



April 12, 2016

**In Attendance:**

*Committee Members*

Ari Bezona

Arlen Bogaards

Bert Isaacson

Bill Lawrence

Dana Johnson

Eric Brown

Eric Jacoby

Glenn Gervais

Chris Whitaker (for Kevin  
Vanderhorst)

Lance Hansen

Becky Peace

Walden Haines

Wendy McDermott

Doug Huddle

Mike McGlenn

*DNR Staff*

Chris Hankey

Brock Milliern

Greg Morrow

Dana Leavitt

Jason Goldstein

Kyle Galloway

Laurie Bergvall

**Review March Minutes:** March 8, 2016 minutes were approved, with one small change to Wendy's involvement regarding the paddling community. Change was made to the minutes.

**Public Comment:** Mushroom club – here representing the mushroom community. Need representation from conservation group. Wendy McDermott represents conservation groups, as does Arlen Bogaards.

**General Housekeeping:** Meeting date second Tuesday of the month. Committee approved the charter by voice vote. Parking lot issues – USFS Road clarification. USFS Recreation Planner will come to a future meeting; Middle Fork of the Nooksack River – ownership lines – aquatic and uplands ownership in the area; Sumas Mountain ORV Plan SEPA – this has been found, need to figure out the relevance of the documents.

**Recreation on DNR Lands:** Brock Milliern, DNR Statewide Recreation Coordinator, gave an overview of DNR's purpose (DNR 101) and DNR's niche in recreation.

- DNR's primary legal responsibility is to manage approximately 3 million acres of trust lands – primarily forest lands on the west side; agriculture, grazing and forest lands on the eastside. These lands are managed for the trust beneficiaries to generate revenue including the counties, schools, universities, and junior taxing districts in the counties. Last biennium we generated approximately \$315 million for the trust beneficiaries.
- DNR is also the state's largest on-call fire department and one of its primary missions is to fight wildland fires.
- DNR also manages 2 million acres of aquatic lands we manage across the state.
- Also manage approximately 750,000 acres of natural areas for conservation, including Cypress Island, Morning Star in the Sultan Basin, and Lake Louise.
- DNR can manage state trust lands for recreation per the Multiple Use Act. This Act states that recreation can occur as long as it is compatible with trust lands management.

**BAKER TO BELLINGHAM RECREATION PLAN**

Washington State Department of Natural Resources

[BakertoBellingham@dnr.wa.gov](mailto:BakertoBellingham@dnr.wa.gov) | [www.dnr.wa.gov/BakertoBellingham](http://www.dnr.wa.gov/BakertoBellingham)

Recreation Planning Committee April 12, 2016

Meeting Notes: FINAL



- There are approximately 1,100 miles of trails on DNR managed lands; there are approximately 2,000 more miles of trails.
- DNR's niche is a trail based system for recreation. Hike, bike, equestrian, motorized, and winterized trail.
- Trail running, mountain bike with fat tire running, and side by side vehicles are emerging uses.
- The history of recreation goes back to hunting and access for sportsmen.
- There are 70 primitive campgrounds on DNR managed lands;
- Water access sites are also part of the system.

Funding projects - It usually takes two years to develop a recreation plan and then we have to go get funding. A couple ways to get the funding:

- One is from a direct appropriation from the legislature through the capital program.
- The other way to get funding is through grants – WWRP grants and gas tax grants (NOVA grants).
- We can also get funding through partnerships.

What fits on the landscape – we are not going to develop trails on all 86,000 acres. The goal is to develop something people will partner with us – both in construction and in maintaining the trails. Looking more for the experience. As part of planning process, a suitability analysis will look at biological, geological, etc. and identify issues; some areas will be eliminated because of these issues.

#### Trust management

- Can't do something that infringes on DNR's ability to harvest timber and generate revenue for the trust beneficiaries. Think about trail development and the timing of trails. Trust must be legally compensated for recreation on managed trust lands.
- A lot of DNR managed lands don't have solidified public access or the road is washed out – this is an issue that comes up and must be considered as we think about recreation development.
- DNR will continue to look at cultural and tribal concerns.
- Two areas we will not deal with in this planning process – North Fork water access and South Fork Park across DNR Lands (been in the works for a very long time – not momentum Brock wants to stop at this time).

**Develop an Understanding for Preparing a Recreation Plan:** Dana Leavitt, DNR Recreation Planner, gave an overview of the major components of a recreation plan.

- Land Suitability Assessment (biological, geological/soil, and management). In the biological layer there are 12 layers for example.
- There is also a user survey that is put online for the public to fill-out.
- The next phase is concept development – bubble diagrams with notes on a map showing.
- From concept development the planning progresses into the preferred alternative phase, where a single alternative is developed that is refinement of the concepts
- The next phase is objectives and strategies – come up with appropriate objectives supported by the strategies.



- The next step is to develop implementation strategies, usually sorted from two to four phases – made up of priorities for funding and ability to accomplish (for example with partners).
- On the DNR website is a list of all the active recreation plans.
- The planning meetings are posted in the DNR recreation Baker to Bellingham webpage. The public can email the [BakertoBellingham@dnr.wa.gov](mailto:BakertoBellingham@dnr.wa.gov) directly for public input.

**Gain an Understanding of Different Units that Make up the Planning Area:** Chris Hankey, Baker District Manager, gave an overview of the landscapes in the recreation planning area.

- Stuart Mountain – Backcountry Horseman lease a trailhead from Whatcom County for a trailhead in this landscape. DNR follows the Lake Whatcom Landscape plan for all activities in the Lake Whatcom planning area – all activities such as timber sales and silviculture go through the Lake Whatcom Interjurisdictional Committee (IJC).
- Park Road – access is through private property – have an active timber sale in this area, do have current ORV and mountain bike activity.
- Van Zandt Dike – major timber sale area – direct access from Mosquito Lake Road – contained road system – very popular with the hunters and mushroom gatherers.
- South Fork Park – East of Mosquito Lake Road – planned trail – with Whatcom County. Middle Fork of the Nooksack – USFS 38 Road – takes you to the USFS to Mt. Baker – a large part of the DNR landscape is Nesting, Roosting, and Foraging habitat managed for the Northern Spotted Owl under the habitat conservation plan, as well as species who need older forest conditions.
- North Fork of the Nooksack – two active timber sales, two more timber sales coming up. Whatcom County wants access into Canyon Lake. Free flight community likes this area. Historic slide area. Large rock pit popular with the shooting community.
- Sumas Mountain – several sales finishing up now. The only public access is off of Highway 542 by the Catholic Church – the Usatilla Access by the North Fork Brewery.
- Red Mountain – rock pit popular with the shooting community, trails, and terrible problem with garbage dumping.
- Black Mountain – gates open for bear hunting. Free flight community uses this area.
- Vedder Mountain – by the Canadian Border – planned timber sale.

Questions for Chris included - How do we get public access in the areas we don't currently have it? That could be one of the high priority strategies that comes out of this process.

**Results of the Community Meetings:** Dana reviewed the results of the community meeting – there are seven pages of comments from the two public meetings. Comments range from local to statewide perspective. Balance of a variety of recreation activities. Comments will be posted on the website next week.

**Small Group Mapping Exercise:** This activity was postponed this evening.



**Field Trip Planning:** Field trip date will be May 14<sup>th</sup> in the North Fork Nooksack area. Meet at the Deming work center – 8-4:30. DNR will provide two vans. The itinerary is being planned out; it will be emailed out to the committee within two weeks.

### Homework Assignment #2:

- 3-4 people from the first homework assignment need to be ready to present what they have learned at the next meeting.
- Homework assignment number 2 will be to address the questions in the packet:
  - What do you most cherish about the lands in the planning area?
  - What are the biggest challenges to be addressed as part of the planning effort?
  - What are the most important goals to be accomplished – what would you like to be able to point to and say – “this is what we accomplished?”
  - As a group what do we need to understand and learn about as we begin making a plan?
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**Parking Lot:** Research the Van Zandt Dike ORV Plan and SEPA report and report back to the committee on the findings.

DRAFT