

Central Cascades Winter Recreation Council (CCWRC)
December 3 2013 Meeting Minutes
Newport Way Library (Bellevue, WA), 6:30 to 8:30p.m.

Attendees: Ellen Aagaard (Snowshoe Rep. & Secretary)
Karen Behm (At Large & President)
Tim Becker (Snoqualmie Nordic Club)
Don Brooks (Kongsberger & Snoqualmie Nordic)
Dave Claar (Groomer for Meany Lodge Trails)
Lauren DuRocher (USFS, Winter Rec., Cle Elum Ranger District)
Tim Foss (USFS, Winter Rec., Cle Elum Ranger District)
Howard Greenwald (Washington Ski Touring Club)
Rune Harkestad (Kongsberger)
Michael Johnston (Northwest Sled Dog Association)
Steve Krause
Pamela McConkey (Washington State Parks & Recreation Commission)
Wayne McLaughlin (State Parks, Winter Recreation Program Manager)
Joe McNulty (SMAC)
Doug Mercer (Snowplay)
Patti Polinsky (Mountaineers)
Doug Sundberg (Ski for Light)
Glenn Tomchik (Kongsberger)
Josh White (Lake Easton State Parks groomer operator)
Nick Whitman (Landtek grooming contractor)

Meeting began at 6:35 pm.

Report from *Karen Behm, President:*

- 5 new culverts installed on trails out of Crystal Springs Sno-Park
- Many thanks to volunteers for trail maintenance over the summer, organizing work, trail inventories. Hoping for some volunteer greeters at Gold Creek.
- Introductions around the circle.

Agency updates: *Pamela McConkey, Sno-Park Program Manager:*

- New feather banner advertising “Sno-Park Permits” for Gold Creek.
- Credit Card acceptor for Gold Creek. Cash and checks still accepted, but now also credit cards. Safer for employee because not as much cash on site.
- Also new at Gold Creek: white signs with red lettering: Please pick up after your pet.”
- WRAC revenue review. Revenue was up 23% last season, for a total of 1.442657 million. Will be allocated as follows: 5% increase in snow removal; 5% increase in grooming; 5% increase in education and enforcement; 162K in new projects, including one-time expenses such as culverts (very popular with WRAC) and some additional grooming, including 3 days for Cabin Creek & Erling Stordahl plus an additional 10K; some additional money in equipment reserve for a new groomer; 2 new snowmobile groomers for Bumping Lake and Field Spring.

- Some trouble with the State Parks website made it impossible to buy Sno-Park permits for 48 hours. Luckily this did not charge anyone's credit card improperly.
- New contractor for Cabin Creek and Erling Stordahl is Lantek (Nick Whitman). Pamela explained the bid process for a new contract. Nick introduced himself, and his machines.
- DOT is doing State Parks signs; this is a new field for them because the signs are small!
- Using standard colors and designs for recycled plastic signs because specialty orders makes them expensive.
- You can get signs for your area or program from State Parks. Choices are listed on-line. Please remove signs and store at the end of the season so they don't get stolen or shot. There is a cap on how much State Parks can spend each year on signs because they are not done as a contract.

Agency Updates: *Tim Foss, USFS Winter Recreation Ranger, Cle Elum:*

- Tim is retiring January 11th. Lauren DuRocher will be taking over winter recreation for the ranger district. Retirement party January 11th in the evening, potluck in Cle Elum, invitations will be out via email later in December.
- Blewett Pass expansion, now two times the capacity, on the right side of the highway when heading towards Wenatchee. More parking for both snowmobile vehicles and non-motorized. Big signs will show "how to park."
- Road divider placement for 5400 Road still delayed until there's enough snow.
- 4 snow rangers per weekend, enforcing permits. etc.
- Enough money to groom Salmon LaSac through March plus some extra money to bring a large cat through three times during the season.
- Woodson Seal (4510) Road out of Cle Elum has a new Sno-Park (the Evergreen Sno-Park) from which you can get directly onto the Forest Service road which is groomed for motorized recreation. The Evergreen Sno-park will be up and running this year; they have applied for a Forest Service permit to plow the road to the Evergreen Sno-Park.
- the Upper Yakima Plan target date is now the middle of January for the Environmental Assessment draft. When the draft comes out CCWRC will want to take a close look and probably comment.

Lauren DuRocher, USFS Winter Recreation Ranger taking over for Tim:

- Shared bio: she's been at Cle Elum for 3 winters. During the summer she's a campground ranger. Previous to coming to Wahsington she was in new Hampshire's White Mountain Forest. She loves snow play, snow shoeing, and she just got a pair of cross country skis last year.
- Request: ***please cc. Lauren on any emails sent to Tim Foss.***

Josh White, groomer operator for Lake Easton State Parks:

- Grooming schedule for the Iron Horse is the same as last year (MWF plus Sat & Sun twice a day grooming) plus 3 Lente Loppet look groomings on Jan. 26, Feb. 8, and Feb. 22.

- Two new sleds for Lake Easton State Parks grooming.
- Pamela chimed in that there is no new truck yet, but that they are awaiting contract approval for a new vehicle. If there will be a long wait time the agency wants to explore leasing a truck temporarily.

Nick Whitman and Rune Harkestad proposed the following grooming schedule:

Cabin Creek: Wed., Thurs., Fri., Sat., Sun.

Erling Stordahl: Wed., Sat., Sun. (possibly Fri., Sat., Sun., depending on conditions.

The priorities for grooming at Cabin Creek are as follows:

1. Road
2. Berg Loop
3. Viking Loop
4. to “y” on Amabilis
5. top of Amabilis
6. South Loop/Yakima

Nick will send an email after grooming which will go to a blog feed on the Kongsbergers' website, to which State Parks and CCWRC can link.

A discussion followed concerning the lower (south) loop at Cabin Creek. A decision was reached that the South Loop/Yakima River trail would be groomed as needed (and as conditions allow) and be designated multi-use (including dogs and snow shoes) with no tracks.

Joe McNulty asked Pamela about liability for volunteer grooming. Outcome: volunteer grooming is fine as long as it's not during a contracted grooming time, i.e., no volunteer grooming on Sno-Park trails December 1 through March 31.

Glenn Tomchik (Kongsbergers) presented a proposal for two new trails at Cabin Creek: Snow Bunny Express (.3km) and Big Daddy Loop (.5cm). Tim and Lauren commented that these proposed trails would need to go through a planning process. First step: have Tim and Lauren take a look at the proposed location. Second step: assess what it would take to do a NEPA analysis for the proposed trails. Since the Tower Loop is already a designated groomed trail, on the other hand, it can be groomed as funding allows.

Kongsbergers will pursue presenting these trails in response to the Upper Yakima Plan draft EA after it comes out.

Reminder that the total distance of groomed trails will be important for the EA.

Doug Mercer (Snow Play) requested that we add a discussion of new I-90 Snowplay area to all agendas for this season's meetings, since there is such high demand for and revenue potential in a new Snow Play location. Group agreed to do so. Doug will send

a “starting point” questions to Karen & Ellen so folks can think about it in preparation for the next meeting.

Karen Behm (president) introduced the new CCWRC website. Goal of the website: to give people information that helps them choose where to go for specific winter recreation opportunities. URL=snowrec.org. Events, blog site link for grooming updates. Please email text and especially pictures to Karen for inclusion in the website. A huge **Thank you, Karen** for your hard work on a beautiful and much-improved CCWRC website.

Michael Johnston (NW Sled Dog Association) handed out new dog trails maps and asked folks to provide input concerning some new State Parks property and multi-use areas.

Meeting adjourned at 8:45 pm.

Next meeting: Tuesday, January 7, 6:30-8:30pm, Newport Library.