

Oregon Parks and Recreation Commission

August 29, 2012

Agenda Item: 10a

Information

Topic: Heritage Programs Report

Presented by: Roger Roper

Task Force on Heritage Vitality Update

The 2011 Legislature passed HB-3210 that created a task force to study ways to improve the effectiveness, impact, and overall vitality of “heritage providers” in Oregon. The 15-member task force was charged with submitting its findings and recommendations in a written report due October 1, 2012. OPRD, through the Oregon Heritage Commission, is providing staff support, as directed in the bill. Chair of the task force is Kerry Tymchuk, executive director of the Oregon Historical Society, and vice-chair is Janet Taylor, former mayor of Salem.

One of the key issues the task force is examining is funding, both public and private, for supporting historical societies and museums. There are mechanisms in place, such as voter approved tax levies and “heritage districts,” that have been used only sparingly. Is that because they are difficult to employ, or is it due to lack of training for local advocates? What “success stories” are there in the state that can be showcased and copied? Are there funding options in other states that might be effective here in Oregon?

Another key issue revolves around finding better ways to coordinate efforts at the state, county, and city levels to improve heritage tourism, history education, and historic preservation, including related economic development.

Three task force subcommittees have been working this summer to research the relevant issues and come up with recommendations for consideration by the full task force at its next meeting in mid-August. The goal is to have the report written and submitted by September 24, which seems doable at this point.

Archaeology Field Schools

- **Fort Lane:** A very successful public archaeology event was held at Fort Lane on July 7th. Archaeology students from Southern Oregon University, working under Dr. Mark Tveskov, excavated over 20-1x1 meter units in what is believed to be one of the Enlisted Men's Quarters. In addition, a portion of an unanticipated feature was located on the last day of the field school, which appears to be a collapsed well that served the fort. Approximately 100 members of the public stopped by to observe, and the event was well covered by the local media.
- **Champoeg:** An eight-week OSU archaeology field school was conducted in July and August at the site of the Newell Cabin with the hope of building on the discoveries from last summer that revealed the site was occupied about a decade earlier (1830s) than originally believed. Though the excavations are still underway at the time of this writing (August 6), there have been a number of exciting discoveries, including a third button from the war of 1812 with rifleman insignia, a silver child's ring, arrow points (first ever found at the site) and a smoking pipe cap. Public tours were held at set times during the week (3 times a week), and they were well attended by the public, sometimes with as many as 75-80 in attendance.

Prior Action by Commission: None

Action Requested: None

Prepared by: Roger Roper, Assistant Director—Heritage Programs

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Topic: Willamette Falls/Blue Heron Update

Presented by: Jim Desmond, Metro Sustainability Center, Metro Regional Government

Mr. Desmond will provide an update on the ongoing effort to potentially acquire the former Blue Heron paper mill property at Willamette Falls in Oregon City. Metro and the City of Oregon City are the key partners in the current due diligence effort. OPRD staff have participated in meetings and discussions, primarily advising on cultural resource issues.

Prior Action by Commission: None

Action Requested: None

Prepared by: Roger Roper, Assistant Director, Heritage and Community Programs