

**MARION COUNTY
Parks Commission
Meeting Minutes**

Date: Thursday, May 19, 2022
Time: 3:00pm – 5:00pm
Location: Zoom or Willamette Conference Room at Public Works, 5155 Silverton Road NE

Present: **Members:** Wayne Rawlins, Robert Emanuel, Marisa Roskelley, Katy Waid

Zoom: Malcolm Aquinas

Absent: Chris Teichroew, Steve Staten, Alton Hoover, Herschel Sangster

Staff: Tom Kissinger, Brian Nicholas, Natalie Tomaszewski, Stephanie Rosentrater

Guests: Jim Day (Canyon Weekly), Kathy Rogers

Quorum: Yes

ADMINISTRATIVE (Information/Discussion/Action)

Wayne called the meeting to order @ 3:10 p.m.

Member and Staff introductions: Members and staff were introduced.

Attendance/Roll-call: Done

Agenda Changes: None.

Approval of March 17, 2022 minutes

Motion: Marisa made a motion to accept minutes. Katy seconded.

Discussion: None.

Result: A voice vote is unanimous – motion passes.

Parks Naming Subcommittee

Tom shared that the Parks Naming Subcommittee has a mostly finalized procedure and will hopefully be bringing the procedure to the Parks Commission meeting in July for approval.

Bob asked if this was a procedure for choosing names or if we were choosing a name for a park; Tom stated this was the procedure for park naming, the Parks Naming Subcommittee was not choosing the name for a park.

Santiam Canyon Update

Restoration Planning

Stephanie, Marion County Public Works Environmental Specialist, shared the Santiam Canyon Parks story map with the group.

The story map gave an overview of the vision for the Santiam Canyon, along with the restoration and recreation goals for each park. The story map also sectioned the restoration into phases with the goals being accomplished over ten years.

All of the parks have some level of conservation, and the development level varies throughout the parks depending on what is needed.

North Fork

First phase is figuring out what to do with the FEMA money (1-2 years) and reopening the parks. Phase two and phase three have longer timelines, more within the ten-year window. Phase two is focused on establishing new amenities such as a camping area, establishing trails and dedicated use access pointed.

Stephanie stated one of the main goals for North Fork is to get the noxious weeds under control before any other projects are completed. Wayne asked how they planned to contain the noxious weeds; Stephanie stated they would like to not utilize chemical aspects due to it being a drinking water source, but they are unsure if mechanical removal will be sufficient at this time.

Katy asked if there were any grants that could assist with the bird/bat boxes for habitat; Tom stated that this could be a volunteer opportunity.

Wayne asked if Marion County was working with Fish and Wildlife on the restoration part; Stephanie stated that they will be in the future as the projects develop.

Stephanie stated there are two areas in North Fork park for the engineered log jam for work on the eroded bank. Tom shared some future considerations for North Fork such as a picnic shelter, water play feature and an example of the engineered log jam.

Bear Creek

Tom then reviewed Bear Creek and the goals for it such as a large wetland, play place and fenced dog area. Along with the large wetland area, there would be opportunities for interpretation and education activities.

Tom stated that focus on opening Bear Creek, which includes reestablishing RV camping, will be a priority as it was the only revenue generator other than the parking passes.

Stephanie shared some of the restoration goals which included upland forest replanting, noxious weed control and bird/bat boxes. Katy asked how the planting would be planned; Tom stated that seedlings are already planted in between the river and camping. The planting is designed in a way to avoid construction. Phase two is focused on building around the vegetation once it's

developed.

Tom shared some examples of a wetland boardwalk, interpretative signage, a nature play area for children, a dog nature play area, pavilion and an RV space concept.

Salmon Falls

The goals for Salmon Falls would be yurts that would provide revenue and family friendly opportunities. The former “overflow” parking lot will be entirely dedicated to campsites. Future phases include an outdoor amphitheater, which provides opportunity for outdoor education and community building, along with trails throughout the park.

Phase one will focus heavily on the infrastructure of the park, reestablishing access to the waterfall, along with noxious weed control, revegetating riparian and upland areas and adding bird/bat boxes.

Phase two will focus on reestablishing/expanding trails and river access, establishing an amphitheater/event space, adding fish passable culverts and develop tributaries to reconstruct wetlands.

Minto Park

The focus at Minto will be creating fish habitat and interpretive and interactive signage. There is a potential for hike-in camping spots in the future.

Phase one of restoration will be to revegetate and improve the riparian and floodplain areas, along with revegetating the upland area. The recreation aspect of phase one will be to improve day-use capacity and access into the park, along with establishing trails and defined river access points.

Potential future projects are interpretive signage, a bee hotel and a fish cleaning station.

Packsaddle

Packsaddle future projects include a kayak launch, an interpretive signage for boat/water quality, riparian signage and boat cleaning station, CD3 (Clean. Drain. Dry.), to help combat invasive species transport.

Niagara

Niagara will be focused on the history and beauty of Santiam Canyon. Marion County has reached out to the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde about building native wildflower and camas meadow. Trails and meadows will be restored.

Phase one recreation will focus on establishing access for park, parking area, building restrooms and educational signage. Restoration for phase one will include ravine restoration and native plant meadow establishment.

Phase two recreation includes establishing/reopening trails and river access points, along with

establish small new picnic areas. Phase two restoration will focus on examining a low/wet driveway area.

Future considerations include a wildflower meadow, a visitor center and wildfire interpretive signage.

Walker Macy may attend the July or September Parks Commission meeting to present the final report.

Ash Creek Forestry let Marion County know about the OWEB grant, for 500k/600k, due on May 31 that may fund the larger ticket items.

Parks Budget Review

Previous Budget

Tom shared and reviewed the previous Parks Budget with the Commission.

There was about \$38k in system development charges; these are fees that developers pay to develop within the County, Marion County collects most of their fees from East Salem. This will likely be reinvested into Parkdale. ~\$12k was received for camping fees and ~\$33k for parking permits.

Sometimes Parks employees work for other divisions, such as working at North Marion Transfer Station, and are reimbursed for that work done.

Investment earnings are usually around ~\$7k, which is the interest that is earned on the net working capital. Seasonal Parks staff are paid through the general operating fund. They are trying to become less dependent on the general operating fund and more dependent on revenue generating fund.

Marion County Parks received ~\$202k from the State of Oregon for wildfire recovery that was used on the planning effort, the forester for timber sales and the clean up of Packsaddle. The Board of Commissioners worked with the State on acquiring that money; there was a total bucket of money and Parks was given some of it.

The Parks net working capital at the end of 2020 was \$742k; \$360k was allocated to the Auburn Conversion for the purchase of land.

The big jump for personnel from 2020 to 2021 is the allocation of the Parks Supervisor position and additional temporary employees for that year; the total amount for personnel will be far less as Tom doesn't anticipate using that entire amount.

Katy asked about the progress of hiring more full-time employees; Tom stated that was still in the works.

Other contracted services had a large change from ~6k to ~152k for hazard tree removal within

the parks.

There is a large jump in consulting fees because the second phase is more extensive for Walker Macy.

Capital Outlay had an increase for purchasing equipment (a tractor, a mower, a gator, a golfcart and a dump bed trailer) for North Santiam Recreation Area.

Tom is planning on an ending fund balance of ~\$871k this year.

Proposed Budget

Tom shared the proposed Parks Budget for FY22-23 with the Commission.

Marion County Parks is receiving ~1.1-1.3 million from FEMA and that money will come into the County, not necessarily directly into the Parks fund; Tom plans to spend about ~450k on rebuilding with the FEMA money. This will pay for the first year of a three-year process for Salmon Falls and most of Bear Creek.

County Rescue Plan line item is funds from ARPA for Parkdale; they are planning on a two-year process with ~180k planned to be spent each of the two years.

There is ~64k is budgeted for other Federal revenues, from a grant (Natural Resources Conservation Service), for work at North Fork park to move a boulder.

Bear Creek still receives RV Parks apportionments even though it is closed; they are expecting around ~\$310k from that.

~265k is budgeted for timber sales and Tom expects to receive that in July 2022. A third timber sale is going out for bid in the near future.

Tom stated that the Parks gas bill is actually going to go down due to being more efficient with vehicles and traveling as a team.

There are some replacement costs to smaller equipment such as blowers. There are also small increases in electricity and parks maintenance from adding North Santiam Park. There was a slight increase in fleet services from replacing a Parks truck.

There was a decrease in consulting services because they aren't predicting another planning effort.

The larger cost is going to be capital outlay, up 93% year over year, is going to be the purchase of land. More capital outlay is focusing on Parkdale, Salmon Falls and Bear Creek restoration and general improvements. The only item coming out of the Parks fund is the land purchase, everything else is covered from grant funding.

Jim Day asked about why North Santiam Recreation Area was not included on the story map; Tom stated that the plans for that park are separate from the rest of the parks as they don't have ownership of the park yet. They are in a trial period for two years to prove they have the ability to maintain it.

Wayne thanked Tom for the presentation and was grateful for the information.

Malcolm asked if the Commission members had any specific responsibilities as it relates to the budget; Wayne commented that the Commission members are advisory only and they can provide commentary and recommendations.

Commissioner Roundtable

Katy stated she is excited about parks being potentially self-sufficient and wanted to make sure we are focused on equity within the parks.

Marisa asked if Marion County Parks could fix the horseshoe pits within Parkdale; Tom stated they could look into that, but they were not installed by Marion County and once Marion County fixes them, the issue of liability comes in. Marisa also asked about neighbors bordering Parkdale and the issue of damaged fences; Tom stated the idea of bordering the entire park with fencing was brought up at a previous meeting the East Salem Service District Advisory Committee.

Bob asked about replanting of the parks; Tom stated that ~6,781 seedlings went into the parks. That does not include the seedlings that came from the Long-Term Recovery Group that planted within the Canyon, the seedlings from One Tree Planted or the grant from Oregon Parks Forever for additional seedlings.

Bob asked about the Auburn Conversion Project; Tom stated it has been State and Federal Parks and they have given permission to move forward in the process. They have the money set aside for land purchase and are in negotiations with a property owner.

Bob asked about the side trail at Bonesteele; Tom shared it hasn't been developed due to being so close to the road but that is an option for the future.

Malcolm asked about the Marion County Parks Newsletter; Tom stated that it is in the works.

Wayne wanted to bring up the idea of meeting monthly instead of every other month at the next meeting for discussion.

Tom brought up the idea of a field trip to visit Riverbend park within Lane County to explore their amenities that Marion County Parks might explore in the future.

Meeting adjourned at 4:43pm.

NEXT MEETING: Thursday, July 21, 2022 @ 3:00 p.m.