

Clallam County Trails Advisory Committee (TAC) November 6, 2024, Meeting Minutes

A. WELCOME/INTRODUCTIONS:

The meeting was called to order and conducted via video/phone conferencing.

Members Present: Charlie Commeree (Chair), Andy Stevenson, Gordon Taylor, Judy Sarles, Justin Zarzeczny, Lorrie Mittmann, Dick Gritman, Grant Herman, Jim Mraz, Wendy Clark-Getzin, Erik Rohrer

County Representatives: Steve Gray, County Public Works Dept. (Ex-officio TAC member)
William Habel, Regional Trails & Active Transportation Coordinator
Mike French, County Commissioner

Guests/Public: Powell Jones, Jamestown S’Klallam Tribe (JSKT), Molly Erickson (PTC), Jeff Bohman (PTC), Tim Tucker, City of Port Angeles

B. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Chair Commeree requested a change for last months meeting minutes to fix a mistake. The mistake involved a desire for the Kitsap County trail representatives to give a presentation to the TAC, while the minutes indicated that the PTC was to receive the presentation. Eric Rohrer requested that he was included in last months minutes, as his name was missing from the Guests/Public list. After approval of these changes, Member Taylor made a motion to approve the minutes with modifications, the motion was seconded and approved.

C. MODIFICATIONS/ADDITIONS TO AGENDA:

- There were no modifications to the agenda

D. ANNOUNCEMENTS AND MEMBER UPDATES:

- **Washington State Trails Conference**
 - Member Stevenson, Member Sarles & local expert Rich James attended the Washington State Trails Conference, representing the Peninsula Trails Coalition. Member Sarles indicated she would work with Will to organize representatives from Kitsap County to present to the TAC.
 - Member Sarles highlighted a new state-run effort to create a statewide trails database.
 - Member Sarles also highlighted a project from the state of Oregon, which created a trails forecasting model for the Forest Service, which would assist trail planners pick optimal routes in less time.
 - Member Stevenson said he reconnected and had good dialog with representatives with some of the land managers who are responsible for segments of the Olympic Discovery Trail. He also attended a presentation on the Foothills Trail in Pierce County, and attended the Puget Sound to Pacific (PS2P) panel.
- **Other Member Updates**
 - Chair Commeree expressed a desire to hear from the PS2P representatives at the TAC. Member Gray indicated that the PS2P representatives from Port Angeles and Sequim had already presented at the TAC, but that we had not heard from Jefferson County, or from the Sound to Olympics trail representatives. Member Gray indicated that it was a possibility to hear from them during 2025.
 - Member Stevenson informed the group that he had acquired a presentation from PS2P that does a good job of summarizing the future trail routes, and the status of various sections.

- Member Stevenson also informed the group that citizen trail groups in Jefferson County have decided that the name “Olympic Discovery Trail” will extend to the western side of the Hood Canal Bridge.
- Chair Commeree mentioned the timelapse from the Whiskey Creek Bridge project, and praised how well it worked to illustrate the efforts of the volunteer crews assembling the bridge.
- Member Clark-Getzin inquired whether Clallam County had dedicated portions of the RAISE Grant budget to PS2P. Member Gray indicated that the County had not, and that the funding of the grant was dedicated to the trail projects themselves.
- Member Zarzeczny mentioned the Olympic Peninsula Outdoor Recreation Collaborative (OPORC) had recently met. The OPORC is a US Forest Service led group of state and federal agencies intended to promote recreation on the Olympic Peninsula.

E. TRAIL PROJECTS AND MAINTENANCE REPORTS:

- **ODT – Forks to La Push Project Update**

William Habel gave a brief update on the Forks to La Push Project, indicating that the County was still waiting to hear back Western Federal Lands on the status of the Counties prepared acquisition plan, and that the County was also waiting to hear back from major landowners along the route.

- **RAISE Grant Update**

William Habel indicated that the Federal Highways Administration had changed some of their standard contract language, which prompted a resigning of the RAISE grant by all involved organizations, as the contract had not been finalized prior to the changing of that language. The Board of County Commissioners is scheduled to review and resign the agreement during the November 26th regular work session.

- **ODT Update- Gossett Rd to Thompson/Onella, Waterline Rd**

William Habel gave a brief overview of a daytrip out to the DNR owned property North of Joyce, which will ideally comprise of the majority of the Gossett Rd to Thompson/Onella Rd gap of the ODT. Much of this visit was for building familiarity with the site, and identifying challenges related to crossing Whiskey Creek. The group is planning another trip out to the property soon. Rich James wrote up a great summary of the site visit, if any members are interested.

Will also mentioned a trip out to the Waterline Rd property. The County has elected to in-house the design.

- **County Volunteer ODT/OAT Trail Crew Maintenance Project Reports**

There were 5 volunteer days this month, two on the OAT at MP 1-3 and 11-12. 3 days on the 17th, 24th and 31st were spent on the ODT with chainsaws and chippers. Locations included Vautier to Kitchen-Dick Rd, and two days on Cooper Ranch to 070 gate. Will mentioned that volunteers had expressed interest in receiving sawyer training. Powell Jones informed the group that the Backcountry Horsemen were currently planning on a free sawyer training event, and that he would inform the group if there was space available for training.

- **County acquisition of DNR River Road Property Acquisition Update**

Member Gray informed the group that the property had been acquired, and that the County’s Park system had now more than doubled with the purchase. The item will be removed as a regular agenda item until trail related projects are occurring on the property.

- **Towne Road/Dungeness Levee Trail Progress Update**

Member Gray informed the group that the trail surface and road surface had been completed, and are open to the public.

- **County ODT/OAT Maintenance Project Reports**

The County spent 11 days on the ODT, and 4 days on the OAT. Much of the time on the ODT was spent brushing the trail clean of leaves and debris, utilizing the new tractor attachment. Some trail edge work was also completed on the ODT. On the OAT, improvements to the tread and drainage were worked on, and excess wood from the Whiskey Creek project was removed. Will also mentioned that the county was installing caution signs at some problem areas that had received complaints. So far, these areas include: the bridge on the Thompson/Onella Rd segment, Bagley Creek, Sieberts Creek, and Pristine Lane. Will also mentioned a wayfinding proposal that Member Taylor had sent in, and that they would be working on it in the coming days. Member Stephenson emphasized that wayfinding and caution signs need to be expedited.

F. DISCUSSION AND BUSINESS ITEMS

- **DNR RCO NOVA Off-Road M&O Grant Presentation & Letter of Support-** Justin Zarzeczny-
Department of Natural Resources

Member Zarzeczny gave a presentation outlining the Foothills & Sadie Creek Offroad areas. The Sadie Creek offroad area is located west of Joyce. Sadie Creek offers trails for most forms of motorized Off-road-vehicles (ORV's) including full size 4x4s, side by sides, ATV's and dirtbikes, with varying levels of difficulty. The Foothills trail system is located near Lake Dawn, and caters more to smaller motorized users. These trails are also popular with hikers, mountain bikers, and equestrians. Having these trail systems available helps encourage motorized trail users to enjoy their hobby in a legal and controlled manner. Justin emphasized that these two areas are the only locations on the Olympic Peninsula specifically designated for ORV's. Justin explained some of the difficulties with maintaining these trail systems, as the systems are nearly entirely grant funded. Justin asked that the TAC support the DNR's Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) grant application, in order to ensure that these areas continue to operate. Member Stevenson added that he lives near the Sadie Creek area, and thoroughly enjoys mountain biking there. Member Stevenson made a motion to support the DNR's request for support, which Member Sarles seconded. The motion passed, and a letter of support was signed by Chair Commeree.

- **Clallam County 2025 Lodging Tax-** William Habel- Clallam County Public Works

Will gave a short presentation on the department's 2025 Lodging Tax Application. The proposed project consists of re-paving 1100 feet of ODT from the western border of Sequim Bay State Park to Barker Rd. The section had been the subject of multiple complaints from trail users, as root intrusion has heavily damaged the surface. The project will also include the installation of root barriers on either side of the trail, acting as a test bed for other areas of the ODT that are starting to show signs of root damage. Root barriers can also be installed during new trail construction, helping the trail surface last longer. If the root barriers prove effective, then the county could install them in other areas without the need to repave, while lowering the need to remove trees from the trail edges. The department is also requesting to purchase a John Deere 270B backhoe attachment for the newly acquired trail maintenance tractor. The backhoe will be used for spot repairs where total removal and repaving is not required, along with other trail maintenance activities. Requested budget is \$119,371.60 for the repaving, and \$12,000 for the backhoe, for a total of \$131,371.60. Member Stevenson made a motion to approve and support the departments request for funding. The motion was seconded and passed. Member Gray thanked the group, and emphasized how surface conditions are a common concern raised in surveys about the ODT.

- **County Safe Streets for All (SS4A) Funding Overview-** William Habel- Clallam County Public Works

Will told the group of the counties recently awarded SS4A funding. The total funding amounts to \$209,040 develop a comprehensive road safety plan for Clallam County. The purpose of the plan is to illustrate where the county falls short in terms of road safety for all road users, and what can and will be done to improve conditions. Will told the TAC that he would appreciate input from them on improvements, and that he would be supplying the group with updates as the plan is developed, especially pertaining to bicycle and pedestrian elements.

- **Carlsborg Road Crossing Improvements**

Member Sarles inquired about the status of the proposed ODT crossing at Carlsborg Rd near Banana Wy. Member Clark-Getzin informed the group that construction is tentatively scheduled for the end of 2025, and shared preliminary plans with the group.

- **Other notes/Discussion**

There will be no January TAC meeting. Chair Commeree expressed his desire to hear from the City of Port Angeles relating to the RAISE grant, and to the Waterfront Trail. Timothy Tucker from the City of Port Angeles Parks Department has said he or a representative will be present at the **February** meeting

G. PUBLIC COMMENT:

- Jeff Bohman – Peninsula Trails Coalition- Expressed his desire for increased action with properties held by Rayonier. He also inquired about the Forest Service easement element to the Waterline Rd project. Member Gray informed him that it will be addressed as an element of the RAISE Grant, once funding has been awarded.

H. ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at approximately 3:00 p.m.