

## Oregon Parks and Recreation Commission

February 23, 2023

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Agenda Item:	3d	<b>Action</b>
Public Comment Allowed:	Yes	
Topic:	TouVelle State Recreation Site jet boat concession concept update	
Presented by:	Chris Havel	

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TouVelle is a 59-acre park managed by the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD) on the banks of the Rogue River near Central Point in southern Oregon. The park is popular (estimated ~400,000 visits per year) with anglers, boaters, picnickers, birdwatchers, swimmers and waders, and light day hikers. The park features group day-use shelters and charges a parking fee. Rules for use of the river are not set by OPRD, and motorboats – including jet boats – are currently allowed on the river. To expand recreation service at the park, a pilot project using a short-term Special Use Permit allowed a local jet boat business to operate in the park by advertising and conducting customer pick-up and drop-off in the park. The pilot project ended in late 2022 and staff began studying whether to pursue a formal concession through a public competitive process.

To work toward a decision, staff interacted informally with park visitors, held a public open house meeting in the community, spoke directly with nongovernment organizations and partner agencies, and conducted an online survey that produced 1,600 responses. The purpose of the survey in particular was to understand current and past visitor use and satisfaction with facilities and services at the park to aid management decisions regarding future improvements, and to help OPRD leadership understand the attitudes and beliefs about a possible jet boat concession at the park. In addition to the survey, outside organizations organized a form letter campaign that sent staff and the Commission Chair messages opposing the idea of a jet boat concession.

While the purpose of outreach is not to put the idea of a jet boat concession to a vote, it does serve to inform OPRD managers about the current state of affairs in the park and along the river so they can make a sound management decision about the concession concept. The survey and meeting results show generally high satisfaction with the park (except for the restrooms), strong support for jet boat service from people who have patronized it in this area, and strong concerns from people who feel the social and biological effects of increased jet boat traffic either needs much more study or will degrade the river.

The park management team led by District Manager Dani Padilla are reviewing the results of the outreach effort and other factors to decide whether to do more development work on the concession concept, table the project, or pursue some other option. There is no commission role in this decision, and even a concession contract would only come to this body if the dollar amount exceeds the OPRD Director's delegated authority, but staff will share the outcome with the commission for its information.

**Attachment:** None

**Action Requested:** None

**Prior Action by Commission:** None

**Prepared by:** Chris Havel