ESA VIGIL-AGRIMIS

819 SE Morrison Street
Suite 310
Portland, OR 97214
503.274.2010 phone

www.vigil-agrimis.com

PORTLAND PARKS & RECREATION
Healthy Parks, Healthy Portland

meeting notes

project River View Natural Area Management Plan

date 12/19/2013 time 1:30 pm – 4:30 pm

present See below location: Ponderosa Conference Room, Bureau of Environmental Services

subject TAC Meeting #2 (Second Indoor Meeting)

Meeting Attendees, Including Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)	
Paul Agrimis, Project Principal, ESA VA	Sage Jensen, Natural Resource Ecologist, Sage Environmental Services
Shannah Anderson, Land Acquisition Specialist, BES (TAC)	Paul Ketcham, Willamette Watershed Manager, BES (filling in for TAC member Mary Bushman)
Rachel Felice, Natural Area West Supervisor, PP&R (TAC)	Susie Mattke-Robinson, Landscape Architecture Staff, ESA VA
Greg Hawley, Trail Program Coordinator, PP&R (TAC)	Kendra Petersen-Morgan, Westside Ecologist, PP&R (TAC)
Kate Holleran, Natural Resources Scientist, Metro (TAC)	Steve Roelof, Project Manager, ESA VA
Jeff Hough, Trail Technician, City Nature West (joining the TAC in January)	Emily Roth, Project Manager, Natural Resource Planner, PP&R (TAC)
Zach Jarrett, Lead Outdoor Recreation Planner, Bureau of Land Management (TAC)	Maija Spencer, Public Involvement Specialist, PP&R (TAC)

1. Introductions

Emily Roth, Project Manager at Portland Parks & Recreation (PP&R) commenced the second indoor meeting for the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) by welcoming attendees, who gave brief introductions. Emily reviewed the meeting agenda.

2. Finalize Project Goals

Steve Roelof, Project Manager at ESA Vigil-Agrimis, led the group in finalizing the project goals. The consultant team will state in the plan document that the function-based goal is more of a descriptor, and both general and function-based goals have equal importance. A TAC member noted the general (header) goals may be preferable to the function-based goals for public outreach materials, as they are shorter. A TAC member would like to edit a portion of the function-based recreation access goal to state "…provide a system of safe and sustainable trails and access points to achieve planning outcomes."

The group discussed presenting goals in an order based on priority in the written plan document. The group reiterated that each goal has equal importance, but will need to be presented in an order for the plan. The group prioritized goals for the plan in the following order (note goals listed here are abbreviated): "Protect water quality and hydrology…"; "Protect aquatic and terrestrial wildlife…"; "Improve forest health…"; "Provide recreation access…"; and "Foster community engagement…" The consultant team will present goals in the plan in this order, and will state they have been prioritized but not weighted.

3. Review Draft Ecological Prescriptions

Steve led the group review of the draft ecological prescriptions that were prepared by the consultant team. A TAC member asked if prescriptions would be prepared for the access and recreation goals, in addition to the ecological prescriptions. The project scope includes only the ecological prescriptions. The group reviewed the goals, and team members and the consultant team provided clarification as needed. The group provided the following responses to the draft ecological prescriptions (goals are listed here for reader clarity):

Goal: Protect aquatic and terrestrial wildlife and their habitats (*Function based goal*: Protect, restore, and enhance habitat functions and connectivity within and to natural areas adjacent to River View Natural Area for terrestrial (land) and aquatic (water) wildlife)

TAC responses to prescriptions:

- #1: Use PAWMAP information
- # 3: In key component, use break in slope rather than 25 feet from stream center to determine the priority planting buffer at riparian zones. Perhaps use LIDAR to determine break in slope. Consultant team to recommend percentage plant cover in measure of success
- #4: Use TEES instead of Rare for plants.
- #6: Add monitoring program to project title, add key component wildlife study for impacts from bikes and dogs. Change name to identify that this is a baseline study and define what baseline study means. Focus on the wildlife that will inform the management of the site.
- #8: Consultant team to review PAWMAP and TEES studies for habitat structure densities
- #9: Use the TEES guidelines for birds.
- #12: A payment program could be established for the Portland Watershed Revegetation Program team to remove invasive plant species on private property
- #13: Edit measure of success to state "maximize" pollinator habitat
- #14: Edit measure of success to "one bridge crossing and dense riparian planting" (this will depend on final trail alignment); can this prescription be used for the other streams? Look at fragmented habitat at a larger landscape scale
- Provide definition of LWD (large woody debris), clarifying size. Add footnote for LWD. Consultant to review PAWMAP standard for preferred density of wood and monitoring process.

Consider using woody debris if there are feasibility issues with placing LWD on site. Installation may be limited to hand placement over much of the site.
- Add prescription for connectivity from RVNA to adjacent habitat/natural areas like Tryon Creek State Natural Area and Powers Marine Park
- During a discussion of the 100 foot riparian buffer, the consultant team clarified the 100 foot buffer is an area that was determined for priority management activities (such as replanting). A TAC member stated the team may need to consider a 200 foot buffer for functionally steeper slopes. Metro and City of Portland accommodate greater than 100 foot based on stream gradient.
- Add a prescription for monitoring/evaluation trail uses/dogs on habitat and wildlife
- Define Core habitat for this site and wildlife use – much discussion that the core habitat needs to be delineated before a trail system is shown. Once this is defined, add a prescription for management.
- Add a prescription or add into others for climate change and resiliency.

Goal: Protect water quality and hydrology in RVNA streams and their adjacent Willamette River Confluence Areas (*Function based goal*: Protect and restore stream processes (e.g. sediment transport, stream flows, energy movement) to improve watershed and stream health, channel functions, and public health and safety)

TAC responses to prescriptions:

- #1: Create separate study of potential for fish refugia (incorporate into stream inventory); measure of success is compliance w/ TSS water quality standard.
- #2: Measure of success 80% cover of native shrubs and groundcover that help stablize streambanks
- #4: Consultant team can review PAWMAP info for watershed health index standard.
- #5 Use properly functioning in the measure of success for reduction of untreated stormwater. Compliance with water quality standards.
- #6: Note that two sites are being assessed currently in RVNA, per PAWMAP protocol

Goal: Improve Forest Health and Structural Diversity (*Function based goal*: Increase the diversity of forest stand structure to support the Desired Future Condition and associated biological communities through monitoring and adaptive management to address invasive species, forest diseases, and climate change)

TAC responses to prescriptions:

- #1: Tailor the key components to include party camp/social issues, and remove vegetative fuel bed plots; change this from Wildlife Fuels Inventory and Monitoring to Fire Risk Management
- #4: Change measure of success for forest disease and insect infestation to reflect that disease and insects are a natural process. Need to make the measure of success more specific – frame within terms of climate changes and a natural range. Should treat when pest monitoring is higher than the natural range.
- #5: Need a more specific measure of success – want to increase from now by X%.
- Add prescription for enhancing the site to be more resilient to climate change

Add a prescription for a monitoring program to determine if trails are degrading beyond the limits of acceptable change. Staff could develop a matrix of activities (such as seasonal closures) and set limits of acceptable change on soil displacement to monitor effects on trails.

4. Review Draft Trail Best Management Practices

Steve next led the group review of the draft Trail Best Management Practices (BMPs) document prepared by the consultant team. The group contributed the following input for the draft document:

- How was the trail density determined? Discussion that there is no literature on trail density and ecology. The trail density should be based on the recreation experience that is trying to be provided at the site. Should density be based on defining the core habitat first so it can be maintained.
- Include a best management practice to keep humans and dogs on the trail and out of the stream at crossing areas. This could include fencing or placement of rocks/vegetation. Want to control people and dogs away from the water.
- Minimize trail impacts in riparian areas; limit to crossing streams.
- Ecological uplift is limited due to trails, and this site has the potential to maintain core habitat
- ADA accessibility signage element should be amended to the appropriate language per Rachel Felice (such as 'usability signage')
- PP&R trail guidelines are being updated, and consultant team should note there may be upcoming changes
- During a discussion of PPR guidelines and steeper slopes, it was suggested tolimit the maximum grade to 12 percent on all trails, or possibly 10 percent to be cautious. Steeper segments could have armored treads, and the consultant team could add a new BMP to add aggregate to amend soils for steeper slopes. The team should also note exceptions in the plan, such as "for the protection of tree roots, steeper slopes segments will be permitted". The team should also note trails may have conditional closures due to soil displacement.
- Include a BMP for safety that includes what we have heard from the public that includes: incorporating sight lines for pedestrians around corners, shared biking and hiking user safety, accessibility signage and "priority on trail" signage
- A priority is to minimize impacts to riparian corridor and wetlands
- Fencing and hog wire can be used to keep dogs out of crossings, but can have an unappealing caged-in aesthetic
- Consider alternative crossing materials, such as an Appalachian crossing with rock
- Add a section on how and when to armor trails (illustrations would be helpful to the public)
- Discuss seasonal closures, static versus group-determined; Add a trail demand BMP (for public use x # of days per month)

- The mountain bike community wants technical trail features, including leaving berms and bigger grade reversals; discussed that this is not appropriate at this site.
- Review appropriate trail use in this area. Are trails consistent with city's multiple purposes for purchasing the site: water quality, stream protection for an intact watershed?
- Trail BMPs may need to be tailored to target species needs
- Edit Conditional Closures purpose to state "trail closures during periods of soil displacement…"
- Add to the element "Minimize Impacts to Riparian Corridors *and Wetlands*"
- Use should be based on the context of the site and be tied to more specific bmp – hiking only, shared use; uni-directional, multiple use.
- Is the trail system consistent with maintaining habitat for target species? Need to identify the target species.

5. Review Draft Trail and Access Overlay Concept

The consultant team next presented the draft Trail and Access Overlay Concept, indicating that trails typically focus mountain biking routes in one direction for increased safety. The consultant team also examined parallel trails for trail density but this was not carried forward. The layout protects

Stream 6 as core habitat for the site; provides loops and minimizes stream crossing to 5. The upper loop is low gradient and has fewer technical switchbacks. Mountain biking would be one-way to reduce conflicts. There are 4.85 miles of trail, approximately 100 acres without trail.

TAC members had the following responses and discussion:

- Current studies at RVNA have yet to identify all of the wildlife species that would be the focus of management efforts
- Need to determine the amount of core habitat that is being conserved and protected on site, if possible. That amount can be used in comparison to the core habitat area if there were no trails on site. Emily led a discussion about whether trails going through habitat split the core habitat. A TAC member noted that trails that allow dogs influence the fauna on-site, which fragments the habitat. Core habitat is defined by TEES as greater than a 30 acres minimum that is 200 feet from an edge.
- Investigate removal of trail at south end, and reduce switchbacks to reduce trail footprint at the upper loop. Look to reduce the number of trail miles suggested for the site.
- A team member noted there is an elevated importance to keep fragmenting trails to a minimum because the rest of the city of fragmented. Do all soft-surface trails fragment habitat? Again the discussion focused on defining and protection core habitat.
- Keep management of property a priority while developing the plan
- Would having pedestrian only trails reduce water quality/wildlife impacts to the site?
- Historic bike use on site, note there are limited staff for enforcement if decide to eliminate cycling. Need to be able to manage the people to protect the habitat.
- There may be greater protection to the site if trails provided sustainable access and natural surveillance
- By excluding people from Stream 6, could create additional natural resource impacts as students and people will continue to use this area
- Requested consultant assessment of riparian impacts from existing trails, number of crossings in previous footprint, trail density, and area without trails. These amounts will help compare and contrast the new plan to quantify improvements. Note how much new trail management versus trail closures.
- It may be challenging to explain the rationale for hiking only areas to the public
- Consider three separate zones in trail plan: for hiking only, directional shared-use, and multiway shared use
- Possible parking options should be included in the plan to provide safe access from neighborhoods
- Concerns of multi-use directional trail at north due to long descent, possibly create a single use for biking only at this trail
- The trail in the southeast of the plan is shown as hiker-only, which prevents cyclists from connecting to existing trails in the area near Lewis & Clark College.
- Emily is meeting with River View Cemetery and Lewis & Clark College to discuss trail connections to private property
- Is there a true likelihood of a bridge over Highway 43, as it would be a key connection to trails outside the park. If in the plan then it will be considered by the region.
- Mountain bikers would like to experience the site with more contouring trails and higher bridges
- How does the trail system meet the recreational consumer needs for the site? Could there be zones for hiking and cycling?
- The upper loop would be a good place for children to learn to ride a mountain bike and for a family experience if it was a shared trail.
- As the site is 150 acres in the city, what is the amount of trail use that should be allowed due to the ecological lift that is possible?
- Preference for all trails to stay out of the 100 foot riparian buffer

- Show an alternative without bikes, making a perimeter-only option that limits fragmenting effects to edge. The plan would be the most conservative option to provide the maximum protection of streams, wetlands, and natural areas.
- Investigate dog management in the natural area, and possibly no dogs allowed on site?
- Discuss metrics of evaluation on impacts and determine thresholds. For example, if trail usage pushes trails beyond acceptable thresholds, PP&R will discontinue the opportunity.

Emily adjourned the meeting, stating she will follow up with the consultant team for next steps. The upper management from PP&R and BES will be meeting in January to review the draft Trail and Access Overlay Concept and Ecological Prescriptions.