

Mt. Emily Recreation Area (MERA)
Joint Advisory Committee Meeting
Tuesday, May 6, 2025

Agenda

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

- **Committee Members:** Katrina Gains, Sean Lerner, Chris Evans, Jon Paustian, Norm Paullis, Forrest Warren, Ian Caldwell, Tyler Brooks, Ben Walker, Bill Gerst, Doug Hislop,

Online: JB Brock, Elaine La Rochelle

Staff: Josh Ford

- **Attendees:** Bart Barlow, Tim Collinswood

Public comment- (3 minutes per individual)

Bart Barlow:

Trail Proposal, Forrest Warren: I support the Proposal with the following condition:

1) The existing trail segment that is being bypassed is retained in the hope that most equestrians would use it.

Trail Proposal, Sean Lerner: I support the Proposal with the following conditions:

1) A team approach should be used to select several alternate locations for the trails, develop design attributes and ensure sustainable construction is defined.

2) The team should include mtn bikers that prefer to ride black, blue and green rated trails; and, at least one hiking and one equestrian representative (assuming they can find an interested representative).

3) Downhill trails should not terminate on the MERA Loop or other green rated trails-- don't drop a bunch of high speed mtn bikers onto green rated trails on MERA. Crossing such

trails is Ok provide a safety analysis is completed and implemented--Chokes, Line of Sight, Signage, etc.

4) Trails shall be as long as possible and extending from Ridgeline Trail and descending, as close as practicable to, Owsley Canyon or Upper IGO TH.

5) At least one new trail for hikers/runners and equestrians (no mtn bikes) shall be included in the planning, funding and construction of the new downhill mtn bike trails .

6) A "robust" public notice and opportunity for review shall be included.

- Approve Minutes of last meeting February 4, 2025 Motion by Tyler, Second by Katrina. All in favor.

Topics

- Accepting/Naming Intermediate Jump line trail “All Riled Up” – Josh Ford, Action Item

Josh: BMSTA completed work on intermediate jumpline. Would like to name it “All Riled Up”. Still some fine tuning that needs to be done.

- **Tyler motion to accept trail as it is. Chris second All in favor.**
- **Sean motion to approve name. Katrina second. All in favor.**

- Annual Archaeology Report – Josh Ford, Informational

Substrate Collaborative Anthropological Research has finished their annual review of the trails. Josh has reviewed the document with State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR). Onion Flat Cutoff and section of Mainline will remain closed until repairs have been made. Recommended to close Rock Pit Road from its intersection of Cut Off to intersection of Mainline. Recommended to rock Gateway from Apple Drop to Goldfish Pond, due to erosion. Planning a site visit in June to look at trails and talk about repairs. (moved to August 11).

- Parking Program Update – Josh Ford, Informational

Been going well. Still working on payment systems. Total income has been about \$8,000 so far. Will put \$2,000 into a Parking Expense Account to purchase supplies like passes. Will put rest in Contingency Fund. Josh will need to go to Commissioners to get permission to spend those dollars. Still working out kinks of filling out the forms. It will be good to get numbers of people visiting the site. Wondering about asking what type of activities people are doing, such as hiking or mt biking.

- Master Plan Public Comments - Josh Ford, Discussion

When are we going to finish reviewing document? Josh: Have done 90 days of public comments. After this meeting will be wrapping up. Will also have new forestry plan.

Comments submitted

- What responsibility does the Advisory Group have? Advisory for Commissioners.
- Do user groups represent a true cross section of visitors, such as schools or city?
Can add other groups in the future. Can be hard with too many people.
- Sustainable Funding and partnerships to maintain trails.
- Should review the Master Plan in 5 years.
- Develop a public process for decision making. Already have advisory committee.
More communication on internet? Ian: Hood River has email list for notices.
- Develop technical document for trails building. Already use IMBA and NOHVCC standards and trails books.
- Enlisting volunteers for day-to-day management of property. Already working a lot with volunteers.
- Review lease of Archery area. Norm: working on third section. Concern with trail access around or through shooting area. Some people would like to see another trail through the range, but difficult to do with locations of targets. Discussion on the lease.

- Trail Proposal – Forest Warren, Action Item

Just finished Rubble Trail. Want to have another trail to make a better connection. About 200 feet long. **Katrina made a motion to approve. Elaine second. All in favor.**

- Trail Proposal – Bart Barlow, Action Item

MERA Loop Trail, need to fix 6 spots. Used by many groups and is a hub to the trail system. Want to make the trail an easy “green” trail. Reduce grades to 5%. Want to move trail near fence line. Some hand work and some excavator work. People have to push bike up some sections of trail. Can leave difficult sections as options. Need more green trails. **Motion by Tyler, second by Norm. All in favor.**

- Trail Proposal – Sean Lerner, Action Item

Want to build a downhill trail near Dirt Circus. Need an easier route and use a professional trail builder. Concern that the ground might be too steep. Need to make sure professional trail builder is part of the layout and design process. Need to make sure that new trails have an adopter for future maintenance. **Motion to move forward on the concept by Tyler. Second by Chris. All in favor.**

Want to build a double black diamond trail south of Caffeine. Would be hand built. Might need to stay more on the ridge. Discussion about amount of trails being built and the ability to maintain. Also concern about other users needing a trail in that area. **Motion by Chris to explore flagging in trail location and evaluate how the trail would hold up for long term maintenance. Second by Sean Lerner. All in favor.**

Future Business –

Discussion about setting up agenda to review discuss joint items first, then motorized projects and non-motorized projects. This would allow motorized representatives leave early if they want to.

Discussion about Ebikes. In the past, Committee voted to allow Class 1 ebikes that have max speed of 20 mph with pedal assist (no throttle).

Sean Lerner:

- Still working on laying out a hiking trail to avoid Whoopsy Doo. Should be done by next meeting.
- At the next meeting, would like an update on Adopt a Trail program and the expectations of adopters.
- Need to look at trail ratings. Don't feel that they are in-line with other areas for non-motorized. Trail subcommittee should look at difficulty ratings on signs.

Next meeting- Tuesday, August 5, 2025 (changed to Aug 12)

Meeting Schedule; First Tuesday of February May, August, November - Selecting MAC

MERA Adjourned at 7:50pm