

Pinchot Partners Monthly Meeting

April 20, 2022

9:03 AM - 11:05 AM

In attendance: Executive Committee: Pete Krabbe, John O'Brien, David Owen, Fred Norman (due to previous commitments, Matt Comisky and Anjolene Ngari were absent); Board Members: Janene Ritchie, Eli Asher, John Squires, Bill Little, Molly Whitney, Sharon Hanna; Forest Service (FS): Elizabeth Robinson, Andrew Spaeth, Christina Donehauer, Cheyenne Adomonis; Department of Natural Resources (DNR): Sean Tran; Guests: Anna Baklund, Tread Lightly, Ashley Short, Cascade Forest Conservancy (CFC)

Welcome, Introductions, Regular Business

Agenda

MOTION: After review, a motion was made to approve today's agenda with no additions or corrections. 1st, David O.; 2nd, Fred N. MOTION CARRIED.

Meeting notes

MOTION: After review, a motion was made to approve 3/16/22 meeting notes with minor corrections. 1st, John O.; 2nd, David O. MOTION CARRIED.

Treasurer's Report

David Owen, Treasurer, reported routine withdrawals and no deposits for the month. Balance: \$40,115.77. Pete K. requested clarification of a \$4,000 line item. David identified the item as executive director salary and expenses. MOTION: A motion was made to approve the Treasurer's Report. 1st, Bill L.; 2nd, John O. MOTION CARRIED.

Tread Lightly^R Presentation

Anna Baklund, Tread Lightly Program Manager for Washington and Oregon, outlined the organization's activities on behalf of motorized recreational vehicle (MRV) enthusiasts to help reduce environmental impact and ensure continued access to public lands.

Find a copy of the presentation here: https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1C4xy9mjLAj65yox7P_nceXNHIJebafi9?usp=sharing

Find more information at: <https://treadlightly.org>

Key takeaways

- Littering, dumping, vandalism, and other irresponsible/uneducated behavior that damages natural resources are not exclusive to MRV owners, but where they occur, land managers may be more likely to close public lands to MRVs.
- Tread Lightly has created a code of ethics for MRV riders and uses a robust three-prong program of stewardship, education, and outreach to help address problems on public lands. The organization leverages corporate and member funding for projects in keeping with their goals.
- Stewardship activities. Tread Lightly supports projects such as volunteer trash clean-ups, trail repair and maintenance, and signage. Recent successes include:
 - At Greenwater, Overlander volunteers picked up over 3,000 pounds of trash.
 - At Table Mesa, Overlander and Fieldcraft Survival volunteers cleared up confusion about trail routes with new signs and a kiosk.
 - At Kane Creek, a threatened archaeological site was protected with signage and fencing funded by corporate sponsor Quadratach.
- Education. Online and in-person training courses promote a code of conduct for ethical recreating and help MRV enthusiasts build their own skills as well as influence and train others. For example, riders are encouraged to take a dirt bike course, avoid sensitive areas, stay on trails, camp 200 feet from water resources, and leave areas better than they found them.
- Outreach. Trade and community outreach is achieved via events, rallies, speaking engagements, social media and corporate affiliations.
- Anna encouraged Pinchot Partners to apply for project funding. Currently, 50/50 funding is available through Quadratach. Anyone can apply on the Tread Lightly website.

Questions and Discussion

Signage opportunities: Pete K. suggested the Randle Forest Service readerboard and trailhead kiosks for Tread Lightly outreach.

Trail confrontations: John S. asked how Anna deals with MRV owners who resent correction by others. Her advice: "Never endanger yourself." Instead of a direct confrontation, she advised asking questions such as, 'Hey, did you know that off-trail riding can do this or that damage? Could we clear this fallen tree to make it easier to stay on the trail?'"

E-Bikes: Eli A. asked about e-bikes and whether they would have different trail access rules. According to Anna, each land manager makes that decision. On the GP, access is limited to motorized vehicle trails, according to new FS guidance. Find it here: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/detailfull/giffordpinchot/home/?cid=stelprdb5289777&width=full>

Collaboration: Elizabeth R. indicated that tight funding has caused recreation to take a lower priority and Nikia H. is very interested in potential collaboration with Tread Lightly.

Adaptation: Sharon H. suggested that the Tread Lightly model could be adapted for Pinchot Partners.

Forest Service Update

Delivered by Elizabeth Robinson, filling in for Nikia Hernandez who had a conflicting appointment.

Yellow Jacket. All specialists' reports are now in for the Environmental Assessment and will be posted as they are ready at <https://www.fs.usda.gov/projects/giffordpinchot/landmanagement/projects> . Elizabeth gave the Partners the following rough timetable for sign-off:

- June: 30-day public notice for comments
- Early August: Revised EA addressing comments out for 45-day review/comments.
- December: Sign-off.

Skate Creek. A first EA informational session will be conducted by Nikia H. on May 10th. He will outline the general framework for the NFS team. Elizabeth will advise about time and location.

New Hires

- Recreation: Casey Smith, currently with Umpqua NF, joins the recreation staff in May. Her skill set includes e-bike experience.
- Silviculture: Allan Shieksley joins other foresters and will report to Cheyenne A.
- Presale: Grayson Bacon joins the presale crew.
- Law Enforcement: Miles Stipic is now on the job after completing his training. Captain Joe Cook is moving on
- Surge Positions are open for temporary workers via federal infrastructure funding.

Firewise Presentation. The FS will host a community meeting on fire prevention practices at the Packwood Fire Department on Thursday, April 28.

Packwood Trails Association. Nikia will receive a presentation from the group this month.

Return to Office Policy. Implementation begins June 6th. Each employee will agree to follow a specified home/office schedule.

Discussion and Questions

Pinchot Partners in-person meeting. John S. asked if our May 18 meeting could be held at the FS office. Elizabeth will check room availability. (That's Eruption Day.)

FS Road 52. John S. asked when the road will be open. Elizabeth says that most of the FS road crew positions have now been filled so opening could be soon. Anna B asked if Sheryl Hall and the Packwood Trash Force could be allowed to do a clean-up before the road is open. Elizabeth will check.

Housing for NFS workers. Pete asked if housing shortages could be addressed by hiring more locals who already have homes. Elizabeth R. says FS hiring practices take longer than many locals can wait. None have applied for permanent FS positions.

Temporary positions. Elizabeth says temporary positions are more suitable for local hires and requested the Partner's help with community outreach. She recalled Bob Guenther's suggestion that the Partners support local training in rudimentary forestry skills.

Executive Director Update

Janene Ritchie, Pinchot Partners Executive Director

May 18 In-Person Meeting. Janene is seeking a location for a hybrid in-person/Zoom meeting. A FS conference room could be an option.

June Field Trip. The Partners will tour the Skate Creek EA project area where habitat, water quality and recreation issues will require consideration.

New FS Agreement. Funding approval for the Partners is pending.

Woods Creek grant application. Our request for a \$6,000 FS grant to make accessibility improvements required for certification as Washington State's first forest bathing trail was not approved. A key reason was that initial work is not appropriate for volunteers. Janene is encouraged by the feedback and interest in forest bathing trails on Mt. St. Helen and Mt. Adams. Next year, she intends to reapply with a focus on volunteer noxious weed eradication.

Communications Director. The deadline for applications is Monday, 5/9 and the hiring committee will review applications on Wednesday, 5/11. Fred N. suggested that the executive board be invited to that review meeting.

Personal. Janene will be attending the Northwest Collaborative Forum and tour an Idaho Forest managed by the Colville Tribe May 3 - 5.

Roundtable Updates

Riparian Reserves: John S. and Pete K. discussed Riparian Reserve notes supplied by Gordon Reese, former FS employee. The notes apply primarily to watersheds below 2,000 feet. John and Pete agree that these are areas where management within the reserves will have the most impact on fish. Pete stated that one half of GP riparian reserves are above 2000 feet.

Personal: David O. will be out of town and absent from May's meeting.

Skate Creek Park: Fred N. encouraged the Partners to experience the park. David O. favors no further development except for gravel at the trailhead. John S. says that Lewis County is constructing a parking area plus a toilet just 100 yards away from the trailhead.

Global warming: Pete K. says that the latest scientific global warming projections include 30 more inches of rainfall each year and a 10" rise in sea level. "With last summer's fires and record heat, global warming is already here," says Pete.

The Meeting was adjourned at 11:05am.