



RECREATIONAL TRAILS POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING

December 17, 2014 | 12:00 pm to 3 pm
USFS Issaquah Ranger Station- North Bend Office
Meeting Summary

Attendees

DNR Staff

Brock Milliern
Doug McClelland

Cyndi Comfort
Eryn Akers

Public Committee Members

Jim Anderson
Ed Tenney
Glenn Glover
Jennifer Reandeau
Jon Knechtel
Eric Brown

Donna Ruelas Semasko
Scott Tucker
Steve Davies
Dave Hiatt
Kevin Hancock
Mike Ames

LeeAnne Nawrot
Spencer King
Andrea Imler
Karl Forsgaard (late arrival)

Meeting welcome

- Staff introduced themselves and reviewed the meeting agenda
- Committee members introduced themselves

Importance of the Committee

- Each committee member received a copy of the Ground Rules and the Committee Charter. Additionally, a copy with signature lines was passed around for committee members to sign, indicating their agreement with the Ground Rules and Charter.
- The Charter is intended to explain the roles, responsibilities and commitments of the Recreational Trails Policy Committee.
- The Ground Rules are intended to provide operating guidelines for the committee and DNR staff.

Two modifications were suggested and agreed upon:

- In the Ground Rules, for alternate committee person each committee member can identify an alternate person to attend meetings for them when they aren't able to. This person can't vote when they're just filling in temporarily, but they can vote if they fill in permanently. The language about alternates was scratched out on the signature copy and



DNR staff will write up new language reflecting the change and email it out for electronic confirmation.

- A DNR staff person will take meeting minutes and provide a written summary of the meeting to the committee in advance of the next meeting.

DNR Presentation

- A PowerPoint* presentation was given to the committee to give a more in-depth background to the committee regarding:
 - DNR's trust land and natural areas management responsibilities
 - Recreation's role in relationship to DNR's management responsibilities
 - ESHB 2151 review and policy requirements

(*The Power Point will be posted on the Recreational Trails Policy webpage on the DNR website.)

Question/Clarifications

The committee had several questions for DNR staff and there was some discussion about the following:

- There were questions about Washington's Forest Practices rules and the need to understand them in context of the policy. DNR staff shared that forest practices don't govern recreational trails. The Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP), federal laws such as the Clean Water Act, WDFW's Hydraulic Project Approvals for stream crossings (HPAs), and county permits (for bridges, trailheads, etc.) have the strongest influence on recreation on DNR-managed lands.
- Permitting differs in the 39 counties and there is intention to find efficiencies with counties wherever possible.
- There were questions about whether or not DNR already has a template of the policy from which to work. DNR staff shared that there has been nothing written towards the policy. DNR staff envision the role of this committee process is for the Committee and DNR staff to work jointly to discuss options and develop recommendations.
- Committee members asked DNR staff if there are topics that they feel need to be in the policy and if so could they share them early in the process?
- DNR staff shared that they anticipate there will be some discussion in the policy to clarify recreation and the role of trust and natural areas management, both for internal and external clarification.
- Committee members shared they believe that user groups across the state could help amplify this message.
- Committee members also shared that there might be examples of policies from other states that would provide some great ideas. Central Oregon was given as an example.



Committee Issue Forum

The committee had been asked prior to the meeting to think about their top trail topic and share with the group at the meeting. The intent was to get people thinking about topics to be discussed as potential policy items, and could include:

- Concern/issues
- Question to be answered
- Something DNR is doing really well that should be continued

Each committee member shared their idea and then ideas were summarized and captured on 11"x17" pieces of paper and taped to the wall. After each committee member had shared, the committee and DNR staff sorted the papers into groups of common themes.

The following ideas and groups emerged:

- **Group 1:**
 - Safety rules
 - Security (personal, maintenance, pollution)
 - Site specific education for users and land managers
 - Education about less common trail uses
- **Group 2:**
 - Single use and multi-use trails
 - Design trails with user groups in mind
 - Volunteers and trail maintenance
- **Group 3:**
 - Consistent process for new trails
 - Consistency for trail development and authorization
 - Appeal process
- **Group 4:**
 - Communication between DNR, regions, and user groups
 - More DNR presence at user group meetings
 - More advance notifications of trail closures – communication between DNR and users about what is happening in the forest.
 - Engage users with trail design and development
- **Group 5:**
 - Standards should not exceed forest practices
 - Streamline development for motorized and non-motorized trails to make both processes equitable
- **General:**
 - Consistent direction that supports quality recreation for all uses
 - Resources to support recreation



Additional questions and discussion included:

- Committee member asked if DNR values recreation or simply tolerates it.
- DNR staff shared that DNR leadership values and prioritizes recreation and recognizes that recreation is important to the public and how the majority of people relate to the agency. The recent update to the Strategic Plan (2014-2017) for the agency included the goal: “Ensure opportunities for sustainable recreation and appropriate use of state lands.”
- There was additional committee input that working forests should be a topic of outreach and that user groups are the best public relations machine. With the right communication people can be proud that they get to recreate on DNR-managed lands and understand the opportunities exist because of working forests.
- There was discussion about the importance of volunteer groups and how they are critical to supplement maintenance on many DNR-managed lands.
- Committee members suggested that many people are willing to volunteer to assist in areas where they most often recreate.
- Committee members suggested if multiple user groups were able to partner together possibly more could be maintained.
- Committee members commented that they’d like to see more education and engagement from DNR with user groups. Comments said this could be done through tabling, engaging forums, and connecting with recreation-minded businesses.

Wrap-Up

Take-home messages:

DNR staff asked if people would like to share any “take-home” messages they got from the meeting. Comments included:

- There was more commonalities than differences among the committee members.
- Members were impressed with the positivity and openness among the group and how they were happy to see people engaging in a positive way.
- There needs to be a high value on resources and environmental protection.

Homework:

- Committee members were asked to email the topics, issues, questions, or important items they would like included in the policy discussion that hadn’t been covered in the meeting. DNR staff will send an email reminding the committee to please send their list in several weeks prior to the next meeting to give staff time to consolidate the information.
- DNR staff will send out a Doodle Poll before Dec. 24th to help schedule the next meeting in the second half of January.



- DNR staff will also send out a spreadsheet to the committee with each committee member's contact information.

Next meeting:

- Committee members also discussed, and the majority agreed, that the next meeting would be in the same location (North Bend) and that the meeting should be longer since for many of them the drive was longer than the meeting. Many committee members thought there was value in meeting face to face instead of phone meetings and wanted to continue in person meetings whenever possible.
- It was decided that the next meeting would be from 10 am to 3 pm and be a working lunch.

Public Comments:

- The public was given the opportunity at the end of the meeting to share comments:
 - A suggestion that DNR develop a timeline that shows the evolution of recreation, which could include important laws and policy-related documents.
 - A suggestion that DNR could look into financing ORV opportunities similar to some that Oregon uses: ORV tab money, day-use fees, and camping fees.
 - Also a comment about target shooting concerns in trail areas and perhaps designating target shooting areas.
 - Another comment about DNR needing to better help its user groups with the ability to use grant funding.