

MEETING NOTES

COOKS BUTTE TRAIL PLAN

MEETING #1

March 16, 2010

Attendees:

Michele Thompson

Brigitte Howley

Jan Holibaugh

Patt Thomas

Sally Dixon

Mel Campf

Marianne Zarkin, Landscape Architect (MZ)

Jim Slagle, Trail Consultant (JS)

After a brief description of the project goals and existing conditions, MZ described some options and opportunities for the trail system at Cooks Butte including:

- Relocate trail access points from Delenka Lane to ease the grades at the existing locations. Include a trail that would connect these two access points.
- Relocate trails within the park that are over 35% slope. This includes several trails south of the meadow. New trails would be sited to reduce slope thereby reducing erosion and drainage problems now seen on these trails. Abandoned trail beds will be revegetated with native plants.
- Remove redundant trails south of the meadow that run almost parallel to each other and are not far apart. These trails are problematic as they have too little grade so don't drain well. These trails then lead to trails that are up to 55% grade – too steep to maintain and that cause erosion.
- Explore the option of adding a trail from the ROW of Ridge Point Drive at the top of hill at the hammerhead where the road turns south. This trail would switchback up the hill and connect to the meadow.
- Relocate the trail at the south border of the park that currently runs immediately adjacent to fencing. By moving the trail up the hill from this fence, the hiking experience can be substantially improved.
- A trail could be added on the north side of the park connecting from the entrance at Palisades Crest Drive west to connect to the reservoir viewpoint and with the trails from Delenka Lane.

- Relocate the trail from lower Palisades Crest Drive that runs through private property (2390 Palisades Crest Drive) to the west approximately 100 feet to where the park corner meets the road right-of-way. This not only puts the trail totally on public property, but also improves the trail grade and drainage.
- Explore the opportunity to locate a small (4 to 6 cars) trailhead parking area in the park approximately 100 feet in from the end of Palisades Crest Drive.
- Add an ADA accessible trail from this trailhead to the northeast around to the meadow.
- Selective pruning of deciduous trees on the west side of the meadow will provide a better view of Mt. Hood from the meadow bench.

Here is a summary of the comments and discussion that followed the presentation:

- 1) Trail along the fence line at south end of park seems like a good idea. Some of the trees are falling over in this area.
- 2) Some people feel that there is not enough parking for Cooks Butte trail users. What about enlarging the parking lot for Stevens Meadow?
- 3) Indians used the meadow as a place to grow strawberries. It was a spiritual ground as well.
- 4) There are apple trees east of the meadow. In autumn these apples are often thrown down in to the yards of people who live adjacent to the park below this area.
- 5) Patt Thomas' property is adjacent to the meadow on the east side of the park. She experiences the apple vandalism mentioned in item 4 above. Teens in the meadow often harass her dog if she is in the backyard. She is also concerned about safety in the park. She hears and has seen teen parties, campfires in the woods south of the meadow, and people camping.
- 6) Jan Holibaugh lives in the old Emory house. She mentioned that the Emory's gave the property so that people could enjoy a wilderness experience.
- 7) Mel Campf lives next to the park at the entrance on Palisades. The park is an attractive nuisance. After sunset the park becomes a party spot and lover's lane. People have been known to party in the street outside the park. Neighbors constantly have to pick up trash left by these visitors. People coming to the end of the road to visit the park have backed into his fence, breaking it many times. He does not feel that the water tower should be more accessible as kids are already trying to break in.
- 8) Mr. Campf feels that part of the problem with Palisades is that there is no turn around at the end of the street. So if the City were to put in a parking lot – it needs to be large enough for 12 cars and include a turnaround large enough to accommodate trucks.
- 9) Ms. Thomas feels that the City should not make this park a bigger attraction – there is not enough access on the narrow, winding streets surrounding the park.

- 10) Brigitte Howley lives on the west side of the park and has spoken with her neighbors. Their main concerns include keeping at least a few steep trails as they like to get a hiking experience and get some exercise. In addition, they are very concerned with the lack of follow through dog owners show by not cleaning up after their dogs. They want dogs to be allowed in the park, but suggest that more signage and plastic bag dispensers be provided at access points.
- 11) Why is the meadow considered a bird sanctuary? Last summer people noticed that the meadow grass was quite tall and very dried out and they were concerned about fire hazard. They spoke with someone at the Parks Dept. and were told because the meadow is considered a bird sanctuary, it would not be mowed often.
- 12) Many attendees felt that it would be great if the City could patrol the park more often. MZ mentioned the volunteer patrols at Mt. Tabor Park in Portland, formed by the Friends of Mt. Tabor Park. The group discussed the possibility of forming a friends group for Cooks Butte.
- 13) There was group consensus that mountain bikes should not be allowed. They tear up the trails, it is dangerous as they speed down the same trails as hikers, they freak out their dogs and the park is too small.
- 14) Every attendee expressed concern with the potential fire hazards the park presents. JS felt that there was not a large amount of fuel in the woodlands of the park. Some suggested that they'd like recommendations for the Fire Marshall as to how they can minimize their fire risks.
- 15) Is there a plan to revegetate the forest with native trees? In the 1950's the hillside was clear-cut and many 'junk' trees grew – such as cottonwood.
- 16) The Lake Oswego Hikers group could perhaps help on a restoration project at the park?
- 17) What is the City's plan for taking care of ivy? Perhaps the Neighborhood Association could help out, or Lakeridge H.S. students, boy scouts, or?
- 18) Poison oak is a problem especially at south edge of park – any plan to remove it?
- 19) Coyotes are becoming aggressive. People living near the park see them.
- 20) Mr. Campf gave a wrap up for the group: quietly rebuild the trails, don't advertise it. This is the only wild place in Lake Oswego – keep it that way.