

**Pacific Northwest National Scenic Trail Advisory Council****Meeting #1**

Wednesday, October 14, 2015, 8:00am-5:00pm PDT

Thursday, October 15, 2015, 8:00am-4:30pm PDT

Best Western Edgewater Resort, 56 Bridge Street, Sandpoint, ID

**Attendees**

Advisory Council Members: Diane Brockway, Pete Brown, Almer Casile, Jeff Chapman, Brad Cownover\*, Mike Dawson, Jessie Grossman, Randall Hansen, Wayne Hare, Jeff Kish, Kevin Knauth\*, Jon Knechtel, Katie LeBlanc, Mike Lithgow, Teresa Martinez (Chair), James Michaud, Brock Milliern, Diane Priebe, Steve Quick, Raynelle Rino-Southon, Clea Rome, Rosemary Seifried, Brad Smith, Adam Sowards, Wendy Walker

U.S. Forest Service Staff\*: Matt McGrath (DFO), Becky Blanchard, Patrick Bridegam, Sue Colyer, Molly Erickson, Dianne Guidry, Ben Johnson, Josh Jurgensen, Lindsey Kiesz, Craig Newman, Jaime Schmidt, Dave Thorstenson, Kevin Walton, Wendy Zoodsma

Public: Ron Abraham (Kootenai Tribe of Idaho), Eric Anderson, Hall Baetz, Diane Barlow, Stephanie Campbell (Pacific Northwest Trail Association), Charley Carpenter (Pacific Northwest Trail Association), Jody Chinchin, Carolan Coughlin (Montana Conservation Corps), Phil Hough, Lauren Jarrold (Montana Conservation Corps), Patty Perry (Kootenai Tribe of Idaho), Rick Potts, Scotty Stalp, Ed Wingert (Idaho Department of Lands)

\* = USDA employees

*These notes are supplemented by overhead (Powerpoint) presentations, handouts, and flipchart notes. For purposes of brevity and to minimize duplicity, some of the content of the supplemental material is not included in these minutes and is available in the meeting record which is maintained in the agency PNNST project file. Contact Matt McGrath at 425-583-9304 or [mtmcgrath@fs.fed.us](mailto:mtmcgrath@fs.fed.us) with questions.*

**Day 1 – October 14, 2015****Opening Remarks by Dianne Guidry**

Dianne Guidry, Deputy Regional Forester for the Forest Service Pacific Northwest Region, welcomed the members of the Advisory Council and the public and thanked members for their volunteer service.

**PNNST Overview and Planning Presentation by Matt McGrath and Becky Blanchard**

Presentation is posted at <http://www.fs.usda.gov/main/pnt/working-together/advisory-committees>.

**Questions/Discussion:**

What is the lifespan of the comprehensive plan? There is no requirement to revise plans. Pacific Crest Trail (PCT) and Appalachian Trail (AT) comprehensive plans from the 1980s have not been revised, but the Nez Perce National Historic Trail comprehensive plan is under revision.

Council Members would like to see the baseline scenery assessment produced by the team of landscape architects working across the PNNST this summer. Matt will provide the report when it is available, and it will be posted on the Advisory Council website.

**Pacific Northwest Trail Thru Hike Presentation by Jeff Kish**

Jeff Kish presented on his experience thru-hiking the Pacific Northwest Trail (PNT) in 2014.

Jeff said that the road walks did not detract much from his experience, but he feels the experience would be even better if those sections were moved to trails. The most dangerous sections of trail are the sections on paved highways. Navigation was one of the largest challenges. There were very few signs. Bushwack and cross country sections were not very long. GPS is a very useful tool. It is important for him to connect to thru-hikers because they are the “storytellers of the trail”. He has an opportunity to dispel rumors that lead people to believe that the PNT is not a viable thru-hike. There are a few minor reroutes he’d recommend. One of the unique features of this trail is that it goes over mountain ranges and into valleys, where trail towns exist. The towns are great for hikers. They are small, but primarily have what is needed. The awareness of the PNT is minimal in trail towns. The PNT could possibly take some of the pressure off the PCT or the AT. Getting permits for the PNT was not much of an issue; a long-distance permit would help. Typically, people start in late June or early July and end in September. Some people started in May this year.

**FACA Overview and Ethics Training**

Matt and Becky provided training on the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) and ethics. Advisory council members signed their ethics pledge.

**Group Norms**

Ben facilitated a discussion of group norms. Council members shared the following: respect, patience, listening, one at a time, have an open mind, allow others to be heard, assume people come with best intentions.

**Panel Discussion by Jaime Schmidt, Teresa Martinez, and Mike Dawson**

Jaime provided background regarding the administration of national scenic trails (NSTs) and national historic trails (NHTs), as well as experience as the Forest Service manager for the Iditarod NHT which is administered by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). Teresa discussed the role and value of partnerships as well as experience with partnerships developed around the Continental Divide Trail (CDT). Mike Dawson shared experience of partnerships from the PCT. Because of the nature of the PNT (percentage of private land and multiple public managers) is there a concern about corridor integrity? It is not unlike the PCT or AT, where corridor width and standards are variable. Discussed value of and lessons learned from comprehensive planning efforts. Discussed role of land and resource management plans, the need for consistency, and the uniqueness of each Region.

**Regional Breakout Discussion**

Advisory Council members broke into four geographically based groups and discussed challenges, opportunities, and unique experiences relevant to the region. Forest Service staff and members of the public were invited to participate in the groups' discussions.

Montana: Wide open spaces and dark skies are key aspects of the experience, as are connections with trail towns. Issues include roadwalk sections. Discussed difference in the quality of the experience between the original PNT route along Kintla Lake and the congressional route along Bowman Lake in Glacier National Park.

Idaho: Section of motorized trail in Purcell Mountains is a potential issue. Rough terrain, grizzly bear create challenges for re-routes in this area. There may be an opportunity to relocate the route south on the Montana line. Connections with Bonners Ferry, Kootenai National Wildlife Refuge, south end of Priest Lake were discussed as opportunities. There is concern about adding use to the Lakeshore trail on the west side of Priest Lake.

Eastern Washington: Active timber and grazing along with two potentially challenging hydroelectric dam crossings, are unique aspects of this region. There is a large wilderness piece with established trails. Discussed opportunities for connection with Republic and possibly with Canadian communities.

Western Washington: Discussed gateway communities issues and opportunities. Two large areas of wilderness experience in that region with a unique coastal stretch. Largest issue is the seven-mile highway walk.

*Discussions are documented on flipcharts contained in the project record.*

**Nature and Purposes Presentation by Matt McGrath**

Presentation is posted at <http://www.fs.usda.gov/main/pnt/working-together/advisory-committees>.

Matt provided background regarding nature and purpose statements for national scenic and historic trails (NSHTs). The panel discussion earlier in the day brought home the importance of these statements.

Advisory Council members broke into four small groups to discuss recommendations developed by the Partnership for the National Trails System (PNTS) for writing effective nature and purposes statements, as well as examples of existing and draft nature and purpose statements for other NSHTs. Members of the public were invited to participate in the discussion.

*Discussions are documented on flipcharts contained in the project record.*

## **Day 2 – October 15, 2015**

### **Agency Land Use Planning**

Brad Cownover discussed Forest Service structure, organization, and planning. Authorities from National Forest Management Act provide the framework for Forest planning. Discussed how the agency's 2012 Planning Rule applies to this project as well. There were questions about how preliminary administratively recommended wilderness areas are managed and what uses may occur. The standard the Forest Service strives to meet is to not irreversibly degrade wilderness character. How this is done is determined either at the Forest Plan level (through establishment of suitable uses) or through implementation (by restrictions).

Diane Priebe discussed the BLM organization and mission. She discussed how land use planning is done by state and provided status of the Washington State office's Resource Management Plan.

Rosemary Seifried shared structure of the National Park Service. Every unit has a foundations document that describes the purpose, fundamental resources, and management objectives for the unit. General management plans are intended to be comprehensive for units within each unit. There are also resource- and area-specific management plans. If a Park includes part of a NST, the NST should be mentioned in the Park's foundations document.

Brock Milliern discussed the role and mandates of the Washington State Department of Natural Resources including the purposes for which it manages its holdings. Discussed various land designations within these holdings and how they are managed for multiple uses. Discussed special designations such as natural resource conservation area status and how those are designated, purchased out of the state trust system, and managed.

Jeff Chapman discussed how management of private lands relates to NST management. He discussed positive and negative impacts of trail designation and granting of rights-of-way.

The Advisory Council's role is to develop recommendations for the PNNST Comprehensive Plan. It represents the public but does not replace the public involvement that will occur as a part of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) plan development process.

### **Trail Corridor, Congressional Route, and Route Relocation by Matt McGrath and Becky Blanchard**

*Presentations are posted at <http://www.fs.usda.gov/main/pnt/working-together/advisory-committees>.*

Matt discussed the legislative and administrative framework for managing NST corridors. He shared language from existing and draft plans on trail corridors and an example of what a visual corridor might look like graphically. There was some discussion about suitable uses and how some uses might be accommodated on alternate routes or connector trails. This will all be discussed further with the advisory council.

Becky discussed the evolution of the PNNST route including the congressionally designated route location and the process and criteria for amending it with route relocations. This presentation set the framework for future discussion of specific potential route relocations.

### **Advisory Council Bylaws Discussion**

*The original version of the draft document, along with a version of the draft reflecting changes proposed at this meeting, are posted at <http://www.fs.usda.gov/main/pnt/working-together/advisory-committees>.*

Recommendation was made that the public meeting notice gets more broadly distributed at least 30 days in advance of the meeting. Information can be added to the bylaws to be more specific on how meeting notices will be distributed. Local unit public affairs staff along the trail can assist with getting information about meetings to their local media. Advisory Council members also have the ability to use their connections to various media markets including social media that can supplement the agencies' efforts.

There was discussion about what "consensus" means in the bylaws and how it might be used.

Matt shared that public comment is to be determined by the chairperson.

The Advisory Council suggested edits to the language to reflect these concerns. These proposed edits will be reflected in version 2 of the draft bylaws that will be considered at the next meeting.

### **Comprehensive Plan Components by Matt McGrath**

Matt reviewed a handout of a draft comprehensive plan outline and discussed a general outline and required plan components including the nature and purposes, route, significant resources, and suitable uses.

### **Nature and Purposes Discussion**

Advisory Council members reported out on the previous day's small group discussions on nature and purposes statements. Preferences for what a nature and purposes statement should include:

- short and concise
- specific to the trail
- poetic
- yet specific language
- highlighting national significance
- careful about implications of using specific words (perhaps be more broad at this early stage to avoid unintentionally restricting future uses)
- be specific about what intended uses are in anticipation of unknown future technology and proposed trail uses
- address diversity of character, uses and public values along the trail
- consider differing abilities and accessibility
- like a mission statement

Small groups continued to work on elements of the nature and purposes statement, recorded input on flipcharts, and reported out to the large group. Small groups discussed current trail uses, the compatibility of trail uses, suitability of activities in the trail corridor, and words/phrases (positive or negative) that best describe the current PNT experience and participants' vision of what the experience should be.

*Discussions are documented on flipcharts contained in the project record.*

### **Advisory Council Logistics/Meeting Dates and Locations**

Advisory Council members discussed logistics for the next meeting. Dates would be late March or April.

Interests for location include:

- rotating between the three states
- getting a feel for different unique sections of the trail, such as the coastal section
- within per diem rates

- simple logistics and safe travel
- highlighting small community connections
- economic contribution to poor, rural communities

The DFO and Chair will discuss these interests and come up with options for locations considering some specific locations that were provided by the group and get back to the advisory council.

### **Advisory Council Subcommittees**

The Advisory Council charter allows for the establishment of subcommittees (which can include members of the public); subcommittees report to the Council. Members of the Advisory Council discussed potential subcommittees including:

- Regional trail relocation subcommittees: Montana, Idaho, Eastern WA, Western WA
  - Assigned leads for each subcommittee
  - Agency employees will provide support to the committees
- Funding
- Gateway communities
- Environmental Education
- Nature and Purposes
- Youth and Diversity
- History and Culture
- Recreation and Wildlife resources
- Carrying capacity
- Tribal relations
- Corridor definitions

The Chair solicited leads and initial participants for the subcommittees. These lists will be provided to the members so they can solicit input and involvement from the public and the interests they represent.

*Discussions are documented on flipcharts contained in the project record.*

### **Public Participation**

The entire duration meeting was open to the public. Approximately 14 members of the public were in attendance. Among public attendees were Diane Barlow, who has submitted an application to join the Advisory Council as a representative for Tribes (currently vacant) and Patty Perry, who was asked to observe and take notes for Advisory Council member Dan Dinning (absent); both participated in Advisory Council discussions as non-voting observers.

The DFO received one advance request to provide oral testimony, which was accompanied by written testimony. The Chair recognized the requestor, Phil Hough. Phil introduced himself as a long-distance hiker with experience completing other NSTs. He encouraged the Advisory Council to think big as far as future impacts of this designation and to think about the corridor as something much bigger in terms of the impacts to communities and to other land uses. Jeff Chapman asked Phil's thoughts on mountain biking on NSTs. Phil responded that he feels there may be some areas where mountain bike use might be feasible.

A second member of the public, Hall Baetz, requested time to provide oral testimony and was recognized by the Chair. Hall said the reputation of the PNT may be in jeopardy because certain sections of the trail, including a section on State Route 20 near his home in Port Townsend, Washington, are dangerous for trail users. He interviewed two 2014 PNT thru-hikers about this section and has posted the interview on his blog. He stated that we cannot wait to address the safety issue on SR 20.

There were no further requests to provide testimony.

*Written testimony is contained in the project record.*

### **Adjournment**

The DFO adjourned the meeting at approximately 4:30pm PDT.