

**ODNRA OHV Designated Routes Working Group
FIELD TOUR/MEETING NOTES
January 22-23, 2010
North Riding Area Field Tour (Jan 22)
Meeting – Honeyman State Park (Jan 23)**

Friday, January 22

Welcome and Introductions:

Field tour attendees gathered at the South Jetty Staging Area on South Jetty Road at 12:30 P.M. Ross Holloway welcomed the attendees, and Sharon Stewart introduced agency staff. Working Group members introduced themselves. Ross highlighted the field tour objectives, and Sharon Stewart provided an overview of logistics and transportation for the afternoon.

Attendees – Working Group Members and Staff:

| Name | Representing | Name | Representing |
|---------------|-------------------------|----------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| Ross Holloway | Facilitator | Sharon Stewart | SNF – ODNRA |
| Larry Robison | Coos County Parks Dept | Barbara Taylor | Cape Arago Audubon |
| Jody Phillips | OHV Users | Scott Ryland | Organized OHV Groups |
| Liz Kelly | USFWS | Arrow Coyote | Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw Indians |
| John Carnahan | Emergency Responders | Mark Tilton | Community Leader |
| Greg Hoover | OHV Organized Groups | Doug Duchscher | OHV Guides/Outfitters |
| Marty Giles | Non-OHV Guide/Outfitter | Adele Dawson | General Public |
| John Getz | Mushroom Pickers | | |

Working Group members not present: Ron Price, OPRD

Attendees – Others:

| Name | Representing | Name | Representing |
|-----------------|------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|
| Shane Gill | ODNRA OHV Staff | Marty Stein | SNF - Botanist |
| Janine Burgess | ODNRA OHV Staff | Cindy Burns | SNF – Wildlife Biologist |
| Keith Consiglio | Mushroom Picker | Neil Cox | Self – OHV user |
| Lance Rowland | Self – OHV user | Barbara Rowland | Self – OHV user |
| Craig Hawkins | Self – OHV user | Tami Hawkins | Self – OHV user |
| David Horland | Self – Dirt Bike Rider | Leo Cox | Self – OHV user |
| Brandon Bretl | Self – OHV user | Kate Bretl | Self – OHV user |
| Jon Gustafson | Self – OHV user | Joe Culley | Self – OHV user |
| Clifford Pallin | Self – OHV user | | |

The group departed for the first stop at 12:40 P.M.

Stop 1 – Mushroom Habitat Area – The group walked into a plantation stand that is an example of high quality matsutake mushroom habitat. John Getz and Keith Consiglio described how user created trails can encroach into the stands as the “spider web” of trails expands. John provided some background information on the matsutake mushroom industry and the importance of the habitats in the ODNRA for producing high quality mushrooms. In response to a question from Liz Kelly, John explained that a very small percentage of the land within Management Area 10(C) consists of good mushroom habitat. In response to comments from some public members, Ross clarified the definition and purpose of the 10(C) area, and that the question here was not whether this stand should be within 10(C), but rather, we are addressing the question of what designated routes might be appropriate in a stand like this, and how mushroom habitat should be considered in developing recommendations. In response to a question from Arrow Coyote about how long stands like this will remain mushroom habitat, John indicated that it was not really known. Stands seem to begin being productive at around age 25, and it seems clear that they will eventually no longer be good mushroom habitat. Marty Stein commented that indeed, shore pine (Lodgepole pine) is a relatively short-lived tree species, and he would expect this stand to evolve and change over time, with other species such as Sitka spruce likely to start appearing. It was pointed out that this area appears as open sand on the 1962 aerial photos, and that these plantations were established in the 1970s. In response to a comment from John that he believed it was possible that OHV exhaust could affect mushroom quality, several group members expressed concern about trying to consider or address issues for which no empirical evidence existed. John acknowledged that this was an anecdotal observation on his part, and that no empirical evidence existed to demonstrate this impact. Scott Ryland suggested that in these types of stands the group should consider recommending some designated routes that could be well controlled and managed. The group discussed how and why the specific user-created trail at this location was established. Sharon clarified that this area was designated at 10(C) when the 1994 Management Plan was adopted, but that signage to indicate that these trails were closed was not put in place until later years. This prompted a discussion of enforcement, and how the agency’s ability to implement the plan and enforce designated routes should be considered by the group. Ross indicated that he believed it was important that the group should be careful about constraining itself in developing recommendation through assumptions about the ability of the FS to obtain the resources necessary to implement those recommendations.

Stop 2 – Little Bear Lake mushroom habitat stand – The Group walked into a second mushroom habitat plantation stand adjacent to Little Bear Lake. John Getz pointed out an area on the other side of the lake, where user-created trails have expanded rapidly in recent years within high quality mushroom habitat. Users are attracted to that area because of the hill climbing opportunities, and it was pointed out that the trails visible from this location were primarily jeep trails. This is an example of an area where designating routes and confining use to those routes will be a challenge. The group continued to discuss the issue of plan implementation and enforcement of designated routes. Sharon explained that under the “old” rules, specific closure orders were required to prohibit motorized use in an area, and that system relied on signage to communicate what was closed. Under the new travel management rule, which will go into effect on the Siuslaw National Forest very soon (sometime in January), motorized use is prohibited unless specifically allowed in designated areas or on designated routes. This new system is not designed to rely on signing, but rather will rely on a published

map that shows where and on what routes motorized use is allowed. Several group members expressed concern about a system of implementation and enforcement that relies on a map, rather than on-the-ground signage to communicate where use is allowed.

Stop 3 – Cleawox Creek Overview – The group viewed the other side (south side) of the stand visited on Stop 2. This stand is bordered on the south by the creek and on the north by the road.

Stop 7 – Red Buggy area north of Siltcoos River – After a rest stop at the Driftwood 2 Campground, the group travelled north on a designated route (Incinerator Road), and then northeast on an undesignated route to the Red Buggy area. This area is bordered on the south by a stretch of the Siltcoos River that is a popular hiking and kayaking area. This area also contains another pine plantation stand (1 of 2 in this riding area) that represents a sizeable amount of Matsutake mushroom habitat that is highly valuable and productive, and of significant interest to pickers. User created trails have developed right down to the river in several locations, and noise from OHV use is a source of concern to the non-motorized use along the river and in the campgrounds. This area of 10(C) is also a very popular riding area, and the main routes in also provide critical emergency vehicle access to the open riding areas to the north. Group members discussed the potential for some sort of designated loop route that can allow for a riding opportunity while maintaining a good distance from the river to minimize conflicts with other uses.

Stop 8 – Optional Stop at the Dog Pond site – This site is located on the north side of South Jetty Road, and it outside of 10(C), across South Jetty Road to the north. Several group members expressed concern about including a stop that was outside of the 10(C) area, and questioned the reasons for viewing and discussing this site. At the stop, Mark Tilton and others indicated that their concern had to do with the close proximity of this site to the currently designated route that lies just south of the main road at this location, and noise impacts from use of that route. The group discussed whether or not the location of that designated route should be affected by the existence of this site and its use by non-motorized users. Roger Geeting provided a history of how the Dog Pond came to be. It was created as an opportunity for bird-dog trainers to train dogs in a location that would not disturb nesting ducks and geese that are prevalent in the system of ponds and wetlands in the dunes north of the road. This site was specifically designated for that purpose because biologist felt that the disturbance from the adjacent OHV use would make it unlikely that ducks and geese would nest here. Over time, bird watchers have increasingly used the site as well. In further discussion it was pointed out that the “designated” route to the south is in fact located in the developed corridor zone 10(D) which runs parallel to South Jetty Road, not 10(C). The group concluded that while an impact of a designated route on other uses and adjacent landowners was a valid consideration, the particular circumstances at this location would make it difficult to change the location of the route in question.

The field tour ended with the group returning to the Staging Area at ~ 4:45 p.m.

Saturday, January 23

Introduction:

The meeting convened at the Group Meeting Hall at Honeyman State Park at 8:30 A.M. Working Group members and others introduced themselves.

Attendees – Working Group Members and Staff:

| Name | Representing | Name | Representing |
|---------------|-------------------------|----------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| Ross Holloway | Facilitator | Sharon Stewart | SNF – ODNRA |
| Larry Robison | Coos County Parks Dept | Barbara Taylor | Cape Arago Audubon |
| Jody Phillips | OHV Users | Scott Ryland | Organized OHV Groups |
| Liz Kelly | USFWS | Arrow Coyote | Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw Indians |
| John Carnahan | Emergency Responders | Mark Tilton | Community Leader |
| Greg Hoover | OHV Organized Groups | Doug Duchscher | OHV Guides/Outfitters |
| Marty Giles | Non-OHV Guide/Outfitter | Adele Dawson | General Public |
| John Getz | Mushroom Pickers | | |

Working Group members not present: Ron Price

Attendees – Others:

| Name | Representing | Name | Representing |
|----------------|---------------------|-----------------|---------------------|
| Lance Rowland | NW Sand Deuces | Barbara Rowland | NW Sand Deuces |
| Kevin Studer | Self | Jon Gustafson | Self |
| Joe Culley | Self | Craig Hawkins | Self |
| Bill Maisel | Self | Tami Hawkins | Self |
| Justin Barrett | Self | Ed Costa | NW Sand Deuces |
| Jason Maisel | Self | Brandon Bretl | Self |
| Dean Chapman | Self | Kate Bretl | Self |
| Angel Chapman | Self | Elizabeth Yager | Self |
| Chris Tribe | Self | Grant Gording | Self |
| Bret Schmid | Self | | |

Ross Holloway reviewed the logistics for the day, and the plan to have lunch brought in. Ross described the agenda for the day, and reviewed the meeting objectives, included on the back of the agenda. He indicated that the middle riding area route proposal displays did not get done in time for this meeting, but we will be able to view displays that Ross has on his computer. We do have the existing trail displays for the north riding area. He described the plan for public comment, and indicated that there would be two opportunities, one at 11:30 and another at the conclusion of the meeting. If necessary, Ross and Sharon will stay and continue to hear public comments if they are not able to accommodate everyone in the times indicated on the agenda.

In response to a question from Scott, Ross reported that one working group member; Michael Cobb (representing adjacent landowners) has dropped off the working group due to other commitments. In discussion with Forest Service staff, it has been decided not to replace Michael with a new member. Group is working well together, and we would like to continue with the group we have. Several adjacent landowners have expressed an interest, particularly in the south area, and they will be invited to participate when we have a field tour and meeting in that area.

In response to another question from Scott, John Getz clarified that he is able and committed to representing the interests of mushroom pickers across the ODNRA, and not just in specific riding areas.

Feedback on Field Tour of Northern Riding Area:

- A very productive field tour. Good review for those not familiar with the northern area.
- Scott Ryland – Did a good job of getting into the issues in more detail and actually was able to view currently designated routes and see what they look like. Also were able to see some routes that probably should be designated. Also were able to actually see what is within 10(C) and what we are working with.
- Mark Tilton - Good to have the photo display with the stops marked so we could see where we were in relation to the entire riding area.
- Mark Tilton – There a lot of related issues that come up and we end up discussing that are not directly relevant to the designated routes issue. Can we capture some of the key issues that are not directly 10(C) related, that the group can evaluate and decide if they want to move a recommendation forward to the FS. Group agreed that we should at least capture these on a list for now, and re-visit them later. Several other issues were identified to start a list, i.e. noise buffer issues, the changing landscape of the dunes, etc.
- Greg Hoover – Passed along a question from a user as to why they are not being asked to vote on the issues before the Working Group. In response, Ross explained that this was not a process of voting on issues. The Group is intended as a forum of diverse interests to generate reasonable recommendations, which will eventually be considered by the FS, and alternatives will be subject to public review and comment in a future decision-making process. Scott suggests that folks be made aware that there will be a formal public process and people should plan to participate in it when it occurs.
- Field tour stops should focus on 10(C) and minimize distractions with other issues.
- Liz Kelly – Group discussed the issue of enforcement and assumptions about FS ability to enforce designated routes in the future. This needs to be captured as one of the related issues to consider for recommendations from the group.

- Doug Duchscher – Made the point that areas we visited on the field tour, and the aerial photos illustrate that in many cases, the vegetation has grown up around areas of OHV use, rather than OHV use destroying vegetation that was already established.
- Jody Phillips – It is important that we are clear on what we mean by user created trails, which is a term that has negative connotations. It is better to refer to undesignated and designated trails, and acknowledge that trails exist for a variety of reasons.
- For the benefit of people attending their first meeting of the working group, Ross reviewed the intent and purpose of Management Area 10(C), and how it was established in the 1994 plan. Jody added some information on the amount of the NRA that is zoned into open riding and designated route areas (~40% of the NRA). He reiterated the change that will occur when the Siuslaw publishes its travel management maps this month. Many additional areas will be closed.
- Marty Giles – Requested that we make the maps and displays available on-line so that everyone can access them.

Review of Evaluation Criteria for Proposed Designated Routes:

The group reviewed a handout from Ross that summarized responses to a survey of the Working Group where they had been asked to rank each of the evaluation criteria developed at the last meeting. 12 out of 14 group members filled out the survey, ranking each of the 15 criteria as high, medium or low in their opinion. The purpose of this exercise is to get a sense of which factors are generally considered more important by the group. Several issues and concerns were brought up and discussed as a result.

Barbara Taylor observed that while Criteria #13, related to trail maintenance and cost requirements scored as a relative low priority, she pointed out that it comes directly from the CFR on travel management (FS rules). Scott and Mark both commented that while they considered it lower priority than some other criteria, they did not consider it unimportant. It was pointed out that there may be a distinction between what the FS is required to consider in making a final decision, and what the working group considers in making its recommendations.

Scott Ryland emphasized the importance of dealing with facts in making evaluations, not just opinions. Ross offered that when each individual group members actually evaluates different proposals using the criteria it will inevitably involve both objective and subjective factors.

Arrow Coyote asked if the group is really going to be recommending completely new routes, or if they will be selecting from existing trails to come up with designated route recommendations. The group generally agreed that for the most part, proposals for designation will be for existing trails, but that there will be some exceptions. The example of the proposed designated route on the east side of the middle riding area was offered as an exception. Part of that proposal follows existing trails, and part consists of a proposed new route. Scott stated that the group should look at the best routes, whether they currently exist or not.

John Getz raised the question of how long-term success can be considered, when both the landscape and use levels are changing. Compliance will have a major affect on any specific routes implemented.

Barbara Taylor read a letter that she had received from Randy Rasmussen of the National Trails Alliance, which discusses the economic value of “natural quiet”. The group agreed that Criteria #12 and #15 provide for the consideration of noise potential in evaluating any specific route proposal.

Marty Giles raised the question of the statistical validity of the survey, since 2 group members did not respond. Ross commented that it was not intended to be a statistically significant exercise, but merely to get a sense of how members felt about the criteria, and to generate a discussion of their usefulness as an evaluation tool.

The group discussed a number of other related issues (quality of user experience, economic impacts of OHV and non-OHV use, amount of ODNRA zoned for OHV use, changing vegetation in the area, and the dependency of local businesses on OHV use.) In the end, the group agreed that the evaluation criteria provide for all of these factors to be considered and weighed by individual group members when they evaluate specific proposals.

Ross closed the discussion by explaining how he envisioned the criteria being used at a later point in the process. Following development of alternative proposals for all three riding area, a portion of a future meeting will be devoted to reviewing each proposal, with a group member or members describing how they believe the proposal meets various criteria. Following that, each group member will independently complete an evaluation of each proposal using the criteria.

Review of Middle Area Route Proposals:

The group reviewed ten alternate proposals for designated route recommendations for the middle riding area that were developed at the November meeting. For several of the proposals, the group was able to view displays that showed specific proposed route locations, while others were discussed more conceptually.

The group reviewed what had been listed as four separate proposals for the east side of the riding area (Proposals #3 through #6). After further discussion, the group narrowed these down to three alternate proposals, as follows:

- Proposal #4 – As mapped by Scott Ryland and Lance Rowland, this proposal would recommend designating one route that traversed all five forested fingers on the east side of the area. The route would generally be located as far to the east in the forested finger as possible to provide for less exposure to storm winds. Some of the route would rely on existing trail locations, while other portions would require new trail establishment. It incorporates the principles that had defined separate Proposals #3 and #5, so those two will be deleted from what is under consideration.

Joe Culley – Asked the audience how many were here to advocate for protecting OHV use areas. (21 people raised their hands). He commented that all of the public in attendance was here to protect OHV use, while no one had showed up to protect other uses and values. Also commented that a system that just relies on maps for communicating closure areas, without signs, is not reasonable.

Craig Hawkins – Indicated that he had spent 35 years recreating in the NRA, starting with training sled dogs on the sand. Commented on how the lakes and ponds were used in the past. Commented on the existing split between non-motorized zones on the NRA (~60%) and OHV zones (~40%). He believes that higher ATV fees would be supported by most users and could provide more funds to provide increased opportunities. He also pointed out that further restricting OHV use limits the opportunities for disabled people to enjoy the NRA.

Ed Costa – Commented that new trails will mean that more funds are needed. He supports raising ATV fees, which are lower than other states. Most users would support paying more. He is concerned about keeping the area open for OHV use, as there are not that many acres left.

Brandon Bretl – Commented that he respected the public process that was occurring and that we were all fortunate to have this opportunity to participate. Referred to the historic photo displays and commented that open sand has been diminishing and trails are becoming more and more critical to riders. Wherever OHV are restricted, more beach grass grows. Supports a “corridor” approach in some areas, rather than narrow routes. Supports opening up more of the west side of the middle riding area to open riding, as outlined in one of the proposals discussed.

Kate Bretl – Commented that OHV users are not asking to use non-motorized areas. They are just trying to use the areas that were designated for their use.

Chris Tribe – Commented that he is a life-long Oregonian who resides in Lincoln City. Concerned that OHV riding areas are getting smaller and smaller, and that safety issues are increasing as a result. OHV users respect and support local communities, but they need to self-police and correct bad behavior when it occurs. Wants to see the areas that were designated for OHV use be maintained, and feels that the OHV users are willing to work with everyone.

Leo Cox – Commented on the importance of considering the economic impact of various uses. Pointed out that there are a lot of out-of-state users attracted to the NRA, and that narrowing the areas available could cause less people to travel here.

Designated Routes Recommendations for the Northern Riding Area:

The group reviewed four aerial photo displays of the riding area, on which the location of existing designated and undesignated trails had been mapped.

Group members identified a number of possible designated route recommendations for the 10C portions of the riding area, working through each of the four displays, and brief descriptions of

each were written on easel sheets and numbered. The group identified the two “bookend” proposals, one to designate all existing user created trails in the riding area, and close all future user created trails (Proposal #1), and the other to just retain the current designated routes, and make no additional designations (Proposal #2). The remaining proposals were developed based on the four geographic portions shown on the four displays, as follows:

Northwest Area of the Northern Riding Area:

- Proposal #3 – Designate a “corridor” route through the center of this area either by re-zoning to 10(B) or creating a route wide enough to allow for a network of routes running north-south to connect 10(B) areas. Designate a similar “corridor” route on the east side of this area to connect existing 10(B) areas. Retain all of the existing designated routes in this area. Locate and designate an additional east-west connector route to the beach midway between existing east-west designated routes (Scott to identify this on the ground).
- Proposal #4 – Proposes the same designated routes as #3, but proposes to re-zone the NE portion of the forested area (pine plantation southwest of Cleawox Creek) to 10(B), open riding. This would effectively eliminate the need for the two “corridor” routes described in Proposal #3.

Northeast Area of the Northern Riding Area:

- Proposal #5 – Designate an additional route on the north end, to connect open sand in the east side of this area with the existing designated route that connects to open sand on the west side of the area. Designate an additional route on the south end, which would run to the west of the existing designated route (Scott to identify this on the ground). Both would connect open sand areas lying to the north and south. Retain the currently designated routes in this area.
- Proposal #6 – Proposes the same designated routes as #5 with the addition of one more route. The additional route would be located at the southern end, and would provide access from open sand on the west, to the lake that lies along the east side of the area (Scott to identify this on the ground).

Middle West Area of the Northern Riding Area:

All three proposals for this area involve re-zoning various portions to 10(B), and all would apply to portions of the northwest and southwest areas as well. No additional designated routes are being proposed. Retain all existing designated routes.

- Proposal #7 – Re-zone the entire area from Chapman Road to the Siltcoos Breach designated route to 10(B).
- Proposal #8 – Re-zone the portion of this area lying west of the Coast Guard designated route, between South Jetty Road and the Siltcoos Breach designated route to 10(B).
- Proposal #9 – Same as #8, but establish the south boundary of the re-zoned area at a location north of the Siltcoos Breach designated route based on FS analysis to address Snowy plover habitat concerns.

Southwest Area of the Northern Riding Area:

- Proposal #10 – Designate a route east-west to connect to the beach on the north end of this area (Scott to identify this on the ground). This route would provide an additional beach connection mid-way between Chapman Road and the Siltcoos Breach designated route. Expand the Incinerator Road designated route to the north to connect to the open sand area. Designate a new route that branches off the Incinerator Road route and connects east to the open sand area known as Red Buggy. Retain all existing designated routes in this area.
- Proposal #11 – Same as #10, with two additional designated routes. One new route would provide an east-west connector from the north end of the Incinerator Road route to the Driftwood 2 designated route. The second new route would provide an additional connector from Incinerator Road east-west to the Red Buggy area, located to the south of the connector proposed in #10. (Jody to identify both of these routes on the ground.)
- Proposal #12 – Same as #10, but eliminate existing Siltcoos Breach OHV-designated

The group identified potential dates for meetings in May and June. May dates identified included Saturday, May 8 or Saturday, May 15. June dates identified included, Saturday, June 19 or Saturday, June 26.

The group expressed concern about the proposal for only one day for a field tour of the south riding area. Some believe that two field tours will be necessary to adequately cover that area. Sharon will develop a proposed itinerary for a one-day field tour, and the group will re-evaluate this concern in the future. The group also requested that a display of the south riding area be made available electronically to aid in evaluating the field tour itinerary.

The meeting concluded at 3:30 P.M.