

**Nason Ridge Stewardship Group Meeting
February 26, 2025
6-8pm, Online**

Attending:

Shon Smith (County)
Mike Kaputa (County)
Elle Robinson (County)
Erin McKay (County)
Trevor Wylie (State Parks)
Chad Spies (Monitor)
Bill and Nancy Miller (Kahler Glen)
Sue McCausland (6910)
Mark Khilstrom (6910)
Mic McLane (EMBA)
Dave Millard (Kahler Glen MC and 6910)
Eric Prestbo (Stellerwood)
Mary and Tim Gallagher (Kahler Glen)
James Hudson (Yakama Nation)
Mimi Brunges (6910)

Meeting summary

We discussed the management and monitoring of the Nason Ridge Community Forest (NRCF), including updates on snow park development, trail maintenance, and wildlife monitoring. Trevor discussed challenges with winter grooming and plans to request funding for a side-by-side vehicle to improve access. The group reviewed monitoring data from trail cameras and vehicle counters, which showed high levels of recreational use and wildlife activity. Mary and Tim shared results from bird surveys, highlighting the forest's biodiversity. The team discussed plans for controlling knapweed through targeted spraying and hand-pulling efforts. Chad proposed building a picnic table at the Butcher Creek gate, and the group considered adding benches at Big Red. The conversation ended with a review of the proposed budget for the upcoming year and a discussion of potential volunteer projects.

Winter Flooding and Equipment Needs- Trevor Wylie, State Parks

Trevor discussed the challenges faced this winter due to unusual December flooding, which affected ski trails, roads, and snow parks. He explained that areas experienced washouts not seen before, and they plan to assess road conditions in late spring to determine future improvements. Trevor also mentioned the need to replace an old snowmobile and the

possibility of acquiring a side-by-side for better grooming, which would cost around \$36,000. He noted that having a side-by-side would also be useful for maintaining a planned bridge. Mary inquired about the practicality of using a larger grooming machine at a potential Butcher Creek snow park, and Trevor confirmed it would be possible but challenging due to logistical constraints.

Forest Health- Erin McKay, CCNRD

The meeting covered several topics related to forest management and community projects. Erin discussed ongoing work with state parks to develop a master agreement for managing various projects, including Snow Park, and mentioned safety improvements being worked on with WSDOT. Bill raised concerns about emergency access during flooding and suggested adding a gate on a bridge for emergency vehicles, which Trevor said he would pass along to the capital department. The group also discussed the implementation of the Nason Ridgetop Fuel Break project, funded through multiple sources, which will begin in June and involve machine mastication thinning to improve forest health and create wildlife corridors. The group discussed a thinning project and its location relative to roads and trails, with Mark inquiring about access routes. Erin confirmed that the warming hut is at the western end of a long, skinny purple area and explained that roads provide access to the project site.

Thinning Project and Knapweed Control- group

The team discussed herbicide application for knapweed control, with Tim suggesting a targeted backpack spraying approach rather than vehicle spraying to minimize damage to native plants. Chad and Mary shared insights on knapweed infestations in specific areas, and the group agreed to create maps highlighting problem spots for contractors.

NRCF Monitoring- Elle Robinson, CCNRD

Elle presented data from vehicle counters and trail cameras monitoring forest use over the past three years. She noted that the 6910 road had significantly more traffic than the 112 spur road, with a noticeable drop in traffic around October 2024 that may be related to logging activities or resident movements. The trail cameras revealed high winter use for non-motorized recreation, particularly snowshoers, and showed that a recently installed fence appeared to reduce motorized vehicle access. Mary and Tim discussed wildlife observations from the cameras, including the presence of fisher and marten, and emphasized that despite high human use, there had been no wildlife confrontations.

Bird Monitoring and Trail Activity- Mary and Tim Gallagher

Mary and Tim discussed the bird monitoring project in the NRCF, which covers 9 sites and has recorded over 100 species. They explained the survey method, which involves counting birds

within a 100-yard radius at each site monthly. The data is compiled and shared through eBird, an international citizen science platform.

Budget Planning- Erin

Erin and Elle reviewed the proposed budget and work plan for the upcoming year, with Erin explaining they are transitioning between funding sources after a three-year grant ended, and will use a portion of the Stewardship fund while pursuing new grant opportunities. There was no objection from the group about using stewardship funds to support 2026 NRCF work.

Trail Maintenance and 2026 Volunteer Projects- group

The group discussed trail maintenance challenges, particularly noting significant damage from recent flooding and water bars installed by Tim to prevent further erosion. Mary reported that the Northwest Youth Corps will be working on trails from Round Mountain down, and Trevor agreed to coordinate with horse concessionaires about trail conditions. The group expressed gratitude for the state park crew's efforts in clearing downed trees to maintain trail access. Mary and Chad talked about adding a bench at Big Red, with Chad mentioning a fallen cedar tree that could be used for building. The group also discussed the sign-in sheets at various locations. Erin provided an update on a grant for road maintenance on the 6910, which had been approved after some delays. Mark suggested using volunteer labor for the installation, which Erin confirmed was possible.

Next steps

- [Trevor: Pass along to State Parks capital department the suggestion to consider emergency vehicle access/gate on the new bridge.](#)
- [Erin/Elle: Develop a targeted Knapweed spraying plan with the contractor, incorporating feedback for backpack/foot spraying in priority areas, and loop in relevant volunteers for input and mapping of bad spots.](#)
- [Chad: Draw up a map highlighting bad Knapweed spots for the spraying crew.](#)
- [Chad: Coordinate with Dave and others on building the bike/pedestrian pass-through at the Khaler gate in April/May.](#)
- [Michael \(Evergreen\): Coordinate with Forest Service regarding Northwest Youth Corps trail work on Nason Ridge Trail, and provide professional staff support as needed.](#)
- [Erin/Elle/Mark: Discuss and coordinate with Butcher Creek community volunteers about using grant funds for materials \(not labor\) for 6910 road maintenance, to maximize volunteer labor.](#)
- [Elle/Erin: Reach out to group with summer plans for projects as discussed.](#)