

**Ridge to Rivers**  
**1<sup>st</sup> Quarter Partnership Meeting**

**MINUTES**

**November 13, 2013**

Partners present: Doug Holloway and Julia Grant, Boise Parks and Recreation, Larry Ridenhour and Terry Humphrey, Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Krista Mueller, Idaho Fish and Game, Megan Impson, Forest Service, Scott Koberg, Ada County Parks and Waterways, David Gordon, Ridge to Rivers. Kristine Smith, Minutes Recorder.

The meeting began at 8:02 a.m.

- 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter Budget and Work Plan Review

D. Gordon explained that additional funding from the City had been provided for a replacement of a Ridge to Rivers truck. The new truck will be four-wheel drive with towing capabilities. The City is providing \$20,000 in funding for the vehicle—the total cost will be approximately \$25,000. He proposed that the remaining \$5,000 come from the Heritage Trust Fund for map sales which is most often used for signage and other system-wide projects. The new truck will not be received until spring, the old truck will likely be used by the Foothills Learning Center.

The state contacted D. Gordon and has encouraged him to apply for RTP grants this year. One of the grants he plans to apply for would go towards maintenance of the chute in the Camel's Back Park area on City property which has significant erosion along the cable fencing as well as on top. It is anticipated to be an expensive project. When funding is available the project will go through a public comment period. He will also apply for funding for the Hillside to the Hollow property. It is not expected to have a management plan completed by the time he applies however, he will work to identify an estimate of the number of miles of trails which will need to be rehabbed and restored, as well as an estimate of the number of miles which will be kept as system trails.

Over the winter staff will continue to look into additional funding for the trail plan for next September. Another \$1,000 grant was received from Macy's who contacted D. Gordon with interest in donating to the program. J. Grant explained that staff would also follow up with the BLM Challenge Cost Share Programs.

T. Humphrey responded that every opportunity to look at additional funding through the BLM will be critical. With sequestration the projected revenue from the BLM of \$42,550 may not occur. L. Ridenhour will keep in contact with D. Gordon and pass along information as it is available. D. Gordon questioned if the Forest Service would have the same impact. M. Impson

responded that it was likely, with discussions between the sequestration and the furlough it is estimated that there will likely be a 28-30% cut in budget. S. Koberg explained that Ada County would be contributing an additional \$5,000 for funding, increasing their total contribution to \$30,000.

- Scott Koberg Intro. – New Ada County Parks and Waterways Director

S. Koberg explained that he is hopeful for opportunities with the Ridge to Rivers Partnership. He would like consideration to be made regarding the possibility of having crews pick up some of the daily trail maintenance including Homestead as well as Old Pen depending on what the work load would be. D. Gordon responded that crews would be grateful for the help.

- Fall Trail Report

D. Gordon explained that there is approximately three weeks of trail maintenance needed before the winter weather hits. Once the ground is frozen it is difficult for crews to continue maintenance. Crews are also hoping to work on two of the motorized trails on Forest Service and BLM property, trails 4 and 6, which were supposed to be done by State Parks and Recreation last spring. This work however, like the remainder, will be weather dependent.

During the winter a plan will be developed for the use of the major repair and maintenance budget of \$15,000. Current considerations for the budget include Bucktail Trail which is a major connector trail and is highly used. When the trail was originally constructed nine years ago the vegetation and a very minor tread cut was made – approximately 20” wide. Currently the trail is up to a foot deep in spots and is difficult for walkers and runners to use causing them to move to the side of the trail, resulting in significant widening to the trail in some areas. Maintenance would include infill of the trail which he anticipated would take a contractor a week to complete with the use of an ATV or other small motorized vehicle. In the past volunteers have helped with the work by hand however it was labor intensive and inefficient.

The other area which needs some major maintenance is the Central Ridge Spurs trail in the lower portion of Military Reserve. The Ridge to Rivers crew will likely remove the outside berm to move the trail. The large berm makes it difficult for water to drain off of the trail.

T. Humphrey questioned if the trail was in Sector 3. D. Gordon responded that it is low enough down that he does not believe it is, however he will look into it. Section 3 is the location of possible unexploded ordinances—a new trail couldn’t be cut without the Army Corp of Engineers completing a survey beforehand.

L. Ridenhour questioned whether the work could be done by a mini excavator. D. Gordon explained that they would look at the possibility of using the mini-excavator or completing the work by hand. L. Ridenhour questioned whether someone from the BLM staff could assist with the trail repair in Military Reserve or on the Bucktail Trail. D. Gordon questioned the trail building experience of staff. L. Ridenhour explained that they had worked on the trails in the Owyhees. D. Gordon explained that it could be possible to have them work on the Bucktail Trail.

If BLM completed the maintenance on Bucktail Trail the available funding could be used on the Old Pen Trail which receives heavy winter use and has widened over time due to high levels of foot traffic. The trail is also impacted by users hiking up to watch concerts at the Idaho Botanical Gardens which can be viewed when sitting directly above the trail.

Winter projects for Ridge to Rivers crews will include finishing building a rock crib along the Cottonwood Creek Trail. Without the added support the steps they will be lost due to erosion caused by dogs jumping down the off the trail. Crib logs will also be replaced in the Lower Hulls Gulch area.

Before the ground freezes crews will work to plant approximately 75 plants set aside by Fish and Game. The spring planting had less than 50% mortality rate—Bitterbrush having a higher mortality rate than the Silver Sage. K. Mueller explained that the plantings should take place in March. D. Gordon explained that crews usually plant in March, however, it was suggested to try a fall planting. Each plant will have to be hand watered in, which is why crews only plan to place 75 plants.

S. Koberg questioned how crews would water. D. Gordon explained that it would depend on the location, in some areas crews can use an ATV with a sprayer, other location will require staff to hike in with bladder bags. Plants will only be watered once because that is all that can be added to the crew's workload. J. Grant questioned whether volunteers could be responsible for the watering in the summer or spring. D. Gordon explained that if there was an interest he would support the idea, most of the areas would require hiking in by foot with bladder bags.

- Around the Mountain Trail

D. Gordon explained that the project has been completed and came in under budget by \$700. The trail ends after 6.5 miles of newly developed trail on a grassy ski run, then finishes on the War Eagle cat track. He will discuss the possibility of replacing this final half-mile of cat-track with new single track, with the Forest Service and Bogus Basin, as the trail would cross both of their jurisdictions. The trail will be on the next Shaffer Butte Trail Map.

- Highlands Trail

The Highlands Trail has been completed. A few areas cross private property and have received all of the appropriate easements. The original trail which was illegally built was closed to encourage use of the newly constructed trail. The new construction will also reduce conflicts between trail users and cattle.

- Request to name trail after Mark Urban

An additional loop between Bob's and the Highlands Trails is approved through BLM NEPA analysis, and will be completed during spring 2014. The BLM Smokejumpers approached Ridge to Rivers and requested a trail be named after Mark Urban, a BLM Smokejumper who died in the fall during a training exercise. Originally there was discussion about possibly naming the trail Mark's Trail however because the preference has been to not name a trail after an individual it was proposed that the trail use his nickname and be called Yeti Trail. This was ultimately a BLM decision, as the trail is located entirely on BLM property. The current plan is for BLM smokejumpers to construct the trail next spring under R2R supervision, then to maintain it bi-annually through the Adopt-A-Trail program. The Adopt-A-Trail sign will read "Adopted by Boise BLM Smokejumpers in Memory of Mark Urban 'Yeti'."

J. Grant questioned whether the BLM had a policy which addressed naming a trail after an individual. T. Humphrey explained that the BLM did not have a policy addressing naming trails after individuals. T. Humphrey, L. Ridenhour, and S. Koberg explained that they supported the naming decision.

D. Holloway suggested staff develop an internal policy to address future requests, especially as funding for Ridge to Rivers is limited.

- Etiquette Videos at Theatres

Overland Cinemas agreed to play the trail etiquette videos between movies for free. The Reel will show the thirty-second muddy trails video from November 1<sup>st</sup> through March. They provided the first two months of showings free of charge and had a good price for the remaining three months. Edwards Cinema was challenging to get in contact with and will not be showing the videos.

- Mountain Bike Race Proposals: Enduro and possible winter proposal for lower trails

D. Gordon explained that the Mountain Bike Race Proposals will be reviewed by a group of partners after the first of the year. It is likely that the Foothill Frenzy will request their event again as well as the XC12, leaving one available slot for foot races. In 2013 there was a third race approved however it did not occur due to a lack of sign ups.

One of the mountain bike race proposals will be for an enduro race which proposes to include downhill stages on trails 4 and 6 – neither of which are currently included in the Mountain Bike Race Policy but are approved for motorized use. The majority of the race would take place in the middle and upper foothills, while transfer stages would cross through the lower mid to lower foothills. The Ridge to Rivers crew agreed that the race was not likely to do any more damage than motorized use. The concern however is that the proposed trails are heavily used and it will be challenging to have participants ride slowly during the transition stages, on the portions of trails they are not racing - which could cause a very negative social impact.

T. Humphrey questioned the amount of time they are anticipated to be on the trail. D. Gordon responded that it would likely be between four to six hours starting in the morning.

S. Koberg explained that he was concerned with congestion in the transitions between sections. D. Gordon shared the same concern, and suggested that if approved, perhaps the transition stages will need to be modified – ie. going up Trail 4 to the ATV Lot, as opposed to riding out Crestline Trail. S. Koberg questioned how many riders the event coordinators anticipated. D. Gordon responded that they are seeking an estimated 200 riders – though race policy calls for a maximum of 150 riders, and that we should stand firm on that number. If the proposal is approved the coordinators would know that if the transitions are not handled properly or if there is a large social impact it will be a one-time event.

D. Gordon explained that he had been contacted by a local race promoter who was interested in hosting a race in the middle/lower foothills when the trails were frozen. There would be limited impact to the trails because they would be frozen and a limited social impact as there would be fewer users on the trails.

J. Grant questioned what the risk would be in relation to the weather. D. Gordon explained that he did not anticipate a problem if it snowed, the concern would be if it became warm and the trails were no longer frozen. K. Mueller explained that wildlife would also be a big concern during the winter months as many animals would be struggling to make it through the winter.

- Trail Ranger Program – Extrapolation and Statistic – David, Ulli

D. Gordon introduced Ulli Kamm, a volunteer trail ranger who analyzed the number of trail users reported by all of the volunteer trail rangers to estimate a total number of trail users each

year. J. Grant explained that a conservative estimate for the number of trail users each year made by staff had been 300,000.

U. Kamm explained that the rangers completed 847 patrols. The average number of patrols completed by each ranger in 2013 was 80, while in 2012 the average was 67. In 2012 and 2013 there were 13 volunteer trail rangers, for an average of 10.7 rangers on the trails per week, 2012's average was 10.2 patrols per week with an increase of 18% more patrols per ranger in 2013.

Rangers are on the trails to look at the condition of the trails as well as to educate users on the rules of the trails. The rangers recorded meeting approximately 13,500 pedestrians and 10,000 mountain bikers in the seven months of summer patrols. Of those met approximately 4,200 of the trail users were dog owners. He estimates that there are over 400,000 trail users each year. Rangers encountered 32% more pedestrians, 16% more bikers, and 32% more dog owners on patrols in 2013, when compared to 2012. Most increase of trail use by area was in the Camel's Back Park trails with a 5% increase in trail users. The Veteran's and eastern trails also had an increase in trail users likely due to new development.

- Hillside to Hollow Open Space Planning Process Update – Julia, David

J. Grant explained that she is working with Park Planners to develop a master plan for the Hillside to Hollow property. Staff is also working with the Land Trust of the Treasure Valley and some of the neighboring private land owners. A five month comment period is planned to begin in January to determine where trail users would like access and where the trails should be.

D. Gordon explained that a challenge with the property will be closing unsustainable trail routes and to develop existing trails to be sustainable. S. Koberg questioned whether the challenges would be because of the slopes and soil on the property. D. Gordon responded that most of the trails were walked in and were never professionally built. There is one individual who has put a lot of work into the trails. An officer has been in contact with the individual to keep him from building any additional trails. Staff has been in contact with the individual and has asked that he only work to help mitigate erosion and that he not develop any additional trails. Due to his dedication to the property, it is hoped that he will be an asset to the Ridge to Rivers crew in the future.

- Polecat Trailhead Update - Julia

J. Grant explained that staff expected to start construction on the Polecat Gulch Trailhead in the fall, however because significant grading will have to occur the project has been delayed. An engineer came up with a grading plan and a new layout of the trailhead, which is slightly

different than what was presented to the public last summer. The information has been posted online. The project is expected to go to bid in the spring.

- Trail Survey Review - Julia

J. Grant explained that staff is still waiting for the trail survey review. She is expecting to have the numbers back later in the week. She will work with U. Kamm to analyze the answers and look at how they have changed over the last five years.

S. Koberg requested a copy of the questions which were asked during the survey. J. Grant responded that she would send him a copy of the survey.

- LTTV – Jon Krutz

Jon Krutz explained that Tim Breuer was unable to attend the meeting however he provided a letter which explained some of the projects the organization has been working on. He also explained that the Land Trust of the Treasure Valley looks forward to working with staff on the Hillside to the Hollow property.

- Ada County Advisory Committee – Paul Woods and Jim Keller

Paul Woods explained that he serves on the Ada County Parks and Open Space Advisory Committee. The Committee proposed to expand the Ridge to Rivers Partnership to some of the regional trails by Avimor. A year ago the Committee presented the proposal to the partners however there was a concern about funding. The concerns were taken back to the Ada County Commissioners with a recommendation to increase base funding to the partnership in fiscal year 2014—funding has increased from \$25,000 to \$ 30,000. An additional \$5,000 in funding is available to include management of some trails within Avimor that provide, or have the potential to provide regional connectivity. If accepted, expectation of Ridge to Rivers is to put forth \$5,000 worth of effort to put standards of improvements on the trails to make them sustainable.

J. Grant questioned whether the Committee proposed specific trails which would make connections to the regional trail system. P. Woods explained that the Committee did not want to be specific because they wanted the partners to decide what the best investment of \$5,000 would be. The Committee does not intend for the group to support the micro-trails but instead to focus on the regional connecting trails.

J. Grant questioned whether there was a threshold of mileage. D. Holloway explained that the partners should provide a recommendation to the Committee for how far \$5,000 would go towards trail management. The recommendation can be taken back to the Committee to decide

whether it is acceptable and if they would like to continue to pursue the proposal. P. Woods explained that the funds have been set aside, while it is not expected for the work to begin until the summer it will be important to have a recommendation for the Ada County Commissioners so the funds can be encumbered. If the proposal is accepted and after a year the partners don't believe it is a success there is no obligation to continue in 2015.

J. Grant questioned if the trails selected would be included on the Ridge to Rivers Trail Map. P. Woods explained that adding the trails to the map could be deferred until it is known whether the proposal will be a success.

P. Woods explained S. Koberg would be the point of contact, and that the Committee would like an answer to the proposal by the end of the year.

D. Gordon agreed that consideration for regionally connecting trails should be considered. He would like to review some of the possibilities and discuss the type of management which would occur before a decision is made.

Mark Tate from SWIMBA explained that he was happy to see Ada County increasing their commitment level. SWIMBA is committed to helping build and maintain trails in the Avimor area and they would support the partners in whatever decision was made.

- Other Business

K. Mueller informed the partners that starting next spring Fish and Game will start issuing citations for dogs off-leash. D. Gordon requested additional information so that he can provide the information on the Ridge to Rivers Facebook page.

M. Impson explained that the Forest Service will be taking part in a National Visitor Monitoring Survey and will be on their property randomly throughout the year—they could be on roads or on the trails.

Meeting ended at 9:40 a.m.