

Teanaway Recreation Planning - Public Comments

February 9 - March 8, 2018

Trail Use

It has come to my attention that some people want to open the Teanaway to motorized vehicles such as motorcycles and 3-wheeled motor vehicles both of which cause noise that is jarring to both man and beast, to say nothing of the fire danger when it is dry.

Studies have shown that people are mentally and physically better when they are in nature, the beach, the woods. I can assure you that is not the case when there is the noise of a motorcycle or a snowmobile or some other off-road machine.

My husband and I have the privilege of living on Puget Sound. The best part about winter is the lack of noise from motorized watercraft. As I write this, I can hear Buffleheads and Grebes. That would not be possible in the daytime in summer, yet I find their calls soothing and relaxing. It puts me to sleep.

We also had a cabin in the woods of Central Oregon for almost twenty years. At night, the coyotes' howls were amazing, and just a little bit frightening and fascinating as they hunted. Allowing motorcycles means missing a big part of what being outdoors is all about. One sense is obliterated by noise and you might say another, the sense of smell, is obliterated by exhaust fumes.

I understand people who want to ride their vehicles off-road or on paths. We are constantly bombarded by advertisements for Jeeps and other 4-wheel drive vehicles during any and all sports program. These vehicles drive through creeks and over boulders to reach a pristine spot with a beautiful view. Only it is no longer pristine because a vehicle with less than a good maintenance record has spewed gas and oil indiscriminately.

Last, but not least, let us remember that humans are merely guests in the neighborhood. Imagine your guest riding their motorcycle into your living room. That is what is happening. Your dog runs to hide barking wildly. Perhaps a better image is a dog and a vacuum cleaner in the same room and suddenly you turn on the vacuum. Nine out of ten dogs are instantly intimidated and frightened. Is that fair?

All this is to reiterate that I hope you will seriously consider saving this area for humans using their feet, cross-country skis (when and where appropriate) or other form of non-motorized transport.

Margaret McPhee

I am a resident of Roslyn who hikes in the Teanaway Community Forest and am concerned after hearing that there is pressure from the motorized recreation community to allow motorcycles and other recreational vehicles on TCF roads and trails. I am opposed to this and would recommend that only those trails accessing Forest Service ORV trails be allowed to remain open to motorized use. In the past, some members of the motorized community have illegally used trails and roads, as well as created their own hill climbs and trails in what is now the TCF. While these people are in the minority, they have had a lot of adverse impact on the landscape. There are already plenty of motorized opportunities on Forest

Service and State trail and road networks. The TCF should focus on non-motorized recreation while making protection of the ecosystem a priority.

Sincerely,

Jon R. Herman
Roslyn, WA

I am writing to express my opposition to motorized use in the Teanaway Community Forest. Please consider managing the Teanaway Community Forest as non-motorized.

Katie Fitch

I would like to express my gratitude for the existence of the Teanaway Community Forest and all the hard work that has gone into the land management plan, on-the-ground projects currently happening and now the recreation plan. I understand how TCF is tied to the Yakima Basin Integrated Plan and the importance of completing planning for the TCF.

My background comes with over 15 years' experience in recreation resource management and 9 years of being a resident of Roslyn. I very much value quietness and all the qualities that quietness brings. There is much imaginative capital that comes from having, quiet, and primeval places. I want to express my support for wanting non-motorized recreation in the TCF. I do not want to see any increased expansion of motorized use in the TCF. I would like to see current motorized use to be redesigned, where needed, to lessen impacts to streams and aquatic wildlife.

I also am hoping not to see motorized trails connecting up and over Cle Elum Ridge. This would impact wildlife and quietness on the Roslyn side of Cle Elum Ridge. This would also not mesh well with the land stewardship plans or other projects currently going on in this area.

Motorized use is more impactful and stressful for wildlife. We need to conserve and preserve wildlife areas and limit our human wants to access everything. This is an opportunity to have a non-motorized area set aside to protect and conserve wildlife. There are plenty of motorized opportunities in the Taneum, Manastash and Liberty areas. We need more quiet areas.

I thank you for the opportunity to comment on the recreation plan. If I could, I would attend the March 8th meeting but will be out of town. If you have an email list that, you could add me to that sends out info on the process and on any community meeting dates I would appreciate it.

Thank you for your time and all the work you have put into the recreation plan,

Angela McPhee
Roslyn Resident

I am writing to express my opinion about additional use of motorized trail use in the Teanaway Community Forest.

Motorcyclists have sufficient area already without increasing use in this community forest. The Taneum and Manastash are areas dominated by motorcycle and ORV use. There are multiple trails open to the motorized community across the National Forest and the Vantage area.

Please do not cave to their loud voices. I know they are organized, probably better than the hiker community or even the horse back community, but I am confident they are not the majority. Wheeled vehicles spread noxious weeds and cause resource damage. Please limit their use in the Teanaway Community Forest.

Luci Bull
Ellensburg, WA

Fat Tire Bikes

A few thoughts in response to seeing the following in last meetings draft summary: ***"It makes more sense for fat bikes to use snowmobile groomed trails so that they will not damage cross country ski groomed trails."***

Mostly true. Particularly if the x-c trail has traditional set tracks. Yesterday I laid down some test corduroy in the NF neighborhood so I could ride this am after it froze up. (I have a groomer like sled I pull w/my snowmobile.) Check out the photo from this am.

My incentive to do this is to ride a bike myself and provide some groomers for neighbors and family that want to ski/walk the area. The proposed west fork snow park, cheese and bible rock area makes for some very cool bike rides. I could very easily envision hitting the trails over that way with my sled/groomer/trailer on occasion to provide a set of tracks. Narrow tracks (~44") but nice. And all for free. Obviously excluding bikes from the area would be a disincentive to making this happen.

The fat bike experience is relatively new to me but I know that it's no fun to ride in slush and other similar conditions that would damage a ski trail. The local community has done a great job of respecting each others recreational pursuits and we work together to enhance them. Signage and education on how to share trails will be important.

It might make sense to "soften" the rec plan statement and not exclude fat bikes and snowmobiles upfront but let the rules evolve as the need arises. Maybe there are funds sitting out there to make a snow park and grooming happen immediately but I suspect not. If not, I'd like the opportunity to participate in goal 5 and contribute to some winter trail fun!

Another thought is to make sure there is a separate winter bike trail that locals can maintain.

As always, thanks for all your hard work and pls share as appropriate.

Tracy Rooney



From my comments handed out at the last meeting:

- a. Please be careful what you ask for regarding non-motorized areas for skiers. Most of my neighbors and I are multi-sport winter recreationalists and we rely on the snowmobiles to help “groom” and keep trail open for x-c skiers and fat tired bikes. Grooming is expensive and allowing motorized access “can be” used to everyone’s advantage. And as is common practice in the Methow Valley, snowmobiles are used frequently to gain access for back country skiing. We all understand the noise factor. Fortunately, new sleds are much quieter than their predecessors.

E-Bikes

<https://www.evergreenmtb.org/blog/ebike-legislation-passes-in-wa-senate-and-house>

"Evergreen collaborated with other outdoor recreation groups to include language defining natural surface trails, and treating them differently than paved bike paths. The end result is that e-bikes are not allowed on natural surface trails, unless signed or stated open by the managing jurisdiction."

Please discuss at the next meeting and be very specific on allowing e-bike use as the default now seems to not allow them once this gets signed.

comments from a prior e-mail:

Please make a call-out to allow e-bikes. I've been to areas where e-assist bikes are allowed but signage has not been specific enough to eliminate confusion as to what is and isn't allowed

Tracy Rooney

TVFF Parking Lot

Email from Chuck Johnson to WDFW:

At the TCF committee meeting yesterday, it came to my attention that the parking lot at the TVFF is going to be installed this year. There were several questions that I did raise about the usage, how it was to be configured and how it will be maintained. Explanations were extended but would it be possible to see the written plan and all the details as it pertains to the actual installation, i.e. signage, fencing, barriers (controls to keep out unauthorized vehicles, usage), etc? I for one did find it interesting that the committee chose to put the TVFF as a low priority for attention as it concerns recreation but the parking lot is going to proceed anyway! Appears the committee proposals don't need to address this one as it is happening.

One item that I did not question was traffic as it passes the TVFF. Living next to the road as my family does, we are painfully aware of the driving habits of those who visit and live in the Teanaway. Even though the posted speed is 50mph, I would venture to say that the average speed is 60mph. The only thing that keeps it at 60 are the nature lovers and hunters who are checking out the flora and fauna, usually traveling at 30-40mph. My observations of folks driving past my place would put the speeds at 60-70mph. There are also those that surpass that rate of speed on occasion. This issue becomes even more apparent during the summer months with even more volume in traffic.

So, the question that I am raising is what measures are being put into place to mitigate the speed along the Teanaway? At the TVFF, I was told that the plan is to open up the area north as well as access to the river to the south. I see a big issue as families park in the lot and cross the road to get to the river.

Also, just in general, as we're encouraging more and more folks to come and visit the TCF, is anyone thinking about **increasing** enforcement not only in the recreational areas but along the Teanaway roads? Will there be more controls and enforcement put in place? I would like to see the sheriff's department do more speed enforcement especially on weekends and as the weather warms there will be a huge increase in traffic. Most likely a few locals will be ticketed but the word will get out that this is not a raceway. The posted 50mph speed is a good one for the Teanaway and lowering it is not the way to go. This question was raised once before and put to rest. However, enforcement is needed of the existing limit.

Doug, can you make it a point to have a presentation by the parties involved in the TVFF and the questions I raised above shared at the next meeting? I believe everyone needs to hear what is going on and what the plans are.

Thank you all for working hard in making the area a better place for all to enjoy.

Chuck Johnson

Reply from WDFW:

Mr. Johnson,

It was good to talk to you on the phone this morning. I wanted to follow up our conversation with a response to your original email.

Thank you for your interest in the Teanaway Valley Family Farm property. The property was acquired by WDFW in 2017 in partnership with the Trust for Public Lands, Kittitas County, and Washington Water Trust. The land is being managed as the Teanaway Valley Unit of the LT Murray Wildlife Area. Melissa Babik is the LT Murray Wildlife Area Manager and is responsible for the day to day operations of the Unit.

A good portion of the funding came from the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) for the recovery of federally designated threatened and endangered species. Because of this funding, there will be limited development for recreation and the property will not be open to motorized use. It was recognized during the acquisition process that because the property was located along the Teanaway Road and was adjacent to the Teanaway Community Forest it would be used by the public to access the Community Forest and the Teanaway River for recreation. A limited development parking lot was approved by the USFWS and remaining funding from the acquisition will be used to construct the parking lot.

The parking lot is currently in the design and permitting phase and will go through SEPA review prior to construction. The draft design calls for an 18 car gravel lot with room for horse trailer parking. The lot will be surrounded by fencing or barrier rock to restrict motorized vehicles to the lot. Informational signs and a kiosk will be installed, and will include applicable restrictions like no motorized use. Plans also call for fencing the property lines of adjacent private property to reduce the likelihood of public trespass onto private property. Fencing will also be installed along the south side of the county road to restrict vehicle access to the hay field. A simple walk through in the fence will be created to allow people to walk down to the river.

The Teanaway Valley Unit is not part of the Teanaway Community Forest, but since it is adjacent to and provides new public access to the community forest, as much as possible it will be managed consistent with the community forest management plan. Discussions with the advisory committee have focused on how best to manage the access on the Teanaway Valley Unit within the limits of the funding source. Currently, there are no proposals being considered by the advisory committee to direct recreation toward or promote use of the Teanaway Valley Unit. The advisory committee is aware of the parking lot construction and has discussed the property at multiple meetings. We encourage you to share your thoughts about recreation management at the property with the advisory committee during the public comment period. If you have concerns with the parking lot design, I would be happy to talk you about it some more and they can be addressed during the SEPA comment period.

Your concerns with speed limits and enforcement along the county roads are the responsibility of Kittitas County and are beyond the scope of recreation planning on the community forest.

Thank you again for your interest in the Teanaway Valley Unit and the Teanaway Community Forest.

Ross Huffman
Region 3 Lands Operations Manager

Lick Creek Reroute

Hi all. I'm Tracy Rooney. Full time resident. Tax payer on 4 North Fork parcels. Lick Creek flows through at least 1,000 feet of our property. I served on the county citizens advisory committee that helped the county establish a flood control district back in 2012. I'm not a hydrologist or an expert on flood control, but I sure am familiar with it.

I'm here today to discuss the Lick Creek reroute and it's many potential impacts.

The easy solution to solve the county flooding problem on the Teanaway North Fork road is to remove the water from the stream in our front yard and place it in our backyards. Wow. Let's take a minute to dissect this.

We all have been told that stream flows are affected by wells and vice versa. So, does taking away the surface water for the eight or so wells that potentially get recharged by lower Lick Creek make sense? Probably not.

Streamside property carries a premium over dry barren land with dead trees. It provides a sense of calmness that is an important part of our life. I can be working in my shop, open the doors and be part of a wonderful outdoor experience with a stream running about 100 feet away, all while working on projects. Will drying up this stream negatively affect our property values? Likely. It sure as hell will be a quality of life take away.

Your recreation efforts here are designed to increase the volume of traffic in the valley. It's worked! Property sheltered by foliage from the road offer both visual and noise suppression qualities. The trees and the water they need to thrive comes from Lick Creek. Eliminating the current creek will cause our aspen, willows and cottonwoods to die. And it probably means corresponding wildlife losses that are dependent on this streamside habitat.

Sorry. I like the birds, frogs and other creatures that call Lick Creek next to my house home. While the plan to move the creek north will create great habit, it will be doing so by taking away some of my privacy and devalue the land where I live. That would be wrong.

And to top it off, the counties preferred plan will take this water from our front yard and put it in the backyard where all sorts of havoc will likely happen. It will artificially speed up the breadth and width where the North Fork naturally meanders. It will add water to what is now simple snow melt sitting on top of the sponge into actual seasonal stream beds. It'll put my pasture underwater for extended periods of time. It might even mean that we'll need to fortify our houses with rip-rap in the future. All for what?

Regarding the recreation aspect of this plan, I've heard nothing in the way of building a bridge over this new waterway. We have an extensive private neighborhood trail system. Residents can easily access the TCF up North but will be blocked from doing so with the proposed Lick Creek alignment.

I'd rather the county not have your permission to trade one problem for the many unknowns of another set of problems.

We understand Lick Creek, it's flood patterns and ice flows potential to do damage. I for one learned the hard way. My original driveway culverts were under sized and this caused our out buildings to be flooded. We fixed this with generous assistance from the Kittitas County Conservation District by

combining driveways, removing 4 culverts and replacing it with one huge one. When the Army Corp of Engineers came out to sign off on the project they were pleasantly surprised to see many fish already taking up residence. And we have not seen any flooding to our outbuildings since.

Unfortunately, the quantity and velocity of water flowing in Lick Creek seems to have increased. Some of this is due to logging, some to the removal of undersized culverts that once acted as barriers to water flow, and some to fire impacts.

We've all heard about the "sponge" and the ability of the flood plains to recharge and provide cooling water to stream flows in the summer. Obviously having a culvert blockage slow down water flow is different than wood debris being intentionally placed with the desired effect being to pool and slow down the water flow. We know that culverts are usually not fish friendly. But I wonder, does having water pool in the flood plain regardless of the blockage mechanism help the sponge? Maybe.

Does eliminating the "sponge" on private property by rerouting 5,000 feet or so of stream make sense? Not to me.

The county told me our concerns will all be addressed through the NEPA process. I don't buy it. There is no way that this plan won't destroy property values, habitat and not impact personal enjoyment.

Here's what I recommend:

1. Form a lower Lick Creek basin subcommittee with both stakeholders and water experts. The county has already hired one hydrology firm, but these folks have never met with the local landowners. I was told they were fully briefed on neighbors' concerns, the flooding history, etc. Fine. But our concerns are not reflected in the preferred plan draft I was sent yesterday.

2. Charge the subcommittee to come up with a plan that:

- a. protects the county road from flooding;
- b. includes the current 3 and 5-foot culvert replacement under the county road with a solution that is fish friendly and easily maintained;
- c. enhances the lower Lick Creek habitat area in conjunction with the local property owners' efforts;
- d. enables upstream habitat enhancements while protecting downstream property owners.
- e. does no harm.

3. It shouldn't take long to come up with an outline of a plan, obtain consensus and move it on to the engineers to make it all happen. I'll be happy to commit to host say 4 to 6 meetings at either my house or barn where we'll be able to simply walk outside for on-the-ground site inspection and brain storming.

Pitting residents against easy solutions for the county road flood problem and the various agencies desire to create more habitat is just wrong.

We can create better habitat, protect the county road as well as residents' homes with solutions that are less destructive than the one you heard about today.

I hope you encourage the county and the agencies to go back to the drawing board on this one. Forming a sub-committee might be a good starting place for an outcome that makes sense to all.