

PACIFIC NORTHWEST NATIONAL SCENIC TRAIL

Advisory Council Meeting Notes

January 16th & 17th, 2024

The National Advisory Council for the Pacific Northwest National Scenic Trail (PNT) was convened for its sixth meeting at 10:00 A.M. PST on January 16 and 17, 2024, on Zoom. Designated Federal Official (DFO) Jeff Kitchens, Strategic Project Manager, and Facilitator Tom Krekel opened the meeting with a welcome to the returning Advisory Council members.

In accordance with the provisions of the Federal Advisory Committee Act (PL 92-463), the meeting was open to the public from 10:00 A.M. to 1:00 P.M. PST, without active microphone and video functions. The microphone and video functions were activated to allow for public participation during the designated Public Comment period.

JANUARY 16 – DAY 1

Council Members Present*:

Diane Barlow (Chair)	Leah Dobey	Soisette Lumpkin
Glenn Blakeslee	Melinda DuPree	Elizabeth Nelson
Frank Bob	Luke Fisher	Ashley South
Jeffrey Chapman	Philip Hough	Adam Sowards
Callum Cintron	David Kennedy	Shelly Stevens
Michael Cuffe	Clifford Kipp	Diane Priebe (BLM)
Mike Dawson	Jeff Kish	Erik Frenzel (NPS)
Michael DeCramer	Michael Kroschel	
Dan Dinning	Michael Liu	

Council Members Not Present:

Randy Beacham	Kevin Knauth (FS) Justin	Elizabeth Thomas
Molly Erickson	Kooyman	
Robert Kendall	Michael Lithgow	

Forest Service staff present for meeting operations and technical support were:

Jeff Kitchens; Nicole LaGioia; Olivia Tong

Forest Service members in attendance were:

Sally Butts; Lisa Romano; Rick Pringle; Craig Newman

*Attendance varied through the meeting and throughout the day due to schedule conflicts and technological challenges. As members moved in and out of the meeting, Forest Service staff worked diligently to capture movement and ensure quorum prior to any sensing or voting actions.

WELCOME & INTRODUCTION

At the 10 a.m. start time, the meeting facilitator, Tom Krekel, took attendance of the audience participants. There were enough Council members present, and a quorum was established.

Tom Krekel shared the meeting agenda in the Zoom chat box. Advisory Council members, U.S. Forest Service staff, and members of the public gave self-introductions. DFO, Jeff Kitchens, and Acting PNT Administrator, Lisa Romano, were introduced. A Forest Service member commended the Advisory Council for their contributions to the Comprehensive Plan.

COUNCIL BUSINESS

Advisory Council Chair, Diane Barlow, requested for motions to approve minutes from the November 2, 2023 meeting.

APPROVE MINUTES FROM NOVEMBER 2, 2023 MEETING

Council member David Kennedy motioned to approve the meeting minutes for August 24, 2023, Seconded by Leah Dobey.

Motion passed unanimously.

NO PUBLIC COMMENTS RECEIVED FOR TODAY'S MEETING

There were no public comments received by the official date of the Federal Register notice. Interest to express comments were received by the DFO and there will be time during the public comment period later this afternoon. A comment made in the chat by a member of the public about concerns with trail impacts on the Yaak Valley's recovering grizzly populations.

Advisory Council Chair, Diane Barlow, thanked Rick Pringle, outgoing Acting PNT Administrator, and Advisory Council members for their work thus far and welcomed Jeff Kitchens and Lisa Romano. It was then asked of the Advisory Council members to think about next steps following completion of the Comprehensive Plan.

REPORT FROM USFS ON STATUS OF COMPREHENSIVE PLAN PROCESS

Rick Pringle, outgoing Acting PNT Administrator, reported that the Chief of the Forest Service (FS) signed the Comprehensive Plan on December 12th, 2023, and that the Plan was sent to Congress two weeks in advance of the court-imposed deadline of December 31, 2024. The FS is appreciative of those who provided input and comments at various stages. Because the FS determined that the final changes to the Plan did not constitute a "significant impact," a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) was noted when the final version of the Plan was posted on the website.

Sally Butts, Regional 6 Director of Recreation, Lands & Minerals, thanked previous PNT Administrator, Becky Blanchard, for her work with the Advisory Council. Gratitude was also expressed to Advisory Council members for their review and input on the Plan.

A Council member requested that the FS keep a record of key lessons learned from the drafting and completion of the Comprehensive Plan for future national scenic trails.

OVERVIEW OF FINAL PLAN AND SHARING OF KEY SUMMARY REFERENCES

Lisa Romano, Acting PNT Administrator, delivered a presentation of general points of consideration to prepare the Council for its next meeting. Those sections of the Plan identified by Romano as being particularly significant when the Council begins to provide advice and recommendations to the FS with respect to implementation of the Plan included sections of the Plan dealing with trail values, trail management, carrying capacity, monitoring, trail relocation and realignment, and land acquisition and protection. Romano also shared the following document with Council members.

Discussion: The Council was given time to respond with questions and comments after Romano's presentation. Topics raised during this discussion included:

- Concern was expressed about the FS' commitment to trail relocation. Specifically, one Council member described frustration regarding the much needed trail relocation on the Olympic

Peninsula. The Council member asked whether there is a budget for trail relocation and what outreach to landowners the FS has planned. Romano committed to look into this matter and respond at the next Council meeting. Romano further noted that it is important for Council members to consult with their respective constituents, identify concerns and present those concerns to the FS with as much background information as possible. The FS will undertake to address the concerns raised. Romano emphasized that such communication is essential to implementation of the Plan.

- Another Council member stated that while the Plan did a good job of generally discussing the optimal location review (OLR) process, more specific guidance is needed and that documentation of the OLR process would be helpful.
- The next question raised regarded the role of Congress and whether any Congressional action was needed before implementation of the Plan could proceed. The answer provided was no, there was no requirement that Congress approve the Plan. The Plan merely had to be submitted to Congress by the established deadline. The FS advised that the Plan had been timely submitted to the Chairs and Ranking Members of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee and House Natural Resources Committee on December 15th, 2023.
- It was asked how objections to the Plan and public comments filed in response thereto are being addressed and resolved. It was explained that the objections process was being handled by FS staff in Washington D.C. Changes made to the Plan are summarized in the FONSI and objections are addressed in the decision notice. Objections that are more specific and confined to a specific area or portion of the trail will be addressed at the local level. An example of such localized issues would be trail relocation. Also, certain issues may be addressed later during implementation. The FS explained that objection resolution is an on-going process and resolution is often determined by the nature of the objection. It is even possible that objections could be resolved through public comments and discussion at the Advisory Council level. It was suggested that the objection resolution process may be a future agenda topic.
- A final comment was made with regard to the limited time allowed for the Council to review and comment on the Plan. The Council member commented on the “rushed” nature of the review process and that it precluded the Council from substantive and thoughtful input on the Plan. The Council member urged the FS to ensure this not happen again.

BRIEF BREAK

OVERVIEW AND DISCUSSION OF PROCESS REQUIRED FOR ADVISORY COUNCIL TO REQUEST AN EXTENSION, TO EXTEND EXISTENCE OF A PNT ADVISORY COUNCIL AND REASONS JUSTIFYING SUCH CONTINUED EXISTENCE.

Facilitator Tom Krekel welcomed everyone back from the break.

Council Chair Diane Barlow began discussion of this agenda topic by summarizing the “life” of the Advisory Council and the reasons for requesting that the existing Council be extended for some period of time or that a *new* advisory council be established to continue to fulfill the statutory duties and responsibilities of the existing Council. Barlow referred to the Memorandum addressed to the Chief of the FS dated November 2, 2023 and approved by the Advisory Council on the same date. Barlow reported that the Memorandum had been submitted to the FS on November 2, 2023. Barlow reported that to date, no response from the FS had been received.

The DFO then addressed the Council's request set forth in the November 2nd Memorandum. First, the DFW explained that the FS did not have the authority to "extend" the ten-year term of the current PNT Advisory Council. Because the ten-year term of the Council was established by Congress as part of the National Trail Systems Act, only Congress had the authority to amend the Act and extend the term beyond ten years.

While the FS does not have authority to extend the ten-year term of the Council, the DFO explained that the FS *does have* discretionary authority to establish a *new* PNT advisory council. This discretionary authority to establish a *new* advisory council derives from the Federal Administrative Council Act (FACA) and internal FS rules implementing FACA.

The DFO outlined the process for establishment of a new advisory council under FACA. First, a request to establish a new advisory council should be delivered to the Regional Office for review and recommendation. The Regional Office would then forward the request to the Chief with the Regional Officer's recommendation that the request either be approved or denied. The DFO explained that any request for the establishment of a new advisory council should clarify the purpose and intent of the new advisory council, identify to whom the new council would provide consensus and advice, and identify who should serve on the newly established advisory council. The DFO emphasized that justification for why a new advisory council needs to be established is critical and that the party requesting the establishment of a new advisory council must disclose what the new council hopes to accomplish, the importance thereof and why an advisory council is the best means to accomplish the objective.

The DFO noted that the circumstances at issue here - - an advisory council established by Congress requesting that it be allowed to continue to fulfill its mission through the means of a new advisory council established by the FS - - is unique and appears to be without precedent. The DFO explained that if the FS decided to establish a new advisory council, it could take many months. For example, previous membership on the existing Advisory Council may not guarantee service on a newly created advisory council established by the FS and new members might have to be identified, contacted, and vetted. Existing Council members may be considered eligible for service on a new council but the vetting process might have to be re-started. There is also the issue of promulgating a charter for a newly established advisory council. Typically, drafting a charter and securing the requisite approval within the FS is a time-consuming process. In short, if the FS agrees to establish a new advisory council under FACA, it could be a lengthy process and is unlikely to be done by the end of 2024.

Given this scenario, the DFO suggested that the Council consider ways to make the most out of the limited time available before its May 2024 expiration date. In addition to working on Plan implementation, the DFO suggested that the Council may want to consider establishing a non-FACA based group for interested Council members or joining an existing non-FACA based group. A non-FACA based group could provide options for having a voice. Collaboratives and other means of community engagement could also serve as possibilities for public involvement during Plan implementation.

Council Chair Barlow re-addressed the November 2nd Memorandum and the context and reasoning for the request to establish a new PNT advisory council. In short, Barlow stated that a persuasive argument could be made that when Congress established the framework for the PNT Advisory Council, Congress made its intentions clear: The PNT Advisory Council was to be in place for ten years and that eight to nine of those ten years would be devoted to matters related to post-Comprehensive Plan trail administration issues. A seven-year "hiatus" due to no fault of the Council, was not envisioned by Congress and it was

certainly not envisioned that the ten-year term of the Council would end a mere five months after completion and submission of the Comprehensive Plan leaving practically no time for the Council to engage in any meaningful implementation of the Plan. Barlow pointed out that since the federal legislation clearly and succinctly sets forth the duties and responsibilities of the PNT Advisory Council and those duties and responsibilities have not been met because of a seven-year hiatus, it is relatively easy to justify the request for a new advisory council. Similarly, because Congress has already set forth the membership “categories” for the existing Advisory Council, those same categories should serve as the basis for membership on any new advisory council established by the FS. Similarly, to avoid the time-consuming task of identifying and contacting potential new members for a FS-created advisory council and to draw upon the current bank of institutional knowledge, it would seem to make sense and be most efficient to appoint existing Advisory Council members to any new advisory council. Finally, with respect to the time and effort associated with drafting a charter for a new advisory committee, it was pointed out that a draft charter was submitted as an attachment to the November 2nd Memorandum.

Barlow concluded by stating that if the Council stood ready to pursue the request set forth in the November 2nd Memorandum, she would be willing to meet with the Regional Forester to discuss the request, Barlow agreed, however, that the Council should make the best of the time left to plan for the future and prepare for a rejection of the request.

Discussion: Council discussion centered around next steps for the Council until May 2024 and considerations for an advisory body after the Advisory Council charter expires. Most Council members agreed that the current Advisory Council should focus on the time they have left and make the most of it, but also consider alternatives for collaboration with the FS about Plan implementation. Points raised during the discussion follow:

- The first comment questioned whether pursuing establishment of a new advisory council was worth the time and effort if most of the Plan implementation work would be done at the local level and would involve discussions between the FS and local collaborative groups. If the current Council cannot be extended and the FS declines to establish a new advisory council, would it be better to establish a private group of interested parties that would not fall under FACA and where the FS would participate but not lead? Discussion on this point included statements to the effect that non-FACA based collaborative groups are an option, but it was noted collaboratives generally do not have the same weight or range of perspectives and experience as would a formal Advisory Council. There were also concerns raised about the administrative costs of establishing a new advisory committee. It was pointed out that while there are costs associated with an advisory council, such costs are minimized by use of virtual rather than in-person meetings.
- Next, the following hypothetical question was raised: If a meeting took place between the FS and existing Advisory Council members *after* the Council’s May expiration date would such meeting be considered a “public” meeting subject to federal open meeting laws? Acting PNT Administrator Romano responded that additional context and facts would be needed before a definitive response could be provided. While not all meetings between the FS and private citizens are subject to open meeting requirements, if the FS is meeting with a group of citizens and that group is essentially a “de facto” advisory council, the FS would most likely treat it as an open meeting. A message sent in the Zoom chat box stated that any collaboration on public land needs to be a public process; if the USFS is involved with a collaborative group about occurrences on public lands, then meetings need to be open to public. A significant amount of the trail is not on

federal lands and would take a large regional view to address these areas rather than putting it on neighboring FS office.

The DFO stated that the Advisory Council should decide how it wants to proceed. If the Council believes it is in the best interest of the PNT to pursue establishment of a new advisory council as set forth in the November 2nd Memorandum, then the FS will cooperate. The information on alternatives to a new advisory council is provided not to dissuade the Council but rather, provide points of consideration. It is up to the Council to decide what is the best use of their remaining time.

To help inform the Council's decision on how to proceed, Barlow asked Council member Jeff Kish to briefly describe the role of the Pacific Northwest Trail Association (PNTA). Kish responded that the PNTA, whose mission is to build and manage the PNT and conserve the wild places it traverses, is heavily involved with the PNT on many levels and that it intends to be proactive with respect to Plan implementation issues. Kish stated that there are many ways for the public to get involved in the decision-making process with respect to a resource such as the PNT and that the PNTA believes all stakeholders should be included in trail management decision-making process. While the PNTA might be able to serve as a facilitator of an advisory group, it could not be all things to all persons as there is not always unanimity among stakeholders. Barlow echoed this sentiment and pointed out that there are several collaborative groups that are focused on very local issues, e.g., the Yaak Valley Forest Council is focused on protection of grizzly bear habitat while other groups are focused on issues such as equestrian access. Council member Ashley South who is associated with the Yaak Valley Council noted that her organization has been actively involved in the objection process and intends to participate in the Plan implementation process on issues involving land and wildlife management.

Additional discussion was had concerning collaborative groups, the scope of their interest and the varying weight they carried. The DFO noted that while a lot of work is done at the local level for collaboratives, the FS can also work with collaborative groups that are focused on issues that are broader in range and scope. The DFO noted that the Comprehensive Plan requires coordination and collaboration at all levels - not just local.

A question that came up in the previous Council meeting was raised again: *Has Congress been asked to extend the term of the PNT Advisory Council?* Council Chair Barlow responded that no such request had been submitted to Congress. It was then asked whether the FS had delivered the November 2nd Memorandum to the Regional Office for review and recommendation. The DFO responded that the November 2nd Memorandum had not yet been delivered to the Regional Officer for review and recommendation. When asked why the Memorandum had not been delivered, the DFO explained that due to the unique circumstances surrounding the PNT Advisory Council and its timeline, the FS felt it needed to gather more information and fully investigate the process for establishing a new advisory council under such circumstances before submitting the Memorandum to the Regional Office. Also, there was a delay in sending the Memorandum because of the focus on resolving objections and submitting the Plan to Congress in a timely manner and further delay due to personnel changes. The DFO stated that the FS is happy to send the Memorandum to the Regional Forester if the Council still wishes to pursue its request to establish a new advisory council.

Council Chair Diane Barlow asked the Council if it wished to withdraw its approval of the November 2nd Memorandum and its request that the November 2nd Memorandum be submitted to the FS for review and action. No motion to withdraw the November 2nd Memorandum was forthcoming. Barlow stated that she

would work with the FS to ensure the November 2nd Memorandum was delivered to the Regional Officer. Barlow said she would work with the FS to develop agendas for upcoming Council meetings that would optimize use of the Council's time through May 2024.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

A member of the public asked: *are committees established for the PNT working with the government required to be public?* Answer: No, they are not required to be, only FACA-established groups. The government is often invited to meetings that are open to specific groups but not open to the public. It was then requested that if there is a discretionary council that the meetings be public. This is already a requirement as it would be subject to FACA.

CLOSEOUT & REVIEW OF DAY'S ACTION ITEMS

Facilitator Tom Krekel reviewed the agenda and tasks for the Advisory Council members in preparation for the second half-day meeting of January 17th, 2024.

General comments during wrap-up:

- Is there a list of the Advisory Council members and who they are representing? There was a current roster circulated in connection with the June 2023 meetings and an updated roster will be sent out.
- This council was not intended to continue indefinitely and will need to establish purpose and reason to justify its continued existence.

Council Chair Diane Barlow shared that everyone should prepare their thoughts for their four minutes of presentation during the listening session in the following January 17th meeting. Lisa Romano shared final remarks of the day, thanking everyone for their support.

MEETING CLOSED FOR THE DAY

JANUARY 17 – DAY 2

Council Members Present*:

Diane Barlow (Chair)	Dan Dinning	Michael Liu
Glenn Blakeslee	Leah Dobey	Elizabeth Nelson
Frank Bob	Melinda DuPree	Ashley South
Jeffrey Chapman	Philip Hough	Adam Sowards
Michael Cuffe	Clifford Kipp	Shelly Stevens
Mike Dawson	Jeff Kish	Diane Priebe (BLM)
Michael DeCramer	Michael Kroschel	Erik Frenzel (NPS)

Council Members Not Present:

Randy Beacham	Robert Kendall	Soisette Lumpkin
Callum Cintron	David Kennedy	Elizabeth Thomas
Molly Erickson	Justin Kooyman	Kevin Knauth (FS)
Luke Fisher	Michael Lithgow	

Forest Service staff present for meeting operations and technical support were:

Jeff Kitchens; Nicole LaGioia; Olivia Tong

Forest Service members in attendance were:

Lisa Romano; Craig Newman

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WELCOME, REVIEW OF PREVIOUS DAY, & BRIEF INTRODUCTION OF ANYONE ABSENT DURING DAY 1

Facilitator Tom Krekel began the meeting at the 10 a.m. start time and allowed for self-introduction of anyone who was not in attendance the previous day. Krekel provided a recap of Day 1 (approved minutes, presentation, preparation of thoughts during the listening session, and thinking about the future goals of the PNT Advisory Council).

Goals summarized from Day 1:

1. Make the most of the time remaining until May 2024
2. Deliver the November 2nd Memorandum to the Regional Office.
3. Pursue any other alternative to a discretionary council.

The Chair asked DFO Jeff Kitchens and Olivia Tong, USFS Intern, for additional self-introduction. Jeff Kitchens has worked for a long time supporting and coordinating collaborative governance and possesses a background in this line of work in collaboration and coordination.

PLAN FOR FEBRUARY – MAY MEETINGS (PRIORITIZATION FOR PLAN IMPLEMENTATION 2024-2025)

Advisory Council Chair Diane Barlow began the discussion regarding the status of the Comprehensive Plan. The FS is at the starting point of implementation after having completed the planning process and its previous focus on preparing the Plan. The Advisory Council should now think about what they can advise the FS on when thinking about Plan implementation and can look at Appendix G for priority projects. The DFO encouraged the Council to think through the best use of their remaining time, given the end date in May 2024. The FS would like to hear from all Council members about their priorities on what the FS should consider in the short-term for implementation and specific details, such as local planning.

Council Chair Diane Barlow noted that she had worked with a subcommittee to generate the following agenda topics:

- As a very preliminary matter, be sure to congratulate and give credit to those FS personnel who worked so hard to complete and submit the Comprehensive Plan in a timely manner.
- Discuss the value of a timeline for Plan implementation and encourage the FS to develop such timeline. While there are bound to be changes, establishing a timeline can have long term benefits. For example, a timeline can provide benchmarks for monitoring progress and accountability.
- Hear a more specific and robust discussion of the optimal location review (OLR) process and integration of the Comprehensive Plan into localized planning units. How does the FS plan to proceed?

The DFO then opened the conservation and asked for additional future potential agenda topics.

Discussion: The first comment was that there should be more outreach to affected communities to hear their priorities. While there was an opportunity for public comment on the priorities set forth in Appendix G of the Plan, meeting with communities and getting localized input will be an important part of Plan implementation. Many plan implementation actions are specific and require local level public

engagement. The Council was urged to seek public engagement to inform how implementation is prioritized. Every Council member was selected to represent diverse interests of the broad public and the Council therefore plays an important role in advising the FS with respect to Plan implementation. Community engagement is important.

The next discussion generally centered around what the Advisory Council could realistically achieve with respect to Plan implementation given the Council's limited remaining time in existence and the fact that local trail management may not be able to address implementation projects at this time. Under these circumstances, the Council should probably concentrate on prioritization of certain areas of implementation, such as OLR. Specifically, the Council could conceivably help create guidelines for how these processes take place and for OLR and land management decisions. It was expressed that it would be useful to go through OLR to avoid mistakes with acquisition of unsuitable lands as seen to happen with the Appalachian Trail.

Other general comments during the discussion:

- What is the role of the Advisory Council in the PNT implementation?
There was a document presented at a previous meeting that setting forth the role and functions of an advisory council. This document will be re-distributed in advance of the next meeting.
- What is the process for tribal government-to-government engagement to identify conflicts and concerns? Would like to hear more about this from the FS.
- Other Council members also voiced support for hearing more about government-to-government discussions.
- Would like to hear from the FS about its commitment in regard to Plan implementation.

COUNCIL MEMBER LISTENING SESSION

Facilitator Tom Krekel briefly went over the format of the listening session and Council members were given four minutes each to present their thoughts on moving plan implementation forward and their priorities. Council Chair Barlow noted that this will be beneficial for overall discussion and addressing concerns going forward.

All Council members in attendance were invited to present. Council members were called to present in alphabetical order of first name.

- Adam Sowards
 - It is important to represent historical interests and that people hiking the trail are aware of the history and understand the PNT.
 - We should ensure that the history being told is inclusive, accurate, and representative of the communities living along the trail (e.g., having government-government relations).
- Ashley South
 - The Yaak Valley Forest Council (YVFC) appreciates the work put into the Comprehensive Plan by the Advisory Council.
 - The YVFC is committed to working collaboratively and participating during implementation to protect and conserve wildlife habitats, specifically the Yaak population of grizzly bears.
 - The FS should explore alternative trail routes that avoid diminishment of grizzly bear habitats.
 - YVFC will work with the FS on the local level to ensure actions taken support grizzly bear recovery. Segments of the PNT that bisects designated grizzly bear recovery zones will likely require an EIS to assess environment impacts.

- Land management decisions need to prioritize grizzly bear habitats.
- The proposed northern trail route can be rerouted to avoid core grizzly bear habitats in the Cabinet-Yaak Ecosystem and prevent grizzly bear displacement and/or human conflict.
- The FS is required to ensure that proposed actions are not likely to jeopardize threatened grizzly bear populations.
- Effective tracking of visitation metrics is critical for the security of core grizzly bear habitats.
- Dan Dinning
 - As someone who lives where the PNT goes through, there have been successful collaboration processes but not enough engagement with the community.
 - There should be steps taken to reach out and talk to communities about the PNT and implementation, such as the relocation process.
 - The trail has social, economic, and cultural impacts that are only experienced by people living there.
 - Give local communities the opportunity to communicate their experiences, concerns, and impacts.
- Diane Priebe
 - Representing the Bureau of Land Management (BLM).
 - Congratulations to the FS for completing the Comprehensive Plan and thanked the agency as BLM will be using the plan for trail administration.
 - As BLM land ownership is scattered, it is necessary to locate the trail.
 - It would be helpful if BLM receives assistance with planning.
 - There is also need for more coordination and partnership building with communities and partners to understand the roles of BLM in the whole effort.
- Erik Frenzel
 - Representing the National Park Service (NPS).
 - The current use and location of the trail in national park units is appropriate.
 - A valuable role for the council could be providing input on trail locations outside of parks.
 - The council and land management agencies should anticipate greater use as the trail is completed and moved off roads and be proactive about developing visitor use strategies before problems develop.
- Frank Bob
 - Expressed concerns about grizzly bears throughout Washington State, given the accumulated effects of recreation on wildlife and the amount of existing recreational activities.
 - Want to know: how are the treaty tribes and federally recognized tribes going to be involved and heard during implementation going forward?
- Glenn Blakeslee
 - Echoed the concerns of other Council members about the security and safety of the trail.
 - The Council can advise on establishing trail location that is both safe for hikers and first responders.
- Jeff Kish
 - As the Executive Director of the Pacific Northwest Trail Association (PNTA), has continued to talk with public about their needs surrounding the PNT.
 - Think about ways that the FS can make changes directly seen by people on the ground.
 - Need to create nonmotorized trail and get the trail off roads. Communities do not view the PNT as a recreational trail because it is still located on roads.

- Need not just OLR, but also a process related to OLR for planning the entire trail location so that there is direction on how to do it, who does it, and when.
- Jeff Chapman
 - Concerns regarding the Olympic Peninsula (Olympic National Forest and National Park).
 - There needs to be more attention on where the trail exists.
 - Concerns over the FS's commitment in locating the trail given past agency with other trails.
 - The trail should be thought through as a whole: land acquisition, construction, management, etc.
 - Trail routes through private lands may not necessarily be open to all and/or are not feasible to manage a trail over.
 - The FS will have to work with local and state governments on forest planning.
- Libby Nelson
 - It is crucial to understand issues regarding general recreation through a tribal lens about general recreation, and to acknowledge concerns in increasing recreation impacts on tribal interests.
 - The FS should conduct tribal consultation to honor native lands and treaty rights.
 - There will also be more wildlife impacts as there is increased human connection.
 - Have to think about how to protect resources, wildlife, and biodiversity, and how to make the trail ecologically compatible.
- Leah Dobey
 - The Council should use their limited time to think about how they can provide direction on optimal location in a zoomed-out perspective applied across the trail rather than a localized area.
 - The Council can also provide recommendations on how broad-level community input and partnerships processes can occur.
- Mike Cuffe
 - Consult with officials and county commissioners to cover trail area.
 - The PNT is very unique in its land management planning.
 - The PNT could have been located somewhere else - - for example, it could have been located closer to the Canadian border and Cuffe and other residents of his town would have been happier with that result, but he acknowledges the trail is where it is so he will live with it.
 - There need to be public meetings during implementation rather than small, private groups for opportunities to participate.
 - Also need to reach out to communities as they may not have even asked for the PNT to be created.
- Michael DeCramer
 - The Council should use its remaining time to support the people and the FS in the continued development of the PNT in line with the Comprehensive Plan.
 - The Council should set concrete goals for providing the FS with direction on priority areas for implementation. They can work together to decide priorities and durable solutions with an estimated timeline.
- Mike Dawson
 - It is important for the Council to propose time-bounded aspirations. One priority area the Council can recommend on is a timeframe with specific goals for completing specific OLR guidelines which will give direction for FS to incorporate OLR decisions.
 - This will move the OLR process forward and encourage land planning.
 - A time-bounded plan will be crucial for the FS as this will give them direction and can be incorporated in decision-making.

- The PNT goes through various locations that differ geographically, and decisions should reflect the places they go through.
- Important to have time-bounded goals for how the Comprehensive Plan will be incorporated into individual forest plans and the strategies to make this happen.

BRIEF BREAK

COUNCIL MEMBER LISTENING SESSION CONTINUED

After the break, presentations continued from the remaining Council members who have not spoken. This is the second part of the listening session.

- Mike Liu
 - Want the FS to identify these concerns during implementation: unique access needs for backcountry horsemen; use of chainsaws during post-wildfire; and trail maintenance.
 - Supported the suggestion for the Council to set benchmarks and timeline.
 - Continue looking into an advisory entity after the Council expires.
 - Border control engagement could be another voice for trail development.
 - Need to make sure that trail signs and geographic data are easily identifiable.
 - There could be a dedicated regional team to focus on OLR over the next couple years.
- Melinda DuPree
 - Mountain bikers and cycling organizations could be valuable partners for collaboration during implementation for trail use and monitoring.
- Phil Hough
 - The Council can make the best of the remaining time through the following actions.
 - Have the FS identify their needs from the Council.
 - Look at the Optimal Site Review and prioritize locations.
 - Look at Lane Acquisition Plan with an eye towards need. The Council can support for any agreements or funding.
 - Look at use monitoring – how to address questions of carrying capacity and permits, before they become problems.
 - Assist in designing a local outreach plan to create a system of gathering input that brings in all local voices and priorities.
 - Set Objectives and design a forum that provides for collaboration and assures input from broader interests that may not be represented locally, specifically to address long distance hiking community interests and concerns about wildlife issues that are more regional in nature.
- Shelly Stevens
 - As a representative of the Tri-County Economic Development District (TEDD) serving counties that the PNT runs through, looking forward to supporting implementation.
 - Explore ways to connect trail towns and user groups.
 - Enhance awareness of the PNT for hikers to experience the trail.
- Diane Barlow
 - Believes it is important to tell the stories of the people and the events that shaped the PNT. For example, the PNT “begins” in Glacier National Park near Chief Mountain. Traditionally, this land “belonged” to the Blackfeet Tribe.
 - To the Blackfeet, Chief Mountain is a sacred place. It is important to tell this story - - to provide links on the PNT website so hikers and others interested in the PNT can learn this.
 - It is important to tell the story not just of the Blackfeet but we should tell the stories of all the Tribes along the PNT and tell the stories of the communities along the PNT.

- Educational opportunities should be pursued. The FS should engage not only with local communities but with area universities and colleges to develop an informative and educational website.
- Clifford Kipp
 - Work on getting local buy-in and forming messaging around the PNT to get people excited about the trail.
 - Address issues of land management and ownership.
 - Identify where the trail is ending up and likely trail users.
 - Still would like to have an opportunity for the current group of Council members to continue to have their voices heard regardless of whether it is in the shape of a FACA committee or not going forward.
 - Can connect youth and local participants as a resource for partner groups.
- Mike Kroschel
 - As the PNT goes through grizzly bear habitats, the FS should prioritize Kootenai reroute discussions and consider a reroute to Troy (alternate route through the south of Montana) and having trail access and resupply there.
 - The trail should also be relocated around roads.
 - There needs to be a more precisely drawn map of an alternative route.
 - Need to have more focus on the PNT itself and not the legal aspects of the Council.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

There were no additional comments made by members of the public.

CLOSEOUT, REVIEW OF DAY'S ACTION ITEMS, & FEBRUARY AGENDA SETTING

FS staff shared initial reactions to comments discussed in the meeting. Acting PNT Administrator, Lisa Romano, looks forward to reflecting on Council member concerns and how to incorporate moving forward. Romano is tasked with laying out a roadmap for the FS to move forward with implementation. The constructive feedback and input received today will be helpful for informing implementation and further work. The DFO will synthesize key themes and share a summary with clear goals and concerns made by the Advisory Council for the next meeting in February.

The Council was asked to discuss the February meeting agenda. Based on the meeting discussions, creating a timeline for implementation will be an agenda item as the timeline would not be ready by the February meeting date. Suggestions for potential agenda topics are welcomed. The Council is looking forward to a synthesis of the comments raised during this meeting.

Proposed upcoming Advisory Council meeting dates:

- March 5th from 10am-2pm PST
- April 2nd from 10am-2pm PST
- May 7th from 10am-2pm PST

NOTE: the proposed February meeting date coincides with Trail Advocacy week. A significant portion of the Council and FS staff will be unavailable to attend the meeting due to the D.C. conference. To meet the goal of holding a minimum of four more Council meetings, the FS will look into re-scheduling or canceling the February 13 meeting.

One question came up during this time: *is there a set procedure for how the Advisory Council puts forward recommendations on priority implementation?* There is no specific roadmap but rather general, less structured effort to get consensus. The DFO stated that in the next meeting, will walk the Council

through the council charter and decision-making process for implementation, and discuss how the Council can decide priorities. A file copy of the charter was shared during the meeting.

MEETING ADJOURNED

MINUTES CERTIFIED BY

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Diane Barlow". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "D".

DIANE BARLOW
Council Chair