



Tualatin Hills Park & Recreation District Nature & Trails Advisory Committee Minutes

Date: 6/23/2021
Time: 6:30 PM
Location: Zoom

In Attendance

Committee Members: Sheri Wantland (chair), Margaret Hite, Laura Porter, Alison Rhea, Sam Scheerens, James Wright.

Board Liaison: None

Staff: Bruce Barbarasch, Nicole Paulsen

Guests: None.

I. Call to Order 6:36 PM

II. Approval of Minutes: The minutes of the May 2021 NTAC meeting were approved unanimously.

III. Chair Updates:

Sheri felt that the June 19th field trip was very valuable for the members. She would like to do more field trips if they can be arranged.

IV. Check-in

Sam apologized for missing the field trip. Bruce gave him some tips for a self-guided walking/windshield tour of the properties visited. Marty, Sheri, and James all loved the field trip. Alison has been participating in turtle monitoring. She witnessed the safe and humane removal of an invasive snapping turtle and had the opportunity to explain to other patrons what was happening and why. Laura took a bike trip up Mt St Helens and also visited Jackson Bottom Wetlands, where she saw a very young fawn.

V. New Business

A. 155th Ave. Wetland Trail – Nicole Paulsen (Park Planner at THPRD)

Nicole presented plans for a new trail connecting the Westside Regional Trail to SW Sexton Mountain Dr. near Sexton Mountain Elementary School. The trail will be about 0.15 miles long. The initial implementation will be a 6-foot-wide gravel trail. At a date to be determined, the City of Beaverton plans to extend Sexton Mountain Drive. When that happens, the gravel trail will be replaced with a permanent hard surface trail.

The trail will meet ADAG standards, with a maximum grade of 7.5%. Most of the trail will be on less than a 5% grade. The trail will run along the edge of the 155th Avenue Wetlands Natural Area. The proposed alignment is already occupied by an informal trail. Limiting tree removal and avoiding wetland impacts are high priorities.

Community outreach has begun and will continue in the summer of 2021. Design, permitting, and planning will be accomplished by autumn 2022. Construction is planned to begin in the summer of 2023 and finish in the autumn of 2023.

Project webpage: <http://www.thprd.org/parks-in-progress/southwest-155th-trail>

Nicole addressed committee members' questions and concerns:

- Habitat impacts – THPRD has been working in the 155th Avenue Wetlands Natural Area, improving the environmental quality of the site.
- Accessibility of a 7.5% gravel trail – There will be landings designed in the trail to mitigate the slope. THPRD is attempting to balance accessibility, environmental impact, and cost, considering that the initial alignment is temporary.
- Fencing to limit access to the natural area – There is currently no fencing in the forested (western) part of the natural area and THPRD has experienced very few problems from people straying off the existing informal trail. There is an existing split rail fence along Sexton Mountain Dr. and 155 Ave. protecting the wetland (eastern) part of the natural area. There are no plans to add fencing.
- Vegetative buffer around the wetland – There is an existing vegetative corridor, but the planned trail alignment impinges on it in places. Mitigation measures will be discussed with Clean Water Services.

B. Fire/Smoke Response

Bruce informed the committee about THPRD's recent work to mitigate fire risk and improve response. The dryer and hotter climate trend has raised concerns, and THPRD is working with Tualatin Valley Fire and Rescue on a suite of activities to reduce fire risk. Natural fires are uncommon in our area; the main concern is human caused fires.

TVF&R is confident that they will be able to respond to any fires on THPRD property in timely fashion.

Bruce listed some of the initiatives staff are pursuing:

- Enlist neighbors to watch out for dangerous activities on THPRD properties, such as fireworks, illegal campfires.
- Reduce load of small fuels close to people, for example non-native blackberries, which produce large dry brambles.
- Promote TVF&R's "Home Hardening & Defensible Spaces" program.

Staff has scored fire risk in many parks and natural areas, and risk management efforts will focus mainly on the top ten properties. Cooper Mountain Nature Park scored highest.

THPRD is not currently planning or promoting the use of district facilities as temporary smoke shelters, because of covid-19 protocols.

VI. Old Business

A. Tualatin Hills Nature Park Sewer Project

Bruce updated the committee on the project. Work has officially begun, with construction of an access road underway. THPRD staff is working closely with the contractor. Trails will start closing soon – some will stay closed throughout the project. Summer camps will continue. The project is expected to take two summers to complete, and will include (in addition to upgrading the sewer pipe) boardwalk changes, invasive plant removal, restoration work, and monitoring of avian impacts.

VII. Closing

Sheri asked if members have any new topics to add to the menu of committee goals that we formulated in early 2021. Laura suggested discussing the impact of more users and reduced staff on the district's ability to maintain parks, trails, and natural areas.

Next Meeting will be a Joint Advisory Committee meeting on 7/21/2021 at 6:30 PM

Meeting adjourned at 8:00 PM

Respectfully submitted,
Sam Scheerens

Recording Secretary pro tempore