



## Recreation Planning Committee Meeting Notes

September 19, 2017 | 6 to 9 p.m.

Deming Library, 5044 Mt. Baker Highway, Deming

### In Attendance:

#### *Committee Members*

Lance Hansen	Glenn Gervais	Ari Bezona
Bert Isaacson	Walden Haines	Dana Johnson
Kevin Vanderhorst	Mark Harding	Sean Lucke for Becky Peace
Mike McGlenn	Arlen Bogaards	
Chris Tretwold	Eric Brown	

#### *DNR Staff*

Dana Leavitt	Rick Foster	Glenn Glover
Chris Hankey	Hyden McKown	

#### *Public*

Jeff Kish	Johnathan Stumpf
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**Meeting Purpose:** The committee engaged in discussions focused on working forests and recreation, trail density, access, and user experiences. Members received an update on the marbled Murrelet strategy and told about the schedule and content of the Fall meetings.

**Welcome:** Glenn Glover welcomed the group, went over the agenda and reviewed the May 9, 2017 meeting notes, which were accepted. Mike McGlenn requested that the discussion on DNR's public relations be revisited during the meeting, which was agreed to.

**Logistics:** Dana Leavitt explained that the library will be closing at 8:00 pm. The committee may stay until 9:00 pm. Meetings will end earlier to allow for breakdown and exiting the building.

**Introductions:** Committee members re-introduced themselves and shared something they did this summer; staff did likewise.

**Public Comment:** No public comments

**Update on Marbled Murrelet Strategy:** Dana gave a brief update on the Marbled Murrelet Strategy - Board of Natural Resources is trying to come up with a preferred alternative; recreation has been elevated somewhat within the board; they will work toward a preferred alternative and a supplemental EIS will be issued; mid-2018 the process may be completed.

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Eric Brown and Mike McGlenn – Report on their trip to Olympia to talk with the Board of Natural Resources regarding the Marbled Murrelet strategy; reported it was a positive experience and believe the committee was receptive to their comments.

**Working Forests & Recreation:** Glenn opened a discussion on recreation in a working forest, raising several points:

- How does recreation fit into the DNR's trust obligations of revenue generation?
- We have 2 million acres across the state, and on some of it we will be able to have recreation.
- With 6.5 million people in the state of Washington, recreating on DNR lands is vitally important to the public, local economies, and personal health.
- Where does your group stand on this holistic approach?

Comments from committee members in no certain order included:

Kevin Vanderhorst

- It works well at Walker Valley.
- Focus group meetings keep us up to date on future sales. DNR staff takes effort to work with the contractor to save trail within timber harvests. This helps us reopen trail quickly and minimizes work for DNR staff and volunteers.
- The Discover Pass requirement is advertising in a way, but most people think where it is required they are at a State Park; State Parks gets 86 percent of the funding, because but we could do a lot if it was split between DNR and Fish & Wildlife as it was originally intended. (Glenn – State Parks argument is that it opened up the pool of people who needed to buy the pass and therefore the DNR receives more money as a result)
- Updates at the focus group meetings about shared infrastructure such as bridges not being used amongst DNR landscapes would be appreciated

Mark Harding

- We have a hard time measuring the invisible benefits of recreating on public lands. Such as when we have fundraisers or events it may help if we have quantitative measurements of the how many people showed up and stayed in the area, or how much money we raised for a good cause.
- We can send out messages to our constituents from the DNR.

Mike McGlenn

- We gave the Board of Natural Resources notes on recreation in Whatcom County
- We (WBCH) work with other recreation groups on Blanchard
- When they log, DNR staff passes on the word ahead of time; there's almost always a way to ride around the logged sections

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- Recreating in a working forest is doable: at Blanchard, we had to figure out how to offset the cost of the Core area that folks wanted to save. This is very difficult. To take five acres out of timber production for a trailhead, there is a cost there
- In the thirty years that I have dealt with the DNR on Blanchard, things have gone mostly well. The wildlife is there. Staff keeps us informed of timber sales. It can work.
- The DNR does not do a good job of selling itself to the people of the state; it might help a lot of the things you have a problem with, if the people of the state understand who you are and what you do
- DNR lands are local. Folks can recreate there all year; that's important

## Dana Johnson

- Straddleline ORV near Olympia abuts Capitol Forest and people can ride right onto DNR land. How do we get to that situation here in Whatcom County?
- Because we have big opportunity to make money from events if folks could ride on DNR land, but there isn't anywhere for that to happen; this could be a way for the DNR to generate more money.

## Arlen Bogaards

- We should continue to be looking at beloved recreation areas and ways that we can offset the timber harvest revenue to preserve these areas; such as recreation corridors.

## Eric Brown

- Timber harvest create nice views that people enjoy. I think we should educate folks on when timber stands are planted, and show them the life of the working forest
- Please do not shut the whole system down for a timber harvest; we appreciate alternatives so folks can still use those areas
- When Janicki clear-cuts a zone and a trail is completely lost, we use it as a chance re-route a trail and make improvements
- Deming library probably gets funding from local harvests. There is another opportunity to advertise your trust mandate (Glenn - in our best interest to communicate with you and the public about our timber management; the rec program has to compensate the trust for any land that is taken out of timber production which typically is for a 35 year lease)

## Sean Lucke

- At Galbraith, and within the flying community, it's culturally established that some recreation opportunities may be temporary lost

## Walden

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- It's up to the rec groups to educate themselves about what the land manager where they are recreating is doing

## Ari Bezona

- I think we should have onsite signage
- Sign in sheets at the trailheads

**Trail Density:** Dana made a presentation on the density of trails based on an analysis of several trail systems on DNR lands.

- The amount of trail miles in a certain area, typically measured by the square mile (section of land).
- Tiger Mountain has about 23 miles of trail in 4 square miles, which equals 5.75 miles per section; in a comparable area of the planning area, such as Stuart Mountain, there could be similar densities
- Walker Valley has 31 miles of trail in 8.1 square miles, equating to almost 4 miles of trail per square mile. Different densities, different uses
- Tahuya has 200 miles of trail in 36 square miles. A higher trail density, and may not be the kind of density our planning area can support
- Need to address this so that there is an understanding of possible options available when concepts are reviewed next month

**Access:** Chris Hankey provided an update on the status of access points into the various blocks in the planning area.

- Most of our access agreements are based on the Timber Sales program - we have legal access to get our timber out, our management in, and the contractor in
- Almost no access agreements specifically allow for recreation; we think we have identified a few areas where we could get recreation access
- Race Horse, Slide Mountain – Pretty confident that provides access for the general public
- Red Mountain – Public access easements are unclear; they focus only on logging and plantation management; it is not clear what we can do with access to Red Mountain; Silver Lake road does provide some access
- Sumas Mountain – Public access is by the North Fork Brewery. It crosses a private land owner, the easement is unclear if it provides for general public recreation access; that is the only official DNR access to Sumas
- Olson Creek – The gate crosses Weyerheuser and Y-Road crosses Weyerheuser; easement addresses plantation management, it does not address public access; we do not think there is clear public access to that block.
- Middle Fork, FS 38 Road – There is clear public access.
- Easement acquisitions are on hold now until the Capitol budget is decided

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**Optimizing User Experience:** Glenn led an open discussion with committee members to elicit comments on primary management objectives, trail management objectives and shared or segregated recreation zones in general. Talking points involved:

- BLM put out their guidelines for a quality user experience. We want to provide a quality user experience. We may not satisfy everyone, but we want to do our best for the majority of users.
- Let's discuss PMOs (primary management objectives) and TMOs (trail management objectives). For instance, a TMO could designate a trail one way, because that would be the best user experience.
- Goal Interference - how can we avoid interfering with users goals when they are out recreating on public land
- What is a quality user experience for each of your groups?

Committee member comments included:

Ari – For dirt bikes – a variety of difficulties and trails. A lot of those are shared double and single track. Quad trails can be good places for beginners and families. That helps with the diverse difficulty range.

Bert – Consider safety. Because it is unsafe for a dirt bike to drive faster down a double track trail. You can't hear other motorized users.

Kevin – It has generally been a very positive experience of sharing trails between the 4x4 and dirt bike or quad communities. Reiter has designated segregated trails between the different users. It has worked fairly well, but some discussion has come up about why not all the trails are open to different uses, but I would like to see the multi-use model. I don't have a problem with the shared trail system between the motorized communities. It makes no difference to me if the non-motorized community shares the trails as well. We welcome them. Quads and 4x4 can share trails. Designated quad sections may be a good idea, because some 4x4 sections of trail are not conducive to quads, such as technical 4x4 areas, which would need ride arounds for quads.

Eric – In large areas of land like in Eastern Washington, or Capitol Forest, shared use between mountain bikes and dirt bikes/motorized community can work. Density of usage needs to be considered. In tighter landscapes, the shared non moto/moto plan may not work.

Arlen – Trunk trails can work. From a hiker's perspective, large areas of shared use trail with the motorized community generally don't work. But trunk trails to get hikers and motorized to their respective zones could work. Muscled powered and motor powered generally should probably be separated.

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Ari – Agrees with Eric. Some landscapes are big enough you won't run into other users and that works. But there are more people over here and denser landscapes.

Mike – A horse is a 24-7/365 commitment to keep it alive. We travel at about 3 mph. Some of our riders like no challenges, some like a challenge. We want a variety of difficulty levels. We are a slow moving, contemplative sport. A lot of us ride by ourselves. A screaming two-cycle engine is not ideal for my rec experience. Good portions of our trails are multi-use. The majority of mountain bikers are fine, but occasionally a bike spooks a horse. However, there are some bad apples in every group. It is really nice to have a nice quiet ride.

Walden – Every situation is different. I don't mind sharing. But I have had both good and bad experiences with motorized users and mountain bikers.

Lance – Kids area, mixed skill area. Hill climbs. Gravel pits. Distance and loop trails. Destinations and viewpoints.

Ari – There is a good amount of maintenance required for trails. We need to keep that in mind with how many miles of trails we build.

Mark – Many runners will avoid a motorized area. Runners get along with horses and bikes fine.

Eric – Shared non-moto climbing trails and one way descending trails work well. At Duthie, we built one way XC trails to encourage folks from running in to each other and it works well. The place can be packed, but you can still have a good experience because everyone is traveling the same direction.

## Looking Ahead:

- Next meeting October 10<sup>th</sup> where 3 options are scheduled to be presented to the planning committee
- No meeting in November
- We will be boiling down those options from 3 to 2, which will be presented on December 5<sup>th</sup>
- Jan, Feb, March of next year we will wrap this up. We will have a preferred option early next year
- Dec. 13<sup>th</sup> we will have community meeting at the Ferry Terminal building in the Dome Room

**Identifying Concepts:** Has anything been left out?

Ari – We should talk about camping. Such as trail heads. It can be primitive camping, no water or restrooms necessary.

**End of Meeting:** Meeting adjourned at 8:50 pm.

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