

Lower Deschutes River Managers Meeting Minutes

February 24, 2023

10 AM – 1 PM

BLM – Prineville Office

3050 NE 3rd St.

Prineville, Or.

ZOOM – Meeting ID: 864 9355 0960

Password: 750197

Chair –OSMB – Josh Mulhollem

*** Note to public participates. If you could please refrain from asking questions or comments until the public comment period, unless the IIT or Managers request input from you prior to making a decision on something. This 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. Thank you. Mary/facilitator.

10:00 AM **Welcome and introductions:** In attendance in person: Lisa Clark (BLM), Brad Houslet (CTWS), Tim Schwartz (OSP), Scott Green (OPRD), Mary

Fleischmann (Facilitator – note taker). Attending via ZOOM: Mike Millay (BLM), Josh Mulhollem (OSMB); Brenda Bremer (BIA), Jeff Kitchens (BLM).

Not in attendance: OPRD, Local Govt., Wasco Sheriff's Dept.

Review /Additions to agenda/ Approval of agenda and meeting minutes. (Approval of minutes from November 4th, 2022)

No additions or omissions on the agenda, agenda stands as written.

Motion made to approve minutes from the November 4, 2022 Managers meeting by Brad Houslet, second by Lisa. MOTION passed.

Old Business:

- Charter Review group will meet Feb. 16th. Jeff gave overview history regarding the creation of the charter which was first done in 2018. One key element is that there are intergovernmental orders that was not looked at initially when preparing the Charter. Charter

group needs to integrate that document into the charter. With the new updates, Jeff suggested that Managers will need to look at that document and have a discussion regarding what they are willing to do or not. It is not a fail, but some things may not be needed. Plan is to have Jeff work on document, run it by the charter committee and then it goes before the IIT to then pass along to the Manager group. Jeff shared that he has been hearing from other agencies all over the United States regarding establishing such a charter.” We are the first managing body to take something like this on” and so others are asking us about this. We’re an example.

- Continued conversation regarding transfer of permits from Segment 4 to Segment 1 - At this time there will be no major changes regarding the transferring of permits. Discussion at IIT meeting that to do this would be a huge challenge due to many issues, staffing, Rec. Gov. and there has only been one fish closures historically on the Lower Deschutes ever. Mike Millay discussed the history regarding transfer of permits from segment 4 to segment 1. To do this would be a heavy lift for BLM and well as making this work with Rec. Gov. The fishing situation when the lower section was closed to fishing due to low counts, which is what prompted commercial guides/outfitters to make the request, this situation has happened only once in 40 years. To take this on would be costly, BLM doesn’t have the man/woman power to deal with this and Rec. Gov. is not set up to deal with this either. More discussion regarding additional issues that could present themselves as to limited entry on a segment, etc. There would have to be a tracking system in place to again make sure that hoarding permits would not be a problem. At this time, there is no further need for discussion as it is not a priority and requires too much for all parties involved.

New Business:

- New chair for IIT – is ODFW (Jason Seals and Managers is OSMB (Josh Mulhollem) – This was shared for clarification.
- Presentation from Ben Kirsch, Attorney for Deschutes River Alliance? Have not heard from DRA, Mary has made several attempts but has not gotten a response. Unless DRA contacts us for a presentation, this is no longer on the agenda.
- Ecommerce solutions options – “Electronic payment methods” for drive-in campgrounds – Mike Millay gave an overview of this project. The BLM has been experiencing a continued and increased

vandalism and theft of the Iron Ranger fee boxes on the Lower Deschutes and Crooked River. Due to this BLM is looking at ways to have cash-less systems and hope to get them on board by this spring.

- Sanistar ROK (remote off-grid Kiosk) – this is an onsite swipe and pay system where information is downloaded to a special device. This is easy to install and is effective in remote areas or canyons. However it is expensive and requires people to have a credit card. Costs can range from \$6500 to \$10,000 per machine. Mike is looking into grants or ways to fund this.
- Rec.gov. Scan & Pay – this can be done online in advance for reservable sites, but the district doesn't currently have any. With this system, visitors could scan a QR code and pay using their phone. Once they get out into cell service, the information transfers to Rec.Gov. They would be given a confirmation number that can be written on the fee envelope and posted at the sites. The Scan & Pay system is a BLM approved system with Rec. Gov.
- The goal is thru these systems there would be better compliance rates as far as fees paid for camping. There will be a pilot project most likely tried at Trout Creek. As this thing rolls out there will be public notification on websites, press releases and email contacts to inform the public of this new opportunity. People may still choose to pay cash, but the hope is more people will go to cash – less. One of the additional pluses is that the manufacturer of the ROK resides in Sisters, Oregon so if issues arise or repairs are needed we have local support.
- New scanning available at Heritage for Moody Rapids and permits to the mouth – Scott Green shared that currently OPRD has Vendex machines on the East side of the river near campgrounds which people can buy boater passes, get receipts for ice and firewood. This doesn't allow for purchase of campsite permits. Campground sites are still either reservation or cash.
- David Spangler (OPRD), prior to reassignment, started a Deschutes River Usage Study. The question is whether the group wants this to be completed/continue. Need to look at costs: Mike and Jeff gave a brief history of this project which was started to try to capture the non-boater use on Segment 4 prior to implementing the all user fee. It is important to get this survey completed so the fee can go into effect. BLM was coordinating with OPRD but at this point it requires boots on the ground to talk with users, etc. On the eastside cameras were put in place to gather data. It got started but never got off the ground as of 2020. OPRD needs seasonal

personnel to move forward. Originally the plan was to get OSU on board to assist to formulate a good survey. Jeff shared what it would take a professor who sees the value in this project and willing to take it on and willing to do the work. Need a point person as this is labor intensive and will take 5 – 6 months. * Scott will check on this to get up to speed with this project and Mike and he will get together and sort this out.

- “Emergency Action Plan” for Happy Valley Dam – Brenda reported out that the Tribes are developing a safety plan regarding the Happy Valley Dam, which many people are not aware of. She brought it up to the group that she wanted some input as to protocol regarding if there is an emergency with the dam, such as a breach or other emergency which would impact the flow into the Deschutes. Tribes are the primary for monitoring the dam which is primarily used for irrigation purposes. Brad shared that any kind of emergency would be the same protocol as when there are fires in the river corridor. Lisa shared that BLM would want the emergency notifications as would State Parks and OSMB. Brenda has a meeting March 22nd to move forward with development of the safety plan.
- At IIT meeting, a question was raised in regards to rules for landowners on the Lower Deschutes having free permits to use the river, but the stipulations state that people have to live in the home. This does not allow, according to stipulations, that if grandchildren as an example, or adult children visiting parents/grandparents do not qualify to use these free permits. Question is if this can be amended or somehow changed or made clearer. Mike and Lisa reviewed the statute which is a state statute not a Federal statute which they have no jurisdiction over. The rules are very straight forward that it is homes on the river, primarily Segment 1 and Segment 2 and it is only those who reside on the property and family members who also reside on same property. It also means that the purpose of the permits is to float from point A to point B, which means you can’t float a whole section of the river. The initial purpose for these was for access for properties that were across the river from property. Question raised as to how many permits this entails, BLM believes the numbers are very low. Another question was raised if this impacts limited entry or data collected of users on the river. Again, the numbers are low and have no significant impact on the river. There will/may be some upset people, but BLM has not flexibility on this issue. Clarification or review of river salvage agreement with Imperial. Jeff and Lisa shared that currently there is a letter of authorization from

BLM incident to incident. There is more paperwork to be completed but it is complicated given rules for SRP's which this doesn't fall under those guide lines. There are various things to get straightened out. Kyle, Lisa, Mike and Jeff will work on this and bring to next Managers meeting.

- Digital hand out regarding the Inter-governmental cooperative management agreement... Charter is looking at what the agreement states and want all agencies to be aware of this and that it will be in the charter. Discussion is that Mary just wanted all agencies to read this and be aware of the agreement for further discussion when the Charter is completed.

Round Table Discussions and Updates

- Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs – Nothing new to share at this time, just plugging along.
- OSMP / Oregon State Marine Board – Josh shared that his focus right now is what is going in legislatively. Currently there is a bill to raise the aged for wearing lifejackets (PFD's) from 12 and under to 15 and under. It seems to be picking up some speed but he still is not sure if it will pass.
- OSP/ Oregon State Police – There will be the annual Law Enforcement meeting sometime in April. This is a way for all law enforcement to be on the same page with everything and figure out who is covering what and when available.
- ODFW/ Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife –Everyone is not available on this date. Updates are: 1) the summer steelhead forecast for 2023 to Bonneville Dam is one of the lowest on record. ODFW will monitor these returns beginning on July 1 at Bonneville Dam to determine if fishery restrictions are necessary as per ODFW's Deschutes River Steelhead Fishery Framework. 2) ODFW The Dalles staff will be conducting work on the river as part of the annual Redband Trout Monitoring Program. Work includes operation of a jet boat and electrofishing boat. Current dates for this work is Feb. 21, 28th and March 7th (at North Junction) and March 10 (below Trout Creek).
- Wasco Co. Sheriff Dept. – Lane will be in a county training and not available to attend this meeting. Wasco Co. Sheriff's Office has

cancelled our OSMB contract effective Feb. 1st, 2023. They have returned OSMB assets and are in the process of developing their own marine program to be more effective. They should have more deputies able to enforce marine laws and provide future patrols than by contracting with OSMB. Hoping to be up and running by May 1st. This may be adjusted if they run into purchasing issues with vendors for equipment. Will keep everyone up to date. Also, Steve Rodgers will be available this year for OPRD contract and have started working portions of the river already. If anyone has questions, please contact Lane.

- OPRD/ Oregon Park and Recreation Department – Scott reported out that Steve Memminger is retiring at the end of March, so he is on a HUGE learning curve. They are currently finalizing their float schedule for the John Day and the Lower Deschutes. Susan Bethers will be filling Steve’s position temporarily until it is filled.
- BLM/Bureau of Land Management – Lisa shared that finally staff has new quarters at the Bakeoven site and staff will move in on March 2nd. There will be an open house sometime in June. Mike shared that BLM is upgrading and creating new Kiosks at take out’s Put- ins. They are very excited as it will have information showing the river corridor, campsites, cash-less pay information and these will be consistent throughout the district. State office provided funds for this project.
- Local Government – no report
- BIA/ Bureau of Indian Affairs – nothing to add

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Final Discussion, Follow Up, Action Items

- Follow up with Charter completion. If you have any additions, please send to Jeff.
- Managers November meeting date was changed from the 10th to the 17th, still at BLM, Prineville.

- Lower Deschutes, Segment 4 survey. BLM and OPRD to report out.
- Follow up of progress with Cash-less system on drive- in campsites.
- Actual number of free boater passes for land owners on the Deschutes.

Next Meetings

- IIT May 5th 10 – 1 pm The Dalles, ODFW Office
- Managers May 19th 10 – 1pm Maupin City Hall
- August – field trip?
- IIT – November 3rd 10 – 1 pm Warm Springs Power and Water Enterprises
- Managers – November 17th 10 – 1 pm BLM Prineville Office.

Meeting adjourned. 12:15 pm