



Tualatin Hills Park & Recreation District

ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Natural Resources Advisory Committee Meeting

Date: March 18, 2014

Time: 6:30 pm

Location: Fanno Creek Service Center

In Attendance

Committee Members: Rod Coles, Mitch Cruzan, Don Nearhood, Laura Porter, Cory Samia, Matthew Shepherd, Jack Shorr
Staff: Bruce Barbarasch

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Mitch Cruzan at 6:41 pm.

II. Approval of Minutes

Motion to approve proposed by Laura Porter; seconded by Don Nearhood. Approved unanimously with no changes.

III. Financial Report

There were no financial changes to report. The posts to mark unmown areas have been purchased; they are brown.

IV. Old Business

a. Check in activity

Mitch: Went to see short-eared owls near Forest Grove.

Laura: Shared a new video created by Clean Water Services; wore THPRD hat in AZ.

Matthew: Nothing to report.

Rod: Been enjoying late-winter blooms in Tualatin Hills Nature Park: trilliums, osoberry.

Jack: Helped with tree planting at Greenway Park; about 1,200 trees were planted that day.

Don: Participated in volunteer photo monitoring training; spotted some weeds following recent weed seminar, noticed erosion from trail runoff, and spotted trash.

Cory: Attended a talk about the Native American tribes of the Tualatin basin; visited a huge Douglas fir at Moonshadow Park.

Bruce: Shared news that Greg Creager has been appointed to fill the Natural Resources & Trails Specialist vacancy and that Bug Fest would go on hiatus for this summer. Future plans uncertain.

b. Update on Natural Resources Functional Plan

Bruce led a discussion about what constitutes an appropriate level of development in natural areas. The NRFP needs to balance protection with access/use. The hope is that the NRAC can develop preliminary criteria for development in natural areas.

Some background: There are many opportunities to purchase new land. The district will only buy what it can manage and if it meets criteria such as connectivity of habitat, presence of rare species, high-quality habitat or potential to provide that, access or recreation value, large area for healthy plant/animal communities. There are also reasons to not buy land: limited capacity to maintain the property, unstable slope (future liability), negative impact on neighbors, contamination. NR funds may be spent on land that is treasured, is biologically important, or in which there is a community interest. Sites are assessed for their level of ecosystem services and by measuring the percentage of ground cover that is native or non-native. High functioning sites have a target of 80% or greater,

native plant cover, low functioning sites have 40% or lower native plant cover, medium functioning sites fill the gap between those two.

The ensuing discussion touched on many issues:

- Laura asked how THPRD works with Metro on land purchases. Bruce said that Metro may support the purchase with a grant or may collaborate in a joint purchase.
- Laura continued with an observation that streams need more width of property to accommodate natural processes, and followed with a question about whether there might be partnership opportunities for management. Bruce offered Cooper Mountain as an example of such an arrangement; Metro owns the land, THPRD manages it.
- Cory wondered how the NRFP would relate to trails plan standards. The trails plan is due for an update in 2015.
- Laura noted that trails with impervious surfaces can lead to increased erosion from runoff. Can the NRFP recommend things such as impervious trail surfaces? Bruce shared that the NRFP and revised trails FP will not dictate each other. They will each provide guidelines, which combine to create a framework for decision making.
- Mitch inquired whether the NRFP can establish trail density guidelines. The response was that THPRD is community driven and has great responsibility to respond to local residents' desires.
- Jack raised the issue of how many current high-functioning sites have trails. Apparently, probably half of high-functioning sites have trails. Large sites often have neighbors who want trails.
- Don said that access and education could be considered valuable functions. Matthew noted that trails/access can reduce other values such as habitat value.
- Laura suggested that higher functioning sites should have lower trail density or development.
- Mitch is concerned about the number of social trails from houses into the forest at Lowami Hart Woods, and wondered if a cutoff trail that bisects the social trails and redirects traffic would be appropriate.

There then ensued a discussion about trail density and how it could be defined: length of trails?; area of trail surfaces?; distance between trails in a site?; area of undisturbed habitat between trails? Data from THPRD surveys suggest that there may be nest predation/abandonment near trails and salamanders may be impacted. The question was raised as to what is done elsewhere to define or manage trail densities. Is there research or best practice from the USA or Europe that could guide us? Committee members were given homework of finding out what is done in other park districts.

V. New Business

- a. [View from Bruce's Office](#). This was combined with the previous discussion about the NRFP.

VI. Other

None

VII. Next Meeting will be held on Tuesday, May 22, at 6:30 pm at the Fanno Creek Service Center.

Meeting adjourned at 8:36 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Matthew Shepherd
Recording Secretary