

**ODNRA OHV Designated Routes Working Group  
MEETING NOTES  
September 11, 2010  
North Bend Public Library**

**Introduction:**

The meeting convened at the North Bend Public Library at 8:35 A.M.

Attendees – Working Group Members and Staff:

Name	Representing	Name	Representing
Ross Holloway	Facilitator	Sharon Stewart	SNF – ODNRA
Larry Robison	Coos County Parks Dept	Greg Hoover	OHV Users
Doug Duchscher	OHV Guides/Outfitters	Scott Ryland	Organized OHV Groups
Liz Kelly	USFWS	Jody Phillips	OHV Users
John Carnahan	Emergency Responders	Mark Tilton	Community Leader
John Getz	Mushroom Pickers	Marty Giles	Non-OHV Guides and Outfitters
Barbara Taylor	Cape Arago Audubon		

Working Group members not present: Adele Dawson and Ron Price

Attendees – Others:

Name	Representing	Name	Representing
Lance Rowland	Self	Alex Powers	The Umpqua Post
Fritz Gross	Oregon Dunes KOA	Jack Huffman	Hauser RFPD
Mike Gesner	Salem Sand Club	Richard Denn	Oregon Dune Patrol
Rod Roberts	Coos County Sheriff	Jason Patterson	Coos County Sheriff

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 2:00 P.M.

**Opening Remarks by Working Group Members:**

Greg Hoover – Related a conversation with campers at the dunes. Their concern was why there is a process to designate routes when the dunes are dying.

Jody Phillips – Commented on the video of an episode of the TV show Lassie, which was filmed in the northern portion of the dunes in the 1960's. Episode talks about the FS planting beach grass to create a foredune. It illustrates what the thinking was at the time. He emphasized that the real issue is the vegetation in the dunes and how it is changing.

Marty Giles – Feels that the public isn't aware of the temporal nature of the landscape on the NRA. Believes the FS needs to develop a longer range plan for the NRA to address this issue.

### **Review and Discussion of “Level of Support” Surveys:**

The group reviewed and discussed the results of the surveys completed by group members since the last meeting. Group members had been asked to identify their level of support for each of the designated route and re-zoning proposals developed over the course of the process. The survey offered three possible responses: Full support for a proposal, support with reservations, and do not support. Members could also provide comments if they so chose. The group agreed to use the results of the surveys to identify those proposals for which further discussion would be valuable, versus those which appeared to have a clear consensus, and for which additional discussion was not needed. The group then reviewed each proposal and the survey results. A number of proposals were identified for further discussion in the north riding area and the middle riding area, and a few were identified for the south riding area.

### **Additional Review and Discussion of Proposals:**

The group reviewed and discussed the proposals identified through the previous discussion, as follows:

#### **North Riding Area –**

NA-DR-3 – (East-west connector to beach, west of Cleawox Lake area). The group discussed the practicality of a route in the location shown on the display. The displayed location is a seasonally flooded area, and there is a breach on the beach side that collects driftwood during winter storms. It was agreed that the narrative should clarify that the display location is approximate, and that additional on-the-ground work will be necessary to identify the actual location for such a route.

NA-DR-6 – (Connector route to shore of Cleawox Lake). The group offered a number of different issues and concerns to be added to the narrative on this proposal. Benefits suggested included providing a safe, low speed trail for family riding, which is a limited opportunity. Also that the existing trail has been in place for a very long time, and has provided access to this popular destination spot. Additional concerns noted included the presence of the Girl Scout Camp on the opposite lake shore, and the fact that this trail does not serve as a connector for open riding areas. There were also concerns about the ability to enforce designated route use in this area.

NA-DR-7 – (East-west connector to beach south of Chapman DR). John Carnahan pointed out that this proposed route would not really improve emergency vehicle access to the beach as stated in the narrative. Emergency vehicles typically access the beach off of South Jetty Road on the north end, and travel south on the beach itself.

NA-DR-8 – (Extension of Incinerator Road route to north). The specific location shown on the display was discussed, and it was agreed that it should be shown to the east of the seasonal wet area, rather than to the west.

NA-DR-9 – (Connector from Incinerator Road to Red Buggy area). John Carnahan emphasized the critical nature of this route for emergency access to the Red Buggy area. He has been involved in numerous responses to this area over the years, and this is the only good access. John Getz indicated that the concerns about mushroom habitat and nearby campgrounds don't actually apply to this proposed route. It was agreed that those concerns would be deleted from the narrative.

NA-DR-10 – (Connector from Driftwood 2 DR to Incinerator Road DR). It was agreed that this proposed route now needed to be extended south, along the west side of the seasonal wet area, because of the change in location for NA-DR-8. Implementation of this route would no longer depend on the Incinerator Road extension (DR-8) because it would connect to the existing northern end of Incinerator Road. John Getz also commented that there were no mushroom habitat concerns with this route proposal.

NA-DR-12 – (Alternate route for existing Breach DR). It was agreed that this route is shown too far north on the display. In reality, it would likely be in close proximity to the existing Breach DR, and is intended to serve as a seasonal alternative to the Breach DR when it is flooded.

NA-DR-14 – (Proposal to close existing Incinerator Road DR). Sharon Stewart indicated that the actual cost of annual maintenance to keep the route open for emergency vehicle access would likely be more like \$2500, rather than the \$500 previously suggested. She agreed to have FS engineering staff provide an estimate. John Carnahan again emphasized the critical nature of this route and the Red Buggy connector to access the south end of the open riding area.

NA-RZ-B – (Re-zone adjacent to south end of South Jetty DR). John Getz emphasized the very high quality mushroom habitat within this proposed re-zone area, and its popularity with pickers. He supports the second designated route on the west side of this area (NA-DR-5), and would also support designation of additional existing connectors in this area. He re-emphasized the concern that opening this area up could lead to additional “spider webbing” of trails, and conflicts between mushroom pickers and OHV users.

NA-RZ-D – (Re-zone of foredune area between South Jetty DR and Breach DR). Discussions focused on the northern boundary of this proposal. Some are concerned that creating an open riding area immediately south of the South Jetty Road will contribute to noise issues in the Florence area. Others feel that those noise issues are related to OHV use on higher slopes to the east and that OHV use in this area is not the problem. It was acknowledged that the proposed re-zone area is almost exclusively foredune dominated by European beachgrass.

#### Middle Riding Area –

MA-DR-1 and 2 – (Options for routes in forested fingers on east side of riding area). Some in the group re-emphasized their concerns about extensive trail development in native forest stands associated with DR-1. There are also concerns about DR-2 leading to a “tree island” on the end of the second forested finger. Also, that piece of DR-2 is shown as using existing trail, but there is not currently a trail there. Display needs to be corrected to reflect that this would be new construction. It was also pointed out that several of the existing trails shown along the eastern boundary do not actually exist, and these need to be deleted from the display.

MA-DR-3 and RZ-A – (Options for a route and re-zone in the west side of the riding area). Discussion focused on the issue of non-native vegetation in this area, and the methods available to control it. Some emphasized that the narrative and report need to clarify that control of beach grass is not likely to occur merely from OHV open riding alone. They maintain that experts on the subject have concluded that repeated removal by mechanical means is the only effective way to control beach grass. There was general agreement that once removed, OHV use does help keep it at bay to some extent.

#### South Riding Area –

SA-DR-9 – (East-west route to north of Coos County parcel). Through further discussion, it was determined that this proposed route is seasonally flooded, and is not particularly valuable as an OHV route. It is a popular horse riding route.

SA-RZ-B – (Re-zone north of Beal Lake). Discussed the need to separate out this proposed re-zone into two proposals. One is the portion in 10(C), and the other is the portion in 10(F). Sharon Stewart stated that the most logical boundary to distinguish between the area open to OHVs (10C) and the area closed (10F) is an existing trail. This trail is currently shown as the south boundary of the proposed re-zone on the display, and will become the south boundary of SA-RZ-C (portion in 10F). These will need to be separated on the display and new acreages calculated for each.

#### Review and Discussion on Draft Final Report:

Ross reviewed the organization and content of the draft final report. He indicated that the section on “Purpose and Scope of the Working Group” would be moved forward in the document to the Introduction chapter. His intent was to convey to people not familiar with the process, what was important about the issue and the process. He will establish a comment deadline for Working Group members to provide input on the next draft of the report. He will be producing another draft, with input on the proposals from today’s meeting, and will try to get that out to the group by the middle of next week. Will need to add summaries of today’s meeting and the meeting on October 16, and create the Executive Summary.

Reviewed and discussed the Key Issues section of the report. Group discussed the “User Safety” issue and the need for input on what should be discussed here. Group expressed their opinion that User Safety did involve some overall issues and concerns. Some of the things identified included the corridor concept for popular trails, loop routes and one-way routes to improve safety. They also raised the issue of lower speed trails preferred by families who are concerned about safety in open riding areas. Ross agreed to develop this further for the next draft.

Ross also indicated that in producing this review draft, it appears that some material from earlier drafts had been “lost” or excluded. In particular, the economic impact data from the OSU surveys had previously appeared in the Economics Impact issue write-up and was not in this draft. He will be going back through earlier drafts to make sure everything gets included. Group also emphasized the need for the FS to collect economic information on non-OHV uses of the area in the future.

The group reviewed and discussed the proposal summaries included in the section on proposals, and also reviewed the summary of public comment in the Appendix. He described the approach of summarizing public comments in this report. Ross indicated that more detailed notes on public comments provided at each meeting were included in the meeting notes. These notes are all available through the FS website, and the link is included in the document. In addition, all written and e-mail input submitted during the process is being maintained at the Corvallis FS office and is available as public information. Group agreed that as long as the detailed submittals and comments are available, this type of summary is fine in the report.

Ross discussed ideas for including displays in the report. The displays that the group has been working with to date are too large, and would not be useful to add in page-sized versions. John Getz suggested using an “orientation” type map to indicate the location of proposals, and then individual page maps for specific proposals. Group also discussed the possibility of creating an interactive map on the FS website to provide access to the detailed proposal displays. Ross and Sharon agreed to discuss this further with other FS staff and see what can be created through the website.

### **Public Comment:**

Three individuals provided comments as follows...

Fritz Gross – Owner of Oregon Dunes KOA campground. Commented that the Group is working very well together, and seems to be well aware of the economic benefits associated with OHV use of the NRA. The group’s work and its report appear to be serving the public interest well. Commented that noise concerns are largely an issue of enforcement. He feels that the rules are in place and that more aggressive enforcement is what is needed. Supports more ATV funds coming to the Sheriff and FS to help fund more enforcement.

Mike Gesner – Salem Sand Club – He expressed concern about the number of existing trails that will be closed in the north riding area. He does feel that the Group is working well. Commented that noise has always been an issue, and also believes that this is primarily an enforcement issue. If enforcement is increase, and tickets and fines are levied, he feels that problems would decrease greatly. He believes that 2% of the users cause most of the problems and give the rest a bad name.

Rod Roberts – Coos County Sheriffs Office – He expressed his concerns about the encroachment of beach grass over time, especially in areas that have been closed to OHV use. Feels that this problem needs to be looked at and addressed by FS. Concerned that further trail closures will concentrate use and lead to more accidents. He would like to see some trails widened to accommodate more use and safer use. Also support establishment of one-way routes to increase safety. He supports establishing a corridor route for OHVs between Tenmile Creek and Umpqua Dunes area. He pointed out that the OSU work on OHV use and economic benefits was paid for by ATV funds, which is why it did not address other uses. He believes that there may be less willingness in the future to allocated State ATV funds to projects on federal land.

Following the public comment period, Lance Rowland submitted copies of five e-mails submitted by members of “Save the Riders Dunes”, to be included in the public record.

## **Wrap Up and Future Planning:**

### Future work and meeting date discussion -

The next and final meeting of the Working Group will be held on October 16 in Florence. The primary focus of this meeting will be review and discussion of the final draft of the final report document. Ross will be submitting the final report to the FS by the end of October. There are also plans to provide some sort of recognition for Working Group members at this meeting, and it is anticipated that District Ranger Pam Gardner and Forest Supervisor Jerry Ingersoll will be attending. Sharon indicated that the FS would like to give each Working Group member a gift (fleece jacket with ODNRA logo). Ross will circulate an e-mail to collect information on sizes for these gifts.

The group agreed that there would be value in completing another set of the “Level of Support” surveys with the benefit of the additional issues and information from today’s meeting. Ross will check to see if there is any way to provide access to the previous survey for individuals to go in and edit their previous responses. If there is not, he will circulate new surveys in about one week.

Sharon will be working with the FS GIS person and will try to have display edits done by the end of next week.

Ross will produce another draft of the final report document next week and distribute that to members for comment. He would like comments back by October 1.

### Closing thoughts from Working Group members –

Barbara Taylor – Thought that it was a very productive meeting. Feels that everyone is being heard.

Mark Tilton – Feels that the group has done a good job of addressing the issues and getting them out there in an understandable way.

Jody Phillips – Feels that this has been a much better input process than the 1994 planning process. He is very pleased with the process, even though some of the eventual outcomes may be difficult and frustrating to OHV users.

Greg Hoover – Process has enabled him to be able to answer the many questions he gets asked by users, with the exception of “where is it all going?” He has enjoyed the meetings and has enjoyed hearing all the viewpoints.

John Getz – He feels it has been a good process, and that he has learned a lot. Expressed confidence that good things will happen as a result.

Liz Kelly – It was very helpful to go back over the proposals today. Learned some new things and now understands them better, and will feel better about the next survey responses. The key issues section is good, and captures the broader issues that the FS will need to address.

Larry Robison – Process has increased his knowledge of the whole NRA, and has been very beneficial to him as a provider of recreation on County lands.

Scott Ryland – He thanked the members of the group for listening to each other and being willing to adjust their views. Feels that the group has accomplished a lot. Members of the OHV community have become more aware of key issues, like concerns about noise.

Doug Duchscher – He is interested in seeing what kind of follow-up occurs after all the time invested by the Working Group.

John Carnahan – Thanked the group for all their work. He thinks it has been an interesting education for everyone.

Marty Giles – She is heartened that each member of the group loves the dunes, albeit for different reasons. Also heartened that each group member took the time to be at the meetings and work on this process.

The meeting concluded at 2:50 P.M.