

Oregon Parks and Recreation Commission

February 5, 2014

Agenda Item: 6b

Action

Subject: Grouse Mountain Ranch Acquisition– Final Order

Presented by: Jim Morgan

Background:

On July 17, 2013, the Oregon Parks and Recreation Commission (Commission) approved the proposed OPRD 2013-15 Land Acquisition Priorities, and staff began moving forward with property acquisitions within the targeted initiative areas. Grouse Mountain Ranch was on the approved acquisition list. At the same time, Bandon Biota LLC submitted a proposal to OPRD outlining acquisition of a portion of Bandon State Natural Area (SNA) in exchange for other property and in-kind services. Grouse Mountain Ranch was identified as a possible element of a Bandon exchange.

Public input regarding the Grouse Mountain acquisition and the Bandon exchange proposal was provided at the July meeting; at one public meeting in Bandon; and at one public meeting in Mount Vernon (nearest community to Grouse Mountain). In addition, public comment was taken at the September 24, 2013 Commission meeting and through open solicitation via mail, e-mail, OPRD's web site, and social media. At the November 7, 2013 Commission meeting, additional public comments were received, after which the Commission took action in considering approval of the acquisition of Grouse Mountain. The Commission found:

1. That the contemplated acquisition of Grouse Mountain Ranch meets the acquisition standard of OAR 736-019-0060 and instructed the department to prepare a proposed final order for Commission approval; and,
2. That the department accepts additional written testimony until December 6, 2013 regarding the proposed acquisition to afford the public the opportunity to respond to the latest information.

Considerations:

With the support of the Department of Justice, the department has prepared a final order regarding the Grouse Mountain Ranch acquisition (Exhibit A) for the Commission's consideration for approval. In addition to providing the final order, the Commission requested the department to provide additional information pertaining to the proposed Grouse Mountain acquisition, addressed below:

Appraisals

Administrative rule and policy require appraisals upon which the Department makes an offer to be dated as close in time to the expected closing as possible and not be older than one year. The Department must require the appraiser to consider the new, anticipated, or intended use if the exchange proponent intends, or is likely to pursue, a different highest and best use than the Department's current use or zone. By policy, appraisal reports must

meet Uniform Standards of Professional Appraisal Practice and appraisal reviews are required for any property valued above \$250,000. OPRD has commissioned an appraisal review of the Grouse Mountain property appraisal completed in August 2013. That review is due January 30, 2014, and further information will be provided at the February 5, 2013 Commission meeting.

Grant County Agreement to Address Issues

The Commission directed the department to continue good faith efforts to address local community concerns as reflected in the Governor's letter to the Commission dated November 19, 2013. To that end, the department has drafted and submitted a draft intergovernmental agreement (IGA) to the Grant County Court for their consideration. The Grant County Court has appointed a task force to review the draft IGA and make recommendations. It is anticipated that the Court will provide a response to the department prior to the February 5, 2013 Commission meeting.

Hunting

The department continues to work on specific issues that may extend beyond the February 5, 2013 Commission meeting. These include development of a wildlife management strategy for Grouse Mountain in conjunction with the Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife and neighbors. The wildlife management strategy will include consideration of hunting as a management tool and to mitigate impact on neighbors. This commitment was included in the draft IGA.

Natural Resource Values

Natural resources, primarily botanical and wildlife, have been assessed on all properties being considered in the exchange including Grouse Mountain and are available on the OPRD website and in Exhibit C. Included in the reports are management recommendations for protecting and enhancing those resources.

Preliminary Management Goals

Upon acquisition of new property, OPRD normally conducts thorough inventories and works with the local community to develop goals for how the property could be enjoyed by the public and effectively managed in the future. Prior to the acquisition of Grouse Mountain, preliminary management concepts have been developed to help inform the Commission of the property's potential (Exhibit B). These include consideration of the potential for management and use of the buildings and other infrastructure on the property.

Attachments:

- Exhibit A – Proposed Final Order: Grouse Mountain Ranch Acquisition
- Exhibit B – Preliminary Management Concepts
- Exhibit C – Natural Resource Values

Prior Action by the Commission:

- July 17, 2013 – Approved the OPRD 2013-15 Land Acquisition Priorities; Proposed Acquisition – Public Comments.
- September 24, 2013 – Proposed Acquisition - Public Comments
- November 20, 2013 – Finds that Grouse Mountain Acquisition meets OAR 736-019-0060 and instructs the department to prepare a final order for Commission consideration for approval.

Action Requested:

Staff recommends that the Commission adopt the final order in Exhibit A and the preliminary management goals in Exhibit B.

Prepared by: Jim Morgan