



Tualatin Hills Park & Recreation District Nature & Trails Advisory Committee Minutes

Date: February 21, 2026

Time: 7:00 pm

Location: Virtual (Microsoft Teams)

In Attendance

Committee Members: Carl Nelson (chair), Tina Ricks (secretary), Matthew Shepherd, Erich Pacheco, Tom Erwin, Marty Hite, Sharon Keiser

Absent: Vidy Kulkarni, Erik Lehr

Board Liaison: Barbie Minor

Staff: Bruce Barbarasch, Nature & Trails Manager

Guests: None

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:35 pm.

II. Approval of Minutes

The minutes were reviewed. Tom moved to approve the minutes, Erich seconded. The January 2024 minutes were approved as written.

III. New Business

Icebreaker: What is your superpower?

Carl: I understand technology.

Tina: I put gobbledegook (technical, governmental, law) into plain English for normal people.

Marty: I can spot wildlife (find the raccoon in the tree, see the bighorn sheep).

Erich: I speak 3 languages. I've worked in governments in every inhabited continent. I understand how governments work.

Sharon: I work in finance in nonprofits, so I love problem solving.

Matthew: I'm a parent. My kids still talk to us, so I guess we did ok.

Tom: I have a lot of governmental experience. I was in 4 different agencies with State of Oregon. We have 3 kids, 4 grandkids, one more coming. I like group dynamics.

Barbie: I'm an empath. I genuinely care about people. I make sure people are heard. I pick up on sensitivities in the room. I'm the team cheerleader.

Bruce: I'm good at organizing stuff. It finds me and I find it, and I organize it.

Storm Update:

We hired a park resource analyst to help us track information. Park staff has an app called Field Notes on their phones. Sent staff out to every property. There is a big concentration of damage

and downed trees on the east and northeast side of district. Lots and lots of trees down, mostly conifers more than deciduous trees. Most fell with enormous roots intact. Miraculously little infrastructure damage.

Fir Grove Park had a fir tree fall directly on the playground. Playground is a total loss. This is sad because it's a low-income area.

There are 370 trees down that have impacts on parks (more trees down that are in the woods). Most that fell were reasonably healthy.

Matthew: I read in news reports that people were finding laminated root rot.

Bruce: Root rot exists no matter what. It's a naturally occurring disease. We lost all kinds of species, even those not susceptible to root rot. Some that were already leaning came down.

A big problem was buildings that lost power then had heat loss and burst pipes. We don't have backup generators. Ceilings in the HMT complex had burst pipes. A tree fell and missed the house at the Jenkins Estate by just a few feet, but the electricity went out, there were burst pipes and lots of damage.

14 facilities were damaged by power out and frozen pipes.

These will be repaired with a combination of insurance claims, state/federal funds, and a reallocation of capital dollars. We might be able to use the cost/value of trees down to reforest where appropriate.

We have a process to evaluate remaining trees to see if they need to be removed.

Generally if a tree falls in a natural area, we leave it as it. Some crews do "lop and scatter" to cut off branches and scatter material on the ground, so it gets wet and rots faster. This will help with fire danger in summer. In some places, it's just too much debris and we've taken some of it out.

If a tree falls in the park what happens to the wood? Is there dollar value in the logs? Is there habitat value in the logs? For a timber sale to be worthwhile, it needs a lot of trees, not piecemeal, and the trees have to be easily transportable. It's mostly not cost effective to look at the dollar value of the logs. There is habitat value in the logs for all kinds of animals, insects, and birds.

Can we give the trees away to another park or another area for habitat? It depends. We try to rehome the wood where we can. We've used wood to make benches and other park features. Sometimes retaining walls. It depends on how hard it is to move the wood out of the site.

Functional Plan Overview: Natural Resources plan and Trails plan
Presentation from Bruce (PDF of slides attached to this document).

Definition of terms:

Comprehensive Plan sets the 20-year plan for the district.

Strategic Plan is a 5-year plan for the whole district.

Functional Plans are specific to particular areas.

Our team is reviewing two functional plans: *Natural Resources* plan and *Trails* plan.

Important point for both plans: they don't say WHAT decisions to make, instead they focus on HOW to make decisions and how to form priorities. This way, the loudest voice in the room isn't necessarily the one acted on, and dollars can be distributed fairly to neighborhoods of all income levels.

These two functional plans have not been updated since 2014, because of a number of factors. We are still picking up the pieces after COVID.

Advice from the committee: We don't think any of these plans need a complete restart, but more like toss out a few pieces, and add a few in. We should consider updating the *Trails Functional Plan* and *Natural Resources Functional Plan* together into one document.

The opportunity to get more public engagement might be higher if we combine the documents and processes. If we had an event to present the functional plans to the public, there might be different stations to talk about 3 different things (Natural Resources, Parks, and Trails). Would be great to simplify into one event. We should coordinate to make the documents more consistent. The community might not care how the sausage gets made, but they might care to make their voice heard if we can combine more issues into one event.

For each project, there is a communication strategy and outreach strategy. We don't know yet what the process would be. If we do 3 plans together will have a more coordinated public comment process. The public does not get jazzed about abstract planning.

If there are a lot of different plans, it can create confusion. If there is overlap between the plans, it may not be clear what priorities are. Less is sometimes more. Bruce noted that at the parks district offices, all the people in Parks, Trails, and Natural Resources are under one supervisor.

Erich's experience from the Portland Water Bureau—I hope there are not too many plans that conflict with each other. Fewer plans are better.

Future Meeting Ideas

We would like to prioritize the opinions for future meetings: what the group wants to focus on for the coming year. Carl presented the following list. Note that the numbers are for identification, not priority.

Future Meetings Brainstorm List

1. Existing Trail and Natural Area improvement & maintenance plans and status

2. Any additional Natural Areas planned to be added? Nature Gaps assessment ***
3. What is going well? How can the NATC be most helpful and Supportive? Budget for Nature and Trails and Priorities ***
4. Improvements for Wildlife and Habitat and Project Priorities
5. What areas of the district are underserved and how we can improve? How does THPRD define “equitable access” and Service Delivery *****
6. How can we support the nature mobile to bring more attention to nature and trails in the district? *
7. What data is available to inform our decision making?
8. Website improvements (better trail maps, etc)
9. Continue Trail gaps project **
10. Understanding partnerships with outside organization and THPRD
11. Community access and use of grant money
12. Field Trips *****
13. When and how to update Functional Plans
14. Status updates on recent grant proposals
15. Update on Climate Action Plan **
16. Topics of Concern: Emerald Ash Borer Impact and Western Red Cedar, etc.
17. Invasive species management
18. How to increase Community engagement *
19. NATC Book Club, Readings *

Top Prioritized list

1. What areas of the district are underserved and how we can improve? How does THPRD define “equitable access” and Service Delivery *****
2. Field Trips (as needed depending on what our projects/focus are)
3. Any additional Natural Areas planned to be added? Nature Gaps assessment ***
4. What is going well? How can the NATC be most helpful and Supportive? Budget for Nature and Trails and Priorities ***
5. Continue Trail gaps project **
6. Update on Climate Action Plan **
7. NATC Book Club, Readings *

IV. Old Business

Update on the Trail Gaps Project

Tina attended the Beaverton Traffic Commission meeting on Feb. 1 with a letter of support from our committee. The commission proposed designating Bethany Court (part of the Waterhouse Trail gap) as a “Bike Boulevard.” However, what that means in practice is painted “sharrow” signs on the street and no designated bike lanes. During morning and evening rush there is a lot of traffic in this court because there is a childcare center and many adult- and child-centered sports facilities with people doing drop-off and pickup. The only safe place to ride a bike is on the sidewalk. The Beaverton Traffic Commission was not willing to discuss removing the on-street parking, as this is a very contentious issue with the businesses on

Bethany Court. The businesses do not share parking with each other and use the street as overflow parking. However, painted “sharrows” and a designated bicycle boulevard is better than it was, so Tina expressed to the traffic commission that the THPRD NTAC supports it. The Beaverton Traffic Commission has since voted and this court will become an official “Bike Boulevard” with painted sharrows.

Carl and Tina have presented the Trail Gaps grant funding request to the other two committees (Parks/Facilities and Programs/Events). They will vote on it. If approved, it will go on to the THPRD board for approval. We need to spend the money by the end of June, 2024.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 p.m. PST.

V. Next Meeting will be held on

March 20, 2024 at 6:30 pm. Bruce will re-send the calendar invite. Meeting is hybrid.

Respectfully submitted,

Tina Ricks

Recording Secretary