**Stemilt-Squilchuck Recreation**

**September 25, 2017 Meeting Notes**

**Participants:**

James Wiggs, Wenatchee Heights Reclamation District

Jerry Gutzwiler, Wenatchee Sportsmen’s Association

Pete Lopushinsky, WDFW

Brian Patnode, WA State Parks

Gordon Goodwin, Stemilt Irrigation District

Cindy Uren, Forest Ridge Resident

Bruce Merighi, Wentachee FlyFishers

Cody Gillin, WTA

Josh Jorgensen, Mission Ridge

Gus Bekker, El Sendero Backcountry Ski and Snowshoe Club

Ace Bollinger, Apple Country Snowmobile Club

Travis Hornby, Evergreen/TREAD

Pat Norlin, Wenatchee Chamber of Commerce

Susan Rosebrough, NPS

Erin McKay, CCNRD

Mike Kaputa, CCNRD

**Planning Process and Updates:**

Erin and Susan provided and overview of the history of the planning process and updates since the last meeting.

The following feedback was expressed for the Noyd Easement and motorized use for Forest Ridge residents:

* Concern about wildlife impacts during spring calving season (May/June); consider adding a seasonal closure
* Winter use needs to stay on the road
* Education about the rules and enforcement are needed. If abuse happens, the access should no longer be allowed.

**Recreation Concepts and Alternatives:**

The group then divided into two smaller groups to discuss the recreation concepts and alternatives and come up with an ideal alternative. Below is the feedback received from each group:

**Group 1**

**Zone 1**

**Road:**

* Great Basin Road is well maintained to the high use areas – Clear Lake, Lily Lake. Passenger vehicles can access this.
* Other areas are harder like Steffen’s Meadow and Upper Wheeler reservoir are harder to get too and 4 wheel drive vehicles are generally needed. This section of the road is maintained in hot spots on an as needed basis.
* Add access needs of Gordy – on map

Camping:

* Leave dispersed campsites as no fee sites
* Charge a small fee for camping at the higher use areas (Clear Lake, Lily Lake, and possibly Steffen’s Meadow). If a restroom is provided a fee could be charged.
  + Consider though low-income people often use the area, especially Clear Lake; want to make it accessible to them
  + Research near-by campsites with similar rustic facilities to determine appropriate fees.
  + Would fees pay for themselves? Need to ensure it is feasible.
* Start with smaller number of campsites and have the ability to expand; use the already impacted areas
* Alternative B closest to what the group would like to see.
* Upper Wheeler – keep camping near the main road
* Facilities: fire ring, picnic table, trash, signage, vault toilet at high use areas
* Dispersed: fire ring, picnic table, sign, delineated site

Trails:

* Keep trails away from diversions, weir boxes of irrigation districts
* Concern about spring and wildlife impacts; may need seasonal closures
* Some interest in road to trail conversions, but not specific places identified. Not as high demand for trails in this zone as in Zone 2. Concentrating trails near the high use areas makes sense.
* Consider creating new trails along the green dot roads with a 50-100 foot buffer.
* Keep non-motorized area near Squilchuck Park side of Zone 1 and potential for motorized trail use near Lily Lake and Clear Lake.

Target shooting:

* Concern over existing use and growing potential for conflicts with other recreation uses
* Support for a designated area if one is found suitable
* Enforcement challenging

Non-motorized Snow Park:

* Upper Wheeler Road snow park – 10 parking spaces, seasonal toilet
* If feasible, plowing the road and putting in a parking lot a little higher would help make the area accessible to more people.

Non-motorized Area:

* West of the groomed snowmobile trails
* Includes the green dot roads as non-motorized as well. The exception is for administrative/operational use by the irrigation districts and other land managers.
* Need more definition in the alternatives and concepts on this – Gus to provide more information

Winter Trails:

* Nordic ski trails in sections #17 and #19

Add info on priorities?

**Zone 2**

Camping:

* Largely focused at Squilchuck Park – group campground
* Sometimes Mission Ridge parking lot is used for camping for events
* Potential new camping opportunities may be available at the Mission Ridge expansion area

**Trails**

* Trails in the summer for hikers and bikers connecting the Mission Ridge Expansion area to Squilchukc State Park and Boy Scout Camp
* Nordic Ski trails in the proposed Wildlife Preserve Area
* Concentrated use at Mission Ridge Expansion area including ADA accessible trails
* Seasonal closure of trail in the spring may be needed in many places to protect wildlife

Trailheads:

* Trailhead on Mission Ridge Ski Area property in the summer with a permanent vault toilet and garbage collection
* Trailhead(s) on the new Mission Ridge Expansion area for summer and winter use and include permanent vault toilet and garbage collection.

Roads:

* Close a small section of green-dot road south of the proposed Noyd easement

**Zone 3**

Camping:

* Leave camping as dispersed, don’t need facilities
* Close illegal campsites that are more than 100’ off the green dot roads

Trails:

* Support for non-motorized trails

Huts:

* Backcountry hut/yurt with a permanent vault toilet for skiers
* Permanent warming hut at four corners for snowmobilers
* The huts are being proposed for winter use, but there is also potential for summer use

**Group 2**

**Zone 1**

Roads:

* Alternative C: Improve/maintain green dots roads and graded and graveled, to allow for continued use into the future. The roads are borderline undrivable, and to invest in the recreational and other resources in the Stemilt, the roads need continued maintenance.
* Seasonal closures during mud season to protect roads- the most damage to the roads occurs at this time. Closures of non-green dot roads to prevent people from driving in non-sustainable areas. Roads committee currently working on these proposals.

Camping:

* Vault toilets preferred over seasonal toilets
* Alternative B/C generally favored.
* Lily Lake and Clear Lake: maximize day use parking to accommodate peak visitation, gravel parking areas to protect from mud damage/spread of impacts
* Design to assess how many campsites can fit into area without being right next to each other, and determine number of sites based on design. Medium number of sites.
* Fees may make sense eventually, but due to the multiple ownership of lands, may be difficult to figure out a how a fee system could work, and may cost more to hire someone to manage fee system than the fees would generate. Fees could be a later phase for these two campgrounds. Not in favor of fee system for camping elsewhere in the basin.
* Steffen’s Meadow: again, see what the footprint allows, but stay on the side of restoration. Enable sites to be used as a group site.
* Upper Wheeler: a few campsites at the junction would be appropriate. Use impacted area to delineate campsites, with fire pits that could keep fire impacts contained. Similar in size/capacity to Steffen’s Meadow.

Trails:

* In favor of converting roads to non-motorized routes.
* Concern over wildlife impacts on Noyd Easement and crossover route between Upper Wheeler and Orr Creek: consider seasonal wildlife closures for calving.

Target shooting:

* Phase, with wording in plan about assessing feasibility of a designated shooting area. Research about the legality of shooting in campgrounds. Preference would be to have areas where shooting is not allowed, such as campgrounds and high use areas.

Winter:

* If Lily Lake SnoPark needs to move, one SnoPark in Section 23 (current one at Clear Lake) is sufficient if it can be enlarged to accommodate use.
* Upper Wheeler Road non-motorized SnoPark: upper site preferable, but road does not currently get plowed. Would be a bigger expense, but would be better when snow level is higher.
* Winter non-motorized area as described: west of groomed snowmobile route and east of Upper Wheeler Road. Possibly alternative Snopark could be Orr Creek Road entrance.
* Snowmobile access route through winter non-motorized use area needs more specific wording to ensure the designated route is adhered to.

**Zone 2**

Trails

* Seasonal closures to motorized traffic on Noyd Easement to protect elk calving. No new motorized trail development in this area. Any new non-motorized trail development should have seasonal closures.
* Winter trails are fine in terms of wildlife, including groomed Nordic.
* Support for better parking/vault toilet at Lake Clara Trailhead/Mission Ridge parking lot.
* Wildlife conservation area extending into Section 19 to buffer Section 20 and the development area. No new trail development in this area, but old road grades could be converted to non-motorized trails. Any new trail connectors to Squilchuck State Park would be outside of this conservation area.
* Nordic trails connecting to Section 17 are too vague at this point to include in plan.

**Zone 3**

* Motorized access to Naneum Ridge: this already happens on the Pole Flat road, there is a gate that dirtbikes and ATVs can go around. Consider making this a designated motorized route.
* Leave dispersed site as is, support for converting roads to trails around the site on Pole Flat Road.
* Warming hut for snowmobilers near 4 Corners area
* Backcountry ski hut in Section 36 on Naneum Ridge.

**Report out Feedback**

* Concern about where the fuel for camping at campsites and huts would come from? Will people be cutting down limbs and trees?
  + Could use the down wood in slash piles
  + Need for enforcement and education

**Desired Conditions**

* Erin will email out the desired conditions and ask for an email vote on approval.

**Next steps:**

* Next meeting 11/28; 1-4 pm