

Reiter Foothills Recreation Planning Committee
Meeting # 4
August 27, 2008 | 6:00 to 9:00 PM

Meeting Purpose: Introduce Planning Committee members, facilitator, and DNR staff. Confirm a common understanding of the DNR's recreation planning process and this committee's roles and responsibilities in support of the DNR's long term recreation planning for the Reiter Foothills Area. The Committee also reviewed public comments the DNR received between February 13th and Aug. 27th, 2008, and set up future meetings dates.

Welcome:

- Review agenda
- Overview of public work session format
- DNR welcome and introductions

Bill Wallace: NW Region Manager

Welcomed and thanked the Committee for their time and involvement in helping identify interests and recreational needs for this planning area. We appreciate your time. Northwest Region oversees five counties and many programs. One program the Northwest Region DNR is involved in is management of 350,000 acres of forest trust land. The state legislature is the trustee of these lands and the DNR, as trust manager, must provide for three functions:

- Provide revenue for the trust beneficiaries
- Manage as good stewards to provide for habitat and resources
- Consistent with the above two elements, provide for public use and recreation. (Multiple Use concepts)

The DNR looks to a variety of individuals to help with all of these functions, and particularly the third element. The DNR must balance these elements and manage sustainably. The challenges are many – including increasing population and public use with decreasing funding to manage recreation.

Mark Mauren: DNR Statewide Recreation Program Manager

Welcomed and thanked the Committee for their expertise and knowledge. User perspectives are important in planning for recreation. Only with the help of groups like this can we develop a durable plan. Mark shared a number of experiences highlighting the importance of planning.

- Tillamook forest, Oregon – Recreation specialists were asked if they would site facilities in the same places today? Their response was no, they would have sited facilities in more sustainable locations to cut down on maintenance cost and impact to the environment. Mark indicated that the challenge is to look at where the facilities should be in the future, not where the user built features are now.
- Capitol State Forest in Olympia – Mark's take-away from this experience was that what you see today is not what it may look like in a decade. The challenge is to think about what it *could* be. He indicated that the Capital Forest didn't look much different than the Reiter Foothills looks at this point. The DNR decided to re-engineer recreation access and features and it turned out to be a huge success.
- Loomis State Forest Planning – Mark shared that this was an extremely difficult and controversial process. It was the third planning attempt and a broad set of users and perspectives were involved in developing the plan. The planning process was successful because, although they did not always agree on an issue, they respected and valued each other's perspective. The challenge is for the group to work together,

respect each other, and meld opinions which will help build broader community support for the plan.

- The limiting factor for this planning process will not be the land but will be acquiring the resources to build, maintain and provide the right presence to create something that will last for generations.

DNR's Review of Planning Process:

Candace presented the revised Reiter Foothills Recreation Plan timeline (see attached timeline). She highlighted the extended timeframe for the Committee's work (meeting now through March 2009) and subsequent public involvement to comment on the DNR's draft plan. The DNR will continue to collect public input through the user survey and comments.

Candace also outlined the DNR's decision making process, which will involve DNR's Reiter Foothills planning team, DNR staff in Olympia, and the SEPA public review process.

Randy clarified the types of recommendations the committee will be producing and provided examples from the DNR's Yacolt Burn Forest recreational planning effort currently underway. The DNR currently has three recreation planning efforts taking place: Reiter Foothills, Ahtanum State Forest and Yacolt Burn Forest. The DNR is learning from the processes as the committees move along. The Committee's work products will be map-based – combining the committee's understanding of what constitutes good recreation experiences with the land suitability information for Reiter. Recommendation elements will include: proposed locations for trails and facilities, and a list of priority projects to help DNR attract funding.

Committee Member Introductions

Review and Affirm Reiter Foothills Committee Charter and Ground Rules:

See attached August 2008 Committee Charter and Ground Rules. Members reviewed and affirmed Committee Ground Rules. The Committee had no changes or additions to the Meeting 3 summary.

Questions and Comments

- **The legislature provided the money for recreational planning and expressed goals. What was the legislature expecting?**

DNR Response: DNR requested that the 2008 Washington State Legislature establish a statewide working group. The legislation, overwhelmingly supported by the legislature and users, created the Sustainable Recreation Work Group and charged them with making recommendations to the Washington State Legislature on a long-term vision for the future of recreation on DNR-managed lands, including improving public access and developing a sustainable funding source. The first Work Group meeting is scheduled for September 26th. In preparation for the September 26th meeting, a series of public meetings will be held across the state. At the public meetings, the DNR will be asking the public three things: what type of recreation do you enjoy, where do you like to recreate in Washington, and what is your vision for recreation on DNR-managed lands. DNR staff will compile the information gathered at the public workshops and present them to the Work Group on the 26th.

Public Workshops Schedule 2008 (All meetings are from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m.):

NOTE: This schedule was not discussed at the meeting, but added here for informational purposes.

- Sept 9 – King County Library Service Center, Issaquah (Kick-off meeting)
- Sept 10 – Omak Community Library, Omak
- Sept 10 – Longhouse Educational & Cultural Center, Evergreen State College
- Sept 11 – Deer Park Library, Deer Park
- Sept 15 – Hoquiam Library, Hoquiam
- Sept 15 – Vancouver Water Resources Education Center, Vancouver
- Sept 16 – North Olympic Library-Port Angeles Branch, Port Angeles
- Sept 16 – Burlington Library, Burlington
- Sept 17 – Group Conference Center, Central Washington University, Ellensburg

- **Funding resource information is needed to support recommendation development. Is there an excess of funding in the NonHighway and Off-Road Vehicle Activities Program (NOVA) account? When the Committee comes to agreement regarding trails and facilities what is the source of funding?**

DNR Response: There are three main sources for capital funding: legislature, Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) grants, and federal grants. In addition, DNR operational sources of funding include NOVA grants and general fund. At times there are excess funds in the NOVA account from projects that came in under budget or were canceled. Normally this money is re-appropriated and dispersed during the next round of NOVA grants. Last session, the legislature looked for ways to fund the DNR's request to develop recreation plans and to develop and implement a sign standard program. The legislature chose (DNR did not request) to use some of the excess NOVA account balance to fund these activities.

- **So planning for future funding comes after the Committee's recommendations and DNR's recreation plan is developed?**

DNR Response: One of the Reiter Foothills Committee work products is a prioritized list of proposed projects, which the DNR will use to help acquire the funding in the right order.

- **Is DNR requesting funding for recreational purposes now, so additional resources for work on the ground will be in place once the recreation plan is completed?**

DNR Response: The DNR intends to apply for NOVA grants this coming spring dependant on securing resources to support maintenance and education and enforcement at the site. To this end, the DNR is requesting a staff person for the Reiter Foothills area, and crew time to help begin restoration and development work. By February DNR should have enough of a plan to begin work on grant requests.

- **In reviewing the Committee meeting summaries, I noticed that some meetings go until 8:30 pm, some until 9:00 pm.**

DNR Response: The Committee's meetings start at 6:00 pm and will end at 8:30 pm. The goal is for 2.5 hour meetings, though the Committee can choose to extend the meeting time up to 9:00 pm if significant work can be completed by doing so.

DNR Management Updates:

User survey - The Reiter Foothills project web site and recreational user survey are up and running. The web-based survey has been open for approximately two months with 1260 responses. The survey will stay open through the end of November. DNR encourages committee members to share the link to the survey with other users. The survey can be found on the DNR website at:

http://www.dnr.wa.gov/RecreationEducation/Events/Pages/amp_rec_reiter_foothills_recreation_survey.aspx

Questions and Comments

- **How is DNR advertising the survey? Can the link be sent out to local recreation groups?**

DNR Response: DNR has distributed the survey link to individuals and organizations who have submitted comments about Reiter Foothills Recreation planning. Committee members are encouraged to forward the link to user groups and organizations. DNR staff will explore how to expand their survey distribution to a broader range of users.

- **How do you access the survey link from the DNR website? The access seems a little clumsy – can it be more user-friendly?**

DNR Response: DNR will talk with technical staff to see if access can be simplified. Updates on the survey access and website will be sent out to the Committee.

Trail Inventory – Washington Conservation Corps (WCC) people have completed an initial GPS inventory of the trails that exist at Reiter, trails mapped include Wallace Falls State Park. The draft map from of the inventory was available at the meeting for Committee member review. If the Committee has corrections or additions to the map, please contact David Way. This information will be updated and available for Committee use.

Questions and Comments

- **How are the various types of trails distinguished from one another on the inventory and map? Is there a ground-truthing effort underway?**

DNR Response: DNR will try and sort out the types of trails. As of right now, all types of trails are included and represented on the map with no distinction between use types. NOTE: 62 total miles of trails includes Wallace Falls State Park trail mileage.

Stakeholder Engagement - DNR has held a series of ongoing meetings with Department of Ecology, Department of Fish and Wildlife, and Tulalip Tribal biologists. DNR is also in contact with Snohomish County and state officials and the Sky Valley Chamber of Commerce. Upcoming meetings are scheduled with Backcountry Horsemen, city mayors, Index water system manager, Gold Bar Nature Trails, local fire district, and the US Forest Service.

The Forest Service will begin work on an access plan for motorized vehicle access in the Mt Baker Snoqualmie National Forest. DNR will provide further information about this US Forest Service process as we find out more details.

DNR will be sending out another public update to our Reiter Foothills contact list regarding the Committee's resumed work and other progress related to the Reiter Foothills planning process.

Reiter Work Projects and Ongoing Management – DNR is currently organizing work projects within the planning area. The other agencies – Department of Ecology, Department of Fish & Wildlife and Tulalip Tribe - share DNR's concern regarding sediment impacts in some streams. The Deer Creek crossing is of particular concern to all agencies right now and a project is underway at that crossing to provide interim measures to protect water quality. The work involves hardening the crossing and placement of woody material for fish habitat. DNR has filed a Forest Practice Application and expects approval by next week. In the longer term, the planning Committee will make recommendations about types and locations of recreational uses that will guide DNR's planning for more permanent work and mitigation measures.

DNR held a volunteer work party on August 23rd and installed silt fences and barriers. Special thanks to Timber Tames and Reiter Trail Watch for their participation and support. There will be additional work parties.

DNR and other agencies will be looking at additional sites on the landscape which may require further short-term mitigation projects in the future. If you would like more information, please let Candace know and we will keep you posted.

Questions and Comments:

- Where is the location of this project? Deer Creek is a very important stream for steelhead salmon.
DNR Response: DNR staff showed the location on the map. It is where the "Wall Trail" crosses Deer Creek. Yes, this stream is considered an important area for fish habitat.
- **Is there going to be another field trip to Reiter for the newer Committee members? Sooner rather than later would be good.**
DNR Response: As outlined in the Future Meeting Topics and Dates, DNR is organizing a Committee tour to visit other managed recreation areas. An additional tour will be added so there is the opportunity for new committee members to tour Reiter (all Committee members are welcome to join this tour as well).

Group Activity:

Committee reviewed the summary of public comments DNR has received between February 12 and August 27. The summary includes all comments from all sources (emails and letters). Committee members worked together to identify comments that address specific, named locations within the planning area. This information will be used, along with the land suitability analysis information, to support the Committee's next phases of planning.

Questions and Comments:

- **How do we get information regarding the frequency of each comment?**
DNR Response: All of the comments that DNR has received have been included here, even if somewhat repetitive. This summary does not include the user survey responses. The results of the survey will be provided to the Committee at a later date.
- **Is there an interest in mountain biking in this area, and is it currently taking place? In what areas?**

Committee Member Response: Yes there is an interest in mountain biking access in the Reiter. Unsure of where exactly people currently ride mountain bikes within the planning area.

- **Is there room for comment on the survey?**

DNR Response: Yes, the survey includes several open-ended questions. When the survey results are presented the comments will be included.

Specific comments regarding site-specific geographic areas identified by the Committee:

- Index Town Wall – important to mountain bikers looking for areas to ride, climbers appreciate the opportunity to recreate here. (NOTE: Top of Index Wall – Index Wall – Trail to Index Wall are three separate areas important to people for different uses and concerns).
- Deer Creek parking and staging – resource damage along trail to Index Wall. Area needs rehabilitation. Protect City of Index water supply.
- Wallace Falls area – Horse trails could be located west of Wallace Falls area, mountain bikes trails in the middle, and ORVs to east side of the planning area.
- Wallace Falls area – terrain changes are optimal for mountain bike trails and user experience.
- Access from planning area to Sultan Basin – horseback riding access to these areas is desired.
- Reiter Trails should become an ORV area – if managed correctly. ORV's need a specific place to play that is safe and sustainable.
- In areas currently used for camping - ORVs can cause toxic run-off, large amounts of litter and garbage can impact both surface and groundwater.
- Index water supply area is impacted by the Deer Flats water quality.
- Hogarty Creek Trail should be re-opened.
- Crags and boulder fields located in privately owned area are popular for climbing.
- Deer Flats provides an opportunity for mountain bike trails.
- Deer Creek area – resource damage.
- Index overlook – access to this area is desired.
- While no specific location was identified, there is a need for restrooms and other facilities.

Questions and Comments:

- *DNR comment:* The public comments are weighted toward heavy use areas and based on existing user's experiences. Regarding the area west of Wallace Falls – the public may not be commenting about this area because access is limited so they are unfamiliar.
- **Are there areas where dirt bikes and mountain bikes could co-exist on trails?**
Committee Member Response: The recreational experience these two types of users are looking for are different. There are two schools of thought on mixed use trails and compatibility—they can coexist versus they should not. Compatibility depends on how the trails are designed and if designed appropriately for both uses.
- **At the next meeting will we see the results of the user surveys? I am interested in seeing the information prior to its being final given you already have 1200+ responses.**
DNR Response: Yes. We are able to present the draft survey data before it is finalized. DNR will bring that to the Committee soon.
- *Committee Member Response:* As we digest the information, the Committee must take into account who has had access or is aware of the survey.
- *Committee Member Comment:* I have had the impression that some of the ORV users are not interested in active DNR management, enforcement, guidance, etc. However, many of the ORV user comments in the Public Comment Summary are requesting enforcement, education, guidance, and overall recreation management. This is encouraging.
- **Can we consider closing the area to use at night?**
DNR Response: That is something the Committee must consider as part of the planning recommendation work.
- **When considering the Town of Index water supply, the Committee must communicate with the town and the Tulalip Tribe.**
DNR Response: DNR meets regularly with stakeholders like the towns, agencies and Tulalip Tribe. This information will be provided to the Committee in the stakeholder updates DNR provides at each meeting.
- *Committee Member Comment:* The Skykomish River runs through this area and its tributaries heavily influence the river.

Future Committee Meetings:

Future Meeting Dates are: December 3, January 28, February 18, and March 18

Tours:

DNR will identify alternate Saturday dates in November for a five- to six-hour tour of Walker Valley and other managed recreation areas and work with Committee members to select the final tour date.

Reiter Tour – DNR is working with new members to identify an optional Reiter Foothills tour date. All other committee members are welcome and encouraged to join us.

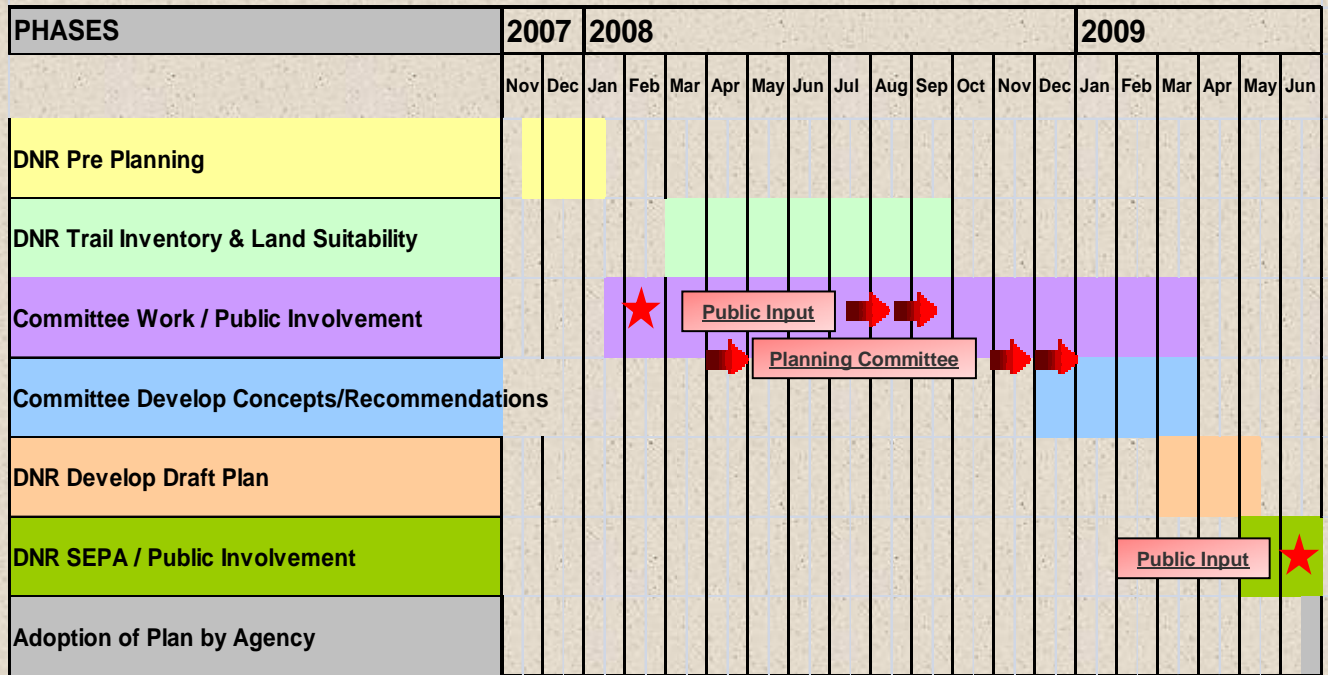
Review Action Items and Next Steps:

- The meeting summary will be distributed to the committee within ten days following meetings – please review and let us know if there are additions or corrections.
- DNR will look at ways to broaden the outreach on the user survey and web site.
- DNR will look at ways to make the Reiter Foothills project website and user survey access more user-friendly.
- Follow up information on the budget and finance questions will be provided to the Committee.

Attachments:

Revised Reiter Foothills Recreation Plan Project Timeline
August 2008 Revised Committee Charter
Affirmed Committee Ground Rules

Reiter Foothills Recreation Plan Project Timeline



August, 2008

DRAFT - Subject to Change
without Notification

- ★ Public Meeting
- ➡ Ongoing

Reiter Foothills Forest

Recreation Planning Committee Charter - Revised August 2008

What is the DNR's mission?

- To provide professional, forward-looking stewardship of our state lands, natural resources, and environment.
- To provide leadership in creating a sustainable future for the Trusts and all citizens.

What is the DNR's vision statement for Public Access?

“Manage public and trust lands in a manner that provides quality, safe recreational experiences that are sustainable and consistent with DNR's environmental, financial and social responsibilities.”

What are DNR's recreational goals?

- 1) Ensure the safety of the public, department employees and volunteers
- 2) Ensure recreation is consistent with trust and ecological goals
- 3) Provide quality recreation experiences that can be sustained over time
- 4) Obtain adequate funding and staffing for managing recreation in the Reiter Foothills Forest

What is the Reiter Foothills Forest Recreation Planning Committee's mission?

- To provide insight and input to help DNR make decisions related to recreation management for the Reiter Foothills Forest
- To work with DNR staff to develop draft recreation management recommendations

The recommendations must:

- i. Be consistent with the purpose and objectives of State Forest Trust Lands;
- ii. Not adversely impact revenue generation from timber sales and special forest products for our trust beneficiaries and counties;
- iii. Not adversely impact ecological functions;
- iv. Not favor any user group over another; and
- v. Recognize Reiter Foothills Forest is a working forest and is part of a larger regional landscape.
- vi. Be consistent with applicable Federal State and local regulations as well as agency policies including but not limited to the:
 - a. Federal Enabling Act and State Constitution
 - b. Policy for Sustainable Forests
 - c. Endangered Species Act
 - d. Public Lands Act (Chapter 79.01 RCW)
 - e. Forest Practices Act (Chapter 76.09 RCW)
 - f. Hydraulic Project Approval (RCW 75.55.100)
 - g. State Environmental Policy Act (Chapter 43.21C RCW)
 - h. Water Pollution Control Act (Chapter 90.48 RCW)

What are the commitments of being a member of the Reiter Foothills Recreation Planning Committee?

The Reiter Foothills Recreation Planning Committee is an advisory body comprised of individuals who bring a mix of user group perspectives and is not a body representative of constituencies. Committee members:

1. Commit to actively participate and attend all meetings throughout the process, including presenting the committee's recommendations to the public
2. Consider other interests, share ideas and gather input from the user groups they engage with
3. Agree to focus on the whole community by representing the interests of recreation activities or organization(s) other than your own, in addition to giving input related to your recreation area of interest
4. Agree to utilize a consensus-based decision making process
5. Agree to work within this Charter set forth by DNR and the ground rules agreed upon by the group
6. Be creative and progressive within the framework of existing DNR policy and recognizing that the future is uncertain and that technology, information, markets, or other opportunities may develop that provide new opportunities for the Reiter Foothills Forest over time

What is the time commitment required by members of the Reiter Foothills Recreation Planning Committee?

- Attend approximately ten meetings of approximately three hours in length
- Review the materials provided prior to each meeting

The Recreation Planning Committee will meet from April 2008 to March 2009, including meetings on:

- August 27, 2008
- September 24, 2008
- October 29, 2008
- November 18, 2008
- The balance of the meetings will be scheduled at the August 27th Committee meeting

When will the committee be disbanded?

- No later than March 31, 2009

What are the limits on the Reiter Foothills Recreation Planning Committee's authority?

The Recreation Planning Committee is convened for the specific purpose of developing draft recreation management recommendations and providing information and insight to DNR staff for the development of the Reiter Foothills Recreation Plan.

Draft recommendations developed in this committee will be presented to DNR decision-makers, which consist of the Northwest Region Manager, Asset Protection and Management Division Manager and Executive Management.

Reiter Foothills Committee Ground Rules
Affirmed April 8, 2008 and Reaffirmed August 27, 2008

- Value the time of Committee members and their contributions to the DNR planning effort in the Reiter Foothills Area
- Start on time and end on time
- Share your knowledge, experience, time and talents
- Extend general courtesies to the speaker (e.g., opportunity to speak without being interrupted, no sidebar conversations)
- Respect each other's view despite differences
- Give equal airtime to all Committee members
- Listen to learn
- Stay focused on planning use area and adjacent lands
- Handle conflicts openly and productively
- Silence equals support, voice your concerns
- Provide information ahead of meetings whenever possible, including agendas, locations under discussion, and resource materials to support discussions
- Create clear list of meeting objectives that the Committee will cover over the planning period to develop recommendations
- Committee members' reports to user groups should provide a fair representation of Committee's work and not seek to create or embroil hysteria and political force that will thwart Committee's work.
 - DNR will maintain a central reporting tool/web page that supports the Committee in: 1) communicating its work to the other interested user groups/enthusiasts, 2) educating across user groups, and 3) increasing consistency on what is reported across various user groups.
 - DNR staff will serve as the media contact for the Committee. Committee members will direct media questions to Candace Johnson or David Way at 360-854-2803 or email to reiterfoothills@dnr.wa.gov
- Absences: As the Committee does not have formal alternates, provide an open invitation to have Committee members send another individual in their absence to attend the Committee meeting as a listener, not a representative for that user group.
- DNR staff will serve as resource staff to the Committee's work. This will include bringing issues and concerns raised by citizens and other user groups without a direct representative on the Committee into the Committee's discussions for review and consideration.