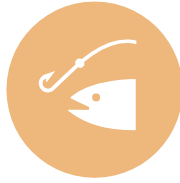




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Recreation  
must be  
consistent with  
forest  
objectives





# Recreation

**Goal: To maintain and where possible expand recreational opportunities consistent with watershed protection, for activities such as hiking, fishing, hunting, horseback riding, camping, birding, and snowmobiling.**

## OVERVIEW

Generations of people have considered the Teanaway to be a special place. Its location in the heart of the state; its gentle terrain and mid-elevation forests; its proximity to the nearby communities of Cle Elum, Roslyn, and Ellensburg; and the availability of an unusually wide range of outdoor recreation opportunities, all contribute to the Teanaway's popularity among local residents and people throughout Washington.

Recreational opportunities abound in the Community Forest. Hikers, mountain bikers and horseback riders flock to the views of the Teanaway valley and its scenic landscape. The area's wildlife and fish draw hunters and anglers as well as photographers, birders and other wildlife watchers. The rivers are a source of enjoyment for kayakers as well as swimmers during the hot summer months. Three campgrounds are busy for much of the year, and groomed trails attract snowmobilers in winter. Several roads and trails in the Community Forest connect to trails in the adjacent Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest, providing opportunities for motorized and non-motorized recreation. The forest and its rivers are very popular day-use destinations for the local community.

Outdoor recreation in the Teanaway and on neighboring public and private lands is also critically important to the region's economy. A January 2015 study conducted by Earth Economics for the state Recreation and Conservation Office concluded that outdoor recreation supports nearly 1,800 jobs and generates \$185 million per year in economic activity in Kittitas County alone. This total includes about \$9.5 million in state and local taxes. The legislative goal

for recreation in the Community Forest reflects the Teanaway's history as a prime recreation area – and its importance as a source of water and fish habitat in the Yakima Basin. Likewise, the Yakima Basin Integrated Water Resource Management Plan (YBIP) recognizes that lands acquired for watershed protection and habitat conservation can support well-managed recreation activities, both motorized and non-motorized. Ultimately, recreation in the Teanaway Community Forest must be consistent with watershed protection and the other forest objectives.

In the past, visitors recreating in the forest took advantage of the 334 miles of roads built for forest management by previous property owners. Use of these roads, which also provided access to the Teanaway backcountry, was controlled by gates, earthen barricades, and berms. Motorcycles have used three multi-use trails in the Community Forest that access USFS lands. Other off-road vehicle (ORV) use was not allowed by the former owners and was prohibited as of early 2015, although unsanctioned ORV use has occurred.

One of the challenges addressed in the management plan is the presence of numerous unapproved, user-made trails that crisscross the Community Forest, sometimes cutting through vital wildlife habitat or running alongside or through streams. Use of such trails - for motorized and some forms of non-motorized recreation - can harm habitat and water quality. Proper trail design and placement will be an important future management activity.



## ADVISORY COMMITTEE INPUT

The Advisory Committee agreed on many of the themes associated with recreational use of the forest, including the need to develop a recreation plan that ensures watershed protection and forest sustainability. Committee members recognize the strong desire in the local community and across the state for recreation opportunities in the Community Forest, and they urged DNR and WDFW to provide opportunities for diverse user groups.

They said recreational opportunities should be:

Developed with the involvement of recreation groups and Advisory Committee members,

- Managed to maximize compatibility among different forms of recreation and to respect private property rights, and

Consistent with watershed protection and the other goals in this plan.



Committee members wanted to see trails developed to scenic locations, public access to rivers, and roads for recreational drivers. The committee also supports preserving winter access for activities such as snowmobiling, snowshoeing, and cross-country skiing.

The Advisory Committee agreed that recreation contributes to the economic vitality of the region; that recreation volunteers can help build and maintain trails and facilities; that facilities like campgrounds should provide a rustic yet pleasant camping experience; and that education and enforcement should be well-coordinated.

However, opinions diverged on the topic of off-road motorized recreation. Many committee members trusted that the recreation planning process

would evaluate whether the forest could sustain such use while still achieving lawmakers' goals for protecting watershed functions and fish and wildlife habitat. Some committee members supported off-road motorcycle use; others believed that any off-road recreational vehicle use would be incompatible with the Community Forest goals; and others felt that all forms of off-road motorized recreation should be permitted, including uses not historically allowed.

The Advisory Committee members agreed more recreation planning is needed. They provided criteria to help guide that effort and recommended that a future plan analyze whether and where motorcycles should be permitted in the forest.



## OBJECTIVES

- Provide opportunities for access and recreational use of the Community Forest consistent with watershed protection and in recognition of the importance of outdoor recreation to the regional economy.
- Provide social benefits through a wide variety of outdoor recreation opportunities, which allow the community to enjoy better mental, physical and societal health.
- Consider social as well as physical and biological factors in determining where recreation should take place within the Community Forest.
- Identify opportunities for partner organizations and volunteers to help develop and maintain recreational facilities and assist with recreation management.
- **Ensure that improvements to campgrounds and other recreation facilities meet users' needs, protect public health and safety, and contribute to achieving other Community Forest goals.**
- Provide a consistent and proactive law enforcement and education presence to ensure forest users understand and follow recreation rules and other forest requirements.

## Agencies and Advisory Committee agree more recreation planning needed

As the two agencies and the Advisory Committee considered recreation management options through the summer and fall of 2014 – and as various recreation interests shared their frequently opposing views – it became clear that additional planning would be required to ensure appropriate and well-managed recreation in the Community Forest.

For that reason, this plan lays out the criteria and process needed for future planning and the objectives and strategies for recreation that will help guide the planning process. Future planning will take advantage of recreation strategies identified during the development of the management plan.

The Teanaway recreation planning process will be different than the standard DNR recreation planning process for several important reasons:

The Legislature provided strong guidance for all land uses in the Teanaway to be consistent with watershed protection.

The recreation plan will need to recognize the role of the Community Forest in helping to achieve the fish restoration and other objectives of the Yakima Basin Integrated Plan.

Recreation planning for the Community Forest has already received significant interest and input from the conservation and recreational user groups that participated in developing the management plan.

The recreation planning committee will be composed of Advisory Committee members and other groups, including Community Forest neighbors, many of whom have already participated in lengthy discussions about recreation in the Community Forest.

While the plan is being developed, recreation in the Community Forest will be guided by the interim rules that have been in effect since May 2014, with one exception: Beginning Jan. 1, 2016, forest visitors will be required to display a valid Discover Pass to recreate in the Community Forest. An education campaign will be conducted before the Discover Pass requirement takes effect. Interim recreation rules are summarized on the DNR website at [www.dnr.wa.gov/teanaway](http://www.dnr.wa.gov/teanaway).

More information about recreation in the Community Forest is available from the DNR Southeast Region office in Ellensburg, 509-925-8510.



## RECREATION

# Strategies & Tools

### Develop a recreation plan for the forest

With input from the Advisory Committee and the public, DNR and WDFW will develop a plan that directs recreation activities and infrastructure development to appropriate areas within the Community Forest.

The plan will be based in large part on an analysis of the suitability of specific areas within the forest for various recreational uses and facilities, which will be displayed on maps that provide a visual foundation for the recreation plan. The suitability criteria described on page 44 will be the starting point for this analysis. The recreation planning process will also review historic recreational uses in the forest, along with past planning efforts, and current forest conditions.

**The recreation plan will emphasize “leave no trace” principles and other guidelines for recreational users that will be designed to maximize recreational opportunities while protecting the Teanaway watershed and ensuring the other goals of the Community Forest are met.**

A recreation planning committee will help the agencies guide the planning effort, and members will offer input and suggestions. Ultimately, the recreation plan will be consistent with the goals of the Community Forest, address environmental responsibilities, and provide for continued public access and safe, sustainable recreational opportunities.

The plan will lay a foundation for the restoration, maintenance, and development of recreation opportunities. Future development of facilities and trails will undergo site-specific analysis and be contingent on the availability of funding. The final recreation plan will be evaluated and revised periodically to ensure compatibility with Teanaway Community Forest goals.

### Evaluate motorcycle use within the recreation planning process

Off-road motorized recreation occurred in the past in what is now the Teanaway Community Forest, when prior landowners allowed snowmobile use and limited access for two-wheeled motorcycles. DNR and WDFW continued this practice when they acquired the property.

As of January 2015, two-wheeled motorcycles within the Community Forest could access three multiple-use trails: the Middle Fork (FS 1393), Yellow Hill (FS 1222), and West Fork (FS 1353), and motorcyclists were required to follow all applicable laws and rules, including prohibitions on closed trails, closed roads, and cross-country travel.





TOP PHOTOGRAPH: ANDREA IMLER / WASHINGTON TRAILS ASSOCIATION. BOTTOM: JASON GLODSTEIN

DNR and WDFW will use the results of a recreation planning process to determine whether the use of two-wheeled motorcycles is appropriate in the Community Forest. All other motorized vehicles – ATVs, ORVs, wheeled all-terrain vehicles, and 4x4s – will continue to be prohibited from trails, closed roads, and cross-country travel.

If the agencies decide motorcycle use is appropriate, the recreation planning process will use the criteria on page 44 to determine where it could occur. Any motorcycle use would be conditioned on an education and self-policing campaign by users; enforcement by WDFW and DNR; and compliance by the motorcycle community. If conditions are not met, or if serious environmental degradation occurs, the agencies would prohibit motorcycle use.

Two-wheeled motorcycle use will be permitted on the three multi-use trails while a recreation plan is being developed, although seasonal restrictions may be needed to prevent environmental damage. The recreation planning process will evaluate the trails to determine current conditions and to establish a baseline for evaluating the impacts of future use. This evaluation also will determine whether the trails should be repaired, relocated, or closed.

The recreation planning committee will encourage broad participation in discussions of motorcycle use and will evaluate motorcycle options in relation to the recreation needs and interests of all user groups, including those of neighboring land owners.

## Provide a sustainable network of safe, enjoyable recreational trails

Designate and build non-motorized trails for hikers, mountain bikers, horseback riders and others that:

- Emphasize scenic destinations and high-quality experiences.

Accommodate multiple skill levels, be designed as loop trails when appropriate, and connect to U.S. Forest Service trails and the regional trail system.

- Provide separate trails for specialized uses as appropriate to enhance users' experiences and safety.

Provide winter trails for snowmobiles, cross-country skiing, and snowshoeing that:

When practical, provide loop routes and connections to regional snowmobile trails.

Are designed, maintained, and, if necessary, relocated to protect water and fish and wildlife.

- Include groomed and un-groomed snowmobile trails and ski trails.
- Include marked, un-groomed trails for cross-country skiing and snowshoeing, with access points that connect to regional snowshoe and cross-country ski trails.

All trail systems will be managed to protect water, fish and wildlife habitat, working lands, and other valued resources. DNR and WDFW, with volunteer help when appropriate, shall work to:

- Restore damaged areas, such as unauthorized trails, and use educational signs or enforcement measures as appropriate.

Upgrade, mitigate for, relocate, or decommission trails and trail segments that are identified in the recreation plan as unsafe or that harm water quality, are difficult to maintain, have highly erodible soils or steep slopes, or cut through sensitive wildlife habitat.

- Inform forest visitors about what they can do to protect the Community Forest environment.

DNR and WDFW will work closely with the USFS, neighboring landowners, local communities, and other neighbors to evaluate and resolve issues such as access, trail use, and enforcement across parcels owned by different organizations.

## Provide recreation opportunities and facilities that are consistent with watershed protection

The recreation plan will guide the efforts of forest managers to:

Evaluate the road system to determine its ability to provide access and meet recreation needs.

Develop new and renovate existing trailheads, including interpretive signs and parking facilities, to ensure recreational access and minimize environmental damage. Where appropriate, new winter parking areas will be established.

- Provide rustic camping experiences while improving existing campgrounds to protect public health and safety, and fish and wildlife habitat. Provide basic amenities such as fire rings and picnic tables. Promote wildlife-friendly camping practices.

Designate day-use areas and trails with parking facilities and interpretive signs for activities such as walk-in fishing, hunting, horseback riding, and river access.

Allow for walk-in/pack-in backcountry camping away from heavily used areas.

- Prohibit camping along county roads and other open roads within the forest.
- Provide opportunities to access the forks of the Teanaway River, and design these river access sites to avoid damage to fish and wildlife habitat.
- Provide recreation access for people with disabilities as required by federal and state laws and consistent with DNR policies and practices for all recreation areas.

Use a permit system for large group activities and events. Considerations will include safety, capacity for participants, staffing needs, sanitation requirements, and the needs and priorities of private property-owners within and adjacent to the forest.

Determine how to manage and, if necessary, limit commercial recreational activities in the forest.

- Provide designated firewood collection areas.
- Manage high-use areas, especially along the river corridor, for public access, safety, and the protection of fish and wildlife habitat.

## Maintain existing partnerships and establish new collaborations between public agencies, user groups, and citizen volunteers

- Partner with volunteer groups and non-profit organizations, community groups, and recreation clubs to educate the public and to maintain and restore the forest.



Develop partnerships with local communities and adjacent public land managers to provide linkages and common messaging for the network of regional trails.

- Support partnerships that involve local schools and youth groups in recreation and environmental education.

Use technology and new media, such as social media, blogs, e-newsletters, websites, email, and citizen science to increase outreach to potential volunteers.

## Establish a consistent enforcement and education presence

Employ an integrated enforcement strategy involving WDFW, DNR, and partner organizations.

- Increase the presence and visibility of law enforcement personnel in the Community Forest.
- Use education, engineering, and enforcement strategies to develop a coordinated approach to enforcement and public education, including federal, state, and local agencies and partner organizations as appropriate.
- Work with local emergency responders to develop an emergency access plan for the community forest, with specific response plans for trailheads and campgrounds.
- Use gates, signs, and maps to create travel routes where natural resource laws, recreation rules, and motor vehicle laws can be readily enforced.
- Establish procedures for forest users to report infractions.
- Provide signs at entrances, trailheads, and day-use areas to inform the public of permitted uses, regulations, fire danger, private land owners, noxious weeds, and safe wildlife encounters.
- Provide signs with historical or environmental information when appropriate.
- Permit the discharge of firearms during lawful hunting seasons. Prohibit target shooting, and prohibit the discharge of firearms within 500 feet of established campgrounds.



## Where should recreation take place in the Community Forest?

The legislation that created the Teanaway Community Forest identified key environmental and economic priorities – including watershed protection, restoration of fish and wildlife habitat, and preservation of forestry and grazing – that will require analysis of the suitability of specific areas for different types of recreation.

DNR and WDFW staff will begin this land suitability analysis by mapping the forest to show attributes that will influence the siting of specific recreational activities. This analysis will include social considerations, such as the interests of neighboring landowners and the availability of recreation opportunities on nearby lands outside the Community Forest.

The presence of specific attributes, such as cliffs or steep slopes, would not automatically disqualify a particular location from being used for recreation, but rather that extra care must be taken to ensure recreation is appropriate and compatible with safety, environmental, visual, and cultural values. The agencies and the recreation planning committee will consider, but are not limited to, the following criteria:

### Maps will identify the following soil and geological conditions:

- Steep, unstable slopes with high potential for landslides
- Highly erosive and compactible soils
- Streams and rivers and 100-year flood plains
- Rock features, including cliffs and bluffs

### Maps will display the following biological elements:

- Stream banks and other riparian areas and buffers
- Wet meadows, wetlands and buffers
- Fish and wildlife habitat, including “habitat connectivity” corridors through which animals move
- The presence of threatened and endangered species
- Natural heritage sites
- Sensitive wildlife areas, such as deer and elk winter range and endangered species habitat.

### Public access points and forest management elements, including:

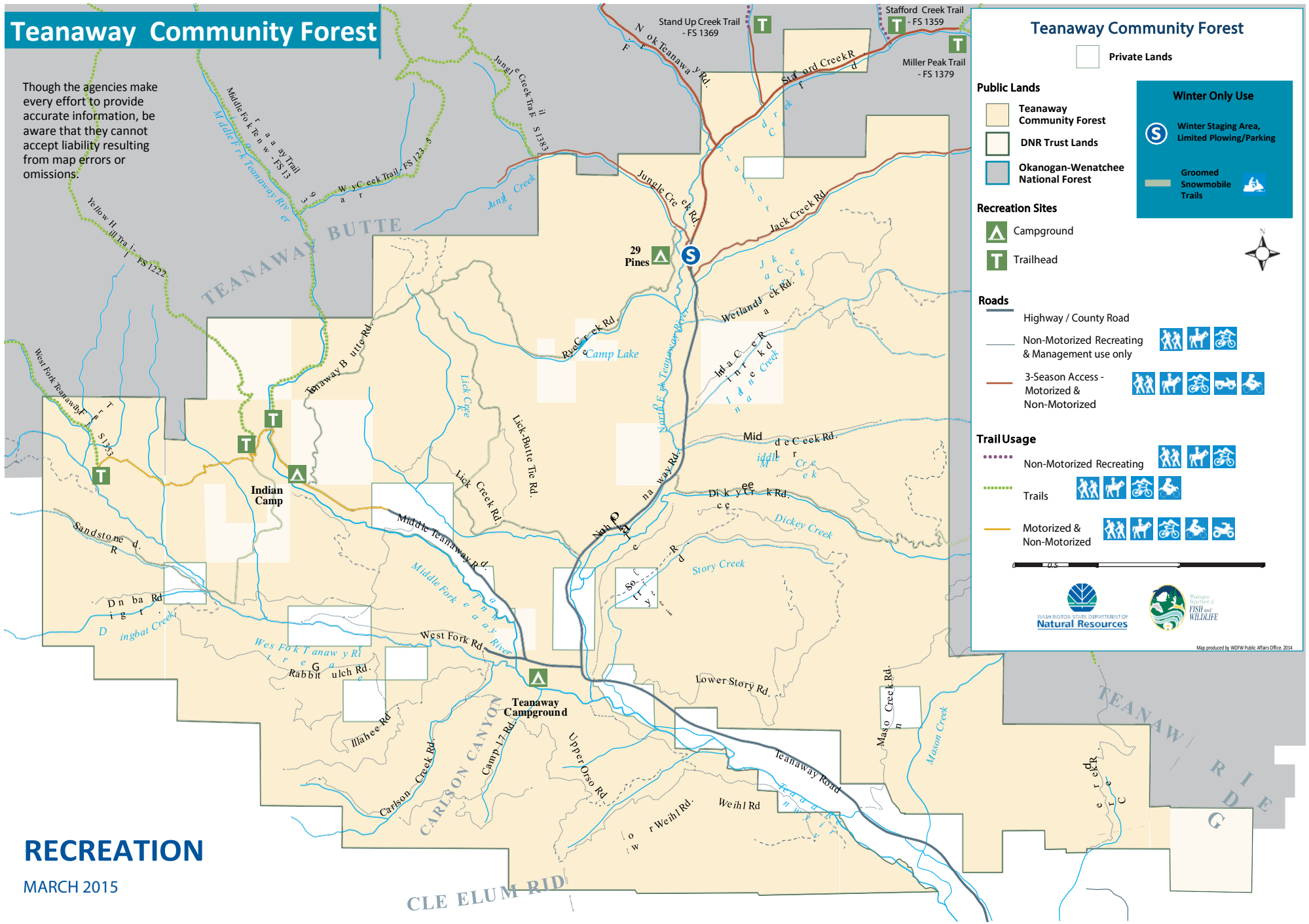
- Public access points
- Private and public property in and around the forest, including easements and rights-of-way
- Water and rock sources
- Locations where noise buffers are required, such as campgrounds and private residences
- Locations where recreation may affect air quality
- Cultural and archaeological resources, such as historic town sites

### Social considerations will also be analyzed, including:

- The availability of recreational opportunities near the Community Forest
- The potential impact of specific activities on adjacent landowners
- The potential for conflicts among user groups, including the displacement of one group by another
- The importance of directing recreation to areas that will not prevent wildlife from moving through the landscape
- The potential for recreational activities to degrade the watershed
- Opportunities for connecting recreational uses to surrounding lands
- Significant recreational assets – sites that are important to the local community – that may not be captured by existing data sources

# Teanaway Community Forest

Though the agencies make every effort to provide accurate information, be aware that they cannot accept liability resulting from map errors or omissions.



## Teanaway Community Forest

**Private Lands**

**Public Lands**

- Teanaway Community Forest
- DNR Trust Lands
- Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest

**Winter Only Use**

- Winter Staging Area, Limited Plowing/Parking
- Groomed Snowmobile Trails

**Recreation Sites**

- Campground
- Trailhead

**Roads**

- Highway / County Road
- Non-Motorized Recreating & Management use only
- 3-Season Access - Motorized & Non-Motorized

**Trail Usage**

- Non-Motorized Recreating
- Trails
- Motorized & Non-Motorized

Map produced by WDFW Public Affairs Office, 2014

## RECREATION

MARCH 2015



# Measuring Performance

## RECREATION PLANNING

### Priority actions

Develop a recreation plan by December 2016, including the following steps:

- a. Identify the project scope, related data needs, and conduct other pre-planning tasks.
- b. Establish the recreation planning committee and determine how to involve interested parties, and the public in the process.
- c. Conduct land suitability analysis and mapping as described on page 44.
- d. Identify and evaluate recreation management options, including factors that could limit access, such as cultural or archeological resources.
- e. Refine recreation options into a recommended plan, with goals, priority actions, and implementation plans and maps.
- f. Conduct analysis required under the State Environmental Policy Act.

Within recreation planning, determine appropriate limits to commercial recreational use of the forest, campground size, and large-event size.

### Performance measures

- Complete a recreation plan by December 2016, including the deliverables described above.
- Complete a prioritized recreation project list, including new facilities and trails, by December 2016.

Upon adoption of the recreation plan, the agencies, with input from the Advisory Committee, shall update these performance measures.



## ENFORCEMENT AND EDUCATION

### Priority actions

- Increase the presence of enforcement officers.
- Develop an emergency access plan.
- Develop maps, handouts, and other educational material for recreation users by April 2016.
- Establish a network of volunteers for restoration, education, and self-policing by April 2016.

### Performance measures

- Number of Community Forest users by type.
- Number of users contacted and educated about recreation.
- Number of volunteer and recreation groups involved in volunteer events, including the number of hours and dollar value of their contributions.
- Number of enforcement contacts regarding natural resource laws, motor vehicle requirements, recreation rules, and other regulations and statutes.

## TRAIL NETWORK

### Priority actions

- Conduct a survey of trail conditions and assess restoration needs by May 2016.
- Develop a work plan for priority projects by December 2016.
- Organize partners and volunteers interested in trail restoration and maintenance by August 2015.

### Performance measures

- Number and length of trail sections improved.
- Number and length of trail sections that are abandoned or improved to enhance compatibility with watershed protection.
- Number and length of new trails added.

## RECREATION INFRASTRUCTURE

### Priority actions

- Identify improvements to campgrounds and other developed areas needed to meet public safety and health and develop a list of priority projects by September 2016.
- Identify roads, trailheads, and other recreational infrastructure needed to improve recreational access by December 2016.

### Performance measures

- Number and dollar value of facility improvements or new facilities completed annually.
- Number of projects completed to improve access to rivers, trails, campgrounds, and other recreational opportunities.

## Develop programs to educate the public about the Teanaway Community Forest.

- Develop the Teanaway Community Forest as a learning center for the social and ecological topics for which it is ideally suited.
  - a. Welcome proposals by groups to provide environmental education opportunities to tell the story of the forest's natural and cultural history, the Yakima Basin Integrated Plan, and the history of the community forest project.
  - b. Welcome proposals by groups to conduct scientific research activities consistent with the goals of the forest.
  - c. Provide education on appropriate recreational uses.
- Support partnerships that involve local schools and youth groups in recreation and environmental education.