

Mt. Emily Recreation Area (MERA)
Joint Advisory Committee Meeting
Tuesday, November 7, 2023

Agenda

- Convene @ 6:00 PM- Daniel Chaplin Building Conference Room at 1001 4th street

- Committee Members: Forrest Warren, Ian Caldwell, Jordan Ray, Tyler Brooks, Bill Gerst, Sean Leaner, Chris Evans, Mark Barber, Katrina Gaines, Elaine La Rochelle, Scott Wilson, Stephaney, Ben Walker, Josh Ford, Doug Hillop

- Attendees Meg Cook, Dave (DK), Bart Barlow, Ron Osterlow?, Ed Mosman,

Public comment- (3 minutes per individual)

- Meg Cooke: Here to support Barts proposal. Want to see more safety for beginner to intermediate trail riders. Seeing erosion and making them dangerous. Like that Bart is working with more beginner riders to walk trails and look at bad spots. Experienced riders don't see hard spots.
- Ron: Being an older rider want to back up what Meg said about safety and difficulty. Concern about Trail Bridge on top of Slammer, the gaps in the boards are too wide and dangerous for dogs.
- Linda Birnbaum (In an email sent to Josh Ford (on 11/7/2023) and forwarded to the Advisory Committee (on 11/7/2023)): Josh, I am unable to attend tonight's meeting. I hike on MERA weekly and ride horses often in the dry season. I support Bart's proposals, especially those that mitigate the dangers of his target intersections. If a mostly all-weather trail is feasible (proposed new trail figure #3) that would be a benefit, but it probably won't deter the riders that I know abuse the trails in the wet season. Politely asking them to stay off wet trails has had no effect. Too bad they can't be cited and be required to do community service by helping to repair the damage they do. Alas. Thank you and Bart for the work you do on this gem of a recreation area.

- Approve Minutes of last meeting May 2, 2023 Tyler made motion to approve.

Sean second. All in favor.

Topics

Logging Update- Josh Ford Informational: Got last log decks out of Red Apple. Working with logger and tribe to see if it is viable to continue logging and break even. Pulp market is down. Once project is done will look at trails and then can start to work on trails. Can't pile slash on cultural areas. Does the county know when they will stop logging? Depends on market. Have a new trail adopter for Parent Trap. Need an adopter for Red Apple. Some of the ruts are bad and need a piece of equipment to make repairs. Not too many areas. About 8-9 places where skid trail goes across Parent Trap. Soil moisture is really good right now.

- Map- Josh Ford, Informational – Working on updating map with all the trails. Kiosk map is done. Working on an 8.5x11 inch map which is easy to print. Have all the intersection maps completed. Will send out for edits, but need quick turnaround. Signs are great for safety.

- EOVA Grant- Josh Ford, Informational – Eastern Oregon Visitors Association. Working to get a \$7,000 grant about recreation planning in the Union and Baker Counties.

- Forming Parking Program Sub-Committee- Josh Ford, Action Item – Looking into parking permit program. Want to start a sub-committee to continue researching. Ian recommended looking at Hood River County Forestry. Josh has been talking with them already.

- Grade Corrections and Sightline Improvements MERA Loop- Forest Warren, Proposal/Action Item – Proposal #1 There is a difficult section coming up to the bridge on Pebbles Trail. Would create a one-way down hill trail. Makes a natural drop down to the bridge.
Motion to begin process to review trail building process. Elaine. Second by Jordan. All in favor.

Another section of MERA Loop has corners too tight and climbs too steep. Need to find good line. Have looked at with Josh. **Katrina made a motion to start working on this. Tyler Second. All in favor.**

- Directional Use Trails- Forest Warren, Proposal/Action Item – Upper Hotshot is getting more uphill traffic and have been some conflicts with someone riding fast downhill. Katrina likes to walk up Upper Hotshot. It is easy to ride up other routes, but for hikers it is too far to hike to get to the top. Have had some issues with runners. Whoops-e-do and 2 others. No problems with other 3 trails to make them downhill. Potential to make hiking trail next to Hot Shot to separate use. **Motion to make other 3 trails downhill only by Tyler. Scott second. All in favor.**

- Lengthening Redledge- Ed Mosiman, Proposal/Action Item - would like to consider to finish Red Ledge. Have build part of it. From Caffeine down to Connely Creek. Hand build. Want to start next spring Steep terrain. Downhill only. Easier connector. Would be “easier” advanced trail. **Tyler motion to begin work. Sean Second. All in favor.**

- Specific Use Non-Motorized Winter Recreation Routes- Ed Mosiman, Proposal/Action Item – Antony Lakes asks people to not walk on the groomed routes. Want one loop for no walking. Walking on 40 degree days creates potholes. **Elaine motion for information signing. Chris Second. All in favor**

- New Trails & Reroutes- Bart Barlow, Proposal – Did a lot of work on Lower Hotshot. Still a few safety issues on Hotshot that needs to be addressed. Bart submitted 12 pages of Proposal with maps and photos. MERA MAC Proposals 11_7_23 Safety Resolutions New.pdf

- Relocating Bridleway & Rerouting Gateway, Action Item – Horses would have a new trail on south side of Igo which would be less confusing. Have Bridleway only a horse trail. **Motion by Sean. Elaine Second. All in favor.**

- Extending Skills Slalom, Action Item – Issues with tabletops near Lower Hotshot. **Tyler motion. Second by Sean. All in favor.**

- Rerouting & Reclaiming Sections Lower Hotshot, Action Item – Some very steep sections of trails and fixing some corners. Skills Crossover is very steep. Make more of a green trails. Fixes steep climbs and fast downhills. Don't want to deal with 2 trails that do the same

thing. Would rather fix the best route. **Motion by Chris to approve what Bart had in original proposal. Tyler Second. All in favor. Sean opposed. All in favor.**

- Bi-directional Bypass on MERA Loop, Action Item – **Motion by Sean. Scott Second. All in favor.**

- New Climbing Trail Out of Upper Igo to Rock Pit, Action Item – South Facing, well drained. Snow melts fast so can use in most of winter. Easy trail. **Motion by Tyler. Second by Katrina. All in favor.**

- Master plan amendments- Josh Ford, Discussion –

- Section 5.0 Recreational Management, Action Item – Chris question about allowing members of the public to attend walk-thru. **Chris make motion to accept with addition 4.3 of section 5 to allow members of the public to attend. Second by elaine. All in favor.**

- MERA Trail Management Plan, Action Item **Motion by Scott Second Mark All in favor.**

- MERA Volunteer Plan, Action Item– no changes.

Future Business

- Master Plan (Section 4.0 Natural Resources Management)

- Deadbull Trail# 306- Josh Ford, Proposal/Action Item

- Addition of a Handrail to Conley Creek Bridge- Josh Ford, Proposal/ Action Item

-Advisory positions to expire/ renewal Dec. 2023- Josh Ford has renewed positions. Still have open seat for motorized (general public).

Next meeting- Tuesday, February 6, 2024

Meeting Schedule; First Tuesday of February, May, August, November

Adjourn at 7:44pm

