



MEMORANDUM

Date: Thursday, October 13, 2022

To: SCVAP Stakeholder Advisory Committee

From: Matt Hastie, MIG|APG
Brandon Crawford, MIG|APG

Subject: Advisory Committee Meeting #3 Summary

Attendees:

Committee Members

Patti Adair, BOCC Patti.Adair@deschutes.org
Sara Baughman, US Forest Service sara.baughman@usda.gov
Paul Bertagna, City of Sisters pbertagna@ci.sisters.or.us
Chris Cheng, Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) Chris.CHENG@odot.state.or.us
Matt Cyrus, Deschutes County Planning Commissioner matt@aspenlakes.com
Devin Hearing, ODOT devin.hearing@odot.oregon.gov
Nicole Mardell, Deschutes County Nicole.Mardell@deschutes.org
Annie Marland, BPAC annie72sisters@gmail.com
Kim McCarrel, Equestrian Board kim@nwhorsetrails.com
Scott Penzarella, Sisters Trails Alliance scott@sisterstrails.org
Tarik Rawlings, Deschutes County Tarik.Rawlings@deschutes.org
Ian Reid, USFS, Sisters District ian.reid2@usda.gov
Peter Russell, Deschutes County peter.russell@deschutescounty.gov
Steve Swisher, Former Deschutes County Planning Commissioner swishersn@live.com

Consulting Team

Brandon Crawford, APG|MIG bcrawford@migcom.com
Matt Hastie, APG|MIG mhastie@migcom.com
Karen Swirsky, Kittelson & Associates kswirsky@kittelson.com

Notes:

Project Timeline and Status Update

- Matt Hastie opened the meeting with a brief project status update and a quick discussion on the project schedule. For more information on the project background, schedule, and past meeting, see the [project website](#).

Draft Proposed Trails

- Brandon discussed the draft proposed trails. He noted that the proposed trails were still mostly in draft form and were largely conceptual. He added that most of the proposed draft trails were based on previous work and proposals that were provided from Sisters Trails Alliance (STA), Oregon Equestrian Trails (OET), and Central Oregon Trails Alliance (COTA). Brandon summarized the proposed trails as follows and discussed the locations and type for each proposed trail in maps of subareas of Sisters Country:
 - There are 22 total proposed trails depicted between three subarea maps.
 - Trails are categorized between *repurposed/conversion of existing facilities* and *new trails or trail connections*
 - The proposed trails are for non-motorized uses, which was part of the project scope from the outset of the project. Proposed trail uses are primarily intended for biking, hiking, and equestrian uses.

Proposed Trails Discussion

- Chris Cheng asked whether any of the proposed trails would cross highways in the study area. He suggested highlighting those areas and providing recommendations for marked crossings and signs at locations where trails cross highways or roads.
- Annie Marland asked if the project team had considered trail connections between Camp Sherman and Black Butte Ranch.
 - Brandon noted that the proposed trails were provided from the trails groups and added that many survey respondents indicated a need for trail access to Camp Sherman.
 - Matt added that Camp Sherman is outside of the study area and it's in Jefferson County.
 - Peter suggested adding something to the Plan about coordinating with other counties (e.g., Jefferson County) re: trails that go through multiple counties.
- Kim McCarrel pointed out that the proposed Upper and Lower Black Butte equestrian trails on the maps already exist and that they are mislabeled.
 - Ian added that those trails are not part of the official trail system, but they have been permitted under a special use permit with Black Butte Stables. Suggested the name should be upper and lower Black Butte Swamp.
 - Brandon will remove those trails from the list of proposed new trails and new trail connections.
- Chris asked if the proposed trails include connections or new trails associated with the new wastewater treatment plant that is being planned.
 - Paul Bertagna noted that those trails are part of the Lazy Z Ranch plan and encourages the team to include them in the list of proposed trails.
- Kim noted that some proposed equestrian trails that start outside of Sisters Country and enter the study area are not on the map.
 - Sara Baughman has the most recent GIS data for the proposed trails and will coordinate with Brandon to add any trails that were missed in the first draft, including the proposed equestrian trails.
- Ian asked why motorized trails weren't included in the proposed trails. He has observed that motorized uses of trails has become increasingly popular in the areas.

- Peter and Karen responded that the DLCD-ODOT TGM grant was specifically for active transportation, which is bike, ped, and transit only. They added that the project is implementing SCVAP actions that are specific to non-motorized trails and that the team is keeping the range of proposed trails within the original scope.
- Annie asked whether trails and trail connections within the City were considered.
 - Matt responded that trails within the City were not part of the project scope and that they would need to be part of the City's TSP.
 - Matt added that the City is currently doing a Parks and Recreation Master Plan and that trail connections to the City should be coordinated with the City. That is noted in the draft Trails Concept Plan document as well.

Sisters to Black Butte Ranch Trail Discussion

- Brandon briefly summarized what the project team had heard from the community and the committee discussion and comments regarding the Sisters to Black Butte Ranch (BBR) trail, noting the divided support among survey respondents, the controversial history, and relatively high level of support from different organizations.
- Annie clarified that BBR homeowners board initially approved the proposed trail, but their approval was not taken into account in the formal trail application process.
 - Matt suggested the Stakeholder committee share any documentation regarding previous support or approval from the BBR board or homeowners to help us accurately update our report.
- Steve Swisher noted that the trail had initial interest and support from the school district so students could have access to the Black Butte trailhead and trails network, which would be incorporated into the curriculum and provide field trip opportunities.
 - Steve added that the initial proposed alignment was north of the highway so that the trail wouldn't need to cross the highway. He suggested the location of the trail so as to avoid crossing the highway may influence how community members perceive and support the trail.
- Scott Penzarella (new director of STA) recently met with the BBR board of directors and learned more about the history of the trail.
 - Scott noted that many of the current BBR board members support the trail and would welcome re-initiating the planning process. He explained to the group that the success of the trail is dependent upon BBR board approval and that he would like to see a definitive letter of support from the BBR board.
 - He added that there is strong support for the trail from STA, residents in Sisters, and many other BBR residents.
- Nicole Mardell asked whether there is confusion among BBR and other area residents about the proposed trail alignment – i.e., does the trail go to the BBR community/resort, or does it go to the actual feature and its trail system?
 - Scott suggested there is confusion as to the location and purpose of the trail. He suggested changing the name of the proposed trail to better clarify its location and purpose. Many residents would like to use the trail to access Sisters, but they may be afraid that it will frame BBR as a destination that can be accessed via the trail.
 - It would be important to have an educational component of the proposed trail to better address people's concerns, as noted in the draft Trails Concept Plan document.
 - Peter suggested naming the trail Sisters to Jefferson County Line.

- Ian noted some inaccuracies in the account of the Sisters-BBR trail history. He noted that the initial trail proposal that the Forest Service started the planning effort connected Sisters and Black Butte Ranch but that the trails inside Black Butte Ranch are private and not for public use. Hence some of the controversy with some BBR residents.
- He added that it never cleared NEPA review, but other proposed trails that were a part of the review did complete the NEPA process and received approval (such as the Sisters High School to Crossroads trail, but the decision was pulled due to the level of controversy and opposition among some community members).
 - Annie recalls that STA paid for the trail application for Sisters-BBR and that it was approved.
 - Ian responded that Sisters to BBR was never approved. A draft decision notice and Final Environmental Assessment were released and the Forest Service cancelled the project at the objection phase of the draft decision for a variety of reasons. Sisters HS to Crossroads was initially approved in a Decision Memo along with several other trails but after hearing from the public who lived near this proposed trail the responsible official signed a separate decision rescinding the authorization to construct Sisters to Crossroads.
 - Scott mentioned that he has encountered conflicting information and accounts of the history.
 - Scott and Ian will coordinate their information to sort out the history of the Sisters-BBR trail review and approval process. Scott suggested some of the prior work and analysis for the application could be re-used to help expedite the planning and review/approval process. Scott and/or Ian will provide updated information to Matt and Brandon for incorporation in a revised draft of the Trails Concept Plan document.

Trails Planning Processes

- Matt summarized some of the anticipated planning processes, including:
 - Possible NEPA review, pending level of complexity, location, and management allocation
 - Forest Service Program of Work
 - ODOT and City of Sisters review procedures
- Matt discussed how the proposed trails may be incorporated into the current County TSP planning process and updates. He added that the Concept Plan may also lead to revised TSP policies related to trails.

Planning Process Discussion

- Peter noted that if any trails go through private or County-administered land then they would also have to go through the County land use review and approval process. He added that trails that are within or cross ODOT ROW would also have to be approved by the County.
- Ian noted that the Forest Service screens proposed trails to determine whether they need to go through the NEPA process. He noted that some of the proposed trails may not make into the NEPA review phase based on their screening criteria. Some of the screening includes the following criteria which should be briefly described in the Trails Concept Plan document:
 - Trail sustainability
 - Whether it is a redundant trail
 - If the trail is inconsistent with Forest Service policies and regulations
- Peter clarified that the Regional TSP trails map is intended for City-to-City connections. The TSP update will include sub-area maps that include other, non-intercity trails.

- Peter noted that the County does not have a parks and recreation district and does not have jurisdiction over where many of the proposed trails are located. He mentioned that the TSP policies and recommendations need to be at a broad, high-level and should not address trail design or site-specific details. He suggests removing the proposed TSP policies that address design and add a policy to “coordinate with neighboring counties for inter-county trails”.
- Matt Cyrus noted that ODFW is pushing for stronger protection of wildlife habitat.
 - Ian responded that the Forest Service would use their screening process to look at core habitat areas, winter ranges, and other management units to determine if a trail application would be suitable to enter the NEPA process, which would address trail impacts, mitigation, and design.

Action Items

- Identify and highlight areas where trails cross highways or roads. Provide recommendations for marked crossings and signs at locations where trails cross highways or roads.
- Remove the already existing Upper and Lower Black Butte equestrian trails from the proposed trails list.
- Add proposed trails associated with the Lazy Z Ranch Master Plan.
- Revise BBR discussion for accuracy in accordance with committee feedback, including comments from Ian, Scott, Annie, and Steve.
- Revise planning process discussion in the Concept Plan per Ian and Peter’s comments.
- Include the missed equestrian trails that Kim mentioned.
- Share updated Concept Plan with committee members and solicit any final comments/revisions before finalizing.