

Central Cascades Winter Recreation Council (CCWRC)
April 8, 2014 Meeting Minutes
Mercer Island Library (Mercer Island, WA), 6:30 to 8:30p.m.

Attendees: Ellen Aagaard (Snowshoe Rep. & Secretary)
Karen Behm (At Large & President)
Sharon Chen (Kongsberger)
Dave Claar, Mountaineers' Meany Lodge Groomer Operator
Michael Johnston (Northwest Sled Dog Association)
Pamela McConkey (Washington State Parks, Sno-Park Program Manager)
Joe McNulty (Kongsberger, CCWRA)
Shawn Pedersen (Fat Tire Bike enthusiast)
Glenn Tomchik (Kongsberger)
Josh White (Lake Easton State Park, Groomer Operator)
Nick Whitman (Landtek grooming contractor)

Meeting began at 6:45 pm.

Introductions of attendees

Report from *Karen Behm*, President:

- *Sno-Park Clean-up Saturday, June 7, 9:00am*: Each Sno-Park “mayor” will take care of organizing volunteers for their area; Lauren will provide garbage bags and pick-up; Karen will email details closer to June 7.
- *Upper Yakima Environmental Assessment*: No report date yet. Doug Mercer and Glenn Tomchik will head up CCWRC comments for the EA when the time comes.
- *Jente Loppet Course*: Discussion about the difficulty of getting permanent permits for grooming it.
- *Review of WRAC Funding*:
 1. Suggestion that Cle Elum Ranger District and Lake Easton State Park put in a request to fund a new snowmobile for snowmobile grooming.
 2. Suggestion to help fund a Sno-Park Information Center.
 3. Desire for a yurt on the Iron Horse.
 4. Desire for more regular Jente Loppet grooming.
 5. Pamela reminded folks that due to a \$335K reduction in Sno-Park income some requests will not be funded.
 6. Northwest Sled Dog Association will put in a Funding Request for grooming the Crystal Spring Dog Trails.
 7. Kongsberger Ski Club does not plan on submitting funding requests this year because of low budget dollars.
 8. Nick commented that perhaps grooming dollars and trail maintenance requests should come from the CCWRC, on behalf of the I-90 trail system as a whole.
 9. Josh commented that Crystal Springs has so many “push-pulls” from different user groups that it would be impossible to work them out in the context of all the I-90 trails.

10. Pamela commented that you can't mix state and private/contracted grooming dollars in the same pot.
11. There was general agreement that CCWRC should serve to sort out and prioritize funding requests from the corridor as a whole.
12. Pamela commented that WRAC funding needs to focus on sustainability, projects that make a difference on the ground, and not exploding the system.

Report on Budget from Pamela McConkey, Sno-Park Program Manager:

- *Electronic Kiosk Data:* Hyak e-kiosk dollars this year, 5200; Hyak e-kiosk dollars last year, 8940. Lake Wenatchee e-kiosk dollars this year, 4500. Mount Spokane e-kiosk dollars this year, 2800. Pamela said that an electronic kiosk at Crystal Springs would be impossible because there is no electricity there, they are too prone to vandalism, and too vulnerable to snow removal in that parking lot.
- Kongsbergers suggested increased enforcement of Sno-Park permits at Cabin Creek, giving CCWRC members courtesy notices to pass out to member clubs so volunteers can put them on the windshields of cars parked without permits.
- Kongsbergers is hoping to put in a future request for funding some trail safety repair, to grade and contour the downhill curve on Ozbaldy and to widen the trail on the final Berg Loop hill.
- Sharon reminded members that the Washington State Ski Touring Club has about 2000 dollars available for conservation grants and would welcome requests for projects that have to do with conservation and winter recreation, preferably skiing given the mission of the club. Discussion about whether that grant could be used for wand markers, to mark trail for groomers and skiers, particularly in the CS Dog Trails.
- There is a need for small permanent posts that go in the ground to which signs can be attached, particularly on the dog trails.

Report from Michael Johnston, Northwest Sled Dog Association:

- *Kittitas County Grooming Council:* Michael voices his support for a voluntary non-motorized area at Crystal Springs, but that only Nickie's trail should be mandatory non-motorized. The Council is trying to organize as a registered association.
- *Specific Dog Trail Updates:* Trail 4 should be in better condition next year after trail maintenance improvements; Dave's trails will get posts and an anti-Beaver screen; plans to put up permanent signs at each trail intersection with additional temporary seasonal signs (Michael is working on permission from USFS for signage)
- *Trail dividers will be pulled Friday by Michael; Dave Claar volunteered to help.*
- *Dave Claar* described a confrontation he experienced while grooming the dog sled trails. Dave filed a police report.

End-of-Season Area Reports:

- *Iron Horse State Park:* Pamela reported that the legislature changed the law to allow individuals to apply for a permit to operate motor vehicles on the trail for access to private property that has no other access. Steve Hahn, Lands Program Manager for Washington State Parks, is in charge of these permits. Concern over farm vehicle use damaging trail.

- *Crystal Springs*: Next Spring there will be a clear cut near the pond which will raise 600K for State Parks. This may also be an opportunity for State Parks to buy 15 acres of USFS land. The current trails running through the clear cut area are all dog trails. It may be possible to change the cut area boundaries, or include some trails in the trade. Pamela and Michael will meet after they flag the cut boundaries.
- *All USFS Areas*: Please remember to turn in volunteer hours to Lauren, primarily trail maintenance hours. Please use the USFS form to report hours.
- *All Areas*: Kongsberger work parties have had extra people power, so nearby area “mayors” should think about trail maintenance priorities and put the volunteer trail crew to work! Suggestion: contact Sons of Norway to see if we could use Trollhaugen Lodge for a work party weekend. Remember that all chain saw users need chainsaw certification. John Simon at USFS provides both one-on-one and group certification sessions. Karen and Glenn will meet to sort out some of the trail work priorities.
- *All Areas*: Sign orders should be submitted with WRAC funding applications by June 1st. Be specific about which signs, whether they need a reflective edge, etc. Discussion regarding the need for consistency among Winter Recreation signage, and a suggestion to inventory permanent and seasonal signage by area.

Fat Tire Bikes Information Sharing, Shawn Pedersen:

- Shawn asked how many questions the Sno-Park program gets about access from Fat Tire bikers, vs. how many concerns about Fat Tire bike access are expressed by other users!
- Fat Tire bikers prefer to be on groomed trails; it’s really difficult to ride in deep snow.
- Currently MVSTA (Methow Valley Ski Trails Association) is the only winter trail system in the state that allows Fat Tire bikes, and then only on selected trails and under certain conditions. Schweitzer (in Idaho) and White Pass ski area have a program where Saturday from 3pm on the trails are available to use by Fat Tires, snowshoers, and dogs, all pre-grooming for the next day.
- Ideal Fat Bike conditions: packed Forest Service roads with no more than 6” of fresh snow.
- On a groomed trail in below freezing conditions a Fat Tire Bike with low PSI will leave almost no mark; in slush conditions with 8 PSI a Fat Tire Bike will leave a rut. Conditions should determine when Fat Tire Bikes are allowed on groomed trails.
- Snowmobile trails are ideal for Fat Tire biking, but user conflict with snowmobilers seems like a potential problem and safety issue.
- Fat Tire bikes usually travel at about 5-7mph; ideally Fat Tire Bike trails would be at least 4-5 miles long, but wouldn’t need to be much longer to provide a satisfying ride.
- Most Fat Tire Bike riders who would use the CCWRC coverage area trails are probably coming from the Seattle area.
- Shawn is willing to come to a steering committee meeting on Fat Tire biking, and to meet with Sno-Park Program Managers. Thank you Shawn!!

Meeting adjourned at 8:48 pm. We checked out Shawn’s Fat Tires in the library parking lot afterwards, and it was cool!

Next meeting: November or December 2014; look for Karen’s email in the fall.