

## Lower Deschutes IIT/Managers Meeting

**Date & Time:** August 7, 2020 10AM – 11:15 AM

**Location:** ZOOM meeting

10:05AM Welcome and Introductions: Brad Houslet (CTWS), Jeff Kitchens (BLM); Scott Hege (Local Govt.); Kyle Hensley (BLM); Brian Cunninghame (CTWS); Rod French (ODFW); Dorothy Diel (OSMB); Steve Memminger (OPRD); Kat Smith (BLM); Tim Schwartz (OSP); Lane Magill (Wasco Co. Sheriff Dept.); Mary Fleischmann (Facilitator); Ron Walp (Public)

10:07 AM Review of agenda/ additions to agenda/ Approval of IIT minutes from May 15, 2020 and Managers minutes from May 29<sup>th</sup>, 2020.

Nothing to add to agenda and no changes to minutes from IIT or Managers meetings. Motion made to accept both sets of minutes by Jeff and second by Brian. Motion passed.

10:10 AM Old Business

- Discussion of getting information onto website. Steve shared that Chris Parkins (OPRD) will continue do this as well as public notification of meetings and information. He simply needs more lead time to get it done.
- Jeff reported out he ran boater pass numbers from Jan.1 to July 31 2019 and those numbers were 6900. He ran pass numbers for Jan. 1 – July 31 2020 and those numbers are 6300 to date. Jeff pointed out that the numbers can fluctuate any given year but he compared fee's and passes sold this year and the numbers are not down as badly as they had thought. 2019 cancellations were at 85 and this year they are at 189. This number also includes refunds to boaters who had to cancel March into May due to the river being closed and boaters unable to float the river. He is hearing that no show rates are up quite a bit but have not been able to actually capture those numbers. Jeff also shared that BLM is waiving the minimum use numbers for those with SRP permits this year to help the guides and outfitters out due to COVID concerns and people cancelling their trips. Question raised if it is more relevant to look at last 3 months. Jeff shared that observations are that use is above normal this year. In October BLM will look specifically at the summer months of June thru Sept. 31<sup>st</sup> to compare. Use at campgrounds is

definitely higher than normal and it is taking longer to collect camp fees. They will be able to compare back to other years and will do that month by month.

- At next IIT specific meeting discussion about surfing and paddle board situation which group has again referred back to IIT meeting in October. It was mentioned that this subject matter is about clarifying the rules regarding the need for a boater pass if you float on the river or are untethered. Expect to see more of this activity in the future.
- COVID – 19. Lane reported having conversations with signage on BLM lands on the river regarding social distancing. His department has been putting up black and white signs on kiosks but it appears they get torn down. Have placed these from North Junction to Mack's Canyon. Seeing very busy activity on the river. Also shared there was a drowning yesterday at Boxcar. Jeff will have Kat connect with Sheriff Magill regarding signage and running lots of regular patrols. Lane's staff will continue to put up signs as they go along. Land also shared that besides being busy on the river, campgrounds have been busy as well. Some people wearing masks and some not. Question was asked about people camping on closed tribal lands. Lane shared it has been hit and miss, nothing consistent. When they do run across it they tell people they aren't allowed to camp and they pretty much move on. There was incident with a large group camping, they had been drinking, so they requested they leave by 8 am the following morning, which they did. At Harpham and White River it's hard to keep out as it is open to tribal members and not the public so how do you check? Will let Bobbi know the challenges.

10:30 AM New Business –There was none.

10:31 AM Round Table Discussions and Updates

- **Tribes**- Brad shared there is not a lot new. Federal Government is temporarily shut down with hopes to reopen on Tuesday, August 11<sup>th</sup>. Tribal lands continue to be day use only.
- **OSMB** – Dorothy reported that Josh was unable to attend and she is simply here to listen in and report back to him.
- **ODFW**- Rod shared that they started angler sampling protocol for the summer. Seems to be more anglers and license sales are up. Steelhead numbers are coming back and fishing is overall better than expected. Let everyone know that fishing below Moody Rapids is closed through September. Few passes sold.

- **OSP** – Tim had nothing new to report.
- **Local Government** – Scott mentioned that there is not much to report with COVID issues impacting everything. Things are getting worse and not better and they are currently on the governors “watch list”. He expects the governor to enact some travel related restrictions as soon as next week.
- **OPRD** – Steve reported that camp use is up all over the state and with reduced staffing OPRD is struggling. David has the scat machine at Heritage working again. There have been increases of people with heat stroke or broken ankles. Think this is due to a lot of new people taking to the trails and/or overall more people are out and about. Due to shortages they are having to modify the float schedule to every other week and are doing more land patrols. The TTS toilet systems hope to get installed this fall or spring but by next season for sure.
- **BLM** – Jeff reported that BLM is close to finishing their business plan. Had hoped by July 1<sup>st</sup> but lost key staff to get this completed. The key with change of user fees is being able to have public involvement and engagement. Challenges have been that the world is distracted, not having public meetings and getting people to focus on Federal Registry. Hope to have this buttoned up by September. Current plan is to get signage up for the public to know what is going on and how they can participate/ give input. This signage will run into mid-July of next year and will do Federal Registry next spring. Know that people want to give input, so if it takes another year regarding these changes that simply is the way it has to be. This restructuring would include not only the boater pass fee but also the all user fee. Plan is to coordinate with State Parks regarding collecting info as it pertains to Mack’s Canyon to Heritage, but this is put on hold until next season. Have cameras on the trails but have not been able to collect all the data. Jeff continues that there currently onsite meetings with contractors for the construction of quarters and office space at Bake Oven. Should begin work from fall to winter, hopeful to have completed by October. Fire season so far has been kind to BLM, there have been a few starts but they have been small. Conditions are drier and worse than in 2018. There have been fires even in places where fires were before. There is significant fuel conditions and there is bigger potential this year than what happened in 2018. The past year and half have partnered with Sherman County regarding weed control. BLM also have staff that are certified to help with spraying this year to work alongside Sherman Co. The prospectus for new SRP permits will be out in October. There will be 4 to 5

opportunities for new SRP's. Have not gotten any takers in last few years. Looking at Third phase with toilet replacement project on Segments 1 and 4 which will be composite toilets. They have been unable to act on this due to restrictions with deferred monies. There was an act passed in congress to fund restoration projects and update improvements. These dollars will be used in segments 1, 2 and 3 to improve ramps and campsites and will mitigate with river partners regarding other areas of concern. Question raised about NEPA on these projects and Jeff shared that they are looking at what will require NEPA and what would be CX. BLM will be looking at this site by site. There will be 5 years of money coming. The segment 4 EA should be happening by next summer as they finalize data.

Kat reported that they are doing analysis of the historical use on the river corridor. They have been doing float patrols. They have completed segment 3 and almost done with segment 4 and then will be doing segment 1. This all falls into the monitoring and evaluating of limits of acceptable change regarding conditions on the river, not just about use and abuse an area can tolerate.

10:55 AM Public Comment

(Redacted name to protect person) shared that he/she just came off the river and has some concerns regarding guides on the river. His/her understanding is the Columbia River is closed and that there are guides who need cash flow. He/she thinks there are guides on the Deschutes who do not have the right credentials. He/she believes there are newbies who do not understand some of the established courtesy's that the usual users have for one another. He/she has seen some going 40 mph around other drift boats and jet sleds. This person was advised that the Columbia is only closed to steelhead fishing. This person was also advised to contact OSP, Wasco Co. Sheriff and even the BLM when they come across these issues and if can have more details that would be helpful.

Also shared about some property that has permits to run cows and the owners were helpful to putting out a recent fire. Problem with the property is that people are camping there. There doesn't appear to be any signage that it is private and no camping. Jeff shared that there has been signage but people take it off. There was a complaint of people driving too fast and this person almost had a head on accident. Jeff said BLM wants the information regarding driving too fast as well about concerns of illegal guides on the river. BLM will follow up with conversations with the property owner regarding signage. Sheriff Magill shared that he and OSP will attack

segment 4 for enforcement, regarding trespassing, driving too fast and boater safety. The only other complaint was the conditions at Mack's Canyon around garbage. Dumpsters are not being closed and with the summer winds it is a mess. There are broken lids on the dumpsters and maybe they need to be checked more often, they are heaped over. Also need to do a better job of power washing the scat machine at Heritage.

11:00 AM Final Discussion, Follow Ups, and Action Items

- Brian shared that he and his wife moved to Sedona, Arizona earlier this summer. At this time he is retiring from the Managers group after 47 years of involvement/commitment to the river. Lots of congratulations shared, everyone is thankful for the history and dedication Brian has given to this group and all the previous participants. He will be missed but we are happy for him. He wants to continue to be on the stake holder list and shared he would be available if there were some historical questions or concerns were brought up. (Let's not too much more advantage of that – just kidding). On a personal note, I will miss not sharing rides to meetings with you Brian. Mary
- Follow ups – paddle board/surf board issue to IIT.
- Fall meetings for IIT and Managers – new chairs- 2021 new chairs will be Managers/ODFW and IIT/ OPRD.
- Review “white paper” – limited entry numbers
- Need to have quorum at Managers next meeting to set boater use numbers for limited entry.
- BLM will have a more detailed summary about boater use. In spring will have a financial report.
- FUP working group hasn't gone away and after the season will set up meeting and review what we know and where are we going.

11:14 AM MEETING ADJOURNED

**\_Next meetings: IIT October 16<sup>th</sup> from 10 am – 1 pm; Managers Nov. 6<sup>th</sup> 10 am – 1 pm. Meeting adjourned.**