Community Recreation Strategy Project: Supplemental Materials

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April 7, 2020

To	Bethany Steiner, Project Director
From	Leslie Harka, Project Assistant
SUBJECT	**OAKRIDGE INTERVIEWS SUMMARY**

OVERVIEW

This memo summarizes the main findings from interviews with project stakeholders affiliated with the Oakridge community. To date, the Community Recreation Strategy team has completed 15 interviews, conducted during February 2020. Participants represented a wide range of backgrounds, including Oakridge government staff, regional planners, local recreation outfitters, community members, and nonprofit organizations working in tourism and natural resource protection. Interviews were administered via phone using a standardized interview guide (see Appendix for a complete list of interview questions).

The interview questions explored 4 topics related to recreation planning: identifying solutions to boost Oakridge's recreation economy, improving community engagement, addressing funding barriers, and assessing participant experiences regarding interactions with Forest Service staff.

From these topics, participants listed the following as significant challenges[1] hindering successful implementation of recreation projects:

(1) **Community division over recreation focus:** Due to different values and goals across user groups, the community is currently polarized regarding the recreation brand for the town. The community and City of Oakridge need to create consensus promoting all types of activities and the image of the town to promote a sustainable economy.

(2) **Local resources are stretched thin:** A significant amount of work is consistently undertaken by a small group of committed community members and businesses–all of which have limited time and resources. As a result, it has been hard to keep momentum going for recreation planning.

(3) **Lack of funding for recreation planning:** Planning for projects is consistently underfunded. However, finding ways to increase funding for recreation planning requires hiring dedicated staff who can coordinate planning efforts and outline strategies for successful completion. This represents funding issues on both sides–funding staff and securing grants to increase overall funding for recreation planning.

(4) **Lack of recreation access:** Oakridge lacks visitor infrastructure, such as appropriate signage and connectivity to help visitors get to and from recreation areas.

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[1] See Table 1 in the Appendix for the number of participant mentions for each challenge.

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(5) Limited amenities services: Oakridge has limited attractive amenities that encourage visitors to stop and stay. Visitors are challenged with finding convenient, accessible places to stay and eat.

(6) Limited marketing for local events and activities: Marketing is a big opportunity and could bring significant economic gains for the number of public events and recreational options in Oakridge.

NEEDS

As a consequence of the challenges identified above, participants indicated five needs that Oakridge must address to enhance the overall recreation planning and economic growth for the area.[2] They are summarized as follows:

1. Improve community engagement and build consensus for recreation focus and brand
2. Increase funding for recreation planning and maximize local resources
3. Improve recreation access
4. Diversify amenities services
5. Increase marketing for public events and recreational options to capture new visitors

SUGGESTED SOLUTIONS

For each of these needs, participants offered a number of possible solutions. The following summary outlines specific suggestions to address each need from the four categories.

1. Improve Community Engagement and Build Consensus for Recreation Focus and Brand

By and large, interviewees reported that creating an open, inclusive forum for engagement is a top priority to help community members find common ground and bring more people to the table. Participants offered a number of suggestions to help bring the community together and better promote a positive image of Oakridge based on common interests. They reported the following:

Outreach Strategies

- Workshops and recruitment via social media were viewed as a strong forum model.
- Social events sponsored by the Oakridge Chamber of Commerce were reported as popular and another way to facilitate useful conversations.
- RAIN was cited as a good outreach model. Their community events in Oakridge are well attended, with outreach occurring via emails, notifications, Facebook events, and posting on all of the local community groups. They also rotate public events through different local businesses.

Engagement Frameworks

- Conversations should be structured to facilitate communicating across the different perceptions of Oakridge (i.e., "ghost town" and "up-and-coming" viewpoints).
- Encourage discussions which reframe growth into positives, such as new services offered to community members.

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[2] See Table 2 in the Appendix for the number of participant mentions for each need.

- Coming up with a plan: Set attainable goals and coordinate with everybody who wants to be involved. Then, bring people into categories or projects that reflect their interests. This will set collaborative efforts up for success by helping brainstorm tasks that can be delegated and completed.
- For students, educate them about the wide range of community involvement options to help broaden the ways in which they participate.
- Use inclusive language in recreation planning materials that represents all user groups and political affiliations.

One respondent actively engaged in rural community building efforts offered three tips as general good practices for successful organization of public engagement meetings:

Tip #1: Make the forum some version of a celebration with food involved. Providing stakeholders with another reason to come out is good press.

Tip #2: Always have a local agency be the top billing. Local ownership of this work is going to improve the quality and durability of the input. The local group can own the purpose for the event and then introduce someone as a trusted partner.

Tip #3: Identify 3-5 people early on who show strong interest in projects. Then invite them to get together to figure out how to structure any community engagement sessions.

2. Increase Funding for Recreation Planning and Maximize Local Resources

To meet financial needs to adequately coordinate recreation planning efforts, strategies, and minimize burnout, the following solutions were suggested:

- Hire dedicated staff focused on grant writing to obtain funding and secure partnerships supporting initiatives related to creating a recreation economy. This staff member could be hired by the City of Oakridge or a committed community organization.
- Consider private philanthropy options. One participant mentioned that this route may be more of a hook than public funding grants. This involves making a case to a small group of committed donors to support community improvements. Stakeholders were encouraged to reach out to nonprofit consultants as resources to help the community identify private philanthropy opportunities.
- Promote volunteerism: Identify ways to increase visitor stewardship and support of community resources.

3. Improve Recreation Access

To improve recreation access for visitors, interviewees indicated the following areas of importance:

- Enhance transportation between communities (i.e., Oakridge to Eugene/Springfield) and forest recreation opportunities.

● Wayfinding: Implement Oakridge's Wayfinding Plan[3] (currently stuck at the funding stage)

4. Diversify Amenity Services

To promote a visitor recreation economy and establish itself as a thriving recreation hub, Oakridge needs to improve visitor interactions with the community. Specific suggestions to address this included:

● Diversify amenity services (such as improving access to recreation equipment, lodging, boutiques, and restaurants),
● Create amenities for through-mountain bikers. Oakridge is a gateway community for this sport and can better attract people with showers, internet, laundry, etc.
● Consider developing a store that is more like the Mercantile in McKenzie Bridge (i.e., a small store with organic foods and boutique-y ambience).
● Prioritize enhancing city services (i.e., creating jobs, housing, increasing enrollment in schools, and general public services)
● Look to Hood River, Oregon as a model for building a recreation economy in Oakridge.

5. Increase Marketing for Public Events and Recreational Options to Capture New Visitors

Making tourism more year-round involves getting information to people about places that they might not know about. To improve marketing and recruitment, the following suggestions were made:

● Capitalize on major regional and local events to draw in new visitors and encourage them to come back (i.e., Track World Championship, Oakridge Truffle Festival, and Harvest Festival)
● Work to provide the "whole package experience" to help generate revenue. Suggestions to do this include:
  o Establish a good equipment rental resources so that people know they can easily access needs to engage in outdoor activities.
  o Pair different assets together that draw people to visit (i.e., wine, craft beer, and food with recreational assets).
  o Create and curate outdoor adventure experiences and shuttles services for forest visitors.
● Revive the Rural Tourism Studio "We Speak" initiative to educate front-facing members of the community (i.e., gas station attendants, cafes, retail, etc.) about community events and activities. This prepares them to answer questions to visitors in a positive way and suggest opportunities.

MAIN ISSUES RELATING TO THE FOREST SERVICE

Many respondents reported having positive, accessible interactions with Forest Service staff. They recounted having experiences wherein staff were generally willing to hear out ideas and assess the feasibility of proposed projects.

However, some reported having variable interactions with Forest Service staff, stating that successful dialogues generally depended on specific personnel for each district. Another recounted experiencing

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[3] Travel Oregon. (2014). Oakridge area wayfinding plan. Portland, Oregon: Travel Oregon.

significant lag time in connecting with recreation managers, citing the bureaucratic process and understaffing at the Forest Service as limitations to receiving support for requests.

Additional areas where respondents reported a need for improvement include:

- Improving the permit system process to address capacity needs.
- Increasing parking lot capacity at the Salt Creek Snow Park.
- Improving information sharing to visitors about trail conditions and alternatives. Doing so enhances the overall visitation experience, helping visitors plan ahead in the event of trail closures or lack of parking.

APPENDIX

Table 1. Challenges to Successful Recreation Planning in Oakridge

Challenges	Number of Mentions
Community division over recreation focus	7
Lack of recreation access and amenities services	5
Limited marketing for local events and activities	5
Lack of funding for recreation planning	4
Local resources stretched thin	3

Source: Oakridge Stakeholder Interviews, February 2020

Table 2. Needs Related to Successful Recreation Planning in Oakridge

Challenges	Number of Mentions
Improve community engagement and build consensus for recreation focus and brand	7
Increase funding for recreation planning and maximize local resources	5
Improve recreation access	5
Diversify amenities services	5
Increase marketing for public events and recreational options to capture new visitors	3

Source: Oakridge Stakeholder Interviews, February 2020

Interview Script

Q1: How do you interact with the Forest Service?

> Q1 Follow-up: If you interact with the FS, do you have to? Do you want to?

> Q1 Follow-up: How do you communicate with staff members or people in the forest service?

> Q1 Follow-up: How would you characterize your interactions with the Forest Service? Do you feel that public land managers have been receptive?

Q2: Have you been involved in recreation planning in Oakridge? How?

> Q2 Follow up: What has changed in Oakridge since then?

> Q2 Follow-up: How do we better represent the community?

Q3: What are the barriers to getting funding?

Q4: What have you seen be successful in getting folks to engage?

Q5: What do you think would be a good forum to encourage engagement?

Q6: What is one thing that we can do in the next year to boost the recreation economy?

> Q6 Follow up: What is one thing that would make the recreation economy sustainable?

> Q6 Follow up: Has planning or action already been done on this topic?

Q7: Do you have anything to add? Is there anyone else you recommend that we speak to?

UNIVERSITY OF OREGON

Date 5/11/20

To	Bethany Steiner, Project Director
From	Allison Ahlert, Student Consultant
SUBJECT	SUMMARY OF OAKRIDGE AREA PREVIOUS PLANNING

OVERVIEW

Oakridge holds an abundance of planning work from the past decade, containing community participation, quantitative research, and informed recommendations. As a baseline for our understanding of work that has already been completed, our team reviewed the following plans:

Oakridge Area Recreation Plans	Year
Visitor Readiness Report, Oakridge, OR	2009
Adapting to The New Economy: The Impacts of Mountain Bike Tourism in Oakridge, Oregon	2014
Framework for Creating a Smart Growth Economic Development Strategy: A Tool for Small Cities and Towns	2016
Southern Willamette Forest Collaborative MFRD Recreation Workshop	2019
Oakridge Transportation Systems Plan 2000/Update	2019
Oakridge-Westfir Community Trails Plan	2008
Oakridge Mill Park Concept Plan	2019
Sea to Summit: Creating the Future of Lane County Parks, Parks and Open Space Mater Plan	2018
Outdoor Recreation Destination Economic Opportunities Analysis for the City of Oakridge	2007
The Economic Significance of Bicycle-Related Travel in Oregon	2012
East Lane County Bicycle Tourism Strategy	2017
Oakridge Area Wayfinding Plan	2014

The team discovered a number of reappearing themes, listed below. These themes were accompanied by an overarching tension between creating the amenities needed to capture revenue and creating the activities that bring visitors' money. One is dependent upon the other, and there is disagreement over which to prioritize.

Additionally, recommendations relevant to outdoor recreation and economic development were compiled from each plan. The list below reflects all suggestions with no weight in merit. Recommendations have been categorized into facilities, amenities, and business services. Our team has defined these as follows:

Facilities – physical recreation structures such trail including condition/maintenance, restrooms, boat ramps, picnic tables,

Amenities – items that enhance facilities, which include wayfinding, educational signage, interpretation, maps, etc.

Business Services/Organization – services/organizations/collaborations that support the recreation economy, such as hotels, outfitters, marketing, websites, etc.

Many plans were focused on mountain biking and bicycle tourism; those recommendations have been separated into bicycle specific sections.

CROSS CUTTING THEMES

Promote mountain biking while developing alternative activities. Market to mountain bikers through creating MTB specific amenities, deals, and events. A variety of activities will entice people to stay and capture more revenue. Encourage people to bring their families.

Trails. Increase the variety of trails for different user groups. Increase trail inventory to mitigate environmental impacts and user conflicts. Create connectivity between trails, town, and forest destinations. Add comfort amenities to trails to entice a variety of users.

Promote overnight stays. Many visitors return to Eugene for a better variety of accommodations and eating opportunities. Entice visitors to stay in Oakridge with more activities and events. Create more options for sleeping and eating.

Support for and expansion of volunteer base. Many projects rely heavily on local volunteers due to lack of funding. Volunteers are limited to a small group of citizens who can become burned out.

Public/private partnerships. Creative funding strategies are necessary to mobilize projects. Plans emphasized personal relationships between land managers, municipalities, and business owners.

Promote Oakridge as a destination through Placemaking. Develop cohesive wayfinding including electronic and physical information hubs. Develop stewardship through interpretive signs. Commit to a brand as an outdoor recreation destination, or as a mountain biking destination.

Hwy 58 improvements. Retrofit storefronts and abandoned buildings, create a retail focal point, and improve signage along the business corridor. Install pedestrian and bicycle facilities, as well as greenery and traffic calming devices.

Create bicycle hubs. Cater to cyclists by creating a location (or multiple) with information, amenities and services available to cyclists. Hubs would create connectivity to regional trail systems.

FACILITIES

Recommendations focus on a variety of recreational activities, with the main emphasis on trails. Mountain bike trails are well established, and many recommendations focus on taking advantage of bicycle tourism. Many proposals call for more in-town and out-of-town connectivity. Many proposals call for diversifying user groups on trails. In town infrastructure proposals focus on transportation and access improvements. The emphasis here is on bike lanes and pathway connectivity. Other infrastructure recommendations include increasing water access through boat ramps, a whitewater park, and low-barrier facilities like disc golf and nature parks.

A majority community involvement in planning has happened around facilities. Plans are detailed and incorporate input from an informed group of volunteers. Ongoing collaboration efforts should build on momentum created during the following recent planning activities:
-Oakridge Mill Park Concept Plan, Fall 2019
-MFRD Trails Plan Update, Winter 2019-2020
-City of Oakridge Transportation System Plan Update, October 2019
-South Willamette Forest Collaborative MFRD Recreation Workshop, April 2019

Lists of advisory committees, and our own workshops, share many participants, highlighting the need to expand the volunteer base in future planning to prevent burn out and to increase inclusivity.

Rivers	Purpose
North Fork River Put-Ins: Create bump outs at put-ins and take-outs	Limited parking off the road
Hampton Boat Ramp: Establish a longer boat ramp	Short for reservoir levels
Lower North Fork: Place port-a-potties at key put-ins and takeouts	No sanitation services
Seasonal placement of port-a-potties or vault toilet	Sanitation issues at locations
Gold Lake boat launch: Expand parking for boaters	Restricted parking

Winter	
Gold Lake and other Snow Park Shelter Maintenance Funding	In deteriorating condition (i.e. shutters, concrete, caulking)

Willamette Pass: - Rebuild mountain bike trails - Funding to thin trees, clear runs, and build West Peak Lift	Low snow years lead to not enough snow for Willamette Pass to open in summer

Trails	
Improve connectivity between the Districts/ Forests/ communities	No connectivity across district
Improve historic and legacy trails - example: Mill Park historical ramp honors logging history	Many Legacy trails
Increased mileage and loop opportunities for trail motorbikes	Limited motorized trail options
West Oak Road Multi-use path	Increase Multi-Modal Transport
Fish Hatchery Road multi-use path	
Crestview Street multi-use path	
High Prairie multi-use path	
West Oakridge Trail: bridge feasibility study	
Salmon Creek Levee multi-use paths and bridge	
Union Street multi-use path	

AMENITIES RECOMMENDATIONS

There is little local data so research from plans is based on county, state, or nationwide findings and case studies. This economic and behavioral information creates suggestions for improving recreation opportunities. Recommendations below include alternatives to mountain biking to serve a variety of people and to serve mountain bikers when they are not on their bikes.

Develop additional non-mtb recreation amenities
Create a retail focal point on Hwy 58, i.e. multiple businesses that can be reached on foot
Expand the volunteer base in the community
Create cohesive wayfinding throughout town and district, including signage representing Oakridge brand

Improve appearance of Hwy 58	

BUSINESS SERVICES RECOMMENDATIONS

Economic analyses clearly state that visitors spend most of their money on food and accommodations, leading to recommendations promoting these businesses.

Branding is also emphasized, including suggestions of niche marketing. While the emphasis is to promote mountain biking specifically, recommendations below would serve to increase all types of visitors.

Coordinate business hours
Hold annual events targeting specific user groups
Focus on future business owners who want to live in Oakridge, not businesses that should locate in Oakridge
Encourage industrial development as well as recreational development
Document the economic impact of tourism in Oakridge and share with business owners
Create a new strategic economic development plan
Streamline permitting process for desirable business and desirable locations
City and Public Land Manager personnel make regular visits to businesses (relationship building)
Provide social media assistance and workshops for businesses hosted by the City
Promote public/private partnerships in development projects
Create a range of lodging focused on those that pay the transient lodging tax (not federal campgrounds)

BICYCLE RELATED RECOMMENDATIONS

Facilities

Goodman Creek: Better drainage; evaluate usage (e.g. bikes only in summer)	Wear from winter use
Better maintenance and signage of upper Willamette trails	Need maintenance
Re-route and rebuild to modern trail designs and best practices, i.e. eliminate blind corners and designate speeds	Not all trails designed well (i.e. Goodman creek)
Improve trail infrastructure and complete deferred maintenance	Current infrastructure isn't up to specifications (i.e. bridges, etc.)

Need for a Ride Center	- No Mountain Bike Ride Center - No central information hub
Connect all of the North Fork Trail	North Fork trail has bits & pieces
On-street bike lanes for all arterials and major collectors	Increase Multi-Modal Transport
Salmon Creek Trail: bridge feasibility study	
Fish Hatchery Road Bikeway	
Garden Road, Fairyglen Drive, Rainbow Street multi-use path	
Bike lanes: Highway 58	
Bike lanes: W. 2nd, E. 1st, Hill St	
Bike lanes: Commercial St.	
Bike lanes: Schools Street, River Road	
Bicycle support hub (rest stop)	

Amenities

Create a central point of information online
Hotel outdoor chill zones
Information Hub and Wayfinding
Bicycle Support Hubs including: Parking,   Benches/tables Shuttle drop off/pick up   Water Food and drink for purchase   Restrooms/changing rooms Bike wash station   Shade/shelter Maps and info   Iconic artwork for selfies Bike racks   Pump track or skills area Wayfinding

Business Services

Foster relationships with public land managers near Oakridge to maintain facilities
Create shuttle service to Oakridge, improve transit links
Provide scholarships for businesses seeking to improve bike-friendliness

Coordinate motels and restaurants to offer combo discounts
Overnight/after-hours laundry
Provide shuttle services to lodges, trails and towns
Develop healthy food offerings with simple and quick menus
Develop fee based guide services and skills clinics
Create bike rental fleets with current model, well maintained, many sizes

February 3, 2020

To	Oakridge Community Recreation Strategy Project Stakeholders
From	Trevor Ackerman, UO Institute for Policy Research and Engagement Student Consultant
SUBJECT	**SUMMARY OF OAKRIDGE KICK-OFF MEETING**

Overview

The purpose of this memorandum is to summarize the Kick-Off Meeting for the Oakridge Community Recreation Strategy hosted at Oakridge High School on January 30, 2020. The meeting consisted of an opening activity, a brief presentation about the economic impacts of recreation, an overview of the project, and small group discussions that focused on the future of economic development and recreation in the area. The purpose of this meeting was to introduce our project, with these goals in mind:

- Provide input to the Willamette National Forest and other public land management agencies about where to invest resources for recreation
- Create better linkages between business development/tourism efforts and recreation
- Begin fostering relationships for continued collaboration

Approximately 20 stakeholders, including business owners and government officials, attended to discuss ideas on how to improve recreation and economic conditions in the area. This meeting and the topics discussed will provide themes to examine in future workshops.

Vision for Recreation and Economic Development in Oakridge

A desire for a sustainable recreation economy was shared in all small group discussions. Although expressed in different ways, participants wanted:

- Well-paying jobs
- Safe, clean, and accessible recreation facilities for all user types
- Appropriate signage/education at facilities and trails
- To maintain the natural beauty of the area.

There is a large sense of pride in the community and many want to see the branding of Oakridge reflect how they feel about the city/area. Many of the groups expressed that the best way to achieve this vision is to have a space to collaborate and work toward the vision as a community instead of separate user groups/organizations.

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Challenges in Making Vision a Reality

Topics brought up by all small groups included:

- Conflicts between user groups
- Shoulder season
- Trail maintenance
- Funding
- Staffing
- Overcoming stereotype/branding of Oakridge

Other challenges mentioned include fees and enforcement, transportation, parking, the negative aspects of recreation such as over-crowding of trails, pollution, degradation of the environment, and impacts on local infrastructure, and community burn out from previous recreation strategic planning efforts.

Notes from Small Group Discussions

Common ideas were organized into 6 cross-cutting themes:

- Activities (disc golf, kayaking/SUP, Boating, etc.)
- Facilities
- Marketing/Branding
- Communication/Involvement/Education
- Jobs and Social Services
- Other topics to consider
  - Permitting
  - Seasonality
  - Funding

These themes will be used to guide future discussions at the remaining Oakridge Workshops. Each of the topics are outlined in more detail below with notes from the small group discussions.

Activities

- Increase access to water-based recreation activities such as SUP, boating, kayaking, and fishing.
- Addition of land-based recreation activities such as disc golf, hiking, mountain biking, horseback riding.
- Add new businesses to compliment recreation activities.

Facilities

- Improve overall maintenance of trails, facilities, and access points.
- Addition of amenities such as benches, picnic tables, and toilets.
- Increase and improve access to recreation opportunities (not always ADA).

Marketing/Branding

- What is Oakridge's brand?
- What does it want to be, how should it be marketed, and to whom?
- There is an opportunity to open the forest up more, both as an organization and for recreation opportunities.

Communication/Involvement/Education

- How should the Forest Service and City communicate more efficiently with residents and visitors?
- Need for appropriate Wayfinding/signage (mentioned in every group).
- Need for central space for collaboration/creating relationships between user groups.

Jobs and Other Social Services

- The people in Oakridge need local, well-paying jobs, including healthcare and childcare.
- Not enough staffing of facilities/amenities.
- Recognizing impacts on infrastructure/services, such as traffic.
- Opportunity for more guided services to attract visitors.

Other Topics to Consider

- Opportunity for increased permitting/bringing more guided services.
- The economy slows down in the winter months.
- How can the Forest Service bring in more money to assist in the goals above?

Future Oakridge Workshop Dates

Four future meetings will be held at the Oakridge High School Cafeteria:

February 25, 2020 from 6:00 – 7:30 p.m.

March 12, 2020 from 6:00 – 7:30 p.m.

April 14, 2020 from 6:00 – 7:30 p.m.

May 12, 2020 from 6:00 – 7:30 p.m.

March 7, 2020

To	Oakridge Community Recreation Strategy Project Stakeholders
From	Hayley Shapiro, UO Institute for Policy Research and Engagement Student Consultant
SUBJECT	**SUMMARY OF OAKRIDGE FEBRUARY MEETING**

Overview

The purpose of this memorandum is to summarize the Second Meeting for the Oakridge Community Recreation Strategy hosted at Oakridge High School on February 25, 2020. The purpose of this meeting was to:
- Provide the community with a review of past plans that have proposed recreation facilities and infrastructure
- Identify what work still needs to be done
- Rank which facilities and recreation strategies were of the highest importance

Approximately 20 stakeholders, including business owners, government officials, and two high school aged people attended the meeting to discuss ideas on how to improve recreation and economic conditions in the area. A summary of the ranking sheets is provided in the Appendix.

Opening discussion

The opening discussion served to begin dialogue among community members and offer a chance to talk about some big vision ideas before diving into the more concrete ranking exercise. Each small group was asked to report key ideas from their table discussion:
- What is your purpose for being here?
    o Building coalitions
    o Connecting with people who do different activities
    o Interested in what brings people to Oakridge
    o Educating and communicating to more people
- If you could build any facility to support recreation, what do you think would be the most beneficial?
    o Community Center: multi-purpose, conference, large gathering space
    o Facilities that are sustainable across the seasons
    o Amtrak station
    o Swimming areas
    o Family opportunities: like playgrounds
This short discussion lent itself well to the discussions that followed focusing more specifically on proposed projects and existing plans.

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Key Findings: Individual Ranking Sheets

After reviewing over 700 pages of planning documents, our team compiled the proposed projects and plans into a five-page handout. Plans and projects were categorized into one of three categories: (1) in-town facilities and trails; (2) out-of-town facilities and trails; (3) and water and snow. Community members were randomized into three different small groups and spent fifteen minutes discussing the proposals in each category. Groups discussed whether or not the proposed projects were still relevant, what other projects were missing in each category and what plans/projects felt the most important for folks and why. Community members were then asked to rank each project on a scale of High importance (H), Medium Importance (M), and Low importance (L).

Included in this memo are those projects or proposals that **had over half of the total votes**. At the end of the meeting of the 20 people who signed in, 19 turned in ranking sheets. If certain projects or proposals received more than 9H votes, they have been included under the relevant category below. A full list of rankings is included in the Appendix.

Water & Snow Projects or Proposal with Nine or More High "votes"

- North Fork River Put-ins: Create bump outs at put ins and take outs (9H votes)

Out-of-Town Trails and Facilities Projects or Proposal with Nine or More High "votes"

- Improve connectivity between the Districts/ forests/ communities (12H votes)
- Improve trail infrastructure and complete deferred maintained (11H votes)
- Connect all of the North Fork Trail (12H votes)
- Larrison Trail Expansion (9H votes)

In-town Trails and Facilities Projects or Proposal with Nine or More High "votes"
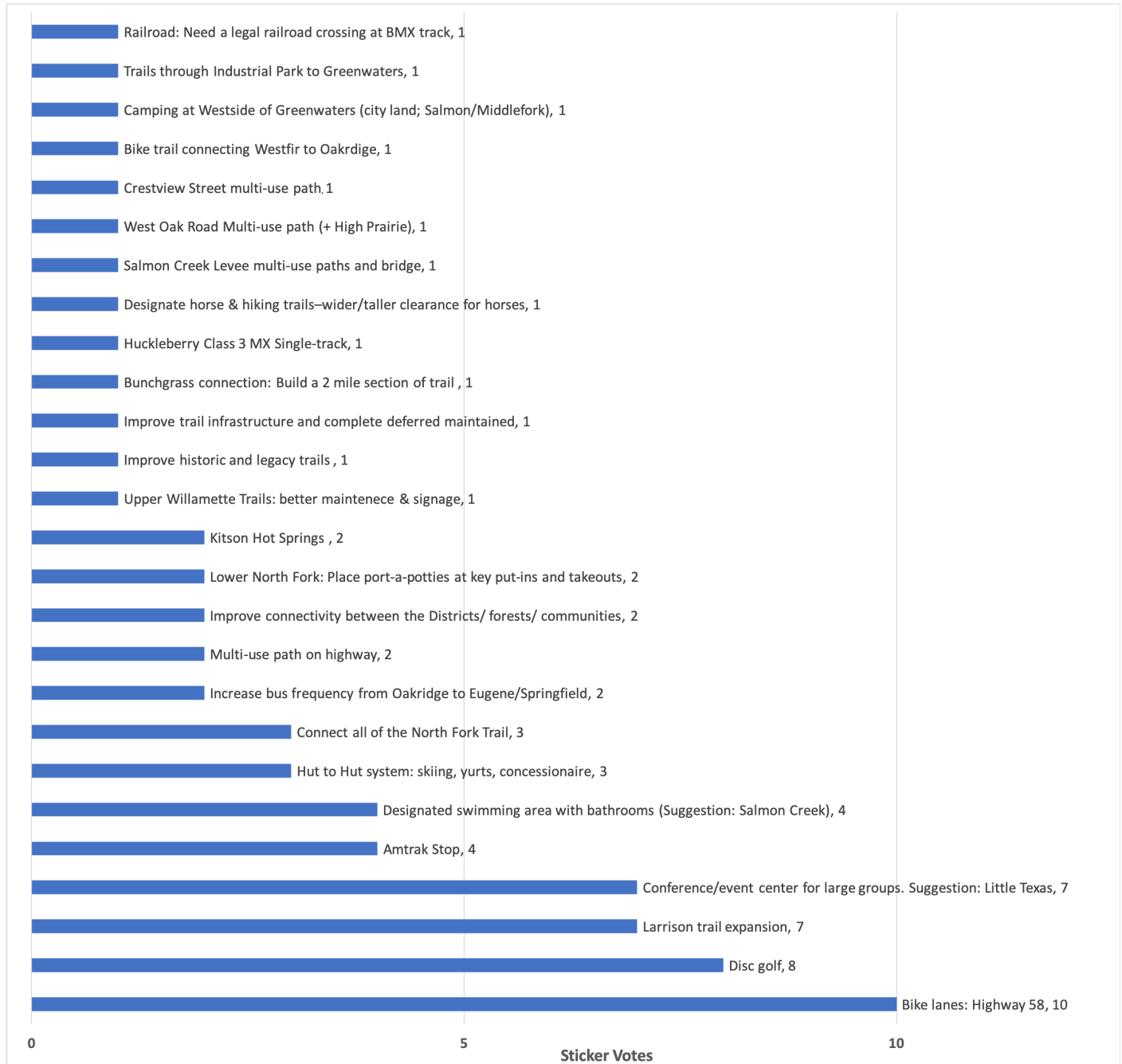
- Salmon Creek Levee multi-use paths and bridge (13H votes)
- Salmon Creek Trail: bridge feasibility study (11H votes)
- Bike lanes: Highway 58 (13H votes)

Key Findings: Group Sticker Vote

In addition to capturing the individual H, M, L rankings on handouts, each community member was given three stickers at the end of the meeting to vote on their top three proposals. In this exercise, members could also vote for any of the additional suggestions that came up during the meeting. Less emphasis was put on a scale of importance since members could only vote on three of the proposals from the entire list. This was another way to gather data and give the group a chance to see where their priorities lie as a community. Some of the proposals that ranked high in the individual handouts were also those that showed up with the highest sticker votes. Additionally, in this final exercise, proposals that had not been originally included in the handout and were suggested by community members received sticker votes. Figure 1 displays all those projects that received a sticker vote:

Figure 1: Highest Sticker Counts, Oakridge Facilities

Figure 1: Highest Sticker Counts, Oakridge Facilities

Horizontal bar chart showing sticker votes for Oakridge facilities (from top to bottom):

- Railroad: Need a legal railroad crossing at BMX track, 1
- Trails through Industrial Park to Greenwaters, 1
- Camping at Westside of Greenwaters (city land; Salmon/Middlefork), 1
- Bike trail connecting Westfir to Oakrdige, 1
- Crestview Street multi-use path, 1
- West Oak Road Multi-use path (+ High Prairie), 1
- Salmon Creek Levee multi-use paths and bridge, 1
- Designate horse & hiking trails–wider/taller clearance for horses, 1
- Huckleberry Class 3 MX Single-track, 1
- Bunchgrass connection: Build a 2 mile section of trail , 1
- Improve trail infrastructure and complete deferred maintained, 1
- Improve historic and legacy trails , 1
- Upper Willamette Trails: better maintenece & signage, 1
- Kitson Hot Springs , 2
- Lower North Fork: Place port-a-potties at key put-ins and takeouts, 2
- Improve connectivity between the Districts/ forests/ communities, 2
- Multi-use path on highway, 2
- Increase bus frequency from Oakridge to Eugene/Springfield, 2
- Connect all of the North Fork Trail, 3
- Hut to Hut system: skiing, yurts, concessionaire, 3
- Designated swimming area with bathrooms (Suggestion: Salmon Creek), 4
- Amtrak Stop, 4
- Conference/event center for large groups. Suggestion: Little Texas, 7
- Larrison trail expansion, 7
- Disc golf, 8
- Bike lanes: Highway 58, 10

X-axis: Sticker Votes (0, 5, 10)

Future Oakridge Workshop Dates

Three future meetings will be held at the Oakridge High School Cafeteria:

- March 12, 2020 from 6:00 – 7:30 p.m.
    o **Topic:** Assessment of existing and missing amenities and businesses in Oakridge
- April 14, 2020 from 6:00 – 7:30 p.m.

- May 12, 2020 from 6:00 – 7:30 p.m.

Appendix

Summary of Past Planning Efforts: Water

Activity	Work that was proposed	High	Medium	Low	STICKERS
Water Canoe Kayak SUP Motorb oat Fishing	North Fork River Put-Ins: Create bump outs at put-ins and take-outs Comment: Middle Fork too	9	7	2	
	Hampton Boat Ramp: Establish a longer boat ramp Comments: - Is it too far from Oakridge? - Manage boat ramps Oakridge has rather new ramps	7	6	6	
	Lower North Fork: Place port-a-potties at key put-ins and takeouts Comments: Westfir take out	5	6	7	2
	Seasonal placement of port-a-potties or vault toilet Comments: - Fees? - Portable toilet up on the Eugene-to-Crest Trail junction where the 5826 to Rob's cut-in and Chad's cut-in area - Other sanitation facilities at Salmon Creek - Porta Potties get trashed/burned–hard to maintain; vault toilets get vandalized	8	6	5	
	Gold Lake boat launch: Expand parking for boaters	3	9	6	
	Proposals added to our list by the Community that were ranked:				
	Kitson Hot Springs - Boy Scouts + Forest Service, Lease? Get back from BOA for public use - retreat center? → increase access and add parking	2			2
	Hampton boat ramp (improve to water level)	1			
	Middlefork facilities	2			
	Designated swimming area with bathrooms (Suggestion: Salmon Creek)	3			4

	Additional Participant Suggestions:
	● McCredie Hot Spring improvements: parking, dig out/expand pools, designated trails, fee site (3 people indicated this)
	● Fishing trail access points improved/signage to lower impact (2 people indicated this)
	    ○ LNT, stewardship signage at fishing point
	    ○ turnouts for fishing area parking, establish 2 put-ins with specific parking, sanitation facilities; appropriately sized facilities for fishing tournaments
	● Put in public use area of Middlefork Willamette below Hills Creek Dam				

Summary of Past Planning Efforts: Snow

Activity	Work that was proposed	High	Medium	Low	STICKERS
Snow Skiing XC skiing Snowboarding Snowmobile	Gold lake snow park shelter–Partnerships for maintenance: - Willamette Backcountry ski patrol and High Cascades volunteers are willing to do work, but need funding and Forest Service help	5	11	1	
	Seven snow shelters need maintenance Comments: - Secondary facility on Maiden Peak (shelter is always packed)	6	10	2	

	Willamette Pass:
	General WP Comments:
	   - Private ownership makes improvements hard to support
	   - Not ready for more visitors; business traffic can't justify improvements (we should focus elsewhere).
	   - Overflow parking eliminates sledding & XC ski trail/snow bike trails. PCT Access from here for sledding/XC skiing (2 votes)
	Proposal 1: Rebuild mountain bike trails
	Proposal 1 Comments:
	   - Not viable, concentrate on GOATS trails
	   - Not enough promotion; low use during summer
	Proposal 2: Funding to thin trees, clear runs, and build West Peak Lift
	Proposal 2 Comments:
	   - They're struggling, so this/any other work probably won't happen (owner)> the owner of the business is not in the room/doesn't participate & the ski resort is struggling
	   - WP lease reserves access–West Peak Lift for public use
		8	2	6	

	Proposals added to our list by the Community that were ranked:				
	Hut-to-Hut System skiing–yurts, maybe a concessionaire	5			3
	Expand Waldo parking for snowmobiles, snow biking		1		
	Additional Participant Suggestions: ● Fat biking trails for snow/XC skiing in winter (6 people indicated this) ● Signage & wayfinding: Implement phase #3 (3 people indicated this) ● Fire lookouts rented out for winter lodging ● Snowmobiling, XC ski/backpacking ● Don't want to bring more people to the spots, but tourism is important ● Access to Waldo for fire lookout?				

Summary of Past Planning Efforts: Out-of-Town Trails and Facilities

Activity	Work that was proposed	High	Medium	Low	STICKERS
Trails Equestrian Hiking Bikes: Mountain Gravel Road Ebike Motorized: Quads Jeeps Motorcycles Side by Side	Goodman Creek: Better drainage; evaluate usage (e.g. bikes only in summer) Comment: Multi-use awareness for equestrians	5	7	4	
	Upper Willamette Trails: Better maintenance and signage of upper Willamette trails Comment: Middlefork trail	8	7	1	1
	Re-route and rebuild to modern trail designs and best practices	6	6	5	
	Improve historic and legacy trails - example: Mill Park historical ramp honors logging history	6	7	4	1
	Improve connectivity between the Districts/ forests/ communities	12	3	2	2
	Improve trail infrastructure and complete deferred maintained	11	5	1	1
	Need for a Ride Center - Avoid some trails due to possible Mountain bike interactions	6	4	3	
	Increased mileage and loop opportunities for trail motorbikes Comment: OHV area	5	4	7	
	Connect all of the North Fork Trail	12	3	2	3
	Re-open closed trails	3	1	9	
	- Designate some trails as fast and slow user trails - Eliminate blind corners on certain trails Comment: Signage and maps	6	5	3	
	Bunchgrass connection: Build a 2 mile section of trail - Note: This project is already underway in FS project pipeline; rankings may not be useful	8	2	–	1
	Cowhorn connection: 2 miles of trail - Note: This project is already underway in FS project pipeline; rankings may not be useful	6	3	1	
	Proposals added to our list by the Community that were ranked:				
	Huckleberry Class 3 MX Single-track - Also: Cloverditch single-track	1			1
	Increased close in-town campgrounds–i.e. less than 5 miles - Expanded/Invested in: Salmon Creek, Ivan Oaks, Black Canyon, Farrin Forest	6			

Activity	Work that was proposed	High	Medium	Low	STICKERS
	- Restored or repurposed: Packard Creek - Packard: Reservoir evaluation: What's busy? What's there? Consider the need for boat trailer parking.				
	Larrison trail expansion - Larisson Ridge: community summer area (out-of-town)	9			7
	Side x Side routes - Riding on County roads: Can the FS help tell the story regarding this? Oakridge community is looking for a liaison with the county to accomplish this.	3	3	1	
	Designate horse & hiking trails–wider/taller clearance for horses	1			1
	Disc golf - built infrastructure: parking, picnic tables, bathrooms, hot showers, concessions, swimming area, interpretive signs (4 comments) - Suggestion: Mill Park and/or Little Texas	2		1	8

Additional Participant Suggestions:
- RTP recreation grant
- Army Corps drawing down above the reservoir
- More lookouts (i.e., Dead Mountain lookout maintenance)
- Deception Butte: restore trail from fire
- Timber trail amenities: marking and signage
- Overall campground improvement; farm-forest camping (bikeable)

Summary of Past Planning Efforts: In-town Trails and Facilities

Activity	Work that was proposed	High	Medium	Low	STICKERS
In-Town Network	On-street bike lanes for all arterials and major collectors	8	5	5	
	Salmon Creek Levee multi-use paths and bridge	13	4	1	1
	Salmon Creek Trail: bridge feasibility study	11	5	2	
	Fish Hatchery Road Bikeway Comment: Family use	7	7	4	
	West Oak Road Multi-use path (+ High Prairie)	6	7	4	1
	Fish Hatchery Road multi-use path Comment: Family use	5	9	4	
	Crestview Street multi-use path	6	5	4	1
	High Prairie multi-use path	5	7	4	
	Garden Road, Fairyglen Drive, Rainbow Street multi-use path	2	3	9	
	West Oakridge Trail: bridge feasibility study	4	7	4	

Union Street multi-use path	2	7	7	
Bike lanes: Highway 58 Comment: Road diet (2 comments)	13	4	–	10
Bike lanes: W. 2nd, E. 1st, Hill St	5	6	7	
Bike lanes: Commercial St.	5	4	9	
Bike lanes: Schools Street, River Road	3	7	6	
Bicycle support hub (rest stop)	8	2	5	
Proposals added to our list by the Community that were ranked:				
Amtrak stop - Study has not been completed (need more data). City needs to step up.	2	2	1	4
Oakridge-Westfir Bike/Ped feasibility study	1			
Bike trail connecting Westfir to Oakrdige - Cycle Oregon grant to look at feasibility	2	1		1
Camping at Westside of Greenwaters (city land; Salmon/Middlefork)	1			1
Trails through Industrial Park to Greenwaters	1			1
Pedestrian and Bike safety (vision for the community)	1			
Pedestrian bridge to Greenwaters		1		
Increase bus frequency from Oakridge to Eugene/Springfield (midday route)				2
Multi-use path on highway				2
Railroad: Need a legal railroad crossing at BMX track				1
Conference/event center for large groups. Suggestion: Little Texas				7

Additional Participant Suggestions:
- Visitor Center to connect and communicate with local community and visitors (2 people indicated this)
- Lodging
- In-town ride center at Greenwaters
- City/in-town camping
- Connection to Greenwaters Park for community
- Any network improvement that fills gaps in the system
- Paths for multigenerational/abilities use
- Railroad: Eugene-Oakridge connection

Date 3/3/20

To	Bethany Steiner, Project Director
From	Allison Ahlert, Student Consultant
SUBJECT	SUMMARY OF MCKENZIE INTERVIEWS

OVERVIEW

During February 2020, our team conducted eight interviews of stakeholders identified by the project management team. This group included business owners, outfitters, representatives of the McKenzie River Guides, EWEB, LCOG, RARE, Travel Lane County, and the Ford Foundation. Interviews lasted around 30 minutes and were conducted informally over the phone. Each interview addressed 11 questions designed by the team to identify areas of concern and community priorities around recreation planning. (See Appendix)

The interviews provided community members' perspective on recreation issues for locals and visitors. A review of the eight interviews yielded recurring challenges and themes related to addressing these challenges.

Most prominent were challenges related to the McKenzie River Area decentralized, unincorporated nature. This intrinsic characteristic is at the root of many barriers to infrastructure improvements, funding for economic development, community involvement, and safety.

Related to this was coordination between a decentralized community and multiple public land managers. including Willamette National Forest, Lane County, EWEB, ODOT, and the Army Corps of Engineers. Numerous jurisdictions and community initiatives has created a lack of cohesion in planning.

In addition, stakeholders identified the seasonal nature of recreation tourism as an intrinsic problem. Although efforts to extend the season or promote off-season activities continue, the nature of periodic revenue streams contributes to other issues such as housing availability and job security.

In addition to foundational challenges, almost all interviews discussed two concerns and one major positive in planning for recreation tourism:

- Concern of Visitor Impacts
- Lack of Funding
- Recognition of community efforts to create business

In addition to these themes, interviews generated a list of community assets, needs, and actions that have already been taken to improve recreation tourism. To accompany the information gathered on challenges faced by the McKenzie Area community, interviewees were asked for solutions and suggestions to address these problems. Through sharing their vision for recreation and economic development, stakeholders identified multiple actions to improve the recreation economy. These were categorized according to their relation to recreation activities or economic development efforts.

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ASSETS

Interviewees were asked, "In your opinion, what do you see as significant assets for the McKenzie area in terms of recreation?" Responses were categorized to show the frequency each asset was mentioned. Figure 1 below shows that 9 distinct assets were recorded. More interviewees identified the asset, 'Community Efforts to Create Business,' than any other asset. People remarked on the variety and quality of eating and lodging opportunities, identifying lodges as particular draws. The promotion of rafting and fishing through individual business' efforts was important, and the McKenzie River Guides also appears as a major economic contributor. See appendix for complete data.

Figure 1. McKenzie Area Assets to Recreation Economy by Frequency of Mention.
From Stakeholder Interviews, February 2020.
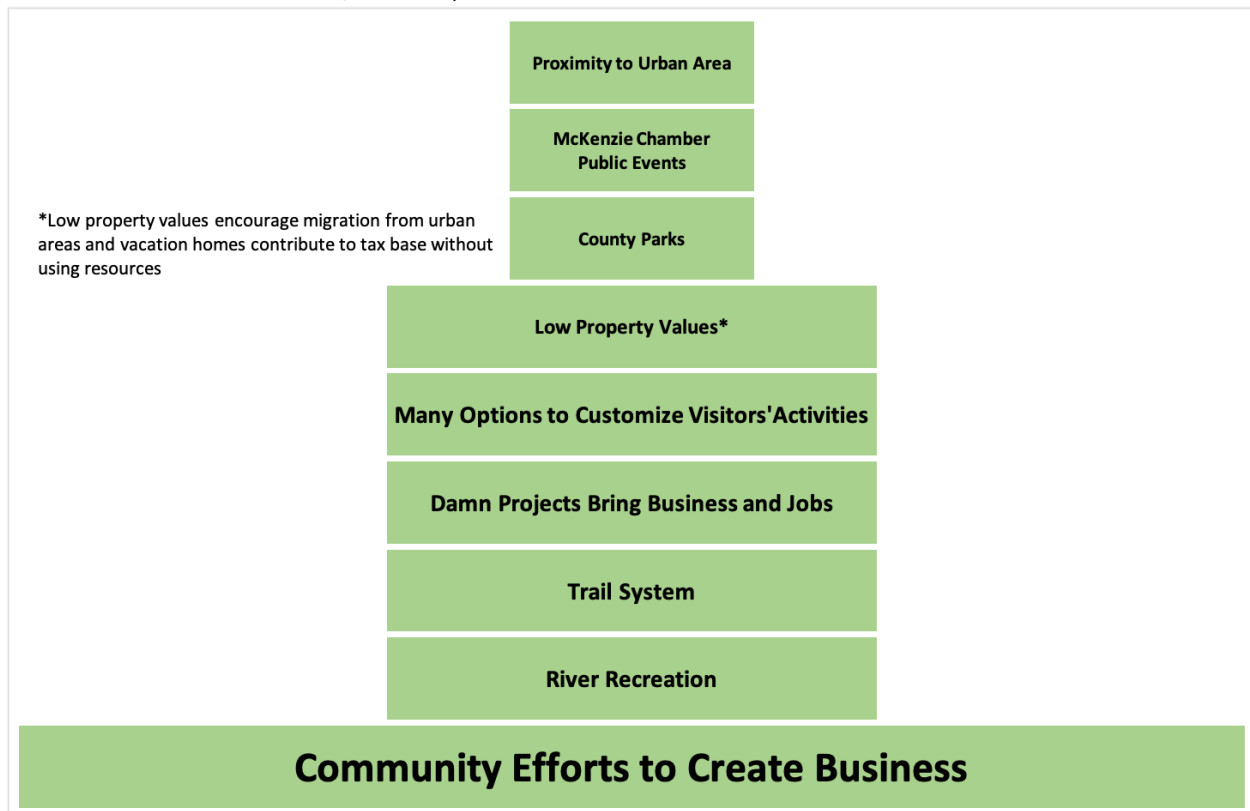
NEEDS

A series of interview questions regarding vision, challenges, and missing businesses produced Items that would benefit the McKenzie Area recreation economy. Responses were categorized and compiled into Figure 2, showing the frequency each need appeared in an interview. Nearly all interviews indicated a need for funding, whether for infrastructure, economic development, or conservation. The efforts of community members, recognized as a significant asset, have been thwarted by the lack of access to funding. Funding for specific facilities or amenities is a problem, but the missing tax base also contributes to other needs mentioned, like law enforcement presence, transit options, and internet access. See Appendix for complete data.

Figure 2. McKenzie Area Needs for Recreation Economy by Frequency of Mention.
From Stakeholder Interviews, February 2020

PAST AND ON-GOING SOLUTIONS

Despite the lengthy list of needs, stakeholders provided information on a number of community and governmental projects to address issues in the area. These included:

- Limiting the number of river guides through Forest Service permitting helps mitigate overuse
- Plans for the McKenzie Discovery Center create an attraction, event venue, and information resource.
- Lane County Rural Prosperity Initiative promotes economic resiliency.
- Charter schools want to create opportunities for place-based learning with local businesses
- Secured Grant Funding for Wayfinding
- Secured a Grant for the Creation of a Bicycle Kiosk

SUGGESTED SOLUTIONS

Stakeholders provided a range of ways to address recreation issues. These suggestions were divided between 'Facilities,' meaning infrastructure related to recreation activities like mountain biking, hiking, or floating, and 'Amenities,' which refers to economic development efforts like businesses, public relations, or advertising. While some suggestions are duplicates of 'needs,' others were not captured by that definition.

Facilities Suggestions

- Open more trails, either by rehabilitating old trails or creating new ones

  Purpose: Mitigate user conflicts, disperse impacts

- Install bathrooms at trailheads and boat ramps

  Purpose: Decrease user impacts

- Increase Parking at trailheads and boat ramps

  Purpose: Improve safety on Hwy 126

- Increase Forest Service user fees

  Purpose: Create funding for maintenance and conservation

- Provide fee collection enforcement

  Purpose: Users won't pay otherwise

- Issue outfitter permits for Three Sisters Wilderness to McKenzie outfitters

  Purpose: Capture market share of Three Sisters visitors

- Create an office or team to attend all committees and meetings

  Purpose: Coordinate planning, decrease work duplication

Amenities Suggestions

- Promote mountain biking and responsible use of trails
- Promote use of lesser known trails to disperse visitor impact
- Create new selfie spots through social media
- Consolidated wayfinding
- Create high quality imagery/digital media of lesser known areas
- Water sports rental equipment
- Develop Mountain biking hub including showers, groceries, and equipment
- Clothing store
- Self-Guided Tour app
- Additional tour guide business

MAIN ISSUES RELATING TO THE FOREST SERVICE

From our lists of suggestions for infrastructure/facilities and the list of economic amenities and opportunities to support recreation, a few are of special interest to Willamette National Forest. Below are actionable items suggested by McKenzie River Area recreation tourism stakeholders.

- Increasing support for concessionaires and visitors through communication and funding

- o Interviewees desired more communication from the Forest Service. One mentioned that many business owners thought of the Forest Service as 'The Enemy.' One mentioned difficulty in obtaining permits and funding for businesses.
- Potentially increasing outfitter access to Three Sisters Wilderness
    - o Interviewees recognized that many commercial trips into Three Sisters originate in Bend, rather than McKenzie. There is an opportunity to capture revenue locally since McKenzie is closer to Eugene and Portland.
- Contributing to Law Enforcement presence
    - o Crime contributes to a negative image of the area, and there is limited personnel from the county and highway on patrol. A lack of enforcement at recreation sites also leads to environmental impacts and revenue loss.
- Trail building and maintenance to disperse and mitigate impacts
    - o Interviewees identified trails as a point source for environmental impacts and user conflicts. There is an opportunity to mitigate both with trail work.
- Mitigating impact of increased visitor volumes with education and infrastructure improvements
    - o The most common topic in interviews was concern over environmental impacts of visitors. Dangerous parking and consequential pedestrian traffic, litter, and human waste were all included. For the people we interviewed, planning for increasing visitors as Eugene continues to grow and outdoor recreation becomes more accessible was critical to maintaining the beauty and health of the area.

APPENDIX

Asset (From McKenzie Stakeholder Interviews, February 2020)	Number of Mentions
Proximity to Urban Area	1
McKenzie Chamber Public Events	1
County Parks	1
Low Property Values*	2
Many Options to Customize Visitors'Activities	2
Damn Projects Bring Business and Jobs	2
Trail System	2
River Recreation	2
Community Efforts to Create Business	5

Need (From McKenzie Stakeholder interviews, February 2020)	Number of Mentions
Grocery Store	1
Wayfinding	1
Parking and Toilets at Boat Ramps	1
Measures to Preserve Water Quality	1
More Lodging and Food Options	1
Communication and Financial Support for Willamette National Forest Concessionaires	1
Tax Funded District for Infrastructure Improvements	1
Visitor Stewardship Opportunities	1
Childcare, Elder Care	1
Internet Access	1
New Generation of Engaged Community Members	2
Law Enforcement	2
Off-Season Business	2
Outdoor Center	2
Infrastructure Capacity to Handle Increased Visitors	2
Transit Options	2
More Outfitter Trips into Three Sisters Wilderness	2
Housing: Supply and Affordability	2
Community/Area Branding	2
Disaster/Fire Resilience	2
Funding	5

Interview Script:

Q1: How long have you lived or worked in the McKenzie area?

      Q1 Follow-up: Do you do anything recreationally in this area?

Q2: In your opinion, what do you see as significant assets for the McKenzie area in terms of recreation? (i.e., assets are river: boating, kayaking, rafting)

      Q2 Follow-up: Are those all the major assets that you have? Anything else that you'd like to add?

Q3: What is your vision for how recreation and the community will develop in the next 5 years?

      Q3 Follow-up: What are the challenges to making that a reality?

Q4: In your opinion, what do you see as economic strengths for this area? (i.e., river trips, McKenzie General Store, local artists). If they ask, "What do you mean by that?" We mean: An economic strength could be a business or store in particular that's generating income. Or, it's an environment that will create economic growth (i.e., entrepreneurs or artists).

Q5: To better support the recreation industry in the area, are there any new businesses that need to be developed or strengthened?

Q6: What topics do we need to talk about to better understand the challenges facing the Willamette National Forest and McKenzie area?

Q7: Is there anything else you would like to share?

Q8: Is there anyone else you recommend that we speak to?

4/10/2020

To	Bethany Steiner
From	Trevor Ackerman, MCPR Student Consultant
SUBJECT	MCKENZIE PLAN REVIEW

OVERVIEW

This memorandum summarizes nine previous recreation planning documents in the McKenzie River Communities (MRC). Major themes from each plan will be presented in three categories: facilities, amenities, and business services. The definitions for these categories are as follows:

Facilities – physical recreation structures such as trail condition/maintenance, restrooms, boat ramps, picnic tables,
Amenities – items that enhance facilities, which include Wayfinding, educational signage, interpretation, maps, etc.
Business Services/Organization – services/organizations/collaborations that support the recreation economy, such as hotels, outfitters, marketing, websites, etc.

This plan review will be used to inform recommendations provided to the MRC on how to work toward a sustainable recreation economy. Below is the list of the plans reviewed for this memorandum:

McKenzie River Communities Recreation Plans	Year
McKenzie Year-Round Tourism Action Plan	2016
YRT Action Plan Executive Summary Final	2016
YRT Action Plan Summary of Goals	2016
Market Analysis/feasibility of Discovery Center (Fish Lake Historic Site)	2015
Rural Tourism Studio Summary	2011
McKenzie River Final Visitor Readiness Report	2009
McKenzie River Business Retention & Expansion (BRE) Program	2018
East Lane County Bicycle Tourism Strategy	2017
McKenzie River & Trail Visitor Survey: Final Report	2014

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CROSS CUTTING THEMES

There were several themes that were present across many of the plans. These include:

Wayfinding. Have consistent and updated Wayfinding, educational signage, and information sharing across the McKenzie River Valley.

Information Kiosks. Fix visitor center information kiosk/create easily accessible information hubs across the valley.

Collaboration. Increase collaboration between local Chamber of Commerce, businesses, Lane County Parks and Recreation Department, Travel Lane County/Oregon, and other key stakeholders for a unified effort across the valley.

Marketing. Create unified marketing strategy that promotes uniqueness of recreation opportunities in the valley, which include the river and trails.

Trails and Sustainability. Maintain pristine appearance of trails, river, and access points; this includes parking lots, restroom services, managing number of visitors, litter, and health of ecosystems.

BICYCLE RELATED THEMES

Any bicycle related themes and suggestions from past planning efforts can be found in the Bicycle Tourisms Suggestions section of the report.

FACILITIES

Below is a curated list of facility themes and suggestions based off the plans reviewed:

Create comprehensive list of indoor facilities for off season use
Continue to review funding options for Fish Lake Historic Site
Install information kiosk in Eugene
Diverse accommodations – Glamping and rustic, hut to hut, outdoor theme
Create recreation hubs – safe parking, restroom
Ease of access to public lands
Add visitor gateways, interpretive bays, viewpoints, and public art along Highway 126
Localize permitting process to McKenzie River Ranger Station
Adding "Ranger Station and Visitors Center" to its name to convey its major visitor information role more clearly.

Manage the McKenzie River National Recreation Trail as a product in its own right. Develop its awareness as a destination brand that has "must do" national status for hikers.

Ways to do this:
     ▪ Create a distinctive logo for trail, included in all signage and promotional material
     ▪ More 'Enter MRNR Trail here' signs should be erected at all key roadside bays and safe traffic points along the highway. Include sub-signage with appropriate symbols for the activity types visitors can undertake (hiking, biking, kayaking, etc)
     ▪ Clearly identify key wildlife areas along the trail, hwy entry points, and trail maps
     ▪ Add prominent directional signage to Trail at the Belknap Hot Springs entry point.

Consider adding short riverside walking trails at selected county parks

AMENITIES

Below is a curated list of amenity themes and suggestions based off the plans reviewed:

Create single map that can be used across all marketing platforms

Form wayfinding team
 	
     o Standardize signage to improve its consistency and look, with greater ease of visibility and stronger design qualities.
 	
     o Ensure that internationally and nationally recognized color standards are followed.
 	
     o Ensure that all signs have adequate illumination or reflectivity for nighttime use.

Continue to survey visitors about experience and needs
Integrating history and linking the businesses through storytelling – the historical history of the river.
Include thematic interpretation of the area's wildlife, history, and geography.
Install official tourism attraction highway signs for each bridge.
Create art installations that promote regions unique ecosystems, history, and geography

BUSINESS SERVICES

Below is a curated list of business service themes and suggestions based off the plans reviewed:

Create theme-based travel itineraries / create package deals across different businesses/experiences

New tour offerings:
 	
    o Foraging trips for mushrooms
    o Lucky Boy mine
    o McKenzie bike trails
    o Waterfall tours
    o Hiking to geologically unique areas (Wolf Rock, He He Mt.).
    o Old Growth tours

Potential for a McKenzie River Festival and other large events   o For example, taking advantage of fall colors and spring flowers
Encourage community gardening
Opportunity for increased bus transit to area
Several seasonal events that appeal to tourists – get people off of I-5 and include free transportation from any of the many amenities – attractions and locations
A common "river" event is crucial to uniting the communities.
Create a range of lodging-focusing on those that pay the transient lodging tax (not federal campgrounds)
Overnight/afterhours laundry
Lodge integrated shuttle services
Hotel outdoor chill zones
Develop healthy food offerings, simple and quick menus
Food carts
Develop fee-based guide services and skills clinics
Provide scholarships for businesses seeking to improve bike-friendliness
Create shuttle service to Oakridge, improve transit links

Develop lift access riding at Willamette Pass
Promoting current events in the valley as well as creating new events for year-round visitation to the valley
Meet quarterly with regional operators to collaborate and address priority issues.
The promotion and the ease of booking river-based and other adventure activities must be evident to a far greater extent than at present.

Ways to address this:
 	
    o Ensure that soft adventure operators are given prominence in the Chamber's destination marketing and not treated as "just another member."
    o Work with local/regional lodging to encourage promotion of operators to guests.
    o Ensure that local operator services are easy to book via phone and internet.
    o Investigate the need for and feasibility of a regional reservations system.
    o Ensure that all McKenzie River soft adventure opportunities are included in CVALCO's adventure tourism brochures and online marketing.
    o Operators should identify and activate appropriate cross selling techniques and participate in cooperative marketing directed toward their target audiences.

Support the McKenzie River Community Charter School by linking school programs with projects.
Research a local investment vehicle enabling members of the community to invest in their community.
Work to improve broadband access

March 15, 2020

To	Bethany Steiner, Project Director
From	Leslie Harka, Project Assistant
SUBJECT	**FOREST SERVICE INTERVIEW FINDINGS**

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

This memo summarizes the main findings from interviews with the Middle Fork Ranger District (MFRD) staff. Interviews of MFRD staff included Kevin Rowell, McKenzie Jensen, Chloe Goldade-Holbrook. Molly Juillerat, an MFRD Deputy District Ranger and District Botanist, was also interviewed alongside Cameron Mitchell, the Wildlife Biologist in the Cottage Grove Ranger District. They were contacted via phone by the University of Oregon Community Recreation Strategy team and completed between March 2nd through March 9th of this year.

Topics summarized include general interview findings regarding amenities and specific perspectives related to trails, special use permits, facilities, and capacity concerns. Of special note are the sections outlining recommendations for continued collaboration and final report product.

GENERAL FINDINGS

Amenities

The majority of interviewees expressed a need for tourist-friendly restaurants, hotels, and hostels. New development was encouraged to consider providing an overall higher level of quality that visitors would likely expect to entice them to stop and stay. Additional comments included recommendations that Oakridge takes steps towards beautification (i.e., remedying road-facing stores that are boarded up or shut down), and cluster development of amenities near the downtown area.

Trails

2007 MFRD Trails Plan Update

To gain insight into MFRD trails planning, recreation specialist Kevin Rowell was interviewed. As a Forest Service ranger, he specializes in trails, snow, and OHV use and planning. Importantly, a revision of the older 2007 MFRD Trails plan is currently underway. It has an existing steering committee of which Oakridge Mayor Kathy Holston is a member. A survey for the trails plan revision received 80 responses from the community, with maps included to encourage greater public input. As a community trails plan, the revision aims to identify the local trails desired by the community within the next five years.

Influence of Community Input

Rowell finds that his vision for trails work is strongly guided by the community's expressed needs. He stated that the most useful public input for his work would use open-ended questions to capture

community priorities and preferences. Ideally, this input would reflect what the community wants to see and where resources should be divested from and put to better use.

Dispersed Use a Top Priority

Juillerat and Mitchell highlighted dispersed mountain bike use as a top priority to mitigate capacity concerns. This could be achieved by careful trails planning efforts that results in either constructing new trails or encouraging people to spread use across existing trails.

Special Use Permits

Broader Goals

MFRD recreation specialist McKenzie Jensen handles special use permitting in the Middle Fork District. Her broader goal is to streamline the special permit process at the local level. This is in alignment with regional and national Forest Service initiatives striving to make this process more efficient. Specific changes would include creating an online permitting process where guides could fill out the required forms.

Influence of Community Input

Jensen stated that community input consistently influences her work and that staff are continually working to ensure that input is heard. She observed that when Forest Service staff respond with a "no" to a community request it is due to policy restrictions.

Facilities: Developed and Dispersed Use

Prioritize Where Facilities Resources Are Invested

Chloe Goldade-Holbrook is a MFRD recreation specialist managing developed and dispersed use (i.e., day-use sites and campgrounds). She observed that there is a lot of existing infrastructure that is underutilized and poorly maintained. Therefore, a top priority for her is to assess forest facilities and determine what to shut down, what to keep going, and what to improve. To help facilitate this process, Goldade-Holbrook suggests identifying the degree to which facilities are utilized.

Recreation Facilities Improvements: Attracting Visitors

To attract more visitors to the area, Goldade-Holbrook encourages community members to consider what has worked in the past and what is popular right now. For example, mountain biking, disc golf, OHV, e-bikes, and the Terwilliger Hot Springs are all current recreation activities drawing people to the area. Improving facilities associated with these activities could be economically beneficial.

Capacity and Overuse Concerns

In general, staff expressed environmental concerns over issues related to capacity of a site's use. There was an overall desire to apply a holistic approach to help balance human use with the needs of protecting the local ecology.

The Alpine trail was identified as receiving lots or recreation use via outfitters, guides, and other recreational use. Staff expressed concern to balance use with resource protection. To address this, a needs assessment is being conducted for the Alpine trail and Waldo Basin area to determine its capacity for increased use. Other future areas of concern included Diamond Peak and the Waldo Wilderness Area, due to changes leading to reduced restrictions for these areas.

Rowell identified addressing capacity issues in the context of recreation facilities as an area of high priority. Specific projects mentioned included:

- Huckleberry Flats: completing an environmental document analysis for expansion
- Motorcycle staging areas: meet capacity demands within the next 2 ½ years
- Trail system expansion: outfitter guides and special use requests currently outpaces capacity
- Trailheads: increase overall size to accommodate horse trailers and expand parking

Hardening Recreation Facilities

Additionally, Juillerat and Mitchell suggested that any facility improvements made should aim to "harden" popular facilities to improve their ability to handle increased use. Some historic structures identified as needing maintenance include:

- Clark Creek Shelter
- Lookouts on rental program
- Salmon Creek Campground: potable water
- Shadow Bay campground at Waldo: installing a new well
- Boat docks

IDEAS FOR ONGOING COLLABORATION

The majority of recreation staff interviewed expressed a strong willingness and interest in continuing to collaborate with community members to help guide their work. Staff stated an interest in continuing to interact with members frequently, attend meetings, take field trips, and provide relevant information such as maps.

Continue Identifying Project Priorities

For ongoing community recreation collaboration, Jensen and Goldade-Holbrook acknowledged that help with project prioritization is useful and requested that community members continue to identify desired priorities. To do this, Jensen recommends that community members consider the funding capacity, timeline, and public benefit of a project. Outlining priorities can help the Forest Service and community make progress together.

Make Specific Comments and Requests

Goldade-Holbrook stated that specific comments and requests were much more useful than open-ended suggestions. For example, stating the trail number that a bathroom facility is needed for will be significantly more constructive in guiding her work. However, she also finds it useful if significant public input helps identify a sector of desired work (i.e., 500 people in the community desire mountain bike trails).

Be Creative, Realistic, and Helpful

To help empower community stakeholders to influence recreation project priorities, Goldade-Holbrook also encourages people to think creatively about project opportunities when working together. For example, community members should consider brainstorming project opportunities that Forest Service staff wouldn't normally think of, such as disc golf. This is a low cost, creative project idea that would likely have a positive economic and recreation impact for the community.

Expand Involvement and Include Diverse Voices

Most recreation staff observed that a core group of community members are consistently showing up to contribute to recreation planning efforts. These members often reflect those who have the time to contribute or a personal stake in the outcome (i.e., business owners). The mountain biking community was identified as having a particularly strong voice, that while important, should not overshadow other recreation users. While the involvement of these members is appreciated, multiple staff also suggested that identifying more people who have interest in contributing could help prevent burnout.

Future Outreach

Most rangers expressed a sense that there are other activities and user groups whose needs are unmet. Highlighted groups include:

- Skiers and backcountry skiers: lack of resources and facilities (specifically parking)
- Opening up to the broader community: include people with different ideas and backgrounds (i.e., non-recreation voices such as environmental and fiscal concern groups)

Additionally, Juillerat and Cameron expressed interest in including the perspectives of community members living along Highway 58 (i.e., Lowell, Pleasant Hill, Springfield, Dexter, and Fall Creek). These are small communities that also impact recreation in this area. Their input would be valued and help inform the Forest Service's proposed project priorities.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FINAL REPORT

Interviewees expressed the following recommendations for our final report to the Forest Service

- Align terms in the report with Forest Service definitions to ensure we're using the same language (i.e., trails, facilities, etc.).
- Only include projects occurring on National Forest land.
- Conduct a preliminary Forest Service review and seek guidance for proposed projects.
  - How this works: Look at project proposals and go over them with a Forest Service staff member before sharing them publicly with community stakeholders. The Forest Service can provide guidance regarding what is possible and help with preliminary prioritization.
  - Reason for doing this: As a team, we have been compiling lists of proposed projects gathered from interviews, public meetings, and written reports. However, many projects exist in a broader context that we are not aware of–impacting each project's feasibility and priority considerations. For example, during our second Oakridge public meeting, Jensen and Goldade-Holbrook both observed that a number of our listed facilities projects were not useful to share with the Oakridge community members for input. Moving forward, they suggest that our team review any proposed projects with

Forest Service staff before sharing them with the community. Doing so helps not only with initial prioritization but also lends itself to more successful public participation outcomes due to an increased likelihood of project completion.

● Set realistic expectations: Identify a few easy projects that can get done and help people feel successful. These can be proposed in conjunction with projects that reflect larger goals.
● Identify the needs of other non-trails activities and user groups. This would serve as a pre-planning document to offer initial guidance for areas with no existing planning materials.
  ○ User group example: Skiers and backcountry skiers (per Kevin Rowell interview; our team can follow-up with him to investigate any planning work already underway)

Best Practices for Collaborative Meetings

For meetings, researchers Bruce Shindler and Julie Neburka (1995) offer seven additional key principles to consider when creating collaboratives that foster successful public participation.

(1) **Meeting Structure**: Prioritize whole group interaction over information sharing. Meetings focused solely on information sharing are often frustrating experiences and an ineffective way to involve the public. Successful public process involvements are aided by clearly articulating the purpose of public involvement, creating a comfortable meeting environment for genuine participation, and keeping group meetings on track and aligned with the overall mission.

(2) **Purpose and Product:** Define the goals of the group at the outset. This provides guidance regarding the use of everyone's time and efforts. Being able to align participant efforts with a common focus, direct actions towards notable goals, and achieve relevant results improves each group member's sense of good will towards the process.

(3) **Legitimize Efforts:** Regular attendance of decision makers boosts the sense of group efficacy. Active involvement of administrators, such as district managers, communicates both respect and value for the group's efforts. In turn, this increases the group's perception of real influence and effect on final decisions, inspiring greater participation and involvement. Importantly, successful public process involvement is ultimately assessed by the degree to which agencies incorporate and implement participant work.

(4) **Give Good Information:** Distribute current and reliable data for all participants to consider. Providing accurate, credible information fosters better group analysis and identification of alternative solutions to group goals.

(5) **Be Courteous and Considerate:** Distribute meeting materials in advance, define jargon early on, respond promptly to group questions, and provide refreshments for meetings. Ultimately, the distribution of reliable project information improves the overall quality of participation. Agencies also benefit from the incentive to review existing data in preparation for the public participation process.

(6) **Build Relationships:** Create spaces to facilitate dialogue across differences and new understandings. This helps foster new understandings and improve relationships between people with different values and concerns.

(7) **Refine Your Focus:** Differentiate between local and national concerns to increase the on-the-ground impact of the group's work. Genuine consideration and deliberation of the local context for a given issue improves the group's overall purpose and focus. However, high-profile issues may require a different public participation approach to achieve consensus.

An interview with another local expert actively engaged in rural community building efforts offered three additional tips to keep in mind when coordinating public engagement meetings for collaboratives:

Tip #1:   Make the forum some version of a celebration with food involved. Providing stakeholders with another reason to come out is good press.

Tip #2:   Always have a local agency be the top billing. Local ownership of this work is going to improve the quality and durability of the input. The local group can own the purpose for the event and then introduce someone as a trusted partner.

Tip #3:   Identify 3-5 people early on who show strong interest in projects. Then invite them to get together to figure out how to structure any community engagement sessions,

Southern Willamette Forest Collaborative
Recreation Committee
Charter

Adopted November 2018

This charter serves to guide operations of the SWFC Recreation Committee (Rec Committee). The Rec Committee is a voluntary, private initiative, not convened or managed by the Forest Service. This charter clarifies the roles of participants in the Rec Committee. The charter may be modified by consensus of Committee members during any of the Committee's meetings to respond to conditions that arise during the period of its operation.

Association with the Southern Willamette Forest Collaborative

The Rec Committee is a group of volunteers participating in a multi-party effort to create a vision for recreation in the upper Willamette area. The Rec Committee was established by the Southern Willamette Forest Collaborative (SWFC) and operates consistent with the SWFC mission to "promote forest management solutions that sustain ecological resiliency and socioeconomic health for the southern Willamette forest area and nearby communities." The Rec Committee's decisions are not subject to approval and/or amendment by the SWFC Board of Directors.

Recreation Committee Mission

Cooperatively promote recreation activities and management solutions that sustain ecological resiliency and socioeconomic health for the southern Willamette forest area and nearby communities.

Goals and Objectives

The Rec Committee will work to fulfill the following objectives while developing and implementing a shared vision of recreation in the upper Willamette area and the Middle Fork District:

1. Provide recommendations for Forest Service recreation management
2. Seek out common ground and zones of agreement
3. Inventory recreation user types, uses, volunteers and investments
4. Identify overused, underused, and best uses for recreation areas
5. Work across private/public boundaries to improve recreation access and experiences and connect communities
6. Identify opportunities to leverage funds to support recreation projects
7. Serve as an advocate for recreation in the Upper Willamette area
8. Provide educational opportunities about recreation in the area and partner work
9. Serve as an information resource and knowledge base for each other and the public and identify information gaps

Membership

1. Membership on the Rec Committee is open to any and all interested stakeholders and community members who support the purpose of this charter and the SWFC mission. The process for becoming a Rec Committee member is to:
   a. Sign on to the Rec Committee charter, mission and ground rules
   b. Sign on to Rec Committee Zones of Agreement as they are developed
2. Any Rec Committee member or organization who misses three consecutive roundtable meetings without notification to the facilitator shall be subject to removal from the Rec Committee by a consensus of the Rec Committee members.
3. Employees of the Forest Service serve as liaisons and may not vote as members of the Rec Committee.
4. Organizations and individuals may choose to participate as non-voting *ad hoc* members
5. Members of the Rec Committee are responsible for reviewing the notes from each meeting for accuracy and to stay informed about decisions and discussions.
6. At the discretion of the Rec Committee, any Rec Committee member may assume other roles during the course of its operations. These roles may be as members or chairs of subcommittees or as leaders of specific tasks, such as information gathering, as designated by the Rec Committee.

Decision Making

1. *Consensus.* The Rec Committee shall strive to make decisions by consensus agreement.
   a. The Rec Committee reaches *consensus* when members in attendance agree on a choice and each member can say:
      i. I believe that others understand my point of view
      ii. I believe I understand others' point of view
      iii. Whether or not I prefer this decision, I support it (will not undermine it) because it was arrived at openly and fairly and is the best solution for us at this time
   b. In the absence of consensus the Rec Committee will identify areas of agreement and disagreement and the reasons why differences exist.

2. *Majority recommendation with minority report*. If agreement cannot be reached a separate set of recommendations can be recorded through a minority report.
   a. The minority report is drafted by members who represent the minority perspective. The members will be asked to prepare language reflecting their views, the language should clearly identify the issues and alternative recommendations.

3. *Voting Methods:*
   a. Individual members can vote.
   b. Decisions will be made via consensus agreement.
   c. A minority report option can be triggered when 75% of members in attendance agree that a majority/minority report is needed.

d. If there is going to be a key vote (as determined by the Rec Committee members present at the prior meeting), the matter should be made known to members before the meeting where the vote will occur, and the facilitator will make a good faith effort to notify all members. Proxies are allowed but require notification of the facilitator.

Operations

Meetings

1. The Rec Committee meetings will occur monthly on the last Thursday of the month unless otherwise agreed to by the committee.
2. Meetings will be facilitated by the SWFC Coordinator or other mutually agreed to facilitator.
3. A quorum (50% + 1 of all voting members) is not necessary for meetings to occur or for Rec Committee operations to proceed.
4. The Rec Committee may establish subcommittees and working groups as needed.
5. The public is welcome to attend any meeting of the Rec Committee. The facilitator may provide time during the meeting for non-committee members to comment or address the Rec Committee.
6. Any Rec Committee member may invite a member of the public or a representative of an organization to give a presentation to the Rec Committee by notifying the facilitator ahead of time.

Ground Rules

1. Every member agrees to abide by the following SWFC ground rules to participate as a member:

   a. We recognize that the best outcome depends upon cooperation and collaboration by all entities at the table. This means GENUINELY welcoming all willing participants to the table.
   b. We commit to openly communicate ideas, potential contributions, and concerns, and also commit to engage in respectful, active listening to each other.
   c. We are willing to creatively explore solutions.
   d. We recognize that we each have a unique perspective and contribution to make, whether it is expertise, labor, money, in-kind services, etc.
   e. We agree to focus on taking specific, concrete steps towards long-term, systematic outcomes.
   f. We recognize that we must endeavor to involve any person or group who could influence our ability to achieve our goals.
   g. If we, individually, are unable to make a commitment for our organization, we will work to identify the person that can and determine if the commitment is possible.

h. We commit to building trust by doing what we say we will do.

i. When possible, we agree to notify each other before taking outside actions that might impact the process. (This does not mean that we will provide information that it would be inappropriate to share in a public venue.)

2. If a conflict arises among Rec Committee members, the facilitator or SWFC board of directors shall be notified. The issue shall be raised with the full Rec Committee if the SWFC directors or facilitator cannot resolve the conflict.

Recommendations

1. Rec Committee recommendations to the Forest Service will be submitted by the SWFC in writing, which may be assisted by the facilitator or SWFC representative.

2. Recommendations from the Rec Committee subcommittee or working group will be submitted to the full Rec Committee for discussion/consideration, and will be open for revision until approved at a regular Rec Committee meeting.

3. Subcommittee and working group members are encouraged to make independent suggestions to the full Rec Committee or submit other independent ideas as the need arises.

Dissolution and Duration

The Rec Committee may dissolve at any time upon an agreed resolution for dissolution at a Rec Committee meeting. Dissolution will not occur before the resolution has been brought before the SWFC Board of Directors for discussion and feedback. Dissolution requires a simple majority vote, not consensus.

Conflict of Interest

If any member of the of the Rec Committee or any of its subcommittees has a direct or indirect financial, organizational or personal interest, in any contract relating to the SWFC's or committee operations, or in any contract for furnishing services or supplies to it, or on- going litigation in a project proposed through the Recreation collaborative process said member shall fully disclose this fact to the full body of which she/he is a member. Upon such disclosure the member's vote shall not be counted during a decision on the matter/issue.

Amendments

This charter may be revised at any time by consensus of the Rec Committee members.