

Ridge to Rivers
3rd Quarter Partnership Meeting
Minutes
May 10, 2016

Partners present: Scott Koberg, Ada County Parks and Waterways; Doug Holloway and Sara Arkle, Boise City Parks and Recreation (Department); Megan Impson, Boise National Forest Service; Tate Fischer and Larry Ridenhour, Bureau of Land Management (BLM); Krista Muller, Idaho Department of Fish and Game; David Gordon, Ridge to Rivers. Mark Iverson, minutes recorder.

Others present: Tim Breuer, Land Trust of the Treasure Valley (LTTV); Jennifer Tomlinson, Boise City Parks and Recreation and Mark Tate, Southwest Idaho Mountain Biking Association

Fiscal Year 2016 – 3rd Quarter Budget and Work Plan Review

D. Gordon asked if there were any questions regarding the third quarter work proposal. There were no questions.

Spring Trail Maintenance and Construction Update

D. Gordon informed the partners there had been a lot of trail maintenance in the previous month. He stated conditions had dried out, but lower trail maintenance would be finished before moving to the Forest Service trails in the upper part of the Ridge to Rivers system. Many trees were down and needed to be cleared from the trails. He added that the reroute on Bob Smylie Trail at Hillside to Hollow was completed, largely by volunteer efforts. The trails in Hillside to Hollow tended to be very narrow and were primarily used by walkers and users with dogs. In order to discourage speed on these trails, staff constructed an out slope all the way around and flattened ridgelines. He informed the group of one additional reroute at Hillside to Hollow, on June 4, 2016 as part of National Trails Day, in conjunction with LTTV and REI. This is a quarter-mile section of trail on the Harrison Hollow portion of Hillside to the Hollow. It would be a change from a straight climb, to a turn in the trail climb. Some trail users in Hillside to the Hollow present a challenge to staff. Pulling out marker flags for future routes would make it necessary to return to the site at a later date to replace the removed flags. He noted that public feedback on the trails had been very positive.

D. Gordon shared that staff had utilized a contractor for maintenance on some machine maintained trails such as: Corrals, Hard Guy, and Scotts. He added that the contractors were used out of necessity to augment staff's efforts and that contractors had finished their work on these trails. When contractors or crew meet trail users they were urged to ask trail users what their opinions were on these trails. Generally, the feedback was very positive. There was some negative response to machine maintenance on these trails. He reported some elements of the trails were not exactly what was wanted and staff had gone back to the trails to lessen some dips in the trail by hand. He emphasized that trail users needed to understand that when working on old roads, much larger in

surface area with steeper inclines, a small drain dip would only work for a few weeks. That necessitates the construction of larger drain dips. The challenge was making sure these drain dips work while being as rideable as possible. Some of these dips appeared bigger than they were on average, measuring eight inches from top of berms to troughs. D. Gordon found that thirty percent of the drain dips required rework after he rode all the trails in question. The only way to get away from the need for larger drain dips is to reroute these trails. Per the Trail Plan Survey, users did not want trails to be rerouted. He added that drainage dips are in the Foothills due to the erosive soils, and were not needed in other areas with different soils.

S. Koberg asked which contractor was employed for the work. The contractor used on Hard Guy, Scotts and Corrals was YRU Contracting, Inc. and they used the same machine as the crew, a mini excavator K008 by Kubota. Staff required contractors to use this type of machine for trail construction.

Ridge to Rivers Summer Projects

D. Gordon informed the partners they would start on Sheep Camp Trail, which was an old road heavily eroded and overgrown. It also tied Hard Guy Trail to Dry Creek. This trail would be the same style of trail as Sweet Connie; which moved back and forth across the road prism. He added that they would build the reroute, from the parking area, at the conclusion of Sweet Connie to Lower Bogus Basin Road then descending to Dry Creek. This was a half-mile of trail that likely required one, sixteen-foot span bridge or a large culvert. Once this was completed, construction would begin on Full Sail Trail once a cultural and plant survey was completed. Full Sail Trail was a full trail and not simply a reroute and it was important not to cut the trail through sensitive plant areas.

D. Gordon asked the agency representatives if there was any opportunity for Forest Service or BLM botanists to walk the Full Sail Trail alignment.

M. Impson answered the Boise National Forest was at full capacity and were relying on a seasonal botanist only at the time.

S. Arkle stated that the Department would find a botanist, but it would help to have a contact for the cultural survey. She suggested the Idaho Archaeological Society as an example.

T. Fischer asked when this would be started.

D. Gordon replied that he did not think it would begin until early July, 2016.

T. Fischer said he would check with the BLM.

D. Gordon said the Upper Shingle Creek reroute would begin over the summer. This trail would extend a mile and a half over an old roadbed that ties into the top of Dry Creek Trail followed by

½-mile of new tread construction to tie into the bottom of Shingle Creek Trail. He shared that the crew had planned to construct the reroute, but decided to use YRU Contracting, Inc. instead.

D. Gordon explained that, later in the summer, the two puncheon bridges along Dry Creek Trail would be constructed. He stated he checked with the Department of Water Resources and the Army Corp of Engineers to make sure a permit was not needed for the addition of the puncheon bridges. Both agencies replied no permit was needed. The locations needed to dry out and crews needed to be available before construction could begin. LTTV was helping to fund those bridges and Eric Willadsen was helping on construction.

D. Gordon explained that a small bridge was to be replaced on Deer Point Trail because the old bridge had cracked when a tree fell on it a year before. He also planned to have two crew members be available to identify areas of the Dry and Shingle Creek trails in need of cribbing, to stop sedimentation into the streams. They also hope to armor some crossing approaches and install some water diversion above the approaches to try and lessen sedimentation. Table Rock Trail Loop, Number 16, went through a piece of private land owned by Homer Wise Development. They started to develop the land and did not inform Ridge to Rivers before removing the portion of trail on their land. The resolution was to remove the trail and reroute it through Boise City property. He shared his opinion that a cultural survey was important, due to the historic nature of the area, and what had been found in the area previously.

8th Street Gate Update

D. Gordon shared that BLM had decided to open the 8th Street Gate early for the 2016 season. He noted that ATV trail users would break the gate lock. During the last incident, they had torn down the fence, going up and around the gate. He stated that staff had added a bollard which allowed for ATVs to access the trails, but not full size trucks. The gate was typically opened on May 15th.

D. Gordon informed the partners that staff had finished the heavy maintenance contracts for Trail 4 and Trail 6. YRU Contracting, Inc. had finished Trail 4 in 2015 and finished Trail 6 recently. Trails 4 and 6 are enjoyed mainly by motorcyclists and were not the best examples of sound resource management. Trail 4 had an area known as “Devil’s Slide,” that was visible from Interstate 84 and Trail 6 had a portion of trail named the “Grand Canyon,” above the Watchman Junction, that was not safe to pass on. He proposed it was perhaps time to relocate these portions of trail due to trail degradation.

Trail Ranger Program/Community Outreach Update

D. Gordon explained that the trail season for the Trail Ranger Program started April 1, 2016. In April the program had 221 patrols divided between 17 Ridge to Rivers Park Rangers.

S. Koberg asked what constituted a patrol.

D. Gordon replied that representatives walk or ride the trails in uniform for four hours a week. Pete Ritter, Lead Trail Ranger, had been riding the trails, speaking with users, and conducting a lot of public relations. He met with the Southwest Idaho Trail and Distance Riders; an equestrian group, attended the Idaho Horse Expo, and met with the Mountain West Outdoor Club. He also represented Ridge to Rivers at a booth during the opening of George's Cycle, in downtown Boise, and gave two talks at REI. The requests were increasing.

He informed them that Boise Brewing wanted to organize a Ridge to Rivers trail project, on a morning in October, where they would provide volunteers with tokens for beer.. Meriwether Cider Company was also interested in donating a dollar of "Foothills Sundays" sales from their Foothills Dry Cider, to Ridge to Rivers. D. Gordon said he would attend to talk to people about Ridge to Rivers. He also added that they had wanted a booth in order to provide a presence at the Tour de Fat, but the organizer in Colorado denied Ridge to Rivers request to be involved. The reason provided was to keep the Tour de Fat's focus on non-profit organizations. D. Gordon thought it was a misconception on the part of the organizer, as their goal was not to take focus from the non-profit, but rather to be there to provide information. D. Gordon had called the organizer again and had not heard back from him. He had also emailed the SWIMBA.

M. Tate informed the group that the organizer of Tour de Fat wanted to keep the event focused on a handful of groups who met the non-profit criteria. He mentioned that SWIMBA redirected funds from these events back to Ridge to Rivers and had provided \$40,000.00 over the past years. There had been very little communication back to SWIMBA regarding the donated money. He explained that it was best to keep the event focused on the partners that put in hundreds of hours of volunteer work to make the event happen.

D. Gordon clarified that, the funds M. Tate was speaking of, was not actually a SWIMBA donation, but was instead a percentage paid to Boise City from alcohol sales at the event. This was money that went back to the parks for improvements, and Ridge to Rivers benefited from that. It was different from a donation.

L. Ridenhour asked if Ridge to Rivers would be present at the Idaho Recreation Festival. D. Gordon answered that he would need to check.

Special Uses/Group Events Policy Formulation

D. Gordon stated that the pack mule coffee sales issue, discussed in the Ridge to Rivers 2nd Quarter Meeting, raised the topic of having some type of use permit policy to get ahead of special use requests. He suggested a representative of each agency should present what their agency would want to see included in a permitting policy. He asked if any partners present had any other thoughts on the permitting policy.

D. Gordon informed the group that Matt Bishop, the mule vendor, had found that if he kept his clientele under a seventy-five-person threshold, he could vend from National Forest land without

a special use permit. He was providing services for several weeks as a test run and he was not charging for anything.

M. Impson informed the group that Matt Bishop had submitted proposals for ultramarathon events in the Idaho City region through the Forest Service.

S. Arkle said a consensus in policy was important for the management of the Ridge to Rivers Trails System going forward. She stated she wanted to know what the parameters for the group policy would be.

D. Holloway said the Department would research what the Park Vendor Policy said about commercial use, but he was unsure about opening the door to the amount of commercial vendors wanting to vend in Boise Public Parks or on the Foothills trails. In the parks, if the service did not have a benefit for the general public, it was turned down - even if the service was offered for free. He commented on the importance of diligence in the drafting of a special use policy for Ridge to Rivers.

T. Fischer stated that the BLM had issued Matt Bishop a permit for ultramarathon land navigation events as well.

L. Ridenhour said he believed these races to be competitive events.

M. Impson informed the partners that they were not competitive events, but instead go at your own pace events.

L. Ridenhour replied that he viewed these races as competitive events because they were assigned specific dates with a quantified number of participants involved.

S. Koberg commented that he agreed with D. Holloway, sharing his opinion regarding commercial use permitting, and that Barber Park received commercial use requests frequently during floating season on the Boise River. He added that Ada County Parks and Waterways would defer to the partnership in matters relating to Ridge to Rivers.

D. Gordon replied that, since Matt Bishop wanted to vend on a trail, it made the request a Ridge to Rivers matter. He added that it was likely a no win situation because they looked overly strict and closeminded if they refuse the mule vendor request, but on the other hand would be criticized for allowing commercial ventures on public lands and natural resources.

S. Koberg shared his opinion that race organizers had made the same argument towards Ada County claiming that prohibiting races was stifling economic opportunity.

D. Gordon emphasized the importance of first determining appropriate uses people could apply for and what were not appropriate uses. He shared that during his time with the Forest Service it was customary to determine what could be provided off of public lands. Once an appropriate use

had been determined, policy then needed to dictate how many outfitters would be allowed in a certain area over a certain time period.

T. Fischer informed the group that Wilderness Permits for the BLM had the same criteria to consider.

D. Holloway asked if it was a first come, first served policy.

K. Muller asked if staff wanted each agency's policy. She anticipated each policy was considerably different. She added her concern about any vendor that would utilize other agencies' lands and a special use policy for Ridge to Rivers needed to encompass each agency's individual policies. If a proposed use was on Idaho Fish and Game land, then anything that involved fifteen or more people would not be allowed, and that policy needed to be a part of any consensus that would be determined.

T. Fischer commented that they needed to set the parameters for a policy draft, then work from there.

S. Koberg explained that an across-system policy was critical.

D. Holloway said the Department could dedicate an individual to gather all the policies and build a framework for the Ridge to Rivers Partners to utilize when they drafted a collective policy. He added that a consensus point of view supported the group, rather than different policies that put strain on the Ridge to Rivers organization.

S. Koberg stated Eagle Bike Park had been carved off of Ridge to Rivers because it was a part of Ada County and needed to be separate because there would be races conducted in the Bike Park as Ridge to Rivers did not have a racing policy allowing for these events. With the special use policy, the trails were all intertwined and all the Ridge to Rivers partner agencies were under a joint agreement. Special use permits should not be based on the policy of the agency who owns the land being vended upon, but rather it should be based on a Ridge to Rivers' joint policy.

D. Gordon asked the partners if it was illegal to conduct commercial use on the trails without a permit. M. Impson confirmed that it was illegal. K. Muller concurred it was illegal on their trails as well.

D. Holloway stated that on the four thousand acres, owned by the Boise City, it was illegal without a permit. Most commercial uses on Boise City lands required a competitive bidding process. He suggested Ridge to Rivers might use a competitive bidding process as well. He stated that the Department would take the lead on drafting a policy and utilizing Boise City's legal department. He added that his concern was if Matt Bishop was allowed to sell coffee from a mule, then the next vendor would want to sell a product like a t-shirt or another not readily explainable product.

M. Impson stated that she frequently answered commercial proposals by stating this can be done elsewhere and not on public lands. She added that coffee fell under unacceptable use on natural public lands.

S. Arkle said she would contact each partner agency representative to request a draft of their separate permitting policies.

Trail Plan Update

D. Gordon explained that Agnew:Beck and Ridge to Rivers were scheduled to look at the plan and add changes requested from agency personnel. When that was completed an endorsement letter would be signed stating the agencies agreed with the plan. He introduced J. Tomlinson from the Department's design team, to talk about the trail plan process.

J. Tomlinson informed the group that this was the first trail plan they had conducted and she wanted to gain the partners' feedback regarding how it went for them in relation to their participation. She asked if the public involvement was appropriate, and did they have enough time to comment on aspects of the plan or anything in the process to be improved upon.

K. Muller shared that the plan should have been reviewed by all of the partners with all changes added before being submitted to public review. She added that she read what had been offered to the public and, what she had requested to be added, had not been included. Idaho Fish and Game did not support that draft. The language, she clarified, needed to meet her management plan.

S. Koberg stated he agreed that he thought the partner agencies were going to have another opportunity to revise the plan prior to public submission. He stated that the committee, formed to draft the plan, was fantastic. He added that the most important portion of the process was the joint brainstorming of partner agency ideas with Agnew:Beck, making the product a coordinated effort and a shared vision.

D. Gordon explained that Agnew:Beck had done a great job and that Ellen Campfield was great to work with, but as the end of the process approached, he felt there was haste on their part to get it done and had this not been the case, it would have allowed for an additional draft to be revised prior to public submission.

K. Muller added that she understood projects come with end dates, but end dates needed to be extended if necessary.

T. Fischer shared that he agreed with S.Koberg that the planning process needed to have hands-on involvement from the partners.

J. Tomlinson added that forty percent of individuals taking the plan survey, did not participate in any other part of the process.

M. Tate commented that it was a phenomenal process. He added that he was particularly pleased with the wide array of public involvement.

T. Breuer said he gave the planning process two thumbs up.

D. Holloway mentioned he thought the letter to the editor was nicely done and effectively showed how organized the planning process was.

D. Gordon commented that Ridge to Rivers had begun to implement portions of the plan, specifically related to equestrian use, as well as the installment of more trash cans. One challenge was getting trash cans to further-out locations because they had not had an employee dedicated to servicing these locations which was harder in the winter. He shared his hope to create an all-weather loop in the Lower Hull's Gulch Reserve, but that this was an incredibly expensive project to do. He stated that if all went well, the all-weather trail could be finished by the winter of 2017.

J. Tomlinson asked if the time commitment for the trail planning process was too much, too little or the perfect amount. She asked if two hour meetings were too long.

S. Koberg stated that those time commitments were unavoidable and some of those meetings, he added, could have been longer.

L. Ridenhour commented that the process felt like a suitable amount of time.

S. Arkle added that the online workshop component was perfect, as it allowed those who could not make a meeting, to be a part of the process, and this added two hundred users to the process of a workshop. She commented that the work group had been instrumental in distilling and adding some of the public feedback.

D. Gordon mentioned that a few individuals had come up to him at meetings to thank them for allowing them to be a part of the trail planning process.

Program Growth

D. Gordon stated he wanted to quickly inform the partners of the growth in trail mileage and the impending additions to management with the trail plan, all of which required additions to infrastructure, and put staff at maximum capacity. He added he was starting to say no to requests because it simply could not be done by his staff with the projects and duties already being performed.

S. Koberg offered seven thousand dollars of his Ada County budget to add to the Ridge to Rivers budget to assist in added personnel if needed.

T. Fischer stated that he was working some angles with the BLM, to free up some funds or staff to assist Ridge to Rivers.

Partnership Updates

S. Arkle thanked the partner agencies for their continued participation and increased involvement with Ridge to Rivers. She informed the partners that Jim Hall Foothills Learning Center (JHFLC) had a position currently open for a Restoration Specialist, with twenty-five percent of that employee's time devoted to supporting Ridge to Rivers with trail rehabilitation. She updated the partners on Boise City's purchase of Hawkins Ranch, in the Foothills, informing them that the land had been inspected by D. Gordon, Foothills management, and Idaho Fish and Game. The Hawkins Ranch property had no trails at the time, but they were working with their partner agencies on how best to balance wildlife habitat with recreational use. The new reserve would include the recently purchased 160 acres of land from Idaho Humane Society and the 40 acres of Berry properties, in addition to the 160 acres of Hawkins Ranch area. Boise City would continue to acquire property and, as levy funds became available, she hoped to form an advisory committee to approach management of those properties from a holistic standpoint. She informed the group that Suez Water had three proposed projects throughout the system which would have limited impact on trails. They needed to improve water supply to the neighborhoods in the Hillside to Hollow area, between Hill Road and Hillside to Hollow. Suez Water had looked to Boise City to provide easements, in order to access the Hillside to Hollow terrain. She concluded by showing the group the Ridge to Rivers trucker hats they had designed to sell, to help supply heritage trust funds directed towards trail maintenance.

S. Koberg mentioned that the Ada County Bike Park in Eagle had received some positive press for a trail reroute and trail decommissioning project on Snoop Loop Trail, in partnership with SWIMBA. The trail was a poorly placed and designed, a feature that was unsustainable and should not have been a constructed. The new trail was designed to provide a trail experience for kids which had received a lot of positive feedback. The trail project included breaking up the compacted soil layer on the old trail, seeding it with native grasses and bitter brush seedlings - donated by Lucky Peak Nursery - as well as installing dowel rail fencing. This project was informed and aided by Mike Pellant, coordinator for the Healthy Hills Initiative.

M. Impson informed the partners the Forest Service had received comments back regarding the Bogus Basin thin and burn project. She said they were moving forward to incorporate the comments and moving forward with the project.

K. Muller explained that Idaho Fish and Game had been unable to conduct road maintenance on their roads this year. She could not get maintenance done on the motorized trail sections until their engineers were available.

M. Tate updated the group that SWIMBA had been receiving frequent complaints about water bars and he had been replying that Ridge to River's budget made those water bars a necessity. He suggested signs be placed above recently maintained areas of trail. He also reported seeing Utility Terrain Vehicles on Trail 4.

D. Gordon added that this was illegal.

S. Koberg asked M. Tate what the specific complaint was regarding the drainage dips.

M. Tate replied that trail users wanted to know why Ridge to Rivers did not reroute these portions.

D. Gordon added he wished he had the budget to reroute the areas where water bars were because it would be much easier from a trail management standpoint.

M. Tate said he had been hearing complaints about Scott's Trail and cupping.

D. Gordon explained that with deeply incised trails, the only way to fix them was to remove the outside edge berm, and re-establish an outsloped trail.

S. Aarkle told M. Tate it was helpful from a management standpoint, to hear those issues so they would be able to address them promptly at the beginning of maintenance season.

D. Holloway added that trails had doubled in the last ten years and budgets would adapt to cover maintenance. He explained the strategy of matching partner agencies' budgets, so if that received fifty thousand dollars, then he would make the argument to Boise City that they needed to match that sum. He stated that with ten million dollars in funds to manage open spaces, the last thing the Boise City would want was to let forty million dollars in trails go undermanaged. He added that the Foothills were not a recreational hobby to most Boiseans, but had become part of their everyday life and therefore received much more use than many anticipated.

T. Breuer shared that they had conducted "Idaho Gives A Poop Trail Cleanup", where twenty volunteers had cleaned up dog poop along Ridge to River's trails. He added that, on LTTV property, a hot topic had been parking along Suez Water's canal and also the addition of a Suez Water pump-shed that the LTTV was not eager to allow, though this could provide for a restroom and drinking water at no extra cost. He explained the LTTV's interest in discussing parking access and the lack thereof on the upper Bogus Basin Road, where several trails were accessed. He stated that many users were parking illegally and this needed to be discussed and managed holistically.

D. Gordon thanked all participants and partners.