



Tualatin Hills Park & Recreation District

ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Natural Resources Advisory Committee Meeting

Date: February 25, 2014

Time: 6:30 p.m.

Location: Fanno Creek Service Center

In Attendance

Committee Members: Rod Coles, Mitch Cruzan, Don Nearhood, Laura Porter, Cory Samia, Matthew Shepherd, Jack Shorr
Staff: Bruce Barbarasch, John Gaddis

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Mitch Cruzan at 6:32 p.m.

II. Approval of Minutes

There was a brief discussion about last month's minutes. It was noted that Jack Shorr's name was mistyped as "Jack Storr." The minutes were accepted with this correction made.

Motion to approve proposed by Laura Porter; seconded by Jack Shorr. Approved unanimously.

III. Financial Report

There was no financial changes to report. Mitch asked for an update on the posts to mark unmown areas. John Gaddis said they had not yet been purchased because tree planting had been a priority, but they would be obtained before the mowing season.

IV. Old Business

a. Check in activity

Matthew: Shared photos of cross-country skiers in the Rock Creek Greenway. Had seen snipe around a beaver pond. Is shocked at the scale of the engineering project to build a boardwalk through a creek corridor to connect the Stoller Creek Greenway to the Rock Creek Trail.

Rod: Enjoyed Tualatin Hills Nature Park in the snow, especially noticing footprints of various animals.

Cory: Also enjoyed snow on trails in Moonshadow Woods. Asked about likelihood of development on edge of Portland Golf Club adjacent to the Fanno Creek Trail. Since that area is deficient in parks, what's the chance of land acquisition?

Don: Participated in tree planting event at Mitchell Park with Ranger Greg. Had also attended a weed seminar, and subsequently found one of the species – spurge laurel – in his yard.

Laura: Learned about invasive weed management in Hawaii, where helicopters are used for localized treatments in isolated areas and paintball guns are loaded with herbicides for targeted applications. Had enjoyed rain walks and noted contrasts in how water flows and the state of the creeks between Tualatin Hills Nature Park, Lowami Hart Woods, and Ridgewood View Park.

John Gaddis: Chipped in mention of snow on Mt. Tabor in Portland, and that THPRD had facilitated planting of nearly 69,000 trees in southern part of district.

Jack: Been involved with planting projects at Greenway Park.

Mitch: Went birding in the snow at Lowami Hart Woods; shared photos of the trails and creek under a white blanket.

b. Update on NRFP

Bruce reported that there is a new deadline for completing the NRFP, early November 2014, to be ready for the THPRD board meeting. Work on the plan will be split between staff and consultants. Staff members are well-positioned to write much of the plan, but the consultants bring outside perspective and research-based background to plan. The working group will be reconvened (Matthew is NRAC representative) in the spring and again in the summer. There will be public input (via Survey Monkey-type online survey) to gather comments and suggestions from district residents, volunteers, community groups, etc.

Cory: Concerned about public input overriding science; what if public demands access to all natural areas?

Bruce: As a public agency, it is appropriate that THPRD solicits public input early in the process.

Matthew: NRFP should provide framework for managing public access, not facilitating it.

Bruce: NRFP will do that.

V. **New Business**

a. View from Bruce's office. Bruce regaled the committee with tales of beavers in the district and the attitudes and management challenges they engender. Beavers are one animal that seems to be doing well in developed areas. Most beavers in the district construct bank dens, though there are a couple of lodges. The longest dam is at C.E. Mason Wetlands, beside Highway 217. Beavers are an important manipulator of habitat, but they also create problems, including chewing on fences, felling trees on structures, causing flooding on neighboring property, and undermining trails. Despite public opinion, THPRD does not own the beavers, nor is it responsible for any damage. The district does do good-neighbor repairs to fences, etc. Beavers are a growing management issue. The board says no lethal measures will be taken against them. Looking ahead, a consultant will be brought in to advise on management.

b. Southside Natural Resource & Trail Management. The floor was given to John Gaddis, Natural Resources & Trails Specialist, responsible for the southern part of the district. John gave the committee an entertaining "Day in the Life" presentation that covered the range of activities and issues typically encountered. These include wildlife management, social management (neighbor complains about skunks, etc.), patron safety, encroachment into parks, volunteers, staff and project management, and various natural resources projects (weed control, tree planting, peer-group tours, monitoring).

The ensuing discussion focused on using volunteers to monitor activities and the acceptance of volunteer-derived data. This broadened into a conversation about citizen science and how monitoring protocols are developed.

VI. **Other**

None.

VII. **Next Meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 18, at 6:30 p.m. at the Fanno Creek Service Center.**

Meeting adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Matthew Shepherd
Recording Secretary