



Recreation Planning Committee Meeting Notes

September 13, 2016 | 6 to 9 p.m.

Rome Grange Hall, 2821 Mt. Baker Highway, Bellingham

In Attendance:

Committee Members

Ari Bezona	Dana Johnson	Kevin Vanderhorst
Arlen Bogaards	Eric Brown	James Willson – for Mark Harding
Bert Isaacson	Walden Haines	Becky Peace
Bill Lawrence	Glenn Gervais	Wendy McDermott
Lance Hansen	Mike McGlenn	

DNR Staff

Chris Hankey	Kyle Galloway	Hyden McKown
Laurie Bergvall	Dana Leavitt	Glenn Glover
Rick Foster		

Meeting Purpose: Review and discussion of the second land suitability module – Management criteria – within the planning area. The committee learned about recreation activities on US Forest Service lands adjacent to the planning area. Additionally, committee members continued presentations on existing recreation experiences.

Welcome: Glenn Glover opened the meeting with a review of the agenda and general housekeeping items, which included introductions of the general public in attendance and approving the meeting notes from the June 14 planning committee meeting.

Public Comment: One comment focused on recreational use in the area of the south end of Mirror Lake and access to the Wickersham Truck Trail - does DNR have an easement for recreational use or is it for management purposes only?

Update: Dana Leavitt provided a brief update on the progress of the planning process and a reminder of the planning committee's role and responsibility to the agency and the public. On the planning process, Dana went over the land suitability modules and how they fit into the overall process, upcoming events such as the November community meeting (November 29th), and the 2017 planning tasks.

USFS Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest Presentation: Rourke McDermott from the Forest Service (works at Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie) went over his team's mission statement and staff; he talked about motivators that lead to a recreation experience, including:

- Place and setting
- The activity

BAKER TO BELLINGHAM RECREATION PLAN
Washington State Department of Natural Resources

BakertoBellingham@dnr.wa.gov | www.dnr.wa.gov/BakertoBellingham
Recreation Planning Committee | September 13, 2016 FINAL Meeting Notes

Baker to Bellingham



- Health reasons
- The people
- What can be learned
- The connection

Rourke also touched on:

- The forest service provides a variety of activities, including camping, hiking, backpacking, water sports, hunting, winter/summer sports, ATV and motocross, birding, and biking.
- How can the USFS serve the public – the aging population and changing demographic of users on the USFS lands; through immersive and guided, kinesthetic experiences (carrying out physical activities, rather than listening to a lecture or watching demonstrations), and primitive education areas (PEA's).
- Travel management plan update – two month period of responding to the objections – the objection period closed on 9/12/2016. They haven't made a decision on what roads will remain open or closed yet. There should be resolution in about two months. Trying to find the best alternative to meet the greatest good within the budget they have.
- Interagency Visitor Use Management Council - "Visitor Use Management Use Framework – A Guide to Providing Sustainable Outdoor Recreation" found at: http://visitorusemanagement.nps.gov/content/documents/lowres_VUM%20Framework_Edition%201_IVUMC.pdf

Q&A for Rourke

Mike McGlenn – trails to keep open and maintained? What is the plan to keep them maintained? Used to have 32 trail staff. Rourke – rely on partners, volunteers, grants, and concessionaires. Declining budget leading us to combining wilderness and trails staffing.

Arlen Bogaards – users in the backcountry doing really harmful things – need to do something. There is a huge gap there. Mountain stewards is a great program – we just need 5,000 of them. Rourke – I agree – watching a TED talk on emotional intelligence – we have the cyber generation coming up – their social skills and etiquette might not be robust – how do we address that as they grow up? Need a life changing experience with some nature exposure so they start to grasp the meaningfulness and exposure of nature to hope they get that ah-ha moment.

Hunter community – when we first started hunting – no trail heads – then they turned into logging roads – hunting and fishing –my question is when you start closing the roads does that mean closed to walking? Rourke – no you can walk, horse, hike – intent is to not have motorized.

Management Land Suitability Module: Two parts to the presentation – 1) over view maps and 2) Management criteria.

- Context Map – shows residential uses in the area next to DNR lands; need to understand adjacent land uses later as we look at buffering trails and facilities; being a good DNR neighbor is really important.

Baker to Bellingham



- Northern Spotted Owl Management Map – east side of the planning unit. These must be managed on a project by project basis. DNR can manage within the Nest Roosting Foraging areas – our objectives are to create habitat for the northern spotted owl per the habitat conservation plan – we can do thinning, build road, etc. in these areas.
- Marbled Murrelet Strategy Map – half a dozen alternatives – we cannot say yet what the management strategies are yet – the draft strategies are going out this winter. This could also change with a new administration. Don't have a good answer yet – next year when we get down to this issue – we will have more information – not excluded at this time.
- Road and Access Map – shows a variety of levels of service for roads, from open and drivable by passenger car to impassable; will look at more of these issues this winter.

Dana reviewed the suitability terms: *low suitability* – long term limiting factors – social political concerns, leases, easements; *moderate suitability* – less mitigation needed than low suitability.

The management criteria included: Communication sites, rock sources, utility easements, land adjacent to other properties, water sources, and cultural/archaeological resources (not put on these maps – sensitive information).

- Communication Sites – for example Sumas Mountain, trails buffered at 300', facilities buffered at 1000'.
- Rock Pits – for example Red Mountain – not suitable for recreation if it is an active rock pit – 25 – 30 of them in the planning area.
- Utility Easements – BPA has a major line going through Mirror Lake – southern portion of Stuart Mountain. City of Bellingham has a water line by Hutchinson Creek. Williamson Pipeline – all examples of utility easements. We do not put facilities near utility easements. Trails will only cross, do not run parallel.
- Land Adjacent to Other Properties – For trails, residential areas – 200' buffer, other land owners (USFS, county, other industrial owners) 100' buffer. Facilities – 900' buffer for residences, 100' for other owners. All based on a noise study of 55 decibels.
- Water Sources – well heads and aquifer recharge zones. 1, 5, 10 year travel time for protection. Contaminants that can travel in the ground to the well – how long it takes the contaminants to get to the well. Still getting this data mapped correctly with the County.
- Cultural/Archaeological Resources – working on developing maps with DAHP. Tribes are not sharing their information at this time.

Q&A

Mike McGlenn – Are these buffers and criteria law? No these are just part of the planning process.

Walden Haines – BPA Lines – does BPA have concerns with vandalism? What are their guidelines and standards for use? Have not had that kind of a dialogue with them. We can follow up with them and bring that back to the committee so when we talk early next year we can have that as a part of our discussions.

Baker to Bellingham



Dana Johnson – Electing a new lands commissioner – is there a way to get those people here or get some kind of a statement about DNR recreation? We are not able to get the candidates here.

Does historical hunting come under cultural? No.

Committee Member Recreation Presentations: Presentations were given by Wendy McDermott and Tom O’Keefe on behalf American Rivers and American Whitewater, Becky Peace on behalf of North Cascades Soaring Club, and Eric Brown and Glenn Gervais on behalf of Whatcom Mountain Bike Coalition.

Wendy and Tom talked about the Upper Nooksack Recreation Plan, that the plan protects the river corridors in the wild and scenic rivers, and develops a vision and a resource document for the rivers. One of the five goals that emerged from it was river access for boating on the North Fork, with a potential site being in an area that is DNR and Whatcom Land Trust property. There are six whitewater runs in the planning area, of which Clearwater Creek – comes into the middle fork of the Nooksack River – heart of the best whitewater resources in the planning area. Their interest is in keeping these rivers in their free flowing conditions – not hydro-power. Helpful to have this activity and interest recognized in a planning document as it will support future actions to protect the river corridors.

Becky Peace explained that her group mission is to promote hang gliding and paragliding safety and education. They work at Blanchard State Forest as official site stewards. They do not start or end at the same site – they do not always know where they are going either, as they are continuously assessing the situation. Fly from Sumas, Red Mtn., Black Mountain, and Anderson Mountain; fly from early February into late October. Recreation Plan priorities – road access, launch sites and landing zones, trails to launches & overlooks, windsocks, launch cameras installations, anemometers. Google “paragliding mount baker” to see a really cool video of a person circumnavigating Mt. Baker.

Eric Brown and Glenn Gervais talked about mountain bike riding; their mission is to preserve and enhance mountain biking in Whatcom County through stewardship and advocacy. Styles of mountain biking – cross country, all mountain, downhill, dirt jump/slopestyle, free ride. Desired experiences – connectivity, loops (stacked loops), varying skill levels (progression), viewpoints and destinations, opportunities for solitude, shuttle access. Fifteen organized trail days a year, 6500 hours a year of volunteer time – Galbraith Mountain, Larrabee State Park, Blanchard State Forest, Whatcom County Parks, and Bellingham City Parks. Stewards of Galbraith Mountain – EMS checkpoint system and working with the land manager on the mountain. Education programs in Bellingham, as well as after school programs. Advocacy – for many different projects. Galbraith the best trail network in Washington State. Large economic benefit from recreation in Whatcom County.

Field Trip #3: Logistics for the September 24th field trip were discussed and potential units of the planning area were identified (Slide Mountain, Van Zandt Dike, and the Middle Fork at Mosquito Lake Road).

The meeting was adjourned at 9 PM.