

Lower Deschutes River Managers Meeting Minutes

February 7, 2025

10 AM -12 Noon

Warm Springs Power and Water Enterprises

5180 Jackson Trail Road

Warm Springs, Or. 97761

ZOOM: 810 2634 6081

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10:00 AM In attendance: Brad Houslet (CTWS); Scott Green (OPRD); Bodie Shaw (BIA); Lisa Clark (BLM); Mike Millay (BLM); Ross Kihs (OPRD); Jason Seals (ODFW); Lane Magill (Wasco Sheriff); Sara Gregory (ODFW); Tim Schwartz (OSP); Alan Hanson (OSMB); Mary Fleischmann (Facilitator); Keith Christenson (Public at large).

Review/Additions to Agenda/ approval of Agenda:

No additions to agenda. MOTION made to approve Agenda, made by Brad, second by Lisa. MOTION passed.

Approval of meeting minutes from Managers Meeting on November 8th, 2024.

Mary needs to correct chair rotation for IIT meetings for coming years. Manager rotation is correct. Need to also make those corrections in the Charter.

Motion made by Brad to Approve minutes with corrections; Lisa 2nd. MOTION passed.

Old Business:

- Reviewed recommendations from the IIT for projects for 2025 – needed to review since it has been several months since Managers have met and IIT has not met yet this year.
- Continued work on new Deschutes River Guide

- Website- improvements being made to make it easier for the public. Scott shared there is a new person on board who deals with website.
- Mary is cleaning up contact lists – who is on what group and what needed to be put on the website for contact information.

New Business:

- Mary will send out email reminder to get personnel updates and send to members.
- Charter Review -Brad send some fine tuning with language and few other clarification/amendments to Lisa to clean up the Charter. Mary will send Lisa corrections regarding chair rotations.
 - MOTION made by Brad to accept Charter, 2nd by Lisa. MOTION passed. Mary will send Charter to OPRD once completed to have on website for the public to have access to.
- Mary has been approved to continue this year as facilitator. Thanks to OPRD finding a way to stream-line this.

Round Table:

- Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs: Wrapping up accounts. Not much of anything upcoming. Will have two new IIT members and will get information to Mary. Looking at grants and agreement, moving forward with Federal Contracts. There are a few agreements on hold but Tribes are moving forward. Brad shared that there will be 3 conservation officers so there will be greater presence on river and at Scherars. Will primarily be on the reservation but can with other areas.
- OSMB: Alan shared that OSMB is very busy with legislative issues right now. On Monday there will be a hearing on HB 2982 introduced by State Rep. Helm. This bill addressed increased waterway access permits for nonmotorized boats/paddle boards/ kayaks, etc. that are under 10 feet. Currently they are not required to get this permit. The funds from these permits go into the aquatic invasive species funds. From these funds there will be grants made available that can benefit repair/maintenance or building boat ramps among many other things.

Funds primarily go to ODFW, but Portland State does water samples for mussels and OSP/Malheur County does enforcement at check stations for boats that could be bringing mussels to our waters/lakes/rivers, etc. The funds also go to education of the public at boater events. Looking at law enforcement contracts – the Boater Safety Advocate address the water access permits. Alan shared that currently they have about 20% and \$15 going to OSMB. Question was brought up about putting this information into the boater guide – problem is that things change so suggestion was possibly a barcode that people can go to for more information. Future project is to look at individual waterways and see what rivers are salmon habitat and other fish species. Working with ODFW about rating rivers regarding when restrictions might be needed re: fish habitat speed limits on lakes etc. This would be stream by stream as want to look at healthy and safe waterways and also look at environmental impacts.

- ODFW: Jason shared there are no budget impacts or contract impacts, everything appears to be stable at this time. Seasonals are hired. There will be crewels at Sherars, Macks and Heritage as well at the traps at Sherars. Completed work on Adult Fall Chinook. It was good for 2025 at 16,500 estimates with the total estimate at 43,577 which is the highest ever. Jacks' estimates were 27,000 which is more than adults. More fish this year is still questionable. Count above Sherars is at 6 or 7,000. Question brought up about DRI (Deschutes River Initiative) which their perspective has been the same since 2010 but they are doing a bigger push via media. Nothing has changed with agencies approach to their complaints. Sara discussed the Big Horn Sheep project. BLM helped gather they in Segment 4 by helicopter and transported to Nevada. They targeted Rams but got a lot of Ewes. Scott Green said that folks at Heritage were pretty impressed with the project.
- Wasco Sheriff: Lane shared that OPRD has contract with officers on Deschutes. They have put schedules together with patrol. January 1st, they have a permanent South County resident deputy which they received with the Commissioners support. Currently one deputy short for fall staffing. Steve Rodgers is still around and currently in Joseph Oregon. BLM deputization is needed and have to have a conversation as need to move in different direction. This will not affect

the relationship between Sheriff Department and BLM but need to change what BLM can and can't do; (Fed. IGA's in Oregon and there is not indemnify BLM). Biggest concern is impacts on how BLM is able to respond. Lane and Lisa will talk later about how to make this work.

- OPRD: Ross discussed that his focus is right now with legislation session. Budget is not too bad but it's not great. They are taking Park properties and giving them to Tribes as a partnership. Scott shared that ending towards biennium spending. Have full ranger at this time; bringing in seasonals which for entire unit is 5. There will be a new river ranger on the river. The discussion with the Park Commission regard landowner passes and river access, nothing has changed at this time. BLM shared they have money for OPRD from river permits and want to get to them. Scott shared that things were sent to State and somehow have got bogged down or no response. BLM and OPRD will get this sorted out.
- BLM: Budget, need to raise camping fee's but currently are collecting data and need to get public input. Currently there is no Federal registration for announcements so RAC is not able to have meetings and review these kinds of issues. Lisa thinks that maybe a decision was made or addressed at a previous RAC meeting regarding increasing camping fee's – they are looking into this and Mary happens to be a member of RAC and will review her meeting minutes to see if in fact that was brought up and addressed. If the decision was made before than BLM can move forward – they really need to increase camping fees to cover costs on the river and over-all at this time. There is no set budget at this time but are looking at an 8 -20% decrease and don't know right now what areas in the BLM budget would be impacted. There is a hiring freeze and so no hiring for seasonals for now. Hiring wildfire personnel and not sure if need to readvertise. Biggest issue right now is to get the campground fee pushed. There will be rooms available at Bake Oven for visiting agencies if they need a place to stay while working. (Mary suggested renting the rooms out- just kidding). BLM acknowledges that the road to Mecca Flats is terrible and needs to be rebuilt as it beyond just to keep grading and they are not able to do anymore maintenance. Currently they have Sonni, Kati, and JD as permanent. The ROKS

have had an increase of 20 -30% increase of compliance and had one ROK vandalized. (Might have thought could get credit card information but that is not available breaking into a ROK). Sonni is working on Lower River contracts and they have cancelled drive-in clean-up and maintenance but Float in contracts is being kept. She is also working on interpretive information at Depot House and keeping the Jr. Ranger program. BLM has been able to hire a local teacher assistant at Depot House to meet with the public. New issue is campground signs being stolen. Katie is working with local cartographer, revamping Kiosk signs to clean them up and have more pertinent information on them. With a grant from OSMB this will help with signage. Budget could impact weed management, and possibly fish bio/hydro. Jones Canyon needs to have better fish passage which might require a bridge (Segment 3). There has also been an issue of a sink hole. There has been a request for floats between Wapinitia and take out at Nina for groups just wanting a short, mellow float. There are some outfitters/guides who were grandfathered in to alleviate crowding at Harpham but these new folks are not part of that. They are paying outfitters to be able to do these launches. Annual outfitters/guides meeting is March 21st from 10 am to noon. Main roads had grading done in the fall of 2024. There have been incidents of rocks coming down but moved things on both sides of the road. Jason brought up concerns with the Pine Tree take-out for ODFW or anyone with motorized boats in this area. It is a nightmare and is difficult to get out as the sandbar has built up and goes out and drops off. It is also really fast to get into this spot. Once you back up trailer to get your boat, can't get out. BLM will look at this. While budgets are not there for BLM regarding weed maintenance, they are working with counties. Also looking at areas of wildrye which will be a focus but still depends on budget, capacity, and timing. Looking at potentially buying a masturgator and otherwise looking at hand spraying. Looking at issues at Trout Creek regarding launch sites. There is an area that could be developed for nonmotorized launches but not good for drift boats. Continue to have issues with speed issues on the road to Trout Creek. Jefferson County has gotten some funding to improve the road, but that might not help with speed

concerns. For BLM funds have never been this low before for the work they do on the river corridor.

- Local Government: Scott shared that they now have one new Commissioner. He currently is still assigned to the Lower Deschutes but he is looking at a transition plan as he will be retiring at some point. He is also talking with other counties to see if there is anyone from the other partner counties who have an interest or ideas how to stay involved.
- BIA: Bodie shared that there is a line officer position which has been advertised for the 3rd time. He is looking at retiring, so looking at new folks who will rotate. A new regional director has been hired – Dan Galvin. Do not know how long freeze will be and adjusting labor forces. There are lots of unknowns regarding shared finances.
- OSP: Tim shared there was a regional restructuring with some overlap with the Eastern area. New Law Enforcement (Lt. Josh Schnagel). Currently his territory is Crook Co., Deschutes Co., Jefferson Co., and northern Klamath Co. The 5th annual LE meeting will happen in Maupin, date to be determined but most likely sometime in April. Looking at memo for enforcement out of Pine Creek. Need to check anglers on Warm Springs, but need authority so need an MOU. Will coordinate float with law enforcement on the river.

Public comment:

Keith Christenson commented that he initially tried to find out about the upcoming meeting but found nothing on the website, but then returned and did find the needed information. Expressed it would be great to have a longer time line. Mary explained that she can't plan locations until the 2nd week of January as many facilities don't have their new year calendars set up. It was decided that in the fall when we do have dates set, we can at best post the dates with further information to be determined. Keith also expressed that there is another area in segment 3 that need to be looked at around Box Elder which is 3 miles from Macks which is clogged.

Final Discussions, Follow-up, Action Items

- Field trip- Looking at possibilities that will be decided/dialed in at a later time. Currently looking at again Segment 1 to look at 10 campsites that could be created via category exclusions, also looking at work being done on Segment 4 regarding cleanups and potential campsites. Group thinking maybe a weekend float to have contact with the public and maybe an overnight. Scott H stated he is interested, there is interest just need more time to plan.
- Discussion regarding looking at QR codes on Kiosk's with information that is important for folks to know about and explore but recognize that codes and other things change with time.
- IIT – we are keeping as a placeholder as currently don't have any specifics for them to work on or make recommendations until we know what budgets are going to be.
- NEXT MANAGERS MEETING: May 16th at ODFW/ The Dalles

MEETING ADJOURNED: 12:06 PM

**Mary will send out a separate sheet with Managers and IIT Chair rotations.