

## Lower Deschutes River IIT Meeting Minutes

February 5, 2021

10 AM – 11:09 AM

Chair – OPRD/ David Spangler

River Website: <https://www.oregon.gov/oprd/BWT/Pages/BWT-ldrms.aspx>

### 10:00 AM In attendance:

- Scott Hege (Local Govt); Jeff Kitchens (BLM); Adam Shimer (OSP); Corey Heath (ODFW); Rod French (ODFW); Steve Memminger (OPRD); David Spangler (OPRD); Kyle Hensley (BLM); Cece Mareila (BLM); Josh Mulhollem (OSMB); Scott Sheppard (BLM); Mary Fleischmann (Facilitator/ note taker)
- Public/ Gretchen McCoy (McCoy Outdoor Outfitters); Valerie (River Trails Rafting); John Workman (Raft California- Tributary Whitewater Tours); Ryan McNulty (Bend Fly Shop); Nate Van Amber (Rogue Adventures); Brad Staples (Fish guide/Jet boats)

### 10:11 AM Review/ Additions to agenda/ Approval of agenda and Meeting minutes.

- David motioned to approve the minutes, Jeff 2<sup>nd</sup>, motions passed.
- Noted that there was no representation from the Tribes at this meeting.
- Jeff clarified user numbers in segments 3 A and 3 B.

### 10:15 AM Old Business

- Website capacity/ Steve M asked how best to get archives for the website, smaller packages are easier to load. He is unsure of total capacity but doesn't see a problem. Need to check with BLM when to load up, OPRD is doing current approved minutes and next step would be the archives. Jeff suggested could create a google drive or put on a thumb drive to zip up in email. Currently there are text files. BLM still has boxes that need to be scanned and once 2 vacant positions are filled can finish this. There is no deadline to complete this project but goal would be 2021 being a good time frame. Steve stated they could put separate tab for archives and then meeting notes. Question regarding sight and hearing impaired access to this information. Steve shared that what is being sent is has ADA standards. Steve will look into this as it has been discussed before. Steve will give us OPRD website for Lower Deschutes Information and Mary will put on all agenda's and minutes that go out.

- Frequent User Pass (FUP) focus group. Scott reported that he doesn't have an update and will work with Jeff to schedule some dates as Jeff is important to the first meeting regarding giving the history. March possibly a good timeline for a virtual meeting. Reminded that we do need the Tribes involved in this process.
- Signage regarding surfing/paddleboard restrictions. Jeff reported out that the need more information from community as where key spots where this activity is taking place so know where to concentrate efforts for signage. This would educate users as to safety issues and the requirement of having a boater pass when you are floating on the river. It was suggested that maybe forming a focus group would be helpful. Dave and Jeff volunteered to take this on- want to address the rules, safety concerns as well as boater conflicts. Jeff shared that Mike Millay and Kyle Hensley with BLM could assist as well.

**\*\*\* Reminder of decisions regarding boater passes and use for 2021**

- Segment 1 remains in limited entry with no reduction in daily use numbers.
- Segment 2 there are no changes
- Segment 3A and 3 B come out of limited entry. Segment 3A will have daily use of 300 and seasonal targets of 15,000. Segment 3B will have daily use of 250 and seasonal targets of 13,600.
- Segment 4 remains in limited entry with current target to remain at 214 (no reduction in daily targets) but if Segment 4 hits seasonal targets in 2021, then daily use targets for 2022 will be reduced to 193.

**10:20 AM New Business**

- Mike Harrington (ODFW) will be new chair of Managers meetings. Unclear who the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs will have attend IIT meetings, but believe it to be Jen Graham. Need to follow up.
- Status of Compost toilets/ Toilets are completed and in place and 100% ready to go. Locations are in segment 4 – Robertson Point down river from Harris as well as at Kloan. Question regarding the footprint of which Robertson Point had to be moved significantly due to cultural/archeological concerns. The toilet at Kloan only needed to be moved slightly from original location. The toilets are from Toilet Tech and different than the previous thoughts. Feeling

very good about them and looking at using them on the John Day and at Smith Rock. Jeff shared that BLM should complete their toilets in Segment 1 and 4 within the next year.

- Damages/repairs from last year's fires. Jeff reported out that fires were much slower last year on the Lower Deschutes compared to previous years, which was a blessing. The White River Canyon burned significantly and will have to watch for blowouts once snow melt happens and rain, but pretty much expect it to happen.
- SRP's status and assistance for guides/outfitters last year. CC from BLM reported out that BLM has been in regular communication with everyone and are now going over post season reports. She described that there are 3 specific SRP groups on the river – Rafting companies, Fishing outfitters and College/nonprofit groups. Rafting groups use was down, fishing groups use overall was more than normal, and the college/nonprofit groups did not operate this past year. There was no reduction in fees and if anyone overpaid in advance – after post season reports are completed if there is a negative balance or have a credit, will be put on their account. There has been lots of communication throughout this process. Jeff shared that it was a hard decision regarding refunds but they worked with individuals how this could be done and it was handled case by case. 4 new SPR's this coming year. Jeff explained that there are some fluctuations as there were a number of transfers as some folks are retiring. Some have thought there might be an increase of outfitter/guides but actually there have been small increases. We may see fewer SRP's apply in the future.

#### **10:38 AM Round Table**

- Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs – no one to report
- Oregon State Marine Board – Nothing to share at this time.
- Oregon State Police – Adam Shimer reported that his section to patrol is Lake Billy Chinook to Trout Creek. There were many users floating during COVID closures and without boater permits. Quite a few of these were duck hunters. From Mecca Flat to Trout Creek he ran into paddle boarders floating with obviously no experience. They needed to follow them as well as pick them up out of the river. Fishing was closed April 22<sup>nd</sup> and there was lots of poaching going on for Whitefish, Redband and Rainbow tTrot. Many didn't know the regulations or recognition of the fish they were catching. OSP will hit the river harder this coming year either floating on the river with a raft or kayak or using bikes some of this in plain clothes.

They will begin floating in April and is giving an invitation to managers/agency folks who would like to join a float let him know.

- ODFW –Not a lot but Rod shared that that ODFW will not authorize Spring Chinook in 2021 as everything is low. Very low runs. Trout inventory in Segments 1, 2 and 3 will be happening in the coming months.
- Wasco Co. Sheriff – No report
- Oregon Park and Recreation Department – Already talked about compost toilets are in. At Heritage there will be work being done to remove the sandbar that builds up. Installing fee machine in 2021 for passes which will be credit card only. They will be mounted at Heritage and Mood Island. There will be a learning curve and so will continue to take cash until 2022, then has to be credit card. This will assist in better auditing of use and permits sold. OPRD expects to have full seasonal staffing in 2021 but unsure of river patrols due to COVID. Will have more people on the rail bed due to increase of use which has been hikers and bikers. Rod French added that there will be significant angling restrictions on that lower section which will mean fewer Moody Island passes. Jeff shared that BLM is willing to share resources in regards to use by nonboaters. BLM wants to get a better idea of numbers on these users. They have cameras to catch activity and possibly feet on the ground. Can make this a coordinated effort for 2021-2022. David shared that these nonboater users have significantly impacted staff as they have had to retrieve people on the rail beds who are dehydrated, get flat tires and try to hike out, don't carry water or not enough, despite signage warnings about how hot it gets in the canyon. Usually people are 5 miles in when they run into problems.
- Bureau of Land Management – Updates on staffing – Michael Millay will take over Dru Johnson's previous position of Wild and Scenic River Recreation Planner. Monica Morin has changed position and will be taking on many of the duties that Heidi Mottl had at the Central Oregon Field Office. Cece Marella accepted a promotion as an Outdoor Recreation Planner with the field office will now be supporting work on the Lower Crooked and in the High Desert and Urban Interface. BLM is currently working to fill two positions but at this time Cece is still helping with river permits. Currently BLM has a great team focused on the northern half of the field office with emphasis on the Lower Deschutes River Corridor and surrounding public lands. This team is Mike Millay (lead outdoor recreation planner), Kat Smith (supervisory park ranger/manager), and Monica Morin (lead river/park ranger and JD Elam (maintenance lead) Jeff announced that BLM has two

park/river ranger positions available stationed in Maupin and if anyone knows someone interested to contact either Kyle or Jeff. They do not need to run these and want to make sure it is open to Veterans and those with disabilities. Again report that there was not much regarding fires this year except heavy impacts on the White River Corridor. Shall see later in the season what happens with runoffs. Sunny Hope will be coming into Maupin area to help out. She will be working the recreation sites. Jeff shared that because of increased use of roads this past year, they were in pretty good shape, primary issue being driving too fast. They were graded in the fall

- Local Government – Scott shared that there has been feedback coming from citizens about the FUP as well as questions regarding law enforcement, specifically where is the Wasco Co. sheriff presence. Some question if the cost is necessary and if those dollars could be spent elsewhere on the river. OPRD will follow up on this. Wasco Co. continues to be in the extreme risk category but hope the risk drops in the coming weeks so more things can be opened up.

#### **11:00 AM Public Comment**

- Brad Staples shared that he enjoyed working with OPRD in replacing toilets on Lower River. He continued to share that the concept of Toilet Tech is very simple.
- Corey Heath- Asked question regarding if there will be analysis on nonboater use and what's driving it, is one of the issues camping competition?
- Jeff shared that there is a fee proposal coming out, approved by the RAC that will have a fee structure change which in Segment 1 and 4 there will be a \$5 per night fee. In segment 4 currently working on an Environmental Assessment to look at all use not just boaters- how much use, where is the use – where is use increasing significantly. Need to do more data collection which they have started.
- Corey asked along with fees, will there be limits of numbers regarding nonboaters?
- Jeff replied that currently there are no limits, but once plan is kicked off, the issue will most likely be raised and then analyzed.
- OPRD responded that along with previous discussion of people using the rail beds, becoming dehydrated, flat tires and folks reported missing, there is a fair number such incidents which seems to be on the rise.

- Nate Van Amber wanted to thank all the SRP's working together even though there were lots of challenges this past year. All the meetings and information sharing was very helpful.
- Brad S asked about signage at Moody Rapids as the issue is people floating the rapid with no life jackets and difficult to spot people. OPRD shared they have temporary signs up currently but working on more permanent signs. Brad also shared that he has worked with Ray Ward with Wasco County Sheriff out of The Dalles and that has always been a good experience.

**11:09**

**Final discussion, Follow up, Action Items**

- CWTS member on IIT
- Follow up with Frequent User Pass meeting – Scott
- Funding law enforcement question – OPRD
- Continue conversation and next steps on Surfing/Paddle board issue on the river.

**Next Meeting**

- Managers Meeting February 19<sup>th</sup> 10 – 1 PM
- IIT Meeting May 7<sup>th</sup> 10 – 1PM

**11:15**

**MEETING ADJOURNED**