

Diablo Trust Recreation Working Group
Meeting Notes
March 29, 2021 10.30 am

Present: Kari Roberg, Alix Skelpsa, Kit Metzger, Diana Kessler, Wolf Gumerman, Jim Driscoll, Matt Eberhart, Nate Ragan, Tim Holt, Steve Cassady, Sasha Stortz, Cynthia Nemeth, Carl Fuller, Jed Botsford, Joey Dahms, Bridget Roth, Amy Tinderholt, Richard Shore, Stephanie Teskey, Jackie Thomas, Ellen Parish, Lisa Bolton, Heather Green, Carl Taylor, Stephen Williams, David Wessel

Ellen opened the meeting with introductions and a welcome. The group introduced themselves – name, organization, position and favorite outdoor activity.

Next, Ellen gave some background about Diablo Trust. Diablo Trust was formed to address contentious land-based issues in the 1990's and has a history of bringing diverse groups together to find solutions. Recreation related issues are not new to Diablo Trust but there has been a sharp increase in 2020. This is an issue that we all face in our jobs and no one agency has all the answers or can solve the problems alone. Our goal is to bring people together, open channels of communication, prevent duplication of effort, share resource, ideas leverage resources, maintain access to land for all users and protect land for all to use.

Lisa then gave an overview of the past work Diablo Trust has done related to recreation. In 2011, Diablo Trust created the Recreation Management Project Report. It was funded by the National Forest Foundation. It was a collaborative effort to find solutions to recreation impacts. Many of the goals and vision statements listed in the 2011 Report hold true today: concern for ecosystem services, impacts on private landowners, the needed increase of public awareness of impacts on the land, intermingled ownership and responsible recreation. Additionally, there was great need identified for educational signage and support of enforcement. While these impacts and needs remain true today, the scale of impact we are seeing in since the pandemic began is like nothing we've seen before as land managers. Kit reminded the group that there was a person-to-person outreach effort done on Fourth of July weekend including questions, traffic count as well as meetings with diverse groups.

Next, Lisa shared the common themes among responses provided to the questionnaire Diablo Trust sent out to Recreation Working Group collaborators in early 2021. 1) Sharp increase in all types of recreation over the last 5-10 years but the increase was significantly more in during 2020. 2) New users are uneducated or unaware of existing recreation policies or that their activities may be destructive to wildlife, livestock and their habitats. 3) Many agencies are experiencing inadequate funding and/or staffing resources to enforce existing policies. 4) We don't need to recreate the wheel – where appropriate, let's use existing plans and models to find the right tools.

Sheriff Driscoll then shared the CCSO PowerPoint slides that provided a 2016-2020 summary of call volume including emergencies, locations and severity. Access to GPS has given people more information to "explore" resulting in a wider recreation area. The CERT/Woods Watch program allows CCSO to utilize trained volunteers to help with education, outreach and patrols. He also shared the need for more education and

enforcement but is challenged by understaffing. The Sheriff's PowerPoint slides can be found at:
<http://www.diablotrust.org/recreation-working-group-info>

Next, Nate shared a summary of the questionnaire responses provided by AZGFD. There were no real harvest trends tied to the increase in the recreation across the GMU's but more toward weather patterns and recruitment. However, the increase in camping is impacting wildlife's access to water sources and water tanks.

Matt followed up with information OHV educational funding from AZ Parks and Trails and that they are working with AZGFD to rewrite the OHV brochure to include updated info on where to ride.

Bridget acknowledged that folks likely have questions for USFS and that they hope to be able to provide some information in subsequent meetings.

Ellen asked the group to consider who else needs to be involved in this group. How can this group help the collaborators and their organizations to address recreation impacts? Can we learn from what is being done in other places in other places? Lisa stated that Diablo Trust will schedule the next meeting to allow for other collaborators to share their response summaries. Matt suggested biweekly meetings.

Meeting adjourned at 12:00 pm