

## Lower Deschutes IIT & Managers Meeting

**August 6, 2021**  
**10 AM – 11:20AM**  
**ZOOM 814-9521-5781**

**Chair: OPRD/ David Spangler**

10:05 AM **Introductions:** Scott Hege (Local Government); Jeff Kitchens (BLM); Jason Seals (ODFW); Josh Mullhollem (OSMB); Corey Heath (ODFW); Justin Hall; Tim Schwartz (OSP); Lane Magil (Wasco Co. Sheriff); Mike Millay (BLM); Brenda Bremner (BIA- Warm Springs); Brad Houslet (CTWS); Kyle Hensley (BLM); Andrew Vanderwerf (OSP); Steve Memminger (OPRD); Kat Smith (BLM); Mary Fleischmann (facilitator).

PUBLIC : Rob Miles (Imperial Rafting); Curtis Norsen (Sun Country Tours); Ron Walp (Citizen Maupin).

### **Review of agenda/additions to the agenda/ Approval of Minutes from IIT meeting May 7<sup>th</sup>.**

Dave reviewed agenda and requests for additions. Mary shared that there was one addition to new business – Sheriff Magil wanted to discuss camp-issues on BLM land.

Motion made by Brad to approve agenda, second made by Brenda – motion passed. Motion made by Steve to approve minutes from May 7<sup>th</sup>, Second by Josh – motion passed.

### **Old Business**

- Comment period on proposed changes to fee structure. Jeff shared that August 13<sup>th</sup> is last date for comments regarding changes in fee structure. He is not sure of what the comments have been so far but has received some verbal comments and having good conversations. There will be a report on results from the comments in October which will be sent out to every one as well as presented at the next IIT and Managers meetings this fall.
- Surveys on Lower Deschutes (Segment 4): David shared that the purpose of the surveys is to gage what the visitor experience is and to get more accurate numbers of hiker/bikers so that we can see what the use looks like. The team working on this have been in touch with an OSU professor

who may be available to assist. Looking at a 2 year study hopefully to kick off in 2022. Looking at funding which would be split between OPRD and BLM. Current price estimate given is \$100,000 to \$150,000. This estimate would mean that OSU would most likely be using grad student(s) that would take the entire project on. This estimate came in late in the budget time period for OPRD and so not sure what limitations on spending they will have this year. Kyle (BLM) who has been working on this with OPRD, shared that this is going to be a good thing and will help everyone in the long term. Hopeful to kick this off in 2022. David also shared that with OSU taking the project on that frees agencies up as far as having to move staff around to complete this survey.

- E-Bikes/ ODFW shared that from their perspective on the Lower Deschutes River /travel management side, they consider E-Bikes as motorized vehicles and thus are not allowed on ODFW land. The interpretation state wide for ODFW is consistent with this. David (OPRD) says they allow E-Bikes for the first 2 miles on the Lower River and have been advising the public of this. There is signage at the kiosk explaining this as well. Jason with ODFW shared that signs are in place but they have not been effective and State Police is reluctant to enforcing this due to the signage issue. Signage is only 8 1/2 x 11 inches and is pretty much hidden. Corey said he would follow up with Chase Brown (who oversees this area) to come up with better signage, bigger signage. Steve asked if signage could include information that people can/will be cited if they have E-bikes past mile 2. Jason shared that yes they can make that clear in signage which should make things good with OSP being able to cite and enforce.
- Follow up with road construction near Washout Rapid. Jeff unclear about what this subject was. Mary clarified that Brad Staples had brought up a concern regarding private land that became public land that the owners were building a new road. Jason shared that the road does come up to ODFW land but there doesn't appear to be new construction, it looks like they are simply maintaining the current road. OSP shared they will follow up on this as well.

### **New Business:**

- Toilet Closures on Segment 1: Jeff shared there are 13 toilets on Segment 1, of which 5 are compost style across 4 different sites. They have been experiencing high use and at this time 2 or 3 have broken down and concern that similar failures could occur to others. (The turbine system is broken, it has failed.) If these failures are not addressed, there could be permanent damage and/or expose staff and the public to human waste. Prior to implementing the closures BLM had already started moving on an emergency contract action to hire the company to come out, float down

Segment 1, and fix/upgrade all five systems. The hope is for a quick turn-around schedule to get this taken care of. Jeff also shared that people think that BLM is not maintaining them, which is not the case as the contractor for maintaining them has been doing that all along. Signs have been posted regarding the closures at Mecca and Warm Springs but not at Trout Creek yet. There just seems to be an increase with use of the toilets despite the rules that people are supposed to be carrying their own toilets.

- Discussion regarding if meetings will be possibly in person in the fall. Mary has reserved space with ODFW and Maupin Civic Center as place holders. Pretty much from feedback from agencies it is a wait and see as things change from week to week and month to month. Currently OPRD requires masks for staff and only one person when driving vehicles. CTWS shared that currently the tribes are limiting travel. ODFW's offices will be open to the public on September 1<sup>st</sup> but will require everyone wears a mask. BLM has the same mask wearing rules when traveling in vehicles.
- Campers on BLM campgrounds-not complying with rules and regulations. Lane reported that he is hearing from citizens about illegal camping, primarily in the Oasis campground. BLM did enforce a couple of campers at Oasis and tagged them with orange stickers. Law enforcement has not been enforcing as there is some confusion regarding the state law that allows people to camp on public lands (state lands), but there is nothing about federal lands. Lane wants to know if BLM has any policies in place addressing camping. Feels we need to keep this concern on everyone's radar. Jeff shared that BLM is aware of the situation, and there are issues at Devil's Canyon and under the bridge at Trout Creek. Currently BLM has 2 vacancies for law enforcement positions and only have one law enforcement person for the whole district at this time. Jeff and Lane will connect and talk more about the issue and look at what policy is so that it can be addressed together.

### **Round Table**

- Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs- Brad shared that there is not much to report. There is no movement of opening up tribal campgrounds as continue to prepare for continuation of dealing with COVID. Most of the spring chinook made it through. Scott brought up question regarding campgrounds, if and when there will be movement. Brad shared hopes it is earlier but now with stricter protocols being applied guessing it might not be earlier.
- Oregon State Marine Board – Josh had nothing to report.
- Oregon State Police – Andrew said he is hearing from the public that segment 1 is extremely crowded and that there are possibly 600 – 800

people floating that section. Wanted to know if that was correct. Jeff shared that he has heard anecdotal conversations that the numbers on segment 1 are exceeding the limits, but he needs to look at the boater permit numbers to see if that is what is really happening. Andrew shared that on July 17<sup>th</sup> when they were down on the water they saw maybe 20 or 30 people but only had 1 issue with not having a boater pass, but that person then went to an outfitter and got a pass. He is not seeing the numbers. Jeff shared that he is not seeing anything that seems there is exceeding use. BLM is sending out a crew this weekend and will have a better picture. Andrew also shared that in Segment 1 and Segment 4 there are lots of guides but fisherman are not catching fish. Things seem to overall be slow. Tim shared that use in Segment 1 seems to be tapering off. He will have a final evaluation of their agencies results of their plans. He also shared that Adam Shimer has been promoted so no longer on the river.

- Oregon Department of Fish and Game – Jason shared that it is business as usual. They will have trawlers out 3 days a week. There have been low returns to the Columbia this year and so fishing below Sherar Falls is closed after 2 pm. hoping to be lifting those closures soon, maybe next week. Rod French is officially retired. Jason is the new fish biologist. Mike Harrington has moved to become the fish Division manager in Salem.
- Wasco Co. - Lane not too much to add. Busy last few weeks. July 4<sup>th</sup> was not as busy as they had anticipated. Saw 2 contacts last month with no boater passes, but pretty much everyone is being in compliance.
- Oregon Park and Recreation- Scat machine is down at Heritage Landing. Staff keeping an eye on it and can open it up when they are around, otherwise have it closed/locked up. Parts are on order. OPRD will have overnight floats on Wed/Thursday. Will alternate 1 day float and 2 day floats. Busy spring but seems quieter or more manageable this summer.
- BLM- Recently purchased a new scat machine for Maupin. Working with the City to install this fall or winter. Jeff shared that replacing the existing machine it is much more expensive than expected. The current scat machine cost roughly \$70,000 and the new one cost over \$100,000. Again reported on the toilet closures on Segment 1 due to failures with the systems. Replacement/or fixes will be coming along soon. Fee structure changes, again reminded everyone that comments are due by August 13<sup>th</sup>. New facilities are being constructed at the BLM Bakeoven Housing and worksite. Hope to start construction after Labor Day. BLM has contracted for building new quarters, establishing a security system to the site and upgrading utilities. They are hopeful to acquire funds to demolish and reconstruct the office building and shop. This has been 10 years in the making and will be a huge benefit/upgrade for seasonal staff. They have been replacing portal signs as they have been weathering. They will

also be replacing campfires and picnic tables in Segment 2 and 3. There have been 4 SRP's applications regarding scenic bike-ways. They are navigating with these applicants as they work through the process. Finally Jeff wanted to share that they have great seasonal staff this year and please say hello when you meet them.

- Local Government – COVID numbers are up significantly and nothing has changed. It is being recommended that masks be worn when indoors but no other actions have been put in place.

### **Public Comment**

- Rob Miles- Things are good. Jeff wanted to thank Imperial Rafting for doing the salvage on the river of a boat earlier in the season. Thanks for taking that on and once he can come up for air, will get back in touch with Rob regarding establishing an agreement. Rob did share that the Discovery Channel will be in Maupin from August 9<sup>th</sup> until September 18<sup>th</sup> to film about the life and adventures of rafting and overall about Maupin. Their focus will be on Imperial and River Trails Rafting. This will add some good economics to the city and bring attention to Maupin. Jeff shared that they had been in contact with BLM regarding if they needed any SRP's. They did not as they will not be making any significant changes to the resources with their filming.

### **Final Discussion, Follow Up, Action Items**

- Nothing to follow up on and no action items.

### **Next meetings:**

- ITT October 8<sup>th</sup> 10 – 1pm (possibly at ODFW Dalles)
- Managers November 5 10 – 1 pm (possibly at Maupin Civic Center)
- 2022 Chairs
  - Managers – BIA
  - IIT – OSP

**Meeting adjourned.**