

OREGON STATEWIDE MOTORIZED TRAILS PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE

Tuesday, February 25, 2003 – 10:00 a.m to 3:00 p.m.

OPRD Salem Headquarters (Yaquina Bay Room)

Meeting Notes Compiled by Terry Bergerson

Participants: OPRD: Mike Carrier; Kathy Schutt; Terry Bergerson; Sean Loughran; Wayne Rawlins; Glennys Lindsay. Motorized Steering Committee Members: John Barnes, ODF; Julie Barrell, ATV Allocation Committee; Ed Becker, USDA—Forest Service; Barrett Brown, Lobos Motorcycle Club; Pat Harris, ATV Allocation Committee; Tyrrell Hart, ATV Allocation Committee; Ron Price, Bureau of Land Management; Peggy Spieger, Oregon State Snowmobiling Association; Don Taylor, Tillamook County Deputy; Alan Cook, Unaffiliated Enthusiast. Steering Committee Members Absent: Jeff Farm, OPRD; John Lilly, DSL.

Observer: Ernie Drapela, Oregon Recreational Trails Advisory Council

1. Welcome and Introductions

Mike Carrier welcomed the Motorized Trails Advisory Committee and emphasized the importance of this planning effort to the Oregon Parks & Recreation Department (OPRD), Oregon ATV Grant Program and the future of Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) recreation in the state. He also stressed that the planning process should include a high degree of flexibility, to properly address the diversity of motorized trail issues and needs throughout the state.

He acknowledged the adoption of Measure 66 by Oregon voters in 1999, which provided the Department the financial stability necessary to conduct long-term planning. With the passage of Measure 66, OPRD and the Oregon Parks and Recreation Commission developed a strategic planning document entitled "Target 2014" providing long-term direction for the Department. The Oregon Statewide Trails Plan, including the motorized trails component, addresses Target 2014's Goal One, which affirms OPRD's role as a principal advocate, leader and source of expertise and support for outdoor recreation providers at all levels of government. Finally, he thanked each of the Steering Committee Members for their commitment to this important statewide planning effort.

Director Carrier pointed out that the need for a Statewide Trails Plan was identified during the agency's recent Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) planning effort. As a result, a planning document entitled "White Paper: Proposed Oregon Statewide Trails Plan (5/13/02)," was prepared by OPRD to introduce the planning project to land management agencies across the state. This Statewide Motorized Trails Planning effort will take its overall direction from the materials included in the white paper.

Finally, he stated that Kathy Schutt, OPRD Planning Manager, would lead the Steering Committee through today's discussion regarding a proposed Statewide Motorized Trails Planning Methodology.

Kathy greeted the group and led an introduction of all meeting attendees.

2. Meeting Objectives, Agenda and Steering Committee Responsibilities

Kathy stated that today's meeting objectives include:

1. Bringing committee members up-to-date on statewide trails planning progress;
2. Reviewing a proposed motorized trails planning framework; and
3. Identifying potential problems/weaknesses and improvements to the proposed motorized trails planning framework through a structured brainstorming session.

She then submitted and summarized the following meeting agenda.

Statewide Motorized Trails Plan Steering Committee Meeting Agenda (2/25/03)	
10:00 a.m.	Welcome from the OPRD Director—Michael Carrier
10:05 a.m.	Introductions and Meeting Objectives—Kathy Schutt
10:15 a.m.	Statewide Trails Planning Process—Terry Bergerson
11:00 a.m.	Regional & Statewide Issue Identification Process—Kathy Schutt
11:30 a.m.	Statewide Trail User Survey—Terry Bergerson
12:00 p.m.	Lunch (Yaquina Bay Room)
1:00 p.m.	Statewide Trails Inventory—Terry Bergerson
1:30 p.m.	Developing a Statewide Motorized Trails Vision—Sean Loughran
2:00 p.m.	Developing an OHV Area Monitoring Program—Terry Bergerson
2:30 p.m.	Developing ATV Grant Selection Criteria—Sean Loughran
3:00 p.m.	Adjourn

Next, Kathy stated that early in the planning effort, OPRD had established 3 separate steering committees (motorized, non-motorized, and water) to assist with the concurrent planning process. Steering committee members were selected to ensure adequate agency/organizational and geographic coverage and trail-user group representation.

Motorized Trails Steering Committee Members (Committee Members) are assigned to assist OPRD with the following tasks:

- Reviewing the basic planning framework;
- Determining the basic plan outline;
- Identifying significant regional and statewide motorized trail issues and solutions;
- Recommending actions that enhance motorized trail opportunities in the state;
- Reviewing survey methodology and instruments; and
- Recommending a set of project evaluation criteria for the OPRD administered All-Terrain Vehicle (ATV) Grant Program.

3. A Proposed Statewide Trails Planning Process

Terry Bergerson, a Statewide Outdoor Recreation Planner with OPRD, has been assigned as the project coordinator for the statewide trails planning effort. Terry gave a Power Point presentation summarizing the proposed Statewide Motorized Trails Planning Methodology. [Download the presentation.](#)

He stated that the proposed methodology would be used as a straw man (focus point) for today's meeting discussion. A set of reading materials was distributed to steering committee members prior to the meeting. Some of these materials will serve as proposed models for use in specific planning components (e.g. 1994 Montana Statewide Trail Inventory).

4. Regional & Statewide Issue Identification Process

Kathy Schutt led the group in a review of a proposed regional issue scoping workshops for the Motorized Trails Plan designed to identify key:

- motorized trails issues;
- motorized trail needs; and
- trail development opportunities.

The proposed workshop schedule includes meetings at the following locations in the 6 trails planning regions.

Trails Plan "Regional Issue Workshop" Schedule

Trails Planning Region	Location	Date	Public-Sector Provider Session	General Public Session
North East	La Grande	4/1/03	11 am - 4:30 pm	6 pm - 8 pm
South East	Burns	4/2/03	11 am - 4:30 pm	6 pm - 8 pm
North Central	Bend	4/3/03	11 am - 4:30 pm	6 pm - 8 pm
South Central	Klamath Falls	4/15/03	11 am - 4:30 pm	6 pm - 8 pm
South West	Grants Pass	4/16/03	11 am - 4:30 pm	6 pm - 8 pm
South West	Coos Bay	4/17/03	11 am - 4:30 pm	6 pm - 8 pm
North West	Lincoln City	5/20/03	11 am - 4:30 pm	6 pm - 8 pm
North West	Portland	5/21/03	11 am - 4:30 pm	6 pm - 8 pm
North West	Eugene	5/22/03	11 am - 4:30 pm	6 pm - 8 pm

The following comments were generated during the discussion:

- OPRD asked Committee Members to help get the word out to motorized user groups to encourage regional workshop attendance.
- Committee Members stated that OPRD should make a greater effort (than with SCORP) in getting the word out to user groups regarding participation at regional workshops (e.g. develop a communication or marketing plan). Staff should tap into the local riding clubs to spread the word.
- Committee Members voiced a concern that simply having public-sector recreation providers (land managers) vote to identify top regional issues would not adequately represent the needs of riding organizations and other enthusiasts. In some regions, enthusiasts have a greater knowledge of issues and needs than land managers. Land managers may also be more likely to filter their comments through perceived political and funding constraints.

- To resolve this issue, OPRD staff will use a voting process in both afternoon (land manager) and evening (general public) sessions to identify top regional issues. Voting results, along with prioritized issues information from the participation survey, will be passed on to Motorized Steering Committee Members at a future meeting. Committee Members will use these 3 sources of information to identify top regional and statewide motorized-trail issues.
- A suggestion was made to not limit the afternoon sessions invitations to on-the-ground agency personnel. OPRD should also consider inviting members of the law enforcement community, commercial providers and organized event providers.
- Invitation letters for both afternoon and evening workshops should come from Director Carrier. The letter to land managers should include recommendations regarding who should attend the workshops to encourage a mix of on-site managers and policy makers.
- After identification of top statewide motorized trail issues, the Committee Members will assist OPRD in developing a set of goals, objectives and strategies for resolving these top statewide issues.

5. Statewide Trail User Survey

Terry Bergerson led the group in a review of a proposed statewide trail user survey methodology. A mail survey will be developed for assessing the opinions of approximately 1,500 Oregonians (500 for each participation group) who have participated in trail and non-motorized boating activities in the state during the past 12 months. The survey design will provide statistically reliable results for each of the 3 participation groups allowing for analysis at the statewide level. In a cost savings effort, a random sample of motorized and non-motorized trail users were selected from the results of the SCORP demand study recently completed by Oregon State University.

The following comments were generated during the discussion:

- OPRD should examine past motorized trail survey work done in the state. Survey results from such studies could be summarized in the statewide plan.
- There was concern that snowmobilers would be under represented in the sample of motorized users. OPRD will examine the final list of survey respondents to see if there is a proportional representation of snowmobilers. There was also a reported discrepancy between the SCORP reported number of statewide snowmobile trail miles and ODOT reported mileage. There appears to be a difference between the ODOT definition of snowmobile trails and the SCORP definition. The SCORP plan did not count backcountry roads as snowmobile trails. OPRD staff will investigate this difference in reported mileage.
- There also was concern that 4x4 (jeeps, pickups, SUV's) drivers not be over represented in the sample of motorized trail users. Steering Committee Members were concerned that jeep, pickup and SUV drivers would prioritize trails issues differently than other motorized trail users. The main problem is associated with separating those 4x4 drivers who are using designated motorized trails and areas from those simply driving on backcountry roads for recreational purposes. There was a suggestion to use the ATV permit registration database to select a sample of motorized users. OPRD staff will discuss this potential problem with the primary investigator (PhD.) selected for developing the statewide survey. OPRD staff will share sample selection recommendations with members of the Steering Committee via email.

6. Statewide Trails Inventory

Terry Bergerson led the group in a review of a proposed statewide trails inventory methodology. The initial point of discussion was to identify a basic trail definition. A proposed definition is:

"Recreation trails in Oregon are used by a variety of outdoor enthusiasts, both in urban areas and the backcountry. For the purposes of this inventory, a "trail" is defined as any pathway, usually unpaved, that is used by either motorized or non-motorized trail users."

Each trail included in the inventory will be identified by the type of uses permitted. Motorized uses include:

- Class I (3 and 4 wheel ATVs)
- Class II (Dune Buggies and 4x4 vehicles)
- Class III (Off-highway motorcycles)
- Snowmobiles

In addition, the proposed inventory would include all designated off-trail riding areas (measured in acres).

Committee Members pointed out that, according to ORS 821.055, Class I, II, and III all-terrain-vehicles may operate on any highway in this state that is open to the public and is not maintained for passenger car traffic. On federal lands, such roads include those open for use by high clearance vehicle and not managed in accordance with the requirements of the Highway Safety Act of 1966, unless signed as closed to all-terrain-vehicle use. This law is intended for recreational usage, and has opened up thousands of miles roads in Oregon for off-highway vehicle use. The Committee felt that it would be too difficult to include all roads in the inventory. At some point, we may want to identify certain roads that are an integral part of the trail system.

Committee Members felt that it would not be realistic to inventory the thousands of miles of motorized trails in the state. They felt a good place to start would be to inventory motorized trails at the state's 40 Designated Managed Areas (e.g. Oregon Dunes NRA, Tillamook OHV Area, Christmas Lake Sand Dunes). This is where the best inventory information is currently available.

A list of potential inventory variables include:

Trail Name	Starting Location of Trail
Managing Agency	Ending Location of Trail
Township, Range and Section # of Trailhead	Length of Trail
High & Low Elevation of Trail	Elevation Range of Trail
Trail Type (e.g., Class 1)	Nearest Town to Trailhead
ROS Classification	Uses Prohibited on Trail
Agency Map Name that Contains the Trail	Difficulty Rating
USGS Map Names that Contain the Trail	Accessibility
If Trail Map is Currently Available in GIS Format	Season of Use
Maintenance Information	

The Committee suggested that the inventory also identify:

- Future additions to existing Designated Managed Areas
- Future Designated Management Areas
- Closure status (temporary or permanent)

The inventory database will be designed for future development of a Statewide Trails GIS system. The Statewide Trails GIS could become a comprehensive trails database and mapping tool providing:

- A better understanding of current trail supply and demand;
- A clearer picture for creating trail linkages, and
- The ability to covert trails information into map format.

7. Developing a Statewide Motorized Trails Vision

Sean Loughran, OPRD State Trails Coordinator, led the group in a general discussion of the Motorized Trails Plan vision. He pointed out that the plan's vision should provide a fair direction for OHV management in the next 5 years, instill confidence in land managers and the general public that we are heading in the right direction, and demonstrate that we understand the major issues and challenges associated with OHV trail management in Oregon.

Committee members reported that historically, a lot of off-road use in the state has been on old skid roads and cross-country riding often resulting in serious erosion problems. Such riding is not good for the environment or the riders. In the recent past, we have become more conscious and better educated about environmental impacts. We have begun to engineer and open new trails and close some of those previously mentioned skid roads. The public will see this as a step in the right direction. To this point, we have not done a good job in getting this message out to the general public.

One of the major components of the vision should focus on how we can develop public confidence in land stewardship associated with the sport. A key planning objective could be to change public perception so that the public begins to see OHV riding in the same way they view other types of linear outdoor recreation activities (e.g. hiking, horseback riding). To build public confidence we must develop a unified approach to OHV resource management involving:

- Environmental issues;
- Assessing environmental impacts; and
- Trail construction.

As we begin to do develop more public confidence, other OHV management tasks will become easier to administer. The plan should also focus on increasing and expanding available riding opportunities for motorized recreation in the state.

The topic of trail connectivity was also discussed in detail. Some Committee Members felt the plan should encourage trail connections between areas of concentrated use to provide long-distance riding opportunities in the state. Others pointed out that connecting such areas is not practical within the planning horizon and could expose the plan to too much opposition (e.g. the recent Backcountry Discovery Route effort). The plan should also spur conversation and communications between the USFS and BLM regarding connectivity opportunities. If some National Forest is creating a forest plan—they should

be talking to other nearby forests and BLM districts regarding motorized trail connectivity. This may be the initial step towards a statewide trails framework. It was also pointed out that there are greater opportunities for such connectivity in the eastern portion of the state. OPRD staff suggested that user survey and issues workshops should provide understanding of the need for motorized trail connectivity in Oregon. It was also pointed out that long-distance riders may be a distinct type of OHV enthusiast—with different needs than the general OHV riding population.

A comment was also made that there are currently more constraints that lock them in rather than opening them up to greater connectivity. In this current reality—a statewide system is an impossible task. Private landowner and environmental issues really curb the possibility for future development of a statewide skeletal system. We need to concentrate our efforts on more practical things such as developing actual on-the-ground riding opportunities.

One Committee Member suggested that other motorized uses such as motorized boating be included in the Motorized Trails Plan. OPRD staff felt that this activity category would be deferred to the Water Trails Planning effort.

8. Developing an OHV Area Monitoring Program

Terry Bergerson led the group in a general discussion of a proposed OHV Area Monitoring Program. He made reference to a potential model included in a document entitled, "Turkey Bay Off-Road Vehicle Area at Land Between the Lakes: Monitoring Use and Impacts Since 1973," written by Chilman, Vogel, and Conley in 1991. The model OHV Area Monitoring Program includes specific environmental monitoring techniques, a methodology for establishing accurate visitor counts at established motorized areas and a survey tool for getting visitor feedback regarding their current OHV area experience.

There was general consensus among the Steering Committee that the environmental assessment concept is absolutely necessary to keep riding areas in the state open for use and to demonstrate environmental responsibility within the plan. On the other hand, Committee Members pointed out that due to the diversity of riding areas and setting types (e.g. high-moisture coastal, dunes, and desert areas) across the state, it would be difficult to develop a standard "one size fits all" OHV Area Monitoring Program for use in Oregon. Instead, they suggested focusing on developing key assessment components or modules that could be used in a number of different riding area circumstances.

The plan's monitoring component could become a toolbox including "best management practices" which provide resource managers (county, state and federal) with the necessary tools for data collection to ensure that OHV resource managers in the state of Oregon are reporting assessment information in a consistent fashion. The Committee Members warned that we should develop the toolbox in a manageable manner, and not attempt to bite off too much in the initial efforts.

Steering Committee Members suggested that the toolbox include the following assessment modules:

- Noise
- Trail Erosion

- Transportation of Noxious Weeds
- Law Enforcement (Citation Management)
- Estimating Area Visitor Use
- Staging Area Impacts
- Signing

9. Developing ATV Grant Selection Criteria

Sean Loughran led the group in a general discussion of the development of a set of ATV Grant Selection Criteria as a part of the Statewide Motorized Trails Planning effort. He handed out a set of the current ATV Project Selection Criteria, Recreational Trail Program Fund Project Application Review Criteria and new Land and Water Conservation Fund Project Review and Scoring Criteria and summarized important criteria content. Sean stated that criteria development was scheduled during the final phase of the planning effort—after regional and statewide issues, survey results, statewide goals, objectives and strategies, and inventory results are available.

In a later meeting, OPRD staff will establish a subcommittee to address the more technical aspects of criteria development.

Meeting Adjourned at 3 p.m

Next Meeting—September 2003