

**Ridge to Rivers**

**1<sup>st</sup> Quarter Partnership Meeting**

**MINUTES**

**October 28, 2014**

Partners present: Scott Koberg, Ada County Parks and Waterways, Deputy Brodin and Sergeant Rowe, Ada County Sheriff's Office, Julia Grant and Doug Holloway, Boise City Department of Parks and Recreation, Stephaney Church and Megan Impson, Boise National Forest, Larry Ridenhour and Tate Fischer, Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Krista Mueller and Steven Dempsey, Idaho Department of Fish and Game, David Gordon, Ridge to Rivers. Kristine Smith, minutes recorder.

- FY 15 1st Quarter Budget and Work Plan Review

D. Gordon explained that the Fiscal Year (FY) 2015 budget was similar to the FY 2014 budget. Ada County increased their financial contribution to the partnership by \$5,000, which they also did for FY 2014, however, that funding was tied to Avimor trail development—the additional funding for FY 2015 would not be tied to a specific project. Boise City (City) will contribute an additional \$30,000 which would be used to replace the Bobcat—the existing Bobcat would be kept and continue to receive use. Ridge to Rivers staff would also get a new trailer which would be under the City, the existing trailer was under BLM.

During the upcoming year a third full-time staff would be added to the Ridge to Rivers team. The new staff, Sam Roberts, had worked seasonally with Ridge to Rivers over the past three years. Roberts would be the point of contact for working with Ridge to Rivers volunteers in the future, working a flexed schedule so he would be available to work with volunteers outside of regular working hours. A challenge in working with volunteers had been that it would have staff working with volunteers in addition to their regular 40-hour work week. In addition to the new full-time staff, a third seasonal staff would be added to the team. A used truck from Idaho IceWorld would be added to Ridge to Rivers, for a total of three trucks, so that crews could be sent in three different directions.

The additional \$5,000 from Ada County and some funding from the Heritage Trust Fund account would be used to pay for the additional staff member's salary in 2015. In the past, funds from the Heritage Trust Fund had been used for buying equipment or materials for large projects, or matching grant funds. D. Gordon questioned if the partners had concerns with using the funds for the additional staff member, the group agreed that it would be an acceptable use of the funds. T. Fischer explained that as long as there was some collateral left in the account, then he didn't have any concerns. D. Gordon responded that there would be plenty of funding left in the account.

1<sup>st</sup> Quarter Partnership Meeting

October 28, 2014

Page 2 of 9

For 2015 Work Activities, staff would first work to complete annual fall maintenance. Trail #16 would need to be rerouted as the loop was severed due to growth in the Boulder Heights Subdivision. There was an existing easement to go through the cul-de-sac, however, it was positioned to go down straight down a cut slope—the plan for the trail reroute would be to go around the houses. The reroute would be equal to approximately one-quarter of a mile. J. Grant added that as part of the Boulder Heights development, the City would be given acreage over time and would be known as the Mesa Reserve.

The development of the Ridge to Rivers Master Plan, which was expected to require a large time commitment from Ridge to Rivers staff, was scheduled to start in the summer of 2015. A grant from Wells Fargo and Macys received in 2014 would be rolled over to 2015 to help with the development of the master plan.

D. Gordon explained that the City had entered into an easement agreement for the Daniels Creek area, the Hillside to Hollow Master Plan had been finalized, and considerations for the possibilities of trails in Dry Creek were being made. Based on direction from the City, Ridge to Rivers staff were directed to focus on the trails in Daniels Creek as their first priority. The needed work would include improving the existing trails and building the necessary links to Hidden Springs and to the Polecat Trailhead. Determination for how to most quickly and efficiently improve and connect the trails was needed. The project would likely incorporate work from volunteers as well as a contractor for some of the sections. The second priority would be working on the trail development in Hillside to Hollow—it would be a challenge dividing resources as crews work in the Daniels Creek area.

D. Holloway explained that it may be possible to have both projects occur at the same time depending on available finances and there may be opportunities to work with the Land Trust of the Treasure Valley (LTTV). The Department of Parks and Recreation committed to the Grossman family that staff would start working on the Daniels Creek property.

S. Koberg questioned how the Ridge to Rivers team would be broken down with the presented changes. D. Gordon responded that the team would include three seasonal employees, three full-time employees, himself, and a part time Trail Ranger Coordinator.

D. Holloway explained that there was a recent *Letter to the Editor* regarding Pete Ritter, the part-time Trail Ranger Coordinator, from a trail user explaining the outstanding customer service provided by the Ridge to Rivers staff.

D. Gordon explained that typically, each year he would apply for one grant, however, for the upcoming year he would plan to apply for four different grants. Two of the grants would be State Off-Road Motor Vehicle (ORMV) grants for maintenance of Trail #4 and Trail #6, motorized trails, which were more like roads. He also planned to apply for a Recreation Trail Program (RTP) grant, however, RTP grants seemed to be less successful for projects in the Boise area, as they fund many projects for small towns. The committee that decides the RTP trail funding will also decide where funding received from the Mountain Bike Idaho license plate funding will be sent—it would only be the second time that the funding from the

1<sup>st</sup> Quarter Partnership Meeting

October 28, 2014

Page 3 of 9

account had been made available with an estimated \$8,000 in the account. If received, the funds would be directed to either Daniels Creek or Hillside to Hollow. Separate RTP grants would be applied for construction and maintenance.

D. Gordon explained that grant funding wouldn't be available until July 1, 2015. He would plan to have a maintenance contract prepared—he thought that it would be likely that the ORMV grant would be successful. The work on Trail #4 and Trail #6 would be completed during late April 2015—which was the best time for trail maintenance due to the weather and soil conditions. The funds would come from the Heritage Trust Fund account until they could be reimbursed, unless the partners saw an issue with the use of funds for that purpose. L. Ridenhour responded that all of the grant funds were reimbursement funds, so they couldn't be accepted to pay for a future project anyway.

- City Meeting Requirements – Josh Leonard

Joshua Leonard was not in attendance, staff would plan to review City Meeting Requirements at a future Ridge to Rivers Partnership meeting.

- Brief introduction of Deputy Brodin and Sergeant Rowe of Ada County Sheriff's Office

D. Gordon explained that Deputy Brodin was responsible for patrolling the foothills trails. Sergeant Rowe explained that Deputy Brodin's position was funded seasonally by the Idaho State Parks and Recreation funding for off-road vehicle enforcement in Ada County.

D. Gordon questioned how often Deputy Brodin was on the trails. Deputy Brodin responded that he worked up to 19-hours per week, however, his responsibilities were largely weather dependent, he planned his own schedule and it was not a consistent schedule.

J. Grant questioned if there was contact information the partners could have so that if there was something witnessed by staff, or a trend of illegal use, staff could contact them directly. Deputy Brodin provided his contact information and requested that requests go through Sergeant Rowe.

S. Koberg explained that it was great to have the officers in attendance to help provide some understanding of the Sheriff's Office side of matters while out on the trails, as well as for the officers to have an opportunity to understand the partnership so that citizens could be better educated on concerns that regard the use of the trails.

Deputy Brodin explained that if there were complaints regarding his use of the trails while on motorcycle then he would stop visiting the trails as he didn't want his patrolling to carry a negative connotation with the public. When he patrolled trails it was to gain a better understanding of the system. Many of his contacts with the public had been positive. He questioned where the partners would allow him to go within the system and where he should stay away from.

D. Gordon explained that the trails had been designated for non-motorized use, with the exception of Trail #4 and Trail #6. If there were an incident then the Fire Department, which has a motorcycle and 2 ATVs, was allowed full access to the system to get people out of the foothills. In the past, when the Fire Department has conducted trainings while on the trails they notified Ridge to Rivers and the information was passed on to the public. He added that Ridge to Rivers crews also take ATV's out on the trails and occasionally receive questions from the public, which D. Gordon supported. While Ridge to Rivers crews are allowed on the trails with motorized equipment to complete trail maintenance, most others cannot, and he hoped that the public would continue to question the use.

From D. Gordon's perspective it was not a big deal to have Deputy Brodin on his motorcycle on non-motorized trails when he needs to gain access between different points, however, it should be expected that the public will have questions. D. Holloway explained that as law enforcement, a Deputy on the trails would likely be identifiable, and the law enforcement presence should provide comfort level to the public, knowing that law enforcement may be out on the trails. S. Koberg agreed that it was good for all of the partners to have an officer on the trails.

S. Koberg added that he did not want the Sheriff's Office take home message to be that Ridge to Rivers doesn't want them on the trails. He suggested that Ridge to Rivers update their Facebook page to inform citizens of when an officer would be on the trails. He explained that it would be an opportunity to get in front of the negative comments, rather than attempting to avoid them.

D. Gordon explained that if the Sheriff's Office were to communicate directly to him, he could address some of the concerns that may come up from citizens. The officer who used to patrol the trails frequently communicated with Ridge to Rivers staff for various issues, such as dumping or if citizens reported motorized use on a non-motorized trail. D. Holloway questioned if the officer who previously patrolled the trails would communicate with him every time before going onto the trail. D. Gordon responded that he would not.

K. Mueller explained that with her officers she has them send a quick message which explained the area they would be in and for what time frame. When her staff receives reports of motorcycle tracks off road then they spend their time investigating trying to determine where the users accessed the trails. Deputy Brodin explained that his schedule was day-to-day and he was never sure where he was going to be. K. Mueller explained that even if the message was sent after he was out on the trails it would be helpful. She added that she would make sure there was a connection with her officers and welcomed Deputy Brodin to their property, she would plan to send a map of Fish and Game's area for his reference.

S. Church added that the Forest Service just had a small area of property in Ada County, any assistance the Sheriff's Office could provide would be greatly appreciated, as they only have one officer. There had been many discussions within her department regarding the use of motorized vehicles on non-motorized trails, in the past it had not been encouraged because the public will see the tracks and think that it is a motorized trail, resulting in an increase in

1<sup>st</sup> Quarter Partnership Meeting

October 28, 2014

Page 5 of 9

motorized vehicle traffic. She understood that there was value in Deputy Brodin knowing the trails. She added that a possibility, instead of advertising when Deputy Brodin would be on the trails, was just issuing a general statement that explains that patrol and enforcement may occur. D. Gordon agreed that it would be better to explained that an officer could be on the trails, so then the public wouldn't necessarily know where the officer was going to be.

K. Mueller explained that as a general rule, it should be that anyone out on the trails who should be will have a uniform and a way to identify themselves.

M. Impson questioned if the Sheriff's Office had the motor vehicle use map which showed the open roads for the Forest Service. Deputy Brodin responded that he did not. M. Impson would plan to mail a copy of the map for the Mountain Home area.

Deputy Brodin informed the partners that he was given free rein on the Avimor trails. T. Fischer responded that there was some BLM property which adjoined the area which would be a loop with future development.

- Fall Trail Work/Winter Update – David

D. Gordon informed the partners that the crew was working on the Around the Mountain Trail to do touch-up on some areas that were not constructed properly by the contractor over the seven-mile trail. Staff will finish the steps near Cottonwood Creek, which included adding a rock wall to reduce erosion on the hillside, which was primarily caused by dog off-leash use, even though the trail was designated for dog on-leash use.

- Trail Ranger Program Review – Pete

The Trail Ranger Program will be reviewed at the second quarter Ridge to Rivers Partnership meeting, when Trail Ranger statistics should be available. The trail ranger season runs April 1 through October 31. It was expected that most of the volunteers would return for the 2015 season and that the team would also likely include additional volunteers.

- Daniels Creek Trails Update

S. Koberg questioned if the trail name, Sweet Connie, would remain the same. He had received a number of questions asking if the name would change. D. Gordon responded that he believed the trail name would stay.

T. Fischer questioned the prioritization within the Daniels Creek area, specifically for Sweet Connie to the Cartwright Trail, as it would involve some input from BLM. D. Gordon responded that the work plan would be dependent on BLM and Forest Service NEPA approvals. Until the NEPA was complete, the only work which could be done was the piece over to the Avimor trails, which would likely be the first project.

D. Holloway questioned if the Forest Service and BLM's NEPA process had been started. S. Church responded that it was not started for the Forest Service. In the past, they have not received funding for recreational trails and staff was still working to determine funding for 2015. J. Grant questioned if funding from the Heritage Trust Fund could be applied to hire someone to complete the Forest Service's NEPA. S. Church responded developing a contract and having staff oversee the contract would still be needed.

D. Holloway questioned how much funding would be needed to complete the necessary NEPA. S. Church responded that it would depend on the NEPA level required, she wasn't sure what was required because there were not enough resources to pass the project to someone.

T. Fischer questioned how much trail was on the Forest Service property versus BLM property. S. Church responded that it would be less than five acres of disturbance. D. Gordon added that the trail area was much shorter for BLM than for the Forest Service trail portion.

L. Ridenhour explained that a possibility would be to have one joint Environmental Assessment (E.A.) for the entire property. The portion of trail which crossed BLM was an existing trail and would seem to qualify as trail maintenance. D. Gordon responded that the Forest Service trail was also an existing trail, it would depend on determining the official existence of the trail. S. Church explained that the rules were different for the Forest Service, however, it was possible to work something out with BLM to have an agreement with BLM to have their staff working NEPA.

D. Holloway questioned whether the Forest Service had the money if the project could be done. S. Church explained that there were two factors for getting the project complete—funding and capacity. The Forest Service had two archeologists on staff and work had been planned three years in advance. D. Holloway requested that the project be added to Forest Service staff's project cue, as it was known that funding would be available.

M. Impson explained that from the Forest Service's perspective, even though a trail was there, it would have to be reviewed as if it didn't exist. D. Gordon questioned if there was an agreement between the Forest Service and BLM, if a Forest Service specialist would look at it. S. Church responded that BLM's specialist could review the area. T. Fischer explained that he would work with the Forest Service to determine if there was a possibility to complete the NEPA requirements through a joint effort.

- Dry Creek Property Trails Update – Julia, Tim (LTTV)

J. Grant explained that the Dry Creek Property Trails agenda item should be held off until a later meeting as there was nothing official to report. D. Gordon explained that if plans for the property did become official, it should be included in the planned NEPA as the system would cross over multiple properties.

1<sup>st</sup> Quarter Partnership Meeting

October 28, 2014

Page 7 of 9

M. Impson explained that when there are multiple trails that need NEPA completed then bundling up-front would be helpful. The construction doesn't have to be completed in the same year, the NEPA could be completed beforehand.

- Hillside to Hollow Open Space Plan – Julia, Tim (LTTV)

Tim Breuer, Executive Director LTTV, showed a copy of the map which included the approved Hillside to Hollow Master Plan for both the City's portion of the property, as well as LTTV's property. He explained that the workshops and community engagement portion of the master plan development created an opportunity for the community to express their opinions and got rid of some of the early misunderstandings. The team took eight different maps to an open house that allowed for citizens to address three to four questions staff had about what should be included in the master plan, from that feedback, as well as feedback received online a final master plan was developed. During the Boise City Parks and Recreation Commission meeting both the Commission and LTTV approved adoption of the master plan. The Boise School District as well as the Quail Hollow Golf Course School will work with the Department of Parks and Recreation to develop access through the different properties.

There was a balance of creating new trails as well as the closure of steep, unsustainable trails. A few of the steeper trails were kept at the request of the public, consideration for use patterns and soil type were made for the trails which would remain open. It was a collective effort of LTTV and the City. There was some funding by LTTV, approximately \$40,000-90,000 on hand that was ready to be applied to the property. New trail construction would include community engagement and volunteer projects which would be under the direction of D. Gordon. A formalization of the partnership between LTTV and the City would take place.

Future funds could include two Neighborhood Reinvestment Grants. One of the neighborhoods would request trash cans and mutt mitt dispensers with responsible dog off-leash signage at the neighborhood access points. The neighborhood access points would be maintained by the neighbors and would not be included on the Ridge to Rivers map.

S. Koberg questioned how the reroutes near the trail would be represented, and if there was a net gain for trail mileage. D. Gordon explained that there would only be a few reroutes and they would be short. Crews would first work on signage to identify open trails then they would work to close trails that would no longer be part of the trail system. Reroutes and new trail construction would then follow in terms of priority. J. Grant responded that there was not a net gain in trail mileage.

S. Koberg questioned what the mountain bike skills park identified on the map would include. D. Gordon explained that the bottom of the Ussery Street Trailhead had historically been utilized by riders building jumps on the property. Public input was supportive for the skills park, but there was still some work needed to determine the skills park location and what would be included.

S. Koberg questioned if there was any sort of cross county or bike races which had happened previously on the property prior to the City's purchase. D. Gordon responded that they had not received any feedback about previous races that took place on the property. T. Breuer explained that he believed that the nearby junior high cross country team trained on the property, but he was not aware of any races that took place on the property.

K. Mueller questioned if there were any comments that the property included species of special concern. J. Grant responded that the question came up during one of the meetings, there was public opinion that some trails with the special species should be closed, while others wanted the trails to be kept open as they already existed. K. Mueller questioned if there was any consideration for signage. J. Grant explained that there was discussion for the placement of educational signs in the area.

D. Holloway explained that on the Daniels Creek property there was also some citizen concern regarding disruption of wildlife. The City attempted to reassure the citizen as there would be plans for staff to work with biologists to minimize the impact recreational use would have on wildlife. K Mueller responded that Fish and Game could provide some feedback to citizens if needed. A few citizens had reached out to Fish and Game with concerns for the property. Fish and Game's response had been that they were working with the City, and that they had been out on the trails. Staff would work to develop a buffer zone to minimize some of the public's concerns.

D. Gordon explained that the local horseback riding community had reached out to him with concern for the Daniels Creek property, as many of the trails in the lower portion of the property was used by horseback riders. They were concerned that some of the trails would be closed to them, however, that had not been an item discussed by staff. There was also some concern with introducing many different user types, specifically mountain bikers. A sign that alerts trail users that they are likely to encounter equestrians will be developed.

- City Open Space Reserves Planning Process – Julia

J. Grant reported that the process for developing an Open Space Master Plan for the City's reserve properties had started. Staff was working with Agnew Beck for the master plan development and was in the listening phase, which included collecting public feedback through surveys. The initial survey included surveying users during various times at the different reserves, asking the public what they thought the top ten priorities for the City should be over the next ten years. A postcard was sent to 5,000 addresses within the City, which were randomly selected—at the time of the meeting approximately 120 responses had been received. A general survey was also opened to the public, which was sent to the different stakeholders, including the different neighborhood associations and the different user groups. The first public meeting was scheduled to take place November 19, 2014. A second public meeting was expected to occur in February, after the holidays.

- FY 15 Grants – David

1<sup>st</sup> Quarter Partnership Meeting

October 28, 2014

Page 9 of 9

The FY 2015 Grant opportunities were explained above.

- Summer 2015 Project Priorities (Trail 16, Daniels Creek trails, H2H, Dry Creek trails)

The 2015 Project Priorities were explained above.

- Idaho High School Mtn. Bike Racing Update – David

D. Gordon informed the partners that Idaho was approved for the National Interscholastic Cycling Association. He met with Dylan Grandhandt and one of the regional representatives, they rode the trails and some of the different Nordic roads in the Bogus Basin area. They thought it would be a challenge to develop a loop as some of the Nordic roads would be dull and the trails in the area would be too difficult for a high school league. They did however think the venue would be great. They would like to hold one event on the system a year, with a goal over the next few years to get up to 650 racers. The Ridge to Rivers Race Policy, as written, would not allow that many racers. The race would also require the issuance of a permit from the Forest Service as trails cross their property in addition to Bogus Basin.

S. Church explained that it could be a conflict of Bogus' special use permit, as so far Bogus Basin had not included summer operations, however, if they decided to include summer operations they could.

D. Gordon explained that they had a fall racing season. K. Muller requested that they stay towards the beginning of the fall out of concern for hunting and regular animal movement patterns which occur during the fall.

- Trail Smart Program – Julia/David

J. Grant explained that they recently did an experiment which included placing sandwich boards at the trailheads for a month. During that time period there was an increase in donations, and then when the signs were taken down there were zero donations. Staff will work on some other advertising opportunities to boost funding.

- Enduro Mountain Bike Race Info. – James Lang

Staff will plan to have the Enduro Mountain Bike Race Information discussed during the second quarter partnership meeting.