

## Lower Deschutes River IIT Meeting Minutes

May 6<sup>th</sup> 2022

10 Am – 12 noon

ODFW – 3561 klindt Dr. The Dalles, Or.

ZOOM: 743 8073 7482

ID: 038707

**CHAIR: Matt Newby/OSP**

\*\*\*Note to public participants. If you could please refrain from asking questions or comments until the public comment period, that would be most useful/helpful for the process of the meeting as well as useful for the note taker. Also, when you do comment, if you would please state your name and any affiliations. Please mute your phone or video to avoid disruptions with background noise. If you have problems with commenting, turn off your video. Thank you, Mary/facilitator.

**10: 00 AM** **Welcome and Introductions** : Jeff Kitchens (BLM); Scott Hege (Local Govt.); Matt Newby (OSP); Chase Brown (ODFW); Josh Mullhollem (OSMB); Brenda Bremner (BIA); Corey Heath (ODFW); Brad Houslet (CTWS); Mike Millay (BLM); Jason Seals (ODFW); Beth Hartwood (BLM); Kat Smith (BLM); Ron Walp (Maupin – public); Rob Miles ( Imperial Rafting); Mary Fleischmann (Facilitator).

### **Review/ Additions to agenda/ Approval of agenda (motion/vote)/ Approval of Minutes from February 11, 2022**

No additions to the agenda; Motion made by Scott to approve minutes From Feb. 11, 2022 IIT meeting, second by Corey. MOTION PASSED.

### **Old Business/ Ongoing business**

- Updates on implementation of “hike in” fees. Distribution/allocations between agencies: Jeff reported out that All User fee is currently in affect, but still need to meet with stakeholders to iron out how to go forward with implementation and how that works out between all of the parties regarding the distribution of those funds. Working on getting a meeting set up with the stakeholders to get everything in place.
- Signage regarding E-Bikes on segment: Reposting of signage was done last week. Have temporary laminated signs currently, but biggest issue is

that they get torn down. There is a large 4 X 4 sign going up fairly quickly. The signage is again at RM 2 that e-bikes can't go further and there is some compliance, but still an issue. Suggestion to have more signage at the beginning of the trail, but again laminated signs have been torn down. ODFW continues to work with OPRD on this. Law enforcement shared that when signage is there is better compliance.

- Updates with ZOOM – hybrid. Mary has set up but is still on big learning curve pulling it together. Conversation with all agencies/parties regarding whether we just do ZOOM rather than in-person/hybrid as we go forward. Difficult to make the transition and various agencies have different in person dates. Discussed possibly waiting until fall, as we figure out how to do hybrid meetings. Reviewed that in the past a decision had been made that could make IIT meeting virtual if members can't attend, but it is important/critical that Manager meetings happen in person as much as possible, with the ability of the public to attend virtually or by phone. Group overall felt that in-person meetings work better regarding decisions and discussion. Also concerns raised that having ZOOM available for Managers meetings could be a crutch instead of in person. Overall, group felt we need to start moving to in person as much as possible. Mary shared that as she set up meetings, she did her best to make sure the various facilities could accommodate that. Over all decision is that the May 20<sup>th</sup> Managers meeting in Maupin will be in person, with hybrid for public and possibly a few managers, but 98% shared that they can make that meeting.

### **New Business**

- Review of Charter – Committee has not met. Jeff will follow-up. Members on that committee are: Jeff Kitchen, Chase Brown, Brad Houslet, Scott Hege, Steve or David from OPRD, and Mary. Mary will set up zoom once dates are set up. Jeff will send out dates for group to meet.
- Law Enforcement meeting highlights. Mary sent out minutes from that meeting to IIT and Managers. Meeting happened in April, very productive. Staffing for BLM looks very good this year, and overall LE presence on the river will be good this year. Question brought up about OSP's ability to check fishing license due to new DOJ decision. OSP has not hard back regarding the ruling. OSP has protocol regarding how/what they can ask, but if see a blatant violation can cite.
- Tribal lands and openings for camping: The new Tribal Council met last month and all tribal lands are open for camping on the Deschutes, Tribal lands as well as the Reservation.
- Update from Fire Emergency partnership meeting: group has not met as of yet.

- Discussion regarding fire season and concerns regarding consistency with OPRD, Wasco County and Sherman County. Open discussion and clarification of who is doing what when and how to coordinate. It was shared that next year the various counties are working on having similar dates for fire closures. OPRD follows the lead of Sherman County. Wasco Co. follows the lead of Oregon Department of Forestry. Sherman Co. has closures earlier this year with concerns with fires. There was some confusion regarding BLM closures, folks thought it was June 15<sup>th</sup>. Clarity is that their fire restrictions are in effect from June 1<sup>st</sup> thru October 15<sup>th</sup>. Jeff shared language from management plan that gives flexibility regarding earlier or later closures...just trying to have clarity on the boater pass for consistency for boaters. BLM has recently looked at how to make consistency with several rivers to make dates all the same. Rivers that now have the same dates are: Lower Deschutes, John Day, White River and the Crooked...so June 1<sup>st</sup> until Oct. 15<sup>th</sup>. The draft will be posted soon on sites and boater permits. Again discussion regarding flexibility around fire dangers and closures, which the management plan allows. (\*\*\*) Read page 48 of the Record of Decision on the River Management Plan for the exact language)
- Creation of a general check off list that law enforcement, river rangers, can have available so boaters don't have multiple checks regarding pulling out all the required equipment. David (OPRD) is working on creating the list for this postcard size check list. The purpose is that once someone is checked there is a sign off so all that needs to be presented for a follow up check is this form. Kat raised a concern about the concerns of someone forging the sign off. Josh shared that OSMB had similar concerns and have a specific tag once someone gets their inspection. This is still a work in progress and those involved will need to figure out a way to not have folks cheating.
- Discussion about boaters having issues downloading their boater passes last year. Could show lots of attempts, but could not get permit. BLM did not get a lot of complaints with this issue. It was reported that law enforcement would look that folks made attempts to download their boater pass but were not able to show they had it. There were not that many complaints, but wondering if this is/was an issue with Rec.Gov. LE let folks go as they showed minimally attempts. Discussion regarding downloading your pass prior to launch as cell service is pretty limited once on the river. BLM looking at how to put something on Rec. Gov. regarding reminding folks to download prior to launch. Seems like it is more likely user error.
- Update on fishing on the Deschutes for the season. Corey shared that ODFW is involved in revising and analyzing data from past seasons on all tributaries in the Columbia Basin. They have been conducting webinars

regarding the data collecting work they have been doing the past several years. Josh shared that they will be finalizing the number of wild steelhead returning to the Deschutes, coming to Bonneville Dam, by certain dates, and what to expect with a certain number of steelhead to return. Last year did not expect the low returns of steelhead and alarmed at the historic low numbers at Bonneville Dam. Last time there was any closures for fisheries was in 1978. If the public goes to their website they will know the passage numbers and can be prepared for low returns. Last year the low returns were at a critical level and so will start season closed until the end of May. There is an extended rule which they can use to continue closures as needed, such as going to the end of July. Will monitor at the dam through July and end of August. Have fingers crossed as to how the season pans out. Don't know what to expect as summer steelhead numbers are difficult to capture. Refer to this website as to how the data collection is going on:

<https://myodfw.com/articles/steelhead-management-columbia-snake-river-basins>.

Discussion around higher use on Segment 1 due to transfers from Segment 4 due to lack of fish. There are no closures for trout fishing. Salmon is closed on the entire lower river and there should only be people fishing for trout. More discussion around outfitters/guides having to shift their efforts, and some are becoming more diversified, i.e.: hunting instead of fishing. There's the need to have more flexibility in changing their business models. Hate to see passes change on Segment 4- BLM does look at the numbers from year to year when they look at limited entry. Numbers are rising on Segment 1 which could force limited entry on that segment. Scott asked about the connection between Salmon and Steelhead. Last year Salmon fishing was open, but it is time to close both due to people saying they were fishing for Salmon when in fact were fishing steelhead. Every steelhead matters thus the closures. Question brought up regarding are these closures specific to the Deschutes. Josh shared that these numbers and closures are figured out basin by basin. A lot of fish are caught = 1 ½ - 2 times caught, that are actually in the population...lots of fish are caught in the Deschutes. As far as impacts on the John Day and Grand Ronde, there are not as many fish, so less impact. There are so many more people fishing on the Deschutes.

- Further update on Executive Order 1426 regarding contracts – There has been no guidance and so pretty much dead on arrival, and possibly because it was initially put in place due to COVID.
- Transfer of permits from section to section/ what flexibilities with climate change? Jeff shared there will be more of a discussion on this at the May 20<sup>th</sup> Managers meetings, but would have to look at many factors. 1) is the impact on limited entry, 2) creates concern for hoarding (private or commercial) – what does that mean, 3) the issue of no refunds. This would be difficult to implement as BLM doesn't have the staff/resources to

deal with changes in the management plan. Workload is big problem regarding dealing with refunds, huge impact on resources. Also changes would require amendment to plan and so not a consideration for primary season this year.

- Follow up with Delbert Anderson – Will be an artist in residence on the river this summer. There are some planned activities which can have 10 or less people. There will be a private meeting at Mecca and a workshop/music at Pelton Park.

### **Round Table Discussion and Updates**

- Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs – Not a lot going on. Camping restrictions have been lifted. Election and new members on the Tribal Council. Discussion about security with pay boxes and how to get around the concerns. Limited fisheries at Sherars Falls.
- OSMB/ Oregon State Marine Board – no report
- OSP/ Oregon State Police- Enforcement float from Warm Springs to Trout Creek. With contacts, some people did not know about fish closures. Have aircraft at their disposal to locate illegal campfires and/or spread of fires. With both Salmon and steelhead closures, less of a challenge with what people are fishing for or what they are allowed.
- ODFW/ Oregon Dept. of Fish and Wildlife – Cruellers out July 1<sup>st</sup> for 3 or 4 days. Will have a person at Heritage landing and Mack's Canyon road. Have Seasonal staff on board and will work upriver 4 – 10 days. Also working removal of skeleton weed and knapweed. Asked question regarding setting up/ drop off a wall tent for the work they are doing on the river (in weed management area) – do they need permission. It was shared that through administration rules the use of boats and campsites are allowed. Conclusion is that this is on ODFW land, so not an issue.
- Wasco Co. Sheriff Dept. - no report, but Scott shared that they have recruited 4 more deputies. Wondering about new law regarding checking for permits on the river, but BLM can still do that.
- ORPD/ Oregon Park and Recreation Dept. - Things are going well and going up river several times. Huge amount of back country use. Tracking vehicles- 28 last week with an average of 2 people per vehicle. Seeing growth in this use. Will have 3 cameras that only captures hiker, bikers and equestrian traffic. Have seasonal hiring and bringing on 2 and a 3<sup>rd</sup> person. Good staffing this year. Will float in May; compost toilets are working well. Will float every other week in June. Trail counters will be going into place in the coming month, to capture hiking and biking. With the fishing closures there has been a drop off in camping.

- BLM/ Bureau of Land Management –
  - Shared the trends for segment 1: 2018 numbers hit 550 a few times; 2019 hit 550 once; 2020 starting to see an increase in the 550 numbers and 2021 the trend is higher still with more increases; 2022 is looking like there will be increases and will look at later in the season. Seems that there is more time in segment 1 from segment 4 due to fishing. Will continue to watch trend data in the next coming years.
  - Already discussed residence in art program
  - It looks to be substantial fire season this year and BLM is preparing for a busy fire season.
  - Segment 4, use was still high in 2021 so will have limited entry in 2022
  - Lots of construction in Maupin area for the Bakeoven facilities. Moving forward, housing should be done by June. Having some issues getting Wasco Electric Coop to respond for electrical hook ups and permits, understand that they are probably slammed. This is the greatest barrier at this time for completion. Scott will work with BLM to see if cannot get this solved.
  - Completed SRP audit this year, appreciated help from all participants
  - Renewals and billings going well, will complete for 2022 season.
  - It was brought up to get names of outfitter/guides to law enforcement regarding who is still working on the river, who is operating and who is not.
  - Toilet removal: On segment 4 there is one more compost toilet. There are 6 more sites in Seg. 1 which will see if they need replacement or removal. Mike shared that in segment 1 and 4 there are assessment in those areas along with field surveys in the future.
  - Kat will be leaving to transfer to a position with the Willamette National Forest. Seasonal hiring is becoming more and more difficult. There will be 3 land based rangers and a new river manager. There will be one more in the coming months. New contracts have been drawn for floating maintenance of toilets as well as in drive in campgrounds.
  - Will coordinate with OPRD regarding floats for good coverage on the river.
  - New scat machine in Maupin City Park.
  - Sunny Hope introduced as lead ranger on the Deschutes and she will be based in Maupin. BLM also has 2 new positions with Kat leaving, one focusing on the day to day operations in Maupin and a landscape lead out of Prineville.

- Local Government – Scott thanked the Tribes for opening up campgrounds. Advised everyone of large solar plant going in Southern Wasco Co. This is being put in place between Bakeover road and Shaniko. He just wanted folks to be aware of more traffic. Also a reminder that Maupin Days is coming up May 21<sup>st</sup>.
- Bureau of Indian Affairs – Brenda had nothing specific to report, but wanted everyone know they are there to support the Tribes.

### **Public Comment**

- Rob shared that he was simply here to see what everyone's done. Doesn't have official long-term agreement regarding salvage/rescue, it has been temporary agreement. (BLM working on this); There was a recent incident on the river he responded to.
- Ron Walp asked about condition on Macks Canyon road. Jeff shared that it will be graded this spring, just need some moisture. Ron also said he was very pleased with the new fire rings, he was very positive about what he saw.

### **Final Discussion, Follow up, Action Items, Recommendations to Managers**

- No final discussions: Action items:
  - Discussion around fire closures/ language in Management Plan regarding change on dates by BLM.
  - Review of check off list for compliance on river on required equipment
  - Charter review
  - Rec.Govt. – ability to advise people to download permit prior to launch site
  - Follow up with Salvage/rescue contract
  - LE meeting
  - Tribal land openings

### **Next Meetings:**

- Managers meeting: May 20<sup>th</sup>, 10 am – 1pm ; Maupin Civic Center
- IIT/Managers meeting – Field Trip? August 12<sup>th</sup> / depends on fire season
- IIT meeting: October 21<sup>st</sup> 10 am – 1pm; Warm Springs Power and Water Enterprises
- Managers meeting: November 4<sup>th</sup> 10 am – 1 pm; Prineville BLM

**Meeting adjourned**