

April 13, 2017 Meeting Notes

In Attendance:

Committee Members

Darcy Batura	Jennifer Stephens	Jim Halstrom
Doug Schindler	Martha Wyckoff	John Littel
Mike Reimer	Jeri Downs	Kitty Craig
Wayne Mohler	Deborah Essman	Scott Nicolai (for Tom Ring)
Kathy Young	JJ Collins	Scott Gray
Tom Tebbs	Andrea Imler	

Not in Attendance

Andrew Cromarty
Paul Jewell
Urban Eberhart

Agency Staff

Doug McClelland	Elizabeth Eberle	Mike Livingston
Eric Winford	Glenn Glover	Patricia Jatczak
Larry Leach	William Meyer	

Guests: Becca Wassell, Barry Collins

Meeting Purpose: To update the committee on all forest goals, to develop a common understanding of the details of preparing a recreation plan, to gain an understanding of recreation in Upper Kittitas and the recreation surrounding the Teanaway Community Forest, and to begin to understand winter recreation.

Welcome: Doug McClelland and Eric Winford opened the meeting and reviewed agenda and January 2017 notes.

Budget Update:

Doug Schindler provided a budget update. Several advisory committee members went to Olympia to advocate for TCF funding, met with key legislators and participated in work sessions. There is a lot of support for the TCF, and the operating budget request was fully supported. The capital budget was supported in the Senate and the Governor, but not in the House. Doug Schindler will put together talking points for others to use to talk about TCF to legislators. The budget is supposed to be adopted by June 30. Tom Tebb of Ecology acknowledged the good work that the advisory members are doing.

Updates, progress, and future direction of Goals 1,2,4,5

Larry Leach provided an update on road maintenance and abandonment planning.

- Planning is going on for what roads are needed. The plan is to reduce the road density. RMAP Implementation is underway.
- The MAD Plan (Maintenance, Abandonment, and Decommissioning plan is being drafted.

(Abandonment means the road will be removed and not come back. Decommissioning means it is put out of active use now, but it might need to be used later.) The plan needs to integrate with other objectives, and will be for 15-20 years. DNR will be working to prioritize implementation; combine with restoration & timber sales work

- Comments/Discussion:
 - We will look a conversion of roads to trails in rec planning.
 - A comment that we need to look at Dickey Creek; Forest Service may have some concerns about access.
 - Most of the closures are behind gates so vehicles currently do not have access. Non-motorized uses do have access behind closed gates. Larry will take input from AC. SEPA is not required, but we can choose to do it.
 - Additional access will be explored in rec planning.

Grazing

Eric Winford provided an update on grazing issues.

- DNR finalized \$200,000 contract (funding from Ecology) for ten miles of lay down wire fence, plus water crossing and troughs. Sensitive areas will be prioritized. About 8 miles will be done this season. This funding is for Phase I. Other sources of funds will be needed.
- Yakama Nation helping out with cultural surveys, which include identifying historical and cultural artifacts, of native populations and homesteaders. We have to make sure we don't impact those artifacts.
- Comments/Discussion:
 - It was acknowledge that getting this project going was a big deal, and participants did a great job.
 - It was noted that grazing is required under the legislation as part of TCF.
 - The permit with ranchers is five years. There will be another cycle at end of five years.

Forest Management

Larry Leach discussed the forest management plan for the next 10 years.

- The spotted owl drives forest management decisions.
 - Forest Practices rules apply; there are owl circles all over the TCF, and this restricts work we can do today.
 - The plan identified areas where trees could get to a size for spotted owl habitat. Multi-story habitat is needed.
 - In areas NOT managed for spotted owl, there is a 50% crown retention and 50% open ground.
 - Over time, the goal is to turn timber into high value logs
- Shaded fuel breaks help protect the area from fires. Cle Elum Ridge is first line of defense
- Comments/Discussion:
 - We are planning for owls even though populations are low because a stated objective of the plan is to provide habitat. USFW is two years into a study of barred owls.
 - Prescribed fire is in the management plan.
 - The Good Neighbor agreement with Region 6 Forest Service gives DNR ability to take on projects on FS land. This may help facilitate other cross-boundary projects.

TEANAWAY COMMUNITY FOREST RECREATION PLAN

Community Involvement

Committee member Martha Wyckoff discussed community involvement.

- Stewardship Group is led by Kitty, Andrea, Deb, and Darcy, and is geared toward gathering support and volunteers for TCF efforts.
- A flier was distributed for the May 6 work party and celebration. Donations and volunteers are needed. AC members encouraged to come. Project work followed by a celebration. Sign up on DNRs website. An email with flier link will be sent.

Restoration

William Meyer, WDFW biologist, provided an overview of fish/aquatic restoration planning.

- There is a strategy to identify and prioritize restoration projects, in coordination with partners (such as Yakama Nation, Mid-Columbia Fisheries Enhancement Group (MCFEG), etc.) with goals, objectives, strategies, and implementation.
- The principles are to: prioritize habitat; address low flow; work with natural processes; address the cost-benefit; and integrate with other TCF goals.
- Critical habitat is for listed bull trout and steelhead and non-listed Chinook salmon.
- The North Fork has been determined to be the most important – Stafford, Jungle, Indian creeks. Most is high or medium priority.
- Implementation considers the principles and condition of the habitat, so that investment is made in an area that takes less work to get to full function to make the most of resources.
- This work is happening both in the TCF and at the watershed level, and coordination with USFWS and USFS is key. Many projects are underway, with involvement by many. Restoration work is integrated with roads, grazing, fire, recreation, etc.

Floodplain Restoration

Becca Wassel of MCFEG and Scott Nikola of Yakama Nation Fisheries discussed salmon and steelhead recovery in the Yakima basin.

- We need to re-connect streams to their flood plains if we want salmon. The restoration goal is to get floodplains wet when water is high. Wood is critical for healthy stream. Engineered structures are part of the plan, but are very expensive, so we need to be smart about building, and rely on natural processes. Benefits: floodplains capture flood debris, reduce erosion by slowing down and spreading out
- MCFEG partners with Yakama Nation and others to do restoration. They identified 8 designs for 8 locations on the TCF. They are ready to submit a proposal for \$350,000 for initial work. They propose to take a pilot area in the N. Fork to treat the stream to get floodplain reconnected, and will also look at RR berms.

Public Comment Period:

Paul, landowner bordering First Creek who is part of the volunteer fire response, is concerned about road closures. There is now only one way out of community, and they are not comfortable with that.

Homework Assignment:

Doug reviewed the homework assignment and members responded to the questions below. Eric capture their comments on easel paper.

- What do you cherish about the lands in the planning area?
- What are the biggest challenges to be addressed?
- What are the most important goals to be accomplished?
- As a group what do we need to understand and learn about as we make a plan?

Develop an understanding of preparing a recreation plan

Doug McClelland provided an overview of the Recreation Planning Process.

- Plan is for 10-15 years, but need to think beyond that. The goal to complete plan process in 21 months with 12 planning meetings.
- Reviewed recreational goals of the original management plan and described the various “phases” of the planning process.
- Staff and the Committee will look at concepts, and preferred alternatives.
- Role of the Advisory Committee: understand the data and maps, assess and learn, go on field visits, review alternatives, make recommendations. It is important to understand “suitability” levels for recreation. This will be the focus for the next three months.
- A user survey is being developed by Goal 5 group. AC should do a quick review, than staff will get it out in June.
- The project implementation list is developed and prioritized for what we want to accomplish in the next 10-15 years. Like in other areas, opportunities for funding drive how much gets done.

Upper Kittitas Valley Recreation Panel Discussion:

Larry Leach (DNR), Mike Livingston (WDFW), Barry Collins (USFS) discussed recreation in the valley.

Summer Recreation, non-motorized:

- Hiking, camping, mountain bicycling, horse, trail-based recreation are pretty common on all lands. The checkerboard ownership leads to the need to coordinate across agencies.
- Larry: There is some horseback riding out of Wenas; recreation in Naneum is mostly dispersed; they have identified some trails and connectors.
- Barry: Lots of hiking and horses in Teanaway, mostly north and west. It is a big jumping off point for the very popular Ingalls Lake. There is a big horse camp on Table Mountain. Mountain biking is getting popular in Navaho Peak and Esmerelda Basin. It was noted that there is only about a 50% compliance rate on self-registration on FS lands so usage is much higher than registrations indicate. It was also noted that the existing rules on lands sometimes limits their use.
- Barry: There 300 miles single track motorized; 180 miles 4 wheel drive trail.

Summer Motorized

- There are a lot of off road vehicle opportunities in Cle Elum Ranger District.
- DNR has “Green Dot” maps for motorized recreation. If motorized users voluntarily stay on Green dot road, then DNR will keep them. Green dot is subset of DNR roads. DNR hopes to build connectors in the Naneum.
- Mike: Green dot goes on WDFW land.

- Barry: There is motorized rec in whole district and some trails. There are Jeep trails up in Liberty. There are some trails. The majority of single use is in Taneum, some on Table Mountain.
- Cabin Creek doesn't get much motorized.

Summer recreation – non trail

- Mike: WDFW lands see lots of birding, wildlife viewing, and big game. The Yakima River canyon has big horn sheep, mule deer. It is mostly dispersed, not trail based, recreation.
- There is big and small game hunting, and a lot of water-based activities such as fly fishing, water access, and rafting, as well as scenic driving.

Winter Recreation

- Snowmobiling is very popular, especially at Crystal Spring, Easton.
- Larry: Wenatchee Mountain is popular, there are groomed routes in LT Murray.
- Barry: Cle Elum valley, Crystal Spring sno-park – very popular; Blewett Pass; Taneum and Manastash were all busy this year.

Winter Non-Motorized

- There is some cross country skiing, snow shoeing. Sledding, tubing, winter bikes, wildlife feeding is growing.
- Larry: All dispersed
- Barry: A lot of activity at the Snoqualmie Pass
- State Parks collects user data. FS determined 70% users coming from outside of county.

Facilities

- Larry: One of the draws is the ability to come set up camps
- Mike: Not a lot of facilities. In fall, elk camps are set up everywhere in the forest.
- Barry: FS has 24 campgrounds, 47 – 50 trailheads. Main campground is Kachess, then Salmon La Sac. They get more dispersed camping than in campgrounds.

Enforcement:

- Larry: DNR has 2 officers on 1 million acres and can enforce all laws. Some cooperative user groups do a lot of education to the user group.
- Barry: There 1 officer for the district, and they will get another in 12-18 months.
- Mike: 3 officers in Kittitas County and 3 in Yakima (WDFW officers are on all lands; enforce all laws).

Surrounding Teanaway

- Darcy talked about TNC purchase, including Cle Elum Ridge. There is a lot of shared boundary with the TNC. The TNC has Guiding Principles for activities on their lands, and have land use and access policies. Non-motorized use allowed, and motorized is prohibited on Cle Elum Ridge
- They are partnering with others (including private landowners) on the Town to Teanaway Regional Trail System to develop trails and connect to TCF. In the interim, they are continuing to allow what was allowed before TNC purchase. TNC bought the land for conservation, and the long term plan is to move to other ownership.

TEANAWAY COMMUNITY FOREST RECREATION PLAN



- Barry: Connections to TCF go onto to USFS land.
- The Stafford Creek area gets horseback riding, hunting; lots of dispersed camping. Navaho peak, getting more winter recreation (Snowmobiling).

Winter recreation field trip

Wayne Mohler gave a summary of the winter field trip, complete with campfire logs. Many people hadn't been there in winter. State Parks and Forest Service joined with the AC members, DNR, and WDFW for the day to explore winter recreation. Snowmobile program began in 1972 as is administered by State Parks, with advisory committees. The group did some snowshoeing, snowmobiling and fat tire bicycle riding. Two snowmobilers happened by and joined in and offered their perspective. Out of Twenty-nine Pines, there is snow shoeing, cross country skiing, with a designated area for non-motorized. Snowmobile trails are open to all. Fat tire bikes getting more popular.

Take home messages:

- There is a Voluntary non-motorized system in place on Jungle Creek
- Recreation connections are important; we need to adjust recreation to support wildlife
- Most non-motorized use is on the west side of TCF
- Connections on trails and loops are important to users
- People coming from residences to access the TCF.
- Snow boarders are using snowmobiles to access back country
- Field trips are good – we will have more!

The Next Meeting of the Advisory Committee:

May 11, 2017. This meeting will focus on the Biological Suitability mapping work that has been done. The June 8 meeting will cover Soils, Geology and Management. On July 13, we will pull all the suitability mapping together.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:00 pm.