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TO: Lane County Board of Commissioners
DEPARTMENT: Public Works/Parks
PRESENTED BY: Howard Schussler, Assistant Director of Public Works
AGENDA ITEM TITLE: Discussion/Proposed Trail Realignment in the Howard Buford Recreation Area (HBRA).

I. **MOTION**

Discussion/Proposed Trail Realignment for Portions of Trails 3 and 4 in HBRA.

II. **AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY**

This is a discussion item that explores the interests of the County and critical stakeholders who use these trails within the Howard Buford Recreation Area (HBRA) and the long-term resource requirements to maintain these trails for safety, habitat, and maximum use-life.

III. **BACKGROUND/IMPLICATIONS OF ACTION**

A. **Board Action and Other History**

In 1993 Lane County completed and adopted the *Howard Buford Recreation Area Master Plan*. The park, which includes Mt. Pisgah, is 2,216 acres and is Lane County's largest park. The *HBRA Master Plan* specifically addresses the trail system and mixed uses of the trails. In 2010, with the County's assistance and support, The Nature Conservancy (TNC) purchased the 1,250-acre Wildish property which is immediately adjacent to HBRA's north boundary. The trails in question come closest to the nexus of the two properties.

B. **Policy Issues**

There are a number of goals from the 1993 *HBRA Master Plan* that provide staff with policy direction for this project proposal.

Goal 1: Accommodate increased use while protecting the resource, minimizing development, and preserving the natural and rural character of the HBRA.

Goal 2: Protect sensitive and significant natural resource areas and restore degraded habitat.

Goal 3: Minimize conflicts among Park users.

Goal 4: Improve access to trails and other facilities for people with special needs.

Goal 5: Develop and maintain the HBRA in a way that minimizes costs and the need for scarce tax revenues.

Goal 7: Help coordinate efforts and cooperate with groups whose goals are complementary to those of the HBRA.

Goal 8: Protect the Park and its users from damage and injury.

The proposed trail realignment appears to be consistent with these seven goals. The PAC, at their May meeting, advertised for and accepted public input for this project. The PAC voted to support this project with the direction that staff continues to work with the key stakeholders to resolve differences as much as possible.

C. Board Goals

Board direction for Parks has been consistent. 1. Provide high quality active and passive recreation experiences for park users at the lowest possible cost to users and taxpayers. 2. Protect, maintain, and enhance natural areas. 3. Work with key stakeholders and the PAC to ensure the greatest amount of transparency and user input.

D. Financial and/or Resource Considerations

The Friends of Buford Park (FBP), who proposed this project, intends to accomplish the majority of this work using volunteer labor. Costs for paid FBP employees will be the responsibility of FBP. Should County labor be required for any significant workload, these costs would also be the responsibility of FBP or grant funding sought and found by FBP. Currently, the County would expect to provide some limited materials for the project and some time from the Natural Areas Coordinator. The County has no available funding to maintain or improve the current trails and would not plan this realignment without FBP's commitment for planning, labor, and funding. Current estimates are that maintenance and improvement costs for the current trails would exceed the development of the new realigned trails.

E. Analysis

BACKGROUND

FBP has been maintaining the "West Slope Trail 3" from the North Trailhead to its junction with "Beistel's West Summit Trail #1" under an Adopt-a-Trail agreement with Lane County Parks Division in HBRA. The Sheriff's Posse

(Posse) is responsible for the maintenance of Trail 4 from its junction with Trail 3 to beyond the proposed re-route under its Adopt-a-Trail agreement with Lane County Parks Division. Both trails are designated for use by hikers and equestrians. Maps of the impacted trails and proposed realignments are included as attachment 1 (page 1 and 2).

THE PROBLEM

Trail 3: A section of Trail 3 from approximately its junction with Trail 4 to its junction with Trail 7 is seasonally wet for at least six months every year primarily because it is located in a draw that concentrates subsurface water from the surrounding hills. Horse hooves punch through any practical trail surface, liquefying the soil and creating slippery, muddy conditions. Hikers seek drier ground along parallel paths, creating multiple trails that concentrate the water and create ruts. Eventually, as the trail conditions continue to degrade, horses also begin to create multiple parallel trails. The trail condition is unsafe for many hikers, problematic for many horse riders, and is causing unnecessary damage to the vegetation. Hikers not wanting a muddy experience avoid the north part of the park for much of the year. As a result, recreational use is concentrated on other trails, which increases the maintenance needed on those trails.

Trail 4 crosses the same draw as Trail 3 and also intercepts the flow from three other seasonal draws that concentrate subsurface runoff onto Trail 4. The water then flows down the trail causing erosion, a deep gully and very muddy conditions that are hazardous for both equestrians and hikers for most of the year. Even in the dry season, the hardened ruts and 8-inch deep holes made by horse hooves pose a risk of injury to people and animals.

THE NEED FOR ACTION

The Need for Action is to improve the safety of the trails, increase access to the north end of the park, reduce damage to vegetation, improve water management and surfacing, and reduce erosion. A firmer trail surface would allow more hikers and equestrians to use this portion of the Buford Park trail network throughout the year and more evenly distribute use.

SCOPE OF PROJECT

The Project would build 3300 feet (approximately .6 miles) of new trail to create a year-round safe trail access in the north end of HBRA. **Phase I** would realign approximately 1600 feet of Trail #3. **Phase II** would realign approximately 1700 feet of Trail #4.

Conflicting Stakeholder Positions

The Posse has voiced an objection to this realignment. One trail expert who somewhat supports the Posse's position indicated that he preferred that the County repair the existing trail 3 and realign less of trail 4. The summary from this individual was to develop no new trail "unless the proper amount of crushed quarry

gravel is placed on the excavated trails to accommodate the user traffic.” Staff and the PAC did not perceive this to be opposition to the proposal, but rather conditional opposition or support and a preference for a different option. This concern will be integrated into the County's conditions for approval for this project. County staff is facilitating a field review of the project with key players holding different perspectives on the realignment, in order to address as many concerns as possible and to improve the realignment plan.

Another concern voiced was the potential for interactions between hikers, horses/riders, and dogs. Given the use volumes and number of trails, the potential for these interactions should remain about the same. Parks staff will attempt to address at least part of this concern with consistent on-leash rules for dogs throughout HBRA and some enforcement/compliance patrols.

The Posse's position has not been representative of the entire equestrian community of users. For example, one email identified a problem with horses losing shoes in the mud and the subsequent cost for a farrier to reshoe the horses; the writers of this email supported realignment.

Representative excerpts from the public comment have been included as attachment 2. The Parks Advisory Committee received public comment and reviewed this proposal and recommended it be presented to the Board of County Commissioners in a work session with their support with the condition that staff continue to work with the FBP and the Posse to address the issues raised by the Posse without blocking the project. Ultimately staff supports this project based on the merits presented and the inescapable fact that the County does not have funding to rebuild the current trails adequately for the short-term or for long term use.

There is an urgent need for reconstruction of the current trails or realignment. Given current and projected resource constraints, there is little likelihood that the County can support reconstruction and no external group has offered to provide resources to accomplish this end. An external group, FBP, has developed a proposal with the help of an expert trail builder and has offered the resources to accomplish this end. Even the expert connected with the Posse has indicated that this project would be reasonable if adequate materials are used in the construction. It is therefore staff's position, along with an endorsement from the PAC, that this project proposal move forward consistent with appropriate conditions of approval from the Parks Manager, Public Works Director, and County Administrator.

IV. TIMING/IMPLEMENTATION

Unless specific direction is provided by the BCC or CAO to the contrary, staff plans to approve the project proposal and work would begin in Late June or July 2011.

V. RECOMMENDATION

Staff intends to support approval of this project with the condition that key stakeholders are involved and consulted at various stages of the project to ensure that critical interests are respected. No BCC decision is required.

VI. FOLLOW-UP

As desired by the Board.

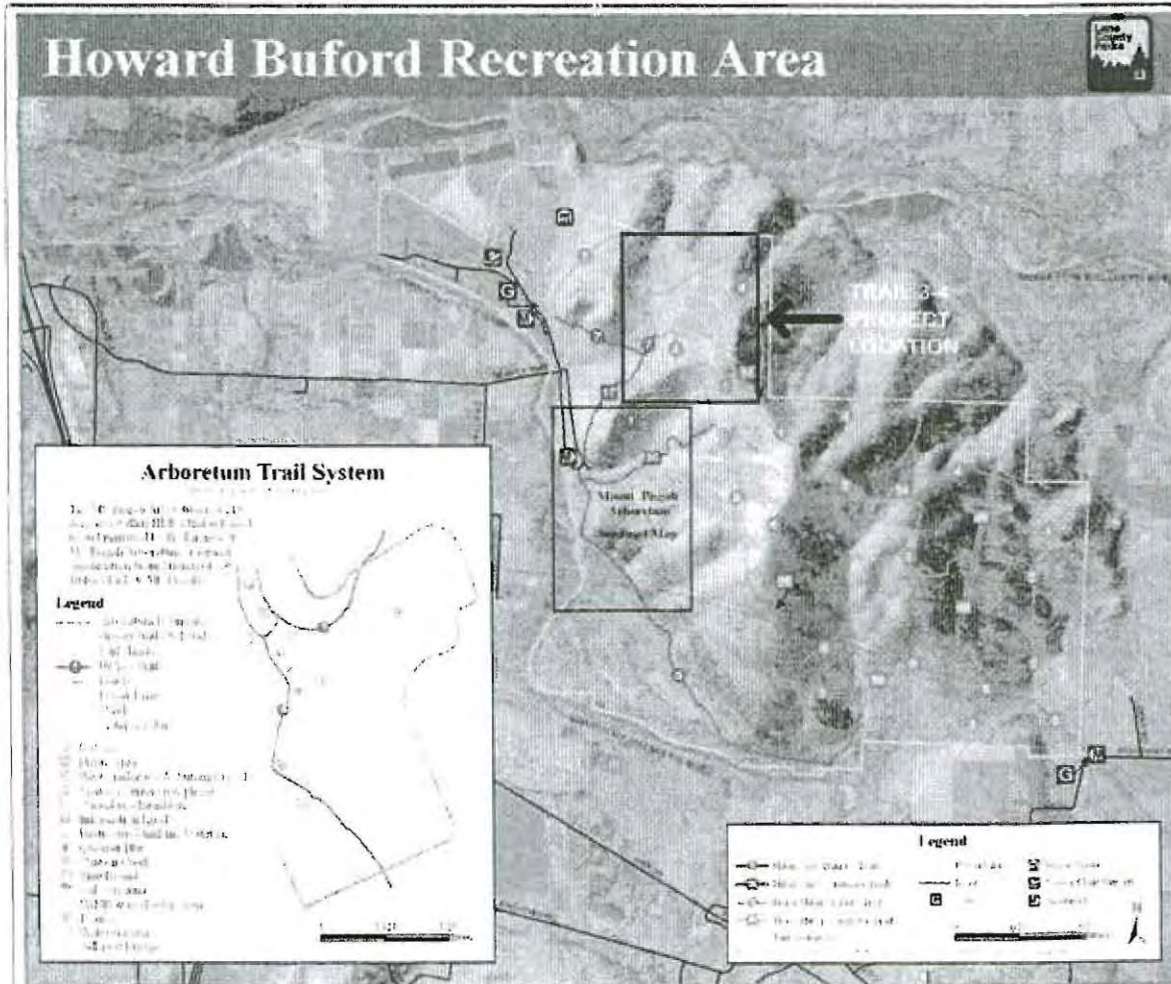
VII. ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Project Maps

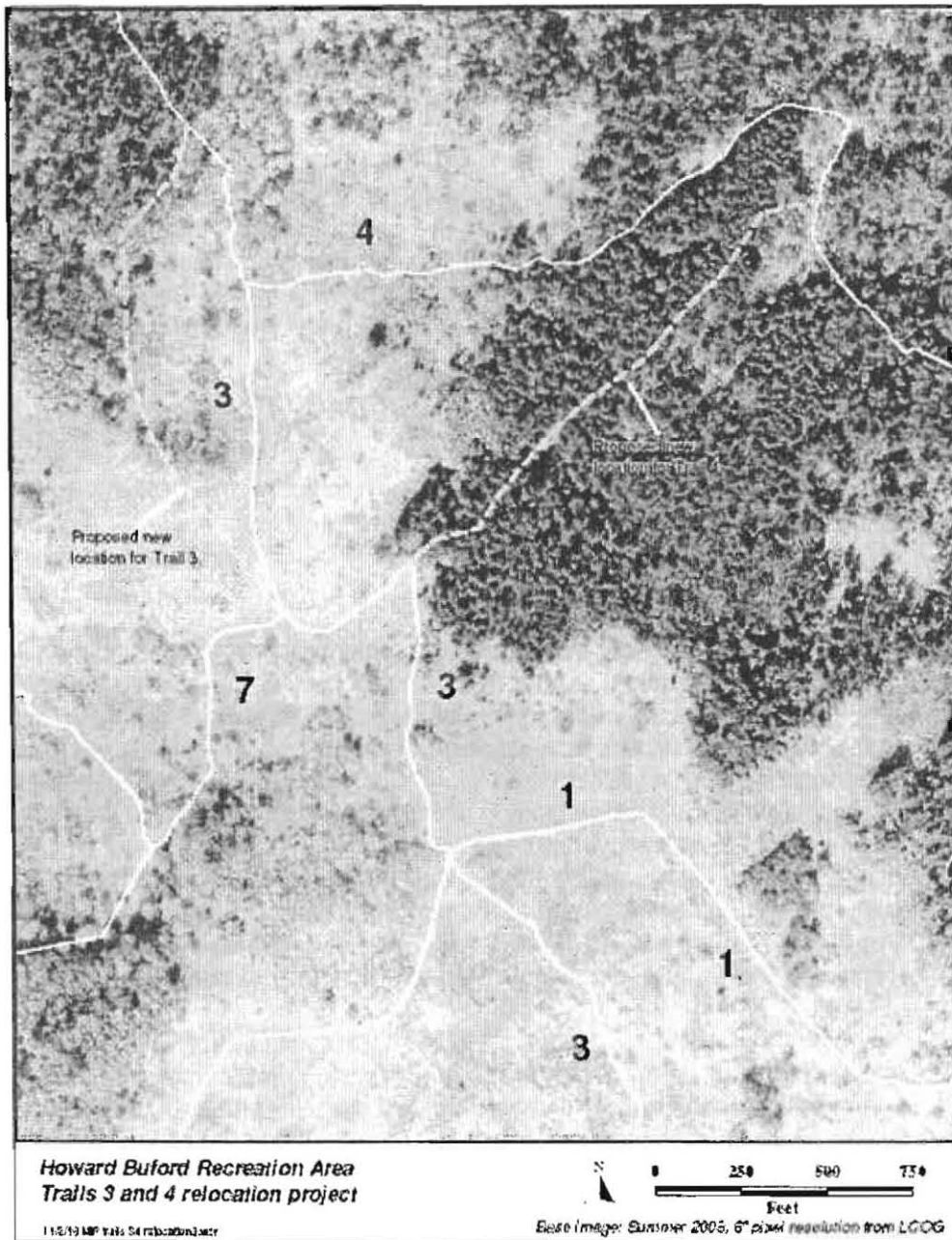
Attachment 2: Compilation of public comments

Attachment 1.

Howard Buford Recreation Area Trail Map with Project Area identified.



Map of Proposed Relocation Routes for Trails 3 and 4, and Existing Trails in the Vicinity.
(Proposed re-routes are shown in dashed yellow lines.)



Attachment 2

Compilation of excerpts of Public Comment for the Parks Advisory Committee meeting in May, 2011.

Date : 4/28/11

From: Larry L. Wilson

Subject : Proposal for Re – route trails 3 & 4 Howard Buford Recreation Area

I walked the existing trail system on 4/27/11 that the relocations for trails 3 and 4 would displace. I also walked the relocations for trails 3 and 4.

I am a retiree from the Forest Service working for 33 years and have consulted for the Forest Service, BLM, Willamalane and the City of Eugene for the past 12 years. I had planned, designed and administrated public work trail contracts for approximately 15 years with the Forest Service. The last 12 years I have been used as a consultant for the Forest Service, Willamalane and the City of Eugene doing similar trail work as when I was with the Forest Service.

I have read your trail alternative descriptions written on 11/16/10 concerning reconstructing or establishing new trail routes for a portion of trails 3 and 4. I will generally discuss my findings comparing the existing field conditions with the trail alternative descriptions written on November 16, 2010 by the Buford Park and Mt. Pisgah Trails Committee.

Trail 3

Reconstruction

Starting from the north walking south I noticed that a substantial portion of the existing trail is located on an old roadbed which seems to have a decent base (approximately 40% of the length). The remaining 60% seems softer with approximately 200' of boggy ground in which a horse would sunk up to their belly in winter type weather. This 200' section of boggy ground would require some excavation, then a well-drained crush quarry rock placed (3" minus) in this 200' area, probably 6" to 8" in depth. A large portion of the trail would be ditched with proper drainage ditches, pipes or other drainage structures installed.

The first 40% of the trail could be reshaped, ditched where needed with proper drainage. A ¾" minus crushed surface rock would be applied to a compacted depth of 3" in this first section. The remaining 60% of trail is recommended to have 1 ½" crushed rock at a 3" compacted depth with a surface 2" compacted depth of ¾" minus crushed rock for a tread surface.

Relocation

Most of this trail would be in the open area with approximately 30 percent under a tree canopy. The remaining 70% in open area has numerous wet sections requiring large 3" minus crushed rock, depth 6 to 8 inches compacted to provide subgrade strength. I would recommend a 3" compacted crush 1 ½" minus crushed rock base with a 2" layer of compacted ¾" crushed rock tread to support the equestrian and hiker traffic. The recommendation in the alternative description of 3" of un-compacted rock is equivalent to about 2" compacted depth, not nearly enough to give any kind of strength to the trail bed surface. This would create a trail that is not constructed to support the traffic and would end up being a muddy trench.

Recommendation

Repair existing Trail 3 to a standard to support the equestrian and hiker traffic and not create another trail that will turn into a boggy strip especially if the proper amount of rock is not placed

on the trail bed. From what I observed off site sedimentation into the Middle Fork from the existing trail is not a concern.

Trail 4

Reconstruction

Approximately ½ the length of the existing trail 4 traverses mostly up a steep grade, in some places up the fall line. This section of trail is very trenched and muddy with poor drainage. This portion of the trail is in a location that if repaired would require high maintenance in the future because of the poor location. If rebuilt the first ½ length would require some special drainage sections such as check dams, turnpikes, ditches, 3" minus crushed rock for subgrade support in sections, and other special drainage requirements. After the subgrade and drainage was corrected, then I recommend 1 ½" minus crushed quarry rock at a depth of 3" compacted for a base, then ¾" crushed gravel at a depth of 2" for the trail tread.

The last ½ of the trail is on a good location and would require excavation to provide a proper drainage by eliminating the trench and providing outlet ditches for drainage. There would be quite a bit of excavation required to provide the proper trail template, then as a minimum 4" of compacted ¾" minus crushed rock applied to handle the equestrian and hiker traffic.

Relocation

I walked the relocation as described in the alternative write up. The side slopes vary from 30 percent with a large portion of the length with side slopes of 40 to 50 percent. The clearing and excavation would require approximately 560 person hours of hand work. The trail should be constructed without fills or full bench especially since the trail will be used for equestrian and hiker traffic. Due to the steepness of the side slopes, turnouts should be required for passing lanes with the hiker and equestrian mix of traffic. The excavation would be a tough project for volunteer crews.

I would recommend the excavation be accomplished by a tracked backhoe to save the 560 hours of volunteer time involved in the clearing and excavation. A machine built trail will be better compacted providing a more stable trail base. I estimate if constructed by a contractor with a track backhoe including clearing and excavation it would be run approximately a cost of \$12,000.

I recommend 1 ½" minus crushed rock with a 3" compacted base be placed, then 2" of compacted ¾" crushed gravel to form a base to accommodate equestrian and hiker traffic.

Reconstruction & Relocation

It would be worthwhile to investigate relocating the first half the trail starting south of the existing trail 4 junction, traversing in a northeasterly direction to tie into the existing trail 4 at approximately the halfway point. The second half of existing trail 4 could then be reconstruction and the first half of the existing trail 4 could be obliteration.

This idea would still keep a separation between hiker and equestrian traffic and would construct less trail than in the total relocation alternative described in the trail alternative write up.

Recommendation

Investigate the **reconstruction & relocation** alternative as discussed in this letter. If this alternative works out on the ground, then this would be my recommended alternative.

My second choice would be to **reconstruct** the entire existing trail 4 not constructing new trail.

This trail alternative would still better separate the equestrian and hiker traffic as in the reconstruct & relocation alternative.

My last choice in the **relocation alternative** which relocates the trail 4 to within the timbered area on the steep side slopes. This alternative does not separate the hiker and equestrian traffic as in the first two recommendations and is the most time consuming and/or expensive alternative for trail 4.

Summary

I recommend no new trail construction/relocation be accomplished **unless the proper amount of crushed quarry gravel is placed on the excavated trails to accommodate the user traffic.**

From: Larry Norris
Sent: Saturday, May 28, 2011
Subject: Reroute of trails #3 and #4 at Mt Pisgah

I heard that you are taking suggestions concerning the re-route of trails #3 and #4 at Mt Pisgah. My partner, Kim Herrick and I are horseback riders, who ride and contribute to Mt Pisgah. Three times now, we have had a horse shoe sucked off and lost when traversing the existing trail in the creek bed in the boggy meadow. At least two friends have also reported lost shoes. Each time that happens it costs \$20 - \$30 to have a farrier come out and re-shoe the horse. We are for re-routing the trail higher on the hill. Thanks

From: Kathy Heerema
Sent: Sunday, May 08, 2011
Subject: Trail Realignment Project

My husband and I support the proposal for realignment of Trails #3 & #4 in Buford Park. It would be nice to have these trails sited as to be more usable during the rainy season. This recreational area is a county gem and its year-round use should be encouraged.
Thank you,

From: Bill and Dianne
Sent: Sunday, May 08, 2011 3:34 PM
Subject: New Trails at Pisgah

Bill and I would like to offer our support for the new trails in development at Pisgah. We usually avoid that back section in the winter as it's too muddy. We've been hiking the "new" trail often and think it's a great idea. Bill Montgomery is a friend of ours and we're always supportive of his ideas. He's an amazing volunteer worker!

A huge issue for us is cows getting into the park. We have called the owner (number provided by the parks department) when we've seen them but it seems they are around most of the time these days. They have ruined the newly planned trail area for walking at this time. They will continue to ruin the trails every time they get into the park. It seems the owner just isn't all that concerned about it and there are no penalties for "grazing" his cows on the park land when they get through the fence. I talked with someone at the arboretum office and they said they have found 50 places the cows can get through the fence. We're not sure if it's the owner's

responsibility to see to fencing or the park department's. Either way, the cows continue to ruin the trails. If you are in a position to see something is done about this, please do. I hate seeing all the hard work ruined in one day by the cows.

Thanks,

From: Alan & Marcia Murphy
Sent: Saturday, May 07, 2011 9:58 PM
Subject: Trail #3 & #4 realignment

My name is Alan Murphy and I'm currently the Captain of the Lane County Sheriff's Mounted Posse. I have viewed the proposed re-route of trails 3 and 4 with the FBP trails committee and I have major concerns about some aspects of the plan. The day that I met with them we sat at the junction of trail 3 and 4 and discussed the whole issue of the poor footing on both trails in that vicinity and I understood there to be a consensus among those present that the primary problem was poor maintenance of existing trails rather than location of existing trails. Both of these trail re-alignments will require clearing a right of way, grading and surface work. The existing routes could be resurfaced, thereby avoiding the need to clear a new route through existing natural areas.

But, my two main concerns are the fact that a funnel effect is being created on trail #3 and that large conifers will be removed for the proposed new trail #4. The proposed new routes will bring four trails together at the head of the draw between the trail #7-#3 junction and the proposed new trail #4-#3 junction. This will concentrate all traffic on four trails, in both directions across the head of this meadow, which already sees heavy traffic. Then, the trail #4 proposal is to build a new trail requiring large trees being removed, a grade created and surfaced, and all just a few yards up hill from the current trail. I will concede that the current trail #4 at that location is in sad condition, but it would only require surface work. There is already a grade and wide clearance as it was once a logging road. I would ask that your committee encourage the FBP trails group to work on improving the existing trails rather than build new ones.

Thank you

From: Ann Tattersall
Sent: Thursday, May 05, 2011 3:04 PM
Subject: Trail Realignment Proposal

I think the trail realignment is a very good idea. Those seeps aren't going to go away (until the entire Willamette Valley dries up) so the problem needs to be solved by moving the trail. I'm sure there are more difficult and expensive ways to solve the problem, but there are unlikely to be any easier or cheaper solutions.

From: John Altshuler
Sent: Thursday, May 05, 2011 10:49 AM
Subject: Buford Park...

Please support Friends of the Trails and Buford Park's plans for this natural area so important to our community. The availability of protected natural settings available to everyone needs to be a

priority of the highest order or otherwise will fall at the hands of individual exposition of self interest and/or corporate greed. Money spent here at Buford Park, Mt. Pisgah and surrounding areas on protection, development and maintenance will be money well spent. Fortunately many members of our community feel as I do offering their time as volunteers but we need your help as well.

Thanks

From: Alice Stroud

Sent: Thursday, May 05, 2011 12:53 AM

Subject: Trail Realignment Project

I have a general comment about all the trail "improvements" I have seen lately, both at Buford Park (the trail that goes up from the parking lot if you turn left after crossing the bridge) and at the Ridgeline trail off of Dillard Road (Mt. Baldy). I do appreciate the intention of making the trails better, but - I really love to go barefoot, and gravel trails are AWFUL for bare feet! Not only for me and other human earth-lovers but also for dogs and deer and other small creatures. Dirt trails are SO much better, even if they're muddy! I was very happy with them the way they were before the "improvements." There are many health benefits from bare feet touching the earth, connecting us with the electromagnetic energy of the earth (which regular shoes insulate us from), besides that it just feels wonderful. So I have been frustrated when my favorite hiking places have become much worse than they were before, in the name of "improvements."

Thanks for considering my feedback.

From: Eric Cullander

Sent: Wednesday, May 04, 2011 8:10 PM

Subject: Trail Realignment Proposal

I'm part of the trail building crew at Buford and a frequent user of the park. It is truly a wonderful space and I'm appreciative of the foresight of the people who were responsible, many years ago, to create this space for inhabitants of the South Willamette Valley. However, I rarely use trails 3 & 4. I'm a pretty hardy soul and a little water or mud doesn't deter me from exploring. However, this old logging skid road is so unpleasant to use during the majority of the year that I stopped using it years ago. I love how we are improving the lower stretches and am in FULL SUPPORT of the realignment. To have the services of a retired professional hydrologist in redesigning the layout of the trails is truly a boon. He understands how water moves through the area and the realignment plans have benefited from his years of experience. Please encourage the alignment to proceed. The current trails are truly atrocious and I can't wait to help with the realignment. I know the people who will use the trail after the improvements will love the redesign.

Thanks for soliciting our opinions.

From: Ellen Cantor

Sent: Wednesday, May 04, 2011 7:38 PM

Subject: Trail Realignment Proposal

I'm writing in support of the HBRA Trail Realignment Proposal of trails 3 & 4. I hike these trails

a lot, and just experienced the goopiest foot I ever have had the unfortunate pleasure to undergo in all my many years of hiking--yes, right in the unavoidable seep on trail 3. This trail is especially lovely as it provides a more solitary hiking experience at Pisgah, lots of interesting birding, and the chance to loop through varied habitats. But that seep area has undergone much vegetative destruction and has become a pretty much uncrossable swamp for the winter and springtime hiker.

I was very pleased to hear of this well-thought out proposal and hope it will come to fruition.

From: michael james
 Sent: Wednesday, May 04, 2011 5:33 PM
 Subject: Trail

I strongly recommend the reorientation of the lower part of the north trail system. The acquisition of the Wildish lands signifies even greater use of this trail system will occur in the near future. The nature of these spring systems at the base of hills like Mt. Pisgah are such that drier zones are found near wetter zones. I don't think a lot of movement is necessary. Even if it is more than I surmise it will be beneficial to the surface hydrology to place the trail in an area that doesn't turn into a mudhole since that fine sediment eventually is washed somewhere during high precipitation events.

The following were contacted directly in addition to advertisements seeking input for this project:

Name	Affiliation
Jim Nelson	Friends of Buford Park
Alan Murphy	Lane County Sheriff's Posse
Tom LoCascio	Mount Pisgah Arboretum
Brad van Appel	Mount Pisgah Arboretum
Betty Jean Keele	Backcountry Horsemen of Oregon
Jeff Ziller	ODFW
Dan Bell	The Nature Conservancy
Melissa Olson	The Nature Conservancy
Jason Nuckols	The Nature Conservancy
Kelly Reis	ODFW
Scott Youngblood	OR Parks & Recreation Dept
Pam Reber	Coast Fork Willamette Watershed Council
Eve Montanaro	Middle Fork Willamette Watershed Council
Eugene Chapter	Oregon Equestrian Trails
Barb Kirchner	Backcountry Horseman of Oregon
Greg Wagenblast	ODFW
Jason Blazar	Friends of Buford Park
Hal Hushbeck	Friends of Buford Park
John Hartman	
Kathy Heerema	

Bill Sherman & Dianne Cunningham	
Ray Smith	
Evelyn Hess	
Ann Tattersall	
John Altshuler	
Alice Stroud	
Eric Cullander	
Ellen Cantor	
Michael James	
Nadine Batya	
Della Webb	
Barbara McKillip	Oregon Equestrian Trails
Tom Caples	
Bill Montgomery	Friends of Buford Park
Bruce Newhouse	
John Helmer	Neighbor