

Considerations for Partner Work Amidst COVID-19: Fieldwork Proposal (Partners)

The USFS-CRGNSA point-of-contact is responsible for completing this form

Name of partner organization and partner POC: [Dana Hendricks, Regional Representative, Pacific Crest Trail Association](#)

Date of proposal: [June 11, 2020](#)

FS-CRGNSA Point of Contact(s): [Nathaniel Brodie / Lorelei Haukness](#)

Detailed description of proposed work. Include specific information about activities, dates, timing, number of individuals, and location(s) for proposed work. Include state and county.

[We are proposing to enter into Level A as soon as possible \(solo or same-household teams scouting only, no tools\). See attached Re-engagement Plan. As our plan indicates, we are proposing to be in that level for at least 3 weeks before moving to the next level. The subsequent levels involve lower-risk activities falling within regular annual maintenance of the PCT and PCTA's adopted connecting trails.](#)

[The PCT segments in question are in Hood River County, OR and Skamania County, WA.](#)

- Can any of the work be done virtually? [No.](#)
- Will the partner be bringing in people from other areas of the country to conduct the work? [Participants will come from a maximum of 100 miles away during our first two phases.](#)
- Is the proposed work in accordance with the most current local, state, and federal policy? [Yes, work dates will be coordinated to sync with phased lifting of restrictions and be equal to, or more conservative, in risk management approach.](#)

See links below for info.

- *State of WA:* <https://coronavirus.wa.gov/>
- *State of OR:* <https://govstatus.egov.com/or-covid-19>
- *CDC Info:* <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html>
- *USFS R6 Sharepoint Site:* <https://usdagcc.sharepoint.com/sites/fs-r06-pnwfrf>

Does the partner organization have their own Risk Assessment, COVID-19 Mitigation Plan, or equivalent? [Yes, see attached. Safety protocols are detailed in three hazard levels and map to CDC, OSHA and local health authority recommendations. Level A is the most restrictive. Level C is the least restrictive. Peak Re-engagement is equivalent to “pre-COVID” normal operations,](#)

- A plan for travel to/entry to the work site, including number of occupants per vehicle; [All levels: “Travel should be conducted to minimize exposure to gas stations, stores, restaurants, and communities outside of your home community. Travel should only occur with members of your household. No carpooling, shuttling, use of public transit, taxis, rideshare, or hitchhiking.”](#)
[Level A: within 100 miles driving distance of residence](#)
[Level B: within 250 miles](#)
[Level C: within 250 miles](#)

- Description of PPE and validation that the partner has access to enough PPE, disinfectant, etc. to complete the job in accordance with their plan and CDC recommendations. *If the unit intends to provide PPE to the partner, is it possible this will result in a shortage of PPE for FS employees?* PCTA and PCTA volunteers will provide all necessary PPE including hand washing stations, hand sanitizer, face coverings, signage and first aid equipment to treat all patients as if they were COVID-19 positive.
- A communication plan including communication method (radio, cell phone, etc...) and contact information. *As per normal operations all PCTA crews are required to have reliable cell coverage or a method of alternate communications means (USFS compatible radio and/or InReach satellite unit) when in areas where cell reception is unreliable.* PCTA crews submit a Communication Plan to our USFS liaison and to Dispatch before going into the field.
- A plan for evacuating a person showing symptoms of COVID-19 and for anyone who might have been exposed. *See "Evacuation and Exposure" section of attached plan.*
- A plan for the partner to communicate possible COVID-19 exposure, etc. to the Forest Service. *See "Evacuation and Exposure" section of attached plan.*

If a partner does not have their own Risk Assessment, work will not begin until one has been created, vetted, and approved by a line officer unless the partner agrees to follow the same RA and JHA as the unit where work is being conducted.

Other important considerations for USFS POC:

- Is the work being done "mission critical," and if not, can it be deferred? *PCTA will work with Forest Service to develop a list of priority projects to ensure alignment with the mission critical work of maintaining and improving trail opportunities in high-density recreation areas.*
- Are there other types of work that could be done with this partner that should be prioritized due to deferred opening of sites, lack of unit capacity, wildfire risk, public health considerations, etc.? *Dana Hendricks is working with Forest Service staff on capacity building through collaboration and planning. Dana is engaged with the REI Rewilding process, Gorge Management Plan revision process, and Co-Visioning. PCTA has additional capacity that is currently on standby to complete field-based projects.*
- What unit-level oversight and involvement is required? Does the unit have the capacity to provide oversight and technical support for the proposed work? *For all projects the scope of work has been approved, and oversight is provided by PCTA staff and trained volunteers. Project-level oversight by the unit is unnecessary.*

Organizations working under a partnership agreement are distinctly different than contractors working under a contract. Partnership agreements require mutual benefit and shared work.

- What type of partnership agreement is in place? *Challenge Cost Share Agreement and OF301a Volunteer Service Agreement.*

- Does the agreement specify (or indicate) that the Forest Service will provide PPE? *If the unit intends to provide PPE to the partner, is it possible this will result in a shortage of PPE for FS employees?* The Challenge Cost Share Agreement states PCTA will provide volunteer support including the purchase of equipment and supplies. Our OF 301a indicates appropriate PPE will be used. Therefore, our COVID plan states we'll provide all PPE including the COVID-specific PPE.
- How is liability addressed in the partnership agreement (e.g. does the Forest Service or partner organization provide worker's compensation)? *Language in the OF-301a Volunteer Service Agreement states that the FS "will consider you as a Federal employee only for the purposes of tort claims, liability and injury compensation to the extent not covered by your volunteer group."* Worker's compensation for PCTA staff is provided for by PCTA's insurance. Volunteers are not entitled to worker's compensation from PCTA.
- Is there any language in the partnership agreement that ensures the partner provides Worker's Compensation, etc.? *No.*

Complete this form and send to your staff officer and to Deputy Area Manager Christy Cheyne for review and approval. Contact your staff officer or supervisor for questions and clarifications.