

Coyote Wall Large Public Meeting #3

April 1, 2008

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Meeting Agenda

- 6:00 pm Agenda & Welcome (*Rita Cantu, Dan Harkenrider*)
- 6:10 pm NEPA process overview (*Rita Cantu*)
- 6:20 pm Results from three working group meetings (*Stan Hinatsu*)
- 6:40 pm Agency concerns (*Greg Cox*)
- 6:50 pm Clarifying Questions from the group
- 7:05 pm Small-group Exercise (*Heidi Bigler Cole*)
- 7:35 pm Review of Preference & Improvements list (*Greg Cox*)
- 7:50 pm Process Check (*Rita Cantu*)
- 8:00 pm Next Steps and Goodnight! (*Greg Cox*)

Attendance Report

Approximately 78 non-agency people attended the meeting.

Questions Asked by Meeting Attendees

- Is there a reason that you do not want to expand the trails in Catherine Creek?
- How many acres are in the project area?
- What is the (disturbance) difference between hikers and bikers?
- Explain what you mean by trail remediation.
- What is the scientific rationale for determining whether trails are good or bad?
- What reforestation/fuel reduction work will take place within the project area?
- Do we know how many people in different user groups use the project area over a three-season timeframe?
- I have a concern about remediation: Will care be taken not to close one trail before another is opened?
- Is there an intention to do a single action alternative or multiple alternatives?
- The loop trails on the left...are they replacements for foot trails?
- How were the blob areas (polygons) determined on the map—how were the boundaries developed?
- Is Coyote Canyon rail not on the map because it's on private land and is to be eliminated?
- Were efforts made to get easements?
- Where were the nine miles of decommissioned trails taken from?
- Clarify: what prompted the need to reduce trail miles?
- Is there empirical evidence that shows that we lack ability to sustain trails?
- Maintaining as many trails with as little impact with the fewest rules...is that the goal?
- As human populations increase and/or use increases with publicity—is that taken into account with your planning?
- Do you ever develop trails?
- What will happen with the enforcement of the 1997 (Atwood?) roads agreement?
- How many years will this planning decision last?

Project-Wide Comments

Private Land

What could be improved?

- Map does not delineate Forest Service ownership (doesn't work). Need better definition of land ownership on map.
- Work closer with private landowners that may be OK with allowing Mountain biking but don't necessarily want to advertise it or don't want to sell land. Make it known which landowners support the trail system.
- Need clear designation from public and private.
- Need respect for private land.
- Need adjoining landowners to have access to public land.
- Maybe a group other than the FS could be responsible for getting trails that are "OK" to ride on private land on a map showing trails on both public and private lands.
- Improve the contacts with private land owners.

Trails Causing Erosion

What works?

- Properly designed trails will withstand wear, be easier and efficient to maintain.
- Glad to see reduction of duplicate trails above coyote wall and through the whole area.

What could be improved?

- Proper use of trails needs to be addressed. (Sensitivity, technical, scenic.)
- A well built and planned trail can sustain a lot more use.
- Trails turn to creeks in rain.
- Designation of trails so that are is sustainable.
- FS designed trails and appropriate switchbacks and construction – respected by all user groups not ignoring it because they want more thrill.
- Braiding unofficial.
- Lack of enforcement.
- Need numbers of various users to realistically determine impacts. # of hikers, # of bikers, # of horses.
- Erosion control through trail building techniques.
- Education, CAMBA members setting example, self-policing.

Litter and Sanitation

- Parking? And sanitation and litter.
- Outhouses off highway.

Congestion on Courtney Road

What works?

- Density may be high here (yes). But when you realize there isn't any other mountain bike area like this B/t syncline and Portland, maybe the density is OK (there are lots of places to hike).

What could be improved?

- Map does not delineate Forest Service ownership (doesn't work). Need better definition of land ownership on map.
- Need greater safety around Courtney Rd.
- Designating low density areas creates a policing problem, cannot be enforced. Parking too limited, parking will control density more.
- Cross over Courtney Road to create a figure eight loop out on area west of Coyote Wall (Burdoin).

Parking

What works?

- Establishing more parking areas.
- Limited parking.
- No more parking.
- An effort should be made to curb parking on the highway and cross open space to access trails.

What could be improved?

- Horse trailer parking needs to not be congruent to main mountain bike trailhead.
- Parking too limited, especially for horse trailers.

Impacts to Wildlife and Plants

What works?

- Should honor riparian areas/sensitive areas.
- Like the redirecting of trails to protect sensitive plants and animals.
- Ecological concerns must be valid.

What could be improved?

- Make environmental studies easily available to public.
- Where is the data on user impacts.
- Could the FS present information to the public on the biological/archaeological/natural resource information like what was done in the first small group. Example ... it was helpful to understand the impact of bikes on critters vs. foot or horse traffic ... how it scared them. Also the reason the talus and cliffs need protecting, etc.
- General invasive weeds.

- Consider constraining use during seasonally critical times (such as winter) to help with ecological concerns.
- Need a better definition of ecological concerns that are specific, for specific species.
- Squirrel protection possible with dogs off leash?

User Conflicts

What works?

- No trail user designation.
- Good access from highway.
- Most trails are bi-directional.
- Dogs on leash.
- Multi-use designation.
- Most trails are ride-able for all rider levels.

What could be improved?

- Include horse use in plan. FS evaluation of trails for user groups not just saying “availability for bikers and hikers” in Coyote Wall Area.
- Conflict Resolution. There is little or no conflict now. So we don’t see a need to change. Use yield signs to notify users that they should (and how to) yield to all other users. No need for trail designation.
- Include horses in plan as far as one of the user groups.
- What are the standards for user input?
- Dogs—safety issue—allow voice control or only limit leash requirement in super-busy areas. Poop at trailhead...

Recreation/Trail Use

What works?

- Any winter recreation area open to all user groups.
- Allow NO public access off Major Creek Road.
- Trails on maps look good. Most are still there. Outstanding!
- If trails are designated, look at the historic and current use.
- Very accessible to public.
- Good that this plan does not designate users.
- Integrity of trail system of project.
- Keep trails in approximate locations.
- No use designation ... trails and parking naturally designates use. Catherine Open Space – horses. Burdoin – above Coyote – hike and bike.
- Dogs not having to be on a leash (leashes and bikes are not a good combination).

- This area works as a winter Mountain. Bike riding area when other areas aren't available.
- Trails mostly maintained ... integrity of trail system.
- Trails – big and small loops.
- Amount of trails appear to be appropriate for planned usage and land available.
- Plan retains most of existing system.
- Good to limit trail growth.
- Good to add trails to replace Coyote Cliff Trail.
- Most trails stay!
- Good effect to keep major routes.
- Maintain diversity open to bikers, hikers, and horses.
- Good dispersion of trails plus multiple options.
- Varied levels of difficulty for all riders.
- Trails take advantage of views and varied terrain.
- Lots of loop options.
- Maintaining and designating existing trails.
- Fairly expansive and good coverage.

What could be improved?

- Must justify standards for removing trails.
- Where else do dogs on leash laws exist in scenic area?
- Design trails and parking lots to encourage the use for which they are intended.
- All trails need to be open to all uses and recreationists will be self-policing.
- Must replace trail usage lost, i.e. Shoestring, Coyote, Mr. Wizard, Sick Puppy. Replace like with like.
- What is driving this? Are impacts real?
- Can't ride loop from east to west.
- Don't eliminate trails before re-routes are completed.
- Horse use in Catherine Creek is or has been questioned. "Green Circle" added in lower area which eliminates a connection with Atwood Rd. Horses/stock use should retain its historic use!
- Define what "maintenance" is and who would be doing it (user specific).
- What's confusing is terminology "density." Can't regulate density... a trail is open or closed.
- Alternate cross-over trail from Atwood Road to Luce Lucy after loss of Shoe String.
- Mountain bikers help design re-routes on trails.
- Need more technically challenging terrain for mountain bikers.
- Horsemen feel they are being shut out. No user group should be shut out ... trail should be sustainable for all groups!
- Shortcut loops have been eliminated ... these are good for less fit users. Need shortcut loops options.
- Why wasn't motorized recreation considered?
- A greater emphasis should be put on reconstructing trails in existing corridors.

- Limit usage.
- Some relocated trails are too far from existing.
- Need to plan now for future increased use. Replacement trail to connect Atwood Road to Loose Lucy. Provide great loop to all users.
- Combine to use Cry Baby. Users need this connection to trail system. Keep Cry Baby trail.
- Use local mountain bike club for planning trail design and construction.
- Keep what trails we have as open.
- All trails should be both uphill and downhill use for all users.
- Use local mountain bike club CAMBA for education.
- I will commit to volunteer time on project area in Booth Trail design/education.
- Create a long-term stewardship agreement with local mountain bike club.
- Please inform our public if an area closure will be in effect for use (Hiking, Biking, Horse use).
- Keep trail construction to a small scale, natural setting. We don't need 2 ft. road design.
- What we have now works! It's a great time to learn from our public!
- Allow equestrian usage anywhere any other trail user has access.
- Designation: Horses to old roadbeds unless build new trails in future
- All other areas multiple use: hiker/biker—those willing to maintain trails, use them. Will also disperse impact.
- Before eliminating Crybaby, allow CAMBRA to work on landowner access (Coyote Cliff).
- How keep people on trails—Hikers?
- Not all trail maintenance to fall on CAMBA's shoulders. Major part, but not all.

Hunting

What works?

- Allowing hunting.

What could be improved?

- Consider hunter access and huge conflicts
- Need to know where hunting areas are to stay away when it is hunting season. Right now it is just "local" knowledge.
- Consider hunter access and huge conflicts
- No hunting on lands that have high density public recreation use.
- Regulate hunting! Not in high density areas! Post signs for season.

Other

What works?

- Protection of natural resources most important.
- Strong community stewardship desire for trail design, building, and maintenance.

- Early public involvement in planning process.
- Good to involve public with early process.
- Breakout of three areas is logical geographically and user-wise.
- Maintain diversity (horses, hikers, bikers).

What could be improved?

- Consider hunter access and huge conflicts.
- Dogs in all areas need to be under verbal or physical control (not on leash).
- Rattlesnake warning (?!?)
- MTB Causing more impact than bike. What proof? What study? Weir study showed bikes and runners cause less wildlife impact because they leave area fast. Rita Nyguen. rita@fx4.net.
- More trails!
- Need to see all data on maps presented in this meeting.
- What determined boundaries? Why not creek to the east?
- Percentage by user not addressed. Dominant user group (mountain bikers) not proportionally represented.
- Better definition of “trail adoption.”
- Have no regulations at all.
- Poison oak control.
- User group percentages need to be assessed. And the specific impacts of each group needs to be realistically evaluated. Trail use should reflect largest user groups.
- Why is there no grazing to maintain habitat?
- Very unfortunate that better information was not specifically provided.
- Research (literature) and reference studies indicating impact of different users in this type of ecosystem.
- Map needs to show existing trails and sensitive areas.
- Map of existing trails in not available.
- What about off-trail restrictions?
- What about a fire management plan?
- Set up plan for expansion as user use increases.

Above Coyote Wall

Private Land

What works?

- Appreciate F.S. support of private land.

What could be improved?

- FS “official” signs for adjacent land owners saying “No access to public land.”
- FS could maybe produce signs demarking private ownership (vs. landowners).

Trails causing Erosion

What works?

- Like limited use in Labyrinth.
- Glad Hog’s Back is closed (Labyrinth).

What could be improved?

- Trail removal restoration.
- Please leave “Moab” building “as-is;” it helps insure user/skill diversity.
- Braiding is a way of lowering the impact of erosion.
- The existing “braiding” on the Moab trail is USEFUL. It provides different usage abilities (as well as uphill possibilities) for lunatics. Braiding on other trails is bad, but on Moab it is useful to insure the “expert” nature of the trails is maintained.

Litter and Sanitation

What could be improved?

- Enforcement (lack thereof)

Congestion on Courtney Road

What could be improved?

- Charge cars that shuttle riders.

Impacts to Wildlife and Plants

What works?

- Glad to see low density use areas.
- Retaining existing routes while protecting cliff habitat.
- Good use protecting wall for habitat including birds of prey.
- Habitat preservation thickets Labyrinth migration routes.

User Conflicts

What works?

- Above Coyote Wall is off leash area for dogs! Good!
- User conflict in Coyote other than hunting season this seems to be a non-issue.

Recreation/Trail Use

What works?

- Keeping little Moab.
- Good to limit trail construction north of Atwood Road.
- Moab braiding as existing is good for bikers—no need to remove.
- Upper Coyote: Old road bed should remain open to all users. (Trail not completely on map proposal—lands back on old roads.)
- All trails multi-use; no single use trails.

What could be improved?

- Can the trail recover from the braiding and years of neglect?
- More complete trail interconnection help spread it out, not individual loop but a system that includes a grand loop on the perimeter.
- Don't close the Cry Baby Trail off at the Atwood Road.
- Cry Baby—get access through private land.
- Don't see good replace to connect bottom of hidden to Maui/Pbl Track.

Other

What could be improved?

- Make a big outer perimeter trail east to west.
- One member concurs with plan: likes it!

Catherine Open Space Area

Litter and Sanitation

What could be improved?

- Parking (not enough, more).
- Sanitation—not long enough or enough.

Parking

What works?

- Catherine Creek low density is controlled by lack of parking (allow access for bikes and horses from across for the few long distance users) i.e., make lower trail hiker only leave upper trails all use.
- Designate area for trailer parking (horses, camping).
- Expanding parking at Catherine Creek.

What could be improved?

- Conflict: Parking area @ Catherine Creek—is gone.
- Needs to be designated parking.
- Parking at Catherine Creek not on map—need parking there (and enough for horse trailers!)
- Designated parking area for Catherine Creek.

Impacts to Wildlife and Plants

What works?

- Eliminating trail redundancy.

User Conflicts

What could be improved?

- Protecting equestrian access of trails (especially Catherine OSP).
- No good reason to prohibit MTBS.

Recreation/Trail Use

What works?

- Loose Lucy: come down to old Lyle Highway access point by Vineyard.
- Crossing at Catherine Creek near the arch.
- By leaving open space it leaves more space for higher density in other areas. Good mixed use now.
- Limit use in upper areas to change weeds.

- Like trail system east of Catherine Creek—keep open to all users.
- Shoestring alternative west of existing trail—up and downhill loop portion—will minimize impact in Labyrinth and Indian Pits. Good options for mountain bikes on Tracy Hill in Catherine Creek.
- Catherine Creek is fine.
- Allow horses on trails.

What could be improved?

- Major Creek Road Trail doesn't connect.
- Longer loop to outside in fringe (spread it out).
- Proposed use and low density in Catherine Creek theoretically equals no trails. But if hikers are walking in a line, they will form a trail. Wildflower views disperse. Should the trails go away? Should it be trail and dispersed? Should it be trail only?
- Trails to Tracy Hill would reduce traffic on entire system. They would also remain low-use due to being so far out of the way. It opens up long distance rides/hikes for those who wish.
- Wish we wouldn't lose access to the old homestead on Wagon Road. (Recognize access issue from major creek road, but if instead access from above, low density would be attained.)
- Lower trail and trailhead might be designated hiker only. BUT only if multi-use access on the north end that crosses Catherine Creek.
- Recommend trail and dispersed use in Catherine Creek.
- Elimination of Loose Loop and Shoestring
- Why not re-build LL and Shoestring (instead of elimination).
- Short connector trails were eliminated
- No access to the top of Tracy Hill from Major Creek Road, especially for horses.

Burdoin Area

Private Land

What could be improved?

- Better effort to work with property owners to keep trail in or near existing Coyote Trail.
- Why closing Coyote if private owners say is OK?
- Possibility to have CAMBA organize with landowners to allow “unofficial” access—similar to kaps. Sas on “Hosp Hill” and if “unofficial” agreements could be reached. Then the F.S. still allow the “feeder trails” on F.S. land connect to the “unofficial” trail.
- Secure use of existing trails on private land by permission and/or easement. (Coyote, cry baby, Mr. Wizard, other).

Litter and Sanitation

What could be improved?

- At parking area at Courtney road—Outhouses off a little ways so highway drivers don’t use it as a rest area.

Parking

What could be improved?

- Parking area at int. of Courtney and Atwood
- Need parking areas

User Conflicts

What works?

- No apparent user conflicts—regarded as mountain bike trail.

Recreation Trails/Use

What works?

- The short loops might be a nice thing to disperse use and the fact that they are loops may be a good thing too.
- Keep character of existing trails.

What could be improved?

- Seek legal advice re possibility of private landowners. Willingness to allow a) access easement; b) have trail end at private landowners (organized via CAMBA).
- Connect two new proposed trail loops off Courtney
- Lack of connectivity of Burdoin area trails (connecting the two distinct loop trails)

- The wizard trail is the most technically challenging trail in the entire area—there needs to be trails of this difficulty if it is going to be closed. (The Wizard connects at the top of Coyote Cliffs.
- Try to connect small loop for larger figure of eight
- No entire trail from bottom to top.
- Need to replace Coyote Trail. Coyote Lower Wall Trail system needs to be retained.

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| Other |
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What works?

- All trails multi-use.

Meeting Evaluation

No formal meeting evaluation was held. However, the facilitators conducted an informal assessment after the meeting. Participants offered the following insights:

What worked?

- The process was effective for the large group of people.
- The meeting was worth their time.
- It was useful to gain insights from people with different perspectives.
- People tended to self-select into groups that had differences of opinion.
- The process was useful to both people who were new to the project and to people who had helped develop the alternative.
- People felt heard and involved.
- There were many requests for continued dialogue.

What could be improved?

- An individual suggested that meeting notes from previous sessions did not accurately reflect decisions/discussions from the meeting. It might be good to have meeting notes peer-reviewed by participants.
- Although the 2-hour meeting was managed well, participant contributions lacked the depth they could have had. Many participants were “shooting from the hip.” They were quickly commenting on an alternative that they had just seen at this meeting.
- More time was needed to reflect on the alternative.
- Maps on tables and on walls should have been consistent.