

## **DRAFT MEETING MINUTES—January 18, 2024**

### **Jackson Demonstration State Forest – Recreation Task Force Thursday January 18, 2024; 0930 – 1230 pm Meeting Location: Woodlands CALFIRE Station, Mendocino**

Task Force Members in attendance: Chris Ruddick and Stacy Bradley

CALFIRE Staff in attendance: JDSF Recreation & Roads Program Manager Erik Wahl, JDSF Biologist Robert Douglas and State Forest Program Manager Kevin Conway.

Public Members in attendance (*per sign in sheet*): Elias Steinbuck, Dan Sweet, Robert Horvat, Marc Jensen, Paul Schulman, Al Lawrence, Lynne Paschal, and Kyle Farmer (UCCE)

*Note: These minutes are not a “word for word” transcript of the meeting, though all points and speakers are covered.*

Meeting Starts: 0940 hrs

Forester II, Erik Wahl Introduction:

- Attempt to have 4-5 RTF meeting per year
- Membership of RTF: three current members: Chris Ruddick, Stacy Bradley, Sarah Bradley; Teresa Sholars and Nick Taylor resigned
- Press release will be sent out by February 8, 2024 to solicit new members for the RTF. I would also encourage existing members to reapply. There are currently 7 slots available, and per the charter, up to 9 members.

Chris Ruddick would like to see more participation on the RTF. If there were enough members, we could have a RTF member attend Jackson Advisory Group (JAG) meetings to provide information on recreation.

Marc Jensen asked how are members are approved? Erik Wahl explained that CAL FIRE is the decision-maker. The process is as follows: applicants submit an application to CF; CF reviews the applications and schedules an interview; following the interview all of the information is reviewed and a decision is made by CF.

A question was brought up about whether a RTF slot is available to people who are recreational shooters on the forest (e.g. the Redwood Practical Shooters). Stacey Bradley mentioned the need based on the prevalence of disbursed recreational shooting on JDSF.

Erik Wahl emphasized that there is an opportunity for public comment after each discussion item.

Previous meeting minutes

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### Task Member Action Item 1

Minutes from July 15, 2023, RTF Meeting. No Quorum.

Yes: N/A

No: N/A

#### Trail signage

Erik Wahl is considering sending an outreach letter on trail etiquette, specifically where new trail signs should be installed indicating user right-of-way and the need for users to yield following the standard triangle: bikers and hikers yield to horse riders; and bikers yield to hikers. EW reiterates that it is CF's responsibility to establish the RTF agenda items with input from the RTF.

#### Public Comment:

LP: Signage: there is nothing on the forest about bikers and runners/hikers yielding. Request the need for the yield triangle.

SB: Some place can have two signs: Horse and Tilley.

DS: Focus on signage has been minimal. This sign is a departure. Maybe this would be more appropriate for a parking area or kiosk. Consider other approaches to signage.

ES: If there is a popular equestrian trail, let's post the sign there.

EW: Caspar Scales and End of Pavement [Road 409] are options. These areas need to be more accommodating to vehicles.

#### General Recreation Update

##### Campgrounds/Day Use Areas

- Camp 20 Picnic Tables – Board Replacement
- Establishing 4'x5' board at EOP
- Replacement of all trash cans with "bear proof" cans. Priority Camp 20. Trash attracting wildlife.
- Hazard Tree Assessment – Felling

##### Road Access

- Road 200 North, 100/130, 230 Upgrades Completed – Summer 2023
  - Road 200 South Needed, Road 320 into Parlin Camp
- Road 720 – Summer 2024
  - Upper section
    - Turnout Improvements w tree felling (March), culvert replacement, lots of rocking. Work will be done under an amended Initial Study—Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS-MND).

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- Lower section... pre-application for FRGP pursue grant funding to replace RR gulch crossing, which will facilitate the eventual abandonment of Road 700 by creating a new access route to the Woodlands.
  - Application to move PG&E transformer and lines at Woodlands Entrance is part of the grant.

### Recreation Update Continued

#### Trails

- Sweet Pea “sanctioning” 3.7-mile road abandonment
- Forest Learning Loop
  - SweetPea, Observatory, Parallel Action, Lindquist Loops
- Pyro Silviculture THP Proposal, which will be the topic of future JAG meeting in 2024
  - Assessed Road 552 to Trail Conversion
- Several unauthorized trails were blocked to prevent further damage to watercourses, potential archaeological sites, and other sensitive natural resources. June visit observed all were improved without authorization with areas of bare soil and further damage to vegetation and unnamed tributary to Russian Gulch.

#### Sales

- Sold over 1,500 mushroom and 143 firewood permits; also had 2,096 campers. Total of 26K in revenue
- More firewood sales likely in 2024 for Red Tail and Chamberlain THP areas
- CF observation: evidence of people running mushroom businesses on JDSF. Some of which conflicted with permitted special events.

DS: [Re: CF Road work activities]: Does CF have discretion for the timing or does the contractor?

LP: CF could send out an email or press release prior to commencing work.

EW: [regarding mushroom permits]: Lots of people running private mushroom businesses on JDSF.

LP: Regarding Trash & Bears: Neighbors adjacent to JDSF often have problems with bears that reside on the forest.

KF: Is it possible to have a Newsletter topic highlight JDSFs new trash cans that might be a prototype for neighbors to use?

#### Recreation

##### Recreation Survey

- Last contract was in 2014 Cal Poly San Luis Obispo.
- SLO has the ability to start the recreation survey this summer.
- Nothing is finalized yet.

Contract deliverables include:

- Collect data at in the Summer and Fall 2024, and Spring 2025

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- Meet with stakeholders to discuss attitudes and perceptions of activities on JDSF (e.g. research, timber harvesting, and vegetation management).

A suggestion was made about holding a public forum to discuss results, take public comment, and answer questions. CF can also add topics to the survey.

EW: Another mission of the State Forest is Education

Presented Observatory Trail sign as an example of interpretive signage that will be installed across the forest on other trails such as the Forest Learning Loop, Whiskey Springs, Parallel Action, and Sweet Pea.

Kyle Farmer gave a presentation on signage highlighting forestry research and the Caspar Watershed Study. It was also mentioned that it is important for signs to let users know they are on an “official” trail. Signs can provide teaching opportunities for the various activities that occur on the forest, including timber harvesting, stream restoration, forest establishment/growth, and wildlife. These can be used to educate the public about land use designations and the type of activities allowable in each of those categories (e.g. Sweet Pea—matrix; Observatory Trail—Late Seral Development [LSD])

Comments:

DS: A trail may need some type of identifier that interacts with information on a pre-loaded map or application.

MJ: I wouldn't worry about slowing people down on the trails.

KF: Signs can be placed to the sides of the trail to avoid having users stop in the middle of the trail that has bike/horse/runner flow.

MJ: Do you have a plan to deal with vandalism of signs?

LP: What about signage for other natural resources such as plant communities and wildlife habitat?

Long-term Plan—Addendum to the Recreation Plan for making additions to the trail network.

- JDSF needs to inventory the miles of sanctioned and unsanctioned trails on the forests
- Starting Point—notifying/educating the public about the state of a trail.
- Communicate the standards as to what constitutes a good trail (enumerate the criteria on the sheet presented at the July RTF meeting).
- Trail Rating Criteria (E size poster displayed at meeting)--Use scoring process to help identify trail priorities.

DS: How can we refine the process? When will it be rolled out? There should be space to maintain the trails.

KC: Staff time and trail maintenance needs will factor together for establishing priorities. We can test out these criteria on several trail areas. This is not necessarily a hard and fast score to fail a particular trail. It is a tool meant to identify problems and propose solutions. Identifying a problem that needs to be fixed could raise the category score. We are looking for a consistent approach to identifying our work priorities on the forest.

DS: Is fire safety included as a rating? Are there other values not considered in the proposed scoring scheme?

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KC: Next time we can bring back a map with areas that can be rated as an example. EW to work on map of unsanctioned trails on JDSF.

KF: Other categories identifying areas as serving as check line or fuel breaks could be included. Distance for extracting injured riders could also be another consideration.

RH: I would like to see more signage information explaining forest management on JDSF.

SB: I would like to see the trail criteria rewritten for the next meeting so we can conduct a dry run on the scoring.

**ACTION ITEM: CF develop map of unsanctioned trails to support posting of Trail Rating Criteria and perform dry run on scoring.**

Discussion on using trails for forest management activities and a thought as to whether the public can tolerate a short-term change—either a temporary closure or an alteration of the user experience.

MJ: I would like to see a smaller focused meeting before the next RTF meeting conducting a dry run of the trail criteria.

DS: Any updates on the Blue Gum trail?

KC: In regards to community engagement for projects that will deal with this issue [Blue Gum]—probably not until 2026.

Meeting adjourned at 1215 hrs.

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Below are previous meeting minutes action items with note on progress:

### July 15, 2023 RTF Meeting

**ACTION ITEM: Revise meeting minutes to reflect changes in May 22<sup>nd</sup> RTF meeting suggested by Stacey Braley and vote on approving minutes at next RTF meeting.**

Action: COMPLETED

**ACTION ITEM: Work with Elias Steinbeck on trail work list (presented at May 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2023 RTF meeting) and long-term planning.**

Action: COMPLETED

**ACTION ITEM: Purchase and post Trail Etiquette signs at major trailheads.**

Action: A “Horses Have Right-of-Way” sign was developed with trail etiquette sign. More copies are needed and time for staff or volunteers to assist.

CONTINUE EFFORT

**ACTION ITEM: Improve and place temporary signage along non-sanctioned trails that inform public that trail has not been surveyed for ecological and cultural resources. Request trail community support in replacing signage if (when) removed.**

Action: DRAFT Trail Rating Criteria was developed and shared at January 18, 2024 meeting.

CONTINUE EFFORT