

# Seeley Lake Trails Project Minutes

## SLE Outside, Seeley Lake - January 25, 2016

Present were Lisa Moisey, Ladd Knotek, Steve Kloetzel, Mike Biggins, Bill Wall, Amy McNamara, Jon Haufler, Rachel Fiegley, Mark Williams, Dave Sharbono, Ken Kronensberger, Lee Boman, Jan Guelff, Mike Barsi, Kristin Baker-Dickinson, Chris Bryant, Andy Baur, and Jenny Rohrer, notetaker.

### 1. Summary of Last Trails Meeting:

Bill Wall opened the meeting with a summary of the possible directions for the Trails Project that were discussed at the November meeting:

- A) Short-term trail work (mapping, signing, trail repair and improvement on existing trails)
- B) Mid-term work with tpl and SLCF on around-town trails
- C) Long-term work on large scale landscape-wide trail plan which incorporates the existing system of trails.

### 2. Presentation on Trust for Public Lands (TPL) Trails Inventory

Amy McNamara from TPL presented a powerpoint summary of the TPL trails inventory and thanked the Trails Group who were proxies for much of the information in the report. The inventory includes these areas: Horseshoe Hills, Morrell Creek, Rice Ridge and the Marshall Lake Wilderness area. Amy reported that TPL found a robust winter grooming program on the snowmobile trails and credited the Driftriders work for 15 years on connecting trails. Seeley Rocks has worked for 5 years to expand the Nordic trails at Fawn Creek. Agencies advise trail planners to “engage early and often”, and all have new staff at the agencies who are eager to meet with area groups. Agencies view the fact that this Trails Planning is coming together as a plus, and are thankful that they have one place to come to for engagement on this issue.

TPL found a common feedback from area user groups. Trails bring people together. Trails connect people and places, and our assets are currently underutilized. Area groups are proud about connecting our trails, and want to improve signage and way-finding. Amy highlighted the work of Backcountry Horsemen, hiking groups that want more looped trails, and the need for mountain bikers to have designated trails. This report was primarily researched by Ben Donatello and Ethan Burns. Dave Sharbono suggested sending a thank you to Ben and Ethan from the Trails Project. Amy distributed hard copies of the report.

### 3. Presentation of the road survey on the Clearwater Blackfoot Project by the Nature Conservancy, Steve Kloetzel:

Steve Kloetzel presented a detailed powerpoint of the results of the TNC weed survey, road infrastructure and stream crossings on the 183 square mile Clearwater Blackfoot Project. The survey discovered that there are 1,264 miles of road on the CBP (not skid trails – roads!) and 460 culverts. Steve mentioned that the TNC would welcome any help and collaboration on weed management and grant-writing for weed management.

### 4. Short-term funding for projects:

Dave Sharbono mentioned that the Driftriders have been actively cutting blow down on the trail to Morrell Falls, and that the Driftriders would be eager to find a grant for brushing trails. Kloetzel suggested that request be put into an RTP grant. Lee Boman mentioned that the

USFS just gave a \$1,500 grant for enhanced signage. Rachel Fiegley mentioned that the USFS really needs to build capacity to create more wayfinding signs and to create a signage plan. Lisa Moisley mentioned that Missoula County Parks has 1-1 matching funds available for certain projects, and are exploring which school lands and state lands, and potentially USFS lands might be potential areas for such projects. The County has prioritized projects that connect existing trails. A funding proposal must emphasize the value of the trails for a healthy lifestyle for county residents, and landowners affected must have approved such a use. Rachel F. pointed out that the USFS has 30% less funding in 2016 than in 2015, and therefore trails planning must take careful thought and preparation.

#### 5. Crowd Funding Campaign for the Trails Project:

CRC outreach director Jenny Rohrer presented a option for raising the funds needed for the planning phase of our Trails Project – a crowd funding campaign. A crowd funding campaign engages it's donors primarily through social media – reaching out through emails, Facebook, Twitter, etc. - all of which lead the potential supporter to a website that would quickly present the argument for the Trails Project through a short, 3-minute on-line video that 'tells our story' and asks for their donation for the Trails Project Planning Process. This video would feature short interviews with our trails partners which highlight the multi-use aspect of the vision for our Trails Project along with beautiful video and photos of our area.

To be successful, our crowd funding campaign would need these elements:

- 1) we need to utilize all of our partners contacts. We need to reach out through partner's websites, email lists, Facebook pages to reach the broadest possible source of support. Dave Sharbono mentioned that the Driftriders have a great email list including many Washington State residents and other states as well,
- 2) create a state-wide, even regional campaign for support,
- 3) need to spend 1-3 months preparing our campaign, identifying websites and email list, the video, and blogs to use before we launch,
- 4) create a campaign launch at a time of year to maximize support (summer),
- 5) run the campaign for a defined period of time – 4-6 weeks,
- 6) create a reward or recognition for donors,
- 7) use a crowd funding platform that allows us to keep all we raise, although we would set a goal publicly that we endeavor to reach.

Several people felt that Jenny's goal of raising \$15,000 was too low – that we could raise \$30,000 in such a campaign. Lee Boman stressed that with MWA and other organizational support that we could run a successful state-wide campaign. Since such a campaign would demonstrate wide community support, many hoped that an area funder might match the funds we raise. Jenny will prepare a campaign outline for the next Trails Meeting.

#### **6. Next Meeting: Tuesday, March 15, 2016. 5 pm (dinner), 6 pm training at SLE Outside.**

The next meeting will be our second Community Building Training, led by facilitator Jennifer Arnold. Please feel free to bring other members of your organization or other community leaders. The training will focus on how to build trust, transparency and accountability to support long-term collaboration and specifically will aim to develop a 'charter' document that the Trails Project will use to move forward.