

Oregon Parks and Recreation Commission

September 18, 2008

Agenda Item: 10

Action

Topic: Golden Site Development Plan

Presented by: Mark Davison

Background:

Staff have crafted a development plan for Golden, a State Heritage Site purchased by OPRD in 2006. The site is located three miles east of Wolf Creek, Oregon. At its peak, the mining town of Golden was home to 100 people and served as a hub for many others who worked the land in more remote locations. Golden was distinguished by its lack of saloons in the town center, its two active churches and the large orchard established by its founding families. Today, visitors to this Heritage Site can explore the remaining settlements perched above the valley where miners once toiled.

The unique heritage of this site needs to be preserved while still supporting local community gatherings. Staff held multiple internal meetings, met with adjacent property owners, and invited input from the local friends group to inform the plan. Staff also conducted resource assessments of the property which looked at natural and historic resources, covering the period when the town was first settled, up to the present day.

Why a Site Development Plan is Needed: This is a new type of planning document for OPRD. Because we are not proposing construction of major new facilities, there is no requirement in either statute or rule to seek land-use approval from the county. However, there are significant activities that need to occur at the site to preserve the resources, develop small-scale facilities and to interpret the former mining community. A plan is needed to understand the history of the site and to set forth a vision for how the public will use this State Park.

The Golden Site Development Plan will:

- Retain the abandoned character of the old mining town -- decaying features convey a message to the public about human experience.
- Apply minimal interventions to enhance Golden's historic character and convey what it was like to live during Golden's boom era --1878-1913.
- Use compatible materials that blend with the abandoned character of Golden. New features where these materials will be used include short walking loops, a small parking area, and the occasional use of interpretive signs.
- Utilize an integrated design plan that protects significant natural, cultural and scenic resources.

Development Concepts for Golden:

- Provide a sense of arrival at the boundary to the site and use the proximity of the Wolf Creek Inn to promote Golden.
- Develop the existing parking area and take action to prevent parking on the road shoulder.
- Rehabilitate the church and retain its current public uses.
- Reestablish the historic property boundary lines to highlight the former settlement patterns during Golden's boom era.
- Preserve the remaining historic buildings and structures as ruins with occasional public access for interpretation programs.
- Remove the stage and barn; they are not historic features.
- Establish short walking trails around the historic site and down to the creek, following historic circulation patterns where possible.
- Develop a planting plan that will transition the meadow back to an orchard, reintroduce historic gardens and restore foundation plantings.
- Retain scenic vistas of the creek from the two major viewpoints.
- Provide universal access to the major site features using compatible materials.
- Foster partnerships to support long-term care and interpretation of Golden.
- Develop an interpretation plan to educate the public about Golden's past and its ongoing preservation.
- Develop a long-term maintenance plan for Golden, which integrates principals of sustainability into all aspects of the on-going maintenance program.
- Monitor and evaluate the erosion of the cliff face to ensure it does not threaten the historic site features.
- OPRD also agreed at a community meeting to retain the gravestone markers used in the filming of a "Gunsmoke" episode.

Prior Action by Commission: Acquisition of Golden in 2006.

Action Requested: Staff seek commission approval of the Golden Site Development Plan.

Prepared by: Mark Davison