



# Oregon Recreation Trails Advisory Council

## Minutes

Friday, April 19, 2019  
9:00 AM – 5:00 PM  
Tamastlikt Cultural Institute  
47106 Wildhorse Blvd  
Pendleton, OR 97801

**Attendance:** Lauralee Svendsgaard, Coastal Representative  
Skyler Archibald, Coastal Representative  
Jim Thayer, District 1  
Joe Kresse, District 2 (Vice Chair)  
Robert Spurlock, District 3 (Chair)  
Rod Sell, District 4  
Del Scharffenberg, District 5

**OPRD Staff:** Jodi Bellefeuille, Holly Emery, Jan Hunt

**Other Attendees:** Greg Brown, Blue Mountain Land Trust; Mike Denny, Walla Walla Community Council; Mark Miller, Oregon State Parks; Ben Walker, Umatilla National Forest; Andy Steel, Umatilla National Forest; Jon Campbell, Walla Walla Community Council; Mary Campbell, Walla Walla Community Council; Andrea Weckmueller-Behringer, Walla Walla Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization; Teresa Penninger, Oregon Department of Transportation Region 5; Larry Fetter, City of Hermiston; Bob Waldher, Umatilla County Planning; Sean Chamber, Union County Parks; Eric Greenwall, Wallowa Land Trust; Amy Linn, Umatilla National Forest; Anita Metlen, Railrider Cycling; Mavis Hartz, Cycle Works; Sheryl Bates, Heppner Chamber of Commerce; Penny Arentsen, Joseph Branch Trail; Matt Rippee, Oregon State Parks; Bobbie Conner, Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation; Jennifer Karson Engum, Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation

**Agenda Item:** January 2019 Minutes **(Action)**  
**Presented by:** Robert Spurlock

The vote was delayed until after lunch.

## Public Presentations

**Agenda Item:** Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation’s Atlas Project **(Information)**  
**Presented by:** Bobbie Conner

Presentation was an overview of the book Caw Pawa Laakni /They Are Not Forgotten. The book is an atlas of Native place names and interactions between a homeland and its people. To create this historical and cultural atlas of the Cayuse, Umatilla, and Walla Walla homeland, which spans the Columbia River and its tributaries from southeastern Washington to northeastern Oregon, ethnographic, traditional, and institutional knowledge was gathered together and



incorporated into a GIS database to produce customized maps that present this knowledge. The book and database project demonstrate the optimism that if the information is available, names and historical record will not disappear with the generations.

**Questions/Comments:**

What does it mean that a language is extinct?

- We have a dictionary of about 400 Cayuse words. The challenge is that we don't have a pronunciation guide. For example, Lewis and Clark's documentation of the language shows they would use an "r" in place of sounds they didn't have context for, when there was no "r" sound in the language. Historians need to unpack this information carefully. Missionaries used Nez Perce resulting in diminished use of Cayuse.

You speak of the place names being valuable artifacts, what about the trails and routes connecting those places?

- Most have become highways. Before the modern designation of these roads or trails, they were travel routes and animal trails. What can help today is for natural resource agencies to document what resources they observe at those places today and the information can be added into the mapping database, giving contemporary use when the information is reprinted and used by the cultural resource protection program. The ecosystem knowledge along those trails and places is critical.

Are there programs in school that pass this information on?

- The tribal charter school is teaching it. Some families use the book to teach their children at home and when they visit these places.

A question was asked about trails in a specific wilderness area. Would there be value to label them appropriately if they have historical importance?

- Many of those historic trails have been obliterated by growth and underbrush.
- The ability to do trail management or conservation can be prohibitive. Part of protecting the area is leaving it alone.
- Perpetuating the knowledge is important but there are arguments on both sides about how to protect those areas and whether recreational trail development is appropriate.

In the La Grande ranger district is a trail named Squaw Creek, are there opportunities for the Forest Service to work with CTUIR to rename those places?

- Oregon's legislature passed a law in 2000/2001 to remove "Squaw" from any public place names. In 2009 CTUIR delivered a list of 48 proposed names to the Oregon Geographic Names Board. More than half of those names or alternates have been approved and others have been hung up in the court of public opinion. Some names have already been changed but may not have been incorporated into the Geographic Names Information Systems database. Signage has been removed in some places but the infrastructure replacement is behind.

**Agenda Item:** Oregon State Parks Blue Mountain Management Unit

**(Information)**

**Presented by:** Mark Miller

An overview was provided of the existing and planned trails in Oregon State Parks' Blue Mountain Management Unit. Parks or other sites in the unit include Emigrant Springs, Blue Mt. Corridor, Hat Rock, Battle Mountain, Ukiah-Dale, Red Bridge, Hilgard Junction, and Catherine Creek. A master planning process is underway and State Parks is looking for additional advisory committee members. If anyone is interested, they can contact Mark Miller, Park Manager, or Ian Matthews, OPRD Park Planner.

**Questions/Comments:**

There has been a lot of talk in the last few years about creating a trail system for the Blue Mountains, some of which



would go through State Parks, as well as Forest Service and BLM. Is State Parks able to connect to that trail system should it come to fruition?

- It would depend on location of the route. If State Park land would be within the corridor, we could be part of the discussion.

Is it feasible for people to take a multi-day trip in the area, similar to hut-to-hut systems?

- A model like that is feasible. Travel Oregon is looking at these models as part of their Signature Trails initiative.

**Agenda Item:** Blue Mountain Region Trails Project **(Information)**  
**Presented by:** Mary Campbell & Andrea Weckmueller-Behringer

The Blue Mountain Region Trails Project is a regional effort of more than 30 local, regional, state and federal stakeholder entities joining forces to develop a trail system plan that spans all local jurisdictions. Beyond recreation and transportation, the diverse group of stakeholders represents integrated interests in health and quality of life.

The project received assistance from the National Park Service’s Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program. Significant public involvement efforts were made to develop a citizen driven plan. Public meetings were attended by over 450 people. To make the process inclusive, child care, food, and Spanish interpreters were provided.

The project outcome is the development of a community driven, and locally supported region wide non-motorized trail and transportation network that will integrate existing and planned urban sidewalks and bike routes with urban and regional trails. This network will provide access to outdoor recreation opportunities, increased walking and biking options, and connectivity among community centers and cultural, historical, and natural resource sites throughout the region.

**Questions/Comments:**

What are some of the biggest benefits of working with the National Park Service’s Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program?

- Besides technical assistance, the biggest benefit was name recognition. The local news picked it up as soon as the RTCA assistance was announced. Washington’s state funding agency contacted them when then heard, interested in funding the project and stakeholders. For stakeholders, a key factor that helped was having the Blues Crew maintenance organization in place already.

Seven years ago ORTAC met in La Grande and to see the collaboration and progress around trails, with this and the other projects talked about, is phenomenal. It’s not just recreation and transportation; it’s also economic development and education. It’s very exciting.

**Agenda Item:** Blue Mountain Century Scenic Bikeway **(Information)**  
**Presented by:** Cheryl Bates

The 108-mile Blue Mountain Century Scenic Bikeway is a loop that starts and ends in Heppner, a full-service community with secure places to leave your vehicle while you ride. The challenging route travels through the Blue Mountains to Ukiah before looping back to Heppner, and is best ridden in two days. The Chamber of Commerce organizes an annual ride in September, offering logistical support, lodging, and food to riders. The 2019 ride will be September 21-22 and registration is open. Travel Oregon created a [video](#) about the ride that was shown.



**Questions/Comments:**

The route is very worthy of the Scenic Bikeways designation.

**Agenda Item:** Grande Tour Scenic Bikeway  
**Presented by:** Mavis Hartz

**(Information)**

The 134-mile Grande Tour Scenic Bikeway starts north of La Grande and passes through the communities of Island City, Union, North Powder, Baker City and Cove. There are many State Parks along the route. The annual ride, organized by La Grande Parks and Recreation, is planned for June 29-30, 2019. There is increased demand for gravel rides but those routes can't be designated under the Scenic Bikeways program. Travel Oregon's [video](#) about the Bikeway was shown.

**Questions/Comments:**

ORTAC is in a position to advocate to Travel Oregon for eastern Oregon's trails and bikeways to be represented in promotions of Signature Trails.

I see a lot of promotion by Chambers of Commerce for Scenic Byways, would like to see combined promotion for Scenic Byways and Bikeways.

- OPRD has a new Scenic Bikeways & Waterways Coordinator who has recognized the need to collaborate more with Chambers.

**Agenda Item:** Wallowa Land Trust's East Moraine Project  
**Presented by:** Eric Greenwell

**(Information)**

Wallowa Land Trust is a local nonprofit that's mission is to protect the rural nature of the Wallowa Country by working cooperatively with private landowners, Indian tribes, local communities and governmental entities to conserve land.

An overview of the Wallowa Lake moraine systems and conservation efforts for the east moraine was provided. There is no development on the east moraine, which is primarily privately owned. There is an informal trail that is being used by pedestrians and equestrians, either trespassing or with specific permission from land owners.

The Wallowa Lake Moraines Partnership's goal is to preserve the moraine for its current and historical uses, including recreational trails. Easements have been secured for some sections and others are in progress. A fundraising campaign is underway to purchase the largest parcel. State Parks is assisting the partnership with their recreation and management plan to monitor use, maintain the land, and minimize public impact. Motorized access has been ruled out. Equestrian access is planned to be allowed.

**Questions/Comments:**

Will mountain bikes be allowed?

- We are considering and researching this but don't know yet. Dog access is also being considered. All uses must be considered.

How many property owners are yet to be on board? How many acres are represented by those owners?

- Two property owners are yet to be on board. A map was shown to demonstrate the properties and geographic features.

It's not accurate to say that the Umatillas are a stakeholder. They are an essential consultation as a Tribal Government. Over half of the people on this reservation have Nez Perce ancestry. The Cayuse and Walla Walla also have heavy



investment. When talked about tribes having interest, it's much more than being a stakeholder. The treaty process caused this section to be a part of the Nez Perce reservation of 1855. The treaty commissioners expected to move the Umatilla, Nez Perce, and Walla Walla people to this land. The tribes are not stakeholder, they are former owners of the land.

Are the tribes at the table even though they aren't identified as members of the Partnership?

- We have talked with and presented to some. The Nez Perce Cultural Resource Committee recently agreed to recommend a letter of support for the purchase of the Yanke property. We are planning to engage more.

**Agenda Item:** Joseph Branch Trail

**(Information)**

**Presented by:** Penny Arentsen

The Joseph Branch Trail Consortium (JBTC) was established in 2013 to promote the idea of constructing and maintaining a 63-mile multi-use recreational trail adjacent to the historic Joseph Branch rail line between Elgin and Joseph, Oregon. Goals of trail development include providing a safer route for cyclists, increasing health, and promoting economic development. A [video](#) was shown about the section from Joseph to Enterprise.

JBTC board members worked with the Wallowa Union Railroad Authority (WURA), the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department, Eastern Oregon University, Northeast Oregon Economic Development District, and multiple other organizations over an 18 month period to determine that the Joseph Branch Rail-with-Trail was feasible. Significant zoning issues were learned about later in the planning process. The Wallowa County Planning Commission has since denied the Conditional Use Permit. The Consortium has appealed the decision.

**Questions/Comments:**

Are there plans to extend to the Grand Ronde?

- Yes, that's the goal. If we can't move forward with this section, we will focus on others. This trail has become a more broad conversation in the community about what Wallowa County will become and who will be attracted by the trail.

What were the results of the cultural resource survey?

- There were no areas we need to route around. The report is on file with the State Historic Preservation Office.

What can we do to support the project?

- Spread the word statewide that EFU zones present difficulties for trail development. The law and its description of significant impact is open for interpretation.

**Council Business Items**

**Agenda Item:** Trails Summit Planning

**(Information)**

**Presented by:** Steph Noll, Jodi Bellefeuille

OPRD has agreed to sponsor the Summit at the \$10,000 level.



It was suggested that Director Lisa Sumption give the opening plenary remarks. Steph will invite her. If Lisa is unable to attend, MG or Cailin will be asked.

The Oregon Trails Summit will be held October 3-4 in Roseburg.

The planning committee will accept session proposals through June 3, 2019.

Does ORTAC want to play a specific role? Does ORTAC have content or presenter suggestions?

- It was suggested to have a session on gravel bike riding and for OPRD to gather input related to gravel routes designated under the Bikeways program.
  - It was asked where OPRD stands. Gravel routes don't meet the existing criteria for Scenic Bikeways.
  - If a session was planned it should include Kitty Weisman, Travel Oregon, Cycle Oregon, mountain biking groups, etc. Two members of the Oregon Mountain Bike Coalition are on the planning committee.
- Barry Lopez was suggested as a speaker. Jim will follow up with Steph and another contact who knows Barry.
  - Dr. Nina Robert has been confirmed as the keynote speaker. She will speak on decreasing barrier to outdoor recreation.
- What's the capacity at the fairgrounds?
  - No limit for registration.
- What hotel?
  - Holiday Inn Express. It connects to the fairgrounds on the South Umpqua Greenway.
- ORTAC, per statute, designates trails. Do we want to have a session about the designation?
  - Would it be its own session? How would it compare to last year's Signature Trails Session?
  - It was asked whether there will be a renewed focus on the designation. Is it in statute or rule?
    - It's in rule. We'll talk about it later in the meeting. Not sure what a session would focus on but the program needs to be evaluated. Summit could be an opportunity for feedback but may be too soon. Hesitant to dedicate a session to it but let's keep it in mind.

Questions were asked about what will become of the Oregon Historic Trails Advisory Council's (OHTAC's) work. How can ORTAC take on historical preservation? A session may be proposed about historic trails and how to carry on OHTAC's work. It would be great to continue the historical preservation discussion that began last year through Chuck Sam's presentation. Lauralee volunteered to coordinate a session proposal.

Have any sessions been proposed about accessibility? There is a hunger for more information on accessible design. It would be good to have case studies shared at the Summit.

- The Oregon Trails Coalition is working on organizing a webinar about universal access.
- It was suggested to have State Parks' ADA Coordinator put on a session about design.

It was suggested for anyone organizing a session that would include tribes, to reach out as soon as possible because of limited capacity.

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**Agenda Item:** Oregon Trails Coalition Legislative Update **(Information)**  
**Presented by:** Robert Spurlock, Jim Thayer, Steph Noll

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Oregon Outdoors and the Oregon Trails Coalition held a legislative day on February 12. Many Oregon Trails Coalition members attended, along with others in the recreation community. The group took positions on [nine bills](#).



**Comments:**

- The event was well organized and included training to prepare attendees on interacting with legislators.
- It was the first time this was done and was energizing.
- Members found it useful to find out who was a supporter or opponent within the legislature.
- It was valuable to meet others in the trails and recreation realm.
- The Oregon Trails Coalition will send action alerts related to the bills they are watching, as they progress.
- There may be administrative changes to Connect Oregon, a key program that funds trails with a transportation function.

**Agenda Item:** Oregon Coast Trail- segment gap planning report **(Information)**  
**Presented by:** Lauralee Svendsgaard & Skyler Archibald

Lauralee and Skyler are involved with the Oregon Coast Trail (OCT) segment gap planning teams as part of the Oregon Coast Trail Action Plan. The teams are reviewing 62 identified gaps to help OPRD and partners prioritize future projects and identify ways to address the more challenging gaps.

Lauralee attended the south and central coast tours. Elected officials, city managers, chambers of commerce, recreation providers, and non-profit interest groups were represented on the tours. Some gaps are already being addressed and the teams are focusing on the more challenging sections.

The north and central teams both agreed they have reached visitation capacity and are focused on maintenance and improvement, while the south coast team is interested in expanding tourism reach. The team is looking at how to expand visitor amenities and infrastructure outside of State Park properties that are already maxed out.

Skyler and Lauralee have both heard there is confusion between the OCT and Oregon Coast Bike Route. It was proposed to call the OCT the Oregon Coast Hiking Trail. There is some but not much overlap between the two routes.

The Oregon Coast Trail Foundation has been formed under the Oregon Coast Visitors Association. The Foundation is charged with raising funds to assist with maintenance, development, and interpretation along the OCT. Lauralee is on the board.

Travel Oregon, under the Signature Trails initiative, is funding a digital guide to the OCT. It will be used a model for other trail proponents to develop similar resources.

**Agenda Item:** Trail Designation Program – History & Survey Results **(Information)**  
**Presented by:** Jodi Bellefeuille

**History:** The Scenic and Regional Trail Designation program was started under the Oregon Recreation Trails System Act, which was a result of the National Trails System Act and recommendations made to states in the 1966 national report, "Trails for America." The Oregon Recreation Trails System Act directed the state to institute a system of recreation trails in the state by designating initial components of the system. Eight trails were designated in rule as either a footpath only trail, or footpath and bicycle trail. In 2009, OPRD and ORTAC initiated a rulemaking process to change the designation program to what it is today. Five more trails have been designated since the change and the previously designated trails were categorized by ORTAC and OPRD.



**Survey:** Land managers or proponents of trails that hold a designation were recently surveyed. Questions were asked about whether the program should be marketed more, if the program has already impacted use of the trails and associated resources, how they have benefited from the program, and what additional incentives they desire. Responses around marketing were mixed. Some respondents were concerned about marketing the trail due to issues of issues or trail conditions, some were interested to help draw visitors, while others needed further evaluation. No respondents indicated that the designated impacted use, while some were unsure. The majority of respondents indicated they have not received incentives from holding the designation. Some respondents indicated the designation has helped them obtain funding or receive recognition from partners.

**Looking Forward:** Discussions are underway at OPRD about the department’s role under the Oregon Recreation Trails System Act and potentially bringing back the Statewide Trails Coordinator position. Information from Steph Noll’s 2016 report is being used for the discussion. We will recruit new members who are up for the task of getting us back on track.

**Questions/Comments:**

ORTAC could work with State Parks and Travel Oregon to promote lesser known trails as a way to relieve overuse.

- Would this be outside of the existing designation program? It would be a morphing of the program.
- Would this be different from the Signature Trails program? Yes. Signature Trails is not a designation. More needs to be learned about the Signature Trails efforts and where ORTAC could get plugged in.
- The Bikeways and Scenic/Regional Trails designation programs require land manager buy-in. ORTAC should not promote trails without proper buy-in. Designations impact maintenance and management
  - o Current administrative rules require a management plan, cooperative agreement, and five year reviews. The rules don’t allow temporary designation.

The survey results suggest that the designation does not have a perceived effect. That worries me. How does the program and ORTAC fit into OPRD’s product mix and how can ORTAC add value to keep the program relevant?

- That same question is being raised internally as part of a larger conversation around what the Recreation Trails System Act looks like in our work today.
- Developing a path forward is a priority for management but it will take time.

**Program Updates**

**Agenda Item:** January 2019 Minutes **(Action)**  
**Presented by:** Robert Spurlock

January 2019 ORTAC meeting minutes were reviewed.

Motion to approve January 2019 minutes by Rod Sell.

Seconded by Jim Thayer.

Motion carried unanimously.

**Agenda Item:** ORTAC Representation on Scenic Bikeways **(Action)**  
**Presented by:** Robert Spurlock



As shared at the January meeting, Lauralee has stepped down from her ORTAC representative position on the Scenic Bikeways committee. Del expressed interest in January and has attended his first Bikeways meeting.

Motion to appoint Del as the ORTAC representative to the Scenic Bikeways committee by Robert Spurlock.

Seconded by Jim Thayer.

Motion carried unanimously.

**Agenda Item:** Miscellaneous **(Information)**

**Presented by:** Various

Jodi shared that council members and volunteers, along with all state employees, are required to take an online anti-harassment training. A follow-up email with more information will be sent to council members and OPRD's Training Coordinator.

It was confirmed to schedule the next meeting on Thursday, August 1 and the site visit on Friday, August 2.

Jan shared that David Stipe will be leaving the agency at the end of June.

Robert shared that Jodi was invited to a proclamation signing with Governor Brown, as part of Public Service Recognition Week.

**Agenda Item:** Unfinished Business & Program Updates **(Information)**

**Presented by:** Jodi Bellefeuille

Members were given a handout with updates on unfinished business or program updates. Due to the agenda going over time, the updates were not discussed.

Meeting adjourned at 5:00pm