

Everyone- FYI

-Elaine

-----Original Message-----

From: Rennis, Denise [<mailto:rennid@portptld.com>]

Sent: Wednesday, August 14, 2002 9:52 AM

To: 'Elaine Stewart'; 'Nancy Hendrickson'

Subject: Submittal of 40 mile loop LUR application

You may already know this from Gerry, but the 40 mile loop application was submitted to OPDR last week while I was on vacation. The usual process is for OPDR to review for completeness. Records show they ALWAYS have more questions and we expect to get this returned. Then, after they are satisfied all the information is there, they put it out for public comment. So, don't expect to be seeing anything from them for a while. I will try and let you know when we have heard that it is going out for public comment.

**Smith & Bybee Lakes Wildlife Area  
Management Committee**

**Metro**

600 NE Grand Ave.  
Portland, OR 97232  
(503) 797-1515

April 11, 2003

David Bragdon  
President, Metro Council  
Metro  
600 NE Grand Avenue  
Portland, Oregon 97232-2736

Dear President Bragdon,

The Smith and Bybee Lakes Management Committee (SBLMC) has been interested in the issues surrounding public trails and their alignment, construction and management for some time. Metro, the City of Portland, and the Port of Portland have discussed the trail issue for many years without resolution. In order to assist in finding a solution, the SBLMC designated a trail subcommittee, which met four times between October 2002 and February 2003. The subcommittee forwarded its unanimous recommendations to the SBLMC, which adopted them unanimously on February 25, 2003.

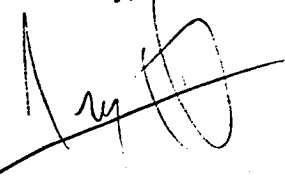
The recommendations include:

- A suggested alignment onto and around the St. Johns Landfill, connecting to the community of St. Johns,
- A feasibility study to determine whether a trail segment is necessary between the landfill and North Portland Road, and what alignment it should follow,
- Best management practices and performance standards to be followed in aligning, building and managing trails.

Our recommendations are the result of considerable time, effort and compromise by people on all sides of the trail issue. We hope that these recommendations can provide Metro with a framework within which to find the solution. The SBLMC encourages Metro to work with the City of Portland on the feasibility study as soon as possible – this issue has languished for many years and a resolution is needed.

Please do not hesitate to contact me at (503) 249-0482 if you would like to discuss this further.

Sincerely,



Troy Clark  
Vice Chair

**Trail Subcommittee**  
**Recommendations to Management Committee**  
February 25, 2003

Trail subcommittee members (attending at least 1 of 4 meetings):

Pam Arden	40-mile Loop Trust
Troy Clark	Audubon Society of Portland
Nancy Hendrickson	Portland Bureau of Environmental Services
Holly Michael	Oregon Dept. Fish and Wildlife
Emily Roth	The Wetlands Conservancy
Denise Rennis	Port of Portland
Jim Sjulín	Portland Parks and Recreation

**1. Alignment – segment from the confluence of North and Columbia sloughs to the landfill bridge**

Subcommittee members reached consensus regarding alignment of the trail segment from the confluence of North and Columbia sloughs to the landfill bridge. This segment would pass over the North Slough and along the west side of the St. Johns Landfill, on the landfill perimeter road. A loop or spur could be used to take trail users a short distance onto the landfill dome in the northwest corner, using another existing road on the landfill. This consensus alignment has several important positive points:

- Minimizes habitat fragmentation (leaving most of the landfill untouched)
- Avoids sensitive habitat on the south side of Bybee Lake
- Provides a good view opportunity from the landfill dome
- Provides a good experience for trail users
- Has connectivity to St. Johns and a trail to be routed in that community.

The aerial photo used in the meeting shows the trail alignment around the west side of the landfill, with a zone outlined where the trail could go one of three ways in the northwest corner:

1. Spur trail up onto the dome
2. Main trail up onto the dome
3. Trail stays on perimeter road and does not go up onto the dome.

**2. Alignment – segment from the landfill bridge to North Portland Road**

The group did not reach consensus regarding this segment, or even the need for it. The discussion began with a question whether this trail segment was necessary. On the “pro” side, it would provide a quality experience for trail users and take them along the slough as it does for much of the rest of the route in the Columbia Slough watershed. On the “con” side, it would cause fragmentation of important riparian habitat, taking trail users right through the riparian zone of the slough.

A route along the south side of the Columbia Slough was discussed, with questions regarding its viability. For example, there are many property owners involved. The group agreed that this route would need more investigation.

The group saw four options for this trail segment:

1. No trail segment in this area
2. Mode split, with the south side of Smith Lake pedestrian-only (bicycles go over the landfill bridge to another alignment)
3. Mode split, pedestrian trail follows south side of Columbia Slough (bicycles go to another alignment)
4. No mode split, pedestrians and bicyclists follow trail on south side of Columbia Slough.

Issues identified for the alignment on the south side of Smith Lake included the grade change from the landfill to the natural area (how to make it ADA-accessible), questions regarding the cooperation of property owners, and potential issues of wetland fill. Other issues included what standards would be appropriate for this segment (width, surface type) and what ADA requirements might be. The group also discussed whether this trail alignment could be different than the route taken by maintenance vehicles, and whether this segment could be open seasonally.

Some of the same issues were identified for siting a trail on the south side of the Columbia Slough, including questions regarding the cooperation of property owners. The bridge at North Portland Road was seen as a potential major obstacle to a trail alignment in this area. The group was unsure whether it would be logistically possible to locate the trail on the south side of the slough. Allowing bicycles on the south side remains an open question also.

The trail subcommittee recommended that additional work be done to evaluate four alternatives:

1. No trail connection from the landfill to North Portland Road (allow another trail alignment through the community of St. Johns to provide connectivity),
2. Trail alignment on the south side of Smith Lake (north side of Columbia Slough),
3. Trail alignment on the south side of the Columbia Slough,
4. Trail alignment along Columbia Boulevard.

The group acknowledged that evaluating the feasibility of these four options is more work than could be done by staff and the subcommittee. They recommended that Metro work with the City of Portland, via the IGA under discussion or some other manner, to perform this feasibility study.

### **3. Best Management Practices and Performance Standards**

The subcommittee began a list of BMPs at its meeting on November 20, 2002. All of the concepts discussed at that meeting are important, and the subcommittee agreed that they require careful balancing of sometimes-conflicting needs.

Below is the list from November 20, 2002, with new concepts added from the February 6, 2003, meeting. The practices (or sometimes concepts) are arranged by relevant area – general principles, alignment, design, construction and management.

## **General principles**

- From the Colorado trail planning guide\*:
  - Any trail will have at least some negative impacts on wildlife, which must be weighed with the benefits of the trail.
  - Don't focus solely on the narrow width of the trail's treadway – also consider the wider area it may influence.
  - Trail corridors may encourage edge-loving generalists, but these species are already increasing across the landscape and may not need encouraging.
  - Trails may negatively affect species that need conditions that are altered in trail construction.
  - It is easier to balance competing wildlife and recreation needs across a landscape or region than it is on a specific trail project within a smaller area.
  - Plan a trail consistent with a regional or landscape-wide plan that identifies where trails should go and which areas should be conserved for wildlife.
  - Enlist the help of conservation advocates in planning trails, and find opportunities to integrate trails and open space planning.
  - Determine which species of interest actually occur in the area you are studying.
  - Use public support of trails to protect riparian corridors.
  - Because there isn't much detailed knowledge about the effects of human disturbance on wildlife, be cautious in planning a trail, carefully weighing the alternatives.
  - Use the best wildlife information available, even if it is scarce.
  - Generally, it is better to concentrate recreational use rather than disperse it.
  - Don't assume all wildlife impacts can be resolved through management.
  - In discussing trails and wildlife, avoid sweeping generalities about wildlife impacts that may not be possible to substantiate or even be true in a specific situation.
  - Scientific study doesn't reveal how the public values wildlife.
  - Invite broad public participation on every trail project.

## **Alignment**

- Site trails along habitat edges – don't create new edges and fragment the habitat.
- Site trails where the area is already receiving disturbance from recreation.
- Trails need to have connectivity.
- Use spurs where you want lower traffic.
- Minimize impacts to riparian habitat.
- No net fill of wetlands.
- Consider what you want users to get out of the trail experience – e.g., take them through different habitats and educate them.
- Consider what people are coming to S&B for – e.g., bicycling for health and passing through, or coming to see the site itself.
- Keep education focused at one place.
- Alignments have to be truly viable.
- Look at the broad area – where else do trails go, where is the riparian area.
- For alignments on or near the landfill, minimize health and safety risks to the public.
- Minimize risks to the landfill infrastructure.

- Locate trails in a way that minimizes interference to landfill staff performing their duties.
- Incorporate the City of Portland's comprehensive plan objectives regarding wildlife and trails. These are:
  - Conserve significant areas and encourage the creation of new areas which increase the variety and quantity of fish and wildlife throughout the urban area in a manner compatible with other urban development and activities [overall goal].
  - Regulate activities in natural resource areas which are deemed to be detrimental to the provision of food, water, and cover for fish and wildlife [natural resource areas].
  - Encourage the creation or enhancement of fish and wildlife habitat throughout the city [city-wide].
  - Protect existing habitat and, where appropriate, incorporate new fish and wildlife habitat elements into park plans and landscaping [city parks].
- Incorporate the objectives in the 40-mile Loop master plan. These are:
  - Provide a trail and open space system that connects existing parks and future parks into a visually and mentally comprehensible park system for the region's citizens and visitors.
  - Plan and encourage neighborhood and community access to the 40 Mile Loop.
  - Serve as a "hub" for long distance regional and state trails including the Lower Elevation Columbia River Gorge Trail, the Portland to the Coast Trail and the Sandy River Gorge Trail.
  - Help protect and utilize the natural resources and physically attractive aspects of the urban environment.
- From the Colorado trail planning guide:
  - Seek out degraded areas that have the potential to be restored when aligning a trail, rather than creating another disturbed area.
  - Site a trail where there are already human-created disturbances or in areas of less sensitive habitat.
  - Align a trail along or near an existing human-created ecological edge, rather than bisecting undisturbed areas.
  - When possible, leave untouched large, undisturbed areas of wildlife habitat.
  - Keep a trail – and its zone of influence – away from specific areas of known sensitive species, populations, or communities.
  - Even within a single type of habitat, some elements may be of greater importance to wildlife than others.
  - Locate trails and supporting facilities in areas where they can be screened and separated from sensitive wildlife by vegetation or topography.
  - Provide trail experiences that are diverse and interesting enough that recreationists are less inclined to create their own trails and thereby expand the zone of influence.
  - Keep the density of trails lower within and near pristine or other high quality areas to reduce the contribution of trails to fragmentation.
  - Avoid small patches of high quality habitat in routing a trail.
  - Avoid smaller, isolated patches when laying out a trail, but do give users an experience of the varied landscape.
  - Avoid patches that are habitat for threatened, endangered, or other species of concern.
  - Analyze the landscape noting the patches, corridors, and matrix – the landscape structure – as they might be used by species of special interest.

- Minimize the number of times prominent landscape corridors – such as riparian zones – are crossed by a trail.
- For both habitat and maintenance reasons, it is better to run a trail just outside the riparian area (perhaps on a topographic bench) and bring it in at strategic places, than to keep it continuously close to a riparian area.
- In routing a trail near a pond or lake, don't run it completely around the body of water.
- Avoid crossings where two or more streams come together.
- In riparian areas of variable habitat quality, route a trail closer to a stream where habitat quality is poorer.
- Give trail users the opportunity to be near water or they will find ways themselves.
- When it is appropriate to provide access to a more sensitive area, use a spur trail instead of a through trail because spur trails tend to have lower volumes of traffic.
- In urban landscapes there are often few options for routing trails other than streetside (where there are not many ecological implications) and along streams.

### **Design**

- Minimize the impact of impervious surface.
- Locate trails away from the water.
- Preserve the existing hydrology (shallow water), via French drains, boardwalks or other methods.
- From the Colorado trail planning guide:
  - To maintain natural processes along a stream corridor, maintain an interior or upland buffer on both sides of a stream.
  - In areas with sensitive vegetation, provide a well-designed trail to encourage users to stay on the trail.
  - Provide toilets at trailheads and other key locations to reduce damage to surrounding vegetation.
  - Design trails with proper drainage and sustainable gradients so users are less likely to trample vegetation along alternate routes.
  - Route a trail around meadows and other wet areas and build up a dry trail in areas where seasonal water creates boggy soil.
  - To minimize ground disturbance and possible spread of weedy species, reconstruct an existing trail instead of rerouting it.
  - Provide facilities, such as blinds, viewing areas, and boardwalks, for visitors to see wildlife with minimal disturbance.

### **Construction**

- Avoid removing trees.
- Minimize construction impacts, including permanent impacts from temporary activities (e.g., soil compaction from movement of heavy equipment).
- Work within the final trail footprint to the extent possible.
- Build during the appropriate season.
- From the Colorado trail planning guide:
  - In constructing or upgrading a trail, disturb as narrow an area as possible to help minimize the zone of influence.

## **Management**

- Do not allow dogs or other pets on trails within the wildlife area.
- Allow bicycle use only on perimeter trails designed for multi-modal transportation; this does not include the south side of Smith Lake.
- From the Colorado trail planning guide:
  - Either avoid wildlife breeding areas or close trails through them at the times such wildlife are most sensitive to human disturbance.
  - If there won't be sufficient resources to enforce a trail closure during wildlife-sensitive seasons, consider rerouting the trail through another area.
  - Educate trail users about the results of direct impacts to vegetation and indirect impacts to wildlife.
  - To prevent weed spread, control aggressive weeds along trails.
  - Plan how to manage a trail's wildlife issues before its alignment is set.
  - Don't depend on management to resolve wildlife conflicts that can be avoided by careful alignment in the first place.
  - More careful management of resources will be required when a trail passes through or near sensitive habitat.
  - Wildlife accept the more predictable disturbances of people on trails more readily than off trails.
  - Encourage visitors not to leave food or garbage around to further support generalist species.
  - Use a combination of management techniques to facilitate the coexistence of recreationists and wildlife.
  - Enlist the help of trail users in monitoring wildlife use of the trail corridor and other activities.
  - To protect wildlife, when describing points of sensitive, ecological interest near a trail – sites you want people to know about, but not visit – don't indicate the direction or distance to the spot.
  - Interpretation and environmental education are very important management tools.

\* Planning Trails with Wildlife in Mind: A Handbook for Trail Planners. Colorado State Parks, Trails and Wildlife Task Force. Available online at:  
<http://www.coloradoparks.org/home/publications.asp#Trails%20Publications>