

**Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR)
Outdoor Access and Responsible Recreation (OARR) Strategic Plan**

**October Virtual Public Meeting Summary
October 29 – 30, 2024**

Meeting Purpose: Two virtual public meetings to introduce the draft OARR Strategic Plan to the public, review how DNR incorporated public input through an early engagement process, and answer questions and hear feedback from the public.

Meeting Dates and Times:

- **Virtual Meeting #1 (Zoom):** Tuesday, October 29 from 5:00-7:00pm
- **Virtual Meeting #2 (Zoom):** Wednesday, October 30 from 10:00am-12:00pm

DNR Welcome & Introductions

Thomas Christian, Triangle Associates facilitator, opened the meeting. He noted the meeting is being broadcast and recorded by TVW. The recording for [October 29 is available here](#) and the recording for [October 30 is available here](#).

Andrea Martin, DNR Statewide Recreation Manager, introduced herself and members of the DNR project team from DNR's Recreation Program. Additionally, she introduced the facilitation and document development team from Triangle Associates (Triangle) and Maul Foster & Alongi (MFA) who supported DNR throughout the planning process.

Thomas reviewed the meeting purpose, agenda, ground rules, and Zoom features for the meeting. Then, he led participants through a warm-up activity, which was to create a word cloud in response to the following question: "What are three words describing why outdoor access is important to you?"

Word clouds from meetings one and two are in Appendix A.

Background Presentation on OARR Strategic Plan & Review of DNR's Proposed Strategies and Actions for Outdoor Access & Recreation Management

For each meeting, Andrea Martin gave a presentation about the background and planning process for the draft OARR Strategic Plan (Strategic Plan). Meeting slides can be found on [DNR's website here](#).

The presentation included an overview of what the Strategic Plan is and is not. Andrea explained that the Strategic Plan identifies goals and strategies for managing outdoor access and recreation on DNR-managed lands statewide, which will provide a management and decision-making framework for future regional and local planning efforts where site specific decisions will be made. It is DNR's first statewide strategy for access and recreation management and includes a framework for how DNR will work with Tribes,

partners, and the public. Andrea also clarified that completing a Strategic Plan is a tool that DNR has used to successfully request statutory changes and additional management funding from the Legislature, which are major needs.

Andrea explained the need for the Strategic Plan, provided a recap of how DNR engaged with Tribes and the public throughout the development of the Strategic Plan, and an explanation of how the Strategic Plan implementation process will be integrated with the State-Tribes Recreation Impacts Initiative (STRII).

Andrea continued by reviewing DNR's six draft goals for the Strategic Plan and its table of contents. Then, she presented an overview of the Strategic Plan structure of the strategy section and reviewed the 15 strategies as well as a selected list of Near-Term and Ongoing Actions.

Afterwards, she invited questions and public comments from participants on the contents of the OARR Strategic Plan.

Questions & Comments on the Strategic Plan

The following is a high-level summary of questions and public comments provided across the two virtual meetings.

Questions

- A participant asked if DNR has any concerns about impacts from the proposed Taylor Shellfish project in Oakland Bay. DNR explained the proposed project would be managed by DNR's Aquatics Program and not the Recreation Program. DNR provided the relevant contact information.
- Participants asked about the locations of target shooting sites on DNR-managed lands. DNR responded that these would be in the Olympic and Northeast Regions.
- When asked how DNR will continue to engage with user groups, DNR pointed to several actions (including piloting a statewide advisory body) under Strategy 3 in the Strategic Plan outlining how DNR hopes to engage with these groups in the future.
- In response to a question about the DNR Recreation Program's funding requests for the next biennium, DNR outlined their \$7.8m request for capital projects, \$8m ongoing to purchase Conservation Corps time, and a \$650k request for staffing to support the STRII.
- When asked if there is a list of partners DNR plans on engaging with in the implementation of the Strategic Plan, DNR noted the term partners is used expansively. Every member of the recreation community who is interested in working with DNR is considered a partner and DNR is actively growing its list of partners.
- When asked about who would be included in the statewide recreation management advisory body listed under Strategy 3 in the Strategic Plan, DNR explained a list of

participants has not been identified yet. DNR anticipates the advisory body would include a broad array of partner groups who support recreation access across the state.

- In response to a question about how the Strategic Plan addresses coordination between land management agencies, DNR explained the Strategic Plan includes strategies and actions designed to help DNR consistently engage with other agencies in decision-making. They added that DNR's Recreation Strategic Plan cannot obligate other agencies to work with DNR.
- A participant asked if there are protocols for identifying recreational users and tracking their activity on DNR-managed lands. DNR noted protocols are not in place, but there are actions in the Strategic Plan to address recreation use numbers and location data gaps.
- When asked how DNR is managing mixed use of DNR-managed lands, DNR noted some landscape plans have zoned areas for different uses such as motorized and non-motorized recreation. DNR has not had the resources to manage all uses and interests, which is something DNR is trying to address through the Strategic Plan.

Public Comments

- Some participants offered minor text edits to the strategies and actions in the Strategic Plan.
- A participant suggested DNR add the strategy and action graphic from the presentation (slide 23) to the Strategic Plan to help readers understand the layout and structure of "Chapter 7: Strategy Design."
- Participants expressed interest in DNR engaging with user group organizations, nonprofits, recreation groups, and outside clubs to provide support with trail work, maintenance, and education. Several representatives from these groups noted they have skilled volunteers ready to help DNR. DNR shared there are several actions aimed at enhancing partnerships with these entities and their volunteers.
- Participants representing Utility Terrain Vehicles (UTV) organizations expressed concerns about how gates to DNR-managed land concentrate UTV users. They noted their organizations look forward to working with DNR to promote compliance and to reduce impacts from unorganized users.
- A participant noted limitations to motorized access could increase the likelihood of unsanctioned trails from users looking for access. They explained motorized user groups assist in education and have volunteers who assist with trail cleanup and maintenance. Additionally, motorized access can be for those who are differently abled physically and could not access outdoor lands without motorized vehicles.
- Participants noted the importance of DNR coordinating with local transportation agencies to improve equitable access and address parking limitations. They suggested DNR add more actions aimed at improving access to transit-dependent people as a part of diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging (DEIB) efforts. One

participant shared that there are policy limitations preventing transit stops on highways, which limits access to areas that would otherwise be accessible.

- A participant suggested DNR graphically link the strategies and actions to specific goals.
- Participants highlighted that many underserved communities are in urban areas and there are underutilized urban State Owned Aquatic Lands which DNR manages, where water access could be improved. One participant suggested adding a map of underserved communities and water access areas to the Strategic Plan, which DNR could use to show how they plan to increase recreation opportunities for these communities.
- Several guide organizations expressed interest in partnering with DNR noting that facilitated recreation programs (e.g. commercial guides, universities, outdoor education programs, etc.) are not mentioned in the plan. They suggested DNR include commercial and non-profit access through guide services and facilitated groups to the Strategic Plan to promote equitable and responsible access – a goal these organizations share with DNR.
- A participant suggested DNR work with partners to educate recreational users about safety and Leave-No-Trace.
- A participant suggested DNR improve reopening trails in a more aesthetically pleasing way after timber harvests.
- Several attendees and representatives from organizations and agencies commended DNR for their work on the Strategic Plan and expressed interest in partnering with DNR to implement it.

Wrap-Up and Review Online Comment Request

Thomas Christian shared that the public comment period launched on October 21, 2024 and will close on November 21, 2024. Public comments should be submitted online via [this survey link](#).

Any further questions can be emailed to OARRPlan@dnr.wa.gov and CC'ed to asweetser@triangleassociates.com.

DNR will consider comments and make appropriate updates if needed before the OARR Strategic Plan is finalized. DNR intends to release the final plan by the end of December 2024.

Andrea Martin thanked all those who participated in the meeting and provided input to improve the draft Strategic Plan.

DNR OARR Project and Facilitation Teams

DNR Project Team

Andrea Martin

Brody Coval

Jayana Marshall

Ben Cooksey

Kristen Ohlson-Kiehn

Sam Hensold

Facilitation Team

Alex Sweetser, Triangle Associates

Claire M, Maul Foster & Alongi

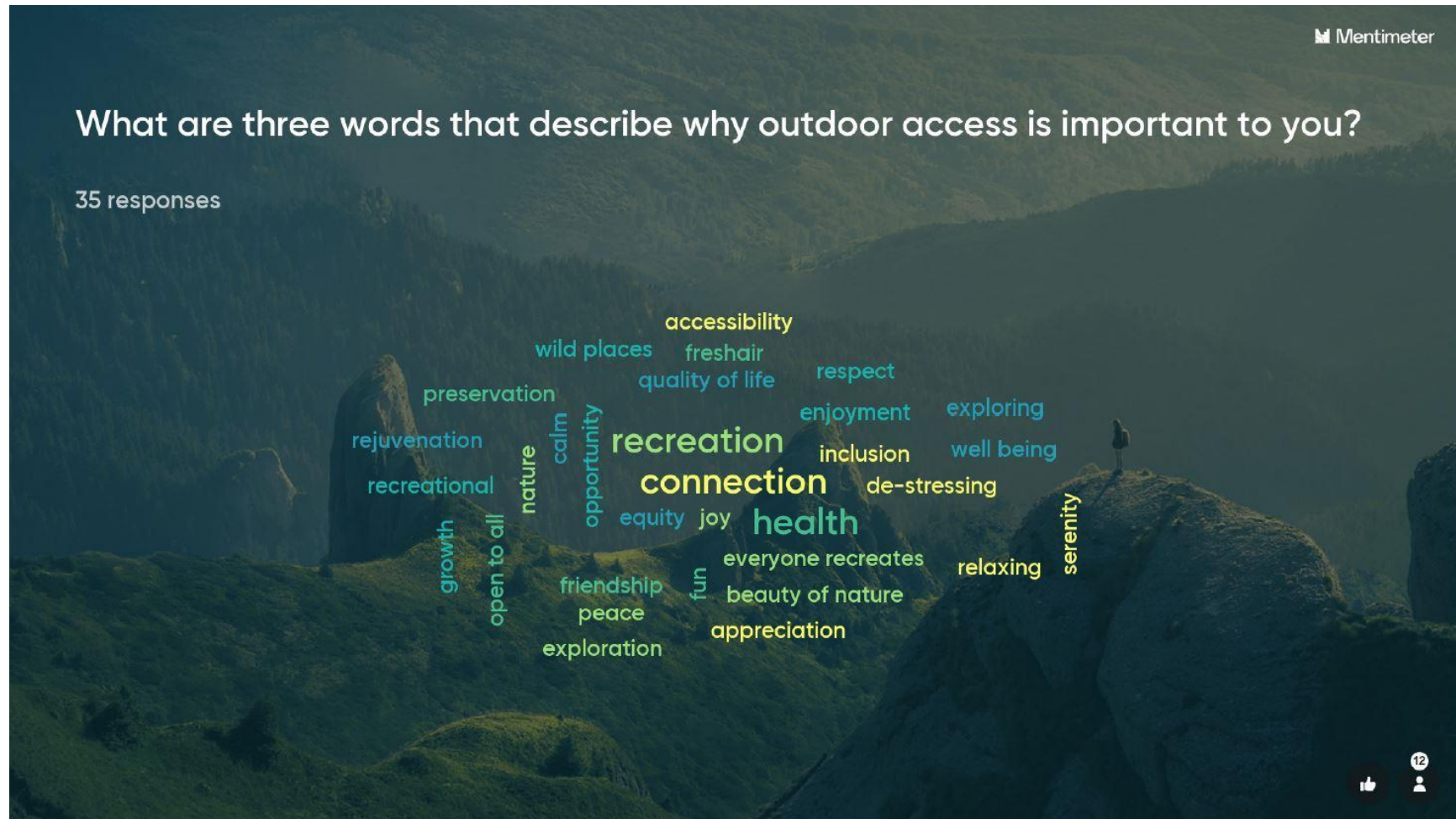
Thomas Christian, Triangle Associates

Katherine Murdock, Maul Foster & Alongi

Appendix A – Word Cloud Warm-Up Responses

The following word clouds were developed through Mentimeter. Word clouds emphasize words or phrases entered repeatedly by a group. Participants could enter up to three responses.

October 29, 2024 Virtual Public Meeting



What are three words that describe why outdoor access is important to you?

65 responses

