

Stemilt-Squilchuck Recreation Plan  
July 18, 2017  
Meeting Notes

## Participants

Pete Lopushinsky – Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife  
Brian Patnode – Washington State Parks  
Cindy Uren – Forest Ridge Resident  
Joe Smith – Washington Department of Natural Resources  
Josh Jorgensen – Mission Ridge  
William Moore – Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife  
Travis Hornby – Tread/Evergreen Mountain Bike Alliance  
Gus Bekker – El Sendero Backcountry Ski and Snowshoe Club  
Bruce Merighi – Wenatchee Valley Fly Fishers  
Susan Rosebourgh - National Park Service  
Erin McKay – Chelan County Department of Natural Resources  
Jennifer Stein – National Park Service  
Brianna Truden - National Park Service  
Pat Norlin – Wenatchee Valley Chamber of Commerce  
Cody Gillin – Washington Trails Association  
John Lehmkuhl – Stemilt Growers  
Jerry Gutzweiler – Wenatchee Sportsmen  
Ben Alworth – Stemilt Growers

## Desired Conditions

Erin reviewed changes made to desired conditions since last meeting. Erin will be going to upcoming irrigation meeting to discuss desired conditions and any concerns.

- Zone 1
  - Potential shooting range in section 27
- Zone 2 changes
  - Changed border of zone 2 so southern edge is closer to Mission Ridge and zone 3 encompasses what was southern portion of zone 2
  - Took out overnight use in zone 2, since this is only in state park
  - Potential motorized use from and for Forest Ridge residents only (sections 17, 19, and small portion of 20)
    - **Decision:** subcommittee to work further on this- Bruce, Cindy, Josh, Gus, Pete, Ben, Erin
  - General zone 2 discussion notes: Erin confirmed not all activities listed in desired conditions for zone 2 are appropriate (allowed) in all of zone 2
  - Recreation planning in Zone 2 should consider wildfire reduction strategies with any recreational development.
- Zone 3 changes
  - Potential of increase in recreation use from DNR lands Ellensburg/Colockum
  - Areas of zone 3 have been logged and now managed for forest health

- Highest use occurs on green dot roads, still opportunities for solitude in other areas
- Will add motorcycles specifically for green dot roads
- General desired condition discussion notes: Overall things to consider for basin – wildlife sensitive in spring. Please don't expand use then, same time as muddy trails/roads

## Recreation Concepts

Susan introduced the updated list of preliminary recreation concepts to the group. Due to time constraints she requested feedback on use characteristics for concepts at the four heavily used sites listed below. Susan encouraged recreation committee members to review the full list of preliminary recreation concepts after the meeting for things that need to be changed.

Brief brainstorm of use characteristics

- Zone 1 – Stemilt Loop Road area:
  - Observation: 15 vehicles on 4th July weekend last year, people were camping in dispersed sites along green dot roads
- Steffens Meadow
  - Sharing past experiences – as Wenatchee youth, spring and summer camping in big trucks, tearing up terrain
  - Fires in non-designated locations is a concern
  - Want way to generate revenue for existing uses
  - Move forward with two rustic group sites and one individual site and trails down to the water, parking for what you can fit in the already impacted area, vault toilet is appropriate, can get pumper truck up there
- Orr Creek Road junction to Upper Wheeler Reservoir - potential location for parking area
  - Concerns – 4-5 cars park by current gate, block irrigation gate, catalytic converters & fires, fly fishermen need closer access for 60-70lb rafts – can they get access to rim of reservoir?
  - Also 5, 6 fire rings in dispersed sites on Orr Creek road near intersection with Upper Wheeler Reservoir road
  - Bruce willing to do surveys on use of this site
  - Dispersed sites that are currently being used are in dangerous fire fuels areas
- Lily Lake area
  - 2 dozen people on peak weekends, after 4<sup>th</sup> July # of people drops significantly to couple per day.
  - Popular during open fishing season which is in April thru July 4<sup>th</sup> weekend
  - People camp on nice weekends. June – Oct for camping, usually only a few
  - mostly day use
  - There are seasonal agricultural campers that do stay more permanently
  - Other vehicle types include RVs and occasional horse trailers (closer to snow park).
- Clear Lake
  - 15 cars for peak season
  - People camp there, or have bonfire

- People park ATV trailers along road on way up to lake, half dozen ATVs and 3-4 cars at bottom of paved road and can go all the way to Ellensburg
- **Comments:** Discuss management goals and side boards of these sites with managers early and involve them in conceptual process. Also consider general Wenatchee community recreation needs and desires (e.g. moto track, close to home camping opportunities, they may not know something they are doing is illegal and may continue to pursue that activity so consider appropriate places for all activities, etc.)

## **Wildlife Considerations**

William Moore gave a presentation on evaluating recreational activities in wildlife habitats. William worked on the Naneum plan. He works in district 8, but is currently helping out in the Stemilt.

- Gaines, Williams, et al. article 2003 best article for understanding wildlife and recreation in this area.
- William said current wildlife types in the basin are doing well.
- Likely the Stemilt elk population has increased 600-700 animals.
- Types of recreation and wildlife impacts include: harvest, habitat modifications, and disturbance
- Most common impacts across literature for road access, motorized access, ski trail literature are displacement and collision, and disturbance. Recommendations include buffer distances (defining the area or zone of human influence). If areas have 70% canopy cover of conifer stands and greater than 250 acres can exclude from need from buffers. If area has topographic complexity (elk/people have limited line of sight), can reduce buffers.

Recreation types and suggested buffer (m) – this can be changed depending on things above, for species and activity, consider birds, riparian species – refer to Stemilt Vision Plan and refer to buffer modeling process as a tool. Currently listed here is for elk.

- Hiking trails 86m – horseback riding, more like this (120)
- Motorized trails 300m – mountain bike (200m)
- Low traffic road - 900m
- Mod traffic road - 1000m
- High traffic road - 1300m

## **Evaluation Criteria**

Left for next meeting due to time constraints

## **Next Steps and Action Items**

Bruce, Cindy, Josh, Gus, Pete, Ben, Erin, Brian – Forest Ridge motorized access sub committee

Please contact Erin if you would be willing to help us collect observational data at one of the four sites we discussed today while you are out recreating. We will also be sending out a very short, five question survey to all of you.

We made it through part of recreation concepts today. Please review all of them, make comments so we can begin to prioritize. Erin will send recreation concepts, desired conditions and meeting notes via email, they are currently on the website.

County and NPS/RTCA tasks:

- Look at Our valley our future survey and Chamber of Commerce Outdoor Recreation economic impact study and survey once released to learn more about what community desires for recreation.
- Develop a map with recreation concepts and with wildlife data and buffers.
- Send recreation concepts, desired conditions and meeting notes via email to recreation committee
- Post Wildlife presentation on the web
- Post winter use presentation on the web (from Gus)
- Start with talking to managers, including Irrigation, about broader options for sites. Jerry can also help with the camping discussions.
- Create use survey and observational data form
- Share concepts with Stemilt Partnership

**Next recreation committee meeting is planned for September 25.**