



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

Date: 3/17/2021

Time: 6:30 PM

Location: Zoom

In Attendance

Committee Members: Margaret Hite, Grace Heassler, Laura Porter, Sam Scheerens, Alison Rhea, Sheri Wantland (chair), James Wright, Katy Brumbelow (6:38), Sridevi Kothandapani (8:00)

Board Liaison: Heidi Edwards

Staff: Bruce Barbarasch

Guests: none

I. Call to Order 6:33PM

II. Approval of Minutes: Marty moved to approve the minutes and Alison seconded. There was no opposition and they were approved at 6:34

III. Check-in

Sam rode the new Yoshihara Trail (formerly Bethany Creek Trail #2) and is pleased it is "just as advertised" with beautiful fencing and landscaping.

Heidi urged the group to attend upcoming park grand openings, and noted that the Highway 26 trail crossing survey is up now at https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/WSTB_Hwy26_2

Laura noted that the trash bins at Ridgewood View Park are often overflowing; she also discussed a storm water monitoring program in cooperation with Clean Water Services.

James discussed the impact of the sewer project at the Tualatin Hills Nature Park.

Alison is working on a frog egg collection program; it has driven engagement with the community and created educational opportunities.

Katy volunteered as a park ambassador at Cooper Mountain Nature Park. The park was very full, she heard comments on parking and litter at the park; later, volunteers were picking up the litter.

Grace talked about a recent visit by her mother to Greenway park and the progress so far on the mural project looks beautiful.

Marty also visited Cooper Mountain; it was very busy on the weekend but did not feel overcrowded thanks to the one-way trail system. She is also getting ready to survey frog egg masses.

Sheri has been to many parks over the past month. On the Rock Creek Trail, signs indicate THPRD removed some of the garbage bins because people were leaving household trash. Despite large crowds, most areas are very well maintained.

IV. Old Business:

The Natural Resources Functional Plan (NRFP) and Vision Action Plan (VAP) reconciliation discussion was completed last month. The group showed appreciation for all the hard work on this process.

V. New Business

a. Natural Area Climate Change Adaptation Strategy

Bruce gave a presentation regarding the drafting process of the Natural Area Climate Change Adaption Strategy. He noted THPRD is a relatively small recreation district that should rely on larger

organizations to lead the way, yet stay very proactive. Bruce discussed the goals of the strategic plan and the planning process; THPRD is currently in the information collection phase. Bruce emphasized the importance of education. THPRD management are not climate scientists, but they will synthesize information produced for/by scientists and make it understandable for the various stakeholders both in management and the broader impacted community. Bruce also discussed the broader landscape of climate change action in the area and our partners, and invited questions.

James asked if THPRD had engaged private timber companies in information gathering, and whether the District had an inventory of vegetation on its properties. Bruce said there is mass data collection and sharing in the forestry community seed and seedling buyers. He also briefly discussed inventory work on district property. Katy asked who THPRD partners with locally regarding our micro-climate; this prompted a conversation about fire mitigation strategy; Bruce shared that Tualatin Valley Fire & Rescue (TVF&R) has not been concerned with fire risk in our parks. Heidi added the recent rise in urban wildfires has raised neighbor concerns about parks and fires. Bruce replied that there have been virtually no fires, but THPRD has a basic fire response plan for key sites. The plan is in the process of being updated. Many parks have no significant fire risk due to a lack of fuels. Cooper Mountain has some risk, so mitigation measures have been taken. Other sites are part of the mitigation planning process. Sheri mentioned prescribed burns in the area. THPRD contracted with a fire boss to evaluate fire risk, and TVF&R has walked some properties to analyze fire risk.

Laura discussed equity issues regarding air quality, and asked if THPRD would offer clean air refuges for the community during wildfires. Bruce noted they have done that in the past. Laura mentioned the 2021 state climate plan and asked how our plan fits into this. Alison mentioned replanting projects, and suggested designating study plots. James asked how far out THPRD climate change models are projecting. Bruce discussed the model. He noted this adaptation plan should be completed in time to be part of the NRFP revision. Katy suggested engaging the private sector in these projects, as there could be investment opportunity from the broader community that can drive benefits for THPRD. Alison moved the conversation from flora to bugs and other fauna. Bruce noted that they have studied some of the indicator species, but are considering how and what data would be best for validity and staff size. Grace suggested partnering with the science option school and the International School of Beaverton (ISB).

- VI. Closing: The group debated upcoming topics for discussion. Sheri temporarily tabled the conversation regarding grant application because of uncertainty about the THPRD reopening timeline and not wanting to overtax staff. Katy noted that we are missing indigenous perspectives. The group discussed the merits and process of including indigenous voices in THPRD decision-making, and will defer to staff that has been developing key relationships with the tribes. Sam offered a list of topics that we could introduce in future sessions, focusing on the Trails Functional Plan and how we prioritize trails in the light of changing climate, diversity, and inclusion goals. Katy suggested an event that would get us all out on the trails to have a better understanding of the system to prepare for the Trails Functional Plan discussion.

VII. Next Meeting will be Joint Advisory Committee meeting: 4/21/2021 at 6:00 PM

Meeting adjourned at 8:25 PM

Respectfully submitted,
James Wright

Recording Secretary