

Lower Deschutes River Managers Meeting Minutes

February 6, 2026

10 AM -1:00 PM

Warm Springs Power and Water Enterprises

5180 Jackson Trail Road

Warm Springs, Or. 97761

ZOOM: 845 9738 0533

Password: 757739

CHAIR: BLM – Sara Gregory/ ODFW

10:00 AM In attendance: Scott Green (OPRD); Mike Millay (BLM); Sara Gregory (ODFW); Matt Davey (OPRD); Alan Hanson (OSMB); Lane Magil (Wasco Co. Sheriff); Kevin Weldon (BLM); Jason Seals (ODFW); Robert Compton (BIA); Mary Fleischmann (Facilitator)
Public: Keith Christianson

Review/Additions to Agenda/ approval of Agenda:

Motion Made: to accept agenda as it is; Motion made by Scott Green, 2nd by Matt Davey. Motion passed.

Approval of meeting minutes from Managers Meeting on November 14, 2025

Motion Made: to approve meeting minutes from November 14, 2025
Motion made by Matt Davey, 2nd by Kevin Weldon – Motion passed.

Old Business:

- Status of River Guide/ did people get their edits in on time? What is time frame for publication? Anything else needed? - Guide is in its final review and needs to be approved through the state office. Greatly appreciated all the valuable feedback from everyone. BLM really luck to have Gabe available as the cartographer to complete this project and at this point are a year ahead of schedule. Look to have printing done in the spring – both digital and hard copy. Looking at QR code where folks can use Avenza on their phones. If this is approved by state office, it will go immediately for print as funds have been set aside for this project.
- Boater numbers from last year – Overall seasonal targets not met, hit daily targets just a few times. No need for changes in target numbers. Targets for each segment has a cap. The focus this year was on seasonal targets. Discussion about amendment to targets happened in 2007. Trends are slightly upward. Fishing creates variable issues when it comes to permit numbers. There was fishing closure in 2021 and 2022. (* See attached copies of boater permit info).
- Annual Pass – Discussion looked at the numbers of annual passes sold which has dropped significantly. Question raised if the annual pass program should continue. BLM doesn't mind doing it, folks just have to contact the office. Question regarding if there is a benefit? Will keep on the radar. Based on local folks, possibly the passes are prohibitive for anglers due to restrictions regarding when they can be used. Keith (public) shared that Segment 3 doesn't allow seasonal passes despite permits below targets. Wondering about more enhancement for seasonal passes, the current seasonal situation doesn't make sense. What drives targets? While opening this up would mean more user fee's which could help with grading of road and other amenities – it could increase more dollars but would it actually change the annual pass numbers? Overall, all of this would

require an amendment change and capacity and resources would be a huge lift for agencies.

Further discussion regarding revision cycles. These are not looked at very often and means work within adjustment of the River Management Plan. The process is very BIG! Again, discussion went back to if having only 2 annual passes is worth continuation of the program. BLM will continue to look at it.

Jason (ODFW) is wondering how everything went down in Segment 4. Segment 3 never decreased at due limitations and Segment 4 decreased due to higher percentage and was reduced by 10% until a reasonable limit was set. There was a pause on reductions between 2007 and 2010. BLM will look at historical information on Segment 4 (seasonal) to find out about last adjustment which we believe happened in 2017. Mary will also look at what archives she has regarding decisions on these changes. Next year it is looking like fishing will be good and so permits should be filled again. Again, the Lower Deschutes is a very complex river management plan. Guides regulate themselves and permits help us getting real numbers regarding use, which many rivers are not able to capture this information. The permit system helps to get real numbers. (number of users, impacts on the resource, and how to continue to protect the resource).

- Follow-up with work on getting meeting info on REC.gov or other websites regarding when and where meetings are happening. Discussion of why using REC.gov is not going to solve our issues with reaching out the public. BLM can do a banner but really want to use that more so for emergency closures, hazards, alerts, and safety concerns. This is extremely challenging and REC.gov is not the best option. Looking at possibilities of QR codes at Kiosks to connect with the OPRD website regarding when meetings are happening. Also looking at getting information to outfitter/guides that they can post on their websites. Also, discussion about adding QR code or some information that can be added to boater pass... this is all a work in progress...everyone wants to make

sure, that the public has a way to make access to when meetings are happening.

New Business:

- Suggestions or ideas of anything IIT – Will discuss at end of meeting.
- Reminder of New chairs for 2026
 - Managers - Sara/ ODFW
 - IIT: BIA (Robert is acting superintendent – CWTS will step up to fill in when/if necessary

Round Table:

- Confederated Tribe of Warm Springs – No report
- OSMB- Primarily focused on the Waterway Access passes. It's very controversial and working on media outreach. The pass costs \$20 annually which \$8 goes to ODFW to deal with the zebra mussel issues at check points with boats and \$12 going to waterway access points and maintenance of these areas. Nothing goes into the general budget. Areas locally getting funding are the Miller Landing in Bend. OSMB has raised 4 million dollars that are granted to waterway access projects. The permits are transferable (from one boat to another) and youth under 14 are exempt. Questions raised about the invasive species permit and how that is folded into the waterways access permit. Out of state folks pay more, they all need invasive species permit for motorized boats. Any wild and Scenic River Ways which require a boater pass are exempt, such as Deschutes and John Day. All other state waterways require the waterway access pass. The other Invasive Species permit is folded into the Waterway Access Pass.

- ODFW- The annual trout sampling will happen at the end of the month (February). They will have jetboats and the electrofishing. If there are question of their presence on the water contact ODFW. Blackberry removal project which is an application for technical assistance grant to OWEB, which is a separate application. The Wasco SWCD is the project sponsor, with BLM, ODFW and the Cooperative Weed Management area program. The Jones Canyon Technical Assistance Grant to fix the ford at Jones Canyon is an application to OWEB for a TA Grant, with the Sherman SWCD being the project sponsor. BLM and ODFW are partners.

Final estimates for Fall Chinook in 2025 were highest estimates on record. 31,500 adults escaped to Deschutes.

Culvert passage problem at Lower Ferry Canyon- Railroad has agreement with Wasco Electric to maintain lines next Old BLM building that burnt, there's a problem with the road and crossing. Railroad took care of everything and put in illegal pipes. ODFW jerked pipes out. This an ongoing issue for BLM regarding the crossing and dealing with Railroad and Wasco Electric. BLM is looking how to improve the crossing so it meets fish passage. Wasco Electric not too concerned about having crossing as there are other ways to get in there.

- Wasco Sheriff- Getting ready for Spring and Summer. Working on the annual April law enforcement meeting. Will have folks 4 days a week between Maupin and Scherar. Will see more of Steve Rodgers at meetings and on the river. Lane just became President of the State Sheriff's Association, so that will keep him pretty busy. Need to review who and when BLM rangers come on board.

- OPRD- Have changed the daily permits at Heritage Landing. Holding off on parking permits as difficult to enforce and has impacts on Shuttle of vehicles who float segments 3 and 4 to mouth. There are issues on the other side of Heritage with boat ramps being unusable due to sediment collecting, leaves little flexibility on the river. Need a permit to allow the removal of 23 yards only. The other issue is that the only time this can be done is Sept./October. ODFW shared will help move forward. Toilet Tech's purchased and are sitting at the shop. Still need to have archaeologist oversee project. They need cultural clearance, which BLM shared that they can help with that. Time frame is to have toilets in by next season. NEPA has been cleared. There will be 2 units put in at Davidson Flat.
- BLM- Talked about staffing on the river this year. There a total of 7 seasonals for the entire district of which only 3 will be on the Deschutes, the rest goes to other locations. They are only allocated so many spots. Lots of vacancies with seasonals in fluctuation. It's going to be challenging as BLM can only do what they can do. Plan to have floats every weekend like they did last year.
Contracts= float in for toilet cleanups, toilet pumping and garbage. Last year dropped development and paired down contracts only for heavy season use due to costs. At the end of fiscal year 2025, due to being conservative with funds there are actually some left over funds going into 2026. Contracts are covered for this year and due to 1232 Key money from Feds from last year savings were able to do a huge purchase of concrete picnic tables (60) as well as fire rings. 50 will go to Maupin and 10 for the John Day River. There some agreements that didn't go thru last year which saved money. The perspective process for SRP's which includes 5 new guided fishing operators. They are allowed 5% new potential SRP's that were postponed due to furlough so following up. Beth Harwood handles all the SRP's. SRP's are on the John Day, Crooked and there are 115 on the Lower Deschutes.

1232 funds are from boater passes, campground fee's as well as SRP's fees (3% of their total). There was \$115,000 collected from guides and outfitters. * There are some changes coming for SRP's. The Title 3 Explore Act, has new categories which are slightly different and new language is in the works. There are 8 categories (used to be 3 or 4) and based on the number and activity type will decide what triggers an SRP. OPRD is updating their SRP's and will at BLM's as they work on theirs. With a grant from OSMP they have been able to improve Kiosks at all drive-in campsites. They explain the rules, how to use the ROK, regulations, etc. This has been a huge facelift on the river. They are putting in a new grant for 2 composite toilets at Whitehorse and Whiskey Dick. Already have NEPA clearance.

Already discussed blackberry removal projects that they are working on with ODFW. Reviewing grazing permit renewals on what areas on the Deschutes where there might be impacts and concerns regarding fish. Will do a couple of allotments at a time instead of a bunch all at one time.

BLM has a proposed EA that is integrated for weed maintenance, treatments and aquatics. There are 10 new herbicides and need to analyze the impacts and how to use. Trout Creek pavement project that Jefferson County Dept. of Transportation is working on. They would pave all the way from the highway up to the campsite (not the ramp). BLM shared that they told Jefferson Co. that the road needs to remain open without closures during peak season. Design phase should be complete by 2027

- Local Government – No report
- BIA- No report. Ken is new to this group and so still trying to get up to speed. Wanted to know how it is that BIA is part of this group. Would refer to Brad Houslet with CTWS to give him more information.

- OSP- Tim Schwartz was ill. He did send report to Mary that Law Enforcement meeting has been scheduled for April 3rd at Maupin City Hall. Meeting will run from 9 – 11 am and then follow from 11 – 11:30 meeting with guides and outfitters.

Public comment:

- Keith Christianson asked about the culver that was full at Box Elder Canyon. BLM believes that it has been taken care of but will follow -up. He asked about the grazing allotments as his family has an allotment. He was given information of who to contact. BLM shared that their checking on allotments hasn't been done in awhile so need check them out, who are the owners and get payment updates. Need to know who the current owners are.

MM

Final Discussions, Follow-up, Action Items

- **ACTION ITEM:** Mary followed up with seeing if she had any archives from 2007 – 2010 regarding reductions in boater permits on Segment 4. All her archives/ meeting notes were given to Jeff to have entered into the archives which she believes the OPRD website stores.
- **ACTION ITEM:** Mary set up Zoom meeting for IIT members for April th 17th at 10 AM to discuss request from BLM and projects they want to focus their efforts on this year. This should be a short meeting. ZOOM Information: 851-1618-8002 - password 586278
- Jason with ODFW wanted to point out that it is status quo with keep up of campsites on Segment 4. Mostly want to keep campsites visible. There is question regarding improvements and use of new sites. Some of this is happening but the biggest issue is lack of

- shade. There is potential that there will be more use once shade has regrown.
- Future Managers Meetings:
 - May 8th 10 am – 1pm ODFW Office, The Dalles
 - November 13th - 10 am – 1pm BLM Office, Prineville

Meeting Adjourned 12:17 PM