



Update: Reiter Foothill State Forest Planning Process

December 17, 2008

As you may be aware, Reiter Foothills in eastern Snohomish County has long been a popular recreation area. The 10,000-acre area, located 30 miles east of Everett, attracts a diverse range of users including off-road enthusiasts, campers, hikers, mountain bikers, and hunters. The southern portion, in particular, has become increasingly popular over the years for motorized use by ATVs, motorcycles, and 4x4s.

Reiter is so popular that certain locations have become overused, and some streams and stream corridors have experienced environmental damage from off-trail riding and the large numbers of riders using the area. This year, DNR put together an advisory committee made up of recreation users and local citizens to help develop a recreation management approach for Reiter Foothills. The committee has been working collaboratively—using scientific data to guide their work—to look at what is right for the land and what is right for recreation use in this area.

In March 2009, the advisory committee will make its recommendations to DNR. These recommendations will be the basis for completing a recreation plan that will be used to seek the funding necessary to address environmental damage, construct well designed facilities and trails. DNR will work with volunteers to make Reiter Foothills an area that provides a fun, safe, and sustainable recreation experience in a working forest.

Meanwhile, the Departments of Ecology and Fish and Wildlife and the Tulalip Tribes share our concern related to environmental damage. Together, we have identified some on-the-ground interim work projects to protect against further resource damage. These interim measures will help address problems until the advisory group completes its final recommendations and DNR determines the best course of action for the long term.

We know that the majority of people who enjoy off-road motorized sports on state-managed lands want to continue to ride in popular areas such as Reiter Foothills. Please help us by supporting and protecting the areas where interim work projects have been completed as we continue to work with the public and user groups to develop a long-term plan for recreation in Reiter Foothills.

In the past few months, DNR has worked with volunteers from groups such as the Northwest Quad Association, the Pacific Northwest Four Wheel Drive Association, and Reiter Trail Watch to complete on-the-ground projects that:

- Protect water quality by keeping sediment from flowing into streams.
- Protect wetlands and fish habitat.
- Clean up and prevent litter.

The key work projects that have taken place include:

- Hardening the Deer Creek crossing.
- Conducting weekend cleanups of the area.

- Repairing fencing around Reiter Pond to protect the pond area by eliminating motorized access.

The next planned work will involve placement of ecology blocks to control access to sensitive areas along Reiter Road and near Reiter Pond where a significant amount of garbage dumping is occurring (see attached map). These blocks are being placed, with support from Snohomish County and Washington Department of Ecology, to eliminate dumping and to reduce impacts to nearby forest and aquatic resources. Primary off road vehicle routes that are currently being used will not be blocked. We expect this work to be completed by mid January 2009.

Thank you again for your participation and interest in the future of recreation in Reiter Foothills. We ask that each of you support and respect the on-site work that is being done jointly by volunteers and DNR. While we do not yet know the future of recreation in Reiter Foothills, any amount of future motorized use will come with guidance and measures necessary to protect the forest and aquatic resources in the area.

For more information, please contact Candace Johnson at 360-854-2803 or e-mail reiterfoothills@dnr.wa.gov. Please also contact David Way at 360-854-2830 if you are interested in volunteering your time, equipment, or materials for upcoming work projects.

For more information about long-term recreation planning for Reiter Foothills, visit: http://www.dnr.wa.gov/RecreationEducation/Topics/RecreationPlanning/Pages/amp_rec_reiter_foothills.aspx