

San Juan Island Trails Committee Minutes

November 12, 2008

Present

Audra Adelberger, Eric Adelberger, Magda Balise, Michael Balise, David Dehlendorf, Susan Dehlendorf, Eileen Drath, Louise Dustrude, Rick Exstrom, Glen Garrett, Eleanor Hartmann, Sally Hawkins, Don Jarrell, David Jenkins, Dick Keefe, Eileen Keefe, Mike Lazzari, Peter Morrison, Cinda Pierce, Tracy Roberson, Steve Ulvi, Leslie Veirs, Chris Wolf

Notice of Upcoming Events

1. Bicycle Paths: November 17, 5pm @ Whidbey Island Bank
2. Trails Steering Committee: December 2 @ 4pm @ Library- all are invited
3. Monthly Trails Committee Meeting: December 10 @ 5pm @ Whidbey Island Bank

Volunteer Hours - October

Steering Committee - 16

Monthly Meeting - 33

Volunteer work - 69

Work Parties - 74

Roche Harbor Stewardship -39

Total hours - 231

Call to Order and Introductions

The meeting was called to order by Chair David Dehlendorf at 5:03 pm. The minutes from October were approved as amended.

Trails Potluck

The date of the Potluck has been changed. It will now be Wednesday, March 11, at the Grange. Members are reminded to gather pictures of recent adventures to share.

County Budget

Chair Dehlendorf explained that the Trails Committee has been cut from the proposed Park Department's budget for 2009. While the Committee expects that it will continue to be funded by Island Rec, County Parks cannot continue to provide its accounting, legal and administrative services. The County Parks' budget has had to eliminate all non-revenue producing programs; therefore the Trails Committee must seek another affiliation. The Steering Committee has met several times to discuss three possible options. Dehlendorf gave the full meeting a synopsis of its conclusions. The first option of forming a non-profit organization was eliminated as too costly and time consuming along with the high cost of liability insurance and onerous reporting requirements. The second is returning to be a sub-committee under Island Rec.

While Trails would receive the staff support and accounting services from Island Rec, the liability insurance would be limited and, most importantly, no legal fees would be covered. The third option would be to affiliate with the Land Bank. Under the Land Bank, Trails would continue to receive the benefits and access it had under the County such as accounting and legal staff, as well as, gain the Land Bank's experience with easements, trail construction and maintenance, and grant writing.

A potential negative to joining the Land Bank is a possible loss of independence and uncertainty of our status. Trails wants to be able to continue to work on projects where Land Bank has no direct role, such as multi-use trails and trails on non-Land Bank property.

No decision has yet been made; however the Steering Committee believes that the best affiliation is likely to be with the Land Bank, although Trails would like to be able to continue to receive funding from Island Rec. David has spoken with Sally Thomsen at Island Rec and she has agreed to request approval of her board to continue our funding in 2009. David has also spoken with Lincoln Bormann of Land Bank, who has had several informal discussions with his board about the possible affiliation with Trails. The Land Bank Board has been generally favorable to the possibility, although no formal approval has yet been proposed. In the meantime, Lincoln has agreed to draft a document specifying how the collaboration would be organized and function so Trails can better evaluate its options.

While both entities are public vote dependent, Island Rec's mandate is scheduled for 2010, while Land Bank's is 2014.

A lively discussion followed with the membership regarding the pros and cons of each option. A motion was made and seconded to direct the Steering Committee to follow up with Land Bank option and review the draft document Lincoln prepares. Further discussion on this issue will continue next month and a decision will be made by the end of the year.

Park Closures

The County Parks' budget cuts also include closing three day parks, Reuben Tarte, Eagle Cove and Turn Point. David passed around a sign-up sheet for anyone interested in forming a Volunteer Group to respond to these closures.

Town Trail

Steve Ulvi reported on the recent meeting that he, David Dehlendorf, Louise Dustrude and Doug McCutchen of the Land Bank had with Amy and Brian Winthrope to evaluate the possibility of constructing a short rustic path on a public right-of-way between Jensen Ave. and McDonald St. behind the Community Theatre. The meeting was on the site of the proposed trail, which was flagged by Steve and Doug. Amy and Brian live in the neighborhood of the proposed trail, which they have suggested as a shorter and safer alternative to walking Tucker Ave. It would be a walking trail only to connect the residential neighborhood and the waterfront with town. Steve and Doug determined that it could be easily constructed with volunteer labor at minimal expense. The property has already been surveyed by the Town so a work party will be organized as soon as Brian contacts King Fitch, Town Administrator, to request his final approval to begin construction.

Bicycle Pathways Meeting

Tracy Roberson reported that over 20 people attended the meeting on October 28. The focus was on bike safety and establishing priorities. Minutes of that meeting are available on the Trails website. Also a bike ride was held Saturday, November 1, with over 30 riders ages 6 to 70 plus. More rides will be planned.

Safe Routes to Schools

Tracy Roberson announced that the Walking School Bus is taking place every Tuesday rain or shine at 2 locations.

Friday Harbor Labs Trails

Dave Jenkins gave a presentation on the meeting he, David Dehlendorf, Don Jarrell and Fiona Norris of the San Juan Nature Institute had on November 11 with Ken Sebens, Director of the University of Washington's Friday Harbor Labs regarding the possibility of increasing public access to the existing walking paths on the Labs' property adjacent to Town. (There may also be an opportunity to build new trails to create a loop.) Ken envisions nature paths maintained by Trails volunteers with signage provided by the Labs, overseen by docents trained by the San Juan Nature Institute, and open in limited numbers by permission only. The Labs are concerned about limited parking spaces and protection of the research areas. Except perhaps for neighbors entering the trail system from Point Caution Rd. area, trail users would be required to sign in and maybe limited to groups such as the Trails Committee and the San Juan Nature Institute.

The discussion at the Trails Committee meeting centered around the role Trails might play in this project. Several members expressed their reticence to get too involved at this point in what seems to be a trail system that would not be open to the general public. Dave and David will follow up with Ken regarding those concerns, as well as about other questions regarding parking, physical access, and location of the paths. Many details would need to be discussed and resolved before a decision could be made to move forward on this opportunity.

Cattle Point Trail

Don Jarrell and Cinda Pierce reported that progress with property owner contact and the finalization of the easement document continue. Cutting of the trail on Louisa Nishitani property will be done this Saturday by Mark Pierce for the Public Works survey being done Monday for the easement document legal description. Dick Keefe has been working with County legal counsel Karen Vedder to complete language on the easement wording.

King Sisters and Wade Sundstrom Properties

The Land Bank continues to pursue an agricultural lease as well as trail potential along these properties. Concern about dogs being allowed to walk along these routes is a concern of a nearby property owner. Trails and Land Bank will follow up on the trail potential and concerns.

Park to Park Trail

As soon as the easement document is finalized for the Cattle Point Road Trail project, David Dehlendorf, Charlie Peckinpaugh, and Rex Stickle will present it to several of the property owners along West Side Rd. who have previously agreed in principle to grant trail easements. A route through the ravine area just south of the county park has already been flagged with the property owner's permission.

Roche Harbor Resort Trail

Several work parties in October completed installation of the fencing and gates necessary to fill in all gaps on the airport trail on the south side of the runway. The Stewardship Plan for trail maintenance is in place and functioning.

English Camp Connection Trail

David Dehlendorf and Louise Dustrude met with Jim McNairy of the high school hiking club, and Will Hamilton of Saltchuk Properties regarding the route of a trail from the parking area at West Valley Road to English Camp. This connecting trail was partially built by the Boy Scouts several years ago. After walking the area all parties agreed the first part needs to be re-established and the final part into English Camp property needs to be flagged and built. This trail would offer any easy path for walkers from the parking area or Roche Harbor to access English Camp.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:28pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Cinda Pierce, Acting Secretary