



IDENTIFICATION OF REGIONAL AND STATEWIDE WATER TRAIL ISSUES

The Public Workshop Process

During the months of April and May 2003, Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD) staff conducted a series of 9 regional trails issues workshops across the state. Table 1 (below) includes the locations of each of the workshops and the specific trails planning region to which the issue comments were assigned. Please note that some regions had more than one workshop.

Table 1. Regional Trails Issues Workshops

Trails Planning Region	Workshop Location
Northwest Region	Lincoln City
	Portland
	Eugene
Southwest Region	Bandon
	Grants Pass
North Central Region	Bend
South Central Region	Klamath Falls
Northeast Region	LaGrande / Union
Southeast Region	Burns

Each workshop included an afternoon session open to all public recreation providers (including federal and state agencies, county, municipal, port and special district recreation departments, and American Indian Tribes) and an evening session open to the general public (including interested members of the public, trail user groups or clubs, commercial organizations or other organizations). Trails issues were defined as high-impact issues related to non-motorized boating opportunities in the region. Trail issues could be related to outdoor recreation areas, programs and projects. At the conclusion of each workshop, each participant was given 3 colored dots to assist in prioritizing the importance of issues gathered. Participants placed their colored dots on those issues they felt were of most important in the planning region.

Approximately 230 people attended a workshop, including representatives from 56 public-sector recreation provider organizations. During the workshops, 160 water trail issue comments were gathered and recorded.

Next, all comments gathered at the regional public recreation provider and general public workshops were posted on the trails planning website for a comment period from March 19 to July 16, 2003. The site was developed for electronic submittal of comments. A letter was sent out to all workshop participants requesting that they review the website comments list to ensure that their comment(s) had been recorded properly. In addition, a letter was sent to trail user groups or clubs, paddling organizations and commercial organizations across the state requesting additional comments through the website.

A complete listing of all issues gathered at the workshops and through the website can be found on the trails planning website at http://www.prd.state.or.us/trailsplanning_regional_issues.php

Identification of Top Regional Issues

Following the issue collection process, OPRD staff developed an issue summary paper to assist the Water Trails Steering Committee members in the process of identifying top regional issues. This issues summary paper was distributed to each steering committee member on August 19, 2003.

A regional issues analysis section in the issue summary paper included a prioritized issues list from each of the regional workshops with separate listings for public provider and general public workshops. An additional section included a summary of the combined prioritization results of all workshops held in the region (including all workshop locations and sessions). Those issues receiving the highest total accumulation of dots from all public provider and general public workshops held in the region were shown in bold.

During the September 24, 2003 Water Trail Steering Committee Meeting, committee members used a voting process to identify top regional water trail issues to include in the plan.

List of Top Regional Water Trail Issues

The following is a list of the top 3 water trail issues in their respective region.

Northwest Trails Planning Region

(Includes Clatsop, Columbia, Multnomah, Hood River, Tillamook Washington, Yamhill, Clackamas, Polk, Marion, Linn and Benton Counties)

A. Need for more public access to waterways.

B. Need for a designated funding source for non-motorized watercraft facility development.

C. Need to properly address the navigability issue and clearly define to users where they can and cannot exit their watercraft.



Southwest Trails Planning Region

(Includes Coos, Curry, Josephine, Jackson and Douglas Counties)



A. Need for additional access to waterways and launch/landing facilities.

B. Need to provide adequate and consistent information resources (route maps, water classification, condition and regulatory information, web-based repository) for designated water trail routes for trip preparation and navigation.

C. Need for a dedicated funding source for non-motorized water trail development.

Northcentral Trails Planning Region

(Includes Wasco, Sherman, Gilliam, Morrow, Umatilla, Jefferson,

Wheeler, Deschutes and Crook Counties)

A. Need to identify water trail resource impacts associated with rapid growth of water-based recreation to properly balance natural/environmental aspects with increasing use.

B. Need for additional water trail facilities (particularly close-to-home).

C. Need for leave-no-trace practices (e.g. sanitation and litter), respect for rights of adjacent landowner to waterways and need to reduce impacts on the resource.



Southcentral Trails Planning Region

(Includes Klamath and Lake Counties)



A. Need for public access on some waterways and information on points of water access.

B. Need for adequate public properties along water trails to reduce conflicts with adjacent property owners on waterways.

C. Need for a dedicated funding source for water trail development.

Northeast Trails Planning Region

(Includes Wallowa, Union, Grant and Baker Counties)

A. Strong need for a non-motorized boater education program providing information on how to properly launch and use a non-motorized watercraft, safety training for running rivers, and how to comply with existing federal and state regulations.

B. Need for a central information source for interested non-motorized boaters to access regarding flat and whitewater paddling opportunities within the region.

C. Need to consider the potential for user conflict between and increasing number of non-motorized and motorized boaters using facilities developed primarily for motorized boaters.



Southeast Trails Planning Region

(Includes Harney and Malheur Counties)



A. Need to educate communities about the economic benefits associated with water trail development to offset local opposition to trail development.

B. Need for additional water access facilities, marketing and interpretive information related to water trail development.

C. There are a number of flat-water paddling opportunities within the region including Lake Owyhee, the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge, connections to irrigation canals and other remote settings that could be developed as water trails.

Identification of Top Statewide Water Trail Issues

In addition, OPRD staff further refined and summarized all regional water trail issue comments into a set of statewide issue categories. The number of issue comments collected in a given category provided a measure of the relative importance of the issue category to workshop and internet participants. The following tables included the results of this categorical analysis:

- Categorical analysis for water trail issue comments gathered at all public provider workshops across the state. Key issues were identified based on the total number of public provider comments.
- Categorical analysis for water trail issue comments gathered at all general public workshops across the state. Key issues were identified based on the total number of general public comments.
- Categorical analysis for water trail issue comments gathered at all public provider and general public workshops across the state. Key issues were identified based on the total number of public provider and general public comments.

Finally, a matrix was developed to summarize results from these tables. This statewide issues summary paper was distributed to each steering committee member on August 19, 2003.

After regional water trail issues were identified, steering committee members were given a final opportunity to review the statewide issue category summaries and a listing of top regional water trail issues. Next, OPRD staff used a sheet including information presented in the first 2 columns of Table 2 (below) to provide steering committee members an opportunity to vote for a set of top Statewide Water Trails Issues. Table 2 includes the total number of committee member votes each issue received. Those issues with the highest number of votes (shown in Table 2) were determined by the steering committee to be the 6 Statewide Water Trails Issues.

Table 2. Identification of Top Statewide Water Trail Issues

Water Trail Issues	Total # of Comments From Issue Scoping	# of Committee Votes For Top Issues
Need For Adequate & Consistent Information Resources Including Signs, Maps, Level Of Difficulty, Water Level Information & Statewide Website	23	9
Need To Proactively Manage Environmental Impacts (Including Effects On Wildlife, Carrying Capacity)	16	3
Need For More Public Water Access And Periodic Take-Out Points	13	9
Need For Proper Facility Development For Water Trails	13	0
Need To Proactively Address Potential Conflicts With Adjacent Landowners & Clarify Navigability Issues	12	11
Need To Identify, Develop & Promote Water Trail Opportunities	11	1
Need For Safety-Related Information, User Education & Outreach	10	5
Need To Address User Conflicts Between Non-Motorized & Motorized Boaters	10	3
Need For Water Trails Planning & Design Assistance/Expertise	9	1
Need For Regional Interagency Coordination/Cooperation In Trail Planning & Management	7	2
Need For A Designated Funding Source For Non-Motorized Watercraft	7	5
Need For Information On The Social & Economic Benefits Of Water Trails	6	4
Need For Private-Sector Involvement In Water Trail Facility & Service Development	5	0
Need To Use Water Trails As Vehicles For Environmental And Historic Interpretation	3	0
Need For Maintenance/Rehabilitation Of Existing Facilities Including Use of Volunteers	3	2
Need For More Urban Trails In Close Proximity To Where People Live	3	0

List of Top Statewide Water Trails Issues

The final set of Top Statewide Water Trails Issues for the 2005-2014 Water Trails plan are as follows.

Table 3. Top Statewide Water Trails Issues

A.	Need to address conflicts between non-motorized boaters and adjacent landowners to waterways
B.	Need for more public access to waterways
C.	Need for adequate and consistent information resources including signs, maps, level of difficulty and water level information and available paddling opportunities
D.	Need for safety-related information, user education and outreach
E.	Need for a dedicated funding source for water trail development
F.	Need for information describing the social and economic benefits of water trails