



Recreation Planning Committee Meeting Notes

June 14, 2016 | 6 to 9 p.m.

Deming Library, Deming

In Attendance

Committee Members

Ari Bezona	Dana Johnson	Kevin Vanderhorst
Arlen Bogaards	Doug Huddle	Mark Harding
Bert Isaacson	Eric Brown	Shawn Lucke for Becky Peace
Bill Lawrence	Eric Jacoby	Walden Haines
Carole MacDonald	Glenn Gervais	Wendy McDermott

DNR Staff

Chris Hankey	Jason Goldstein	Glenn Glover
Kristen Ohlson-Keihn	Kyle Galloway	Greg Morrow
Dana Leavitt	Laurie Bergvall	Brian Bailey

Meeting purpose

Review and discussion of the **Geologic/Soils** land suitability module, learn about DNR’s marbled murrelet strategy, and discuss existing recreation experiences.

Welcome

Jason Goldstein opened the meeting with a review of the agenda and general housekeeping items, which included introductions for DNR staff making presentations (Kristen Ohlson-Keihn for the Marbled Murrelet strategy, Greg Morrow for a geology preview) and approving the meeting notes from the May planning committee meeting.

On-line survey: survey will go live in about a week after the committee reviews the survey content. Staff are still considering how long the survey will be available to the public. Committee observations included:

- Are zip codes going to be captured? (travel time to planning area to recreate will be);
- DNR may want to consider capturing tourism economic information for evaluation;
- Rafting is not on the survey – just boating;
- Dana requested comments in writing.

The 2015 Annual Report is on the DNR website.

Public Comment

Louise Mugar from Mount Baker Experience dropped off her publication and an interest in being part of the planning process.

Check-in on Communications



Dana talked to the planning committee about getting information out to the public:

- DNR's recreation blog
- Social media on our website
- Recreation E-newsletter with approximately 2,000 people

The committee discussed other ideas, which included:

- Think about specific user groups we are trying to communicate to – all of those have different needs and are used to getting information in different ways.
- With the suitability studies coming out, we now have a reason to communicate out to people.
- Need a driver to get them the information – the Bellingham Herald or the Lynden Tribune?

Geologic/Soils Land Suitability Module

Greg Morrow introduced the Geologic/Soils suitability module with a presentation on geology in Whatcom County area. The main talking points were:

- There are two types of rock found within the landscape -Darrington Phyllite and Chuckanut Sandstone
- Glacial History – ice sheets, glacial outwash, glacial drift, and glacial erratics
- Sumas Lobe – gave us farmland in Lynden area of the county

Land Suitability Presentation: Dana first provided the committee with an overview of the geologic/soils suitability assessment accompanied by a presentation. The methodology for mapping the criteria was presented:

- Single track – Mountain bike, equestrian, motorcycle;
- Double track – ATV and 4x4;
- Facilities – campgrounds and trailheads.

Suitability terms were provided:

- Low suitability – areas with long-term limiting factors – these primarily includes areas with potential for landslides, erosion and slope instability;
- Moderate suitability – areas where less mitigation and potential for impact exists compared to low suitability.

The overview also included the individual criteria, the suitability matrix and the composite maps for recreation trails and facilities.

Geologic and soil criteria: The following geologic and soils criteria were reviewed. Dana led the presentation while Greg Morrow helped explain the criteria and answer questions.

- Soils Risk for Recreation
- Poorly drained soils
- Slope percentage
- 100-year flood plain
- Alluvial fans
- Areas that have moved in previous landslides



- Areas with high potential for landslides

Suitability Matrix and Composite Maps: The presentation wrapped up with Dana showing the geologic/soils criteria matrix and composite maps. The composite maps helped in identifying geologic and soils patterns across the planning area and the suitability for potential trail and facility locations. Dana reiterated that this is only one portion of the land suitability assessment; at the end of the process all composite maps will be meshed together (geologic/soils/management, biological) to achieve an end result of a trails composite map and a facilities composite map.

Presentation on DNR's Considerations for Marbled Murrelet Strategy

Kristen Ohlson-Keihn provide information on DNR's efforts to develop a strategy for protecting marbled murrelet and associated habitat. Highlights of the presentation included:

- The Department is preparing an EIS for a marbled murrelet strategy. This would include amending the Department's Habitat Conservation Plan. DNR is working with the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to develop a joint EIS for review at the state and federal level through the SEPA and NEPA processes. The decision maker is the Board of Natural Resources (BNR), which will decide the alternative that will be submitted to the USFWS.
- There are 6 alternatives – they mainly differ in terms of quantity of conservation, and location of conservation.
 - Alternative A – No action
 - Alternative B – Protect existing occupied sites
 - Alternative C – occupied sites, buffers, emphasis areas, specific habitat areas
 - Alternative D – occupied sites, buffers, special habitat areas
 - Alternative E – combination of C&D
 - Alternative F – occupied sites, buffers, marbled murrelet management areas
- A Draft EIS will be made public this fall with the Final EIS completed by the end of 2017. The BNR will then approve a conservation strategy, USFWS will conduct a biological opinion, findings and record of decision, and the BNR will adopt a conservation strategy.
- Marbled Murrelet Long Term Conservation Strategy has a longer timeline than the Baker to Bellingham planning process; the committee should comment through public comment periods and the Board of Natural Resources.

Committee Member Recreation Presentations

Kevin Vanderhorst of the Rainier Ridge Rams 4x4, presented a brief slideshow on the group and what they do. The group actively supports DNR at Walker Valley ORV Park with 250 plus volunteers hours annually for M&O, 100 hours annually for E&E, and the Hefty Haul Out (2500 pounds of trash and recyclables collected and removed from trails). They also have a food drive that collected 360 pounds food last year.

Kevin pointed out that currently there is no legal ORV access in Whatcom County; that Walker Valley is over-used and abused and Reiter is small and has limited capacity. He concluded his presentation by summarizing what the club would like from the recreation plan:

- All users should have access for recreation on public lands, multi-use for motorized, separate from non-motorized



- 25+ miles of trail (possibly one ingress/egress with offshoots)
- Integration of existing logging roads, solely for maintenance /bugout usage – not counted as “trail miles”
- Ideally a unique ORV area
- Hosting special events (poker runs, charity events, etc.)
- Camping access for overnight events

Field Trip #2: Logistics for the June 25th field trip were discussed and potential units of the planning area were identified (Red Mountain, Sumas, Van Zandt Dike).

The meeting was adjourned at 8:55. Thank you to all those who helped restore the library room to the pre-meeting condition.