

Reiter Foothills Recreation Planning Committee
Meeting # 5
September 24, 2008 6:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Meeting Purpose: Presentation and discussion of DNR's geology and soils analysis for recreation facilities and trails. Committee discussion of factors that create a good recreation experience.

Welcome:

- Review agenda
- General Housekeeping items

Committee meeting summaries will be circulated to members by e-mail for their review and comment by Tuesday. Final summaries will be posted on the DNR's Reiter Foothills Project website following Committee meetings to support members' outreach to constituents.

DNR is offering an October 9 field visit to the Reiter Foothill Planning Area for new committee members, continuing members are encouraged to participate. Contact David Way as soon as possible if you plan to attend.

Committee discussed Larry Johnson's participation as a long-distance member of the Committee. Larry will not be available to participate in upcoming meetings due to a job assignment out of state. DNR will determine the fishing representative position on the Committee and asked for members' feedback. Committee suggestions included:

- Replace Larry with another representative of fishing interests who can attend meetings in person.
- Consider conference phone participation, while the technology works, some think this could prove difficult.
- Larry's input is valuable, find some way to keep him involved.

Walker Valley Tour will take place on November 15. Committee members were asked to sign up and indicate availability for this 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. tour. Those participating can expect to see; hardened trail surfaces, water bars, bridges, culverts, drain dips, turnpikes, bollards, multiple use trail systems, grant process, grant work projects, volunteer support, user education, and enforcement.

Committee members and DNR staff introduced themselves and shared something fun they did this past week.

DNR Update:

Survey and web outreach – Randy Kline, DNR

- The survey is up on the website and will be available for response through November. If you know of any additional groups that we need to share the link with please send them the link directly or provide the DNR contact information so that the DNR can do so.
- A DNR communications staff person in the recreation program is looking at ways to make the Web site a little less cumbersome and more accessible to the public.

Outreach – Candace Johnson, DNR

- Sustainable Recreation Work Group
Their first meeting is Friday, September 26. DNR held a number of public workshops throughout the state. There were a wide variety of users at the meetings. DNR asked the users four questions:
 - What kind of recreation do you enjoy?
 - Where do you like to recreate?
 - How can the DNR improve your recreational experience on DNR-managed lands?
 - Share your vision for outdoor recreation on DNR-managed lands for the next 50 years.

Most of the comments are posted on DNR's website now. The public can track the progress of the work group online. The link to DNR's Web site for information about the statewide Sustainable Recreation Work Group is:

http://www.dnr.wa.gov/RecreationEducation/Topics/RecreationPlanning/Pages/amp_rec_sustainable_recreation.aspx

The link to the State Recreation Work Group survey is:

http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=fybai_2bM9f9hVIAWFBH72WA_3d_3d

- DNR met with the US Forest Service.
The DNR talked with Barbara Busse, Skykomish District Ranger, and two staff members who work out of the forest supervisor office in Everett. DNR shared information regarding forestland planning and Reiter Foothills Recreation Planning. The Forest Service shared information regarding their motor vehicle travel study. The USFS and DNR plan to meet again in February to share the draft recommendations made by this committee.
- Town of Index Water System
 - DNR met with the water manager for Index. DNR has a hydrologist looking into Index's water concerns and this information will be shared with the Committee in meetings to come.
- DNR is scheduling a meeting with the Chief of Snohomish County Fire Dist 26 to discuss their concerns related to emergency access in the Reiter Foothills.
- DNR met with Snohomish County Solid Waste representatives to discuss illegal garbage dumping in the Reiter Foothills.
- Washington Department of Ecology (DOE) and Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) coordination
 - Ongoing work as they conduct day-to-day management.
 - DOE is planning to have a representative attend many of our upcoming meetings.

Day-to-Day Management – David Way updated the Committee on:

- Deer Creek work projects for September 26th and 27th, Sept 29th and October 4th. The DNR will be conducting work on site this weekend placing root wads. Next week a crew will do work to harden the water crossing. Later in the week Reiter Trail Watch volunteers will assist in completion of the work project.

- October 12th Reiter Clean Up is put on by Reiter Trail Watch. A number of volunteers are expected to attend and participate in trash collection.
- October 18th is the White Knuckle Grand Prix. This is a motorcycle event that Stumpjumper Motorcycle Club puts on every year. The race is a one-day event on several identified courses with timed events.

Question was asked about whether other users were aware of the race. Given there is a lot of activity in the area, what safety measures are in place?

Committee Member Response: The area selected is not as heavily used as others, it is located further into the area. Volunteers are stationed at trail crossings to alert other users and help manage the flow of traffic during the race.

Question was asked about whether the race would take place on existing trails as opposed to racing in new non-impacted areas?

Committee Member Response: The race will only occur in existing trail areas.

- DNR is working with Snohomish County to identify areas where ecology blocks (large concrete blockades) could be placed for litter prevention, as well as resource protection for primarily water issues. Snohomish County has a DOE grant for litter prevention. Some of the areas that are being considered are:
 - The area people camp off the middle road in the riparian area.
 - The area people camp right off Reiter Road in the riparian area (across from the road that accesses the WDFW fish hatchery).
 - The access to the pond off Reiter Road.
 - The Deer Flats Main Line.

The Recreation Planning Committee timeline was reviewed (see attached handout). This timeline displays the way in which the phases of the Committee's work fit together, e.g. data gathering, assessment, and draft and final recommendation development.

Geology and Soils Suitability Analysis

The land suitability analysis is intended to identify and map features within the planning area that need to be considered when planning recreational facilities and trails. The categories of analysis include geology and soils, management, and biology. Information in these land suitability analyses are mapped at the landscape scale to support the committee's discussions and recommendation development for the Reiter Foothills. The presentation at the September 24 meeting covered geology and soils.

Summary of Local Geology

Topography - There are three basic terrain areas:

- Foothills terrain, located essentially west of Wallace Falls State Park (WFSP), is characterized by low hills. This area was sculpted by the last glacial advance.
- Cliffs terrain, located immediately east and south of WFSP, which is steep and rocky.
- Uplands terrain, located above the cliffs and on other bench areas, characterized by gentler slopes.

Climate - Average measures of climate for the Reiter Foothills area are:

Lower elevation at Index and Startup: 64-89 inches of rain, 12-59 inches of snow

Higher elevation and Tolt Reservoir: 98 inches of rain, 48 inches of snow

Geology – Four general types of geologic earth materials predominate:

- Sedimentary and meta-sedimentary rocks (essentially west of WFSP)
- Igneous rocks (Index Wall, very steep slopes)
- Glacial deposits till and outwash gravels, etc. (generally west of WFSP)
- Surficial deposits - Landslides, alluvium, soil and colluvium, rock fall deposits, and talus slopes

How are igneous rocks formed?

DNR Response: They were formed underground from the cooling of molten rock. (In the Reiter area the igneous rocks are part of the Index Batholith which is composed of granitic-like rocks)

Geologic Processes -

- Slump-type slides have occurred primarily in the foothills area west of WFSP probably in the last 13,000 years, although these areas are likely fairly stable now.
- In the cliff areas, there are more active ongoing geologic processes occurring including rock falls and avalanches. The joint structure in these rocks controls these processes.
- Inner gorges, meander bends, bedrock hollows, convergent topography, and toes and scarps of slump-type landslides are areas where landslide processes may occur at a smaller scale.

Question and Comments

- *Will you point out what areas are suitable or not suitable for trails or other recreational uses? Will you help us identify the practical implications of this information?*

DNR Response: As we move through tonight's presentation, you will see how this is connected to recreational use. We will identify areas less suitable for some kinds of recreation as a result of the suitability analysis.

- *What is the age of the landslide activity?*

DNR Response: The slump type landslides are most likely many thousands of years old but not likely older than the last glacial advance, and are likely relatively stable. The rock falls and rock avalanches could vary from thousands of years old to recent and on-going.

General Information:

Areas identified in the geology and soils analysis as having low suitability for recreation have long term considerations, primarily with potential for landslides, erosion and slope instability. Low suitability does not necessarily indicate recreation trails or facilities cannot exist in these areas, rather, the designation indicates further assessment (in the field) will be needed to determine if a proposal is possible.

Areas identified as moderate suitability are more suitable (compared to low suitability) for trails and facilities, but have factors still requiring consideration.

This analysis provides broad-scale information and mapping and may not be accurate on a site-specific basis. All of this information will have to be reviewed on site as specific trail and facility recommendations are evaluated and implemented.

- *Why do you not identify highly suitable areas?*
DNR Response: We are more interested in identifying areas better suited to recreational use, and where there are fewer challenges. We want the low suitability areas to act as a red flag and the moderate suitability to act as a yellow flag in raising the Committee's awareness of key management considerations. The areas that don't have any of these flags may present better areas for focusing the recreational activities.

Review Criteria

The soils and geology criteria identified during the land suitability analysis process as being significant to recreation trails and facilities are outlined below.

Soils with High Erosion Potential – based on soil types:

- *Will you cover the detailed soil types?*
DNR Response: We can provide that information; it is not included in the presentation. The soil types that are the most fragile in the area are identified in this category.

Landslide Bodies:

- *What is a scarp?*
DNR Response: The “newly” exposed surface area above the body of the landslide created by movement of the landslide. Generally the scarp and the toe of the landslide are areas thought to be less stable than the body of the landslide.

Areas with Higher Potential for Landslides – this is synonymous with potential mass wasting areas but is more refined information.

Slope – The steeper the slope, the potentially more unstable the area and the more erosion that may occur. Areas from 30-65% slope are categorized as moderate suitability for trails and above 65% is low suitability for trails.

- *How does slope in percent relate to slope measured in degrees?*
DNR Response: Percent slope is the vertical rise in feet compared to the horizontal “run” of 100 feet. For example a 25-foot rise in 100 feet would equal a 25% slope. The ratio of percent slope to degrees slope is approximately 2:1, for example 65% slope is approx 33 degrees.
Committee Response: Above 65% the area is steep and physically more difficult to climb.

Perched Water Tables – In the Reiter area there are places where glacial deposits are layered below the soil, some of which are compacted glacial tills. Because these compacted tills are fairly impermeable, downward movement of water through the soil and then into the lower earth materials (glacial till and rocks below) may be impeded by the presence of the till layers, particularly if the area in question is flat. On some sites the water may not drain very quickly and thus accumulates in the soil. Where this condition occurs above the deeper water table it is said to be “perched” above the deeper water table. In this entire region, there are pockets of

wet areas that are important on a site specific level. Most of these are not mapped, but will be identified as we plan these specific activities at a site level.

- *Are clays/clayey soils impermeable?*

DNR Response: Yes relatively so, they do tend to be impermeable because the clay fraction in the soils tends to fill in the soil pore spaces and the clays themselves are characterized by very small pore spaces.

High Elevation Soils - The Verlot and Getchel soil types are the more sensitive within this planning area. These soils occur at relatively higher elevation, contain a high degree of organic matter, and are relatively fragile.

- *Are there general elevations at which these soil types occur?*

DNR Response: Getchel occurs at approximately 1800 to 2600 feet in elevation and Verlot occurs at approximately 2800 to 4000 feet in elevation.

100-year flood plain – Several identified in the planning area.

- *How does this information affect DNR management? For example, above the Index Wall the soils seem to be not very productive, so there may be other areas more suitable to some activities?*

DNR Response: The whole landscape is managed for a variety of activities. Any recreation plan must be coordinated with ongoing land management activities, particularly with regard to timing.

- *Will the committee consider future management activities as we make recreation recommendations?*

DNR Response: Yes.

- *It is crucial we know what will happen with Deer Creek, because the water is important to the community of Index. The area is protected and we cannot do some things there.*

DNR Response: DNR will be sharing information regarding the Index water supply with the committee at future meetings.

Discussion of User Group Experiences

Committee members began discussion of what constitutes an ideal user experience for the variety of recreational uses being considered as part of the Reiter Foothills Recreation Planning efforts. At the September 24 meeting members listed the factors that contribute to a good experience for the following recreational uses: horseback riding, birding, motorcycle riding, hiking, and quads/ATV riding. At future Committee meetings, members will discuss additional recreational uses.

Items of discussion are shown below:

Horseback Riding

- Loop trail with change in elevation and slope during the ride
- Protection from motorized vehicles for people and animal safety

- Room on the trail so horses aren't spooked and there aren't conflicts with pedestrians, bikes, dogs, etc.
- 5-25 miles of trail riding
- 2-6 hours experience and all day experience
- Parking and staging area for horse trailers
- Scenic views, outlook destination point
- Views, change in terrain (open versus closed in)
- Water
- Sanitation
- Variety of trails and difficulty

Birding

- Silence so you can hear bird language and identify species
- 5+ hours to all day experience
- Terrain that offers observation over distance (open, sky, cliffs, trees, updrafts)
- Binocular use
- Dry weather

Motorcycle

- Number of miles depends a lot on topography
- Scenery
- Marked trails with map
- Fun terrain for movement up and down
- Curves and water crossings
- Not having to worry about hitting a hiker or scaring horses
- Challenging terrain
- Loop trail of 15-20 miles
- Elevation gain
- Make sure trails aren't too easy, have a variety for various skill levels
- Special use area for trials bikes. Trials riding is a special type of technical riding – slow and steep areas that provide opportunity for balance demanding activities, pleasure is not about distance but the technical difficulty of the trail
- Parking area for trailers
- Sanitation

Hiking

- Silence for communing with nature, birds, and animals. Noise reduces ability to see and hear wildlife.
- 5+ hours to full day experience
- No garbage
- Access to trailhead
- Scenic aspects and destinations
- Loop trails
- Day use
- Not seeing or hearing motorized vehicles
- Peace and quiet
- Respect of natural resources such as plants, animals, water, fisheries

- Enjoy the sounds, scents, and sights of nature
- More native plants, less weeds, better land management
- Get a good work-out (elevation gain, distance, and variety of terrain)
- Respect from fellow users
- Wildlife
- Terrain variety
- Fishing
- Camping opportunities
- Clean water

Quads/ATVs

- Ease of access for parking and trailers and adequate area for numbers of users
- Trail signage
- Access for novice and experienced, differing degrees of difficulty
- Suitable mix of trail challenges (water, logs, rocks)
- 2-10 hours of riding or 12-50 miles of loop trails
- 1-10 MPH opportunities
- Scenic views
- Wider trails
- Safety
- Family and easy recreation oriented areas
- Big bore 4x rock crawling
- Not getting stuck behind large groups of 4x4s
- Variety of trail types (tight woods, mud, open/wide trails)
- Game events (Poker Runs)
- Getting good and muddy

Review Action Items and Next Steps:

Walker Valley Tour November 15 – Committee members are encouraged to sign up for this 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. tour. Lunch will be provided. DNR will contact the committee members who were not present at the meeting this evening regarding the tour.

October 29 - next committee meeting is at the same location, the Snohomish County Parks office. The DNR will be sharing management suitability information with the committee at this meeting.

Please be thinking about what constitutes a good recreational experience for all the uses under consideration in the Reiter Foothills Recreational Planning process. If you have questions please contact Candace, David or Randy.

Committee members will review the meeting summary when it is emailed to help facilitate faster online access to the information for the public.

[END]

Meeting Handout - Recreation Planning Committee Timeline

