Recreation Committee Meeting Notes 12-6-2023

John Wolter and Stephen Pfeiffer volunteered to help co-lead this committee. The recreation committee will focus on the aspects of boating, camping, and bathrooms that have the potential to impact water quality or water quantity. ATV recreation will be covered under the roads and trails committee. Some recreational activities such as hunting and birdwatching are not expected to have a direct impact on water quality or water quantity. Some ancillary aspects of these activities (camping, roads/trails, habitat) will be covered under this and other committees.

The committee will work on developing goals and a mission statement. This will help distinguish responsibilities between committees where there is overlap. Ideas and discussions on potential activities and unknowns are outlined below.

Boat Ramps

* All official ramps
  + Investigate need and feasibility of
    - hardening/extending ramp structure to reduce erosion
    - Improve parking
    - Sign as official boat ramp
    - Investigate moving/modifying campsite to reduce conflict between boat trailer parking and campsite parking
  + Modifying existing ramps may be able to be conducted under NEPA used for initial ramp creation or with a categorical exclusion for maintenance of existing facilities.
* Tailwaters- investigate feasibility and pros/cons of 3 main options
  + Create new ramp below rapid
    - Can be wooden slide type since it would almost exclusively be a put in and not a take out
    - Need to better document and define issues with using/modifying existing boat ramp and rapid to inform potential funding sources and decision makers.
  + Modify rapid to allow safer passage of boats using existing ramp.
    - Likely to run into issues with permitting and compliance with regulations.
    - Strong feelings exist against modifying rapids.
  + Close/block access and add educational signage to user made ramps with directions to nearest existing official ramps.
    - Previous attempts to install fencing have been ripped out by the public. Blocking existing user made access points is likely to cause users to create additional access points. This may result in more riparian damage and higher sediment inputs than continuing to “allow” access at existing user made sites.
* Cow Creek
  + Remove rocks and add material needed to allow trailered boat use.
  + Add signs to identify ramp and bathroom location.
    - When traveling downstream, existing sign on the north side of the road seems to suggest the user made access is the official ramp.
    - Shuttle company also gets folks saying they parked at the “official Cow Creek Ramp” when they are actually parked at the user made access.
  + After modification of existing official ramp, close/block access and add educational signage to user made ramp.
* Investigate turning existing user made ramps into official ramps.
  + NEPA and ESA compliance would be more complicated and time consuming for new ramps depending on what if any NEPA has been completed at the stie in the past.
  + R road 43°22'50.80"N 115°32'46.16"W
    - Existing dispersed camping area
  + Indian Rock 43°21'1.07"N 115°32'7.50"W
    - Existing recreation site with pit toilet. Check existing NEPA for mention of boating access.
    - Listed as boat access on Google Maps
    - Ramp is gravel and sediment movement would not allow for a hardened structure.
    - Investigate what would be needed to sign/designate as official boat ramp.

Bathrooms

* As a reference USFS said official campsites have around 1 bathroom per 9 campsites
* Existing bathroom at Reclamation Village may need to be replaced
* Rules exist for potential new pit toilet locations based on a range of guidelines around elevation above river, ADA access etc. Investigate these rules to help identify potential pit toilet locations. Some existing dispersed camping areas may be too close to the water for pit toilets.
* Investigate rules/feasibility of providing porta potties during peak usage times
  + User survey/car counters can inform timing
  + Could be temporary solution while we find funding and complete compliance for additional pit toilets
  + Could be long term seasonal thing if we can figure out a long term funding source. Don’t want people to expect them to be there and then not have them in the future.
* Monitor number of campers in each area during peak use to get current ratio estimate
* Identify locations for additional bathrooms to match guidance with use rates
* Add signs to existing dispersed camping noting closest pit toilets
* Provide map or signs for less obvious pit toilets like Cow Creek.
* Investigate USFS capacity to add new bathrooms to existing management

Campsites

* USFS has specific requirements for what they must provide at “official campsites”
* Investigate feasibility and public sentiment on creation of official reservable campsites in addition to existing camping options.
  + This could potentially address some of the issues with leaving equipment for multiple days without anyone there to “reserve” a site as well as expansion of camping into sensitive habitat when no sites are available
* Identify if/what groundwork may have been done during effort to turn Reclamation Village into a paid campsite in early 1990s. Investigate what needs to be done now if it were converted to an official campground. Investigate what could be done to add things like fire rings, tables and individual site boundaries without turning it to official campsite.
* Investigate creating a campsite in existing camping areas or open fields.
* Investigate options to limit erosion and riparian habitat loss at campsites.
* Investigate options to delineate individual campsites, but still leave everything as unpaid sites
* Investigate potential benefits of adding official fire rings
* Research ways that other areas enforce/educate public on 14 of 28 day regulations.
  + Publicize fine $ value?
  + Does Reclamation LEO, new or existing nearby campground host or local Sherriff have any authority?
  + Does one summer of strict enforcement lead to longer term compliance?