



Meeting Minutes Snoqualmie/North Bend Elk Roundtable

Wednesday, August 13th, 2008, 6:30 p.m.
Meadowbrook Farm

Facilitator: Russell Link Minutes: Breanna Trygg

Attendees

Russell Link, Dept. of Fish and Wildlife
Kim Chandler, Dept. of Fish and Wildlife
Breanna Trygg, Dept. of Fish and Wildlife
Jim Gildersleeve
Don Hacherl
Dave Battey
David Kimmett, King County Parks
Sonny Paz, USFS
Joseph Hodgson, King County Sheriff's Office
Jerry Moe
Kelly Moe
Bob Stokke, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation
David Willson
Jim Shain
Jennifer Vanderhoof, King County Parks
Harold Erland
Pat Young
Lauren Hollenbeck, City of Snoqualmie
Raynier Van Egmond
Reed Simms
Karen Suyama, Snoqualmie Tribe
Larry White, City of Snoqualmie
Kevin Halbert, City of Snoqualmie
Kalli Willson
Duncan Wilson, City of North Bend
Ken Hearing, City of North Bend

Agenda

Introductions
Group Name
Goals/Mission
Group Structure
Next Steps

Introductions

Russell Link: Welcome. Introduce everyone. Why you are here-who you are with. Minutes from last month. Recording the meetings to make it more official. Suggested by group members. Help with the preparation of the minutes. Please elevate your voice, speak loudly so that the recorder will pick it up. Group decision on whether we should continue to use it-maybe a little early.

Setting ground rules. Meetings thus far have been pretty informal. Not had much structure. Contacted Kittitas and Sequim-important to keep meetings informal. At this time, though it has been suggested we use Roberts Rules, we will refrain from that for the time being.

Ground Rules:

1. Listen openly and actively
2. Regard one another's views as legitimate and deserving respect
3. Give everyone equal opportunity to speak
4. Value disagreements
5. Examine future improvements rather than dwelling on the past
6. Look for ways to achieve mutual gain
7. Commit to giving the process a chance to succeed.

Coming together as a group, not the responsibility of the WDFW. Group meets monthly.

Structure: Group like this one, as well as a steering committee that meets prior to the large group meeting which will inform agendas, prepare materials for the larger group meeting. Break up into smaller subcommittees as a part of this effort. We will go over those tonight as well. Framework for this process. Come to an agreement on a plan and present that to the public to address some of the issues that have come up.

First meeting: vented about why we are here, elk.

2nd meeting: ground rules, name, mission.

Time to take the group to the next step, start looking at what our goals, objectives.

Name of Group/Decision Making Process

We have some longer name options.

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Jim Gildersleeve: Had a discussion about this last month. One point- a couple individuals who wanted a “plan”. Recommend that we use 2 or 3, so it makes sense that it’s a group that is going to produce a plan.

Dave Battey: Like task force

Jim Gildersleeve: Like group

Kim Chandler: Upper Snoqualmie Valley was essential.

Harold Erland: Could shorten that to Meadowbrook, just to shorten it up.

Russell Link: How about EMG.

Jim Gildersleeve: I think it’s important that we settle on a name and go with it. Our leaders spent days and days arguing about a name. Let’s select something and move on.

Dave Battey: EMT not good, but EMG would be good.

Russell Link: EMG!

Voted: no nays, motion carried, EMG.

Goals/Mission

Read over the mission.

Jennifer Vanderhoof: Has it been decided that preserving the herd is one of the objectives. Has it been agreed upon that this is a goal.

Dave Battey: As a meadowbrook rep, our issue is not the elk, it’s their future at their rate of increase. It’s not getting rid of the elk, it’s managing them.

Jennifer Vanderhoof: Managing might be a better term than preservation.

Dave Battey: Talk Seattle into logging the watershed so the elk go there...

David Willson: Add education to the mission statement. 5 year reminder is necessary-for some reason every few years people forget how to approach elk.

How can it fit?

Pat Young: One of the big problems is people stopping to look at the elk, been a lot of accidents when people slam on their brakes to watch the elk. As far as managing-they stopped a lot of the logging, and contrary to belief, they don’t eat old growth trees, they eat new growth. They will go back and forth from feeding to water no matter how much traffic. Shoot them in the rear end with birdshot-doesn’t hurt them, just stings so they remember that when you’re coming the run. But now they are tame, lot of destruction. Get everyone educated about what kind of territory the elk need to survive on. People don’t realize that elk eat various kinds of food.

Kim Chandler: make sure

Jim Gildersleeve: keep it simple. Put a period after the word herd.

Kalli Willson: That works and encompasses all that we want to say. Then list the objectives.

Vote: Yes!

Objectives:

Harold Erland: How long is this group going to be around?

Russell Link: BGMR has been around in Kittitas for 5 years. I hope this group will be around for at least that long.

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Jim Gildersleeve: The plan we create will have to be continuously updated as conditions change. There is a continuing need to be always fine tuning this plan. Just like the hunting.

Harold Erland: Want to trap and follow elk, need to follow them for awhile.

Jennifer Vanderhoof: Need a timeline, short term and long term.

Obj 1:

Dave Battey: If you look to the last two meetings. We in the upper valley have not been involved with elk for very long. This is really new for us. The education portion of that.

Duncan Wilson: Tourist benefit.

Kim Chandler: When this whole thing started, I think a lot of folks, thought Oh Man, we're finally going to get rid of these problem elk. Once the word got out a little bit more, folks were more concerned about helping to protect, plan for the elk.

Jim Gildersleeve: Heard some strong statements from property owners who have had a lot of impact on their property. Others balance every thing out. We all love to look at these animals, they are so beautiful. This morning at 7:30 there were 80 elk just chomping their cud. The aesthetic value of the elk is a very powerful element.

Kelly Moe: the elk have been here for a long time.

Harold will be able to give some history about the elk at a later time.

Breanna has started putting together a 2 page handout on elk. Education committee will start with that as one of their first tasks.

Obj 2:

ID various stakeholders.

Lauren Hollenbeck: Our biggest concern is Centennial Field. The elk can go in there and cause thousands of dollars of damage in one night.

Obj 3:

Id topics that require research

Pat Young: Collared elk, presentation of where they are moving.

Russell Link: Great study to GPS collar elk.

Dave Battey: Historically, I would love to know, how much of this herd came from Yellowstone in 1913 (genetic data).

Russell Link: If we collar animals, we will take blood from the animals and give them to the pathologist and do genetic studies. Hope Rocky Mt Elk Foundation will participate.

Jim Gildersleeve: Suggestion-I think there are probably a heck of a lot of things that we would like to have answers to. I have developed a list. Email Russell with the things we want to have researched.

Russell Link: Need to look at our Mission Statement! Knowing about this Yellowstone genetics may not go to the top.

Kalli Willson: Need to look at carrying capacity and so on. If it is true that there has been a study proving that they are increasing (There has).

Harold Erland: And the makeup of the herd.

Pat Young: Lot of people feed the elk. Some people want them and they are doing all the damage at the neighbors.

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Obj 4:

Implement the tasks

Kalli Willson: No small task.

Jim Gildersleeve: As I think about that statement, I wonder about the tasks. What's it going to take us to answer the questions of carrying capacity? Do we hire someone, does WDFW take care of that?

Russell Link: Carrying capacity can be easy. The cultural capacity will be more difficult and important.

Jennifer Vanderhoof: Are we talking about the land without people or the land with people.

Kim Chandler: Great opportunity for the high school to do all the grunt work of what we need (transects), and this creates an incredible educational opportunity for kids.

Jim Gildersleeve: Migration patterns of the elk here in the valley. How can you manipulate that in order to minimize property damage.

Russell Link: Cultural carrying capacity, can be done through survey.

Jim Gildersleeve: What is the recommended size of the elk herd in the various areas of the valley, in summer and winter. Quite a few elk die in the winter b/c of starvation.

Kalli Willson: This group and the subcommittees of this group will be doing all of this? We should throw that wording in there.

Jim Gildersleeve: You could look at it in a slightly different context. Subcommittees will be concerned with certain areas. Ultimately responsible would be our advisory committee.

Obj. 5

Dave Battey: There's no question that when we have put together more logical ideas, we will have to give presentations to both cities, king county, WDFW commission.

NEW OBJECTIVE:

David Willson: Need to identify the tools we have to enact these objectives, our plan.

Need to say here's what we can do. ID what we

Obj 6

Jennifer Vanderhoof: Are these solutions in the form of a plan/ written plan?

Dave Battey: My concern, when you get into bureaucracy, there's a verbose tendency to put a frightening amount of words in there. We need to cut to the chase.

Duncan Wilson : Need to know who your audience is. Have to think of it as an action plan, Real core problem if there's an overpopulation. The decision maker is the department; need to aim it to them.

Kim Chandler: No matter what is in a little book that we provide to the commission, then there will be public meetings.

Russell Link: We will be making a recommendation to the wildlife commission, the city council.

Lauren Hollenbeck: A written plan.

Harold Erland: We need to do our due diligence and do a really good plan. Then people will look at it and understand that we did what we needed to, and will be taken a lot more

seriously. There are a lot of parties we have to deal with, lots of stakeholders with agendas, budgets, etc.

Duncan Wilson: In the long run, there is only one single decision maker, and they only have one range of options, we have to figure out what those are and keep an eye on where this plan is going to. Parks and Rec said relocate if possible, and then bow hunting.

Jim Gildersleeve: If you have more recommendations, email it to Russell.

Russell Link: Email these things to me and they will be presented to the Steering Committee.

Structure of the group

There will be steering committee. These other groups will be under them.

Land and People Management.

Pat Young: Will there be WDFW, Sheriff's office people here to make sure that suggestions we make aren't illegal? (Yep)

Jim Gildersleeve: I've heard. What are my rights as a property owner?

Property Rights. How to allow hunts on their land.

Looking at land use patterns,

Safety= Public Safety

Where would ideal spots for elk congregating. What would be necessary to create an elk viewing area (Rocky Spencer Memorial Elk Viewing Area).

Jim Gildersleeve: Have an elevated Elk Viewing area-increases safety, decreases habitat destruction.

Duncan Wilson: Every question we're asking here, is an elk viewing area something we want in a recommendation plan. Would that actually be in a plan going to WDFW, the answer to that is probably no. Got to keep refocusing on the ultimate goal. To manage an oversize herd.

Jim Gildersleeve: That's an interesting perspective. I see it as a community issue. There are only 6 percent of people in our population today are hunters. Pacific Coast Region 58% are against hunting. We can't use a hunting control if we balance it with other needs. Hunting and Viewing seasons separate.

Jennifer Vanderhoof: Whether putting up platforms is a management plan.

Dave Battey: Elk viewing is a safety issue (especially on 202). Where should we be putting pull outs to increase safety. If we can put something on 202.

Kalli Willson: Mission statement. Mitigate the challenge of a rapidly increasing elk herd. Improve safety. Mission is not to simply cull the elk herd or transport them to other places.

Duncan Wilson: How to manage an oversize herd. Safety issues.

Dave Battey: We had a more extensive discussion about the mission, those other issues were put into the objectives.

Harold Erland: The public is not going to let us go out and cull the herd. There's got to be an education process, it determines how the public will react to the management plan.

David Willson: Something has changed here, elk are here now and they weren't. But people are going to want to keep them.

Harold Erland: they are an indicator of a healthy system.

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Russell Link: Will email the North Rainier Elk Plan to the group, by Rocky Spencer. We will borrow heavily from that plan.

Jim Gildersleeve: We are also borrowing heavily from the Kittitas BGMR. They decided what they had to do was to find an area to use and teach them to stay in that area.

Dave Battey: Training by Darwinism.

Jim Gildersleeve: Comes back to giving sufficient browse, privacy, cover, within the Forest Service and DNR, attracting the elk back into those areas. Would be helpful for our area.

Sonny Paz: Good in theory, but we have directives that we have to follow. Can't do a lot of management activity. Timber-mainly in thinning. Sales we do have, we can't find buyers for. Our opportunities are limited. Are working on a stewardship project at Snoqualmie point. Need to remove some of the woody debris that will provide forage.

Mr. 2: Going to face this problem anyway-b/c they will fill up the areas you put aside for their use.

Elk Management

Include this in Elk Management: Includes special safety requirements there might be for a hunting/selective harvest. Hunter or property owners. Safe shooting lanes. Legalities of setting up hot spot hunts with master hunters. There are some tools that the department can participate with the cities on. Harvest Safety.

Jennifer Vanderhoof: Add-investigate wildlife crossing areas. Not just a people issue, put signs up, find funding for such a project.

Outreach and Education

Students at Mt. Si have developed the website. Can't find it at the moment. Great avenue for people to get updated information. Revamp the website. A lot of the school stuff disappears for a few months. Education and Outreach is a very important subcommittee for the group.

Kalli Willson: First bullet. Does this include identifying the stakeholders? One of the objectives. Also have a list of stakeholders.

Russell Link: Add coordinating with the newspaper/media.

Dave Battey: Go through the 2 sets of minutes; find a lot of the stakeholders.

Steering Committee

Will meet a week before this general meeting.

Jennifer Vanderhoof: Is there someone who knows what's going on in all the committees? Cross-pollination.

Dave Battey: Recommendation for the Steering Committee-Mary Norton.

Russell Link: Want to make sure that what we are doing is what the public in this area really wants. Have the steering committee present to the public about here's what we are doing, how we're going to do it.

Jim Gildersleeve: Nominate Committee Chairs now. After the meetings.

Next Steps

Subcommittees. How do people feel about the frequency of the subcommittee meetings. Depends on the committee. Up to them to determine how often they meet.

What do the subcommittees need to bring to the next meeting.

Jim Gildersleeve: Come up with a proposed list of tasks that they need to complete.

Budget. Chair.

Russell Link: Throw this list out to the email for them to discuss.

Jim Gildersleeve: Be prepared to nominate chairs, and start the formal organization. Start their work after our meeting in September, and report back to this larger group.

Harold Erland: Disclaimer. Took a reporter from the Valley Record out, and he is writing a comprehensive article on the elk in the valley. There will be an article coming out. Elk were talking back to Harold and the reporter.

Action Items

The Meadowbrook Facility is available for the education component of this group.

Our next meeting is September 10th.

Email Mary Norton's story about elk viewing to the group.

Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation. Bob Stokke:

Been with the foundation for 10 years. The foundation is a conservation organization.

Next year is the 25th anniversary. Formed by a group of 4 hunters, one from WA. They saw the elk areas going away to development. They formed the foundation to ensure the future of elk, other wildlife, and their habitat. We work with many agencies, buy land, turn it over to the state to hold for open space. Work with municipalities. Helped complete a land swap. Naneum State Forest.

Next Meeting:

September 10th, 2008, 6:30 pm

Meadowbrook Farm

ADDENDUM:

Upper Snoqualmie Valley Elk Management Group Committees and Committee Members

Land and People Management

- Land use (planning issues) in high-use elk areas
- Public safety along state routes and interstate
- Viewing opportunities (tourism, future pullouts for viewing)
- Assess local attitudes (this may be a survey of local citizens)

Elk Management

- Map where elk are and in what numbers
- Document seasonal movements
- Determine carrying capacity of the subject area how many elk the it can sustain
- Document elk damage issues
- Assess nonlethal and lethal means of elk control

Outreach and Education

- Create educational materials (news articles, submissions to group website)
- Create outreach materials to explain the process to the public, invite participation if appropriate, and work with the local schools to involve them in the process (policy education, citizen science, etc)
- Work with local schools (much has been done with Mt Si High School)

Steering Committee

- Create agendas for the meetings
- Schedule votes
- Take care of minutes
- Facilitate the large group meetings
- Oversee, guide, and coordinate the committees

Advisory Committee

Involves elected officials of local jurisdictions, personnel of Washington Dept of Fish and Wildlife, and other major business and special interest groups. (This group is made up of the “decision makers” who lend their names, and credibility, to the process, take part in votes, and agree to publicly support the management plan created by the group. This could include those taking ideas to the legislature. Members might not necessarily have to show up to every meeting.

Land and People Management

David Kimmett (Temporary Committee Lead)
Dave Battey
Pat Young
Larry T. White
Lauren Hollenbeck

Elk Management

Harold Erland (Temporary Committee Lead)
Jim Gildersleeve
Kevin Halbert
Karen Suyana
Raynier Van Egmond
Sonny Paz
Jennifer Vanderhoof

Outreach and Education

Kalli Willson (Temporary Committee Lead)
Raynier Van Egmond
Breanna Trygg

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Steering Committee

Russell Link (Temporary Committee Lead)

Harold Erland

Mary Norton (recommended by Dave Battey)

Jennifer Vanderhoof (maybe)