

Ridge to Rivers
3rd Quarter Partnership Meeting

MINUTES

May 5, 2015

Partners present: Scott Koberg, Ada County Parks and Waterways, Doug Holloway and Dee Oldham, Boise City Department of Parks and Recreation, Stephaney Church and Megan Impson, Boise National Forest, Tate Fischer, Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Steven Dempsey, Idaho Department of Fish and Game, David Gordon, Ridge to Rivers. Others present: Tim Breuer, Land Trust of the Treasure Valley (LTTV), Mark Tate, Southwest Idaho Mountain Biking Association (SWIMBA), and Mark Iverson, minutes recorder.

The meeting was called to order at 8:08 a.m.

- FY 15 3rd Quarter Budget and Work Plan Review

D. Gordon began the Ridge to Rivers meeting summarizing the Third Quarter Work Plan and Budget's progress. The new Kubota Mini-Excavator and trailer was purchased.

- City Open Space Manager Position status – Doug Holloway

D. Holloway informed the partners that Sara Arkle had been hired for the Open Space Manager position. He went on to explain that of the six final candidates, she was the best applicant for the job, familiar with projects like Ridge to Rivers and was well educated in conservation and trails. He quickly reviewed the extensive hiring process and the collaborative nature of the interview panels between all the organizations. Sara Arkle met with the Mayor and the City Council and both had a positive interaction with her. Sara was scheduled to start Monday, May 11, 2015.

D. Gordon went on to explain that regarding the Ridge to Rivers Memorandum of Understanding, all the partner organizations had responded back except Ada County Attorneys, but they had another week to respond. There were very few suggested changes to be made. Once all comments are received, the final document will be circulated for signature by all partner agencies.

D. Holloway asked Scott Koberg if specific attorneys usually handled those types of agreements. S. Koberg responded that it depended on who was assigned to the project, for the Memorandum of Understanding it was Catie Freeman. D. Holloway explained that it would be great if the partnership could work with specific attorneys to establish better working relationships.

- 2015 Grant Proposals

David Gordon explained that the Partnership would not receive official word on the 2015 Off-Road Motor Vehicle (ORMV) until early summer, and on the Recreational Trails Program (RTP) Grant proposals until late summer. Staff applied for three grants; an ORMV Grant for heavy maintenance on Trail 4 and Trail 6 for \$15,750. An additional RTP Grant for the West Highland Valley Area for \$7,150 in grant funds was applied for. The last grant staff applied for was for Hillside to Hollow for \$14,550 and with a match for the same amount. Maintenance contracts had already been arranged for the upcoming projects, there was an understanding that a portion of the project would be dependent on the Partnership's success of receiving the applied for grants.

- Trail Maintenance Report

D Gordon explained that the maintenance in the lower and mid foothills was just beginning to be finished and that the conditions in the foothills were much dryer than was normal for the time of year. He informed every one of his concern that the heavy maintenance work on the Wildlife Management Area Trails would begin while it was too dry and the project would have to wait to be finished in the fall. The contractors plan was to complete the hike and bike trails during the spring and the motorized trails during fall, but it was possible that everything would be moved to the fall. The partners discussed the possibility of employing water trucks and tanks to wet the area, but it was decided that it would not provide the amount of water needed to complete the needed trail work.

At the Polecat Trailhead the individual that lived on the property planted trees at the trailhead with the City's permission. The thought was that he would maintain the trees, however, it took too much water to maintain the trees and the individual decided to not continue watering them. The responsibility would fall on the Department of Parks and Recreation and would require that a \$400 pump be purchased.

- Volunteer Program Update

D. Gordon stated that volunteers were interested in adding some technical features to Morning Star Trails and that his crew would start work on the maintenance below Bogus Basin once the snow had cleared from some of the trails. Volunteer work opportunities had increased as Sam Roberts was available to work with volunteers on weekends and evenings. 1,700 volunteer work hours had been completed during the spring. S. Roberts would start working regular crew hours soon, and would begin volunteer work hours again in the fall. A recent Ridge to Rivers volunteer project included working with LTTV and REI to build a half-mile of trail in the Hillside to Hollow area. The project was viewed as a success—volunteers built the area from the bottom of Harrison Hollow that climbs up to a knob on the south utilizing the help of sixty volunteers working for four hours and they were ninety percent complete when they were done with the job.

- 2015 Summer Work Plan

D. Gordon outlined the 2015 Summer Work Plan describing the plan for Chukar Butte Trail, which would connect Sweet Connie to Hidden Springs. The trail had been broken up into sections based upon groups and their tasks. The Eagle Scouts completed their section and was well-done. A portion of Chukar Butte needed to be moved due to trouble with wet trails and ground and heavy use by cows, making it necessary to start the trail a half-mile up from the original trail junction. The far end of Chukar Butte would be laid out the week of May 11, 2015 by Ridge to Rivers. It was roughly two miles of trails heading towards Hidden Spring. Once complete, crews would start working from the top down. Hidden Springs residents were concerned with parking near their neighborhood and were looking for the City to build an additional trailhead.

T. Breuer explained that Hidden Springs' residents loved the trails and that only a pocket of residents had concerns. It seemed that they supported the direction things were moving, which was seeing how the parking layout worked as it was possible that due to the location of the trails, the trails would mainly be used by Hidden Springs' residents--trail users were parking along Cartwright road.

D. Gordon explained that the planned connections provided by the Daniels Creek Trails may make increase the need to look at adding more parking at existing trailheads, such as at the Cartwright Road Trailhead.

T. Fischer questioned if D. Gordon saw need to put an enclosure in the area where the cattle were doing damage on the Chukar Butte. D. Gordon replied that that area was private land.

T. Fischer stated that BLM needed to conduct a wildlife survey and a cultural survey for the Sweet Connie Trail before they could send the project to the Forest Service and receive National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) clearance. He had been in contact with those conducting the surveys and they expected to get to them within the next week. Once they get the clearance, they could send the surveys to S. Church to sign and publish it for a decision and, the results were expected after thirty days.

D. Gordon opened the discussion about Peggy's Trail by mentioning that Eagle Scout troops were working on the trail. A contractor would begin where the Eagle Scouts left-off tying the trail system into the Dry Creek area, over Cartwright Road. SWIMBA was also just completing a half-mile relocation of a portion of Peggy's Trail and it was coming out nicely. Unfortunately, cows were also now using the new trail, but it is on private land so there wasn't much that could be done. Where Peggy's Trail would tie into the Polecat Trailhead, where it crosses Cartwright Road, Ada County Highway District (ACHD) and Ridge to Rivers would put in a culvert and a stop sign on the trail. There would not be a crosswalk, but there would be warning signs. The contractor was a company named Single Track Trails out of Colorado, but Red Elephant Trails would be doing the work for them. Red Elephant was from Alaska. D. Gordon explained that

he'd seen some of their trails online and both companies were really good. Single Track Trails and Red Elephant were hoping to start in June. They would cut in their portion of Peggy's Trail. They would then move on to Table Rock where they would be working on three areas of Table Rock Trail 15. Work would include restoration, narrowing the trail out, and filling it back in to keep it from widening further. Assuming the Hillside to Hollow RTP Grant was received, the contractors would start on the Hillside to Hollow Project in the fall or early spring depending on their schedule.

D. Gordon thanked the LTTV, specifically Dane Stevens for their help improving a section of trail that was eroding. He also thanked Dane Stevens for installing the marker posts so that once the trail names were finalized for the Hillside to Hollow area, staff would just place stickers on the marker posts. D. Holloway informed the partners that the City was in the final stages of updating the Naming Policy, and once the policy was finalized the Hillside to Hollow trail naming process would resume.

D. Holloway informed the partners that the Department of Parks and Recreation was hoping to get the updated Naming Policy on the May Boise City Parks and Recreation Commission agenda. Boise City Council had requested that all parks, facilities, and trails be addressed in the updated policy. He added that staff was also working to develop a policy that would address how the City handled large donations for these parks, specifically if groups or individuals should receive priority use after making large donations.

D. Gordon further explained that staff planned to get the system trails identified, then start the process of closing trails that were identified for closure in the Master Plan. ACHD planned to remove a series of twenty-one jersey barriers near the 32nd Street and Hill Road access to the Hillside to Hollow area. These would be replaced with post and rail fencing and a trail marker sign. An opening in the fence would be added for trail access.

D. Gordon explained that the Trail 16 relocation turned out nicely, with technical attributes and rock work. Some comments on Facebook described the trail as too easy. Staff organized an on-site public outreach effort on a Saturday to discuss the project and discuss the comments with interested individuals however, no one showed up. Afterwards, it seemed that the public recognized that it was not an easy trail.

- Heavy Trail Maintenance Contract

D. Gordon stated that the group had already discussed the heavy maintenance contracts for the trails. The same contractor had built both Fat Tire Traverse and Around the Mountain Trail for Ridge to Rivers and they had turned out well.

- Daniels/Dry Creek Trailhead

D. Gordon explained that the Daniels Creek/Dry Creek Trailhead on Bogus Basin Road was where Sweet Connie Trail would come out. Staff expected to move it 100 yards up the road, where Dry Creek Trail would eventually end as well. D. Gordon was collaborating with Wendy

Larimore from the Department of Parks and Recreation. She was working to put together a design for the trailhead. The proposed design included 25 to 26 parking spaces. Once ACHD approved the design, staff would work on improvements later this summer. There may be a need from some extra grading work where the road goes from asphalt to road mix that could be completed by Parks and Recreation. There were still discussions regarding what was needed to divide the road and trailhead area.

- Road Crossings – ACHD Coordination

D. Gordon explained that he had gone around with the head foreman at ACHD to review some of the road crossings. ACHD will be responsible for the installation of the signage, while Ridge to Rivers would be responsible for the purchasing of the signs.

- Dry Creek Trail/Stream Analysis

D. Gordon stated that Tim Breuer and he had been working alongside Chris Walser with College of Idaho and Jim McNamara from Boise State University, two professors who've done fishery and trout research in the Dry Creek area. The city had provided \$4,000 and the LTTV had provided \$2,000 to put together an agreement, the money will go to the LTTV who will then pay for an analysis of all the stream crossings in the area. The goal of the analysis is to identify critical areas where the trail is contributing to stream degradation – and identify mitigation for those locations.

Mark Tate questioned if there would be a public process for people to weigh in on the decisions affecting the Dry Creek area, specifically stream crossings. D. Gordon responded that Ridge to Rivers would look for some public input and feedback about the Dry Creek Trail crossings as well as work to communicate Ridge to Rivers planning process.

T. Breuer stated that Dry Creek was a unique model because it was a public trail and easement within private property and there was a misinformed perception that within this trail system users were on public land, but in actuality they weren't. He commented that the Grossman family would have the opportunity to inform trail users that the land off the trail was private. In his experience with Hillside to Hollow, he learned that having a process through which the public could air their opinions usually lead to a better end result.

D. Holloway explained that with Hillside to Hollow, the City owned the property, whereas Grossmans owned the property in the Dry Creek area, so the Grossmans could weigh-in on how trails were constructed. He thought that the strategy of informing the public, collecting feedback, and doing what could be done to address citizen concerns was the correct procedure. He stated that the project was limited in what could be done to address all of the public's concerns, but education would be a key component of the plan.

D. Gordon explained that he was aiming to keep the trail experience as close to existing as possible, being sure to place bridges only where they were necessary to improve stream conditions.

- Hot Springs Trail

D. Gordon explained that the Eastside Neighborhood Association applied for a Neighborhood Reinvestment Grant and received \$9,600. With the funding, the Hot Springs Trail would be “all weathered” with a topping of road mix to allow for winter use during muddy conditions. Staff is working on a small contract to complete this project.

- City Open Space Reserves Planning Process – Doug Holloway

D. Holloway began by stating that the plan was approximately 80 to 90 percent complete. On Tuesday, May 12, 2015 the plan would be presented to Boise City Council by Agnew-Beck. The plan would be labeled as a draft presentation, and he had assured Boise City Council members interested in the plan that there was still time for comments and feedback. At the time of the meeting, the Department of Parks and Recreation had received close to 4,000 comments regarding the plan. Boise City Council’s comments would be incorporated into the draft after the presentation. The final draft would be reviewed by the Boise City Parks and Recreation Commission, the Planning and Zoning Commission, and then back to Boise City Council for adoption. It was expected that the final draft would be ready for review by August 2015.

- Additional R2R Partnership Updates

D. Gordon explained that the Trail Plan was still on track to begin late this summer. D. Holloway informed the group that they couldn’t move forward with the contract until July 1, 2015, when the old contract expired.

D. Gordon mentioned that Ridge to Rivers applied for a \$36,000 Challenge Cost Share Grant with BLM two years ago to assist with planning process costs. The CCS Grant was approved this spring.

S. Koberg updated the partners on Ada County’s Bike Park. The Flow Trail Bridge had been popular with the public since its opening and that the public seemed to be very happy with it. He had put out a request with SWIMBA, Boise Area Mountain Bike Association (BAMBA), and Kore North Cycles in Meridian to help Ada County maintain the Bike Park. The organizations have basically adopted four cross country trails with BAMBA adopting three of the downhill specific trails, Flow Trail, Shake and Bake, and Stormin’ Mormon.

Ada County Parks and Waterways encouraged races at the Bike Park. Dirt Bag Promotions had schedule and enduro race, comprised of timed downhill segments at the Bike Park. Ada County Parks and Waterways staff were interested to see how the event would play out. The event will require closure of quite a few trails while it is underway. It would be the first event that the City of Eagle and the County had worked collaboratively on, and it would be a learning experience for both the partners and the promoters.

Scott proceeded to pass out Ada County Parks and Waterways newsletter.

S. Koberg was asked a question about fencing at the Bike Park and he replied that they were handling the installation of fences at the site. He stated that the purpose of the fencing was to minimize off-site trail impact while also providing a visual barrier for safety purposes. He explained that within the Bike Park there were many trails packed into a small space and that downhill trails ran parallel to some cross country trails by as little as ten feet in some places and that those trails were utilized by families with little kids who often wander off trail. He had spoken to individuals with concerns about the fencing being too close to the trail features. He said that consideration would be made to moving them off the trail slightly more, but not removing them altogether.

Tate Fisher stated that BLM was close to finalizing a candidate for their vacant GIS position, which was responsible for a lot of work on the trail maps. He would announce when he or she was hired for the position.