



## MARION COUNTY PARKS COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES OF THE MEETING

---

**November 20, 2014 - 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.**

**5155 Silverton Rd. NE, Salem, Oregon in the North Santiam Room**

**PRESENT:** Scott Anderson, Ted Dingman, Sandy Grulkey, Marty Heyen, George Moeller, Wayne Rawlins

**PUBLIC:** Jason Bruster and Roger Stephen, PacWest Disc Golf Association; Anna Rankin, Pudding River Watershed Council

**STAFF:** Jeff Bickford, Russ Dilley, Jolene Bray

**CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS: 9:03 a.m.**

### **APPROVAL OF AUGUST 7, 2014 MEETING MINUTES**

Wayne made a motion to approve the August 7, 2014 meeting minutes. Scott seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

Marty said it would be helpful if meeting minutes came out within a week of the meeting. She said they are useful as reminders to commissioners and it's also helpful to have them on the website in that period of time. After some discussion it was agreed that the minutes will be sent to commissioners two weeks after each meeting.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Anna Rankin said she is newly with the Pudding River Watershed Council (PRWC) and is working on addressing issues in Scotts Mills. She said there was a lot of negative history but wants to put the broken organization back together and Scotts Mills Park is the first issue she wants to address. She said it's a multi-tiered project and there is history with the park of opposing ideas about what will happen. She said she discussed a play structure with Jeff and is trying to gather information. Anna said she would like to take the advice of Oregon Water Enhancement Board (OWEB) officials and scale the project up to a restoration enhancement with native planting rather than one little group at a time. Sandy said she met Anna's colleague two days ago and she can happily report that everyone she contacted, including the former president of the PRWC, is enthusiastic.

Scott asked if Anna was proposing improvements to the park in Scotts Mills. Anna said she was advised to come to the Parks Commission (PC) prior to writing grant proposals to ensure the commission is in agreement. She said the PRWC also wants to remove the dam to improve fish passage, plant native plants, and look at new play structures, and wants to know what she can do to facilitate these improvements. Jeff said Marion County's property line ended at the high water line and the dam is not their property. He said this is a water of the state issue and not Marion County's decision. Anna said she has talked with Brian at State Lands, who will make the decision and be the permitting agency, and they need to also have Marion County's support for the concept. Scott asked if it is navigable water. Sandy said it is all the way from Butte

Creek Falls. Scott said the Corp of Engineers would be involved in any dam removal. Sandy said Anna will be invaluable because the Marion and Clackamas county-line meets at the center of creek. She said the PRWC was not allowed to receive funding because they were a nonfunctioning board and they've been waiting for someone like Anna to come along and take the lead on this. She said the dam needs to be removed because it impedes fish traffic. Sandy said this is great time for improvements because Marion County is putting in \$45,000 in play structures.

Wayne asked if fish passage was built and if that was impeding fish. Anna said it is and could be completely removed or improved. Wayne asked if she talked with the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) and if they were in favor of this. Anna said she had and they were. Scott asked if there was an official proposal written on the work to be done because he really needs something official he can peruse and respond to. Anna said she would be happy to that put together, but wanted to know what she's up against before she sat down to write. George said he didn't think she was up against anything and the commission just wants background. Anna said there is some historical opposition because some individuals want the dam maintained as an historical artifact. She said there were solutions but the dam needs to come down. Wayne asked if the opposition is from organizations or individual citizens. Anna said mostly from individual citizens. Sandy said the only opposition she knows of is from people in Scotts Mills who want to maintain the swimming hole. Anna said she is looking at a major project that could easily cost \$500,000-\$1,000,000. She said the next thing she can do is draft a plan, outline where funds will come from, and share at a future meeting.

#### **SPONGS LANDING DISC GOLF COURSE PROPOSAL – Jason Brewster, Pac West Disc Golf**

Jason said Pac West is the only licensed contractor to build and design disc golf courses on the west coast and they recently installed a champion level disc golf course at Willamette Mission State Park. He said it is the second largest disc golf course in Oregon and took 2 and 1/2 years to install. He said their goal is to enhance a park, not take away, and at Willamette Mission Park there was old, overgrown filberts and manzanita and they were told to keep the manzanita. He said any tree bigger than 4' in diameter would be worked around and not be cut down. He said it was a really great project and they have a great relationship with rangers and the supervisor. He said they also have an intermediate level disc golf course at Keizer Rapids Park that they redesigned for safety purposes. He said they first focused on saving green space, then safety, than playability, and also working with existing use (hikers, bikers, dog walkers, etc.). He said at Spong's Landing there is a lot of open green space (soccer field, picnic sites) and their goal is to work around that. He said the Boy Scouts have events at Spong's and building disc golf courses fits with their Eagle Scout projects. Roger said open fields are boring to disc golfers and the best thing you can offer on a disc golf course is wacky routes, which makes it more technical and challenging. Jason said they've done a walk through at Spong's Landing and want to use the outskirts and edges of the open space because it stays dry year round. He said what they're looking for today is a recommendation or approval to move to the next step to work on a layout with staff. Jason said a disc golf course is low cost in comparison to a big toy or playground structure and they bring 500-1,000 volunteer hours to build while providing liability insurance for volunteers.

George asked of any conflicting uses. Jason said it's important to them to design correctly so they don't throw over pathways and visibility is important. Roger said the City of Dallas has a course and it's a walking course that weaves through the park. He said there is a minimal amount of crossing trails but there is common sense to be aware on a disc golf course. He said there are courses throughout the U.S. that share trails with walkers but he hasn't heard of any serious injuries.

Sandy said she has learned that disc golf courses are major tourist attractions, great for children, and are growing in popularity. Roger said it is very family oriented and more fun than just walking. Wayne said Keizer Rapids Park is very close and asked if there is concern about oversaturation. Jason said the thought is Spong's will be beginner level course, Keizer Rapids an intermediate level course, and Willamette Mission a championship level course, and they will all be within 15 minutes of each other. He said Spong's will probably be the most popular because it's a beginner course. Wayne asked if their group with volunteers do anything for maintenance. Jason said they do have work parties that maintain courses at parks. George asked if we can set up arrangement for maintenance. Jeff said something could be worked out. Jeff asked about expenses to install and if they were asking Marion County for funding. Jason said when designed and installed at Willamette Mission, they raised half the money and asked the state for half. Jeff said Spong's Landing is closed November 1 through April 30, and asked if that is a problem. Marty asked if the county would change their decision about closing. Jeff said there are other issues such as cleaning restrooms, picking up garbage, and leaving the water on, and there is only one parks employee in the winter time. Jason said they are not suggesting opening the entire park, but one thought they've had is to move the gate back to make a small parking area in front with one trash can, with multiple trash cans placed throughout the course for volunteers to maintain. He said Keizer Rapids doesn't have trash cans on the course so volunteers pick up garbage on the trails. Marty said there would at least need to be a chemical toilet. Jason said the existing chemical toilet could be moved to the new parking area but wants to limit any new maintenance.

Wayne said this might be eligible for the County Opportunity Grant program with the match portion being provided by county and volunteers doing installation, but they need to be patient and wait for the grant cycle. He said it's an excellent source of funding with the county and encouraged Jason and Roger to work with the county to present a grant application to the state. Wayne said the County Opportunity grants available through state parks are currently in process, so they should look at next year which is due by October and will go to agreements in spring 2016. Jason said funding for these projects is the least of their concerns because they understand it will take time and if they have approval for installation, the money will work out through different funding sources. He said he mainly wants to know if staff and the commission think this will work for this park.

Scott said Jeff and Russ need time to look at budget impacts and what would be helpful to him is some type of recommendation from staff regarding the implications. Jeff said this is something they can bring back to the next meeting. He said they have a maintenance agreement with the builder of the BMX track at Rogers Wayside that they could possibly use as a template. Wayne said they need the plans to see the concept. Jason said they have design recommendations but can scale back if funding is an issue. Jeff said staff will look at financials and take a field trip to Spong's to look at their concept and parks space, and this can be discussed at the next meeting.

## **UPDATES**

- George asked about the Pettyjohn property. Jeff said they held an open house in September and had quite a good turnout of mostly neighbors but also a couple of people not from the immediate vicinity. He said generally speaking there wasn't any support from the neighbors who would prefer to see the property kept closed. He asked if anyone saw the Statesman Journal story that interviewed Carol Hayes' sister. He said that staff were surprised that she was not supportive of this happening, because they had heard no opposition previously. He said staff gave an update to the

board of commissioners (BOC) at a management update meeting a couple days after the open house and the BOC said they are not interested in getting in the middle of a family feud and directed staff to step away. Jeff notified Carol and Nancy that the county was no longer interested and wished them luck. He said he found out the neighbors were working to create a non-profit amongst themselves so they could work with the NW Land Trust and be deeded that property. He said he hasn't heard anything since then, but if this happens the neighbors would hold, maintain, and use this property. Marty said she attended the open house too and was surprised that this great opportunity was met with so much opposition. She said not all residents have that much property to use and still sees no reason this can't be properly maintained by the county for everyone's use. She said she sympathized with Carol who was following her parent's wishes and is now back to square one. Jeff said the conservation easement will still happen but NW Land Trust wasn't going to get all the property and now must start over. He said they likely will have to keep the trust open another year and file a trust report, which will cost them money.

- Russ said they are working on getting a new well pump at Spong's Landing and will have it operational by spring. He said they are waiting for PGE to turn off the power so they can trench.
- Russ said the seasonal county parks are closed for the season.
- Russ said storms dropped branches in parks and they are cleaning up. He said Joryville had a lot of damage but juvenile crews have cleared most of it.
- Jeff said Bear Creek Campground has been deemed a success. He said the year ended with the park earning \$3,000-\$4,000 after expenses although they are still waiting for the final garbage bill. Marty asked if they use these dollars to do improvements. Jeff said it all falls into the general park fund and can be used different ways. Russ said there are some minor repairs to the firepits needed and brushing that needs to be done by crews. Jeff said from May to June the campground was very slow. He said it had just opened, it rained every weekend, and the word wasn't out yet. He said from July 4<sup>th</sup> through Labor Day it was full every weekend, and after Labor Day it was still fairly busy. Russ said they had repeat business and one couple came back every weekend. He said he thinks there will be more campers when it reopens in 2015 because the word is out. Jeff said it is also the only campground in that area opening on May 1. He said the host did an excellent job and wants to return next year. He said the host only had to call the sheriff's office once and when the individuals he was calling about heard him making the call, they left the campground. Sandy asked if their conclusion is that there is a need for more campsites. Russ said eventually, but it's a matter of funding. He said the next campground they'd like to develop would be at Minto for RV's, but that would be very expensive to do. Jeff said the department also wants to get more experience and practice before opening another campground and Bear Creek was right-sized to start. Ted asked if the county is involved in BLM's area plan. Russ said they haven't done a lot of master planning but we work cooperatively with them. Ted asked if State Lands has any area parks. Jeff said yes, but any camping areas are way out in mountains. He said the only nearby campground was Elkhorn, which is also pretty full. Jeff said we used their occupancy rates for a basis for our forecast but have our own data to use for next year's forecasting. He said Bear Creek is out of cell phone reach but Canyon Creek has a landline the camp host can use if needed.
- Russ said a lot of people used the campground sites at Bear Creek for picnicking and the camp host would move them out by 4:00 p.m. to make room for campers. Russ said they are adding four more picnic sites just for picnicking.
- Russ said right before the seasonal parks closed, new gates were installed at North Fork, Minto, and Packsaddle parks replacing the old cattle guard gates.

- Russ said vendors are turning in designs for the Scotts Mills Park playground equipment, which they plan to do in the spring. He said they are also working on having concrete pads poured and placed next to picnic tables at the park.
- Jeff said at a recent Management Update meeting, they discussed a citizen complaint with the BOC regarding security at Bonesteele Park. Russ said there are problems with dumping of trash, wood chips, illicit activity, and destruction of the restroom, and they would like to put up cameras and gates. He said the idea is to put in gates the security company would open and close daily and to make this a seasonal park to prevent ongoing damage. Jeff said Bonesteele is more of a regional style park and it's different that it has unfettered access. He said staff will investigate the cost of gates and security and will bring the concept to the BOC in December. He said if they approve, they may change to a more seasonal approach. He said this is one of the more abused parks.
- Sandy asked if staff had been in touch with Marion County Soil and Water (MCSW) about the design of Scotts Mills Park. She said it would be nice to minimize concrete in the park or at least make it permeable, and would like to make the park as natural looking as possible with concrete piers and wood chips. Russ said he has talked with MCSW. He said in the long run they wouldn't go with wood chips because it's too hard to clean and concrete is much easier. He said they will have settling issues with wood chips but concrete would be stable. Jeff said the concrete is barely big enough for the tables to sit on and won't take up the green space.
- George asked about the garbage bag bandit. Russ said they were never caught and parks are now closed.
- George asked about commissioner's terms. Jeff said Wayne is good until 2016, George is being sent down to the BOC for renewal, and Ted has decided to not renew.

## **ACTION ITEMS**

George said he'd like to get a good summary of discussion of this to send out before next meeting.

### **Promotion of volunteer opportunities – George Moeller and Wayne Rawlins**

George said he and Wayne met once and have ideas they think worth considering, which they would go through and then receive input from the group. He said the parks website has a lot of volunteer opportunities and they want to find ways to get folks to view this. He asked Russ how many people respond to what is on the website. Russ said it's pretty spotty and the volunteer base is pretty established. George said maybe an activity this group can undertake is promoting these volunteer opportunities more. Marty said people will do things if called and engaged, but may disregard emails. She said CCTV may be a great resource to highlight Parks and request volunteers. She said Jane Goodall Environmental School is another good resource. Ted said he has a friend on the Salem Parks Commission and they have active volunteer promotion with a dedicated staff person. He said they are very proactive and engage residents and suggested finding out what they're doing. Wayne said he spoke with people from State Parks and Jackson and Linn county parks, and all said that to do a solid, good, continuous program, we need someone on payroll. He said he realizes Marion County has a volunteer coordinator who does a wide spectrum but doesn't know how focused she is on parks, and thinks a lot could be done if someone was just focused on volunteer activities for parks. He said with that said, Marion County Parks isn't large and doesn't have many campgrounds and there are a number of things the county can do. He suggested Russ use [www.workamper.com/news](http://www.workamper.com/news), which he said a lot of other organizations use to find opportunities. He said the park website is a good site but not sure if people go to and use it. He said his main takeaway is having a full-time person would be great, but financially we can't do that, so we need to look at scale and see what

we can bite off. Marty asked if we should have a Parks Facebook page. Jeff said we have an Environmental Services Facebook page that includes Parks info along with other Environmental Services info. Wayne said he received an invitation from Oregon Parks Association (OPA) that if they could provide additional help they'd like to. He said they are meeting again in January. Russ said they rotate their meeting locations and Marion County will host their July 21<sup>st</sup> meeting. Russ said he would like to attend more of these meetings but budgetarily it's not possible. Sandy asked Wayne if he thought any OPA members would come visit the PC. Wayne said he thought they would, and said Brian from Linn County might be good. Wayne said he's thinking of attending a future OPA meeting as a volunteer to see if they can put something like volunteer recruitment on one of their agendas. He said he will contact State Parks for direction. George said he'd like to join if he can work it out. Ted suggested knocking on park's neighbor doors and asking what kind of relationship they have with their community park and if they would be willing to participate and/or volunteer in an activity such as mowing for those people most affected by park usage. George said another option is the newspaper volunteer section which never has parks volunteer opportunities or a newspaper article for more visibility. He said a PowerPoint presentation and handouts they can share with potential volunteers would be useful. George suggested pursuing an outdoor/recreation television show, attending or holding community meetings to drum up interest, and forming a Friends of Marion County Parks group.

#### **Education opportunities using Park resources – Scott Anderson**

Scott said through his own involvement with Bonesteele Park he learned it is a National Heritage Park. He said a tremendous amount of effort was put in by Willamette University, Chemeketa Community College (CCC), and parks staff in supplementing native plantings and eradicating invasive species. He said all this information is on the parks website and the amount of work done was substantial. Scott said the county made mutual commitments with Willamette University that gave them and the county responsibilities going forward. He said one of the county's is putting up signage giving Willamette University and CCC credit for their contributions. He made contact with Wynn Cudmore, who is a former PC member, and had a good conversation. He was told that CCC currently runs about 500 students through Bonesteele each year. He said he was unsuccessful in contacting Karen Arabas at Willamette University but will follow-up and also spoke with Jason Obrien who runs the Master Naturalist at Oregon State University (OSU). Scott said all of them are interested in working with the PC to create better use of Bonesteele Park.

Scott said there are now a number of trails through the woods but the most interesting is the upland prairie. He said depending on what type of year the park is visited, there are still a lot of plantings but unless one knows what one is looking for or at, they won't know the difference. He said in talking to folks, there is a real interest from 3-4 organizations to help the PC make better utilization of the park with such things as making hog fuel trails and mowing paths to significant plantings. Scott said the park would benefit from creating signage that identified flora also. He said CCC and the Master Naturalist Program each require community service hours from their students and they are interested in having a site their people are connected with. He said the Soil and Water Conservation District could also probably help. He said one thing to do is an inventory so we know what is there and then map out the natives and invasive plants. Scott said he thinks they can get volunteer labor to help maintain these efforts and that this is a real opportunity. He said he'd like to represent the PC in working with these entities to pull together a plan he can bring back to the PC to discuss what they'd like to do, cost, maintenance, and renewing contracts signed with Willamette University and CCC or focusing them on performing duties they agreed to do in previous contracts. He said if we do a little work at this park, it can also be real educational resource for school districts. He said it's great to have a place for naturalist type programs, and while there may be the same kind of opportunity at Aumsville Ponds, he recommended biting off one at a time and taking

Bonesteel on as an area we can develop as a more active resource. He said some folks come for walks in woods but he rarely sees people using the park for what it is and thinks we can change that for minimal dollars. Scott said he also thinks since this is natural heritage park, there must be grant opportunities and would be happy to research this, write grants and negotiate with entities.

Sandy thanked Scott and said this was a great report and has her full support. She said she would vote to have him represent the commission on leading this effort. Scott said he would run things by Jeff and the commission before making any decisions. Russ said Marion Soil and Water is a great resource for a possible grant. Scott said he is working with them on other things now.

George suggested that he, Wayne and Scott can summarize their suggestions and send them out before the next meeting and then decide what the commission should pursue. Marty said she'd like to receive this ahead of time so she has time to read them prior to the meeting.

The group discussed the legalization of recreational marijuana usage in Oregon and Wayne asked if this would cause any consideration from county management. Jeff said his understanding is that usage is not allowed in public spaces and must be done in the privacy of homes. Wayne asked if the county parks rules banning alcohol would be modified to include marijuana. Jeff said although state law already says it can't be done in public which should cover this issue, he will check with county legal counsel.

Commissioners and staff thanked Ted for his service. Jeff said he was very valued and wished him luck.

**NEXT MEETING: February 5, 2015 at 9:00 a.m.**

**ADJOURN: 11:28 a.m.**