

Historic Columbia River Highway Advisory Committee Meeting

MINUTES

May 20, 2008

Columbia River Gorge Discovery Center

The Dalles, Oregon

Members Attending: Marc Berry , Wayne Stewart, Ernest Drapela, Scott West, Art Carroll, Matt Davey (OPRD alternate), Crissey Curran

HCRH AC Staff: Kristen Stallman, Magnus Bernhardt , Chris Ewald

Others Attending: Jeanette Kloos, Gary Brannen, Carolyn Wood, Matthew Joerin, Sue Bake, Gayle Rothrock, Chris Bernhardt, Peter Cornelson

Pre-Meeting Site Visit – The Advisory Committee met at the Chenoweth Creek Pit prior to the meeting to review the issues and proposed solutions in the field.

Call to Order

Wayne Stewart, vice-chair, called the meeting to order at 10:30 A.M. Minutes approved as written.

Public Comment

No public comments. The Advisory Committee had no additions to the agenda.

Update/recap of May 15 Chenoweth Pit Design Workshop

Magnus provided a brief recap on the Design Workshop that was held on May 15 at the Gorge Discovery Center. During the workshop group brainstormed the major goals of the project:

- Eventually restore the pit in the long term
- Restrict shooting and remove garbage in the short term.

The purpose of the workshop was to develop a strategy that would meet these goals and develop general costs related to the proposed solutions.

It became clear a key component of this strategy would be informing the public of new restrictions and why the restrictions are important. ODOT would like to maintain access to site for future gravel extraction if this becomes an allowed use in the future. Collaboration with the law enforcement was also an important strategy. This includes establishing “No Trespassing” and “No parking zones” so that both the County Sheriff and Oregon State Police can issue citations at the site. The physical improvements will include the construction of landscaped berm to limit parking along the road. A fence will be installed behind the berm, out of view of the traveling public to further restrict access. The site will also be signed “No Parking” and “No Trespassing”.

Art Carroll described the purpose of the report is focus on both permitting and anticipated costs associated with the improvements. He described a visit from a middle school teacher from Vancouver who had brought a class of fifth graders to the Museum. The teacher said he was struck by how incompatible the use seemed so close to the highway and at the entrance to the Discovery Center.

Art explained that the report will be ready in a month and will include a site plan. The workshop was very productive with good attendance, which included county sheriff and County Commissioner, Bill Lennox. Brian Bainson was huge asset as he worked on the Rowena Pit Restoration Plan and has firm understanding of ODOT's requirements. With Brian's assistance and Sam Wilkins and Brad DeHart's input, Art explained that he was confident that report would gain approval by ODOT's District 4 Manager. This approval is vital if we intend to seek grant funding for this project. Art explained that three members of the Gorge Discovery Center have generously donated \$1000 each to help offset planning costs.

Jeanette Kloos explained that ODOT previously developed a berm design for this site. According to Jeanette, the previous berm design was not approved due in large part to the fact that it was an "engineered berm" and not a "landscaped berm." The design of the new berm needs to be more natural looking than previous design.

Updates:

Wayne Stewart shifted the agenda around and asked for Committee Updates. There were no objections. Ernie and Scott mentioned that they had a couple of brief announcements.

Staff Updates: Kristen Stallman

Kristen Stallman provided the Advisory Committee with the staff updates.

- **Viewpoint Inn Sign** - Bob Hadlow has been working with the inn owners to redraft the proposed sign. The View Point Inn has hired SeaReach to the design work. This allows for the proposed sign to better integrate with the signs in the field as SeaReach design the interpretive signs. If the Committee or members of the audience have any issues or suggestions they should contact Bob Hadlow directly. The HCRH AC members were handed a draft design for the proposed interpretive sign.
- **Viento to Starvation Creek HCRH Trail Project** - ODOT will have the bid let ready by mid September. This will allow the contractor to remove trees in the winter and prep the site. Full on construction should start in early Spring. This new schedule will reduce impacts to the State Park Campground. Bids typically are less expensive in September, not competing with other summer projects
- **Crown Point Viaduct** – ODOT will be submitting a proposal for the Forest Highway Program. The applications are due July 28, 2008. The present funding through the Forest Highway Enhancement Program and Transportation Enhancement is not enough to cover all the work required.

ODOT staff rescoped the project and the cost for restoration of the viaduct is now exceeds 3 million dollars.

- **Mosier Wayside Project** – At the October 2007 HCRH Advisory Committee meeting Magnus presented the committee with some concepts for a small wayside adjacent to the Historic Highway. This summer we will have an ODOT intern who will be working with City to help refine the plan. The new plan will focus on sustainability and bicycle friendly designs. The intern will be tasked with a public workshop to solicit ideas.
- **Westcliff Drive, Hood River** – It has come to our attention that some of the property owners along Westcliff Drive have reservations regarding the proposed 10-ft path along Westcliff to access the proposed HCRH Sate Trail. Presently the Hood River County and Hood River City Transportation System Plans require that new development provide this path. The properties west of Exit 64 are zoned commercial. ODOT staff will be meeting with City and County to discuss the issues and hope to plan a joint meeting with County and City with the affected property owners to discuss their issues and provide them with information.
- **Multnomah Falls to Cascade Locks Preservation Project** - This project is in development and as part of the project the freeway signs will be updated to reflect the Historic Route 30 shields. Additionally, we will be meeting with ODOT traffic and sign designers to refine the sign plan developed two years and approved by the committee. As part of this project, we will be developing a new Scenic Byway signs to be placed at portals along the highway.
- **Sandy River Delta** – The Exit 18 deceleration lane improvements needed to provide access to the USFS site at the Sandy River will begin shortly. In conjunction with ODOT's improvements to extend the deceleration lane, the USFS is working with the National Guard to construct the 100 space parking lot. At the same time, the Confluence Project will be completing the Maya Linn's installation. An opening is planned for August 23.
- **Scenic Byways Grant** - ODOT has received word that our recent funding request through the Scenic Byways program to replace the single rail wooden guardrail with the two rail wooden guardrail along the highway has been successful. The Scenic Byway Grant will cover approximately \$800,000 or 80% of the project costs. ODOT maintenance will provide the match.
- **Accessibility along the HCRH**- Staff recently received an email regarding the accessibility of motorized scooters and slow walkers along the HCRH Trail. It is important to note that the HCRH is an important resource to mobility impaired.
- **Communications plan** - The video project is now complete. ODOT videographers will be working on a shorten version. They suggest a 7 minute version. The press folders/packets have been prepared. They include the following elements:
 - Executive Summary
 - Fact Sheet

- Progress Report
 - Bike Map
 - HCRH Driving Tour
 - Eventually it will include the Reconnection Report which should be ready in a couple of weeks.
- **Public Relations Strategy:** ODOT staff recently met with Jeff Hampton, Travel Oregon, Scott West and Veronica Rinard, Travel Portland, to review the video and the other related materials. A campaign aimed at shaping public input is needed. Scott agreed to discuss this with some key PR firms such as Conklin, Fiskum and McCormick. They may be willing to take on this project as a civic project. Scott felt it is important that we integrate our communications with Travel Portland. It is important to continually work this issue and broaden the base of support for the project. A grass roots campaign is needed to really make this happen. Scott attended Bike Summit in Washington, D.C. He is investigating getting in touch with corporate/giving community. The project must appear as a community driven project.
 - Jeanette Kloos noted that Friends of the Historic Columbia River Highway are ready to give presentations. She requested a couple copies of video. Kristen noted that the revised, improved video will be available shortly. The Friends also have donations available for reprinting promotional materials if needed
 - Kristen and Marc Berry attended Bike Summit in early March. The bike community is very supportive of overall goal of a complete trail through the Gorge. Marc was particularly interested in the Bicycle Friendly Community concept.
 - Carolyn Wood noted that she would be happy to lobby the City of the Dalles support for the plan.

Friends of the Historic Highway Update – Jeanette Kloos

- The Friends are focusing Gorge Ride. This is a major fund raising event for the Friends. It will be held on June 14 this year. They are looking for volunteers.
- The Friends submitted an application to the Oregon Cultural Trust. If successful the grant would cover the cost of the new brochure, new sets of the interpretive displays, and offset some of the cost associated with the September lecture/driving tour series.
- The Friends submitted another grant request to the Meyer Memorial Trust. Results expected in June. This grant if funded would help the Friends cover Mitchell Point Tunnel Feasibility study. They are currently paying for study out of existing funds.

- Mitchell Point Tunnel Study is in draft form. The study proposes placing the tunnel 80' back from the edge. The Friends would like to see the tunnel move forward as much as possible. There are some concerns related to the method of construction. Blasting would be required which may complicate the traffic control issues along I-84. The Friends would like to see a road header used. A revised report will be available shortly.
- McCord to Moffett Survey – CH2Mhill recently completed the survey for the trail alignment.. Wayne and Jeanette met with the team and it appears they are moving on to engineering. Kristen notes that the volunteers need to coordinate well with Magnus and Wayne on the location of the preferred route.
- Historic Columbia River Highway Lecture and Self Guided Driving Tour 9/25 and 9/27– Bob Hadlow and George Fekaris will be presenting a lecture Thursday night at the Architectural Heritage Center. The lecture will be followed by a Saturday Self Guided Tour of the Historic Highway. There will be mini lectures along the route along with a self guided tour booklet with maps.

Oregon Parks and Recreation Department, Matt Davey

- New Region 2 Manager – Matt announced that John Potter has been promoted to Assistant State Parks Director. OPRD is presently seeking a replacement.
- Gorge Vandalism – Matt was informed by the Hood River County Sheriff that the man breaking into cars was apprehended. He is associated with over 80 break ins. The Crown Point Assault/Robbery Suspect also arrested
- Seasonal help hired and should begin June 1.
- OPRD is seeing higher use numbers along the trails
- Great turnouts at events such as fun runs, walks, Mount Hood Cycling Classic

US Forrest Service Update, Sue Baker

- Eagle Creek improvements, exit ramp
 - Engineer shared, will be working on design
 - Environmental permitting done and now we are waiting for funds from WFLHD
 - Striping bike lane
 - Replacing guard rails
 - Repaving certain roadway sections

Western Federal Lands Highway Update - Matt Joerin

- Money waiting to be distributed at beginning of fiscal year
- Last fall there was a call for Forest Highway Enhancement grants. The Tri Agency group met and selected two projects in the Gorge.
 - Wakeenah Falls- \$300,000 for Construction in 2011, \$75,000 for Design and Construction Admin

- Mitchell Point- \$475,000 2010 Construction, \$118,000 for Design and Construction Admin
 - Overlooks
 - Trail Improvements
 - Entrance and Exit

Video Presentation – The Advisory Committee and members of the audience previewed the Milepost 2016 video.

LUNCH

Wayne Stewart reconvened the meeting at 1:00 pm.

Wayne provided an overview of the Reconnection Projects Report. This is the report will help inform Congressman DeFazio and other potential funders. It includes to main components, text, graphics and tables describing the cost of the projects. The narrative was written by ODOT and the HCRH Advisory Committee but needs to be presented and reviewed by the Friends of the HCRH. Wayne described the layout of the report. There will be an introduction in the front of the document followed by a description of 11 segments. Each segment will include narrative, cost estimates and a map.

Magnus reviewed the 11 segment maps with the committee. The maps outlined the proposed alignment of the trail. Wayne called for approval of the draft report. Ernie seconded it. Motion passed. All in favor.

