

**Historic Columbia River Highway  
Advisory Committee Meeting**

Meeting will be Hybrid  
Bridgeside Restaurant  
745 NW Wa Na Pa St, Cascade Locks, OR 97014  
Online Information below  
Login online: <https://tinyurl.com/AC-Sept2023>



Meeting ID: 878 3280 8088  
Password: HCRHAC

Call in (does not require internet): 1 (253) 215-8782  
Meeting ID: # 878 3280 8088

**Thursday, September 21st, 2023**

**10 AM – 2:00 PM Advisory Committee Meeting**

**MEMBERS:**

**Arthur Babitz, Chair**  
Leti Valle Moretti  
**Ernie Drapela, Vice-Chair**  
Tricia Forsi  
Judy Davis  
Lisa Farquharson  
Clay Courtright  
Rian Windsheimer  
Staj Olson  
Chrissy Curran

Hood River County Representative  
Hood River County Governor's Representative  
Multnomah County Governor's Representative  
Multnomah County Representative  
Wasco County Representative  
Wasco County Governor's Representative  
Oregon Parks and Recreation Department  
Oregon Department of Transportation  
Travel Oregon  
State Historic Preservation Office

**AGENDA:**

<b>Time</b>	<b>Agenda Topics</b>	<b>Presenter</b>
<b>10:00 AM</b>	Call to Order	Arthur Babitz, Chair
<b>10:05 AM</b>	Opportunity for the public to comment on any item not on the agenda*	
<b>10:10 AM</b>	Approval of Minutes	Arthur Babitz, Chair
<b>10:15 AM</b>	Updated mileposts on the Historic Highway	Kent/Dan/Terra
<b>10:35 AM</b>	Mitchell Point Tunnel Update	Austin Armstrong, FHWA
<b>10:55 AM</b>	Viewshed Management Review	Sandra Hikari, ODOT Jamen Lee, OPRD
<b>11:20 AM</b>	Viento State Trail Opening Recap	Terra/Katelyn
<b>12:00 PM</b>	Lunch Break	

<b>12:45 PM</b>	Summer Pilot recap	Terra Lingley, ODOT
<b>1:05 PM</b>	US30: Curve Warning signs	Jeremy Seitz, ODOT
<b>1:25 PM</b>	Updates <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Next meetings:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ December 14, 2023</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Friends of the Historic Highway</li> <li>• OPRD</li> <li>• Travel Oregon</li> <li>• USFS</li> <li>• WFLHD</li> </ul>	Terra, Jeanette, Clay, Staj, Donna, Matt
<b>1:50 PM</b>	Committee Round Table	All
<b>2:00 PM</b>	Adjourn	

## December Agenda items

- Year in review
- 2024 workplan

## Historic Columbia River Highway Advisory Committee 2023 Work Plan

1. **The Final 1.5 Miles of Engineering**
2. **Mitchell Point to Hood River State Trail funding**
3. **Multnomah Falls Viaducts Railroad Coordination**
4. **Columbia Gorge Express**
5. **Eagle Creek Stairway Replacement**
6. **Waterfall Corridor Visitor Experience Management**
7. Congestion and Safety Plan Implementation Projects
8. Twin Tunnels Safety Improvements Implementation
9. Historic Guardrail Research/Analysis
10. Larch Mountain Slide – Funding

## Historic Columbia River Highway Advisory Committee Meeting Summary

September 21, 2023

Hybrid – Zoom and Cousins Country Inn

<b>Members Attending:</b>	Ernie Drapela, Vice Chair Judy Davis Tricia Forsi David Spangler, OPRD Marc Berry, Member Emeritus Chris Ford (ODOT)
<b>Historic Highway AC Staff:</b>	Terra Lingley (ODOT) Melissa Brown (ODOT) Katelyn Jackson (ODOT)
<b>Others Attending:</b>	Jeanette Kloos Bob Hadlow (ODOT) Kent Klasch (ODOT) Richard Alfieri Bonnie Clark Kaylee Crosby Paul Wilcox Jennifer O'Donnell Jamen Lee (OPRD) Sandra Hikari (ODOT) Armando Zelada Kent Krumpschmidt, Sasquatch Shuttle Everyday Northwest Frank Stevens Austin Armstrong (WFLHD) Jeanette Kloos Dick Weber Dan Shanahan (ODOT) David Duncan Van Smith

### Call to Order

Ernie called to order the meeting at 10:00.

## Public Comment

Ernie- Letter from Kathy Watson regarding maintenance on the trail was included in this meeting's packet. Friends of the Historic Highway does a lot of the upkeep on the trail, especially during the winter months. It would be good to follow up on.

David Spangler (OPRD)- has never seen this letter, as OPRD, it would be good to see this. He said that they have worked on these issues and would be happy to follow up regarding the maintenance.

Jeannette Kloos (Friends of the Historic Highway) - Spoke on doing work parties using nonskilled labor to do those. She gets info from trail keepers of Oregon. They can do more skilled labor then the group can do.

Kent Kalsch (ODOT)- also hasn't seen the letter - maintenance cannot fund projects. State Parks does the day to day, ODOT does the big stuff. Budgets are too small, and the level of service is being cut. Can do 1-2-day projects only.

Terra- We will work to help with funding, because we've been hearing about maintenance funding shortfalls for a while.

Ernie-It's a dilemma, we must reach out or postpone required work.

## Approval of Minutes

Minutes approved.

## Mile Marker Update

Connor & Dan

Green mile marker paddles are installed and have restored missing historic markers as well. Dan is in charge of The Dalles to Mosier. Used the smallest green paddle sign that is allowed. For the historic markers, 84 & 85 were missing, and they are now installed. It is completed.

Marc- What mile post should be used for 911? Use the green number.

Judy- Thankful for the installation, she lives on the highway.

Tricia- Likes the dark colored poles, asked about the back of the signs, what they look like? They are double mounted, and there is no back – the numbers are meant to be seen from either side (results in fewer signs).

Jannette- Happy to see the historic markers back. Where will the molds reside? It has been at the Dalles shop historically.

## Mitchell Point Tunnel Updates

Austin Armstrong- Project Engineer (WFL) – Nearing the end of the project but still have work. There is light at the end of the tunnel. Most of the work has been inside the tunnel, West end of the tunnel and the parking lot itself. Placed concrete on the edges of the trail first to get a nice finish, then poured the center. There is 15 feet left at the end, but waiting for where the basalt bands will be placed.

West portal has been a focus for the last couple months. Form work is set up on the outside, placing the arch stones, set the keystone yesterday and there was an ODOT photographer on site – we'll have some good images.

MSE Wall- working on the excavation. Each basket is 18" deep and will be planted. Will install culverts to be able to install the safety guardrail.

The project is 77% complete, \$15.5M spent. Austin would like to get the trail paved by end of October; they are grading it on the east side now to prep. Looking at an early spring 2024 completion.

Richard Alfieri – What is the color inside the tunnel? The tunnel walls are lined with dark gray shotcrete, but the pavement is regular grey concrete.

David Duncan - Will there be concrete decking over the portals so when you come out of the portals there is protection? No, but there is rockfall protection.

Terra- Could we schedule a partner walk through sometime in October? Austin-If it doesn't interfere with the contactors (afternoon would be best)

### [Viewshed Management Review](#)

Sandra Hikari (ODOT) & Jamen Lee (OPRD)

Sandra and Jamen provided an overview of the 2012 viewshed management plan, which aimed to restore views along the Historic Highway along a 13-mile section in the west end of the gorge. Restored filtered and panoramic views from the Historic Highway between Portland Women's Forum and Ainsworth State Park. The Historic Highway was designed to take advantage of the "beauty spots" in the Gorge, capturing the iconic views up and down the Gorge.

Did a very deep dive into what needs to be done, not just cutting down trees and removing vegetation. It was very methodical, and intentional. It was very muddy and snowy while the work was being done. It's simple maintenance once the initial start is done. Could be a work party going out with clippers year to year to maintain it. Some vegetation that was removed was invasive species, so it was habitat restoration as well.

Received an award from the work on the Viewshed management project. Lots of coordination with agency partners.

[AJ in chat] Is viewshed management and vegetation removal a part of the maintenance budget? Or a separate budget? Jamen - It was separate, but now it's follow up work on a much smaller financial scale.

[AJ in chat] Will the 3 existing trail portions be a viewshed audit done? Sandra - It's up to the committee to decide if that is something that needs to be done. Originally the views were found using postcards. So, looking at key view areas and seeing what could be done. It's no small feat, don't want to identify too many spots to keep the costs reasonable. Would be a good project but would need input from the Advisory Committee.

Ernie – I would like to raise the possibility of creating a viewshed dialog between OR and WA since they look at each other in the gorge.

David Duncan – There were some firs removed in the loops below Vista House on the Figure 8s – was that part of the viewshed management?

Jamen – unfortunately, those firs had died and were starting to deteriorate, so they needed to be removed prior to becoming a hazard.

Terra – Wayne Stewart (who is not in attendance today) has advocated in the past for viewshed opening along the State Trail – especially at places like Hole in the Wall falls, and other areas along the trail alignments.

Terra – Arthur Babitz (who is also not in attendance) would remind us that when the Historic Highway was built, there had been a fairly substantial fire in the Gorge, and so there were much fewer trees and shrubs when the Highway was constructed.

Judy – The historic picture of Rowena Loops has no trees, and we don't want to go back to that condition, so it's a balance.

### Viento State Trail Park Opening Recap

Terra & Katelyn (ODOT)

In early September, ODOT opened 2 more miles east of Viento State Park. During the celebration, there were information booths including CAT, Safe Kids (booster seats and bike helmet fittings), Forest Service, Oregon State Parks had kid activities and Jr. Ranger program was there. Empanadas Maria Elba food truck was there, and the food was delish!

Lots of turn out from the cycling community, Portland Bicycle Club, Bike the Gorge, Sol Rides, E-bike Multnomah Falls, among others. Had lots of families and multigenerational groups. There was lots of enthusiasm for what's next, including the Mitchell Point Tunnel.

It was a really nice day, the winds were calm, and it was sunny and delightful. Cookies in the Parks office were delicious.

The State Trail is a magnet – people are attracted to the Trails and wanting to see the full alignment.

Richard – is there a gap between this segment and the Mitchell Point Tunnel?

Katelyn - There is a 0.7 mi gap between this new trail segment and the start of the Mitchell Point Tunnel Segment. We have funding identified, but it will not be allocated until 2026.

There was an old campground up there? Is that being restored?

Terra – yes, there was a Perham Creek campground. There is still a masonry plinth to indicate where it was, but we will not be restoring it as part of this project.

Marc - What's to keep folks from ignoring the trail closed sign?

Terra – There is a barrier at the end of the trail along with signs, and there are two bridges missing at Perham and Mitchell Creeks, so it's very hard to continue east without getting wet or using the shoulder of I-84.

#### Updates:

Next Meeting 12/7/23- This is revised. Looking at Troutdale but will confirm.

#### Friends of the Historic Highway:

Jannette- Historic Highway State Trail Consistency & Enhancement report- Contract with DEA is almost complete.

Lots of various activities this past summer and upcoming. Looking for new board members.

#### OPRD

David- Women's Forum, near a final concept. Got great feedback from the community. Will release the final concept to the public soon. Viento was a great opening. Hosted the open house inside the Parks facility. The Oregon State Park Commission and executive team came to the Mosier twin tunnels for an e-bike tour. Focused on past, present, and future of State Parks in the Gorge. Spoke on the next section and connectivity, and the scope of the State Trail and how fantastic it will be when complete.

Winding down on the busy season, however there is a picnic of 500 coming up. Twin Tunnel safety – in the process of ordering some more signage and striping at the beginning of the tunnels, where people need to slow down and be aware. Vista house- need to look at water infiltration issues in the building. Not sure if it is fixable. If they can solve the water infiltration issue, and do it within budget, it could be fixed.

Ernie – wondering about criminal activity at trailheads. David - seems to have decreased. Had better staffing this year compared to previous years. Have been working on graffiti removal as well throughout the Gorge. Underneath the viaduct at Vista house- You can see it from Rooster Rock- Need to figure out how to remove it – it's larger than regular staff can address.

#### USFS

Stephen Elgart – Not a lot of updates that can be shared. Looking at long term solutions for congestion and tourism, getting ideas from other agencies. Wrapping up/closing campgrounds on 10/1, volunteers will be clearing out. Bringing on a lot of staff, bringing on some winter seasonal workers, hopefully that will keep things safer during the winter. There has been an uptick on hiring, new positions created (been over 30 years since this has happened). Business Operations person to help with Human Resources/hiring. Landscape architect hired as well.

#### ODOT

Kent- More drastic budget cuts, lost 3 more employees. Can only do ½ as well for the Historic Highway segment. Lost 6 staff at Gov't Camp and 3 at Parkdale. Cascade Locks now has only 13 employees. The Historic Rail from Larch Mountain and Vista House, that's fixed, moving to Multnomah Falls rail area (this winter).

The green mile markers are being added on the Historic Highway today, and we're missing fewer historic concrete markers than we originally thought, but working on restoring those now.

Terra- Kristen Stallman is retired, and now working at Western Federal Lands administrating FLAP grants on the Washinton side. Retirement party is tomorrow. Still looking for a Multnomah County Governor's representative, Ernie is willing to stay on for now until we have gotten more of a quorum of applications (apply in Workday). Yesterday WSP and WFL accepted an award on the Mitchell Point Tunnel. Will share the plaque and award with all later.

We're drafting a grant application for construction funding from Mitchell Point Tunnel to Ruthton Point trail head, have more state match to apply for the grant from the Nationally Significant Federal and Tribal Lands Program. Will be at 50% design by end of the year.

Multnomah Falls Viaducts project went out to bid last week, start of construction and traffic impacts in fall 2024.

### Summer Pilot Recap

Terra (ODOT)- Multnomah Falls Timed Use Permits from this summer.

3<sup>rd</sup> year, in continuing collaboration with agency partners.

New Multnomah Falls Parking configuration was implemented this year.

Goals: Improved safety at Exit 31, reduce congestion and back ups on the Historic Highway.

This summer, there were 120-80 permits available per hour between 9am-6PM, down 40 tickets a day from last year. There were 50 in-person permits per day split between Troutdale and Cascade Locks. Over 77,000 permits reserved online. Friday-Monday continue to be high demand days, 10am-3pm are still peak hours.

We tracked CAT ridership, June and July exceeded 2022, but August saw fewer riders than 2022.

More traffic volume this year on the Historic Highway probably because of the lack of time use permits on the waterfall corridor.

Looked at pedestrian volumes, this year saw more pedestrians than 2022, still down from 2017.

Cyclists- Less cyclists this year but loads of E-Bikes. For bike parking, need to look at ways to maintain the pedestrian throughways in the Multnomah Falls plaza, and the Forest Service considers e-bikes motorized vehicles, so we need to determine how to better accommodate visitors arriving by bicycle. [AJ in chat]: One vehicle parking spot can accommodate 8 cycles.

Sasquatch Shuttle is operating the lot, and this year they reconfigured the parking lot to enter on the west side and exit near the crosswalk. They had people turn around at the shuttle turn around when the lot was full.

The parking lot attendant took a car count this summer to see the average in the historic highway lot by hour. Roughly 250 cars daily.



For Summer 2024: Likely continue to fund a flagger, Sasquatch will operate the highway lot.

David – Wanted to extend thank you for Sasquatch operating the lot and noticed that traffic really flowed smoothly through the Multnomah Falls area on the Historic Highway.

Were there any congestion issues with the reconfiguration for shuttles or users? Not at Multnomah Falls, but this is the first year that they've seen congestion at Wahkeena as folks parked there and walked to the Falls.

### US 30 Curve Warning Signs

Jermy Seitz (Region Sign engineer)- The curve warning project extends from Troutdale to Hood River on the Historic Highway. But most signing stops at the Ainsworth interchange. Using technology and best practices to determine the appropriate speeds around curves, and the project will add yellow diamond speed warning signs around the curves. There are lots of long winding sections, so they focused signage where needed. Usually, signage is considered a maintenance activity, but this time had to program it as a project due to the length. The scope is still in flux due to budget, but about the same number of signs.

13<sup>th</sup> and Oak- adding the reflective border around the traffic signal.

Need better signage at the on/off ramp after Toothrock tunnel, especially asking cyclists to cross the off ramp heading to the stairs, where people really are not really slowing down.

### Committee Roundtable

Judy: Rode the Olympic discovery trail. Glad that we went from 3 to 5 adits so there is light in the tunnel.

Tricia: On the Mitchell Point tunnel and lights, wondering if there is away to add a reflective surface to where people could see where walls pop out. Terra said that we cannot have reflective surfaces in the gorge.

Terra: Stay tuned for a Mitchell Point Tunnel tour in October.

### Adjournment

Ernie adjourned the meeting at 1:28 PM.