

**Historic Columbia River Highway Advisory Committee Meeting  
 SUMMARY  
 December 4, 2015  
 Discovery Center  
 The Dalles, OR**

<b>Members Attending:</b>	Wayne Stewart (Chair) Bill Pattison Arthur Babitz Kevin Price (OPRD) Francie Royce Alan Snook (ODOT) Judy Davis Marc Berry – <i>Emeritus</i> Art Carroll – <i>Emeritus</i>
<b>HCRH AC Staff:</b>	Kristen Stallman (ODOT) Sandra Koike (ODOT) Susan Hanson (ODOT)
<b>Others Attending: (14)</b>	Aaron Litt Al Gillis Barb Hosford Bill Failing Bonnie Clark Brad DeHart (ODOT) Gary Brannan (FHCRH) Jeanette Kloos (FHCRH) John Cowan (ODOT) Kevin VanDyke Lynn Burditt(US Forest Service) Marge Dryden (US Forest Service) Mark Reynolds Nancy Nelson (OPRD) Paul Landou Richard Alfieri Rod Runyon (Wasco County Commissioner) Roger A. Buss Stan Hinatsu (US Forest Service)

**Call to Order:**

Wayne Stewart called the December 2015 meeting to order with nine Advisory Committee members present.

**Approval of Minutes:**

Last meeting's minutes were approved.

**Opportunity for Public Comment:**

Susan Buce from the Discovery Center reviewed the activities that will be taking place at the Discovery Center around the Centennial Celebration in 2016. Also the centennial for National Parks Service (NPS) is in 2016, so as a joint effort, a speaker from NPS Timothy Davis will be doing a presentation. Peter Marbach is working on a Historic Highway commemorative book. Susan Buce is also thinking about printing the Historic Highway bridges poster.

Kevin Price provided an update on staff transitions at OPRD. He will be the Willamette Valley's region manager. With Dennis Comfort no longer serving on the advisory committee, Wayne shared Dennis' message with everyone, Dennis thanked everyone for their good work on the Historic Highway. Kevin Price will be taking Dennis' place.

**Mosier Creek, Dry Canyon Creek Restoration and Chenoweth Creek Replacement**

Brad DeHart shared his upcoming work on three bridges; Mosier Creek, Chenoweth Creek and Dry Canyon Creek Bridges. The Mosier Creek and Dry Canyon Creek bridges are in need of a lot of repair. Preservation work is needed to deal with the slow deterioration of concrete and steel within the bridges. This will entail removal of asphalt pavement and placement of a waterproofing membrane on the deck, along with removal of spalling concrete and its replacement with patching. Once completed, the surface will be given a treatment to provide a more consistent, finished appearance.

Chenoweth Creek Bridge will be completely removed and replaced. The new bridge being considered will be 100' long and 38' wide. Brad asked for feedback from the advisory committee on this approach. There isn't much historic value to what's there now and the new bridge will be utilitarian. That being said, ODOT plans to add features as seen on other bridges along the Historic Highway. The substructure is not visible from any of the key viewing areas, so the focus is on the railing, which is visible to the travelling public. The bridge is located within the historic district. There isn't a design ready yet, construction for all three is planned for 2017.

Wayne Stewart mentioned that he would have a concern regarding the expanded width, from 20' to 38'. Marc Berry shared his concern for bicyclists as cars speed past on the bridge. Arthur Babitz discussed his concern with the discontinuity of the roadway profile, particularly at the Mosier Creek Bridge. Another question raised was whether construction will be closing the bridges. Brad responded that ODOT would be looking at single lane closures and using flaggers, but it may be necessary to have each individual bridge closed for short periods of time. He also thought it will be a one-season construction project from Spring to Fall. Overall, the advisory committee and meeting attendees were excited to see these projects come into fruition. For more information on the US30 Bridge Repair & Replacement Project, visit: [www.oregon.gov/ODOT/HWY/REGION4/Pages/US30BridgeRepairReplacementProject](http://www.oregon.gov/ODOT/HWY/REGION4/Pages/US30BridgeRepairReplacementProject)

On January 4<sup>th</sup>, there will be a meeting at the Fort Dalles Readiness Center at Columbia Gorge Community College to discuss high level transportation funding. Kristen can send more information as the meeting details are set.

**Chenoweth Creek Pit Restoration**

Brad also provided an update on the Chenoweth (Shooters) Pit. The pit still contains materials that ODOT would like to have removed. ODOT is working with DEQ on development of a plan to clean the

dirt. A project is in the works, but there aren't many details yet. Construction may take place at the end of 2016. This would include lead removal to keep it from leaching into the soil, and likely some restoration of vegetation.

### **Mitchell Point Alternatives Review and Action**

Wayne introduced all seven Mitchell Point Alternatives.

- **Alignment 1 – Tunnel Option:** The west portal of the tunnel begins about 80 feet north of the existing parking lot. The alignment then bears eastward in a straight line toward approximately the center of the shallow gully in the north face of the cliffs. The tunnel then bears in a straight line through the next segment of the cliffs to the east, ending on the far eastern side of the point for a total length of approximately 1,225 feet.
- **Alignment 2A – Shelf and Bridge:** This option utilizes the shelf of the original HCRH alignment to the fullest. A 300ft bridge is used to cross the chasm. Rockfall mitigation measures are necessary to protect trail users.
- **Alignment 2B – Shelf and Short Tunnel:** Similar to Option 2A except that a curved tunnel structure is used to bypass the chasm instead of a bridge. Rockfall mitigation measures are necessary to protect trail users.
- **Alignment 2C – Shelf and Intermediate Tunnel:** The western approach utilizes the original Historic Highway alignment for the trail and then constructs an intermediate length tunnel along a portion of the rock face and then on to the east, along the Option 1 alignment. Rockfall mitigation measures are necessary to protect trail users.
- **Alignment 3A – Overland Trail:** Connects west to east by using an overland trail. Due to the steepness of the terrain, trail design requirements call for many switchbacks, as the trail curves its way up the hillside.
- **Alignment 3B – Overland Trail with Saddle Cut:** Connects west to east with a similar overland trail, but reduces some trail switchbacks and trail length, by excavating a portion of the area known as the "saddle". The cut depth at the saddle is approximately 50 feet.
- **Alignment 4 – I-84 Adjacent:** Attempts to take fullest advantage of the existing I-84 right-of-way. It is a roadside option with some earthwork. Rockfall mitigation measures are necessary to protect trail users.

Based on Scenic Area permitting, the easiest alternative to implement would be Alternative 1 (The Tunnel) as it would not be seen from any key viewing areas. The Historic Highway Advisory Committee had a working group meeting with ODOT staff and discussed the pros and cons of the various alternatives. During the meeting, the Advisory Committee, Gary and Jeanette stated their preferences. The alternatives that rated the highest were 2A and 2B. Wayne proposed the Advisory Committee make a recommendation to remove alternatives 3A (Overland) and 3B (Overland with rock-cut) and alternative 4 (Adjacent to I-84) which is not historically compatible and an inferior place to put trail users.

Kevin Price shared his concern with switchbacks along the trail in that people have a tendency to cut through to avoid doing so many switchbacks. Marc Berry asked how long it would take to complete Alternative 4 (Adjacent to I-84) route versus other options. Bill Pattison thinks that in addition to knowing our preferences for 2A and 2B alternatives, the next decision will be to decide whether to include a partial tunnel or no tunnel at all. Not including a tunnel would be the most feasible, but what would the Forest Service say about the bridge structure? Arthur Babitz asked when we would get

answers regarding rock catchment structures. Wayne mentioned that we will need future funding to explore the two alternatives further. Art Carroll disagrees with Bill and Arthur that the tunnel would not be considered restoration. He thinks John Elliot would be focused on the views.

Kevin VanDyke liked alternative 2A as a cyclist and historian. Richard Alfieri expressed his opinion from someone who has an interest in cars and shared he would like to see an option that would occasionally allow a car could to pass through. Jeanette would like to keep alternatives 1, 2A and 2B on the table. Alan shared that just because there was a tunnel there, doesn't mean we have to recreate it. A big consideration is the cost and whether the design fits the values of what we are trying to accomplish here. Art suggested that at a future Advisory Committee meeting we examine John Elliot's thesis of how they went through the alternatives analysis process. Lynn Burditt asked whether the switchback would destroy Mitchell point as a natural resource. She suggested not narrowing the alternatives so much that after the rockfall assessment you run out of options or have to go back to other options. One cautionary reminder with alternative 2A is to be aware that there may be high costs attached. Also there are several key viewing areas where a rock fall structure would be visible.

***Motion for ODOT to provide information on rockfall analysis and suspend discussion until we have further information. Focus any money on rockfall findings on 2A and 2B and recommend 3A and 3B be removed from further consideration. Do not remove any more options off the list until we have adequate information. Everyone agreed to the motion.***

#### **Historic Columbia River Highway Collaborative Assessment and Gorge Transit Plan Update**

Kristen Stallman shared that on March 2015, a Multnomah County Sheriff came to discuss the growing issues around congestion. At the June advisory committee meeting, Ernie facilitated a discussion around congestion and urged ODOT to have a conversation around congestion and transit options. In August, the land management agencies met to discuss the issues as well. One idea that came out of the meeting was to get the Oregon Solutions Team involved as a facilitator. The Historic Columbia River Highway collaborative comprised of the land management agencies invested some money towards facilitation and Oregon Solutions matched the amount. County Commissioner Diane McKeel and Representative Mark Johnson were asked to convene the group. The first meeting will be held next week to come up with short term solutions between Bridal Veil and Ainsworth in time for the 2016 centennial celebration of the Historic Highway. A parallel project is a transit study to collect data. The consultant Nelson Nygaard with national park congestion and transit experience was hired to help with the study. The project will start next week with stakeholder interviews with elected officials, recreation providers, tourism groups, public transit providers, ridershare, Columbia Area Transit, etc. Private transit providers will also be involved. The goals of a pilot project include transit service in 2016 between Hood River and East Multnomah County and data collection during the transit service. The project is looking at a 2-4 year time frame for short term solutions.

Kevin Price added that from a natural resource perspective, when is enough, enough? In trying to protect the sites and natural resources, he doesn't think that bringing more people is the solution. They struggle with the damage done to the natural resources unless, other options like parking is removed. Stan added what other mitigation can we attempt such as reducing parking?

Lynn Burditt suggested that it has to be more than the resources agencies talking about the natural resources. She suggested we think about a mix of options. The Rural Tourism Studio is going to look at

other options to disperse users. The Forest Service is looking at closing Oneonta Gorge because of the number of users. She encouraged us to think holistically about how we're bringing people into the Gorge. Art would like to see how many people are using the various location, determining the capacity and how close we are to capacity. Stan has done a heat map. Art shared that people like using cars and getting people to use transit may be challenging. It may take a while, but what about a water taxi? Stan responded that the I-84 and rail are obstacles making access to the Historic Highway a challenge.

### **2016 Centennial Celebration Update**

Bill Failing provided an update on donations. Rick Buck, manager at Multnomah Falls Lodge shared concern regarding the 2016 Centennial Celebration at Multnomah Falls that the VIP list was too large. He suggested narrowing the participants to 50-100 people. The goal is to record the event and make it available elsewhere so everyone knows what is happening. Also, we will have different Centennials oriented events throughout the communities throughout the seasons.

### **Implementation Strategy Discussion**

Oregon Parks and Recreation Department submitted a STIP Enhance grant application to ODOT for trail funding for Segment H. There are two ways of approaching trail construction, starting from Hood River to Viento or starting from Viento to Hood River. Arthur shared his interest in constructing the trail from Hood River to Viento, starting with Segment H. His interest is based solely on politics. Art argued for trail construction from west to east, starting with Segment E. Segment E is a larger section to fund (\$10 million) so it may be easier to piece segments from Hood River to implement less costly segments. The STIP application was for segment H. The reasoning behind it was building out from Hood River creates a section of trail that Hood River residents can use, whereas they would not be able to use segment H if that section was built first. An advantage of building segment E first is that Hood River residents can drive to Mitchell Point and head west. By getting people to start at Mitchell Point, people may be more likely push to get Mitchell Point funded. The conclusion of this discussion was to stay on course with funding and to be opportunistic about funding when it is available.

### **Friends of the Historic Columbia River Highway**

Jeanette shared a list of funding commitments and their involvement with many project around the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Historic Highway celebration and future activities.

### **ODOT Maintenance – not present**

### **OPRD**

Kevin Price shared that Steve Kruger has been gaining management experience at Viento, but his work out of class will be ending soon and he will be heading back to Stub Stewart Park at the end of February. Vista House has been busy and has committed to stay open on Friday, Saturday and Sunday throughout the winter. Storm damage affected Ainsworth State Park which lost 30 trees and the trails were also affected.

**Travel Oregon – not present –** Kristen Stallman suggested not setting advisory committee meetings on Fridays so Kristen Dall can attend.

**Gorge Commission** – not present – Wayne shared that on January 12<sup>th</sup>, he and other committee members will be giving a presentation on what’s happening on the Historic Highway.

**USFS** – Stan Hinatsu mentioned the 100th year anniversary event at Eagle Creek. It is the first campground in the national forest system. The Forest Service is working with the concessionaires at Multnomah Falls to work on the electrical system and also cleaning up downed trees. There has been a transition with Forest Service staff. Christine Plourde has moved on and the Scenic Area position should be advertised in January. Marge mentioned additional repair work at Multnomah Falls of the SW wall.

**WFLHD** – not present

**Historic Columbia River Highway Advisory Committee Round Table**

Arthur mentioned that the movie Singing Waters – an 8 min movie from the 1930’s is now on You Tube. He suggested we watch it at the next Advisory Committee meeting.

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**Next Advisory Committee Meeting –Thursday, March 17<sup>th</sup>, 2016 in Corbett. *The location was later changed to Cascade Locks.***

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