

JUNEAU TRAILS PLAN USER GROUP MEETING AGENDA

Thursday, November 12, 2020

5:30 pm Zoom Meeting

Attendees

Planning committee

Allison Eddins - CBJ Community Development

Alexandra Pierce - CBJ Planning Department

George Schaaf - CBJ Parks and Rec

Michele Elfers - CBJ Parks and Rec

Ryan O'Shaughnessy - Trail Mix, Inc

Kate McWilliams - Trail Mix, Inc

Preston Kroes - AK State Parks

User Groups

Dave Ringle - Freewheelers Bike Club (FW)

Reid Harris - Juneau Mountain Bike Alliance (JMBA)

Caleb Wylie - (JMBA)

George Utermohle - Grateful Dogs of Juneau (GDJ)

Jack Kreinheder - Trail Mix, Paragliders, Snowmobile Association (JMBA)

I. Welcome and Brief Description of the Purpose and Scope of the Juneau Trails Plan

II. Introductions – tell us a little bit about yourself and the group you are representing and funding sources.

Reid (JMBA) Nonprofit org with volunteer board. 800 members, funding primarily from membership fees

Dave (FW) consistently funded by membership fees, sometimes event fees and organization donations.

George (GDJ) represents responsible dog owners on Juneau trails. Grateful dogs funded purely from membership fees. Don't have specific demands or requests. If you build a trail, we will be there, definitely want to participate as a cooperative user group. There's going to be user group allocation issues with any new trail.

Jack (wears a lot of hats!)

III. Group Discussion

a. **What are the organizational priorities for your group?**

Dave (FW) Improving the commute btw valley and downtown. There has already been a lot of improvement with the commuting corridor, i.e. trail around twin lakes. Uphill stretch by Hospital is deteriorating. Unsure whose responsibility it is to maintain this stretch.

Gravel trails get the most use within town. Top used commuter bike paths in Juneau-path btw Mendenhall loop road to Nancy Street (usually a DOT type arrangement) one by hospital drive is neglected.

Alex (CBJ) Goals and recommendations for the Lemon Creek Area Plan - includes discussion about dangers to bicyclists, need alternative access between valley and downtown.

Dave (FW) Unsure whether it's dangerous by design or just by nature because of all the trucks hauling gravel. Would be awesome to have a trail cutting from Walmart parking lot to western auto to eliminate the commute.

Jack road bikers and free wheelers discussed a trail from yacht club to airport along Egan Drive on water side, would have road noise but solves traffic issues. No-go because of wetlands permitting issues OR issues with connectivity because if you wanted to stop between airport and downtown, you'd have to cross. example of success in the "field of wildflowers" (?)

Allison (CBJ) Prior to Lemon Creek Area Plan, CBJ discussed improved trail with army core and DOT

Preston (State Parks) Opportunity! DOT often looks for ways to integrate other types of transport along with roads... might be a good incentive for Egan Drive crossings for bikes.

USER GROUP CONFLICT

George (GDJ) How will the trail plan deal with unofficial or "social" trails that users create themselves?

Michele (CBJ) Regarding user conflicts, it depends on who owns the land. For social trails on CBJ land, contacting user groups whom they think may be using the trails to try to reach people perpetually using those trails. For social trails on private land, CBJ addresses this by dealing with property owners

Jack some social trails are created to divert mountain bikers from using the main walking trail to avoid dangerous encounters

Caleb (JMBA) JMBA board talks a lot about user conflict. A lot of trails in other communities have signage at the beginning that makes users aware of acceptable uses, and guidelines (could be passing etiquette, tire size for bikes) for how to interact with other users. Simple and visual for ground rules.

Preston (State Parks) Chugak State Park has signposts at every trail head (8' x 8') and post 4' x 4' user groups that are welcome and allowed. Relatively inexpensive.

b. What are the BIG successes that your group has accomplished over the years?

Reid (JMBA) Pump track in Cope Park (w/ CBJ) was a huge success and is popular.

c. What current projects is your group working on?

d. What partnerships does your group currently have or might be interested in?

Reid (JMBA) Partnership with CBJ for pump track, partnership with Eaglecrest to work on trail (\$50,000 grant for phase I of that trail). AEL&P and James King of USFS Dredge lake area has great XC ski trails, unfortunately all illegal. Looking into partnership to see if those trails can be legitimized.

Jack snowmobilers work with USFS for use of Dan Moller trail and Lake Creek trails to Spaulding Meadows. Agreement about access keys to locks on gates so that Snowmobile Association can monitor when gates are open/closed. Major improvements on Lake Creek Trail.

Juneau Community Foundation has recently made it a priority to create mountain huts to be used by trail users-- Eaglecrest cabin was the first that JCF took on. Item for trails plan - development of alpine huts to enhance multi-day trail outings in Juneau. Logical first step towards creating a long Douglas alpine trail would link Eaglecrest Cabin to Dan Moller cabin (over Mt Troy) and into Dan Moller bowl, and then further south to a ridge on South Douglas.

e. Which trails or paths does your group frequent the most, and why?

f. What amenities make a trail attractive to your group and what amenities are missing?

Caleb (JMBA) there are a handful of trails that don't have a trashcan or doggy-bag setup. Those should be everywhere. Traction control on slippery wooden bridges or planks.

Reid (JMBA) cross-grain features are the best, better than long-grain features (such as boardwalks). The stainless wire mesh (1/4 in.) is most effective. Chicken wire creates tire puncture hazard and can be problematic for dogs as well.

Preston (State Parks) anywhere we have a wooden, we've been installing metal grip strut. We've tried netting, asphalt, spikey things. Saves a lot of time in maintenance

In winter, the groomer can clear trail NEXT to the metal grating for skiers because the wetland will be frozen.

Jack minimize the angle that the trail meets the bridge.

George (GDJ) Signage!!

g. What are your group's BIG trail goals for Juneau over the next 20 years?

Reid (JMBA) Goal for Juneau to become a world-class mountain biking location. 100+ miles of purpose-built trail. We have the topography and scenery. The scene has boomed in the past 5 years and has a lot of potential to grow. JMBA wants to expand and connect current trail networks such as Perseverance, Glory Hole, and Red Mill which have gotten crowded because hikers love those trails and bikers also do.

Would like to see a connection trail btw perseverance to cope park and PBR/Highlands trail. There are not many miles of purpose-built mountain biking trails, so that is a dream. This isn't intended to exclude other trail users, but mountain biking requires swooping trails, lots of downhills, things that aren't appealing to other trail users. Involves a lot of engineering- which costs more especially because Juneau doesn't have naturally great conditions for trails because of the thick vegetative mat in rainforest. But we know that can be overcome because Treadwell ditch is an example of a successful mtn. biking trail.

Would like to build more pump tracks and courses. Longer 10-20 miles alpine trail. JMBA has an mtn. biking trail rating called [EPIC](#) - and there's a great deal of publicity that comes with a rating, i.e. listing in magazines. Carcross has a phenomenal trail, there's no reason Juneau can't do it. Would probably require funding from govt. or other grant funding. One potential EPIC trail could be Juneau Ridge more bike able. Not exclusively for bikes of course, but just making it more bike able. Would be a major draw for tourists. Another possibility would be a Douglas ridge trail (could be tied into linking up cabins)

Caleb (JMBA) adding an alpine loop on to Treadwell could be a good idea because it's already established.

There are also many hunters on Douglas, so expanding that trail to be used by hunters as well could bring in Pitmann-Robertson funding. Discussion on Dingle-Johnson and Pitmann-Robertson as funding sources. Trends in funding available follows ammunition purchases.

Jack Pre-covid, Whitehorse had a weekly charter flight from Frankfurt to Whitehorse that brought dozens to hundreds of bikers from Europe. They could take a quick ferry down to Juneau and expand their trip. Good opportunity for economic development!
Trail improvements the snowmobile association would like to see will be emailed.

George (GDJ) wants to become a more visible group, interested in partnerships, and to be welcomed and included on all trails.

Jack One other comment — The State Parks recreational Trails grant application asks whether proposed trail projects are included in a community trails plan. Let's discuss later.

IV. Wrap –up and Discussion of Next Steps

ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS FROM USER GROUPS (Include name and group affiliation!)

Juneau Mountain bike Alliance (JMBA) notes on JUNEAU TRAILS PLAN USER GROUP MEETING

II. Introductions – tell us a little bit about yourself and the group you are representing

- The Juneau Mountain bike Alliance (JMBA) is a volunteer organization with a mission to promote and improve local mountain biking opportunities.
- JMBA incorporated in 2015, obtained a 501(c)(3) status in 2019.
- We facilitate mountain bike trail development, construction, and ongoing maintenance.
- We host community events like races, movie features, and group rides
- Collaborate with public and private landowners on trail development.
- We aim to foster community and outdoor recreation, bring people of all ages and skills together, and to support the growth of mountain biking in Juneau.

III. Group Discussion

a. What are the organizational priorities for your group and how is your group funded?

- Board expansion (membership coordinator, fundraising coordinator)
- Membership expansion
- Be funded primarily by membership dues and revenue from fundraising events

b. What are the BIG successes that your group has accomplished over the years?

- Establishment and incorporation (501c3)
- Successful promoting of MTB scene in Juneau
- MOA with CBJ

- Obtained a \$50K Recreational Trails grant in 2015 to construct phase 1 of the Eaglecrest flow trail.
- Cope Park pump track - first joint CBJ/JMBA effort
- Rebuild (in conjunction with Trail Mix) of most sections of Treadwell Ditch

c. What current projects is your group working on?

- With the arrival of winter all trail building has ceased.
- Administrative work continues
- COVID-19 was a silver lining for the outdoor recreation industry. Juneau, like many places, saw an exponential increase in mountain bike users.
 - Engage with new riders
 - Promote paid memberships to facilitate further growth and trail development

d. What partnerships does your group currently have or might be interested in?

- We currently have an MOA with the city to develop and maintain trails on CBJ land.
- We aren't officially involved with Eaglecrest but many JMBA members actively participate in trail building.
- We are in talks with both AEL&P and USFS with the goal of creating an MOA/MOU to facilitate mountain bike use or trail development on AEL&P and federal land.
- We should approach Goldbelt, Inc. about access to Yankee Basin (Davis Creek).
 - There is an old road/trail that runs miles up a scenic alpine valley.
 - This would provide winter access for XC skiers, fat bikers, and alpinists also.
 - Potential conflict: there is an active trap line in the area.

e. Which trails or paths does your group frequent the most, and why?

- Eaglecrest - Flow trail/jump line, challenging riding, good for intermediate/advanced skill development.
- Perseverance/Red Mill/Glory Hole - one of Juneau's most popular trails for many users, including bikers
- East/West Glacier
- Treadwell ditch - long XC ride, Eaglecrest to Douglas
- Various purpose-built MTB trails around town. Purpose built trails are usually more challenging/engaging for intermediate or advanced riders.
- Cope Park pump track. Very popular with riders of all abilities, especially kids and families.
- Dredge Lake trail network
- Under Thunder trails
- PBR (above Highlands)

f. What amenities make a trail attractive to your group and what amenities are missing?

- Flow is important for fun and safe mountain bike riding. Janky, rocky sections (e.g., the unimproved parts of Treadwell Ditch), slick boardwalks (e.g., Dan Moller, John Muir), and tight switchbacks (e.g., East Glacier) are not attractive to riders.
- Lack of land with easy building opportunity.

- Juneau has very little surface dirt.
- Thick vegetable mat
- Rainfall makes trails prone to failure. Engineering considerations add to time/cost to build trails
- Traction control on wood features (bridges, boardwalks) would be nice

g. What are your group's BIG trail goals for Juneau over the next 20 years?

- Expand and connect the current trail network (connections are key!)
 - Connect Perseverance to Cope Park and Highlands
 - Trail on bench cut above lower perseverance (starts at gravel pile where trails meet, about .3 miles up trailhead)
 - This will draw bikers off lower Perseverance, a common user conflict zone.
- Build more pump tracks and bike skills parks.
- Build a couple of bike-only downhill (black diamond, double black diamond rated) trails.
 - DH trails are very steep and are not usually attractive to hikers. Because of the high speeds involved and limited line of sight hikers, dogs, and uphill travel should not be allowed on DH trails
 - These trails are attractive to advanced riders and help “legitimize” a riding zone.
 - DH trails usually comprise less than 10% of a trail network's trails.
- Create a long (10-20 mile) multi use/bike able alpine trail in the Juneau area.
 - Potentially use [Pittman-Robertson](#) (P-R) funds
 - Goal: get [IMBA Epic rating](#)
- Turn Juneau into a world class MTB destination with 100+miles of purpose-built or multi use trails that are fun and engaging for riders of all levels.

IV. Wrap –up and Discussion of Next Steps