



Oregon Parks & Recreation Department | Integrated Park Services

April 30 & May 1 **DRAFT** Public Meeting Summary

Columbia River Gorge Public Meetings III

Date: April 30, 2014 & May 1, 2014

Meeting Summary

The purpose of the meeting was to update the public about our current planning process and share the current planning proposals for Oregon State Parks in the Columbia River Gorge.

- 1) Introductions
- 2) Presentation:
 - Overview of Planning Process, Schedule, Our Role in the Columbia Gorge,
 - Overview of our existing conditions: natural resources, cultural resources, VEA.
 - Values, Overview: Recreation analysis.
 - Preliminary proposals: summary of plan goals and actions, improving visitor experience.
 - Individual Park Proposals:
 - Portland Women's Forum
 - Rooster Rock
 - Bridal Veil
 - Ainsworth
 - Wyeth
 - Viento
 - West Mayer
 - Trail Proposals.

Summary of General Comments

- 1) Would you be planting native plants in the proposals?

OPRD STAFF: OPRD would use native plants for all new Gorge plantings.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- There is a desire for more vegetation in park so people have look at their neighbors and they have a more natural aesthetic.

- 2) Who uses the proposed amphitheaters?

OPRD STAFF: OPRD programs and ranger led programs.

- 3) Why are the hours of operations for OPRD only open until 8:00pm?

OPRD STAFF: We don't enforce a lot of those restrictions because there is a shifting time frame for safe park use. We don't issue a lot of tickets for that violation as long as people are using the park in a reasonable fashion.

- 4) Are your trail managers planning on managing the poison oak off the trails?

OPRD STAFF: We do our best and we definitely try to keep areas with high usage free of poison oak.

- 5) Is OPRD creating ways to connect between parks like Koberg Beach?

OPRD STAFF: A connection to Koberg Beach is very difficult because of the highway, however, we are make a strong effort where we can to makes connections between parks through trail networks, existing and proposed. We are working closely with our partners and stakeholders in the Gorge to build stronger connections between parks in the Gorge.

Rooster Rock

- 6) Is it possible to bring the sand back, maybe by bringing some in? If you let the willows grow, would that interfere with the windsurfers/kiteboarders?

OPRD STAFF: It's possible but there are issues of affordability, environmental impacts, and Gorge scenic act requirements. Also, the water is still at a high level until Labor Day, so replacing the sand would still not produce the "sandy beach" experience people are thinking. Regarding the willows, there would still be access for that user group to get to the water, and actually the boarders/surfers lay their lines out at the top of the bank so willows wouldn't interfere with that part of their activity. In fact, the proposal to expand the bank would likely help them in the water with that process.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- River access is the most important priority for me. There's just not a lot in the gorge. Also, multi-use activities and opportunities are important to pursue. Prioritize projects so that every type of user benefits from your plan. And for me, the entrance and details aren't the most important part for me. I would rather invest the money into making a park function well.
- There isn't a lot of waterfront shore in the Gorge.

- 7) What about dredging the lagoon? Wasn't the beach a result of I-84 project?

OPRD STAFF: That becomes a question of money. Also we're not convinced of dredging being an option when an extreme event could undo what we spent a lot of money changing as it has in the past. Nonetheless, we will include language in the plan about the boat ramp,

including continued work with the marine board to create some long term solutions. The beach and sand was there before the I-84 project.

Comment: I only suggest this because there isn't a lot of waterfront shore in the gorge.

8) Is the trail to Portland Women's Forum going to be paved?

OPRD STAFF: No, it would be a soft surface hiking trail. We wouldn't be able to get it to an ADA level of access due to the grade.

9) Do you have any ideas about how you would construct the railroad crossings? Could we do an underpass?

OPRD STAFF: The water table might fluctuate too much in that area to go under the railroad. When we have funding and the opportunity we will likely have to do an overpass, and that is why this area makes the most sense, because there is room to create that crossing.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- Doug's beach crossing in Washington is a great precedent for a railroad crossing.

Portland Women's Forum

10) Why are you expanding the parking lot at Women's Forum?

OPRD STAFF: People utilizing the parking at PWF to bike on the HCRH is expected to increase. Expanding parking with a turnaround would hopefully lessen the turnarounds that are happening in neighboring driveways.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- Currently a dayuse site, but there is activity at night that is not safe
- Maintenance needs to be more consistent, such as trash collection and vegetation management.
- Visitors are using private driveways to turnaround.
- Can a gate be put across the front of the parking lot?

11) Would OPRD consider restoration of the View Point Inn?

OPRD STAFF: The Crown Point Historical Society might have an interest in this restoration endeavor.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- In restoring the View Point Inn, a partnership with universities or creating a project with student volunteers would be great.
- We have a strong volunteer base to help with the View Point Inn.
- The view from Women's Forum includes the View Point Inn and it is really important for us to improve it
- The View Point Inn may be auctioned off soon

Bridal Veil/Angel's Rest Trail

12) Are you going to make Bridal Veil falls ADA accessible as discussed in the last meeting? Is there a thought about running a trail up to Bridal Veil creek through the old logging towns?

OPRD STAFF: We are coordinating a project with the Forest Service on land they own to build an accessible overlook at the falls. The majority of that trail would be on Forest Service land, but we will include language in our document discussing coordination with the Forest Service.

Wyeth

13) Is there an undercrossing to get to the boat launch at Wyeth? Would there be parking for walk-in campsites? Why isn't the camping on the east side? Is there more than one restroom? Day use instead of camping?

OPRD STAFF: Yes, however the parking is not adjacent to the boat launch. There is only parking for the ADA campsite. We think it will provide a good experience for camping along the river's edge, although we are starting to consider the opportunity to put it on the other side of the highway as well. Wyeth will mostly have more than one bathroom.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- It would be a good location for a windsurfing launch spot.

West Mayer

14) Is there recognition of the historic ferry crossing? Have you looked at the water quality in the pond? Stagnant water? How would you manage that with increase in swimming?

OPRD STAFF: We do have information on the ferry crossing and it may be an excellent interpretive opportunity. We will assess that as we move forward. We have done a natural resource assessment study, but we have further work to do related to water quality in the pond.

15) Why is there is no proposed drive-in camping at West Mayer?

OPRD STAFF: We provide car camping in numerous location along the Gorge, so we are trying to offer a different opportunity at West Mayer. You would park your car and then walk in to your campsite. There will likely be an additional RV loop proposed at Memaloose.

Viento

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- The landowner of a park parcel that is currently leased to Oregon State Parks for public use stated that he is considering his options to limit public access on the west side of the park.
- OPRD should be aware of new hand paddling board use. People are getting dropped off here in shuttles from town.

Dalton Point

16) Could Dalton Point be a windsurfing launch?

OPRD STAFF: It is currently mostly a fishermen boat launch and rest stop. The area is so infrequently accessed that people don't want to park there because of car clout. Users often park on the boat ramp so they can see their vehicles. It would be nice to see a variety of users here to reduce the risk car theft.

Trail Projects

17) Why do you have trails going across forest service land here (at Ainsworth)?

OPRD STAFF: It's ok to have the trail across the forest service property in some cases (such as Ainsworth to Yeon) because we're restoring a previously existing trail.

18) Are you going to expand the trail system near Latourell Falls?

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- I've seen tons of hikers up at Latourell falls. It seems like a prime place to expand the Guy Talbot trail. Add a 2 mile hike that can expand into 4 mile hike? It could take pressure off Angels Rest. Also there may be old roads/trails that could be revived.

19) What happened to the log bridge?

OPRD STAFF: It was not a state project and it got washed out. ODOT is looking to reconnect that trail in the future and is planning that project at this time. Eventually, OPRD will take on certain parts of that trail project and a replacement bridge is proposed in this plan.

Facilities

20) Have you considered showering facilities? Like for bikers/swimmers.

OPRD STAFF: Well, we have them in campgrounds. So Ainsworth, Memaloose, etc. they all have shower facilities. That's an interesting comment though about including showers for additional activity uses.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- Provide potable water service for a drop shower nozzle that allows people to rinse off.

21) Have you thought of going solar for powering your restrooms?

OPRD STAFF: Yes, we just installed solar phone charging stations at Bullards Beach. We're trying out this system in a few different places. We've installed solar power at several parks across the state and it is usually not successful. We are looking for ways it can work at the right application, such as phone charging and lights, not to power pumps or mechanical systems.

Dogs

22) Has there been any exploration to include facilities for dogs to swim/play ball/be off leash?

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- We're missing places for dogs, especially off leash areas for dogs.
- As the Gorge has been developed there are no places anymore for dogs. There's nothing east of Rooster Rock.
- There are some people out there that make sure they keep their dog under control so I don't understand why we don't have any places for dogs.
- Yes, there's no public land for dog walking/playing.

Capacity

23) Should we have a shuttle system for moving people around because of overuse?

OPRD STAFF: We are working to meet the current management plan and we know that we need to address overflow. Fees are a way for us to regulate usage, but it isn't the only approach we can use to control the crowds. Shuttles are another option, but that means

there are more people on trails and we need to figure out if that's the best approach as well.

24) Have you considered having morning and afternoon parking? Have you considered putting in a toll for people driving on the toll for driving on the Historic Columbia River Highway?

OPRD STAFF: That's an interesting idea to consider. There would need to be consistency between OSP and the USFS in terms of how people access sites, pay for parking, etc. We could have a Gorge passport that's similar to the coastal one.

25) Can OPRD take a lead in assisting the Gorge Commission with their planning efforts?

OPRD STAFF: We have heard a lot of regional ideas in this planning process and are collecting them in a regional strategy section of the plan. The ideas we have generated as a result of the public process won't disappear. They just take time to be realized.

Safety/Security

26) Is OPRD thinking about security? How does the security at Multnomah Falls work?

OPRD STAFF: Yes. We've paid attention to increased safety and security issues. We've also considering the use of volunteers at trailheads to provide direction and just be eyes on the ground. Currently, we do have citizen volunteers that help with issues like that and they patrol areas. It's Multnomah County Citizens Patrol and they have an official vehicle and they monitor the area. They can go to many different parks.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- I hope you're considering how the oil trains come through the gorge. The railroad is right next to parks, and emergencies and evacuation issues tied to train accidents. I hope you're being vocal about how the gas and oil trains that move through the Gorge.