

Oregon Parks and Recreation Commission

September 18, 2008

Agenda Item: 13

Information

Topic: Rogue Valley Recreation Planning

Presented by: Kathy Schutt

Background:

OPRD is providing financial support and staff expertise to help local partners complete a regional recreation plan for the Rogue River corridor in Jackson and Josephine counties. As we have moved from large conceptual planning to detailed implementation work, we are now focusing our support and efforts on priority sections of the project. For OPRD, a section that is important to us because of its potential to become a State Park is the stretch from Fort Lane to the Gold Ray Dam, Nugget Falls, Hardy Riffle and on to Gold Hill. At the north end of this section, near Fort Lane, there is a pinch point where the county road is very narrow. Currently, there are significant differences of opinion about how this section should be handled. If handled poorly, we could jeopardize the entire project.

To reduce the risk, we contracted with the Rogue Valley Council of Governments to employ a Solutions Team approach to determine the best way to handle this critical segment. The approach includes facilitated discussions among key stakeholders seeking to understand the site conditions, trail issues, river access needs and design alternatives. The team of stakeholders will include OPRD, Jackson County, the Rogue River Greenway Foundation, and key stakeholders from the community including local businesses, fishing advocates, neighbors, and other recreationists. This work will begin in late September and continue through the biennium. Staff will return to future commission meetings with more information about the Solutions Team approach and results of the planning.

Another issue of concern is our lack of progress negotiating with Rail America about recreation easements along major sections of the proposed corridor. The rail company is currently involved in contentious negotiations with the State of Oregon (unrelated to this project) along the Coos Bay line. Rail America is reluctant to conduct business with any agency of the State of Oregon until the larger issue is resolved. The situation has significantly slowed our progress in planning for these stretches of the trail.

Prior Commission Action: July 12, 2007: staff presented details of regional plan.
May 8, 2008: commission approved contract with Rogue Valley Council of Governments for Solutions Team work.

Action Requested: None

Prepared by: Kathy Schutt