

Ridge to Rivers
4th Quarter Partnership Meeting

MINUTES

August 4, 2015

Partners present: Scott Koberg, Ada County Parks and Waterways, Doug Holloway and Sara Arkle, Boise City Department of Parks and Recreation, Stephaney Church, 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: Mark Tate, Southwest Idaho Mountain Biking Association (SWIMBA), Jon Krutz, Land Trust of the Treasure Valley (LTTV) and Mark Iverson, minutes recorder.

- FY 15 4th Quarter Budget and Work Plan Review:

D. Gordon stated he assumed most of the participants reviewed the 4th Quarter Budget and Work Plan, explaining that new highlights were marked in red. Ridge to Rivers had received over 2,700 volunteer hours, which was a significant amount. Regarding the grants, he stated that since the last 3rd Quarter meeting, in May, Ridge to Rivers had received the ORMV Grant and half the work associated with the grant was completed by the contractor before the trail dried out too much. D. Gordon reported that Trail 4 is finished along with the trail work in the WMA trails; trails 11, 12 and 13. The same contractor is responsible for the Off-Road Motor Vehicle (ORMV) Grant, and work to complete Trail #6 would be continued in the fall. If an early freeze occurred, then the contractor would come back in the spring. D. Gordon expected to hear back on the Recreation Trail Program (RTP) Grant soon.

D. Gordon stated that a \$ 36,000 BLM Challenge Cost-Share Grant for the Trail Plan was added to the budget, but he was still waiting for the official paperwork. D. Holloway asked if there was a match for the grant. D. Gordon clarified that there was a match that would be funded by the City of Boise. There would be additional funding from the Wells Fargo that was a \$25,000 grant.

D. Holloway question if there was a match for the Wells Fargo Grant. D. Gordon responded that there would be an in-kind match from Ridge to Rivers.

- Hulls Gulch Fire Update:

D. Gordon updated the partners on the fire that occurred in Hulls Gulch a week and a half before the meeting. It would be the first time that Ridge to Rivers wasn't left with 100% of the rehab effort. S. Arkle, D. Gordon and Cindy Fritz, from the BLM, had walked the entire damaged area and made note of typical vegetation fire damage. BLM committed to do a significant amount of access route rehabilitation via installing some temporary T-posts and smooth wire fences with signs telling people to stay off the damaged area. If trail users stay off the damaged area,

everything should heal in a year or year and a half. He finished by discussing the fire, stating the importance of BLM's aid to Ridge to Rivers.

S. Koberg asked what kind of rehab would be conducted, specifically if the work would include seeding. T. Fisher stated that the crews had ordered some rakes and waddles that would be used to reduce erosion. S. Arkle continued by stating that there would probably be some stabilization and spot seeding in areas that received less damage. D. Gordon informed the partners that the bunch grasses were already greening up.

- Ridge to Rivers Agreement:

D. Gordon informed the partners that all of the agencies had signed the Ridge to Rivers Agreement, but that it still had to be approved by the Boise City Parks and Recreation Commission and by Boise City Council. It was expected that they would be approved by the end of the month.

- 2015 Summer Work Plan:

D. Gordon explained that the Daniels Creek trails were Ridge to River's primary focus. The work on the Chuckar Butte Trail came out really well, but that the project was now in the rockiest area. The rocks would serve as features that would make the trail very interesting, but are much more difficult to build in. There was less than a quarter mile to finish the trail.

On Sweet Connie Trail, Ridge to Rivers had completed most of the work at the top of the saddle, and was currently working on a short reroute in Daniel's Creek. It was expected that most of the work on the upper portion of Sweet Connie Trail would be done by the end of the week. Ridge to Rivers would pull some stone by hand, keeping the trail challenging for users. D. Gordon made a point that his crew was taking pains to make the trail sustainable without losing its character. It was expected that remainder of the trail construction would go relatively quickly. Following the completion of Chuckar Butte Trail, crews would begin rebuilding the lower section of Sweet Connie Trail, where it left Bogus Basin Trail, as it was basically a ditch.

D. Gordon explained that the construction of Peggy's Trail was almost complete. Multiple organizations worked to construct the trail including Eagle Scouts, Ridge to Rivers, Southwest Idaho Mountain Biking Association (SWIMBA), and a contractor—a few sections of trail would have to be improved because it was not built wide enough. A piece of trail built by the contractor was not what Ridge to Rivers was expecting. Contractors ran into a lot of rock high on the trail and they missed the flags set by Ridge to Rivers, so the trail doesn't roll like most other system trails, and the trail was wider than requested. The end result was a trail that unfortunately doesn't have the character imagined in the original design. D. Gordon reviewed his expectations with this contractor, because they have three more projects with Ridge to Rivers.

T. Fisher questioned who the contractor was that built the portion of Peggy's Trail. D. Gordon replied that the contractor was Single Track Trails from Colorado, but the actual work was done

by Red Elephant Trails out of Hailey, Idaho. He explained that it was difficult for out of state businesses to bid on Ridge to Rivers projects—which was one reason why YRU Construction was often the only bidder on R2R trail contracts.

D. Gordon explained that he expected the trail to turn out great. SWIMBA built over a half mile of trail for free, which was fantastic. Crews were working to decide where they should place their directional signs due to the softness of Peggy's Trail. It would be important to keep trail users off the trail until it receives enough moisture to compact, making it a better trail in the long run.

S. Koberg asked if the trail was receiving use before the construction. D. Gordon responded that the trails in the area had been receiving use, but Peggy's Trail hadn't existed before. D. Gordon questioned if Ridge to Rivers should place directional signs to keep users from getting lost, even though they wanted to limit use at this time. There was concern because there were a number of cow tracks that looked like trails extending throughout the area. S. Koberg asked if there was a chance of marking the areas as trespassing. D. Gordon explained that horseback riders had previously used the area and had received permission from the Grossman's to use the land as they always had. So with the horseback riders riding wherever they wanted to go, it would be difficult to identify other user groups as trespassing.

S. Koberg suggested using signs as well as doing some outreach to inform the public that the trail needed to settle prior to use. D. Holloway asked how long it would take the trail to become compacted. D. Gordon replied that the area would need moisture to be compacted. He explained that he could send a press release asking people to stay off trail. S. Koberg asked if the trail could be opened in the fall. D. Gordon responded that the trails should receive moisture in the fall and then it could be opened. Typically there would be three to four weeks of rain in the fall.

D. Gordon explained that the last 150 feet of Peggy's Trail built by SWIMBA tied into a hillside where the contractor was going to work. It had seemed like an ideal location in the spring, but had become dry and loose in the summer due to damage caused by cows. The trail was moved down to make it easier for the contractor to build.

D. Gordon stated that there would be a sign from ACHD on Cartwright Road, right by the Polecat Trailhead. There wouldn't be a crosswalk, but there would be a trail biker sign by the road.

- Daniels/Dry Creek Trailhead:

D. Gordon began by explaining the stream analysis work done by Chris Walser and some of his students from the College of Idaho. Approximately twenty-seven stream crossings were analyzed, looking at every crossing with a series of parameters quantifying the health of the stream. After the health of the stream crossings had been established, D. Gordon, C. Walser, Tim Breuer, Land Trust of the Treasure Valley (LTTV), and Jim McNamara, Boise State University, reviewed each crossing, identifying the five worst crossings. A few of the stream

crossings were high up, and bridging would be easily possible due to the presence of native logs for stringers. It would be more difficult at the lower stream crossings to acquire the appropriate materials, and would be more expensive. It was expected that the analysis would be completed in the fall, when the trees lost their leaves.

When Ridge to Rivers begins to manage Dry Creek Trail, crews will work to armor many of the crossings. The process of armoring the trail would include having stone placed on the trail's descent into the creek crossings. It would provide entertainment value to users as well as reduce the sediment dropping into the drainages. It was visible where there was heavy sediment drainage. Ridge to Rivers would plan to have drainage structures in place and armor down into the creek crossings with the lowest stone in the streambed.

Mark Tate of SWIMBA voiced his concerns regarding dirt bikes dislodging the armor stones on the trail descents. D. Gordon replied that once Ridge to Rivers started managing the area they could work to address the use of dirt bikes in the area, but he agreed that dirt bikes were damaging the trail.

S. Koberg questioned if D. Gordon knew the parameters of the stream analysis study and if it was going to be published. D. Gordon replied that he would send the study to S. Koberg.

Jon Krutz, LTTV, stated that they had been working in the upper Dry Creek area and they would like to place gates in the area.

D. Holloway questioned what the difference was between the areas where J. Kurtz was proposing the gate and where the curve was. S. Church stated that it was the difference of approximately 1,000 feet. J. Kurtz said it would be advantageous to place the gate closer to the road, however this would put it on Forest Service land.

J. Kurtz said there would be two orientation maps, at the two entry points into the closed road system. He also informed the partners that the LTTV received a sizeable endowment from the Bev Miller Trail Endowment – part of which could be used for trail maintenance.

D. Holloway questioned what actions would be taken for the discussed bridge crossings. D. Gordon explained that in terms of stream health, it would be best to have them bridged while keeping the experience as close to the existing experience as possible. Bridges would be a big expense and funding hadn't been identified.

S. Koberg questioned how much a bridge would cost. D. Gordon responded that the cost was dependent on the width and location of the bridge. In the area of an old dirt road, that tied Hard Guy Trail to Dry Creek Trail, there was a lot that could be done but it would span approximately fifty-feet and would be difficult to cross because the surrounding canyon walls were so vertical.

S. Arkle asked if the location being discussed was one of the top five worst stream crossings. D. Gordon stated the site was of significant concern because of the location on Dry Creek Trail,

connecting the Dry Creek System—trail users had to go through the crossing to get to the rest of the trail system.

D. Gordon continued that if the area was bridged, similar to the upper Hulls Gulch Bridge, the cost could be as high as \$80,000.

D. Gordon explained that before further consideration of installing a bridge was made he would look to see if it was possible relocate the existing trail to a better crossing spot. Currently trail users are crossing upstream by sliding down the embankment, resulting in damage to the stream banks. The existing use was limited, but it would be a key link to everything recently built connecting Dry Creek to the Corrals trail system and will become heavily used.

There would be two bridges on the upper portion of the system that would be small expenses, estimated to be approximately \$800 in materials. There had been some discussions about possibly utilizing a helicopter with the National Park Service or BLM to have materials dropped in for necessary bridges.

T. Fisher asked if use of the National Guard helicopters had been researched. D. Gordon responded that he had asked the National Guard, and they said they could not do it. He explained that the first question should be if the Dry Creek and Shingle Creek area will be brought into the Ridge to Rivers trail system next year—they couldn't be added to the system until Forest Service approval was received.

S. Church informed the partners that the Sweet Connie Trail had been analyzed. She explained that they still needed an archaeologist and botanist to analyze the area, but they were in the planning phase of the budget and expected that it would be a priority. It was expected that more would be known in approximately one month.

D. Gordon explained that if the USFS NEPA was favorable, then he could see opening Dry Creek and Shingle Creek areas next year by first signing the trails then working on problem spots. He predicted his crew would be working in the area for a significant portion of the summer next year, moving downstream and working on different portions of the trail.

D. Holloway requested D. Gordon provide an estimate for the cost of the work needed on Dry Creek. He added that he thought that the stream analysis project was a great story. The work with the College of Idaho and Boise State University was good publicity and there was an opportunity to have an article done explaining everybody's involvement in caring for the stream health and the Red Band Trout.

- R2R Trail Plan Update:

D. Gordon informed the partners that a formal bid from Agnew::Beck had been received for \$89,000, slightly higher than the budgeted \$82,000. He expected that there would be some discussions to try and reduce the price. Jennifer Tomlinson, Boise City Department of Boise Parks and Recreation, would assist with the project. Once they reached an agreement on the

price, there would be a meeting between the City and Agnew::Beck, and then Agnew::Beck would likely meet with the partners to gather additional information and ask questions. It was important that the Trail Plan be a partnership wide plan. The planning process would start with a public survey.

- Hillside to Hollow Naming Process:

D. Gordon explained that the City had approved a formal process to name parks and facilities. He had met with D. Holloway and S. Arkle and determined that the trail naming process can be picked back up. D. Gordon stated he did not want to print the new Ridge to River Trail maps until the trails were named.

T. Fisher informed the partners that BLM had just hired a new GIS Specialist. He suggested that discussions occur to reserve some time to work on the map update.

S. Dempsey requested an update on the Hillside to Hollow naming process. D. Holloway explained that the City paused the trail naming process after receiving direction from Boise City Council to adopt a formalized naming policy. D. Gordon included that they were working to develop language to present to the public explaining the process. The approved policy created a process for allowing memorialization.

S. Koberg asked if the trail suggestions would come solely from the public. D. Holloway responded that Hillside to Hollow was unique because it was the only reserve that had a completed master plan. S. Koberg questioned if staff could name a trail. D. Gordon stated that the policy would allow for staff to name a trail, explaining that trails could be named after geologic and historic landmarks.

- Anticipated Fall Projects:

D. Gordon informed the partners that they had a lot of maintenance that needed to be completed, which would be weather dependent. There was a significant amount of erosion that occurred during the summer from the rain that had occurred a few weeks prior. His entire team would be put on maintenance as soon as possible. A beaver dam had flooded Cottonwood Trail, but for the time being, the trail was passible. He didn't think the beavers could raise the dam any further and the trail had been filled with rock, making it dry and passible. It was not a long term solution. The trail section would need to be raised and some sort of puncheon would need to be added to the location.

A section of Peggy's Trail where it crosses Dry Creek, was dry now, but it would receive a significant amount of water and a simple foot bridge to cross would be added. Various trails would require crib work, and many trails throughout the system would require maintenance. Crib work would include stones being added to support and shore the sides of trails. Towards the end of the season it was expected a crew would work on Morning Star Trail on Bogus Basin, which would contain a number of technical features that would have to be dismantled before the

ski season. Once naming for Hillside to Hollow was finalized, a team would work to relocate trails, close non-system routes and place directional signage.

D. Holloway informed the partners that they would need recommendations for resource allocation, having more money put towards long-term land management issues and continual upkeep. As trails are added to the system and additional lands are purchased it will be necessary to make sure resources are allocated to maintain the system.

D. Gordon explained that one thing he had discovered through all the work on Daniel's Creek, was that crews were spread too thin and nobody was free to handle issues that came up such as trail damage. In the future, it may be necessary to set aside two people to handle different smaller projects that have the ability to break away from their tasks to handle problems as they arise.

- Other Partnership Updates:

Ada County Parks and Waterways:

S Koberg questioned if they could have a crew member visit the southeastern portion of Rabbit Run Trail to look for areas that may need improvement. D. Gordon responded that he would put it on the maintenance schedule for the fall.

Boise National Forest Service:

S. Church stated that she was trying to make contact with Tim Breuer from the LTTV to review a list of issues the LTTV would like to be worked on. They would need to work together to see how feasible it would be to address the issues and if they could be fit into the budget. Bogus Basin launched their mapping trails process to update their twenty year old plan used for running their resort. They would also be conducting a feasibility study, which was expected to roll into finding some funding to go into NEPA. The Boise National Forest (BNF) was working on a forest health project focused on cleaning up the 97-percent mistletoe infestation at Bogus Basin. The project would be under the Boise Basin Footprint. The Boise Basin Special Use Permit area didn't include the cross country area. As Bogus Basin developed a cross country trail area and program they did it without scanning the boundaries. In September, they would start the public scoping process. As part of the process, BNF would need to work on including the Ridge to Rivers areas on the public scoping process.

City of Boise:

S. Arkle stated that the open space management plan had been approved by the City of Boise Parks and Recreation Commission and that the approval process would continue to the Boise City Council level. She said she would like to begin the City process of approval for the Interagency Management Plan. The maps in the plan would need to be updated to incorporate recent land purchases made by the City. She questioned if there would be a ripple effect if they

made edits to the plan. T Fisher responded that the easiest solution would be to leave the plan as it was.

D. Holloway stated that it may be possible to add some revisions by letting the Boise City Parks and Recreation Commission and Boise City Council know that the properties that needed to be added were City owned, and that the revisions had already been approved by the other agencies involved.