



# Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor

## Parks and Recreation Department

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### **Meeting Summary: Smith Rock State Park Master Plan Public Meeting II – Development Concepts + Public Comment**

Date: October 25, 2017 Neighbor Meeting (5:30-7:30PM) Deschutes County Fair and Expo Center, Redmond

OPRD Staff: Julia Cogger, Scott Nebeker, Jerry Winegar, David Stipe, Scott Brown, Josie Barnum, Ian Caldwell, Chris Parkins, Steve Memminger and Carrie Lovellette.

### **Meeting Highlights:**

- This was a well-attended meeting with roughly 75 participants
- The initial presentation was identical to that of the previous evening and advisory committee presentations featuring a summary of the assessments completed, a presentation by Mike Yun from Anderson Krygier of the capacity assessment underway and a presentation of survey responses and working conceptual designs for the park
- Most of the detailed discussion topics were noted in the small group breakout sessions and can be found on a separate attachment
- Some general points discussed in the larger group included the need to accommodate for more parking, opposition to the development of a new entrance road and a discussion of the public process and providing additional opportunities for passionate park users and neighbors to participate

### **Meeting Agenda:**

- David introduced OPRD staff and discussed the planning process and rules of engagement
- Julia presented the results of the assessments completed thus far
- Mike Yun presented the capacity assessment currently underway
- Julia concluded the presentation with a summary of survey feedback, precedent (example park) studies and a description of the three working concepts
- Some time was dedicated to large group questions
- The room broke into three smaller groups where visitors spoke with various OPRD representatives and noted their reactions to the working concepts via post it comments on large scaled maps

### **Post Presentation Comments:**

Comment: The road you are talking about putting in—there is a lot of wildlife in that area. It is supposed to be open and preserved. Seems to be really bad judgement for the park as a park should be open and protected.

Comment: A version of the 1991 plan had overnight camping along the proposed road. Are you going to put RV overnight camping in?

OPRD: We have not talked about RV camping at all and we would have to go through a public process to get overnight camping.

Comment: You are going to do one little thing at a time.

Question: How about the road, does that require permits?

OPRD: Yes, we would have to get permits and land use agreements for the road. We have the same permitting requirements as homeowners.

Question: Would there be an environmental process as well? Have you done a study on that already?

OPRD: Yes. We have been working with our internal botanist and environmentalists. We have walked the corridor several times with them.

Comment: A road would be okay even though there are seasonal raptor closures there?

OPRD: The wildlife biologist did not have concern at this point with disturbance of the raptors. We will complete additional studies.

Comment: Animals feed out of our field right there and you are putting a road there.

OPRD: We are proposing three concepts; only one concept currently has a road. We do not want to give anyone the perception we have a preference or are prepared to construct anything proposed in these concepts. There are current master plans that still have many proposed projects that have yet to be implemented. The only reason we are looking at the new road is to address concerns expressed about overcrowding along existing roads. It is an idea to receive comments on tonight.

OPRD: We do not control the road within the county right of way which currently has a lot of congestion within the park. We would have a little more control of congestion within the park.

Comment: That area is where the last sighting of a cougar in the park was. It would do you well if you could give this more study. Unless you have lived there you will have no concept of the daily happenings of wildlife. We would be willing to document wildlife sightings if you would like. Ask for help, don't just call meetings and ask us to criticize.

OPRD: The folks who work in our stewardship department are very passionate about what they do and we frequently discuss their perspectives on conservation and preservation of habitat.

Comment: The largest response is on parking but it looks like you are talking about the same amount of parking for this plan. There has obviously been an increase in park traffic. How is this addressing the parking in any way?

Comment: It seems that this plan is not a future plan. Where is the future? It looks like you made the decision there shouldn't be any additional parking spaces I see a huge conflict.

Comment: You can't limit the number of people by controlling the parking. If you want to control it, I don't know how you are going to do it because someone will be selling parking spots across the way.

OPRD: It looks fishy when capacity and parking spaces add up to be nearly equivalent. We don't like that coincidence either. We agree you can't manage via parking, but you could potentially manage via the installation of a gate on an OPRD road.

Comment: I went home from last night's meeting and read the capacity assessment. Of everything I read considering capacity studies, good judgement prevails.

Comment: The parking is not the same quantity as 1991, the temporary lot would be included as permanent. The intent is to have a soft hand in how we are managing that type of capacity instead of heavier handed approaches such as allocating permits.

Comment: Your capacity seems to assume a concentration of people within specific areas of the park. With new bridges and trail loops would that change your capacity figures?

OPRD: We will have the consultant evaluate the approved plan to figure out what the new capacity is by calculating capacity on improved trails.

Question: Why would you limit yourself by not adding any parking in the future plan?

OPRD: It is clear some think we need to add more parking to the plan. We have not made any decisions, these are concepts that we are bringing to the table for the public to comment on. We also do not have funds allocated for additional parking areas at this time.

Comment: I beg to differ as you have bought up property in other parts of the state. You have the resources you just don't want to allocate them here.

Comment: There is a tipping point. You cannot just keep cramming people into the park. More parking and more people equals more issues.

OPRD: The parking is not the tool, but managing the people who get to the park and intend to go to the park can help. A gate with real-time updates and online access featuring how full the park is could help.

Comment: The Forest Service meetings I recently attended gave us the impression their minds were made up. I am getting the same impression here. Don't forget this is public land.

OPRD: I would like to address a few issues that have been brought up. First I would push back on the plan for the future and what the model implies. It is a tool, but just one tool. The best advice we have comes from the park staff there every day. What the model attempts to do is to take parking capacity and other numbers to see what facilities and capacity we can hold. The tool becomes valuable when we compare it to proposals for future developments and how that affects the number of users. Parking, I would throw this out for your consideration, it is one of the challenges that we have. I think we would all agree at some point we would need to stop building parking spaces as the resource and staffing cannot handle it. I will do my best to assure you there have been no pre-conceived notions as to what we plan to do. The only one is that we do know there is an upper limit at some point where we cannot allow the resource to take the beating it is getting and we can't continue to be a poor neighbor or service provider. We must continue to provide a good service. Tonight we are here to hear your comments. No final decisions have been made. We will be coming back with preferred options.

Comment: What I think I hear is that you want to put a cap on visitors. If you want to allow more people to come you could add outside parking and shuttle service.

OPRD: We have considered that option and East Oregon Transit may potentially include a bus loop to the park. The Columbia Gorge Express was a very well received example bus loop.

Comment: It seems like the amount of work you have done to get the information you have gives you a model, but you are limiting yourself. You can disperse visitors in parking and extend some trails. All you have to do is increase the parking for the next 5-10 years. Then you will have people better dispersed.

OPRD: We would like to make sure we are writing down all comments and would like to allow for more people to talk, so let's break up into small groups.

Small Group Break Out Sessions.