

**ODNRA OHV Designated Routes Working Group
MEETING NOTES
June 5, 2010
North Bend Public Library**

Introduction:

The meeting convened at the North Bend Public Library at 8:30 A.M. Working Group members and staff 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
Adele Dawson	Area Birders and Lane County Audubon	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
John Getz	Mushroom Pickers	Doug Duchscher	OHV Guides/Outfitters

Working Group members not present: Jody Phillips, Greg Hoover, Marty Giles and Ron Price

Attendees – Others:

Name	Representing	Name	Representing
Lance Rowland	Self	Barbara Rowland	Self
Fritz Gross	Oregon Dunes KOA	Richard Contreras	Self
Joe Culley	Self	Craig Hawkins	Self
Melvin Leshner	JEE and 4x4 Drive	Curtis Kruse	Dune Bugs ATV Rentals
Kevin Studer	Self	Leo Cox	Self
Timm Slater	Chamber of Commerce	Mike Myers	Siuslaw Fire and Rescue
Anthony Kenyon	Self	Kip Neasham	Self
Rod Roberts	Self		

Ross Holloway reviewed the logistics and the agenda for the day. He described the plan for public comment, and indicated that there would be an opportunity at 2:30.

South Riding Area Designated Route and Rezoning Proposals:

Ross reviewed aerial photos showing the south riding area in 1962, and again in 2005, to illustrate how the area has changed over time as vegetation has become established in more

areas. He reviewed some of the unique factors in the south riding area, including the “inholdings” by private landowners and Coos County, and the prevalence of lakes and wetland areas. Blocks of Management Area 10(C) are more fragmented and scattered in the south riding area, as compared to the north and middle areas. Ross reported that Mike Harvey (USFS) will be attending the June 26 meeting in Florence to help answer questions about the 1994 Management Plan and the rationale for some of the decisions made.

The group first discussed the potential for re-zoning some 10(C) areas in the vicinity of Old Bark Staging, and also others that lie to the east of the Old Bark Designated Route as it goes north from the Horsfall Lake area. Several of these parcels were viewed on the field tour, and appear to consist primarily of beach grass hummocks. These are popular areas for families with kids to ride. Proposal SA-RZ-A identifies several such parcels for proposed rezoning from MA 10(C) to MA 10(B), Open Riding.

The group then discussed the feasibility of establishing and designating a route that would connect east to west, between the Old Bark Staging area and the Bull Run area. This area is dominated by wetlands, and past evaluations by the FS have resulted in decisions not to build such a route. There was some discussion of the possibility of easements across private land to locate a route. There was also discussion of locating a route on FS property south of Horsfall Beach access road. Such a route would greatly improve access for emergency response vehicles. Proposal SA-DR-1 proposes to re-evaluate the options for a east-west connector route between Old Bark and Bull Run staging areas.

The group reviewed several 10(C) parcels along the southeastern edge of the riding area. Some of these parcels lie directly above the railroad right-of-way, which is closed to OHV access. One parcel is also closed due to wildlife concerns. The group did identify one parcel, bordered on two sides by Todd Goergen’s property, which contains existing trails that are popular with users. These trails pass from Goergen’s property onto FS, and connect to open sand areas. Todd Goergen was in attendance and stated that he supported the designation of these trails. Proposal SA-DR-6 would designate several existing trails within this block adjacent to Goergen’s property. Sharon Stewart indicated that she would have her staff look at this on the ground prior to the next meeting and identify the specific trail locations involved.

The group developed Proposal SA-DR-2. This proposes to designate an existing trail that connects through behind a tree island located on the east boundary of the area, north of closure area. This trail has been a popular route for many decades, and connects open sand area to the north and south.

The group developed Proposal SA-DR-3. The proposal to designate an existing trail that connects through a forested area to the south of a popular family riding area that is located south of Hauser Beach Road.

The group had a discussion of the location of the Day family property in relation to the FS property. The primary established route that travels north from Old Bark Staging actually passes through a corner of the Day property that “sticks out” into open sand area. John Carnahan stated that good emergency vehicle access in that area requires traveling this route across the Day

property. At this time, that part of the property is not fenced and the Day's allow this use. But that could change in the future. The Group believes that negotiation of some sort of land exchange or easement with the Day family is a priority to address this and other issues with OHV use and private property in this area.

The group identified two proposals for designating routes in the vicinity of the 430 and Hauser designated route intersection. Proposal SA-DR-4 would designate two existing trails, both running north-south, south of the 430 and Hauser Beach Road intersection. Proposal SA-DR-5 would designate an existing trail running north from the Hauser Beach Road and connecting to open riding area to the northwest.

The group discussed issues with the recent wildlife area closure at Beal Lake, and options for providing some sort of access closer to the lake on the north end. This is an area that has historically provided access to the north shore of the lake, particularly for those not able to make the walk. The group developed several proposals for this area. Proposal SA-RZ-B would re-zone an area of MA 10(C) and MA 10(F), north of the lake to MA 10(B). This area was visited on the field tour and consists primarily of beach grass hummocks. Proposal SA-DR-7 would designate an existing trail to provide an east-west connection between the 430 Designated Route and open sand to the west. This is just northwest of Beal Lake. Proposal SA-DR-8 would designate a route for access to the north shore of Beal Lake at a point where there has been historical access. (Note: This proposal is within Management Area 10(F), Wildlife).

The group reviewed and discussed the designated routes proposed for establishment between FS and Coos County property at Riley Ranch. The group decided not to include these routes in what they are proposing, since the FS has already included them in another management decision. Since this decision is the subject of current litigation, the group will not address these routes in their proposals.

The group identified one proposal for designating an existing trail that traverses a parcel of MA 10(C) that lies immediately north of the Coos County parcel that is just north of Beal Lake. This is Proposal SA-DR-9.

Public Comment:

Due to being ahead of schedule for the morning, the group decided to hear public comment early from several individuals whose particular interest is in the south riding area. Four individuals provided comments as follows...

Fritz Gross – Owner of Oregon Dunes KOA campground. He stated that he was very impressed with the Working Group process and the detailed nature of their discussions. He feels that the Dunes are in good hands with this group and that his interests as a local business owner who depends on the dunes are being well served.

Curtis Kruse – He stated that he was concerned at first with the process, but thinks the Working Group is doing a good job. He emphasized the importance of providing direct access between

the Bull Run and Old Bark areas. There are safety issues with the current access restrictions. There may be opportunities by working with the private landowners in the area.

Craig Hawkins – Also supports the idea of access east-west on the south end (Bull Run to Old Bark). He said that lots of folks get lost trying to make that connection. He also reminded the group to remember that no matter what the outcome of this process, there will be a net loss of trails. He related how crowded the area was this past Memorial Day weekend.

Joe Culley – He stated that while there are legitimate concerns, including those of adjacent landowners, as well as environmental concerns, the overall area available for riding has been constantly “chipped away” over time. He would hate to see any more lost for any reason. He feels that if there are trails there today, and they are not causing problems, then they should be left open. He was shocked to find out that in 1994, a large area north of Spinreel was shut off to OHV use. He said that most users don’t understand the reasons for these closures.

Review of North Area Route Proposals:

The group revisited the alternative route and re-zoning proposals for the north riding area that were developed at the November meeting, and refined at the January and April meetings. Ross reviewed the location of each specific proposal, and provided an overview of the “re-organized” proposal format. For each individual route and re-zoning proposal there is now a draft narrative that provides additional detail on each. Ross emphasized that this is a first draft, and is still incomplete. He is seeking any additional thoughts today, and as we move forward in the process.

Needed corrections to the display were noted as follows. DR-2 is labeled in the wrong location on the map, and is actually a proposed designated route further south, on the east side of the plantation area proposed for re-zoning. Also, in the southern portion of the riding area, Incinerator Road should appear in blue, indicating that it is a currently designated route.

The group discussed Proposals NA-DR-12 and 13 at some length, and clarified their intent. These proposals were to establish a new east-west connector (#12) to the north of the Siltcoos Breach designated route, and to close the Siltcoos Breach route (#13). After further discussion, these two proposals will be consolidated into one. That “new” proposal will call for establishing an alternate route that can be used during seasonal closures of the Siltcoos Breach route to protect Snowy plover wintering habitat. The group determined that the exact location of a proposed alternate route will depend on the area of plover protection agreed to between the USFS and USFWS. This will require future analysis.

The group also discussed Proposal NA-DR-14, the proposal to close the Incinerator Road designated route, except for emergency vehicle access. Several members expressed concern about being able to keep the road open and passable for emergency vehicles if it is not receiving OHV use. Sharon indicate that the FS would need to use heavy equipment annually to do maintenance if OHV riding was not occurring. John Carnahan emphasized the critical nature of

Incinerator Road and the trail that branches off to the Red Buggy area for emergency vehicle access to this area of the dunes. Mark Tilton shared concerns about use conflicts in the Incinerator Road area. This area is popular with birders and other non-motorized users. Mark would like to see these kinds of uses encouraged, particularly in the winter, when the local economy could benefit from more tourism.

John Getz showed the group photos taken in the area between Incinerator Road and the Siltcoos River (area of route proposal NA-DR-11). He cited the photos, taken three years apart, as examples of how quickly OHV travel in an area can turn into a visible trail and create eroded areas, and cause impacts to mushroom habitat.

The group discussed the two re-zoning proposals in the western side of the riding area (NA-RZ-C and D). It was pointed out that the two proposals “overlap” in that both include the area between the Coast Guard designated route and the beach, south of Chapman Road. Mark Tilton expressed concerns about Proposal NA-RZ-D going all the way to South Jetty Road. He would like to see the north boundary at Goodpasture Road, to provide more of a noise and scenic foredune view buffer for the non-motorized use area to the north.

Review of Middle Area Route Proposals:

The group revisited the alternative route and re-zoning proposals for the middle riding area that were developed at the November meeting and have continued to be refined by the group.

Reviewed MA-DR-1 and 2. These are the two approaches to designating a route that crosses the forested fingers on the east side of this riding area. There were some concerns expressed as to how emergency vehicles would be able to access portions of this route. It was clarified that this route would need to be constructed to accommodate full-sized vehicles.

Public Comment:

Public comment resumed at 2:30, with seven additional individuals providing comments as follows...

Melvin Leshner – He stated that the economic value of OHV use needs to be emphasized. Also need more open lands for OHV use so that there is room for everyone to use areas safely. He feels there is ample space in the existing road right-of-way for an access route from Horsfall CG to Bull Run area, and we need access along this road. He feels that we do need to reserve the mushroom habitat areas, since once they are destroyed, they are gone. He also believes there needs to be a route that can connect through the currently non-motorized zone between the north end of the south riding area and the middle riding area. You should be able to travel from the north spit all the way to Winchester Bay. He indicated that a 40 foot right-of-way for OHV travel, strictly enforced, could provide for this need. He also indicated that the needs of horseback riders must also be considered.

Lance Rowland – He has been collecting letters from concerned users, and trying to educate folks about this process. He is telling people that it is not about closing the dunes, as some have feared, but about designating trails. Many users are concerned about trail closures. He submitted letters received from 14 individuals and ask that they be entered into the public record for the process.

Richard Contreras – Commented that everyone is here because of their passion, and we all represent those interests. He emphasized that we need to think about how we are going to work together to make everyone happy. There is a need for tolerance of all the viewpoints expressed.

Kip Neasham – Identified himself as a resident of the Hauser area, and commented about the noise problems experienced by local residents. He indicated that there is often loud noise from OHV use until 11:30 at night (Note: ODNRA rules allow use until midnight). He also has concerns about fire season, and the use of fireworks, and emphasized the need for enforcement of fire laws on the ODNRA.

Rod Roberts – Rod works a Coos County Sheriff Deputy on the ODNRA. He is also on the State ATV Allocation Committee, representing law enforcement. He explained that Coos County does not have a noise ordinance, so the situation on ODNRA lands, where there is a curfew, is actually better than in other areas of the county. The ODNRA area is unique in that it does lie adjacent to many residential areas. He would like to see the FS apply for weed eradication funds to start eradicating European beach grass from the NRA. He also commented that the area has a shortage of law enforcement personnel. Budget cuts in Coos County and FS LE retirements have compounded this problem. He also feels that there is need to look at areas that are currently underutilized for OHV use, and supports the idea of creating a corridor route from Spinreel to Winchester Bay.

Leo Cox – He commented about walking into the area north of Spinreel for the first time recently. He feels that the dunes are disappearing in this area due to encroaching vegetation. Beach grass is colonizing slopes here that it does not in areas where OHV use occurs. He also supports a corridor route through this area to connect Spinreel and Winchester Bay. He would also like to see the access to the north end of Beal Lake restored.

Anthony Kenyon – Feels that closing off more areas will make things less safe for users. There needs to be more areas opened up. FS should do more research before making a decision. Vast acreages of forest land elsewhere are being closed off.

Joe Culley – (continued comments from earlier) Purpose of committee was to bring diverse opinions to the table, which requires respect from all concerned. Feels some members have been disrespectful and condescending towards OHV users. He takes offense when all OHV users are blamed for problems caused by a few. The OHV users present at these meetings are here because they care, and are paying the price for those who don't.

Craig Hawkins – (continued comments from earlier) A recent newspaper article stated that “Civility should rule the dunes”. He reminded the group that we are not starting from scratch. A

lot of restrictions on OHV use are already in place. Economic impacts of OHV use area are critical to the local economy and services.

Fritz Gross – (continued comments from earlier) Commented that many visitors come from far away, including Las Vegas and Canada. Many stay 3-4 nights, and about 45% are repeat visitors. The dunes are a unique place for them because of the trails, and more opportunities are needed.

Wrap Up and Future Planning:

Future meeting dates discussion -

The group discussed the status of their work, and the plan for future meetings. The group will meet next on Saturday, June 26 in Florence. That meeting will focus on further review of the proposals for all three riding areas, and also a follow-up discussion on the key issues identified (draft key issues document handed out at meeting).

Ross indicated that there is a tentative plan to extend the project deadline by three months. This will allow for two group meeting in the fall to review and finalize a report from the group. He indicated that he anticipates one meeting in mid-September and another in mid-October. He also indicated that work will continue over the summer, with individual member review and comments on proposals and key issues.

Closing thoughts from Working Group members –

Doug Duschser – Would like to hear from more public, and was not impressed with the turn out for this meeting.

Mark Tilton – Very pleased with the progress to date.

John Carnahan – Very productive meeting. Covering more ground than other meetings he attends.

John Getz – Thought it went well.

Scott Ryland – Group made a lot of progress. There is not agreement on everything.

Arrow Coyote – Went well today. Good to see proposals to re-zone and open up some more areas. Good awareness of the economic importance of OHV use. The routes being proposed so far make sense.

Larry Robison – Gaining a lot of knowledge and feels everyone is becoming familiar with new areas.

Liz Kelly – Well run meeting. Not worried about getting agreement. The different opinions are good, and all are being heard.

Adele Dawson – A very productive and well run meeting. Agrees the diversity of opinions being expressed is a good thing.

The meeting concluded at 3:20 P.M.

Todd Goergen
P.O. Box 97
Coos Bay, Or. 97420

April 16, 2010

RE: OHV Designated Routes Working Group Field Visit and Meeting
ODNRA South Riding Area

Dear fellow stakeholders / work group members:

My family owns property contiguous with federal lands located in the South Riding Area. This specific area is commonly referred to as "Box Car Hill". Our property's Southern Boundary is located at the Section Corner near the intersection of Transpacific Parkway and Horsfall Road. Our land is comprised of several parcels and runs North 1 mile to the ODNRA Boundary line.

I wish to offer the following comments to the OHV Designated Routes Working Group for their consideration regarding this ongoing process:

I think the 10C Area nearest the Horsfall Access should recognize and retain all existing user developed routes for the enjoyment of the OHV users. Some of these trails also traverse a portion of our property and we do not oppose their use and existence.

Second, I would like to point out that at the 10C Area located east of the Old Bark Access there are two old user developed routes not identified on the Tour Map. These trails intersect and connect with trails located on our adjoining private property. We urge that these trails be formally described on the map and remain open for the ongoing enjoyment of OHV users.

Finally, at the extreme Northern end of our property near stop #2 on the field tour, a new fence has been erected that appears to be encroaching upon our ownership. I respectfully request the Forest Service survey the common property line to determine the exact boundary location. If the fence is indeed on our property we would like it removed in a timely manner.

In General, my family believes in classifying as Designated Routes as many existing User Developed Routes as possible within the ODNRA. As lifelong residents of the Oregon Coast we recognize the scarcity of recreational opportunities for OHV users. The default position should not be to further restrict access to an area that has such a significant economical impact upon our local community.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment and participate in yesterday's field tour. Please feel free to contact me via cell (541)290 0463 or email: todd@graticlecooforegon.com to discuss these issues in further detail.

Sincerely,



R. Todd Goergen