**Stemilt-Squilchuck Recreation Planning**

**May 22, 2018 Meeting Notes**

**Participants:**

Gene Reed, Apple Country Snowmobile Club and Wenatchee Valley Ridge Runners ATV

Donna Germain, Wenatchee Valley Ridge Runners ATV

Tom Hendrickson, Apple Country Snowmobile Club

Mark Shipman, Wenatchee Outdoors

Andy Dappen, El Sendero

Ariahna Jones, Wenatchee Valley College

Cindy Uren, Forest Ridge Resident

Kari Johnson, Wenatchee Valley Chamber of Commerce

Pete Lopushinsky, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife

Scott McCorquodale, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife

James Wiggs, Wenatchee Heights Reclamation District

Chester Marler, El Sendero

Ben Alworth, Stemilt Growers

Travis Hornby, Evergreen Mountain Bike Alliance

Bruce Merighi, Wenatchee Valley Fly Fishers

Josh Jorgensen, Mission Ridge

Pat Norlin, Wenatchee Valley Chamber of Commerce

Erin McKay, Chelan County Natural Resource Department

Susan Rosebrough, National Park Service Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance

**Welcome and Background**

Erin opened the meeting by sharing the history of the planning process, decision framework, summary of the public comments received to date, and what has happened since the Open House.

**Naneum Plan**

Scott McCorquodale, Regional Wildlife Program Manager, WDFW, presented on how the Naneum Plan was developed and how it is being implemented. Scott shared that DNR and WDFW worked with an Advisory Committee to develop the plan. Not everyone got everything they wanted, but in the end the committee could live with the plan. In implementing the plan, there is not a set fund dedicated to implementation but the group understood that having a plan can lead to gaining funding resources. The state looks at the objectives as a key component of the plan. The strategies under the objectives are ideas on how to meet that objective, but there is wiggle room there in how those objectives are met. For example objectives for winter use in the Stemilt area include providing a nonmotorized winter trail system and to continue to provide winter motorized recreation opportunities. Within those broad objectives the Stemilt Recreation Plan can help define strategies to meet these objectives.

**Winter Recreation use**

Tom Hendrickson from Apple Country Snowmobile Club shared that the motorized group has met several times since the public meeting. Tom and his group have developed a proposed non-motorized winter area that his group could live with. He presented this to the recreation committee. Tom factored in the types of experiences non-motorized users wanted and tried to provide opportunities closer to access areas as wells as separation between the two user groups. The proposal uses the terrain rather than section lines to define the area. Areas that have traditionally been heavily used by snowmobilers would continue to be shared use areas under this proposal.

The group shared the following in regards to important elements to consider when developing a non-motorized winter recreation area:

* Need to consider the range of types of non-motorized uses and areas desired by these groups including back-country skiing, snowshoeing, and cross-country skiing. All of these users have different types of desired experiences, distances traveled, and desired terrain.
* Experience is important including the area is free of noise, elevation change, and viewpoints.
* Voluntary non-motorized areas may work better than mandatory because enforcement is a challenge and a voluntary area may get more support.
* A terrain based concept makes sense as the separations are more clear on the ground (more clear than section lines). Groomed road is also a clear boundary, but this brings the two groups close together as there will be many snowmobiles on the groomed routes. Also, the proposed groomed trail boundary blocks out a lot of terrain currently and traditionally used by snowmobilers.
* Concern over Lake Clara, Section 23, both the motorized and nonmotorized groups would like to use this area
* Enforcement will be difficult. State patrollers would likely use the groomed snowmobile trails to patrol and would likely not be able to access the ridges. Enforcement would be a challenge given resources under any proposal.
* The Mission Ridge permit area encompasses a lot of the area around the ski area that is included in the new proposal already (the permit area is already non-motorized). Open to considering non-motorized routes through their property.
* Some concern that the Section 20 non-motorized area is too narrow
* Section 23 – some of the prime skiing area not included in proposed non-motorized area
* The intention of the proposal is to include the finger ridges above Lake Clara. Need better mapping and on the ground investigation. It is tricky to map and define because there is not a basalt ridge providing a clear delineation.
* Consider adding a trailhead access point in Section 16 or near Section 16 for summer and winter use (Orr Creek Rd entrance).

**Summer Recreation Use**

* Green Dot connector road proposal: all other suggested green dot road closures to mitigate the new proposed connector would impact hunting activity/access. Discussion about what the Naneum Plan says in terms of road mileage, there is no specification that road mileage cannot increase. Scott McCorquodale explained that road density in any given area is more important than overall road mileage. WDFW to revisit proposal of opening connector road if Upper Wheeler can be closed off at the point the connector road branches off, and if other routes accessing Upper Wheeler Reservoir can be closed off, to reduce impacts of ATVs accessing the reservoir from Upper Wheeler Road.
* North-South trail concept from Nanuem Plan- group discussed locating the trail through the Mission Ridge development and permit area, within impact buffers of existing roads, to avoid new impacts to wildlife. WDFW and the planning group agreed that no new trails should be constructed through the southern part of the basin in Zone 3, to avoid drawing more people, traffic, and impact to that area. There is interest in locating a trail in Zone 2 to link up with trails from Ellensburg. Keep this in plan as “assess potential for locating the North-South non-motorized trail within existing road buffers in Zone 2 and through Mission Ridge permit area”
* Concern was expressed that this trail may attract more people, and therefore more trash and impact to Squilchuck State Park and the residents of Forest Ridge. Assess ways to distribute impact (multiple access points to the trail, separate trailhead, more enforcement, etc.).

**Next Steps and Wrap-up:**

* The winter recreation non-motorized representatives will share the proposal broadly with their membership.
* The motorized and non-motorized winter recreation users want to work together to come to an agreement on mapping out a final proposal. These groups will organize meetings and try to have a revised proposal by July meeting.
* WDFW will check internally regarding the green dot connector proposal and the possibility of opening it if Upper Wheeler Road can be closed at the junction.
* Next group meeting – July 18 or 25?
* Hope is to be able to present plan to Stemilt Partnership by September