

Lower Deschutes River Managers Meeting Minutes

November 14, 2025
10 AM -1:00 PM

Prineville BLM
3050 NE 3rd
Prineville, Or. 97754

ZOOM: 858-2829-0322
Password: 034452

CHAIR: BLM – Scott Green

10:00 AM In attendance: Jason Seals (ODFW); Matt Davey (OPRD); Lane Magill (Wasco Sheriff); Alan Hanson (OSMB); Katie Gosses (BLM); Sara Gregory (ODFW); Ken Borchert (BIA); Jim Schwartz (OSP); Scott Hege (Local Govt.); Gabriel Rouseau (BLM- cartographer); Scott Green (OPRD); Brad Houslet (CTWS); Mary Fleischmann (Facilitator); There was no one from the public.

- Due to government closures the in -person meeting at BLM was canceled. Government opened up day before meeting, but zoom had already been set up.

Review/Additions to Agenda/ approval of Agenda:

- Addition to agenda is a presentation from BLM on new boater guide book.
- Motion made by Scott H. to approve agenda with addition; Second by Alan. **MOTION** passed.

Approval of meeting minutes from Managers Meeting on May 16th 2025

- Motion for approval of minutes from May 16th meeting made by Scott H, Second from Sara. **MOTION** passed.

Old Business:

- How is River Guide coming along? Gabriel and Katie from BLM gave PowerPoint presentation to group. Some of the highlights are:
 - Asked group to review guide that Mary sent out earlier for folks to take a look at as well at this presentation that if there are any glaring issues please bring to their attention. The plan is to get this printed by January. Deadline for feedback is December 15th. Katie and Gabe have looked at this so much, so might miss some things. Did send to guides to review with not hearing much back.
 - Ken B and Brad advised that Tribes will review and make comments but over-all the guide looks good. Will also check with Austin Smith with Tribal Natural Resources.
 - Scott Hege commented that this is an awesome job- fantastic. Likes the information regarding scouting rapids and how to navigate them. He would like to see even larger signage on maps about not running Sherars Falls – to really get folks to know to take out at Sandy Beach.
 - Gabe shared that sites have been vetted with GPS, with information about how many camps can take up sites. Gabe also did the John Day boater guide so this one utilizes many of the same qualities such as waterproof paper. Some additional information in the guide is how to use carbonite-signs, including adaptive friendly sites, rapid classification systems, seasonal flows, rules and regulations, fire restrictions, river etiquette, and safety information. Included is information regarding fish species, endangered species, botany/eco systems, dangerous

plants, wildlife, butterflies, rattle snakes and birds. There are also distance tables (above the falls and below the falls) as well as geology info. The maps cover 7 ½ miles (1 inch to 1 mile). The guide lets people know about seasonal closures for climbing at Trout Creek. There are symbols that relate back to Wild and Scenic River Act. Also included is the history of the railroad along the river. Again, Gabe and Katie tried to be all inclusive with information. The goal is for this guide to also have a 4-to-6-year shelf life.

- Lane's feedback is that this is a great job. Did mention that on page 40 and 44 they don't have river mile in titles. A concern is that PFD wearing requirements can change from year to year due to river conditions and flows, so some language about checking/talking with local guides is suggested as well as any information regarding river changes. There are concerns regarding White River as a case example. With Avanza maps that people can use instead of the guide, these changes can be made quickly.
- Jason suggested having a list of what boaters are going to need, the various permits – a check list. Pg. 5 camping -allowed in designated sites? BLM sites. Segment 1 and 3 specific, segment 4 camp where you want. Information regarding fishing and hunting, regulations change with information about link to ODFW. Seasonal flows, general info regarding flows and how unique the Deschutes is with fairly stable flows. Jason felt info on Fish and Wildlife could be better, bolster native fish info, pictures of native fish, similar to the bird's section. Typo on Pg. 57 with Two "w" s for wildlife.
- Question about price point of John Day guide is \$14.00m need to get the guide out to vendors which can be a challenge. Will distribute to guides/outfitters and retailers. Also, information about the upper river area through Warm Springs regarding ownership, camping locations, need for tribal permit for fishing on Tribal lands before Trout Creek.

- Continuation of IIT as placeholder discussion. IIT only meets when Managers have a needed project. An example is if there is a concern brought to Managers from the public, IIT may be tasked with looking into the matter and make recommendations to the Managers.

New Business:

- Some suggestions or ideas in the coming season/year that IIT might be asked to take on as a task are: Work on finalizing carsonite-signs. BLM is putting in placements. ODFW and BLM have increased maintenance of campsites which input from IIT might be helpful. There are challenges regarding funding for these signs as well as folks pulling them out of the ground. There might also be a rolling project of adding some sites thru NEPA.
- How are agencies impacted with shut-downs? (If the shut-down is over, what does catch up look like?) Playing catch up with lots of project work that they were unable to get to. Need to get payments to OPRD and waiting on funds then will get to OPRD. Missed weather window for some projects and need to get composting toilets in Segment 4 so will reach out to OPRD.
- How to keep public informed of meeting? Jeff used to have a “Friends of” list that he sent out. Not everyone goes to website but when interested either contact Scott H or Lisa. Suggestions how to deal with this. Mary doesn’t have the list, nor the guide and outfitters list. If posted in newspaper – where would that be posted? Group discussion of how best to get the meeting information out to the public and interested parties. One suggestion is announcements at the Maupin City Hall meetings or their newsletter. Possibly at City Council meetings? REC.Gov might be another avenue. Katie shared that there should be the ability to put some kind of reader on the

website for when people apply for permits – it's a start. This would have a wider distribution. This could be done monthly.

- New chairs for 2026:
 - Managers: ODFW
 - IIT: BIA (Ken is acting superintendent- CWTS stepped up as fill in.)

Round Table:

- Confederated Tribes of Warm Spring: Not a lot going on. Fall Chinook Season will be going into full speed ahead with Tribes doing carcass collections.
- OSMB: Alan shared that OSMB is facing some challenges right now. There are legislative fee increases for waterway access fee which impacts aquatic species stations. There are groups that want to eliminate these funds and do not understand that these funds help with accessibility to waterways, besides the aquatic species stations. Alan asked that if folks talk about this, the issue is understanding what the funds go to, the message is known but needs to get more of the word out. People do not understand what they can lose. 2019 all nonmotorized float devices greater than 10 ft. paid the fee, now the exemption has gone away. The fee's pay for access facilities, boat ramps, parking, etc. The new fee goes into effect this year. Grants are also offered from these funds for bathrooms and other amenities. Permits can be transferred to other float/boating equipment. Important to educate more.
- ODFW: Finished crewel stations on segment 4. Steelhead trap ended end of October. Good fishing this year. Fall Chinook monitoring three times a week from Warm Springs to the mouth of the river. There will be helicopter wildlife flights at end of month (November) to early December. Jetboat monitoring goes to January 1st Ish. There will be trout monitoring February and March at North Junction. Winter will

Have continued campsite improvements and maintenance in segment 4.

- Wasco Sheriff: Steve is still working on the river. Not much to report on criminal end of things. Things have been beneficial with pay stations and only one broken into at White River. If there are any public safety concerns, just reach out.
- OPRD: Matt shared that there will be new implementation of parking fees at Heritage with another phase in at Warm Springs in the future. OPRD is in transition with Director moving to another department. There was a question about overnight parking or trailhead parking fees. Fees are just for parking- Heritage Landing. Can have an annual pass and day pass. Need more education as this could impact those who have their vehicles shuttled to Heritage from floating down the river. Enforcement issues, boater pass and now parking pass? Fees have raised from \$5 to \$10 per day. The Oregon State Park Annual Pass is \$60. There will be some meetings coming up to have comments reviewed. Question was asked if this information can be put on Rec.Gov for floaters to be aware of new fees. Scott G. shared that it has been a busy summer thru October and will be doing maintenance projects over the winter. OPRD did have training of how to deal with/prepare for wildfires. Currently doing rehab on fire areas. Last float was last week with toilets being cleaned. Purchased toilets with Davidson Flats getting a composter toilet. It separates liquids from solids. Will installed next season.
- BLM: Mary read out Lisa's report/ Will be extending advertisement for new guides/outfitters on the Lower Deschutes until Dec. 15 2025. Will get a media release out as soon as they can. BLM had to cut back on rec work during shut down and only did limited fee collection/toilet paper replacement. Will get rec folks out to do site inventories and see what they need to do. Still experiencing a hiring freeze- unknown when/if they will be able to hire seasonal or fill permanent positions. Meanwhile in the middle of painting bathrooms and keeping public

Informed of what's being shut down. Have a grant for float-in toilets which will be executed in 2027. Boater passes sold 2025 thru August was 8,759 with 52,000 plus boaters. There were 91,047 user days. August was slower than July. * Katie will work on a more comprehensive report when she is able to get the information*. Meanwhile got back to work yesterday, collecting fees and doing minimal maintenance.

- Local Government: Scott shared there is a major solar project taking place on Bake Oven Road across from the previous solar project, which might be in play this season. Looking at temporary housing to be at site so not to impact Maupin and surrounding area for campsites and motels. This project may start the coming season or the next. This will be on Hwy 197 and again it is HUGE. * Scott brought up concerns regarding how to get word out to the public in regards to Managers meetings and locations. His concern is that there is state requirement for public meetings. Asked about the Interested party list which Jeff had developed but currently BLM doesn't have that list. Maybe need to get more info out to media how to find out about the meetings. PSAs? There used to be more people attending meetings and numbers are down. As previously shared – BLM is looking into and possibly a PSA can go out to media at beginning of season to direct folks where to get information.
- BIA: Ken had nothing to add. Did share that the Boater Guide looks excellent.
- OSP: No report.

Public comment:

No public input.

Final Discussions, Follow-up, Action Items

- Set up 2026 Managers meetings:
 - February, with IIT meeting 2 weeks prior to Managers
 - May, with IIT meeting 2 weeks prior to Managers
 - November, with IIT meeting 2 weeks prior to Managers
 - If needed both groups can meet at additional times as needed.
- Tentative meeting places and dates (Mary will confirm locations after January 1st).
 - February 6th 10 am – 1pm at Warm Springs Enterprises
 - May 8th 10 am – 1pm ODFW Office, The Dalles
 - November 13th 10 am – 1pm BLM Office, Prineville
- ACTION ITEM: Further discussion regarding IIT jobs for coming year- anything that needs to be investigated, find out information about or on the ground work.

MEETING ADJOURNED:

12:20 PM meeting adjourned.