

RED RIVER ROADS STEWARDSHIP COLLABORATIVE WORKSHOP #5

Tuesday, June 18, 2019

Red River Conference Center, Red River, NM

MEETING OVERVIEW

Attendees: Elena Fernandez, Amigos Bravos; Sheriff Jerry Hogrefe, Taos County; Roger Pattison, Taos Ski Valley; Todd Vorce, Red River Miner; Brett Brogdon, Chris Green, and John Russey, Red River Off-road Coalition (RROC); Russell Church, Town of Red River

USDA Forest Service: Marjorie Apodaca - Highway Engineer, Southwestern Regional Office; Eric Garner - Recreation Staff Officer, Carson National Forest Supervisor's Office; Richard Holmes – OHV Ranger, Jack Lewis – District Ranger, and Phil MacAskill - Natural Resource Specialist, Questa Ranger District

Facilitators: Julie Anton-Randall (contractor) and Ben Irely, National Forest Foundation (NFF)

Red River Roads (in order of priority for the Collaborative):

1. Old Red River Pass
2. Goose Lake
3. Fourth of July Canyon
4. Greenie Peak
5. Cabresto Lake
6. Pioneer
7. Flag Mountain

Workshop Objectives

1. Visit sites along and in view of Old Red River Pass, Goose Lake Road, and Fourth of July Canyon Road on a field trip prior to the 5th Red River Roads Workshop.
2. Convene diverse stakeholders committed to the safety and long-term sustainability of Forest Service roads ("Red River Roads") in the Red River area of the Questa District of the Carson National Forest (CNF) to decide upon the Road Steward Action Plans for Old Red River Pass, Goose Lake Road, and Fourth of July Canyon Road, relying upon the structure and process established by the group at previous workshops ("Vision, Purpose and Goals Statement," "Code of Conduct," and "Collaborative Structure").
3. Consider proposed actions and plan of work for marketing of the RRRs in 2019-20.
4. Explore the idea of Comprehensive Action Plan that would encompass the Road Steward Action Plans, marketing, fundraising, and other aspects of collaborating on Red River Roads stewardship for the foreseeable future.
5. Review and agree upon objectives for RRRs Workshop #6 and timing of the workshop in September 2019. Consider how this workshop can finalize the collaborative Comprehensive Action Plan for Red River Roads and use the Road Steward Action Plan and results as models for other roads on the Questa District, the Carson National Forest, and wider National Forest System.

MEETING OUTCOMES

Decisions

Action Items

Bin Items

Welcome – Jack Lewis, Questa District Ranger, Carson National Forest

- There was a great field trip earlier today – everyone who attended got to see the hills we have to climb, quite literally.
- Good work has been done getting Old Red River Pass Road closer to meeting agency standards and the Collaborative has been engaged with the Forest Service to figure out the best path forward for establishing some kind of maintenance agreement.

Introductions and Dinner Provided by Shotgun Willie's Catering – Julie Anton Randall

[After everyone in attendance introduced themselves, all socialized around a fajita dinner.]

RRR Organizing Committee Presentation and Collaborative Discussion

- **Overview**
 - The Collaborative has been able to incorporate a lot of stakeholders into this process.
 - The Collaborative has chosen to focus first on Old Red River Pass Road, before moving down the list of roads that need significant work (above).
 - Through the Organizing Committee, the Collaborative is now working on a comprehensive plan to carry forward the momentum gained through the Old Red River Pass process.
 - The final workshop facilitated by the NFF, under contract with the USDA Forest Service, will take place in mid-September.
 - This collaborative process has been uniquely focused on roads. NFF sees potential to replicate this kind of organization in other communities across the country.
- **Review of Collaborative Vision, Purpose and Goals Statement (with Desired Conditions), Code of Conduct, Collaborative Structure, and Road Steward Action Plan Format**
 - Part of the purpose of this Collaborative is to help visitors understand what is required to travel these roads safely.
 - This group understands the importance of these roads for support the town's revenue. Perhaps there is opportunity in there to diversify the funding for the maintenance of these roads to provide more opportunity for tourism income and jobs.
 - This group is not a substitute for FS decision-making and the agency's entirely separate travel management process.
 - The Marketing Committee has seen some turnover, so they have not been as active in the interim between workshops.
 - Q: Who is the proper fiscal agent for an agreement with the Forest Service?
 - A: It depends on the agreement, but RROC and the Town of Red River could both act as a fiscal agent of an agreement.
 - The Organizing Committee has worked on the Road Stewardship Action Plans for Old Red River Pass, Goose Lake, 4th of July Canyon, and Greenie Peak (attached). These Plans work through the specifics of what work needs to get done, who will do it, when, and how for each road and could serve as the basis for an agreement.
 - In the future, the collaborative may want to start tracking in-kind match to apply for grants.
 - This can be as simple as estimating the hours, mileage, and any other expenses that the Collaborative has put into meetings and today's field trip and can be helpful to know when applying for grants.
- **Organizing Committee report out – Chris Green and Elena Fernandez**

Commented [B11]: Insert key points from Julie's PPT - selected roads, desired conditions: road maintenance, positive environmental impact, law enforcement, positive economic impact.

Commented [B12]: Attach and ensure this list is correct

- The Organizing Committee has been working with the forest service to produce the draft action plans. A next step is to have Amigos Bravos look at the action plans and see how they can plug in.
- Red Rmeets first Tuesday of every month. Meeting place bounces around. Have had some good work days at Old Red River Pass and 4th of July Canyon. Planning another effort to go up Greenie Peaks Road.

Road Steward Action Planning Parameters & Priorities

- **Vision of Long-term RRR Stewardship – Jack Lewis**
 - If I was to hand this off to the next Questa District Ranger, I want them to know that they have folks in the community to bounce ideas off of. Do we turn a road into a trail? What are the implications of that type of decision? We need the communities involved in those decisions.
 - I still have a vision of seeing this type of collaboration happen in Taos Valley and Questa.
 - Shared Stewardship is the new vision for the Forest Service and this effort fits right into that framework.
- **Recreation priorities for RRRs – Eric Garner**
 - This collaborative process has been an educational process both within the Forest Service and within the community. On the agency side, we need to be able to let go of the controls a little bit. We are seeing more and more of these collaborative pop up over the country and they are bringing some unique solutions to the table.
 - As an agency, we want to hear what the priorities are for your communities?
 - Through this process I think you all have really helped us get on the same page.
 - I'm excited to see what the next steps are.
- **Maintenance conditions of Red River Roads parameters for community-based stewardship – Marjorie Apodaca**
 - As a road engineer, I always have my eye on safety and liability. A lot of the times the feedback I provide is from that perspective.
 - The other perspective I bring is resource protection. We are really trying hard to balance all of the issues related to transportation.
 - One thing we have yet to resolve with this group is setting up the standards for where these roads should be. We can't get all the roads to standard all at once, but if we can determine what the standards should be, we should then all be moving in the same direction. We haven't had those detailed discussions yet.
 - Information on road use, use volume, and accidents would really help me prioritize funding. We need to have a discussion of standards too.
 - Consistent messaging and signing really helps, but we don't have much leeway for signing standards within the agency.
 - We need a more comprehensive package of signs we provide to users.
 - The agency has dealt with lawsuits where people got lost because of inconsistent signage.
 - What road am I on? Users should at least be able to see that.
 - We have a manual of signs that are ready to order. There shouldn't be a need to design a bunch of new signs.
 - There is routine maintenance, such as cutting roads out and removing rockfall, that will need to occur on every road. Then there is cleaning out dips and ditches and blading. The agency needs to get in agreement with this group as to how those maintenance functions will be performed.
 - Discussion
 - Q: Can signage be moved? There is a kiosk at the start of the Greenie Peak road. If the kiosk was where the trail starts, that would help.
 - A: That kiosk was placed at the snowmobile parking area.

- The Collaborative and the community would like to extend these efforts to other roads - some of which are one year away from being beyond where a maintainer can keep them safe for travel.
 - Q: Does the Forest Service have the money to lease a little skidder that we can take up on some of these roads and get some work done before we get into the full swing of the summer season?
 - A: The agency is working to figure that out. It would be unusual for us to rent a piece of equipment for another operator.
 - Q: Why can't members of this Collaborative go up there and blade the road?
 - A: It is the liability placed on the taxpayer, both for the person doing the work and for the user who gets hurt after the work gets done.
 - The agency can do road maintenance permit. For a road maintenance permit, it might be easier to work with the town or county as a fiscal agent.
 - The Carson National Forest has scheduled a gentleman from Arizona named Gary to come out and do an assessment of Trail Canyon (part of Greenie Peak Road), Old Red River Pass Road, and Goose Lake Road from the bottom to two miles up. He will be here next Tuesday, June 25.
 - Richard and Chris should join Gary in his assessment, then create a matrix of work needed, who will do the work, and when. Generic and routine actions can also go into the matrix of work.
 - Gary and Chris should talk to work out a meeting with the RROC for the week of July 8th.
- This community understands that the Forest Service has a lot of work to do to get these agreements in place and that our frustration puts you all in a tough place. The thing to remember is that we are getting work done and getting close to getting a lot more work done.
- There is plenty of community pressure to get work done right now.
- Having the data to show the use will help us define the scope of the problem. Speaking of collecting use data, does the Forest Service have road counters that the Collaborative can use?
 - Eric Garner will track some counters down that the Collaborative can use.
 - Outfitters can also track the number of rentals they are providing.
 - Counties have crash reports, but most accidents do not self-report.
 - The Collaborative could do some accident tracking.
 - Fire department would also have an accident count.
- Besides the community helping the Forest Service collect some road use data, the community needs to help define the type of road use that they want to see.
- It will probably be a road use permit that would best facilitate the RROC maintaining these roads.
- Russell Church has maintained Forest Service roads twice for the Town of Red River. He will look in his records to see what that grant or agreement looked like.
- There are things that can be done now under a volunteer agreement. Signing would be the low-hanging fruit.
- Vegetation management and blades on road would need a more formal agreement.
- Punching drains for pooling water would be generic and routine maintenance. Cutting trees off the road would also be generic and routine. Using volunteer program is the way to go for these generic and routine maintenance items. Tracking in the volunteer program really helps to log hours.
- The agency should explore the feasibility of an Adopt-a-Trail program.
- For a contract under \$10k and with the certain qualifications, the Forest Service can hire a contractor to do the work, but they must have liability insurance.
- RROC doesn't have liability insurance, but they can subcontract with bonded contractors.

- The field trip was great today for getting on the same page, but the Forest Service and the RROC need to spend a few days together to get on the same page for what the agency needs in terms of standards for maintenance.
- This Collaborative needs a mix of solutions to get the work done. The Forest Service should get the Lincoln dozer over here to do this work, get RROC to do this work, and the City does this work.
- Maybe that matrix of resources and needs would be helpful.
- Discussion around pictures taken of RR road issues:
 - [Trail canyon, which is part of the Greenie Peak road] The exposed culvert issue. This culvert has been replaced several times. This is a high-priority emergency repair. This is the type of thing the RROC can prevent from happening through routine maintenance. Lots of loaded up wood cutters drive across that exposed culvert. If it were maintained properly it wouldn't have failed. There has probably been no maintenance done on that culvert in 10 years.

Next Steps: Workshop & Work Group Planning on a Timeline

- Date and Structure of RRRs Workshop #6
 - Sit down and hash out what are the short and long term goals we can get done as a group. Come up with action items. Roll up our shirt sleeves and dig in.
 - Dates - shoot for middle of September.
- RROC's next meeting is June 21nd.

Closeout: bin items and last reflections