

Krause Basin Collaborative Field Trip 2022.05.22

****These notes represent the conversations as they were understood at the time. Not all details or ideas could be captured and may not be reflected here.***

Participants met at the intersection of Foothills Road and Strawberry Lake Road. Here participants signed in, obtained name tags, and engaged in small talk while others arrived. Cory (facilitator) engaged the group and requested of them to carpool to the Interpretive Trailhead (TH) because there was limited space. Cory also handed out small Krause Basin area maps containing trails.

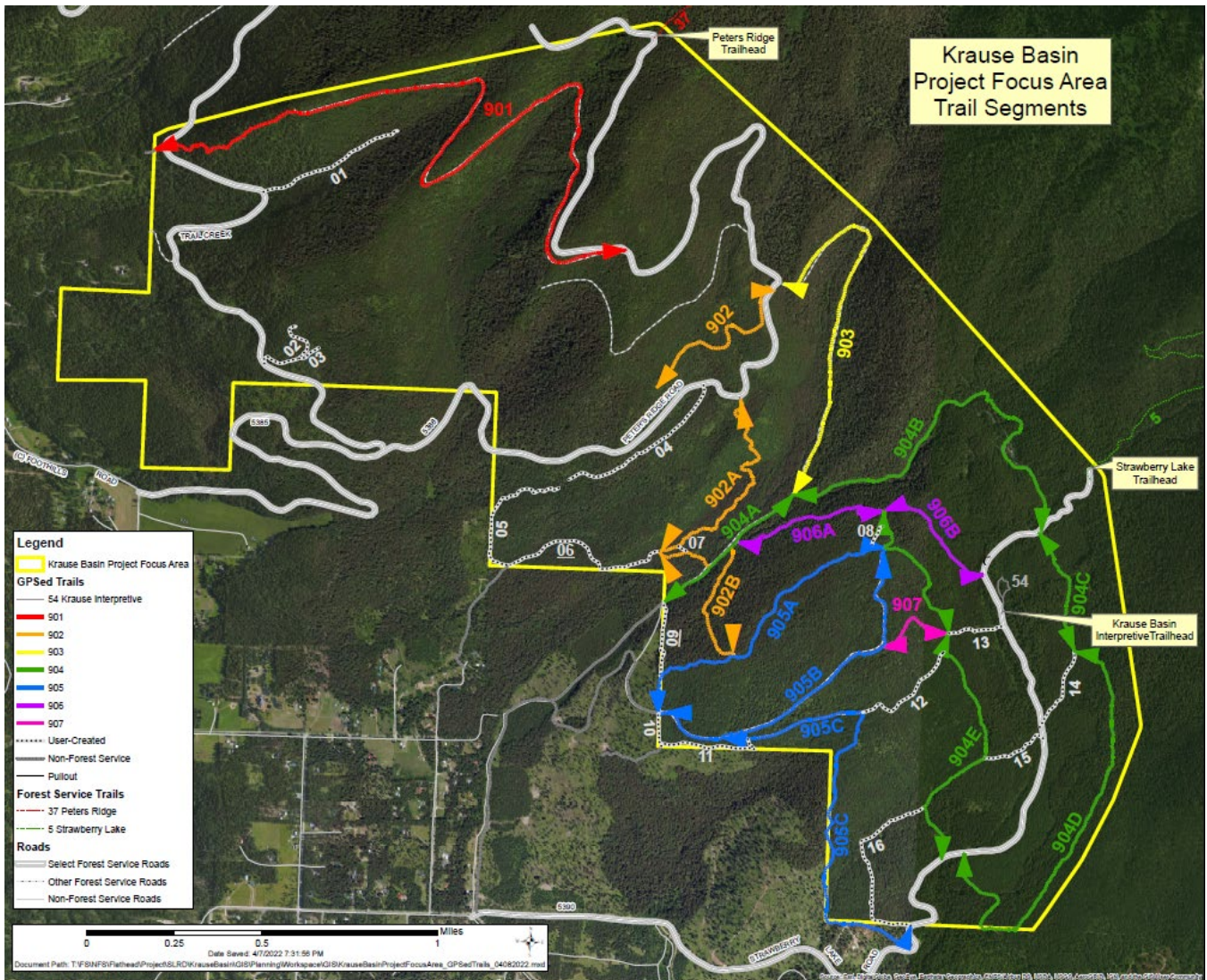
All drove up to the Interpretive TH. Cory and Forest Service personnel provided some limited lunch items to the participants. Cory encouraged participants to get to know other participants in the group while they ate.

Once participants were finished eating, Cory gathered participants around the tailgate of a truck to look at a map of the Krause Basin Area. Cory welcomed everyone and thanked them for their participation. He reviewed where the collaboration currently stood in terms of identified alternatives: no action (which would keep current trail uses) and a hiker/horseback only alternative. Today, additional alternatives could be discussed. He also spent time introducing the topic of signage including types of signage: signs to the area, trailhead signs, and on-trail signs.[Other topics of discussion during the hike could include trail conditions, appropriate users, and resource damage. Cory asked Keith Hammer to say a few words about the interpretive trail and some of the issues his group has had in managing the trailhead area including regular destruction of signage and campfires in the parking lot. Cory showed the route they would walk and the FS personnel were also introduced.





Cory led the group to begin a short hike on a loop he selected in the area. The hike followed this route: 906B, 904F, 08, 905A and B, 907 and 013.



Group Discussion While on the Trail:

Junction of 906B and 904F: The group stopped here to discuss the steepness of the trail on 904F and potential resource damage due to the steepness. Some felt there was definite erosion and others said that the trail had eroded little for as long as it has been there. Someone mentioned that water bars may not be effective here because they shed water off the trail and given the gully like shape that would be difficult. Someone mentioned they had observed a mountain lion just up the trail in the past.

Junction of 904F and 08: The group stopped here to discuss several things. One was the potential benefits of the user-created trail: less steep and less erosion than 904F. Derrick, the FS Recreation Manager, spoke about the regulations and desired conditions for trails on the Forest. Ideally, steep sections are no longer than 100 feet in length. He mentioned that a few switchbacks could easily be added to reduce the slope of the trail. However, some users (bikers, motorized) mentioned that they enjoy some steep sections.

Junction 08 and 905A: Someone suggested the group stop here to discuss trail clearing. They pointed out that 905A had been largely overgrown and not used for many years until some users re-cleared it. A discussion ensued about the FS lack of capacity to clear trails annually and the challenging process for partners to get a trail clearing permit. A participant mentioned that the earliest intent from the Noisy Face Decision for these trails was to let them grow in over time. Continued discussion occurred around which trails were "official" and which trails were unauthorized and how to tell. It was mentioned that in some cases certain unauthorized trails may be in better locations and in better condition than other trails.

Junction 907 and 13: This was the final discussion stop. The group discussed the steepness of 907 and most users agreed that the short trail could be closed. Someone mentioned that the extensive trails in the area were fragmenting wildlife habitat and it was mentioned that wildlife impacts needed a wider discussion in the group. A few participants mentioned having a lack of faith in the USFS and lack of follow-up when reporting issues found in Krause Basin. On-trail signage was discussed. Some felt it was a waste of money because they would just be destroyed. Others liked the idea of adding some simple trail signs. Cory suggested the idea of a "Friends of Krause Basin" group that could include all user groups and potentially get a trail clearing permit. Some supported the idea while others were not interested. Cory thanked everyone for their participation before everyone headed back to the parking area.





Individual Comments:

Cory and the FS personnel could not capture all side conversations. However, some notes were taken, when possible. The following are the comments that were captured. There is no intent to leave anyone's comments out.

As the main group started the hike, Shelli Mavor (FS) stayed behind to collect comments and thoughts from participants who had to leave early.

Participant: Engages in all trail uses – nonmotorized and motorized activities

- Believes area should be motorized year-round as long as law enforcement is available.
- Does not believe the area should be changed if there is no budget for it.
- Believes limiting who can recreate goes against society and the current administration.
- Why limit capacity for motorized users who are disabled from using the forest in other ways – access is shrinking – there are groups of people who can only use motorized to recreate in the forest.
- Others should not tell people how to burn fossil fuels and should not tell people how to recreate on public lands.
- All users need to learn how to coexist.
- Need to be inclusive of how people want to use the trails.
- Does not believe TH signs would get destroyed.

- Request to sign for which uses may occur on the trail – often other users see the ATV with the slash across it and believe that that means ‘No motorized use’ vs ‘No ATV use’ allowing Motorcycles, bikes, horses, and hike uses.

Participant:

- Why is the FS continuing to shut down trails? Believes will create a higher concentration of users on existing trails.
- Need to open the trails back up!
- We are all here to be good stewards.
- Motorized users pick up trash and clear trails as well.
- Want to help by educating all users.

Participant:

Great idea for signs in the area. The signs are about 2-foot-high concrete with a metal cap (Bronze or Brass) which has the trail number and an arrow stamped in them to identify the direction.

- They are used in the Bob Marshall Wilderness. They weather really well.
- They are low maintenance for the long term.
- They are less obvious for gunshots as they are only really noticeable by the user.

During the hike, this conversation was captured:

Participant: Questioned privately – who decides at the end of all of this? Why do we have to change? We already have a Whitefish trail system. Can’t we keep this place as it is? Don’t promote it. It will ruin the place.

Participants comments: We need quiet peaceful places to recreate nearby to the valley. With all the increase in residents and people, it is all the more important to maintain quiet, primitive recreation areas nearby. This is a scarce resource to be maintained.

Post-hike these comments collected at the Trailhead:

- Worried about skeet shooting affecting wildlife.
- Concerned about users making the decision where trails should be, without permits.
- Do not want this area to become a Spencer Mountain, Whitefish Trails, or Crane Mountain.
- There is conflict between user groups
 - Conflicting user speeds
 - Conflicting reasons for why out in the forest
 - Trail Forks (TF) a good example of the arrogance and attitude of Mountain Bikers as reflected in the trail names (e.g., TF calls it ‘Rambo’ we call it ‘Trail of the Hemlocks’).
- Races and Rallies that are scheduled cause an increase in activity pre-race due to race participants practicing. This in-turn causes increased conflicts.
- Horses and Mountain Bikes don’t often mix well.

- Like signs for what the trail is open to – trail signs for who yields to who – maybe could use a sign saying no ear buds?
- Would like to see more education to users on how to handle encounters with horses.
- Wildlife issues have not been addressed
 - With more use, wildlife will be more endangered
 - Research discusses effects on wildlife
 - Various user speeds
 - Various user types

Based on conversations had during the field trip, some of the items we are looking to address in the next meeting include signage options, law enforcement, and wildlife issues.