

# Oregon Parks and Recreation Commission

June 24, 2015

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Agenda Item: 10c

Information

Topic: Visitor Experience Staff Training

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## **Background**

In May of 2015, Visitor Experience (VE) staff from across the state gathered in Bend for annual training. This training is an opportunity for front line staff to connect and network with their peers to learn about new techniques, program ideas, and delivery methods. They focused on: increasing skill, identifying challenges and trends, and discussing the future of the Visitor Experiences Program. The VE program helps support interpretive efforts of OPRD staff and some specialized volunteer programs.

## **Training Components and Program Improvement**

Some of the key highlights of the training included sessions focused on service delivery and improvement. As with many agency programs, the staff that are dedicated to VE programming often have other responsibilities and/or cover multiple parks. A key element of the training was to help increase efficiency and improve service delivery. This includes improved tools and resources for staff. Some highlights include:

- Improved Data Management
  - All VE program related forms (Volunteer applications, JR ranger registration, program supplies) will be placed in OPRIS Forms to ensure the correct form is being used.
  - A single file will be maintained on the OPRD central servers to collect program information, this will reduce duplication and ensure that all program information is on one location.
- Volunteer Program Improvement
  - Central Business Services (CBS) is partnering with the Visitor Experience-Volunteer Program on application and paperwork processes. The purpose is to get the necessary volunteer paperwork processed through CBS prior to volunteer hosts arriving at parks for their assignments in order to free up time for field staff.
  - Volunteer forms are changing to fillable PDF versions to eliminate duplicate copies. The fillable PDF versions will eliminate extra forms on files and computers.

- Interpretation Best Practices
  - Information on program ideas, resources, and templates will be available in the shared server space.
  - *How to get Interpretive Projects Done* is the current procedure for how to move sign projects or other interpretive projects through development and production. The training discussed the importance of consistency and recognized that the procedure may be ready for updates.
  - Guidelines for interpretive plans and the integration of interpretation in park master planning efforts are available. These park level interpretive plans can be excellent guides for new staff and park management when creating or evaluating interpretive services levels.
  - We currently have 94 Basic Interpreters (mostly seasonals and volunteers), and 7 Advanced (full-time) certified. The OPRD Interpretive Certification program is a key element to overall interpretive service efforts and success of park level programs.
- Outdoor Skills
  - Let's Go! programs are still being refined at the statewide level, with a lot of field interest in further development and implementation. VE program staff are working on a manual for Let's GO! Programming to help field staff identify if these programs are right for their parks, as well as provide some resources to help plan and implement Let's Go! in the field.
  - Let's GO! Continues to provide opportunities for parks to connect to underserved recreation communities to offer tailored opportunities for park involvement. One early component of that effort, Let's Go Camping, is going strong since beginning in 1998 with the early partnership between state parks and Friends of Tryon Creek. The 2015 season starts the weekend of June 19-21 at Joseph Stewart and Beverly Beach State Parks, with [18 events](#) scheduled into September.

**Action Requested:** None

**Attachments:** None

**Prepared by:** Vicki Moles and Mark Davison, Park Development Division