



Oregon

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Meeting Summary

Sitka Sedge State Natural Area

OPRD Advisory Committee Meeting III: Draft Master Plan Review

Thursday, May 5, 2016, 1-4 p.m.

Pacific City, OR

Snowy Plover Discussion

OPRD: A snowy plover site with eggs was surveyed on site. OPRD will need to follow certain restrictions with regard to the protection of this habitat in line with the Snowy Plover Habitat Conservation Plan. This area was identified in that plan, prior to OPRD ownership of the property.

OPRD: With the discovery there may need to be changes to the trails near the beach in the future. We have room in the master plan for these kinds of changes.

Elevation & Tidal Elevation Discussion

OPRD has contracted a groundwater study to measure tidal effects of groundwater elevations in northern Tierra Del Mar. This is supplemental to information that the consultant has been collecting in regards to watershed modeling in the estuary. There is a brief summary of this information in the plan however the report because the report is not complete we cannot provide a finalized summary at this time. We plan on providing the completed report for public comment when data collection is completed in 2017.

Question: Data was collected recently after the king tides in March, which was over 2 feet. Does this plan take into account future projections?

OPRD: The information is very preliminary because we do not have current data. It is not a complete package. We are trying to put the data in the plan that we have and we are going to collect more data and put it in the plan.

Note: A comment letter has been submitted to OPRD by a group of Tierra Del Mar residents.

OPRD: The consensus of the attendees seems to be that OPRD should explain the current data clearly and that more data is needed with a clear plan of how to distribute it to the public.

OPRD: Chapter seven includes the tides and it shows the intrusive tides across Sandlake road. There is not a huge difference in maximum elevation without the dike. It also initiated the conversation about ground water.

Question: Your projections show flooding of Sandlake Road. Are you working with the county

to work on this issue?

OPRD: Yes we are.

Restrooms & Water Source Discussion

OPRD determined that for ease of use the estuary side would be best for the vault toilet. There will not be drinking water at this time. We do not want to overuse the TDM water system.

Discussion on Emergency Personnel Access

Question: Do you have any plans for emergency access and location and designations in case there is an emergency situation?

OPRD: The EMT would like dike access but there is no turnaround on the dike. We are proposing a side entrance using the old road which would be gated because it is not regularly used. However, the beach access in TDM is better suited for EMT and this is the current access.

Comment: There are issues with beach access; when the tides are come in it is difficult to drive in the soft sand. EMTs use ATVs or trucks and have encountered difficulty getting folks out of there.

Question: Have you incorporated the park into the numbered green signs along the coast and will you have signs within the park as well?

OPRD: OPRD plans on installing those signs at this property.

Fish Habitat & Passage

OPRD has contracted a groundwater study to measure tidal effects of groundwater elevations in northern Tierra Del Mar. This is supplemental to information that the consultant has been collecting in regards to watershed modeling in the estuary. There is a brief summary of this information in the plan however the report because the report is not complete we cannot provide a finalized summary at this time. We plan on providing the completed report for public comment when data collection is completed in 2017.

OPRD: The information is very preliminary because we do not have current data. It is not a complete package. We are trying to put the data in the plan that we have and we are going to collect more data and put it in the plan.

OPRD: Fish passage or no fish passage there will be changes in the habitat. It is important to express that there will need to be a change made to the tidegate at some point. It could be very soon as the box culvert only has a certain life expectancy. It's not a matter of if these changes take place, but when. The law states that if we change the tide gates 50% or more then we would be required to meet the federal standards

Comment: It was fish habitat before the farm was there and should be restored that way.

Question: In your plan you say Reneke and Beltz creeks have no fish value but the fish habitat is there: Coho, Cutthroat, Chum, and Chino.

OPRD: Our plan will investigate that further. See page 58 of the plan.

Question: Why is it listed as upland; should be upstream?

OPRD: Yes it should be upstream.

Comment: It is not relevant to compare the value to other creeks. From a fish biologist's perspective it is not about what the value is now, but what it could be.

OPRD: It is our understanding of the data that the gradient of these streams is such that it may not be possible to improve habitat.

Comment: The last sentence says it all. There is conflicting data and further study is needed.

OPRD: Evidently the data has been taken out of context and we need to clarify it.

Comment: If you are not going to do anything about the passage, then the issue is moot. You cannot have those conversations separately.

Comment: It appears that you are putting this study in the context that there would be no good upstream habitat.

OPRD: Language may need to be changed.

Comment: I think that you are promoting lots of ideas about providing fish passage restoration habitat.

Comment: I think you should rewrite this whole section and that there is conflicting data with regards to upstream habitat. The impression is that there is no value upstream habitat.

OPRD: This chapter is not identified as a scientific report.

Comment: The state fish statutes are going to require you at some point to update the fish passage.

OPRD: This plan is not making a decision; we are identifying the necessary steps to making one. There are several different values to consider when making decision on fish passage: Botanical, Sea bird, and Amphibian.

Comment: At the last meeting you said you would provide reports at the next meeting and that is why we are here.

Comment: Fish passage and natural hydrology should trump everything. The presence of fresh

water should not trump the fish passage. That is ODFW position.

Comment: Restoring hydrology would be the most important and it would change the fresh water area.

Comment: There is a muted tide gate in Nehalem bay and it works well.

Comment: This could be the most exciting site for restoring habitat and fish passage. The opportunity for productive habitat is present. This is a state natural area and we have a great opportunity.

Comment: This document reflects resource values and does not reflect the fact that it is going to change regardless of what we do.

Comment: We can be proactive or we can get stuck being reactive.

Comment: You are going to put this in infrastructure and then something is going to happen and then suddenly you are going to have to make a dramatic change.

Comment: No matter whose side of the argument you take it beats a golf course

Comment: You say you are moving slowly, but you are planning a parking lot and trail plan. It feels contradictory.

OPRD: This is not a huge park plan, it is a small park. We have a responsibility to provide recreation opportunities in addition to improving natural resources. We are not talking about removing the dike, we are talking about a breach. The dike is staying and will be the trail to the park.

Comment: Please include in the plan that you are not going to take out the dike. Include the value of the dike as a public access to our park.

Comment: You have not developed an understanding of the natural resources of this park. I'm confused—it seems backwards.

Comment: Some of the locations of the trails are concerning.

Comment: Is the opinion of ODFW and Watershed Council complete removal of the dike? No, not necessarily.

OPRD: We provide public access and recreation. We do not buy land for conservation; we provide recreation for state of Oregon residents. The dike has a high recreation value and we will keep it.

Question: Is Reneke creek the most viable?

OPRD: Yes, from what we currently understand.

Comment: Fish passage can be a good visitor experience as well.

OPRD: It is important to express that there will need to be a change made to the tidegate at some point. It could be very soon and we all need to be prepared for what that means. It's not a matter of if these changes take place, but when.

Question: What are the triggers that could mean having to meet fish passage standards at the tidegate?

OPRD: Trigger event could be tide gate falls off or the structure is damaged. If you added riprap or repair more than 50 percent of the culvert, that is potentially a trigger event. And the result would be the need to conduct this analysis, and meet fish passage criteria. While we propose taking time to study this situation, we don't have all the time in the world, either.

OPRD: It is proactive to think it through beforehand. These are the conversations we want to have so we can get to the most sustainable result – to fish, habitat, humans, etc. When you do a complete restoration, it creates better situations for everyone.

Comment: Is it assumed that the community wants nothing to be done, but we are supportive of things that need to be done. The community is very proactive to promote the natural resources. We share a vision of protecting this area.

Comment: What I think is standing in the way is a true conversation with everyone involved.

Comment: OPRD needs to move forward on their planning of the park.

Comment: Include the elevations of the current site of the parking lot. I can't be asked to recommend this plan without this information.

Primary Interpretive Theme

Comment: Sitka Sedge – last functioning estuary? Probably change to estuary natural zone or something like that.

Comment: There are problems with this paragraph – Seems like you are trying to say that it is okay because the dike is here but it doesn't sound quite right.

Question: Is there intent to create a wetland mitigations group or to sell the wetlands? Trevor Taylor is an expert that could be used.

OPRD: I do not think we have considered it. Typically resource agencies do not do that.

OPRD: We are considering two websites, one for comments and one for hydrology updates.

Question: Can we comment at the Commission meeting.

OPRD: It is a public meeting and I believe they hold a hearing and take public comments at the beginning of the meeting. The information on this could be found on the OPRD commission website. The county also holds a commission meeting and allows public comments.

Meeting adjourned.