



*Oregon Parks and Recreation Department:
Integrated Park Services Division*

Advisory Committee Meeting IV – Draft Plan Review

Columbia River Gorge Management Units Plan

Date: October 22, 2014

Time: 1:00-4:00 PM

Location: Port of Cascade Locks, Marine Park Pavilion

Meeting Summary

There was a request to clarify in the Plan that in-lieu fishing sites are open only to the four tribes, not the general public.

There was interest from Friends of the Columbia River Gorge about whether the area below Bridal Veil Falls could be used to create a universal access parking lot for the park. Stan Hinatsu with the Forest Service noted that the potential access area is located on Union Pacific property, not Forest Service property as previously thought (he provided OPRD with a plat showing this). Jaime English commented that the parking lot would be desirable from OPRD's point of view and should be part of the long term vision.

There was a question from ODFW about the function of the proposed bird blind at Viento. It was confirmed by OPRD that the bird blind would focus visitor's attention in one spot rather than going off trail near the pond, in addition to add interpretive value.

There was a suggestion that historical interpretation opportunities could be increased at Viento. Currently, there is one interpretive sign that addresses the railroad and how Viento got its name. There is potential for additional interpretive elements covering the former mill site and the former town of Viento.

There was concern from ODFW that the proposed story circle at West Mayer would be located in a dry east-side setting and could create a fire risk if large campfires are held in the circle. It could perhaps be better suited to Viento given that Viento has a wetter climate. Jaime English responded that all campgrounds could benefit from story circles, and that the story circle would still function well as a gathering place even if fires are deemed too risky to be held in certain locations.

There were questions raised about how the proposed trail from Portland Women's Forum to Rooster Rock would cross the railroad tracks and I-84. OPRD staff noted that this was identified as a reach project and detailed plans for the crossings would have to be developed in the future, but that there are several feasible ways of getting people across these barriers.

Andrew Jansky, with Flowing Solutions, commented that he would like bikes to be allowed on the Portland Women's Forum to Rooster Rock trail and that road bikers in particular would appreciate a

connection from the Historic Columbia River Highway to Rooster Rock State Park. Jaime English responded that the trail is envisioned as an accessible hike close to Portland for people who are not interested in/capable of doing the more strenuous hikes further east in the Gorge. She noted that bicyclists using the trail could create user conflicts, but indicated that OPRD could look at whether the trail can accommodate bicyclists.

Friends of the Gorge noted that the Portland Women's Forum to Rooster Rock trail would not qualify as a 'relief valve' in terms of congestion for popular hikes like Angel Rest because it does not provide the same type of experience. There was also concern that Rooster Rock has a day use fee and Portland Women's Forum does not, so the trail would potentially increase traffic at Portland Women's Forum. Jaime English noted that this issue along with others will need to be addressed at the time a railroad crossing becomes feasible (currently a reach project).

There was a question about whether the Bonneville Power Association (BPA) is amenable to proposed multi-use trails in the BPA right-of-way at Mitchell Point. Jaime English responded that this issue needs to be addressed through further communication with BPA staff. Stan Hinatsu with the Forest Service noted that the previous Post Canyon trails plan avoided BPA right-of-way to the extent possible.

Andrew Jansky, with Flowing Solutions, initially expressed interest in seeing mountain bikes allowed on one of the two proposed trails connecting to the Mitchell Point parking lot. There was a subsequent discussion, with OPRD and Forest Service planners outlining reasons why the Wygant connection is a preferred alternative for connecting mountain bikes to the Historic Columbia River Highway (easier grade, less potential for user conflict, connection to Viento hiker-biker campground and trailhead). This alternative connection appeared to be an acceptable solution for those present.

There was a comment that the "Chetwood Loop" proposed at Viento/Mitchell Point is misspelled. The correct spelling is "Chetwoot," a Native American word for 'bear'.

There was a suggestion that the Mitchell Point trails should be emphasized more in the plan as a significant step toward creating bike access from the highway to an extensive trail network, possibly by adding a separate context map showing the trails relative to the larger Gorge trail network. It was noted by OPRD planners that a similar map exists on p.182-183 of the Plan.

There was a desire for clarification of the 'trail docents' or 'stewards' concept in the Plan. Jaime English explained that trail stewards would be similar to park hosts, but would only come for a few hours during peak times to assist people with directions, site interpretation, and create additional presence near parking lots to prevent car thefts. It was noted that the Northwest Trail Alliance has stewards with vests and red crosses and that they have been successful in promoting mountain bike trail safety.

There was a question about whether a proposed river access feasibility study would fall into the 'top priority projects' category? Jaime English responded that OPRD does view this as an important study to complete.

There was a comment that the map on page 48 and 49 in the Plan is missing identification of water access points outside of state parks – i.e., Port of Hood River, The Dalles, etc. This is important because the Plan should adequately address the ability of people to travel between all access points along the Columbia River. For example, boating from Hood River to Viento is a common route. The connectivity diagrams showing river access on page 140 do include city ports on both sides of the Columbia

Roberta Kirk, a representative of the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, noted that the Tribes and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers want to protect Memaloose Island, which sits in the river just across from Memaloose State Park. This includes ensuring that no public access to the island is allowed. Also, the Plan incorrectly identifies memaloose as a Chinook word. It is a Chinook jargon word, not a true language word. The word means ‘dead people’, not ‘island of the dead.’

There was a question about whether trail advocacy groups could initiate trail projects regardless of the phasing for projects listed in the Plan. There was also a desire for more ways for groups to get involved in trail building in the Gorge. More clarity is needed about how advocates can contribute to the trail planning and development process, including budgeting, and construction/permitting. OPRD staff noted that trail groups can always coordinate projects with park managers, and that their help in leading and implementing trail projects is welcomed. Staff also noted that Chapter 9 in the Plan is a valuable tool for advocates, and that it should include as much information as possible to help trail advocacy groups.

Representatives from the Columbia River Yachting Association expressed concern that the deteriorating docks at Rooster Rock are not addressed in the Plan. Current problems with the docks include people’s feet getting wet because of inadequate flotation and accidents because of geese droppings and slippery surfaces. They would like the docks to be replaced, but noted that a quick fix would be to put some extra flotation on the docks. Kevin Price with OPRD noted that there have been discussions about replacing the docks, but that staff needs to be sure there will be adequate future access to the docks given the silting in of the channel before any commitments are made. Representatives from the Yachting Association pointed out that most boats have a maximum 3.5 foot draft, so access will not be a problem when the river is high. OPRD staff suggested that future conversations be held with boaters and the Oregon Marine Board to determine what can be done about the docks.

Andrew Jansky, with Flowing Solutions, felt that OPRD is essentially writing off boat access to Rooster Rock. He feels that stronger language is needed than “it’s the marine board’s problem,” because they are unlikely to do anything about the problem. Kevin Price stressed the point that it is cost prohibitive to fix the problems with the boat ramp/channel access, given high upfront costs and the need for continual maintenance of the channel if it were to be dredged.

There was concern about the proposal (from the 2011 Lewis and Clark State Park Master Plan) for a 6 ft. bike lane on the Troutdale Bridge, given space limitations and the historic nature of the bridge.

Stan Hinatsu with the Forest Service expressed a need for a more comprehensive approach to connecting with youth and other stakeholders. Currently, agencies in the Gorge have separate programs and strategies for involving the public in recreation activities, some of which may be redundant. Staff from OPRD agreed that a strategic coordinated approach to outreach and volunteer engagement is

needed in the Gorge. Tom Kloster with Trailkeepers of Oregon suggested that the Forest Service partner with OPRD so that volunteer trail groups can complete projects easily that span properties.

There was a question about whether the Toothrock Trailhead is located on BPA property, as it says in the plan. It may be on ODOT property.

Patricia Neighbor, a planner with Wasco County, wondered if Nature Play facilities could potentially be proposed for the east end of the Gorge. Jaime English stated that OPRD could consider nature play at East Mayer.

There is a typo on p.186 of the Plan: 'Portland Women's Forum' should be 'Mitchell Point.'

A representative from the City of Mosier pointed out that OPRD owns property with a nice beach within the City of Mosier, and that no railroad crossing is needed to access it. OPRD promised to look at the area closer.

There was a question about why no hiker-biker camping was proposed at Rooster Rock. OPRD staff noted that the only access for bikers is via I-84 and most bikers don't want to ride along the interstate. Additionally locations that presented themselves as appropriate for camping are close to the highway and noisy. The planning team suggested that the Plan could include language about the possibility of future campsite development contingent on a better connection.

Kevin Price asked attendees about potential areas to provide dog off-leash areas in the eastern end of the Gorge. Several attendees noted that the Post Canyon trails currently function as de facto off-leash areas. Stan Hinatsu with the Forest Service noted that the "dog issue" is complicated and that attempts to address it if there is no pressing need may backfire.

OPRD staff asked attendees to write letters in support of the Plan and indicated that a reminder would be sent to advisory committee members.