

Mt. Emily Recreation Area (MERA)
Joint Advisory Committee Meeting
February-3-2021

AGENDA

- Convene **6:00 PM**
- Attendance/ Introductions: Sean Chambers, Chris Evans, Mark Barber, Elaine La Rochelle, Meg Cooke, Hazel Livermore, Raymond Johnson, Logan McCrae, Bill Gamble, Forrest Warren, Jon Paustian, Katrina Gaines
- Guests: Sean Learner, Ed Mosiman, Lance Colburn

- Public Comment (10 Minutes):

- Minutes of Last Meeting 11-10-2020 Ian made a motion to approve minutes, Mark Second. All in favor.

TOPICS

- Grants update- Sean Chambers
 - **MERA Trail Equipment 2020**
Been doing a lot of work on the Motocross track which is match for the equipment. Track was pretty difficult. Switched direction of travel, removed a bunch of rocks and make faces easier. Safer and more fun for everyone.
 - **2021-22 ATV Operations & Maintenance**
Next meeting for grant is on Feb 24 2021 via zoom. This is to secure funding for Operations and Maintenance of MERA. Thanks for the letters of support.
 - **2021-22 ATV Planning- Master Plan Update**
Developed Master Plan 11 years ago, but need to think about updating the plan to reflect what has been done and where we should be going forward. Was thinking about trying to get a grant to help facilitate process. Think we can do it internally. Will send out original master plan. Need to merge new documents, like forest management plan and then start editing the document.

Chris: Master planning for MERA overall or ATV master planning? Overall master plan with the whole property in mind. Motorized and non-motorized.

Meg: Would like to make sure the plan address weed control and invasive species. Volunteers are doing a lot of work. Soil disturbance is creating more issues with weeds.

- **Forest Management Update- Sean Chambers**
 - **Red Apple Forest Improvement Project**
Put out request for bids in Sept 2020, but did not get any bids. Talking to the tribe and Chuck about how to make the project more attractive.

Are there grants that might help? ODF Community Grant? Chuck our forest consultant is working on this week. Got some funding for Mainline Firebreak.

- **Mainline Firebreak**

Underway, halfway done with 45 days of heavy work to be done currently. Burn in late fall. Invested in this project and showcase project. Is it posted when they will be working on the mainline? It is difficult since work depends on snow conditions. They are trying to get the job done as soon as possible.

- **3120 Firebreak**

At a stopping point. They were able to get value from the pulp instead of burning, so hauled it off the hill.

Mark: Who is responsible for cleaning up trails? The contractor is supposed to clean the corridor, but unsure how it will look. Hard to see where the trails are since they are covered in snow. County and volunteers many have to do some final cleanup.

John: I could donate seed after burning is done.

- **Project Proposals- BMSTC**

- **Grooming- Sean Learner**

Want to groom snow trails for fat biking, cross country skiing, winter trail running, winter trail hiking. Nearest groomed trails for fat biking are at Bogus Basin, ID or Wenatchee, WA.

Plan: Phase 1: Parent trap, Archer Lane, 3.06 miles – want to test grooming on a limited section to see how it goes and the work involved. Would want to groom in the evening when there is at least 2 inches of snow and then would harden in the colder night hours. Want to use a “Snowdog” which has a 20 inch track. Tracked machine that an operator stands on a sled behind the machine. Kind of like a lawn mower. Can store at someone’s house up Owsley canyon. Meg: Have you talked to anyone from Meacham, since they are similar conditions? Concerned that about lack of snow. Don’t like “ski tracks” attachment. Answer: One board member is part of the grooming club. Club is willing to take the risk of purchasing groomer even if future is reduced snow levels.

In the past talked with Leonard Erickson (ODF&W) to monitor impacts to wildlife. Want to run this by Jon. Is this a daily use? Probably once a week. Would want some monitoring in place, want to look at impacts to elk moving around in the area.

MOTION: Ian makes a motion that we allow Sean to purchase the machine and start grooming trails on a trial basis and coordinate to monitor with ODF&W.

Second by Hazel

Passed unanimously

▪ **Destination Ready Program Grant- Sean Learner**

Travel Oregon has a Destination Ready Program Grant for COVID safe recreation opportunities. Good opportunity to tackle big projects that volunteers can't manage. Include Red Apple Forest project, Soggy Bottom, new kiosk, shelter project that Forrest will be talking about. Asking for \$22,000. Strong case to get money to fix these projects. Sean Learner has written the grant and waiting for committee approve to submit it, which is due tonight at mid-night. All grant funded, no match required.

MOTION: Ian makes a motion that Sean Learner work with Sean Chambers to get the Destination Ready Program Grant submitted by midnight tonight and move forward with the grant.

Second by Chris

Passed unanimously.

▪ **Shelter- Forrest Warren**

Intersection #5 is a popular place for people to stop there often to take a break with a good view point. Near Caffeine Trail.

Meg: What is the size of shelter? About 12x16 feet. Enough for 1 picnic table. Would be nice for shade and wind block.

Ian: Standard for shelters or kiosk? Don't have an official standard design. Already brown tin roofing on kiosk, material to match. Forrest is in tune with more natural look. Would love to see weathered wood look

Ian: This summer be done? Would like to get plan going, get going in spring, done in summer. It is a part of Sean Learners Grant and projects need to be completed within a 6 month completion time with this grant. Money would likely be received around March 1.

Chris and Hazel both liked the idea.

MOTION: Ian makes a motion that the committee approves the shelter project.

Second by Hazel

Passed unanimously

- **Committee Vacancy-** Please put out the word for applicants.

Motorized- Class I ATV position open Raymond Johnson, Class II open, three general public positions open.

Non Motorized- Livestock Grazing

Raymond would need to apply again to continue to be on committee. encourage you to apply again.

- **E-bikes-**

- MERA has allowed ebikes on the trail system. There are 3 types
- Three different classes of e bikes. Class I is pedal assist, low speed, max speed of 20 MPH. Class II has a throttle and pedaling is optional with max speed of 20MPH. Class III is speed pedal assist with top speed of 28 MPH.
- Hood River County Forestry allows Class I ebikes. That will be more appropriate at MERA.
- Meg: Seen damage that has been done by e bike. No concern if people are staying on the trails. I would not have problem if they stayed on the trails and followed the etiquette rules.
- Jon: ODF&W consider ebikes as motorized vehicles. Tribes would also view it as motorized vehicle.
- Discussion that Class I is not a big issue for other recreation users.
- Jon: Sits on the Blue Mt Committee, will see board members tomorrow, will have conversation around this issue and get back with Sean on board's input.
- Need to put ebike policy in master plan.

- **Other Business-** no comments

- Date of Next Meeting: **May 4, 2021 6PM**

- **Public Comment (10 minutes):**

Ed and Lance attendees. No comment.

- Adjourn **7:30 PM**