

Olympic Peninsula Resource Advisory Committee (RAC)

Meeting Notes, June 9, 2011

Meeting Location: Jamestown S’Klallam Tribal Community Center

RAC members present: Al Carter, Scott Chitwood, Mike Doherty, Herbert Gerhardt, Ian Jablonksi, Katie Krueger, Richard Olmer, Marc Reinertsen, Leslie Romer, Tim Sheldon, James French, Davis Steelquist

Project leaders, support personal, and community members present: John Knechtel, Sue Hay, Pamela Roberts, R. Coulson, Gary Kaas, Matthew Bloc, Ron Sukert, Ross Krumpe, David Lasulse, Rod Fleck, Teresa Sjastrom, Patricia Gover, Rick Ogden, Nancy Ness, Ed Bowen, Keith Blaunic.

Forest Service employees present: Dean Millett, Donna Nemeth, Bill Shelmerdine, Tina Tyler, Bob Metzger, Susie Graham, Grace Haight.

Donna Nemeth welcomed everyone and provided housekeeping tips.

Scott Chitwood welcomed everyone on behalf of the Jamestown S’Klallam Tribe.

Group introductions took place in the following order: RAC members, followed by the project sponsors, support personnel, and members of the public. Their names and job titles were stated.

Dean Millett, representing Forest Supervisor Dale Hom, provided an overview of the RAC. He welcomed everyone and introduced the new RAC members James French and Greg Good. Dean explained that Al Carter is now representing Citizens at Large rather than Elected Officials.

RAC Chairperson Mike Doherty welcomed everyone and thanked them for attending the meeting. A thank you letter will be sent to the Tribal Chair, Mr. Allen, for hosting us at such a beautiful facility.

Mike explained the requirement for a quorum and confirmed that our member attendance for this meeting met the requirement. He explained how the Secure Rural Schools program has been used to mitigate the impact of timber dollars that are not reaching the counties.

Grace Haight finalized lunch orders and collected payments. The lunches were prepared by the Longhouse Deli. During breaks members were given the opportunity to complete travel reimbursement forms.

Bill Shelmerdine explained the meeting goals. Each RAC member received a packet of 37 proposals to review before this meeting. Bill explained that the 2011 funds are based on 2010 receipts and we received more in 2011 than we had originally anticipated. Today, we will make project

recommendations for 2012 projects as well as the additional 2011 dollars. Please indicate projects that are ready to go so that 2011 funds can be used for immediate award and implementation. RAC members will make funding recommendations, and if a determination is not made on which projects should receive 2011 funding, then the Forest Service will do their best to place 2011 funds appropriately. The RAC was also charged with making recommendations for 2012 funds, to be approved by the Forest Supervisor. Like last year, the final funding amounts have not been released for this year so amounts may vary from what we are anticipating.

At a minimum, 50% of the project funding should be in the category of road and watershed improvements. Tina has noted the nature of each project in a spreadsheet which was projected to a screen for the RAC members. Copies of the spreadsheet were also passed to each member for reference during their discussions within counties. Spreadsheet updates – projected onto a screen for everyone to view - will help individual counties during their caucuses to see how the funds are balancing towards specific project types. Examples of projects that meet evaluation criteria: infrastructure maintenance, forest stewardship, and watershed restoration.

Bill also provided an explanation of the spreadsheet created from an internal technical review. The Forest Service conducts an internal review of all proposals to ensure that all the projects meet the intent of the legislation. We prioritize Forest Service projects only, in case the RAC asks for FS comments. Mike commented that this was something that was requested by the RAC years ago, but that FS recommendations should not at all influence RAC opinion. The intent today is for the RAC to make recommendations for the funding.

BREAK

Bill Shelmerdine wanted to clarify that our goal is to allocate both 2011 and 2012 funds. Year 2011 dollars can go to projects that are ready for immediate implementation. We have more proposals than we have funding, so the RAC's responsibility is to recommend what projects should be funded. The purpose of this program is to make up for the lack of funding to maintain existing infrastructure. We are not looking to build new infrastructure or to acquire new maintenance issues. All projects will require some maintenance but scrutinize the amount of maintenance that is required.

Mike Doherty asked if the RAC members wanted to have a brief presentation from each of the project leaders and the RAC members agreed that this would be helpful. Mike recommended a 2-minute briefing so that all RAC members can become familiar with project proposals from all counties. Davis Steelquist noted that some of the projects can benefit multiple counties even though they may only be listed for one county. Project Leaders should state if theirs is such a project. Mike notes that Counties may choose to share funding responsibilities for projects that benefit multiple counties. Since the proposals come from different counties, a briefing on each project would be helpful. The group agreed that a 2-minute overview is appropriate to present information that wasn't included in the proposals.

Overview of projects

Rod Fleck provided an overview of the ATV Trail Study. The review would focus on 31 miles of existing roads and trails as ATV permitted trails. This project would identify areas with limited impacts to the environment and natural resources. It would also include development of trail designs and implementation processes and the group would look to other forests and areas that do have OHV trails.

David Lasulse, filling in for Rich James from Clallam County Public Works, is asking for funds for work on 070 Road. If we can get funding for this portion of the road, then the county can provide funds to get as far as the 2918 Road, which is a location where there is an approved rock source. This road work will save time and travel to the rock source. Eventually the goal is to link the Olympic Discovery Trail with the 070 road.

Bob Metzger reviewed several projects: Washington Conservation Corps – a multi-county project for watershed restoration. Last year, there was partial funding received. This year, remaining funds are needed to finish the projects. Gold Creek Road to Trail conversion – a road decommissioning project, started years ago which has 8 or 9 miles of road to trails. Reassessment was done and we need another \$60,000 to complete the project.

2922 Culvert Replacement – A key message about this project is that there are three failing culverts impacting fish habitat. The money requested is for the most expensive of those three projects. If it cannot be funded, we have other culverts that still need funding and we would welcome any amount of funding.

Pine Lake restoration – This is third and last year of the project which is weed eradication from and around the lake.

Matheny Elk Habitat Enhancement – The project is an overview of wildlife improvement projects involving thinning old vegetation to create long term diversity, and specifically create forage areas. Vegetation will remain on the ground, although the area will remain passable, but not immediately. Some piling will occur. Each project is already funded under appropriated dollars but we would like to complete more of each project. Amounts requested are proportional to acres.

Mike Doherty mentioned if your projects do not need all the money that you requested, please let us know. This is in the interest of spreading money to as many projects as possible. Mike adds that the RAC can make a recommendation that if these projects are not funded, stewardship may be considered as an option.

Ross Krumpe concurred with Clallam County ATV proposal. We are only asking for access to designated trails and roads.

Matt Blore of the Clallam County Sheriff's Office would like to use 2012 funding to continue the existing Chain Gang program. Examples of work that would be done: facilities maintenance, fisheries projects, noxious weed removal, etc. The funding is used for supervisor's wages. We get a lot of support and good comments from the community. There is political support for this project.

Sue Hay of the Jefferson County 4-H stated the need to continue this stewardship program. Past work includes trail and campground maintenance, watershed clean up, etc. Funds are needed for 2012.

Jon Knechtel represents the Pacific Northwest Trail Association – The Sky crews have been working for 11 years on trails. There are several project proposals to continue existing programs. This is a very successful program which deals with at-risk kids.

Jack from LLTK states that they are asking for funding to restore and monitor wild steelhead. This is a critical component because larger projects will not be successful if this portion is not funded.

Theresa Sjorstrom belongs to the Salmon Enhancement Group. They have tested streams and done control monitoring in the streams. There is community interest in this project.

Susie Graham provided information for three projects. First, she commented on the youth projects: these involve local youth and community members working together on local projects and these are good investments into our future!

Coho RV dump station – asking for repair dollars for upper holding facility. This needs to be done to prevent waste from being released along the road by travelers.

Falls View Restroom Replacement – We are looking at putting in vault toilets to replace flush toilets. The septic system creates issues with the water systems.

Interrorem Cabin Trailhead – Clear tripping hazards on the trail and make it easily identifiable with signage. Make a designated parking area at the trailhead.

Pat Grover states that the Mason County weed program needs continued funding. This program is vital to continue partnerships. They work with the Forest Service much of the time with outreach and help educate the communities about weed control. The funding is needed for surveys to help outreach efforts.

Nancy Ness belongs to the Olympic Noxious Weed Control group. The project includes both Jefferson and Clallam counties to address noxious weeds along aquatic and road decommission areas. They are dedicated to forest health. Local jobs are created and help the community by eliminating weeds. An example of one big continuing project has been in the Quinault area with removal of knotweed

Keith Blaunic is part of the Skokomish Watershed Action Team and is with the Mason County Conservation District. The 5-mile Creek project addresses the South Fork of the Skokomish River which has south bank erosion. The amount of \$18,000 would be sufficient for this project since other in-kind funds were received after the project proposal was submitted.

Bill Shelmerdine stated that if anyone has questions about any FS proposals that were not discussed, please let one of us know and we can address them.

Mike Doherty asked if the group wanted to consider 2011 and 2012 funding separately or together during the caucus? At the end, we can recommend that if there is anything left over after 2011-2012 not being spent, we could put that into special fund such as deferred road maintenance and let the FS decide how to spend it. The group votes to recommend both 2011 and 2012 funds to be used. They then made the recommendation to use funds that may be remaining in 2012 funds on deferred road maintenance.

An explanation on the caucus procedure was given by Mike Doherty. Each county reviews proposals for projects within their county. After they discuss and choose what best fits their county needs, they bring the list to the rest of the RAC before making any final recommendations. Katie Krueger wanted know if she was allowed to vote in two counties since the tribe she represents extends into different counties. Mike Doherty and Bill Shelmerdine said there was not a problem with voting in different counties or

even making recommendations or comments for multiple counties. The group decides to caucus by county, but the full RAC will make final recommendations.

Katie Kruger comments on new ruling impacting roads and culverts in Oregon and soon to come in Washington. Bob Metzger stated this ruling does not apply to National Forest lands at this time. It won't affect the projects that are in progress once it is passed in Washington.

Davis Steelquist asks Dean Millett to explain pre-commercial (15-20 years) and commercial thinning (70 years, generally speaking). Pre-commercial thinning provides more flexibility; generally fairly small timber, which is designed to accelerate growth rate. If we do not have this treatment, it would delay or eliminate the development of forage under the stand.

The public comment period was extended to allow those arriving late an opportunity to be heard; a time limit of three-minutes was allowed. Mike Doherty asks if there are any members of the general public that would like to comment...

Richard Colson, an avid ATV user, stated that trails are currently available to horsemen, bicyclist, and hikers but not ATVs. Off-road vehicles are used in rescue operations. We feel discriminated against. We would appreciate an opportunity to use those trails legally.

No other members of the public wished to speak.

The four Counties convene for project discussion groups.

LUNCH

Report Out by County and Project Recommendations

Grays Harbor - Al Carter surmised that Colonel Bob Trail needs professional work done now. Al has heard comments from the community. This will help student summer jobs in trail restoration work which is important, also help some weed projects. The county group recommends \$15,000 in 2011 and roll into 2012. Coho RV dump project should be fully funded because of the paved roads, we expect an increase in recreational vehicles, this is an important project. If any project falls through or additional funds are available, the group recommends that funds be directed to the Quinault Gateway Weeds project.

Mike Doherty made a motion to allow more time for public comment. Al Carter seconds the motion and the RAC agreed.

Ed Bowen, a concerned citizen from the northwest coast of the peninsula, pointed out that public notification for this meeting was lacking in his community. He also made mention that models like the RAC are becoming more of a reality, funds are deferred to a process like this but we need more public input. Clallam County is supportive of the ATV study since we have channeled ATV use into other areas to cause more damage. Weed abatement program has reached out to our community and we understand the value of the program. The Bogechie project is one the community would like to see supported, followed by the Chain Gang. He then commented on projects in other counties

Mason County – The Jefferson Creek project will receive no funding, likewise the Jefferson Creek wildlife habitat since funding for these projects can be obtained from other sources. Deferred Road Maintenance can be partially funded. This project is important but we cannot give the full amount. Weeds – extra funds. Pine Lake restoration project, we can partially fund. South Fork Skokomish, 5-mile Creek habitat restoration will receive \$10,000 to get started. Some funding will go to WCC, we always want to support the kids. There are a lot of worthy projects but not enough money.

Jefferson County chose to fully fund the 4-H Stewardship program. Hood Canal Little Quilcene. salmon trap project can have partial funding. Any remaining balances of money should be used for road maintenance. Hood Canal Steelhead will also get partial funding. Matheny Elk habitat project had to make cuts so is partially funded. Morgan's crossing cannot be funded at this time. Help fund the vault toilet at Coho campground for a total of \$25,000.

Clallam County–The 070 Road should be funded with 2011 money. It is a huge partnership project. Part of the road would include the Olympic Discovery Trail which is a high visibility project and we feel we can get support. Gold Creek will get approx \$35,000 in 2011 funds, plus additional 2012 funds. Elk habitat, weeds, SKY, chain gang will not be fully funded but some funding will be distributed among them. This is the best we could do.

Mike Doherty asked if anyone had comments on these recommendations. Herbert Gerhardt said he would like to see some seed money go into ATV project. He is not suggesting changing funding recommendations to do this. Mike comments that the ATV project was not high enough on the list to take money from other projects. We can encourage the FS to work with other land managers to help fund this study. Herbert Gerhardt motions that the RAC makes a recommendation that the FS should look for possibilities to work with DNR and the timber industry to help fund this ATV roads and trails study. Richard Olmer seconds this motion. The rest of the members agreed.

Bill Shelmerdine comments that the 070 road project may not qualify as part of the 50% requirement. We are trying to reduce our maintenance load because that is the intent of the legislation, but this project increases future maintenance needs. Clallam County and RAC believe that this project qualifies and is needed because of the high visibility and use it would create. The motion is made to allow this to be a road project and it is seconded by the RAC members.

Bill Shelmerdine also brought up the weeds projects. Clallam County feels that all invasive species should be counted as water enhancement or restoration efforts. Weed work occurs throughout the watershed and some projects specifically in the water. Bill requests an accomplishment report from Weed Board that specifically captures the watershed improvements. The RACs recommendation on this project is that it meets watershed restoration requirement. The remaining group seconds the motion. The work at the Coho campground meets the watershed improvements requirement as well.

Leslie Romer says Gold Creek road to trail conversion meets the criteria. Bill says that is acceptable because you eliminate the need for deferred road maintenance.

Mike Doherty asks if there is a recommendation to adopt these and make these recommendations to Designated Forest Officer. Motion passes and all agree.

Davis Steelquest encourages the FS send out more news releases on how the money is being spent. Inform the communities about the jobs being created with the RAC projects. The group seconds this idea.

Mike Doherty thanks Forest Service personnel for their participation. Mike says he will send a thank you to Mr. Allen for the use their facility.

Dean Millett thanks the RAC members for their participation. He discussed the fact that the future of SRS and RAC is uncertain since we do not know if funding will continue. Dean distributes Keepsake Awards (posters) - a copy of an original painting done by Lee Lauritzen, entitled Pacific Rhododendron, Mt. Walker Olympic National Forest - to all RAC members to thank them for their participation.

Meeting Adjourns at 3:00 PM