



**Morning Star Trail Planning Committee  
Meeting #5 Notes  
June 20, 2017  
6:00 to 9:00 PM**

**Meeting Purpose:** Physical Characteristics of Morningstar - Geology and Riparian, USFS presentation on adjacent lands updates, prioritization of planning objectives and projects, first round.

**DNR Staff in attendance:**

Paul McFarland - Northwest Region Natural Areas Manager, and Morning Star Trail Planning Project Manager  
Barbara Simpson – DNR Parks Planner, Landscape Architect  
Curt Pavola – Natural Areas Program Manager

**Committee in attendance:**

Ken Masel –Washington Trail Blazers  
Matt Perkins - American Alpine Club, WA Climbers Coalition, Cascade Climbers  
Thom Peters – Alpine Lakes Protection Society  
Holly Zox – Morning Star Volunteer Site Steward  
Matt Speten – Morning Star Volunteer Recreation Steward  
Matt Jensen – UWild Adventures Program  
Gary Paull – US Forest Service Wilderness and Trails  
Kathy Johnson –Pilchuck Audubon Society  
Mike Schutt –Snohomish County PUD  
Mike Town –Sierra Club and Friends of Wildsky  
Kim Brown –Washington Trails Association

**Public Guest in attendance:**

Mary Kay Els - Back Country Horsemen

**Approval of Meeting 4:** Approved

**Geology and Riparian Presentations:** Postponed

**Committee Member Presentations:**

**USFS Trails** - Presented by Gary Paull, Wilderness and Trails Program Coordinator, USFS

For slides shown, see presentation document posted. Gary spoke about the Mount Baker Snoqualmie National Forest and gave an overview of the South Fork Stillaguamish Draft EA.



## Morning Star Trails Planning



Question: # trees/acre? Answer: In "prescription"

Question: Intent to open up forest? Answer: Yes so that trees grow larger, quicker.

Question: Once thinned reenter when? Answer: Area is designated Late Successional Reserve under the Northwest Forest Plan, which prohibits most logging in forests over 80 years of age, so probably won't log again.

The increase in use in Morning Star is also happening on USFS lands. 20,000 visitors/year at Heather Lake, more than at Lake Twenty Two. Heather Lake Trailhead: plan is to improve it to eliminate parking on the Pilchuck Road. Cut over of Heather Lake Trail is no longer in plan.

Comment: Still shows up in plan.

Response: Will check into. It is still in the plan. However, many comments received opposing cutting over the trail.

Ashland Lakes, Walt Bailey and Sunrise Mine roads would be affected by thinning project. There will be some reopened, some new, and some decommissioned roads. Roads to recreation sites will be retained.

Road 4021 plan is to upgrade road to passenger vehicle standards. The Sunrise Mine trailhead will be moved back a 1/2 mile and sized for about 75 cars. The new trailhead location has great views.

Walt Bailey trail was built by the CCC and Mountaineers. The trailhead will be moved .98 miles back and sized for about 30 cars with turnaround capability.

No budget exists for either project yet.

Road 4030 has a good viewpoint, level 2 closure.

The trail to Vesper Peak goes through varied ownership. Conversation in future about more unified ownership would be good.

Question: Where is landslide area: Answer: FS trail ends at Headlee Pass - dangerous section.

Question: What plans exist for maintenance? Should the trail be rerouted? Answer: There is nowhere to reroute.

View of Sperry from proposed trailhead.

Question: Regarding the plaque of the climber who died, what is the stand of FS? Answer: We don't do active removal.



## Morning Star Trails Planning



Question Old Bren Mac Mine - is the claim on Federal land? Reponse: The property is not an inholding within the NRCA. It appears to be on Federal land. Physical access may have been through area now within the NRCA. Further research would be required to answer questions about legal access.

Question: How does FS do Road to Trails conversion? DNR decommissions and leaves large holes where culverts are removed. Answer: USFS method will be similar to the lower Lake Serene trail. Or the Granite Lakes Trail in the Mt. Si NRCA.

Question: South Fork research natural areas. Answer: Administratively withdrawn. No timber harvest

Gothic Slide near Monte Cristo just reconnected with new route.

Question: What is status of old route? Answer: It has been gated. Old log crossing is still there. New access route built for Monte Cristo Mine remediation project is to high-clearance standard. Permitted to go through roadless area by Secretary of Agriculture for the purpose of the Monte Cristo project. Next year. Trailhead is accessible. Hordes of people. Gullies are avalanche prone.

Question: Are people still hiking on new route? Answer: No, a lot of up and down and not a good experience.

South Fork Stilly Revegetation EA is in a 30 day comment period. (Passed out copies of scoping letter)

Question: How many acres? Answer: 6000 acres potential logging acreage. Total acreage of area being evaluated about 65,000.

USFS Maps update: Darrington Ranger District map is done and available now. Mount Baker map is at the printers.

### **Trails Planning project and objectives prioritization-Between Categories\***

- Conservation/Restoration 49 points
- Maintenance 47 points
- Interpretation/Education 44 points
- Re-establish Access 42 points
- Access Control 34 points (1 zero)
- Increase Access 23 points
- New Development 10 points (3 zeros)

### **Trails Planning project and objectives prioritization-Within Categories\***

- Conservation/Restoration:
  - Appropriate human waste disposal 20 points
  - Leave large areas without roads or trails 6 points



## Morning Star Trails Planning



- Garbage 5 points
- Alpine conservation 4 points
- Re-route Walt Bailey Trail if better location possible 4 points
- Designate campsites/limit camping to designated 3 points
- Discourage camping in alpine, redirect to lower areas 3 points
- Wildlife 3 points
- Prevent target shooting 3 points
- Pristine environment/resource protection 2 points
- Implement "Leave No Trace" 2 points
- Relocate trails away from sensitive areas/soils 2 points
- Wildness 1 point
- Delete unused campsites 1 point
- Limit new trail development 1 point
- Establish campground where use is high to contain impacts 1 point
- Pit toilets to minimize helicopter, avoid portables
- Close/rehabilitate social trails
- New trails only in NRCS expansion areas, not in existing areas
- No new trails
- Maintenance:
  - Improved trail maintenance 19 points
  - Maintain trails 9 points
  - Repair trails 8 points
  - Repair campsites 6 points
  - Remove infrastructure to cut costs 4 points
  - Maintain campsites 3 points
  - Road maintenance/improvements 2 points
  - Parking 1 point
  - Work with USFS to maintain roads accessing DNR trailheads 1 point
  - Mark trails for summer and winter use
- Interpretation/Education:
  - Use social media to educate "Leave No Trace"; sanitation; management philosophy. Less expensive than signage 11 points
  - Educate public about sensitivity and susceptibility of over-use 11 points
  - Signage about resident wildlife/ecosystems; sanitation 11 points
  - Enforcement 10 points
  - More DNR presence 10 points
- Re-establish access:
  - Reopen Boulder Lake Trail 17 points
  - Improve/restore Bald Mountain Trail end to end 12 points
  - Reopen Twin Falls Lake Trail 11 points



## Morning Star Trails Planning



- Reopen trails that are currently closed 5 points
- Reestablish western access from Spada lake to Sperry/Vesper
- Restore access to Upper Sultan River Basin, Elk Creek, Williamson Creek, and Trail to Copper Lake
- Rebuild trail over Marble Pass
- Reconnect Spada area with Bald Mountain (roads-to-trails)
- Re-open historic trails to/from Spada
- Access Control:
  - Overuse at Gothic Basin 18 points
  - Permit system - especially for sensitive/pristine areas such as Gothic, Cutthroat, Vesper/Sperry and Greider 18 points
  - Limit over use; limit use to level that protects rather than responds to increased demand. Establish/stick to carrying capacity 14 points
- Increase Access:
  - Access to existing rock climbing areas 19 points
  - Loop trails 11 points
  - Static Peak 6 points
  - Fishing opportunities 6 points
  - Paddling (lakes and rivers) 3 points
  - Remote places 2 points
  - Fishing - wild 1 point
  - Hunting 1 point
  - Copper Lake 1 point
  - Winter use
  - New trail access
  - Add new trails in NRCA expansion areas
- New Development:
  - Pit toilet at Gothic Basin 17 points
  - Family friendly hikes 11 points
  - Composting pit toilets 6 points
  - ADA access 4 points
  - Trail to Static Peak 3 points
  - Camping along south side of Spada Lake 2 points
  - Roads to Trails Access to Views 2 points
  - Pit toilet west bench Vesper lake 2 points
  - Yurts 1 point
  - New trails to alpine areas
  - Connection between Mt. Pilchuck/Ashland
  - Trail to Copper Lake
  - Cross country ski/snow parks
  - Trail system interconnections
  - Create more trails
  - Establish routes up Vesper, Gothic, Del Campo



## Morning Star Trails Planning



- Trailhead/trail to Static Peak (sanctioned)

\* The projects and objectives list includes comments from the public survey and public meeting, and committee input.

Prioritization process comments:

- The "New Development" and "Re-establish Access" categories go against the Natural Areas Statewide Management Plan.
- Some of the trails in the "Re-establish Access" categories are still being used.
- Re-establishing access to Twin Falls should be a "0".
- Trails are not priorities in the Natural Areas Statewide Management Plan.
- Recreation is third on the list of priorities in the Statewide Plan. The plan balances conservation and accommodation of use.
- A dilemma in the prioritization exercise was that trails references should have all been in the maintenance category.
- Reopening historic trails is different than reopening Twin Falls trail.
- Reopening trails could help to disperse use.
- Then dispersed use ends up being an issue.
- Maintenance category could include several types of maintenance ie. Boulder and Twin, reopen existing, rebuild historical, and create new (if trail realignment).
- Marble Pass came up from Silverton
- Permits - can't at parking area
- Enchantments - day use has exploded.
- Day runners problem
- Alps doesn't allow runners for same reason.

### July Field Trips:

Question: How many committee members are interested in field trips? Show of hands -  
Response: all. Decision to plan trips to: Ashland Lakes and Boulder/Greider Lakes (and maybe Cutthroat Lakes in August), with one trip on weekday and one trip on weekend. Ashland illustrates permit/regulatory issues ie campsites in wetlands. How can trail that meets standards be built, and what is the education potential? Decision to send out Doodle Polls to decide upon field trip dates.

Question: Is road closed at washout? Answer: Road is abandoned in Natural Area.

**Next Meeting: August 15, 2017, 6:00pm to 8:00pm. Adjourn.**