

## **Bandon Exchange ~ Bandon Open House, Aug. 16, 2013**

For final staff report to Oregon State Parks and Recreation Commission

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Jim Morgan: OPRD stewardship manager.

Audience: There's no public value to Bullard's from the 97 acres on the spit.

Audience: what is outgoing property zoned now, and what will be afterward? Recreation now, and Bandon Biota would have to request a change if the transaction goes through.

Audience: What about water use for the future property? Has OPRD done any due diligence to examine water? Jim: Unknown water rights. Audience: water table drops measurably with water use.

Audience: What is the public benefit? If measured by level of use, the 280 acres will get more use as a golf course. The remaining BSNA will also see more use.

Audience: Coastal park system is probably the highest-use statewide. Should any coastal property ever be transferred out? Coastal systems are rare.

Overwhelming public benefit should be taken more seriously when dealing with

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coastal property. Natural resource land should require even more benefit. Does Whale Cove make this trade even?

Audience: Is there any other park property with the same natural features as Bandon State Natural Area that is equal in size? Jim: might be the largest dunal system in state parks. Audience: because these kinds of systems are threatened and fragmented, why would you make the situation worse by fragmenting it even more? Jim: we did try to consider both the loss and gain. Audience: trading a unique property for a common property doesn't make sense.

Audience: Even gorse infested, the property is too valuable to release. Jim: natural resource values are not the only ones considered. Cultural, recreational and scenic values are also included as a balancing act.

Audience: Will carving out 280 acres from BSNA change its character or value?

Audience: Gorse can be removed to restore this property. Are there any restrictions on what Bandon can do with this property? What benefits will residents get on the golf course if it opens?

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Audience: There are two other state parks, plus federal land, already in Grant County. Why do we need more? Does a new park here provide overwhelming benefit? Audience: no. Audience: entire package has to provide overwhelming benefit, not each part.

Audience: If you haven't done a complete natural resource inventory, how can you know whether the trade is worth it? What if you don't do the thorough review until after the commission acts. Jim: We have some review – if the commission acts to move forward, there is still room to complete the thorough review before the deal is done. A fatal flaw can still stop the deal. Audience: who bears the cost. Jim: We write the scope, Bandon Biota funds it.

Audience: The property acquisition standards say buffer state park land from development. Why sell land for development next to a state park?

Audience: While it's OK for the state to sell land, this deal will change the character of the land around the park. Number of people coming into this spot will increase, and the increase will affect the beach and neighboring property. That will put pressure on the commission to spend more money and develop the remaining area further. Consider these secondary effects.

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Audience: Consider the loss of taxes to Grant County when you buy private land.

Jim: we will make the county whole until the park opens. After it opens, parks provide economic benefit.

Audience: Who makes the decision? Jim: The Commission. Audience: Who makes the recommendation? Jim: Staff.

Audience: What could happen in November? Jim: Commission could act to direct staff to develop a series of agreements, appraisals and other actions to execute some part of the deal. No clear whether this would be the only commission action on the topic.

Audience: Will someone be presenting the other side when the commission is asked to act? Jim: the commission meeting includes public comment.

Audience: Bandon Biota has improved local land values and improved the job situation.

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Audience: Does commission plan out far enough? Sea levels are rising. Trading high ground for low ground could mean public property will be under water, and Bandon Biota will have beachfront property.

Audience: How do you plan on minimizing expenses and produce revenue from the incoming properties? Jim: business plan isn't done on Grouse Mt, but we have initial ideas. For Whale Cove, emphasis is on scenic protection, not public access. Audience: What about increasing access to Bandon State Natural Area? Jim: no plans for improving access at BSNA.

Audience: Bandon SNA is already outstanding. This sets a precedent – taking public land trading it a developer for development. Worried this is a slippery slope.

Audience: Bandon Dunes neighbors enjoy natural resource values, too.

**Bandon/Whale Cove/Grouse Mountain Exchange**  
(Bandon meeting)

**Please sign in**

First and Last Name	Mailing Address	Email
DAVID HELLMANN	761 12 <sup>TH</sup> ST SW BANDON, OR	DIH1028@YA400.COM
JUDY SMILAN	761 12 <sup>TH</sup> ST SW BANDON, OR	
Cameron LaFollette	P.O. Box 857 Astoria, OR 97103	cameron@oregoncoastalliance.org
CAROL ACKLIN	PO Box 1577 Bandon	
Bob Hummansen	3795 Beach Loop Bandon	
Claudine Hummansen	" " " "	
Jen Kemp	PO Box 615 Langlois OR	
Mike Keiser	Fur Court Bandon	
Bob Johnson	1486 Fir Ct. Bandon	
Bill John Russell	PO Box 2029 Bandon OR 97411	Bill@bjruss.com
GUY & BETH RIDENOUR	PO Box 1383 Bandon, OR 97411	
Rick Tempesta	47182 Hwy 101 Bandon, OR 97411	

**Bandon/Whale Cove/Grouse Mountain Exchange**  
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**Please sign in**

First and Last Name	Mailing Address	Email
Dick Mork	PO Box 1361 Coos Bay OR	
<del>Frank Bunge</del>		
JACK HACKETT	BANDON MARSH	
Diana Bilderback	3830 Beach Loop Dr. SW	d.bilderback@mycomspern.com
Lydia Delgado	555 Douglas Bandon	
Rita House	555 Delaware Ave. S.E.	
Robin Riskin	PO Box 958 Cannon Beach Oregon	
JON CHANCE	87840 BOWMAN LN	
Cal Mukumoto	680 S 12th Ct, Coos Bay, OR	
ROCK FRASER	1320 N. MANZANITA ORANGE, CA. 92867	
RUSSELL FRASER	45965 Hwy 101 Bandon	
LARRY VONDERLIN	56507 Prosper Jet Rd Bandon	

**Bandon/Whale Cove/Grouse Mountain Exchange**  
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**Please sign in**

First and Last Name

Mailing Address

Email

Ollie Jones

PoBox 2071 Bandon 97411

Suzanne McDonald

86948 McTimmons

Bandon 97411

SMCDONALDM@GALCO.CO

Stephen Bower

803 Ohio Av. NE

Bandon 97411

GrouseBandon@msn.com

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**Please sign in**

First and Last Name	Mailing Address	Email
Kim S. Griffin	1691 Grant St, North Bend, OR 97459	ksgduct@gmail.com
<del>CHRIS</del>		
Dennis Bowman	P.O. Box 518 Langlois OR 97450	bowmandennis09@gmail.com
Linda Olsen	896 9th St SW Bandon 97411	linda@mycompax.com
GREG COMBS	3080 NATALIE WAY BANDON	
Keith F. Saylor	88551 Circle City Lane Bandon	kfsaylor@gmail.com
EDMUND CHANEY	85948 MCTIMMONS LN	BD-CHANEY2002@AOL.COM
JIM SEELEY	667 MADISON AVE SW	jseeley@wildmoerscoastalliance.com
Melissa Crabbine	Coos Co. Courthouse, Coquille, OR	mcrabbine@co.coos.or.us
John Baxter	PO Box 316 Bandon	jon@inbox.com

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Jim Morgan: OPRD stewardship manager.

John Potter: OPRD Assistant Director (State Park Operations)

Audience: What interest does the Bureau of Reclamation have in Beech Cr? Jim Morgan: No known active role (they provided some design services), but OWEB is also slightly involved. Will find out more for Mary Burke (see sign-in sheet).

Rep. Cliff Bentz: My counties have the most public land, and the highest poverty rates. You're using Lottery to buy land, but you have property you can't maintain now, and should be using Lottery for that. How will more park land help poverty rates? If you lose the Lottery, how will you support the land you purchase if you don't have these funds. Jim Morgan: for state parks to succeed, county also has to succeed. In the short term, we do that by making county whole on the tax issue. Parks eventually improve the economy through tourism dollars. Visitor groups spend \$150-250 per trip. Each dollar spent by parks generally brings in \$17 in local benefits. John Potter: some public lands bring in more money than others. Parks can be an even better partner; there is a return to the local economy. This shift in the state park system relies on existing funding. We're

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trying to make sure new investments produce the kinds of benefits that help local economies.

Audience (Ken Holliday): What is enough public land? Where is the tipping point? The photos don't show anything unique or special about Grouse Mountain. Grouse Mountain is only important because it's leverage to help you with a larger real estate project. Jim Morgan: Grouse Mountain on its own isn't an overwhelming benefit, and our acquisition criteria don't focus on things that are simply unique. Ken: where will the commission draw the line in acquiring or dispensing property? This property was homesteaded, meaning it was valuable enough to use for private benefits (many of the marginal lands were retained by the feds).

Audience: very few tourists naturally move through the area (it's not like the coast, with a large, natural tourist base). First, what's the plan to bring more people here? Second, can you work out a deal to take other public land and move it back into private ownership so there's no net loss of taxed land. Jim Morgan: we start by looking at the resources, then look at what development we can create that will attract people who are already coming here; the goal with that

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audience is to use the concentration of attractions to get visitors to extend their stay. During planning, we have to figure out how the community wants to be connected and use the park, too. We use surveys to identify target audiences and try to bring them in with systemwide marketing.

Audience: how do we deal with the tax issue? Jim Morgan: we will make the county whole, and pay for fire protection in addition to addressing tax payments.

Audience: Some members of the community support acquisitions. Support right acquisitions on right kinds of property. There are other properties that ought to be more important. OPRD can only afford the right property given limited funding. OPRD not complying with statutory obligations. Disclosures must include something outstanding about the property. When OPRD buys nonproduction lands, they are competing with private buyers with public dollars. This causes a social justice issue. Agencies start by making promises (allowing hunting, protecting buildings), but eventually change their minds. The project proponent is required to submit environmental assessment, and measurements of outstanding character, benefits, etc. Post all these evaluations on website.

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Audience: OPRD is becoming very aggressive acquiring property. Concerned acquisition is priority at expense of management.

Audience (Jeff): Coast examples show lack of ability to manage existing properties. How will you maintain 6,000+ acres when you can't manage 878 acres on the coast? You're one ballot measure away from losing funding. John Potter: we're also worried about this, but have to look at long-term investments. Means we slough off less worthy properties in exchange for more worthy ones. Maybe this isn't the right one, but we have some indications it could be.

Audience (Scott): saw how public land movement succeeded on Willamette River. Canyon Creek and Beech Creek are valuable fisheries, Beech Creek more so than Canyon. OPRD report didn't delve into fisheries value much. Serpentine soils on east side of 395 in particular, driving plant communities. Can have both ag and native plant communities. Has potential to be like Smith Rock. Concerns over lack of fence maintenance and allowing weeds to increase are valid and must be dealt with in perpetuity.

Audience (Ken Brooks): Neighbor to Grouse Mt. Concerned over increased trespass, and problem would get worse if OPRD backs off management.

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Economic benefits from state park land would be less since there's already so much public land here. Jim Morgan: planning needs to bring out what activities we need to introduce to bring people who wouldn't normally visit. Property isn't unique in area, but represents area well. To make operations work, we have to demonstrate the commitment even if it means shifting resources from other areas of the state. John Potter: benefits would take time – a generation or two – as interest grows.

Audience (Ken): what is the total donation from Grouse Mt. Jim Morgan: we don't know -- it will depend on appraisal.

Audience (Boyd): County Commission wasn't fully engaged. Unlike Bates, no clear vision for this property and that makes it hard to support. Morrow/Grant property allows grazing and hunting. Need to address hay, ag, hunting, water rights not just now, but into the future. Need more information before deciding. Check with ODFW to see if moving some of their land can offset this loss. ODFW and USFS and Hood River all taking property. Why not make this an educational experience with OSU or EOU in timber, hydrology, etc.. John Potter: no plan (it's

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early), many of these ideas need to come into the planning process. Boyd: how will we access the park? Will it be easy?

Audience (Ken Williams): Must consult with local taxing district. Why did July meeting include a recommendation to proceed without first talking with local taxing district? If you pay ODF for fire, it doesn't come back and offset local assessments. Making good on taxes "for a while" doesn't address the long-term loss. Even small amounts every year add up to a large effect. Why not endow from acquisition funds to pay county forever? Jim Morgan: working now to figure out how to serve each of the different taxing districts. Discovering now ODF doesn't always work to cover local costs. Need to show what total addition state park makes to local coffers. Ken: make sure all districts are covered, because state payments don't go to all the districts.

Audience: OPRD doesn't understand how to get rid of serious weed problems. See Cottonwood, a very weed-infested property. Where are you going to get the money to handle problems on that property as well as this one? Where's the business plan projecting use? What about elk and the need to prevent herds from causing damage on neighboring property. Other property owners are doing

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just as good a job managing and will continue paying taxes. Haven't seen salmon on Beech Cr. USFS tearing out salmon improvements because they don't work. Jim Morgan: yes, lots of weeds at Cottonwood. Funding long-term weed suppression there. Have to start and keep up the work over long period. Where we don't have a clue, we hire a clue. On elk, we work with ODFW and neighbors to use calling/hazing/sometimes hunting to prevent problems (but not considering hunting here?)

Audience (Pat): no Oregon statute compels property tax payments. Means payments could eventually stop. Current fire payment is 28% of tax bill. Feel-good statements don't pay bills. No director has the authority to compel future payments. Jim Morgan: we pay fire suppression because we want prompt service. Pat: why do you get to negotiate this, but private landowners don't? John Potter: there may not be a law, but we can enter into a formal agreement and work with the county through planning. Pat: but it's not a guarantee.

Audience (Pat): Malheur is 2 million acres, and it's enough.

(Audience) Ernie: where are the property lines? Will they be surveyed if this goes forward? Fence isn't accurate. Jim Morgan: Yes.

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Audience (Shaun): only thing at Grouse that isn't present on other public land is the large house. Is that the motivation? Weeds aren't only problem at Murtha. You removed grazing and farming. Do you intend to open this stretch to wealthy fly-fisher without regulation? OPRD isn't prepared to change from being facility and people manager to large-scale landscape manager. Can't buy it first and deal with these questions later. Grant County people made the landscape and river system a success, now you want to take it and use it. You don't need this. Move on. Serpentine soils found elsewhere, for instance.

Audience (Ken): what are priority dates for water rights. Jim Morgan: don't know. Ken: If we choose not to irrigate for 7 years, it becomes an in-stream right that could affect Mt Vernon. Jim Morgan: OPRD tries to use water rights it owns. Irrigating at Cottonwood, for instance.

Audience: do Grant County's wishes matter. Answer: yes.

Audience (Cliff): what is the measure of success you must achieve before you can stop paying the in-lieu taxes? Visits? Something else? John Potter: will negotiate with county on this very point.

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Jim Morgan: issue isn't settled. Audience: but you are recommending commission move forward, as evidenced by appraisal and addition of property to priority acquisition list. Jim Morgan: appraisal is how we learn about property. Each acquisition on priority list is at different stage. Not every property on list reaches final point, and has to go to commission for final approval. Audience: Cart before the horse because county hasn't been appropriately involved yet. Jim Morgan: getting the steps for acquisitions in the right order is tricky.

Audience: when was first contact with the county judge on this issue. Seems like OPRD is already decided to buy. Why bother asking now? John Potter: not all appraisals result in a sale. There is no decision yet. Earliest decision will be November.

Audience: distasteful to try and keep it secret.

Audience: private landowner can sell to whomever he wants, but when the state is a buyer, the public has a right to influence the decision. We can't afford the impact on water rights.

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Grant County Stockowners are against project. Transportation is too weak; there are too few tourists to make a difference.

Audience: would another state park help Clyde Holliday cope with overflow?  
Dennis Bradley, Clyde Holiday Park Manager: Bates and Unity handle some overflow, but this would be closer to keep economic impact local.

Audience: will there be a day-use fee, and can this be used to fund weed control? What about prescribed fire.

Audience: traffic is increasing. Some could be tourism, and park could help.  
Some

Audience: there's already enough public land in Grant County. Jim Morgan: the system does change, growing usually, but shrinking at times. Understand Grant County feels strongly about not adding more public lands to county.

# Bandon/Whale Cove/Grouse Mountain Exchange

(Mt Vernon meeting)

Please sign in

First and Last Name	Mailing Address	Email
Susan Horn & Steve Horn	PO Box 111, Mt. Vernon	hornsusana@ortelco.net
Randy Jones	1 UNIVERSITY BLVD., 233 BRADLEY, LA GUANDE	JONES.RANDY@DEED.STATE.OR.US
Katie Jones	29009 N. Hwy 395 Joy, OR	97856
Mary Burtie	35005 Short Corner Road Fox Oregon	97856
Jim Spraul	P.O. 547 Canyon City, Ore	valleyranch@ortelco.net
BLUZE EDDY	107 20th LaGuande	lowe.v.eddy@state.or.us
Sharon Livingson	PO BX 488 Long Creek	bar96@ofcwb.com
Michael & Kimberly Ballard	P.O. Box 602 MT. Vernon	Fei@ortelco.net
Eric Dougherty	P.O. Box 90 MT Vernon	edougherty@yahoo.com
Cliff Bantz	660 Morgan Ave Astoria, Ore	97114
Angel Carpenter	110 NW 2nd Jam Day	
ART ANDREWS	104 N.E. Charolab J.D	

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**Please sign in**

First and Last Name	Mailing Address	Email
Shirley Enright	59062 Hwy 26 Mount Vernon	
Gail Enright	59062 Hwy 26 Mt. Vernon, OR	
CHRIS LASHART	318 SE Hillcrest Dr. John Day, OR 97845	
King Williams	PO Box 310 Canyon City OR 97820	king.kingsinc@gmail.com
JACK McKeona	Box 007 Mt. Vernon	
MIKE COSGROVE	134 NW CHAROLAIS HT JD 97845	MICHAELG COSGROVE @GMAIL
Harley Allen	PO Box 424 Mt. Vernon	
MARY ELLEN BROOKS	Box 487 Mt. Vernon	
KEN BROOKS	Fox, Or. 97856	
Susan Jorale	PO Box 301 Mt. Vernon OR 97865	sunshaw2001@yahoo.com
Bob Butler	PO Box 64 John Day OR	theconnors@centurytel.net
Kea Ellison	PO Box 266 Canyon City OR	Kenve62a@yahoo.com

# Bandon/Whale Cove/Grouse Mountain Exchange

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Please sign in

First and Last Name

Mailing Address

Email

George Meredith

Priscilla Meredith

Rusty Clark

P.O. Box 275 Monument

Francis Kocis

P.O. Box 282 Canyon City, OR 97820

Jeff Thomas

PO Box 472 Kimberly OR 97848

Tom Day

275 Sierra Pl. Upland Ca. 91786

ERIE E MILLER

P.O. Box 621 Mt Vernon, OR 97865

Mary Smith

PO Box 215

Mt Vernon OR mary@innatjuniper  
ridge.com

Norbert Smith

PO Box 215

Mt Vernon OR 97865

Chuck McKenna

PO Box 369

Mt Vernon, OR 97865

STAN ROBERTSON

PO Box 242

John Day JDRC@CENTURYTEL.NET



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Please sign in

First and Last Name

Mailing Address

Email

SCOTT COTTER

107 NW Valley View Drive, John Day

scott-cotter@yahoo.com

JACK E Johnne

29009 N HWY 395

JJohns1@bcwb.com

ERROL CLAIRE

Box 224 Canyon City, OR

Ryan Toland

ODFW PO Box 9 John Day

DAVE DRISCOLL

46673 Hwy 26 Dayville

driscoll.dave@gmail.com

LANE BURTON

TODAY

Mike Billman

POB 301 Prairie City OR 97869