



Recreation Planning Committee Meeting Notes

May 10, 2016 | 6 to 9 p.m.

Rome Grange Hall, 2821 Mt. Baker Highway, Bellingham

In Attendance:

Committee Members

Ari Bezona	Carole MacDonald	Eric Jacoby	Mark Harding
Arlen Bogaards	Dana Johnson	Glenn Gervais	Mike McGlenn
Bert Isaacson	Doug Huddle	Kevin Vanderhorst	Becky Peace
Bill Lawrence	Eric Brown	Lance Hansen	Walden Haines

DNR Staff

Chris Hankey	Dana Leavitt	Kyle Galloway	Glenn Glover
Brock Milliern	Jason Goldstein	Laurie Bergvall	

Meeting Purpose: To review the land suitability analysis process and specific modules used in the study. In addition, the group will share information on their user group's recreation activities.

Review agenda, questions, and April meeting notes: Questions came up regarding funding, a budget for the recreation plan, keeping the legislature updated on the planning process, about private money and how private agreements work.

April 12th, 2016 meeting notes were approved.

Public Comment: One person - Travis Boyd, expressed concerns over having recreationists (mountain bikers and dirt bikers) coming into forests where they will take areas away that he uses for hunting and such; recreation in general should stay in Bellingham. Also expressed safety concerns for when he drives on the forest roads and encounters people on the roads.

Overview of Land Suitability Assessment: Dana provided the committee with an overview of the land suitability tool, with a focus on the 3 modules – biological, geologic/soils, and management. The committee will spend next month reviewing the geologic/soils suitability assessment, which is being prepared at this time.

Two terms for suitability – low suitability and moderate suitability. The layers are used to map the issues by suitability, then the committee will use this information to make decisions on uses for planning purposes.

The presentation concluded with a brief discussion on how the suitability maps could be applied to existing trails.

Homework Assignment #1 Presentations:

- Lance Hansen, of Upper Skagit ORV Club, made a presentation on ATV use. There is a lot of ATV use throughout the area, with the only legal places being Walker Valley and Reiter (which is too small). Clubs pick

up garbage and does trail work at Reiter. Need somewhere to ride locally; would reduce a lot of the unauthorized trail riding. Some of the planning area already has trails that would suit ATV use.

- Mark Harding – Greater Bellingham Running Club, Cascade Mountain Running Club, Bellingham Trail Running Club – Lack of realization of the amount of DNR land out there – DNR is not really used by runners. If it is built they will come and use it. Presented maps of trails from Strava and Garmin. Usually run in groups of 20 or so runners. Will run on remote, single track trails.
- Mike McGlenn, from Whatcom County Back County Horsemen, (at the end of the meeting) gave an overview on South Fork Park and proposed trail system, which will be a multi-use trail. The Harry Osbourne trail system and Les Hilde Trailhead, are good examples of what the horse groups like to see as far as a trailhead where you can camp with the horse right with the rider. Not a need for things to be over built - gravel surfaces work well for horses.

Group Discussion on Homework Assignment #2:

What do you most cherish about the lands in the planning area? A good discussion followed with some of the points brought up: views, the land itself, solitude, easy access to recreation, beautiful country, once you get three miles away from the trailhead you are away from the people, mountains are very accessible, DNR lands are close by to most of the population of Whatcom County, from the horse standpoint – reliant on DNR and private lands to keep our animals in shape, having the DNR lands to ride on is really important. Calling out specifics like the geology on North Fork, or the cabins and mines are important.

What are the biggest challenges to be addressed as part of the planning effort?

- Being able to fit all the user groups together – compatibility between types of recreations Motorcycles and horses will not be compatible
- Motorized versus non-motorized uses – even within our own groups we have different uses – more in common than our differences – that is what I am going to try to focus on. Give each other respect. I understand that mountain bikes and horses are worse – can't hear each other. I get the sort of spooking the horse thing – challenge is figuring that out.
- Communicating to the public
- Overcoming stigmas. What their use is. There seems to be a big stigma with ATV's – just shut down because we are trashing things – dumping trash –
- There is a big problem with trash dumping on DNR lands
- Creating something that is sufficient for the users, providing a unique area with enough mileage for all types of recreation

What are the most important goals to be able to be accomplished?

- Get something accomplished
- Don't focus on one user group, provide areas for all types of recreation
- Connectivity between areas would be good – Sierra Pacific, Whatcom County Parks
- Hopefully as we keep going forward, setting some things aside, compromise and work together
- Public education at trailheads
- Looking at adjacent properties – use to facilitate visiting DNR lands for recreating

BAKER TO BELLINGHAM RECREATION PLAN
Washington State Department of Natural Resources

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Meeting Notes: FINAL

- There should be stricter enforcement – increase the fines for anything that is not supposed to be going on

As a group what do we need to learn about to start making a plan?

- Need to know about the land itself
- Access that matches what we can do for recreation
- The steps – at least from the 50,000 foot level
- We are all going to find out we agree on more than we disagree – getting a better understanding of what each group actually does.
- How the user group agreements work; private money and how that works; volunteer hours and how that works
- We need to do a good job of educating our user groups, others who aren't engaged, anticipating opposition, and helping others who will oppose but aren't involved in the process
- Have additional community meetings to inform the public about what we're doing

Field Trip Logistics: Reviewed details of upcoming field trip for Saturday, May 14th. Itinerary includes going to Stewart Mountain, Hutchinson Creek, and Olsen Creek.

The meeting adjourned at 8:50 PM.