

**Red Rock Ranger District**  
**February 28, 2013 Red Rock Trails Planning Meeting**  
**6-8PM, Hilton Hotel at the Ridge in VOC**

For Forest Service related information on this trail planning process contact Jennifer Burns at 928-203-7529 [jmburns@fs.fed.us](mailto:jmburns@fs.fed.us) For more information regarding the planning process contact Cate Bradley at 520-791-6472 [cate\\_bradley@nps.gov](mailto:cate_bradley@nps.gov)

Meeting notes and other trail planning materials will be posted to the Coconino Forest website at <http://www.fs.usda.gov/recarea/coconino/recarea/?recid=54892> go to *Land and Resource Management* (on left side) then click on *Planning*, or find meeting notes and other related documents to this planning process at [www.vvcc.us](http://www.vvcc.us) scroll to the RTCA Documents link.

Next meeting will be on Thursday March 21, 2013 from 6 to 8 p.m. at the Hilton Sedona – 90 Ridge Trail Drive

**February 28<sup>th</sup> Participants:** Sam Serrele, Keith Peterson, John Finch, Wally Tibbitts, Patrick Kell, Roger Sneed, Ian Wickson, Doug Brown, Jeff Bear, Martin Glinsky, Rick Riedel, George Witteman, Andy Beeler, Carol Wirkus, Paul Sullivan, Mike Ward, Carol Kommer, Rachel Murdoch, Ann Urick, Dean Williamson, Joe Hazel, Simon Bosman, Lauren Browne, Mike Raney, Phil Kincheloe, Jason First, Matt Sherwood, John Chorlton, Louie Shi, David Blanchard, Anthony Quintile, Don Buffoni, Lars Romig, Keran O'Brien, Dorothy O'Brien, Heide Heidepriem, Cynthia Lovely, Michelle Conway, Spike Hicks, Carol Hicks, Donna Michaels, Ginny Rench, Stephen Rench, Steve McClain, Spencer Gustav, Lee Luedeker, Rocky Luedeker, Sonya Landholm, Joe Landholm, Kevin Harding, Paul Ward, Janet Levy, Jim Manning, Thomas McRae, Christine Lombardi, Jan Starkey, Jim Starkey, Brigit Loewenstein, Graig Stevens, Leslie Stevens, Jim Monahan, Graig Bierly, Rama, Amina Sena, Jennifer Burns, Heather Provencio, Francisca Adrian, Cate Bradley (apologies for misspellings)

### **Meeting Agenda**

- Welcome / Introductions
- Presentation about Soils and Hydrology on the Red Rock District
- Presentation about Better Living Through Trails
- Group discussion preparing for working with maps
- What worked about this meeting and what needs to be changed for future meetings

### **Welcome**

The meeting began with sign-in and participant introductions around the tables, and a review of the meeting agenda.

### **Presentation about the Soils and Hydrology on the Red Rock District**

Amina Sena, FS Hydrologist, presented information about the Forest Service role in watershed stewardship. That FS role is to improve, protect and enhance natural resources on the watershed and the associated drainage systems; to solve complex issues associated with multiple uses on the forest; and to assess impacts and provide recommendations for mitigation to proposed actions/projects on the forest. Her job as hydrologist is to recommend mitigation measures for proposed or continuing activities managed by FS permits. As an example, she talked about effects/impacts from livestock grazing. Her

job is to look at the soils composition and nutrient function, as well as the hydrology dynamics to evaluate rates of erosion then make recommendations for mitigation measures (vegetation treatments to sustain watershed health) to be included in land management for the permit to be granted or continued. Another example is impacts on roads from jeep tours. The recommendation was to use some of the fees paid by jeep operators to fix drainage problems from up-slope formation that have impacts down-stream.

Forest Service uses the “Terrestrial Ecosystem” mapping to determine landscape features of concern. The entire forest has been evaluated and mapped for these features. That takes into account slope, erosion hazard, condition rating, trail limitation rating and K value (soil erodibility factor based on combined effects of soil properties influencing erosion rates). The FS also uses the Revised Universal Soils Loss Equations (RUSLE) which considers estimated annual soils loss based on rainfall/runoff impact, soil erodibility, slope factors, vegetation cover, and land practices impacts. The FS has information about slopes throughout the Red Rock District.

Amina described other important soil conditions such as desert pavement – the rocky rubble that sits on the surface of the ground and protects the soil from blowing or washing away. Most areas around Sedona and VOC have moderate to severe soil hazard ratings because of a high K factor, high amount of biological soil crust, high rainfall intensity, low vegetative cover, steep slopes, high usage and fragile desert pavement.

Amina addressed her role in proposals to additional trails into the FS system. For any trail review or assessment she uses the Terrestrial Ecosystem and RUSLE formulas to determine if the action will accelerate erosion, if the soils can recover and replenish without undue struggle, and if the remaining soil crust can support the natural life forms (micro to macro). The resulting information is then paired with design criteria that can include recommendations to locate a trail on the contour, avoiding trails that run down the “fall line”, armoring steep segments with rock, avoiding any trail on steep slopes, and to ensuring proper drainage.

When considering additional trails into the system, the FS has to weigh sustainable use, available trails budget, very erosive landscape conditions and sediment flows downstream into Oak Creek. Given all these factors, Amina asked the group to consider the cumulative effects of trails on the system and to consider how much is enough for the RR trails system.

Aside from the soil conditions, the FS must comply with several water quality regulations including Section 319 of the Clean Water Act specific to nonpoint source pollution control, Executive Order No 11988 Floodplain management, PL 92-500 Federal Water Pollution Control Act, and Arizona Department of Water Quality Standards. Oak Creek is an Outstanding Arizona Water and has strict water quality anti-degradation standards tied to sedimentation.

To stay within compliance of various environmental regulations, the FS employs recommended best management practices such as location, alignment, sustainable grades, attention to drainage, out sloping, designing to soil texture, minimizing soil displacement, preventing user-made trails, and good maintenance. Because there are such steep slopes on the RR District, the FS uses rock armoring to stabilize slopes, as well as minimizing stream crossings by trails, elevating stream crossings, reducing cross country travel, closing and rehabilitating user-created trails, avoiding disturbance to biological soil crust (which helps to hold the soils in place).

Amina reminded the attendees that the Forest Service Mission is to “Sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the Nation’s Forests and grasslands to meet the needs of the present and future generations”

### **IMBA (International Mountain Biking Association) Presentation “Better Living Through Trails”**

Patrick Kell is the IMBA Southwest Regional Director working in AZ, CA, NC, UT, and NM and shared information that IMBA has gathered regarding mountain bike destination communities, economic impacts of mountain bike tourism, and some outcomes of IMBA community projects around the country. He began with some information about IMBA, which is an organization focused on the benefits of mountain biking and building cooperative partnerships with land managers and communities.

IMBA mostly focuses on community development projects to help transform derelict lands to more useful, improved areas. For example a section under I-5 in Seattle was transformed, in partnership with Seattle DOT, from a high crime spot to a bike park.

He then added information that has been gathered by the national nonprofit Bikes Belong and the Outdoor Industry Foundation. Following is some of the information he shared:

- Among all outdoor recreation activities, 1 in 5 is a mountain bike rider, (1.5 times more than golfing)
- Average costs for various professionally designed and built outdoor recreation facilities (golf course - \$500K-\$1M/ hole, playground - \$70K-\$125K, skate park - \$8K-\$25K/10,000 sq.ft., paved bike path - \$150K-\$1M/mile, natural trail - \$10K-\$50K/mile, mountain bike trail about \$25K/mile)
- Outdoor recreation activities contribute \$730B to the US economy
- Bike activities contribute \$133 B, 1M jobs, \$18B in taxes, \$53B in sales and services
- Bike related retailers are reporting a 60% increase in sales from more clients and more diverse clients)
- With new mountain bike trails, 30% of the riders say they ride more often and spend more money
- It is estimated that for every \$1 spent on trails there is a \$4 savings in health care costs
- In mountain bike destination communities, 80% of visitors come for the sport and stay for an average of 4.6 nights – 45% camp, 8% hotels, 45% in B&Bs (*Outdoor Industry Foundation numbers*)
- Mountain bike demographics: average age 37 years (men), well educated, average \$62K salary/\$75K per household
- Community trail systems encourage social and physical clubs, youth involvement, better trails, better maps and signage

Patrick said that Sedona is often promoted as a mountain bike destination area and most of the mountain bike trails here are advanced – there is a need for more beginner level trails.

Questions after the presentation - does IMBA provide education about trail etiquette on multi-use trails. Patrick said IMBA just had conducted an education and trail system planning session in Cottonwood and another one is scheduled in Prescott for March 9. He said the local IMBA club members are considered “ambassadors” and participate in several trail maintenance events throughout the year.

It was suggested that this information be presented to the Chamber of Commerce and the Sedona 30. In this trails planning process, it has been asked to think about multi-resource impacts.

The question was raised “what is the purpose of the Economic Impacts?” Answer – to consider the benefits and impacts to the community and identify where there are appropriate areas to ride. It was said this feels like a push to increase mountain bike trails and we need to understand how that will impact the resources and community. It was asked “how much is enough for mountain biking?”

Cate commented that the information from the Outdoor Industry Foundation reflect a multi-dimensional push to get more people on trails. The push is coming from the economic opportunities identified by the industry and from the health promotion community to combat the serious increases in obesity, from the youth involvement community to get more youth outside and away from electronics (nature deficit disorder), and from the conservation community to increase attention of youth to natural resource management as a career path.

Heather asked for information about the mountain biking trends for Sedona. Rama said there is a huge shift in trends to more tourism based activity and a need for more beginner trails. This use from those outside of Sedona may result in less regard for and knowledge about the environment.

A participant expressed concern there is a trend in motion that is ahead of our understanding of its impacts. As a horse rider in the area for over 20 years, she has observed much more damage to the trails lately. She wants to take time to have the right discussions and make decisions based on facts, not trends.

Lars said there is a spectrum of users and a need for a sustainable trails system. Patrick commented that IMBA has learned and developed good trail building practices that result in benefits from a great trail system. He said that the natural features of the area (rocks) plus the trails make Sedona a desirable place.

John said there are many more hikers on the trails than mountain bikers. Paul asked “once we get to the point of having a trails vision, where do we get the funds?” Cate said the Heritage Funds, generated by the Lottery and administered by AZ State Parks were swept by the Legislature but there is legislation to reinstate the funds back to State Parks. She encouraged everyone to be in touch with their State Congressperson and Senator to let them know your interest.

Anthony said there is a change in the mountain bike economy that can be tracked and he has seen this elsewhere. First there are the hard-core enthusiasts, next the word gets out and many others come which creates more demands and needs. He said Sedona is making that shift now and it would be a mistake to think we can tell visitors how to behave. There was mention that the figure from sales tax in Sedona indicates there is \$550M in retail sales here. Don asked “what is lost if those recreation dollars go elsewhere?” He said those funds should be captured and reinvested in the trails here.

It was repeated that bikers are a minority among trail users and hikers are a majority. Both need a good trails system and both have the same vested interests.

Chris said in the past presentations have focused on land use, this shifts it to being a focus on money. It was said that the challenge is about how to share Sedona with the visitors and protect the “Golden Goose”.

Because the group discussion went on longer than planned, the “Presentation about Trails Guidance in the Forest Plan” and “Overview of the Trail Program Work” were tabled until the March meeting.

## **Group Discussion Preparing for Working with Maps to Inventory Existing Conditions and User Wants**

Cate asked for input and ideas for gathering information on maps in a clear and efficient way during the next few meetings. Following are some ideas:

- Use information stations with various themes
- Have the group rotate from one station to the next
- Have one or more tables with maps to show connectivity
- Let the maps overlap to show connectivity
- Get information about what trail users want
- Get information by zones
- Get information by dispersion of use
- Gather information about maintenance needs
- Gather information by user group
- Should any trails be removed
- Provide one map per person and let them mark it up as they want to
- Have a FS staff at each table
- Develop ways to prioritize the information
- Let each person assign a rank to each trail they use

## **What Worked About This Meeting and What Needs To Be Changed For Future Meetings**

- Stay with the agenda

### **Next Meeting Date**

Next meeting is Thursday March 21, 2013 from 6 to 8 p.m. at the Hilton Sedona.

### **Next Meeting Agenda**

- Forest Service “trail activities update”
- Group map work Topics:
  - “Access” (why there, any problems, what is needed, what is missing, trespass issues, parking issues, etc.)
  - “What you want for the trail system in the future?” (ideas by areas[including Big Park], ideas by user groups, ideas by types of use, tourist use areas and issues, business ideas/issues for trails, miscellaneous ideas/comments)