**Stemilt Recreation Committee Meeting**

**7/31/18 Meeting Notes**

**Participants:**

Larry Leach (DNR)

Pete Lopushinsky (WDFW)

Bruce Merighi (Wenatchee Valley Flyfishers)

Cody Gillin (WTA)

Travis Hornby (TREAD)

Cindy Uren (Forest Ridge)

Tom Hendrickson (Apple Country Snowmobile Club)

Donna Germain (WVRR ATV Club)

Gene Reed (ACSC and WVRR)

Herb Troxel (Wenatchee Sportsman Association)

James Wiggs (WHRD)

Ace Bollinger (ACSC)

Gus Bekker (El Sendero)

Ben Alworth (Stemilt Growers)

Patrick Norlan (Chamber of Commerce)

Carmen Andonegui (WDFW)

Eric Pentico (WDFW)

Susan Rosebrough (NPS)

Erin McKay (Chelan County)

**Notes:**

Erin opened the meeting and provided background on the history of the planning process to date including the decision process, core issues, public comments received, non-motorized area subgroup’s work, and planning timeline.

**Recommendations and Public Comments**

The group reviewed the public comments received and discussed the following topics related to the recommendations:

* Non-motorized Area. A subgroup consisting of the motorized community and organizations and individuals from the non-motorized group have met and developed a compromise proposal for a voluntary non-motorized area. Erin shared this proposal with the group. El Sendero Backcountry Ski and Snowshoe Club’s board met and selected to not adopt the compromise proposal and to maintain support for their March 2018 proposal for non-motorized area.

The recreation committee’s decision process states if consensus can’t be reached then all sides will be presented to the Stemilt partnership and land managers. Since El Sendero is part of our recreation committee and does not currently agree with the compromise proposal, the County will present all sides to the Stemilt partnership and land managers. Several members of the committee requested that the status quo alternative of no non-motorized area also be presented*.* Erin and Susan will draft a description of all of the proposals including the (1) Motorized and Non-motorized Subgroup’s compromise proposal (July 2018), (2) El Sendero’s proposal (March 2018), (3) the Motorized group’s status quo proposal (March 2018), and (4) the Motorized group’s first compromise proposal of a non-motorized area (May 2018).The recreation committee will have a chance to review and provide input on this.

Larry, stated that he was pleased with the collaboration he witnessed while attending the subgroup meetings. Larry said he thought the subgroup’s proposal was consistent with the Naneum plan and he supports this proposal for DNR’s lands in the Stemilt basin.

Several other recreation committee participants stated their support for the compromise proposal. It does hurt the motorized users’ use, but they can live with the compromise.

Some of the land in the non-motorized area includes USFS lands. Erin has reached out to the USFS and preliminary discussions have indicated a voluntary closure would not need to go through USFS NEPA process. The group requested a better understanding and documentation of the USFS approval process and how this fits with their winter travel plan. Erin will reach out to the USFS to discuss.Tom pointed out that if the action is voluntary and motorized user groups do a good job of educating and promoting this with their membership, government intervention may not be needed. Blewitt pass is an example of a voluntary non-motorized area. Erin noted that voluntary closures may work better if all groups agree. Gus expressed concern over a voluntary closure.

* Connector for Forest Ridge residents:
  + The recommendation for a legal motorized summer connecter road for Forest Ridge residents still stands as is.
  + The non-motorized area subgroup and public comments raised concerns about a winter motorized route through the non-motorized area. Having a motorized route through the middle of the non-motorized area impacts the quality of the recreational experience provided. The group provided input that access for Forest Ridge residents is needed. Erin shared the support for this connector received from Forest Ridge residents during the comment period. Ace and Gus shared that this issue was brought up in the Naneum plan. Group members expressed the desire to locate the connector on willing private landowners lands if possible because this would provide the least impact to the non-motorized area. Erin and Ben shared that private landowners are currently working on plans for orchard development and are not ready to discuss recreation until those plans are defined. After those plans are developed, the private landowners may be willing to discuss access options if it doesn’t impact orchard development or private landowners’ access needs.
  + The group identified a need to understand what the process is for a winter closure on a county road. Also any road closures would be for the public only, irrigation districts, private landowners, and public land managers would still need motorized access. Erin will look into the process to do a public seasonal closure on county lands.
  + The Noyd easement goes through the non-motorized area and would remain a motorized access route.
  + Change language in the recommendations to provide access to Forest Ridge with the least impact to the non-motorized area. Other alternatives may exist on private lands and WDFW lands. Routes need to be identified.
* Fire –Page 1: Add fire agencies as partners. Also add seasonal closures when fire danger is at a certain level. County calls for closure on county roads. The DNR commissioner can close DNR roads. Roads, not lands are closed.
* Roads – Page 2: Keep access generally the same- exact road mileage is less important as access to the areas. Change the language to say an increase or decrease in roads would be resource based.
* Trails – Page 2: Change to say minimize new trails in zone 3 except the north-south trail. Remove reference to zone 1.
* ATV – Page 3: Change ATV to motorized as it is not specific to ATV users only. Part of this would need private land authorization.
* Lily Lake Page 4: Change pending land ownership exchange to access recreation development pending discussions with USFWS and WDFW. Erin to work with WDFW on this language.
* Upper Wheeler Road – Page 5: Change language from trailhead to parking and signage.
* Snow-park – Page 6: Change five spots to adequate parking. Add signage to the snowmobile parking areas about where non-motorized parking areas are to direct users to those sites. Add that the County is willing to help access snowmobile parking opportunities on their lands.
* Seasonal Closures and Trails: Page 7- Remove mention of private lands. Check with Chelan Land Trust regarding their seasonal trail closures.
* Snow-parks – Page 8: Change language to clarify the snow-parks are for access to Section 16, not in Section 16.
* Pole Flat Road – closing this could provide habitat benefits. Closing the road has challenges because of the multiple ownerships. It currently serves recreation users. Focus on closing non-green dot spur roads off of Pole Flats road for habitat protection.

**Schedule and Next Steps**

* Erin will share the draft plan with the Recreation Committee no later than mid-September.
* The recreation committee will review and provide input to Erin from mid-late September.
* Erin will incorporate input before finalizing the draft plan and will organize a meeting of the group as needed before or after sharing the plan with the Stemilt Partnership.
* Erin will present the findings of the draft plan to the Stemilt Partnership at their next meeting which will likely be end of September. All sides of the non-motorized recreation story will be presented. Erin will wait to share copies of the recreation plan with the Stemilt Partnership until after the recreation committee review.
* The goal is to have the plan finalized and approved by November.

**Action Items:**

* Erin/Susan/Jenn – finalize the draft recreation plan to include the missing sections on implementation and monitoring; reflect changes to the recommendations based on input from the group; and include a description of the non-motorized area alternatives and group process.
* Erin will reach out to the USFS to discuss the non-motorized area, the USFS approval process, and how it relates to the winter travel management area.
* Erin will look into what the process is to do a public seasonal closure on county roads.
* Erin to work with WDFW on the best language to describe next steps for Lily Lake.
* Erin will check with Josh/Mission Ridge on their interest/willingness to have a public snow-park on their lands.