

Mount Hood Chapter, PCTA Caretaker Meeting Minutes

November 4, 2018, 8:00 to noon

Location: Estacada Public Library

Attended: Bob, Jane, Pace, Thomas, Bill, Roberta, Kelley, Rob, Terry, Peter, John H, Leif, Frank, Diane, Kim, Tim, Susan, Steve P, Rosemary, Steve Q, Hilary, Underbucker, Tami, Brooke, Tammy, Ruth, Becky, Sway.

Notes: Kim Kovacs

Welcome

- **Greeting and thanks for coming**
- **There will be no meeting in December. Next meeting will be January 9, 2019**
- **Please sign Roberta's poster**
- **Agenda:**
 - **Gorge Fire**
 - **Caretaker sections – a high-level overview of what's been done, what needs to be done**
 - **Reflection – what we did right, what we could do better, what we want to do**

Gorge Fire

The big project of the year was the Gorge fire. Roberta reported on this area. They formed the Gorge Trails Recovery Team and received a National Forest Foundation Grant. This enabled them to hire Max. The funding for work on it only extends through the Gorge itself, plus the PCT to Wahtum Lake. The grant was to allow 50 days of work on the PCT and trails east of PCT ("Yellow" and "Red" trails on the Gorge map in PowerPoint slide #2). Roberta reported that they put in 53 work projects before Max joined them with over 100 total. Roberta reported they worked on 18 trails all together.

Herman Creek was approved as an alternate PCT route. They cleared the "Griz" 2 miles up on Gorton Creek Trail over four projects.

The Middle Eagle Creek Trail was scouted later this season. Between Fern Creek Bridge and High Bridge there's no information. Bridges will need to be helicoptered in. There's no plan to work on Eagle Creek Trail until next year. The first quarter-mile of the trail will be the last to have work done on it to keep people out.

Due to the Oneonta rockfall ODOT decided postpone the opening of the Old Columbia River Highway.

Trails west of Multnomah Falls we hope to be open by the end of the year.

Leif suggested going to Indian Springs. You can see the mosaic quality of the fire from there – it's a good overlook.

Caretaker Sections

Pace (Robert Caldwell) put together the numbers, and they reflect work done from January 1 to October 31, 2018. The numbers may look odd here because of reporting differences across crew leaders.

David Roe asked about getting number of logs added into the report. He would especially like it broken out by crosscut and chain saw. He felt the time it takes to cut by crosscut is crucial to the planning, since it takes four times longer than by chainsaw. Leif said this was unlikely. Being aware of which areas are wilderness should help, since chainsaws aren't permitted. It would definitely help to know which areas required crosscutting so we know the value of crosscut training. Dana confirmed that having it broken across by Wilderness would be a good substitute.

Klickitat District

Brooke Stevinson reported on Mount Adams North. There were not many logs they needed to clear, just 6 trees over 11.6 miles. The trail was well-maintained especially south of the High Line Trail to the south Boundary. The forest service did a lot of work. Biggest challenge is access to the areas that need work. To maintain the south end we'll have to do an

overnight. There's a challenging water crossing at the junction that's too dangerous to take volunteers over. Questions were asked as to whether there was anything that could be done to improve the water crossing. The consensus was that there's really no way. It's the headwaters of the Lewis River and very broad (50 yards bank to bank), kind of like the Sandy. It also keeps changing.

A branch conversation about the "district" terminology conflicting with the USFS ranger districts. Steve said it was created originally to make the web page more usable and he liked "District" so that's why the term is currently used.

Bob Arkes reported on Mt. Adams South. There's not a lot of work to do on this section, although the area that does need work, is difficult to access, and may require pack animals. There's about a 4.5 mile climb up the shoulder to a meadow, which isn't as bad as Indian Heaven but does need work. The main problem is logistics since getting in takes a lot of time. It will have to be at least 1 overnight. The work they've done has held up well, though.

Jane Arkes reported on the Gateway to Mount Adams. She feels the trail has been pretty well maintained. She and Bob have discussed expanding her section from Road 23 to the Wilderness boundary. She'd like one crew that would do nothing but "cut & run", and then a big crew to come in for tread work. There are 80 drain dips that need maintenance. Some should be retired. It would also free up crews to work on areas where trees are about to fall.

Steamboat section is vacant.

Indian Heaven District

Thomas Calvery reported on the Indian Heaven South section. There is an issue north of Crest Camp. The trail is relatively flat but does go uphill. It's eroding and there's no place for drain dips. There was some discussion about potentially putting in steps or rerouting the trail. Steve suggested talking to Bill Hawley regarding the trail's history. He asked if it's stable, and Thomas said it was, but that water is still running down. In the Spring, the meadows in the area turn into lakes; it's too far to reach in one day so the work will require an overnight next summer.

Bill Canavan reported on the Big Huckleberry section. He mentioned that there's a section about 5 miles in that needs to be brushed, right in the middle of the section. It's a "piece of cake" on either side, in good shape. He also mentioned a spring that needs to be cleared every year. People depend on it, it's an important stop on the trail and is documented.

Tami Sheets reported on the Sedum Ridge section. She said it was a good year with lots of good work. Terry's been out on every crew and has earned the nickname of "the Badger." She finds the worst spot possible and leaves him to it. In the last four years they've managed to work on about half of the section. Access is an issue, and the top definitely needs some work.

Gorge District

Sue Malone said she started working on the Three Corner Rock section late in the season and was out five times. It's in pretty good shape with no logs. There were three deep creek beds that were bone dry but look like they're busy in the winter. Crossing is difficult as there are no steps down/up. She'd like to get there during the rainy season to assess it. There's also a section with a long drop-off held up by logs. There's some erosion there and it will need some maintenance. It's not urgent but it should be worked on. The next section is kind of unknown.

David Roe talked about the Table Mountain section. It wasn't logged out this year and there's no reliable information on it. The Department of Natural Resources kept closing and opening roads unpredictably for logging operations, and the access from the former Bonneville Hot Springs is no longer available. There is access from the east from Skamania Lodge but the road is very bad, requiring a four-wheel drive/high clearance vehicle, with about four parking spots at the end. David didn't think the logs were an issue, the problem is the brush. In some places the trail is too overgrown for hikers. It's not recommended for horses and impassible for mules. Next year brushing will be the highest priority. He couldn't even assess the tread because of the brush. It's bad from the powerline area down past the junction with the Table Mountain trail toward Papoose Rock. A crew party could be supplied from the middle.

Frank Jahn reported on the Gillette Lake section. Much of it gets loving all year round, to the point that it's being loved to death. One challenge is poison oak on the trail. He spoke about bad drainage issues on the Tamanous trail and the need to install a turnpike there. He would like to talk to someone about a really muddy section; they did a lot of work on it but after one good rain it was a swamp again. The lower section gets a lot of attention so it is fine. Farther up there's a gated

road to which we now have access, but it's not good for small cars. The upper section is also in pretty good shape. It's been logged out, and the tread is in decent shape although it may not be up to spec. He mentioned that we need new signs in the area; people are adding their own.

Roberta Cobb was next up for the Bridge of the Gods Oregon Side section. There were 14 crews on her trail and they covered 4.4 miles. The biggest challenge was that it's the first part of the burn area. Overall it's in good shape, and they're bringing it up to spec. It's become very busy/popular.

Kelley Davis spoke about the Teakettle Springs section. The biggest challenge is the steepness and rocks. She hasn't been up there in a bit, but she knows the tread needs to be widened for horses. It's also not good because it's steep, with narrow, tight switchbacks, and the dropoff looks more exposed now because of the burn. Herman Creek is a good alternative for horses.

Bull Run District

Hillary Renshaw said her section, Benson Plateau, would be hard without Max next year. It's very limited time-wise, and said that a shuttle system would help, especially for accessing the middle section. An overnight at Benson Plateau helped. It's just a matter of time, and more shuttle crews next year would help, since it's a 2.5-hour drive to Wahtum Lake.

Leif Hovin reported on Wahtum Lake, Waucoma Ridge and Lolo Pass North. He said the biggest problem is access. The worst area is four miles in, making for a long day. We lost a huge amount of expertise and knowledge when Ken Kollas retired. There's a large section of crumbling rock that needs attention, and it needs to be made more horse friendly. Reconstruction was done by Roger Bell who retired some time ago; you can really see the work. Steve has historical records of the work done and can put it on the web site.

Peter Hoffman spoke about Lolo Pass South. He said it was an easy section because it's the shortest with access via Lolo Pass. There weren't too many challenges. It was worked by a New Seasons crew this year. There are some switchbacks that have a little erosion on the corners. It's not bad but could use some work. The trail at the top has encroaching salmonberry. They did some work there, but the area needs more of that. It's not an area that'll take a huge crew.

Wy'east District

Robert Caldwell reported on the Muddy Fork section. They took 10 crews in this year. The lower access from Ramona Falls is a good place to work early season. There were about a dozen old-style water bars on the north segment we made into drainage dips. There was a washout last year forcing a reroute on the north side of the river crossing; it is good for hikers but needs to be improved for horses. There is likely some erosion going on around the logs hikers use at the river crossing that may eventually cause them to wash out. On the south part from Old Maid Flats toward Ramona Falls we worked on the tread and drainage and it's looking much better but it's so level it's hard to get the water off. Another problem is access across the Sandy, which changes every year. Overall it looks pretty good, although it needs more drainage.

Robert Heyman spoke about issues in the Rushing Water section. Half the year it's under 10' of snow, which means late access to the top end. Access across the Sandy is the primary way. They did get all the logs cleared out but it still needs brushing, especially through the meadows. There's also an issue with a landslide that's caused hikers to skirt the section, and it's not passable for horses. Not sure if the trail should be rerouted over the top or if we should spoon 10 yards of dirt out of the trail. A reroute would require working with the Forest Service. We need to go out and scout it.

Ruth Weston, Timberline North, said she had the best section with the best access and best views. The section needs brushing at the northern end, but they were able to get the logs at Paradise Park cleared out. Getting horses up the steep slope of Zigzag Canyon can be a challenge.

David Roe reported on the Twin Lakes area. He said it was straightforward with very little windfall that took just two crews to remove. They also logged out the Twin Lakes Trail, a PCT alternative. They later did significant drainage work, but it was also straightforward because there was very little rain this summer. Most of the erosion was due to snow melt. He mentioned that it helps if crews clear out the drains at the end of the season in preparation. In addition, he sent a crew up Palmateer Trail to eradicate hand-painted route arrows (the Forest Service did this last year & asked PCTA to do it this

year). We painted over 150 trees that were “tagged.” The Forest Service will post a sign telling people it's illegal to do that (as well as put up cairns). The blue diamonds along the PCT in the section are falling off and aren't being replaced, leading to confusion. We're having difficulty clarifying what can be put up, as the Forest Service manual isn't explicit on winter trail markings. David also said that if people are doing things like this it's because it's not marked properly. There must be a compromise, and we'll advocate for blue diamonds at the upcoming meeting in November.

Steve Plant spoke about the Little Crater Lake section. Dana brought youth groups to his section this year, and he hasn't seen what's been done. Someone said there's still a lot of work to do, especially cutting back the rhodies on the trail. It needs a week-long crew in there. Steve also mentioned that the first two miles south of 26 are showing some sloughing and the tread needs work. Huckleberries and rhodies need to be cut back.

Tim Lagasse reported on the Timothy Lake section. He took out three crews, one of which sponsored by PGE. They improved long areas of trail, filled a huge hold, built turnpikes and a bridge rail. Things are looking pretty good. He did discover a new appreciation of the importance of clear trail when walking his horse downhill at one point.

Olallie District

Tim continued with the Warm Springs section. From Warm Springs north there are drainage issues and brushing needs to happen. There's a lot of encroaching salal 3-4 miles outside Clackamas Lake to the south. He said a styling crew needs to go up there. He took care of the brushing needs. North of the river to Pinhead got cleared out.

Becky Wolf reported on Pinhead Buttes, Warm Springs South and Olallie Lake. The drainage going up Pinheads looks good. There were probably close to 300 logs on Tim, Jerry and her section which they cleared out in one long weekend. She has concerns about the signs in that area. She ran into Todd from a running club who was putting up signs. On the Reservation the PCT crosses lots of roads but there are no signs; consequently bikes inadvertently end up on the PCT. The person with the illegal concession at Olallie is gone. Her section can always use brushing and tread work.

Alternate Trails

Susan McDonnell talked about Middle Eagle Creek having access issues, needing 2-3 nights to get 1 day of work in. Will be moving a lot of rock next year.

Pace said he went with Max to Indian Springs and did some brushing and tread work. The upper section is fine but the lower section is pretty bad. You can follow the trail down to Eagle Creek now. A youth group was out there and improved it.

He also reported on the Upper Muddy Fork section. He took six crews to the Upper Muddy Fork. There are several active slide areas on the north and south sides of the Upper Muddy Fork River. On the north side it's mostly sloughing that has to be cleared. On the south side the slides are more active. The middle section needs brushing, and he hopes to do an overnight there next year. There's also a small bridge just north of Ramona Falls that needs to be rebuilt. He said he has the same issue as many others: access.

The Forest Service brushed out Top Spur Road. Because they were replacing a culvert on Lolo Pass Road they had to improve Top Spur since it was the alternate. Steve mentioned that the Upper Muddy Fork route used to be the PCT until the late 90s; it was moved because of the slides Pace is talking about.

Feeder and Side Trails

Leif reported that he and Omar did a lot of logging on the Chinidere Mountain Trail. A lot of brushing needs to be done but we never committed to doing more than logging it and making it passable.

There's not much going on at Buck Peak.

Huckleberry Mountain from Lost Lake should be horse-accessible; it seems to be in really good shape.

Pace talked about Top Spur: New drains were created and existing ones cleared. They also filled in rutted sections. The turnpike in the middle of Top Spur needs work.

Sandy River: We added more drains. A reroute that was put in a couple of years ago is looking good. The old trail was blocked off but someone removed the material placed there trying to re-open it. We replaced the closure and it was still closed at last check.

The Forest Service put a week of logout into it with the help of a horse crew to remove the pileup on the Paradise Park Trail.

Leif asked for any last comments.

Dana wanted to mention drainage issues. Someone said the three enemies of a healthy trail tread are water, water and water. Water running down the middle of a trail is not OK. If you're not sure how to get water off the trail, invite a "water geek" out with you. It would also be good to have a drainage class at the Trail Skills College. After brushing our next step is to become drainage geeks. Not only is it important to get the water off the trail, but you need to look at where you're sending it. Pace mentioned that the outflows of the drains are frequently getting filled with cut trees. Make sure logs don't end up where drains are or should be. The same is true with brushing. He felt sawyers should go through a drain class before they're allowed to cut.

Tammy Turner spoke about the tabling training event she held with Emily on October 22nd. It went well. There were 7 or 8 attendees, most of whom are current caretakers. The training goes over what to say, what's expected, and provide a guidebook. There are hints about how to engage people, and tabling kits are available with materials. The idea is to have everyone saying more or less the same thing. They're hoping to have at least two online webinars by Christmas to get others trained. There is a need for a couple other people who will work with Tammy to help with getting materials to tabling events and maybe even set up tabling events. There will be a lot of tabling events coming up, and the more people that are trained before Tammy is gone in March, the better.

Caretaker Review/Reflection

Operations

Leif asked about what's been going well, what could be better.

Pace mentioned that getting crew is a challenge, especially late in the season. He has difficulty filling crews and has a lot of cancellations and no-shows. He felt it seems worse this year. Dana also said that Max was having the same problem. It was suggested that if there's a specific crew that isn't filled that they talk to Emily, who can do social media for them and get crews filled; e-mail alone isn't enough. Roberta said that it's not unusual to have trouble filling crews in the late summer.

Terry suggest that when volunteers sign up they respond to specific questions that will help them feel more obligated to show up, like "Do you need a hard hat?" Then they'll know we're doing prep work. Leif said that there's some buy-in for that. Frank mentioned that we could put in a statement like, "Please contact me if you won't be able to attend so I don't bring tools for you or wait for you at the trailhead." An e-mail the night before might help. Personalizing the email is critical; the Eventbrite reminder is impersonal.

Someone also mentioned that we need to add difficulty levels to the trail party descriptions. They've had cases where someone wasn't up for the work and had to be escorted out. We need to be blunt, adding not only elevation gain and mileage but the strenuousness of the work.

When asked about what happens to the information on the signup sheets: "I would like to learn more about the PCTA' Volunteer Opportunities 1: Other Opportunities (invitations, trail news), 2) Other Opportunities (invitations, trail news), and 3) No thanks, just email me with PCTA's Mt Hood Chapter updates." Roberta said that we don't do a good job of following up. There's no mechanism to do adds to Mailchimp. The form gets sent to Sacramento and we don't see it. (11/27/2018 Follow-up by Ellen Ginda: "I enter those email addresses (plus all the other info) into Raiser's Edge as best I can when processing project reports. Once the MHC/PCTA email exchange is in place, you guys will get all those emails.")

Someone suggested partnering with other groups and sharing e-mail addresses. Steve said that we don't share our email addresses with other groups and it's only now that we have established an exchange of addresses with Sacramento.

Jane and Bob said they have a group of 4-50 people with whom they've worked in the past and do good work – a list of people they can rely on. Roberta expressed concern about the practice of crew leaders maintaining their own lists. Steve suggested that everyone on the personal list should be on our main list.

Becky mentioned access is also an issue getting into Olallie. The roads have gotten really bad going into the area in the past three years, and they can't get people in there as a result. She can't go to the November meeting but would like this mentioned. She felt it needs to be fixed since they can't even get a fire truck in there. Tim mentioned that the Forest Service knows the road is bad but aren't willing to do anything about it. They purposely delay fixing roads because it limits access to an area.

Tim went on to say that the partnership crews are going very well, especially in the equestrian section. The Backcountry Horsemen's Hotshot team goes around the state doing logout projects and they've been a big help.

Someone asked if we have distribution lists for specific jobs, such as camp host, packer, tabling, etc.? There are some, but not specific. If there's a need for an e-mail to go out to a specific group, bring it up at a Caretaker meeting.

People were reminded for planning purposes that there will be more blow down each year until 7 years after the fire, at which point it'll diminish. It may be worse next year because of bark beetle activity due to the mild winter.

The Sandy River crossing is a continual challenge because it changes every year.

Tami discussed water. She has no water available on her ridge. She looked into sturdy containers and high-clearance trailers to haul in water. She said that water is a tool, and we have a tool budget. Over the next few months she'd like the group to think of a way to get water to those remote areas. In Roberta's cache there are plastic containers and filters, but she can't get filled containers out of her car easily, and then there's the need to pack the water in.

Someone suggested compiling a list of possible shuttle drivers – people with four-wheel drive and higher clearance who don't want to do trail work. They could take 3-4 people in. Tim wondered if trail runners might be willing to run back and forth bringing in supplies. Or maybe we could compile a list of possible "Sherpas"? We may look at a way to advertise for these folks.

Pace mentioned the vacant sections. Should we try to do some planning on these vacant sections until we get someone to adopt them so they don't deteriorate? Leif said the planning should start with a scouting expedition. Pace mentioned that perhaps we should have someone on our group to help coordinate who will work on those sections. They don't have to do it themselves, just coordinate. Without this effort, these sections will just keep getting worse. Sue Malone volunteered to be this person.

There was discussion of a dwindling supply of crew leaders who don't have areas. Most have become caretakers. We need to start getting more individuals recruited as assistant crew leaders and work on mentorship.

Training Needs

Regarding first aid and CPR, recertification is every two years and we are in the middle year right now, so there's no plan to put on those classes at this point. There is interest in wilderness first aid. Dana said that Marijka may be willing to put on a WFA course for us. It would not be free, but it would be cheaper than paying for it outside of PCTA. Skamania County EMS has a one-day course that's \$75 (\$100 w/ CPR). The longer class is preferred, though, as it allows practicing the skills during a simulation. There was some discussion of having a class like this at Trails Skill College, but many of the people who'd like to take the course are teaching and can't take it then.

Someone wondered if we can find some end-of-the-year funds for training. We haven't budgeted for WFA this year. Could we buy a program and then get a volunteer trainer? It was thought the first aid materials weren't expensive. We have CPR manikins stored at the Walking Man cache. Should we cooperate between groups? The issue is the cost, since a full WFA class is expensive. Maybe REI could offer a discount? It's too expensive for PCTA to cover per person out of budget. Perhaps we could get a local medical group to help? Maybe a doctor could teach at Trails Skill College? Perhaps the National Guard would have resources and would be willing to put on a class? Leif said that these programs may exist, but they have no community outreach that would allow us to take advantage of them.

Roberta brought out the portable AED donated by Lamar's widow. She said that we're welcome to start taking it on the trail. She's thinking of keeping it at the Portland cache. It weighs four pounds, so it may work best on parties with horses. Someone recommended bringing it to our larger events since many of our volunteers are over 65.

Leif asked if a rigging class would be worthwhile. Should it be held in a classroom or in the field? Most felt it would be more useful in the field.

Mentorship

Bill Canavan mentioned the need for crew leader development in the first half of the year. He's not getting information on who's been out often. If we had better information about those who've been out multiple times we could contact those people about being crew leaders. Pace believes he can provide this information. He'll make a list of names by number of trips. Leif also suggested that while on trips, the crew leaders keep an eye out for people who seem to know what they're doing since we're not all seeing the same people.

Someone asked if there is any way to have a list of problem people? Tammy used to maintain a "naughty list" as well as a list of chronic no-shows. Ellen does keep track of no-shows if the crew leader tracks it on their sheet. WTA has a watchlist as well.

It was suggested that we pair up crew leaders with caretakers to build a pool of skills. It would be helpful to know who's willing to be a mentor. Leif also thought it would be helpful to do a poll to see where people's skills are. Someone also suggested that trips can be characterized as learning opportunities.

Leadership Roles

Open are the Assistant Chair position and the Volunteer Saw Instructor. Tammy is looking for someone to assist with the Trails Skill College, and she'd like to eventually pass the job off to this person. She will be gone from March through October and needs someone to be the temporary Outreach and Event Coordinator. She would be happy to train that person.

Closing

Don't forget to sign Roberta's poster

What's the date of the annual celebration? Would like to have it late January or the Saturday Super Bowl Sunday. There's also an equestrian event regarding that we need to plan around.

April 12-13-14 is the Trail Skills College

April 26-27-28 is the Saw Skills training

Adjourned at noon for lunch.