

Southern Willamette Forest Collaborative
MFRD Recreation Workshop

Friday, April 27th, 9:00 – 1:00 PM, Middle Fork Ranger District
“Coming together for healthy forests and communities”

Participants: Derrick B, ATCA; Aimee G, City of Eugene; Jim C, Rick Z, City of Oakridge; Chris B, Cog Wild; Ethan, Emerald Trail Riders; Lyndell W, High Cascades & Obsidians; Clinton B, Long Tom Watershed; Audrey, MF Willamette Watershed; West L, Northwest Overland; John O, Valley Powersports; Chris Y, ODFW; Becky H, Oregon Backcountry Horseman; Ed B, Oregon Equestrian Trails; Mile L, Oregon Parks; Janine B, OSMB; Bill C, Pacific Trail Crew; Natalie I, Travel Lane Co; Dawn H, Westfir Lodge; Terry K, Willamette Backcountry Ski Patrol; Rick T, Willamette Pass; Thalia L, Westfir City Council; Loren Hogue, Susan O-K, Paula H, SWFC Steering Committee; Jen S, Omero T, Willamette NF; Brett B, Brian M, Kevin R, Middle Fork RD
Facilitators: Sarah A-P; David K

Intro to SWFC; Intro to Forest Service

Intro to SWFC

- see PPT

USFS intro

- See PPT
- How does wilderness act affect mgmt. of forests?
 - o It set aside blocks of land, untrammled. Affects management via specific of rules agency must follow.
- Resources for FS history? A good resource is the video The Greatest Good and the book The Big Burn. <http://www.forestryvideos.net/videos/greatestgood/>
 - o Who managements wilderness? Several agencies, NPS, BLM, USFS

Sustainable Recreation Strategy

- See PPT
- Agency 100+years. Recreation focus after WW2.
- More recreation= more infrastructure= more money needed to maintained. We compete internally for funding, etc.

Decision space

- The Forest Service retains all decision-making authority but welcomes input from stakeholders.
- Asking for input to help agency right size its delivery of things it can offer the public, add/tweak, etc. and explore how to invoke change that follows a sustainable recreation model.
 - o No promises being made for implementation, hoping to create opportunity for synergy among variety of user groups.
 - o Traditional model is responding to individual group with great idea... if can make happen we will especially if the partner can help with implementation.
 - o In this group, we're asking all to work together to vet these ideas to determine synergy, commonality, use opportunity as sounding board for possibilities.
 - o This is an inclusion exercise... bring in all thoughts, ideas. This process is a great venue to embark on that.

Brainstorming Activity

The following tables and notes are from the brainstorm sessions around the question: *What is the current state and desired condition for the following recreation activities on the Middle Fork Ranger District?*

WATER

Current Condition	Desired Condition
North Fork River Put-Ins: limited parking off the road	Create bump outs at put-ins and take-outs
Hampton Boat Ramp: short for reservoir levels	Establish a longer boat ramp
Lower North Fork: Sanitation services non-existent (spring and winter)	Place port-a-potties at key put-ins and take-outs
North Fork information signage: not well maintained (incline to George)	Invest in better signage and maintenance
North Fork Trail above Kiahanie lacks signage	Invest in better signage and maintenance
Sanitation issues at numerous locations	Seasonal placement of port-a-potties or vault toilet
Gold Lake boat launch: restricted parking	Expand parking for boaters
North Fork Access: prohibition of commercial outfitters	Evaluate this management direction to meet need

Water group report out

- North fork example location
 - o Current conditions- issues with access, sanitation, signage, commercial use
 - Put in locations, parking at each, access in other locations
 - o Desired- better mapping/signage, use technology
 - o Opportunities to allow commercial permits?
 - o Other locations with opportunities? Yes...
 - o Communication of hazards...Janine Belleque- OR Marine board will post if provided the info
 - o Further discussion needed on conflicts between user/ecology conflicts (ie wood placement). Perhaps more perceived conflict
 - o USFS does not clear river channels for river running... state may address big issues, but on policy (not capacity) USFS does not address these
 - o Potential fishing conflicts... minimal discussion. Again difference between conflict and incompatibility. Perceived verses real conflict.
 - o Mining use? Commercial mining is minimal in tributaries, none in main channels

SNOW

Current Condition	Desired Condition
Gold lake snow park shelter: in deteriorating condition (i.e. shutters, concrete, caulking)	Partnerships for maintenance: Willamette Backcountry ski patrol and High Cascades forest volunteers are willing to do work but need funding and Forest Service help and backup
Seven snow shelters need maintenance	<i>See above</i>
Unmarked trails: users get lost	Trails that are well marked w/ diamonds
Trails need maintenance	Summer mountain bikers at Willamette Pass clear trails and benefit winter users
SNOW: Low snow years lead to not enough snow for Willamette Pass to open in summer	Willamette Pass rebuild mountain bike trails
Willamette Pass: trees need to be cleared from runs and thinned from forest to make operations viable during low snow years	Funding to thin trees, clear runs and remove trees <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Pass can thin rebuild mountain bike trails • The Watershed Council could use trees for stream restoration projects for habitat improvements Build West Peak Lift
User Conflicts: Willamette Pass & Cross Country Skiers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • XC skiers are only allowed on certain WP trails but often use others • No similar issues w/ snowmobiles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Snowshoe and ski groups would like access at Willamette Pass after hours, WP will follow up • More signage needed to ID go/ no go areas

Snow group report out

- No known user conflicts within this group
- Shelters/structures
 - o Volunteer groups help maintain, need USFS aid (money, training, expertise, etc)
 - o Trails unmarked/maintained in winter- safety concern- better marked trails, more diamonds, better signage, collaboration between volunteer groups and others to support,
 - o More snow! Willamette pass needs winter income to open in summer... to operate in low snow trees need to be cleared form runs. Small diameter trees cleared, will pass needs collaboration to get this done (USFS). Collaboration with watershed council... transporting trees to creeks needing restoration.
 - o Signage is different in wilderness, less obtrusive=less helpful. Use personal responsibility
 - o Education- better signage at origination points. Not clear, widely known what is allowed where regarding motorized vs nonmotorized. State sno-parks do this well currently?

TRAILS

Current Conditions	Desired Conditions
Goodman Creek: wear from winter use	Better drainage; evaluate usage (e.g. bikes only in summer)
Trail Work Backlog – lots of work needed and not enough resources	Increased resource dedication, fund dedicated non-FS trail crew
Upper Willamette Trails: need maintenance	Better maintenance and signage of upper Willamette trails
Not all trails designed well (i.e. Goodman creek)	Reroute and rebuild to modern trail designs and best practices
Many Legacy trails	Improve historic and legacy trails
Wilderness: some trails have too many users to accommodate	Consider needs of all users/ groups and distribute users equitably
Not everyone educated about all the uses of trails and where they are best utilized and can create safety issues	Better communication and education to improve safety for all trail users
No connectivity across the district	Improve connectivity between the Districts/ forests/ communities
Current infrastructure isn't up to specifications (i.e. bridges, etc.)	Improve trail infrastructure and complete deferred maintained
Increasing trail users of all types	Meet the need of all trail users in a sustainable way as well as supporting facilities (rest stops, restaurants, hotels and campgrounds)
Trail maintenance falls to the mountain biking community	Involve more user groups
No central information hub	Need for a Ride Center
Limited motorized trail opportunities	Increased mileage and loop opportunities for trail motorbikes
North Fork trail has bits and pieces	Connect all of the North Fork Trail
No Mountain Bike Ride Center	Create a Ride Center <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid some trails due to possible Mtn bike interactions •
Equestrian users avoid some trails due to dangerous bridges or wet areas	
Closed trails	Re-open closed trails
Perceived conflicts between user groups	Conflicts between mountain bikes are at a low level

Trail conflicts caused by speed difference of different user groups	Designate some trails as fast and slow user trails Eliminate Blind corners on certain trails because of different speeds of users.
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Trails Group Report out

- Lots of user groups that were all communicating!
- Communicate opportunities to participate in trail maintenance
- We are not doing a good job of tracking trail use

Issues with trash, KV dollars used to address. Possible USFS participation in “junk amnesty” days in Oakridge, USFS is looking at dispersed camping closures as a way to mitigate these issues.

TOURING

The Touring group made the following table but the group was unable to finish it due to time limit – (the table may be useful to consider at a future meeting)

Scale 1 = need met, 2 = some need met, 3 = need not being met

User group	Accessibility	Connectivity	Infrastructure support	Availability of Services	Jurisdictional challenges
Driving	1	1	2	3	1
Equestrian					
Hiking	3		2		
Bikes					
• Mtn					
• Gravel					
• Road					
• Ebike					
Motorized	3				
• Quads					
• Jeeps					
• Motorcycles					
• Side by Side					
Water					
• Canoe	• 3				
• Kyack	• 3				
• SUP	• 3				
• Motorboat	• 1				
• Fishing	• 3				

Touring group report out

- Needed to define what touring meant... applies to several recreation types. What are the issues and how critical was each issue related to each recreation type
- Could be workshop within itself
- Rd19 example- driving needs are different from others
- Getting there is half the fun-- might take the long way. Journey vs destination
- Add snow spots, commercial (shuttles)
- Future thoughts- geographic areas set aside for specific types of recreation (designated areas), even from a destination marketing perspective only.
- Be cognizant of jurisdictional issues

Wrap Up

Reoccurring Themes from the day

- The group discussed the gap that exists between the “need” and what exists and this is where there is an opportunity to bring partners together and identify the gap. The following themes came up repeatedly in topic areas and general discussion:
 - o Education
 - o Infrastructure
 - o Support services
 - o Connectivity for types of uses
 - o Collaboration between users and agencies
- General discussion
 - o Recreation types... the same questions applied to each recreation type will provide different answers... moving and evolving target and method to get somewhere on this effort.
 - o Trails has many silos. Ex/ mtn biking needs more help maintaining trails and ride center that is more inclusive. Mitigate user conflicts by allowing for transport and recreating in same areas. Tons of complex discussion needed, each user group needs space to vet their ideas out individually first.
 - o Education- info and communication electronically.... People are looking for info at off hours, not on site. Meet people where they are.
 - o Consider mass letters to representatives to demonstrate need... need structure to organize these efforts.
 - o Intra communication- who is working where? HCFV efforts hopefully address this
 - o Creative funding pursuits/proposals
 - o Implementation plans verses visionary plans...
 - o Importance of external coordination of efforts.
 - o Possibility of external support for NEPA? Funding and labor are possibilities, how increase the capacity to tackle things?
 - o How realistic is development of a BIG plan? How to create a sustainable rec strategy for one component first to get some momentum going. Small bite approach might be best?

Takeaways:

- Lots of future opportunity for collaborative engagement around this topic.
- Economic data- outdoor industry
 - o Engaging with one another is key- whole greater than sum of parts
- Volunteer strategy effort underway to help address many of the things brought up today, hopefully establish hub partner organization to assist with volunteer and sustainable recreation issues
- USFS can be a facilitator and participant instead of a leader.... The collaborative effort and recognition of collaborative responsibility is critical. Importance of unbiased facilitator.
- Recreation does have ties to restoration. Recreation directly impacts watersheds.
- Collaborative can host as long as there is commitment from the group.