



EBRPD Trails User Working Group Meeting #2
November 13, 2020
Meeting Focus: Hikers

TUWG

Website: <https://www.ebparks.org/about/planning/tuwg/default.htm>

WORKING GROUP: NEW MEMBERS

<p>Elena Miramar - Vision Espana</p>	<p>Gabrielle Martinez - Civicorps JVC</p> <p>Knowledge of what park will represent - hopefully diverse groups and minorities</p>	<p>Antoine Chambers - Civicorps JVC</p> <p>Representing diverse youth hikers / bikers - learning how trails can be improved</p>	<p>Kathy Roth - Dog Walkers</p> <p>Representing dog walkers on trails, interested in new acquisition planning</p>
<p>Ian Baird - Orinda Hiking Club</p> <p>Enjoy sharing trails with equestrians - no bikes on narrow trails</p>	<p>Michael Gregory - District PAC</p> <p>Want to see this effort realized, better defined, more equitable for all</p>	<p>Bob Coomber - District PAC</p> <p>Important - time to do this - Representing wheelchair hikers; looking forward to seeing what we can accomplish</p>	

REFLECTIONS ON THE PREVIOUS MEETING

NOTES

Notes should be sent out sooner so corrections can be made promptly

SHARED RESOURCES

What are criteria for documents to be posted on website?

Response: information for group reference library (e.g., data / surveys, white papers)

Ensure posted documents are compliant with WCAG accessibility rules

UPDATE ON WORKING GROUP FORMATION

MISSION (Updated)

The Working Group will work directly with Park District staff to evaluate various trail interests, constraints, and conflicts that influence the planning, design, and implementation of new natural surface trails; as well as how we can best improve park trails without compromising the safety or enjoyment of any diverse group of trail users, balanced with the District's commitment to protect natural resources.

GROUND RULES

1. Attend scheduled meetings.
2. Attend scheduled site visits.
3. Participate in meeting discussions.
4. Keep an open mind and be respectful.
5. Represent stakeholder perspectives.
6. Work together towards solutions.
7. Avoid sidebar conversations.
8. Avoid repetition.
9. Step up, step back.
10. Be a liaison to the public.
11. Staff will present WG report to the District's Operations Committee.
12. Have fun.

Add 'Be Respectful of diverse opinions' - civility to the Ground Rules - #4 covers this

MISSION / OBJECTIVES

Please send Mission Statement out in writing.

"...without compromising..." is a high bar in the mission statement considering what some participants have stated. How do we define "compromising"?

Add environmental concern to mission

Classic balancing act is recreation versus environmental stewardship.

CONSENSUS

Consensus building encourages dialogue. It clarifies areas of agreement and disagreement. It improves information used in the process. And it resolves controversial issues using structured, face-to-face (virtual) interaction among stakeholders. Consensus does not mean all participants agree completely on every part of an issue. It means that they can support the decision completely even though they might wish the decision could be slightly different. Simply put, consensus is the willingness to go along with the decision either in active support of it or in not opposing it.

Many members agree with definition

Support definition, encourage conveners to ensure that all hear from all perspectives during the conversations. Avoid any participant complaining outside of the forum that they were not consulted nor had an opportunity to weigh in on matters.

Opportunity to discuss assumptions

Create a list, discuss and build on assumptions going forward

Start with agreements

Consensus, per the definition, may be limited on major issues

Move on from fixed positions and listen to diverse perspectives

Information gathering and fact finding is truly important to this process. Agree that structure to how perspectives are presented is very important to our ability to gain consensus; should be provided in advance

Might make sense to include in future meetings an opening presentation from staff about how they are currently addressing particular issues, especially re. new trail design.

Believe that fact finding and discussion of the actual impacts of each user group will be essential to the proper function of this group.

I think that should happen before the next scheduled meeting on Bicycles or Equestrians because user impact should be something that we all learn about together

WORK PRODUCT

A set of issues and potential solutions for optimizing trail use for all user groups.

Is it intention to create policy that Board will votes on?

Response: no, but would appreciate recommendations to discuss with Board

Seeking guidance on specific issues

This is not a design review panel on new trails, it will be all about where the trails are built and who goes on which trails.

Would like the work product to include:

1) recommendations for designing new trails on land banked properties, 2) ideas for creative management of existing trail network

3) strategies for managing e-bikes on natural surface trails, and 4) better understanding of what the opportunities are for increased volunteer trail stewardship work

Develop a work product that is actually HELPFUL to EBRPD in their pursuit of designing new trails and allows trail development projects to run smoothly without threats of legal action.

Work product should equate to the amount of time spent by this group. I.e. 1-2 years of meetings by 50+ engaged participants should equate to a workable product

Agree: concurs with Sibley Land Use Plan

New trails of variable width included; narrowed by resource constraints

Use recommendation removed; was part impetus for this discussion

Consider options for varying permissions at different times

Must consider new park development and creation of new multiple-use narrow trails

Would like to delve into that; represents all interests

NUMBER OF MEETINGS

MEETING #2
NOVEMBER
Hikers

MEETING #3
FEBRUARY
Bicyclists

MEETING #4
APRIL
Equestrians

MEETING #5
JUNE
Others

MEETING #6
AUGUST
Summary

August topic likely will take more than one meeting

Structure to how the various user groups present their perspectives, interests and desires would be helpful.

Others = dogs!

One meeting should focus on environmental and habitat protection -

Were told it would be a two-year process

It should go on as long as useful

Resource request: I'd love to have a discussion board that we can use in between meetings. Is that something EBRPD could provide?

We also have an email list for discussing these issues. If you'd like to join the list, or post thoughts, send to parks@twha.org

baseline studies, avoidance minimization of impacts, assessing impacts, incl significant effects, cumulative impacts

Maybe we could consider field trips to Rancho Pinole and Samuel Taylor?

COMMENTS: SUSTAINABLE TRAILS PRESENTATION

The sustainable trails concept is designed for bicyclists. Hikers and horses are fine on legacy trails.

Conversion of legacy trails into sustainable trails is a worthy goal and one that all trail users should support.

Contrary to the prior statement, I don't know many hikers, especially those in wheelchairs, who like slogging up/down steep, rutted trails.

Legacy trails need to be left in place where multi-use is contemplated.

Agree - I don't enjoy hiking up or down 20% grades.

What fraction of legacy trails are 20% grades? Few, I bet.

Sustainable trails effort could be exciting and worthwhile. Glad to be part of this

20% sounds like an assumption

Such a grade can be seen in the part of Wildcat Canyon by Richmond. Not fun to hike.

hikers and equestrians overwhelmingly prefer single track trails

Apparently people do like steep rutted trails because in so many places people cut switchbacks and make steep straight lines where things are carefully graded. (I'm not supporting this)

The average hiker takes the trail for granted until something had gone wrong. I had never thought about how informal trails grow up when the official trail does not go where the people want to go.

Well said Sean - listening to different perspectives and finding common ground!

Dispute statement that hikers and equestrians prefer single track. Many state that in multi-use situations there needs to be room to avoid bikes.

Trail permit issuance - yes

Hope we are able to reach common ground

Understood intent was to support multiple use - were trails designed primarily for bikes? (slow-down, minimal erosion)

This is from trails packet distributed to group re. nature of sustainable trails

Can GIS Dept. provide details on slopes of existing trails? Are conversations underway with resource agencies to better define what is permissible under current requirements and what would need to be done to allow new trail construction within EBRPD lands?

Response: certain elements hold true for all trails

Certain elements constrain use of trails; many to manage use of water

Response: we are discussing this with our GIS Department. And yes, we have ongoing conversations with the resource agencies on what is permissible.

Don't intend every trail to accommodate every user

Many constraints to developing new trails

HIKERS' PERSPECTIVES

ORINDA HIKING CLUB

Prefer not to hike with bikes on narrow trails - safety concerns

Fire roads okay, but can't design narrow trails for both hikers and bikes

Equestrians are fine - can step to one side

Are there guidelines, rules & regulations, can they be applied to future parks?

Reponse: Can be, but questions of resource protection - might not be good stewardship

OUTDOOR AFRO

In East Bay, haven't had many challenges with cyclists or off-leash dogs

Biggest complaint: facilities not maintained, worse since COVID

Want trails to work for as many users as possible

MORRIS OLDER: HIKING COMMUNITY AT LARGE

Hikers love trails but concerns

Signage: nearby trails, trail distance, etc.

Webpage showing real-time status of facilities

Can we treat different trail widths differently?

EBRPD offers exceptional opportunities, well-maintained trails

Hikers often seemed least represented in prior processes

Many hikers concerned about biker misbehavior

Appreciate when bikers are well trained to share trails

Elements to slow bikes not a problem for bikers and appreciated by other users

Bill's Trail in Samuel P. Taylor. Reopened recently, it is not on their maps, but is accessed from DEVILS Gulch. I can share the old map which shows it.

Loose dogs on trails are an issue for hikers and equestrians

Are trails maintained equitably?

Issues often unresolved until specific funding identified

Often wait a long time

Develop new trails to be more easily maintained

GROUP MEMBER COMMENTS

Need to consult all groups, be inclusive

Sierra Club perspective - hikers wish to enjoy nature without disturbance, concerns for safety

Response: will bring in all perspectives

I have hiked many times with Sierra club, and the comments heard there informed my comments as well as comments from other hiking groups

Joaquin Miller Park - not EBRPD - is the Wild West with no law enforcement, and horses largely driven off the trails.

Updating mapping, ensuring that usage data is accurate is crucial

Parks information needs to be listed accurately and communicated to all

Permitting and CEQA are issues; but lots of land available

Narrow trails for all - is that new District position?

Response: not new, not entirely accurate

What we're here to clarify - do you want multi-use trails for all?

NO on multiuse trails everywhere!

The Ridge Trail between Tilden to Sibley has some stairs, no problem for horses.

Trail guideline of steps for horses is that they be 8 feet apart so all 4 of the horse's feet go on each landing before the next step

Fernandez Ranch reportedly lacks good horse trailer parking, which is why it is more attractive to other user groups

Fernandez is a great example of multiuser trail design

John Muir Land Trust is doing a GREAT job!

BREAKOUT GROUP DISCUSSIONS

1. What are some of the goals that hikers have in using trails?
2. What are some of the issues that hikers experience and/or create on trails?
3. What do you think would improve trail user experience?

GROUP 1: Reporter Rick Rickard

Rick Rickard, Jess Brown, Emily Scholz, Scott Bartlebaugh	Big views and shade are important	Different types of hikers - those seeking serenity, groups seeking wider trails	Serenity - arriving early
Trail capacity is a challenge	insufficient bathrooms	Weekend hikers don't do their part in maintaining trails	
Re. trail etiquette: improve signage to stress this	How to get bikes further out from trailheads - hiking crowds closer to trailheads	Long loops for bikers, short loops encouraged to hikers	How can we help Sean get traction for more than 13 mi. of trails in next 10 years?

GROUP 2: Reporter Austin McInerney

Austin McInerney, Gary Fitts, Norman LaForce, Civicorp Reps, Luana Espana	Goals: solitude, enjoyment of nature	Solitude: hearing the birds, contemplation, good views	Physical exercise, sometimes strenuous	Younger hikers: Seeking social media opportunities
Issues: crowding	Lack of open facilities (water fountains, bathrooms)	Extent of poison oak	Bags of dog poop	Lack of signage, park maps shown in isolation - show connectivity
Trail-sharing etiquette between different users and also between hikers	Newer trail users have a learning curve	Intimidation on trails, not sure how to report, no staff at park	Obivious trail users using earbuds is a huge problem for equestrians, whether they're worn by bicyclists or hikers.	
Improvements: easier to read maps online	Disperse users with more trails	Educating users to wider variety of trails	All cyclists to use bells	

GROUP 3: Reporter Amelia Marshall

Kathy Roth, Pam Young, Ellen Burke, Amelia Marshall	Encourage open discussion with all groups, respect all forms of recreation, want to work together harmoniously	Environmental stewardship also part of it	Need for bike recreation; should accommodate separate place to go fast
Issues: safety with fast mountain bikers	Bikes are vehicular access; existing trails not prepared	Destruction of environment through bootleg trails, soil and root damage	Crockett Hills
Mitigations: improved signage	Code of ethics for each user group; how to better respect each other	Effective way of improving trail behavior	E-bikes: create a permitting and required education process like DMV

GROUP 4: Reporter Devan Reiff

Mimi Wilson, Ian Baird, Linus Eukel	Different users side by side; concerns from older users	Further notes to be provided
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GROUP 5: Reporter Brian Holt

Mary Barnsdale, Joseph Mouzon, Michael Gregory	Create a culture of civility	Campaign similar to "poop fairy"
Track who users are	Consider alternating days/uses	Improved signage: education, how to use parks and report rule violations

GROUP 6: Reporter Kim Thai

Morris Older, Jim Hanson, Simone Nageon de Lestang, Bonnie Lewkowicz	Mental and physical health	Admiring beauty and nature	Relieve stress
Social aspect	Connecting research on trail accessibility		
Issues w/informal or social trails	Trail etiquette re COVID, maintenance of amenities / lack of accessibility	Overflow at trailhead parking	Cleanliness / trail maintenance
User conflict is a primary issue - fact finding beforehand would be beneficial	Will help with bike discussion		
Maps that show updates on all trails, not just EBRPD	Transport / access to trails for differently abled	Info re accessibility	

MISC. COMMENTS

Maximum group size for hiking? (Response: no)	Max group size is an issue; supposed to special events permit for more than 30	Makes no sense for hikers; District should consider	Privilege to be able to hike in EBRPD parks
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NEXT STEPS

FUTURE MEETINGS

Will there be an Evite?	Response: will explore
If you haven't filled out the survey yet, please take a few more days to--most of you have, and thanks for that.	Need info: legal ramifications for e-bikes

MEMBER ANNOUNCEMENTS

Check out the Ridge Trail Challenge that is happening this month https://ridgetrail.org/challenge/ Great way to get out on some of these multi-use trails :)	Also if you want to get out and steward some of our trails sign up for Ridge Trail Month. Spots still open :) https://ridgetrail.org/rt-month/
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