

DRAFT MEETING MINUTES—May 22, 2023

Jackson Demonstration State Forest – Recreation Task Force Monday, May 22, 2023; 12:30 PM - 5:00 PM Meeting Location: First Presbyterian Church, Fort Bragg*

Members in attendance: Nick Taylor, Chris Ruddick, Stacey Bradley; Absent: Teresa Sholars, Sarah Bradley; JDSF Staff: Erik Wahl, Kevin Conway, Robert Douglas, Joy Korstjens, Kyle Farmer (UCCE); Members of the Public (per sign-in sheet): John Allen, Keiko Allen, Marc Jensen, Lynne Paschal, Mary Kay Murche, Roo Harris, Ryan Koch, Gabriel Quinn Maroney, Elias Steinbuck, Dan Sweet, Jami Valentine, Amy Wynn, Robert Horvat. Email comment received from Chad Swimmer expressing support for the work of the group and Steinbuck/Sweet recommendations.

Meeting Start: 12:35 PM

*Note: These minutes are not a “word for word” transcript of the meeting, though all points and speakers are covered. *The meeting Agenda included a field tour to Caspar “Scales” Road 500, but this was not done due to lack of time.*

JDSF Road and Recreation Program Manager Erik Wahl Updates:

PowerPoint presentation up on the wall mounted screen, summarizing various recreation and roads projects with updates, needs assessments, and timelines (where applicable). PowerPoint will be posted to JDSF website.

Operational

- Been over year since last RTF meeting. Hoped to meet twice a year, but JDSF short staffed with competing priorities, and roads are a priority over recreation.
- Camp 20 restrooms have a 2-4x a week cleaning schedule now, but really should be a CalTrans issue. Bathroom situation could use improvement/additional locations (Scales) but adds to already problematic day use area and campground maintenance. Concrete construction preferred at high use/vandalism areas, but more expensive - possible public/private partnership?

Road/Trail/Bridges Updates

- Road 720 – primary access to Woodlands Camp; lower part is w/in flood plain; once upgraded, RD 700 will be abandoned (not trail conversion) after Rd 705 (Forest History Trail). Amy Wynn wants to make sure riders can still go uphill with 720 changes.
- Trestle Trail – Trout Unlimited proposal to rehabilitate stream with placement of LWD, which would cross the trail due to size needed. Rec Task Force visited area in 2016; Nick Taylor commented lots of stream crossings, poison oak; not worth effort to rehabilitate. Chris Ruddick stated 15 years ago looked like some trestles were ready to fall down, probably not much there now. Marc Tenzel (FB Cyclery) suggested keeping trail despite condition and lack of crossings. Users can hike over obstructions and through crossings if need be. Various members of the public spoke about the possibility of

DRAFT MEETING MINUTES—May 22, 2023

rehabbing/restoring the area as historic and unique vs. the cost to do so in light of other priorities; ultimately decided should take another look before abandoning on map.

- Unauthorized trail development – continues to be a problem, means can't justify any new trail development when resources needed for eradication/repair of illegal works (which can/do disturb flora/fauna/cultural sites).
- Bridges – 6 completed (Manly Gulch [3], Sweet Pea, Lindquist Loops, Forest History), 9-10 needed. Most user built bridges don't meet safety standards; not all bridges built to equestrian standards due to lack of design at the time of installation and increased effort for bridges in remote locations.

Elias Steinbuck

- New MCC "trail boss" (replacing Nick Taylor)
- Steam Donkey Trail project list overview
 - Primary goal is focus on maintaining what we've got, new construction/rerouting projects farther down list.
 - Welcome all volunteers, don't need to be bike club member. Scalable if people take ownership.
 - Work is/can be for all forest users.

Keiko Allen would like to see the Tree ID Trail rehabilitated, as it's a good trail for kids. Erik Wahl responded that it's on the list, with ideas for signage involving more interactive learning about ecotones via smart devices for [ArcGIS] StoryMaps. Kyle Farmer feels better location for learning, in an area of the forest not on a blind curve.

Trail Designated Use/Abandonment

- Review of trail designated use in 2016 JDSF Management Plan (soon to begin revision); some ambiguity that needs to be resolved.
- Why are some trails multi-use and others not? Lynne Paschal specifically questioning closure of unofficial trail "Widow Maker" to hikers after closed to bikes. Per Erik Wahl, that trail had wet areas, slide activity, right at private property – would have been huge investment to do it right.
- Discussion with various viewpoints from public regarding need to have specific use trails vs. multiuse trails, i.e., hike or equestrian only to avoid conflict/injury from bikes vs. humans/horses, etc. or whether if you make certain trails exclusive, you lose for everybody. Perhaps certain areas are better for certain situations? Chris Ruddick felt that it was easier to have open for everybody because people ignore signs anyway.

Crew availability update

- Only 2 inmate crews now available vs. the 10 crews historically staffed; Statewide crew staffing is at only 15%, very difficult to get crew workdays now for campgrounds/trails.

Camp 1 Loop

DRAFT MEETING MINUTES—May 22, 2023

- Marc Jensen stated that the Sherwood Trail was part of Camp 1, and it is multiuse, but not the part from the day use area; Nick Taylor felt that the agreement MCC previously had with CalFire was that the work on 4 trails done by MCC, including Camp 1 Loop, would keep the whole Camp 1 trail multiuse, and it's a breaking of trust for any part to be hike only. Erik Wahl felt that he personally had proven that he could be trusted and done a lot of work on trails, can't speak to prior management decisions that were made without consulting the Rec Task Force (Powers). Chris Ruddick said that under Craig Pedersen, the Recreation Task Force agreed that Camp 1 Loop should be hike only. Stacy Bradley pointed out that initially, each members of the Task Force were tasked with representing all uses, and it was understood that 48,000 acres could accommodate multiple different uses, but now we are primarily bikes, and wasting too much time on bike issues.
 - Various discussion as to multiple issues present, including:
 - Strengthen lines of communication
 - Legacy/staff turnover issues
 - Guidance comes from Management Plan, Camp 1 Loop hiker only, Sherwood Little Lake ok for bikes/horses: revision?
 - Increase signage for safety? Include in upcoming Recreation Survey?

Campgrounds – Needs per addendum in Rec. Plan

- Usual updates needed; BBQ grills, picnic benches, fences/vehicle barriers, ADA outhouses.
- Combine Camp 3 and Camp 4 campground sites into one at Poison Oak.
- Camp 8 to become group site.
- Volcano & Indians Springs to be improved or retired. Chris Ruddick doesn't want to see campgrounds completely abandoned, just mothball them so they can be resurrected in future if need is there.
- Real issue is need for more Recreation Program dedicated staffing; Robert Horvat wants to see a Budget Change Proposal and addition of permanent maintenance position(s).

Forest History Trail

- Per Erik Wahl, move discussion to next Recreation Task Force meeting.
- Preliminary talks with State Parks regarding signage and improvements to EOP.

Expansion of Recreation Task Force Membership

- Erik Walk stated that the Charter allows for up to 9 Members – do we want to expand membership? Stacey Bradley and Chris Ruddick agreed need more members. Also requested all members be present for voting, and to “extend that conversation” to a later date. May add a Chair when we have 7 people on the Task Force to assist with meeting planning etc.
- Ryan Koch requested 2 meetings a year.
- Expand categories outlined in Charter? Tribal? Forager? State Parks? More generalists?

DRAFT MEETING MINUTES—May 22, 2023

Recreation Survey

- Kyle Farmer presented on previous 2014 survey, workshopped some items of interest for the new one coming up, with goal of having a draft survey for next meeting (Oct?)

Recreation Task Force Member Action Item(s):

- Stacey Bradley and Sarah Bradley to draft a letter to the JAG from the Recreation Task Force requesting funding for permanent and seasonal staffing dedicated to maintaining recreational facilities on JDSF:
 - 1 Fulltime Permanent Park Maintenance Worker, 2 Seasonal (9 month) Senior Maintenance Aides.
 - Motion to approve by Nick Taylor, 2nd by Chris Ruddick.
 - Erik Wahl to forward copies of JDSF Org Chart and Needs Assessment.

Motion by Erik Wahl to accepting written letter including terms outlined above for next JAG Meeting September 15, 2023.

Yes: Chris Ruddick, Nick Taylor, Stacey Bradley

No: N/A

Other: Teresa Sholars and Sarah Bradley did not vote since they were absent.

Minutes from the January 18, 2022, RTF Meeting. Motion to approve by Erik Wahl.

Yes: Chris Ruddick (1st), Nick Taylor (2nd), Stacey Bradley

No: N/A

Other: Teresa Sholars and Sarah Bradley did not vote since they were absent.

Blue Gum Trail

- Members of public asked: Why closed? Why closed ahead of date discussed at JAG? How much to fix? Kevin Conway explained that the work to Blue Gum, as with many improvements on JDSF, was included as part of a THP contract, and that the THP contract both permitted and financed the project, including (1) the road decommissioning, (2) providing the necessary workforce, and (3) furnishing the tools necessary for its completion (yarding machine). With the contract expired, those mechanisms are gone. When asked why it couldn't be opened in its current condition pending other works, Kevin pointed out that once the safety issues with the current condition were identified, it would be a potential liability to reopen now, and irresponsible as well since water sediment issues were identified.

Being nearly 5:00 PM, Nick Taylor made a motion to adjourn the meeting, and all were in favor.