



Oregon

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Meeting Summary

Sitka Sedge State Natural Area

OPRD Public Meeting III: Draft Master Plan Review

Thursday, May 5, 2016, 6-8 p.m.

Pacific City, OR

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.

Question: Are you going to remove the grasses that affect the Plover?

OPRD: We are planning to look at the restoration to improve plover habitat and that may be part of it.

Hydrology & Breaching

OPRD has contracted a groundwater study to measure tidal effects of groundwater elevations in northern Tierra Del Mar (TDM). 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: There have been two opportunities for public comment, but based on your opinion when did you start talking about breaching the dike.

OPRD: During the second meeting through the conceptual design phase.

Question: Can we expect a fisheries report?

OPRD: That will be included in the wild life assessment report.

Question: Are the meters (piezometers) at the park or TDM?

OPRD: One in the park and three in TDM. We want to see the tidal affects in TDM and rainwater and fluid movement.

Question: Can you provide a map with the markers? We want to know how they are constructed, where they are located and how the data is being gathered.

OPRD: Some are on private land.

Question: Where is the one located in the park?

OPRD: It is located off Sandlake Road in the estuary and it is giving us a baseline and there was some monitoring for salinity too.

Comment: On the northern most block – if you added any water to us in December the whole area would have flooded.

OPRD: We are talking about two separate parts of the plan. There is recreation planning and there is the hydrology & fish passage. This will take an uncertain amount of time to complete. OPRD is proposing moving forward with the recreation planning while identifying steps in the plan to commit to in making a longer term decision around fish passage improvements.

Comment: It does not look like there were a lot of mud flats back then (from the old photo).

OPRD: It is a good observation but we do not know what was constructed or altered at that point.

Question: Where is Reneke Creek?

OPRD: It's all forested over.

Restrooms and Camping

Comment: You said you were going to restore the property with sewage and flushing toilets.

OPRD: OPRD typically provides flushing toilets at overnight campgrounds, not day use type parks. OPRD is not interested in impacting the local water system, which has limited water, with a flushing toilet

Comment: The water easement can be set up with free water – haha!

OPRD: Our goal is as low impact as possible. If it becomes an issue, we are always adaptable. This is not a one size fits all. There is a difference between a pit toilet and a vault toilet. Vault toilet is self-contained and gets pumped out and if it is managed well it is less likely it will smell. We have vaults at Clay Myers and the parking lot is larger than this one. OPRD has made the decision to go with the vault toilet.

Hunting

Question: What about water fowl hunting? Who is going to manage it and the safety? This is a ridiculous idea.

OPRD: As it stands in the plan OPRD is not recommending hunting occur in the park. However, ODFW has asked the agency to consider this use. There is little we can do if people are on the water and hunting from the water because jurisdiction over the water is DSL.

Question: Do you own the tidal water within the park?

OPRD: While we may be deeded some, I believe DSL jurisdiction trumps property ownership in how it is managed for hunting access – in regards to navigable waterways and submerged water.

Park Access

Comment: The traffic flow will increase significantly and there should be a turning lane.

Comment: I have not received the current or planned impact report.

OPRD: We already did the study last memorial weekend. The county public works dept. is the ones who decide on changes to the roads. They grant the permit because it is their county road. However, OPRD would be responsible for the turn pocket.

Comment: How about the horse trail at the west trail?

OPRD: No trails will be multi-use; they will only be walking trails.

Fish 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.

Question: Fish passage – is ODFW going to pay for some of the repairs?

OPRD: There have been no decisions with regard to the flood gate and the culverts, and we haven't got to the cost sharing. Any modification is going to have velocity impacts. We have some fish passage but it is not meeting the federal criteria. If the tide gate comes out there would need to be repairs to the culverts.

Comment: Except that at the 1939 photo Reneke Creek did not discharge on the south.

Comment: Part of the Reneke restoration is not natural. It would be rerouted it to a natural state.

Comment: People have to have an equal footing with the fish.

OPRD: Restoring fish passage will improve the roads because the creeks run alongside and underneath the roads.

OPRD: Fish passage requirements are going to be happening at some point. We do not want to be perceived as reactive but we also do not want to seem like we are jumping into long-term decisions.

Comment: We want to show you fish friendly tide gates that do work as opposed to breaching the dike.

Question: You say final comments need to be in by June 2nd – which side of your mouth are you talking out of?

OPRD: The comments for the park plan need to be in by June 2nd. The fish passage issues are ongoing and will not be resolved before June 2nd.

Comment: Some of the decisions for this park are related to fish passage and if those elements are implemented, then it seems that the decisions are already made.

OPRD: There is a time coming up soon to comment on the impact of things that will be done to the park. Then there will be another time you will be able to comment on the fish passage.

Question: How are you going to build your parking lot if you decide later to restore Reneke Creek because it will go through your parking lot.

OPRD: The type of parking lot that we are building is not permanent. We are putting a gravel parking lot in and it will be temporary.

Question: Where is the creek going to be re-routed.

OPRD: It will run into the marsh. There are different schools of thought about how the original path went. We haven't determined the new route at this point, that comes later in the conversation.

Comment: In 1939 the actual course of Reneke was between the barn & tree line. There is a culvert near the dike and could be restored.

Comment: We value fish passage but breaching the dike will create more hydrologic issues.

Comment: Our goal is not to take back everything to 1700s, but to develop a whole natural state.

Comment: Is Reneke the primary freshwater input into the estuary. It would potentially

compromise the freshwater estuary.

Comment: We all have big concerns about breaching the dike. Are you going to replace the freshwater wetlands if you breach the dike?

Question: Is there a beaver dam?

OPRD: Yes and those could be influencing the water levels in TDM. We recommend further studies to see how this is effecting the hydrology.

OPRD: The next steps on fish passage – we want to wait until Spring 2017 and pull all the data into a report.

Comment: If the gate fails, then the breach is the only choice.

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. The law states that if we change the tide gates 50% or more then we would be required to meet the federal standards. Fish friendly tide gates may not work because of the height of the gate and the dike. Cost, can be an issue.

Question: Is it all based on Reneke remaining in the freshwater estuary? If you remove Reneke then you would not have to make the tide gate larger. The tide gate can control the velocity and the tide level.

Comment: We are willing to have Reneke go through our property because it is the original path.

Comment: Are there any state laws that direct you to restore this back to its original state?

OPRD: There are no laws that when we restore something we have to restore it to 200 years ago. This has to do with state and federal fish passage laws.

Comment: Great interpretive element for kids with fresh/salt water marshes.

Comment: You will need to change the name of the park if you breach the dike.

Comment: The state and federal fish laws would not force TDM folks out of the area. If the dike failed and TDM flooded certainly the state and federal would work together to fix the issue.

Comment: TDM does not want to wait for the trigger, we want to come up with a solution.

Comment: What if you move the dike 150 feet toward TDM.

OPRD: Then you are potentially holding more groundwater near TDM, in theory, but the hydrology study will start to give us additional information.

Comment: Can you get a non-interested party to repair the tide gate?

OPRD: We need to adhere to state laws when modifying or improving our properties, just as we'd expect other agencies adhered to state law on their property.

Meeting adjourned.