



Nature

HISTORY

Discovery

Planning for Beaver Creek State Natural Area & Ona Beach State Park

November 2011 Newsletter

The First Phase of the Planning Process

The first phase of the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department's (OPRD) planning process for Beaver Creek State Natural Area (SNA) and Ona Beach State Park has been underway for the past year. Ona Beach State Park is a long established oceanfront park located along Highway 101 south of Newport. Beaver Creek SNA, located a short distance inland from Ona Beach, was recently opened with initial improvements as Park-of-the-Year for 2010. Additional lands have recently been acquired that will enable expansion of these two parks. A long term plan is needed to guide future resource management and recreational uses in both parks. In the planning process OPRD will be taking a comprehensive look at natural and cultural resource conditions and management needs, outdoor recreation trends in the region, areas within the parks that are suitable for recreational development and use, possible affects of park uses on local public facilities services and neighboring land uses, and related ideas and concerns identified through public input.

OPRD has been conducting assessments of the park resources as a first step in identifying opportunities and constraints related to potential resource management and recreation. This information will provide a basis for discussing options for future uses and management in upcoming public meetings.

Progress on Park Resource Assessments

Botanical and habitat assessments: Since last spring OPRD biologists have been assessing the botanical and related habitat aspects of the park properties, mapping plant community and habitat types, collecting baseline data on the resource conditions and looking for rare and unique species that may need special protection and management. The findings of these assessments will play a key role in identifying opportunities and constraints related to future resource management and recreational use in both parks.

Hydrology study: A hydrology study of Beaver Creek marsh has been underway since 2010 thanks to a partnership between the United States Geologic Service (USGS) and OPRD. Hydrologists from USGS have installed instruments in the creek that measure salinity, temperature, and water level. The goal of the research is to assess the extent of tidal influence within the marsh, determine the dominant sources of water, and to collect baseline hydrologic data that will help in evaluating future restoration efforts. More information about the study is available for review at http://or.water.usgs.gov/proj/beaver_creek/

Weekly bird survey: Every Saturday morning, birdwatchers meet at the Beaver Creek Visitor Center to conduct bird counts within the Natural Area. Volunteers come from near and far to help track resident and migratory bird populations. The count began in January 2011 and will continue through the end of the year, with the purpose of collecting information on how avian species are using the Natural Area. This information will also be used to update the bird checklist for visitor use.

Forest restoration: Over this coming winter, park staff and volunteers will be planting native trees within some of the old pastures currently dominated by invasive plants. The goal is to reestablish healthy native forest conditions to provide optimal habitat for wildlife.

Upcoming Public Involvement Opportunities

In the park planning process, OPRD holds meetings followed by written comment opportunities to ask for public input on park-related issues, goals, use and development concepts and management strategies. The first round of meetings normally occurs when OPRD has information to share on the park resource conditions and opportunity areas, based on the resource assessments. Later in the process, meetings are held to introduce the draft plan and accept comments.

We anticipate holding the first round of meetings in early February. By then we plan to have information to share on park resource conditions and opportunity areas based on the resource assessments currently in progress. This information will represent park resource conditions geographically, illustrating which areas of the parks are best suited for resource management and recreational development. Meetings will be well advertised, on OPRD's

planning web site (see web address below), in multiple newspapers of local distribution, and in our newsletters. Anyone wishing to be included on our planning mailing list, to receive direct mailings of our newsletters, should make their request through the contact information below. (If you received this newsletter by email or Postal Service delivery, you are already on our mailing list.)

Three types of meetings will be held in each public involvement phase: 1) Meetings for the general public will be held at two locations, at a venue in the vicinity of the parks, and at a second location in the Portland area. 2) Owners of properties adjacent to one or both parks will be invited to attend a separate set of meetings at a local venue to share their issues and ideas about the parks and their relationship to the neighborhood. 3) Separate meetings will be held for the planning Stakeholder Committee, which consists of representatives of key interest groups and agencies (see below).

The Stakeholder Committee

The Stakeholder Committee will be made up of representatives of interest groups and agencies that have direct interests in one or both parks. The following interest groups and agencies have been identified and will be asked to participate through Committee representation:

Lincoln County Planning	Oregon Recreation Trails Advisory Council
Lincoln County Public Works	Central Coast Fly Fishers Association
Local Citizen Planning Advisory Committee	Oregon Shores Conservation Coalition
Mid-Coast Watershed Council	Oregon Dept. Fish & Wildlife
Wetlands Conservancy	Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde
Yaquina Birders and Naturalists	Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians
Corvallis-to-Sea Trail Partnership	Lincoln County Outdoor School Association
Lincoln Soil & Water Conservation District	Park neighborhoods

In general, the criteria used to select Committee members are: 1) The represented group has a significant stake in the outcome, or the representative has professional expertise of particular value to the planning process; 2) The group representative will represent his/her group's interests ahead of personal interests, and coordinate comments with and convey information to his/her group; 3) The representative is willing to work toward consensus and seek solutions that address multiple interests; 4) The representative is available to attend the meetings; 5) Duplication of membership is generally avoided in representation of an interest, agency or expertise.

Where Can I See a Map of the Park Properties?

A map showing the extent of OPRD's current ownership of properties that will be part of the planning process is available for review at the web site address below.

Where Can I Review The Draft Plan?

OPRD's planning web site. As materials produced during the planning process become available, including the draft plan, any addendums to the draft, the final plan, newsletters, etc., they may be reviewed at the planning website at http://egov.oregon.gov/OPRD/PLANS/planning_ona&beaver.shtml

OPRD offices. When available, the plan can also be viewed at the OPRD headquarters office in Salem (see address below), and at the South Beach State Park office near Newport, at 5580 South Coast Highway.

Questions or Comments?

Please direct questions or comments to:

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