

Oregon Parks and Recreation Commission

February 11, 2015

Agenda Item: 9a

Action

Topic: Oregon State Parks Columbia River Gorge Management Unit Comprehensive Plan

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Background:

OPRD has developed the Columbia River Gorge Management Unit Comprehensive Plan to guide resource management and visitor experience enhancements at Oregon State Parks within the Columbia River Gorge over the next 15-20 years. An advisory committee, the general public, partners, and park staff provided input on the plan. During the process a series of values and goals and strategies were drafted that will guide the strategy for managing the parks and enhancing the properties. This plan strives to balance recreation access, natural resource health, scenic beauty management, and fiscal responsibility.

Given the larger context of the National Scenic Area, OPRD has committed throughout the planning process, to acknowledge and share larger regional planning ideas with other agencies and stakeholders so as to assist in future region-wide planning efforts.

The Proposed Plan Concepts for the Columbia River Gorge Management Unit:

- Focus on identifying improvements within state parks property relative to how state parks contribute to the existing recreation, cultural resources and natural resources in the National Scenic Area.
- Include consideration of natural resource and scenic areas that should be protected within state parks property.
- Identify improvements that can be made to the overall visitor experience in already established state park recreation sites.
- Articulates the values, goals and strategies that will guide OPRD'S management of its parks in the Gorge for the next 15-20 years.
- Proposes two significant areas for redevelopment at Rooster Rock and West Mayer State Parks among many smaller facilities improvement projects.
- Coordinates Natural Resource Stewardship opportunities with facility development opportunities.
- Priorities identified improvement projects with budgets and phasing.
- Provides a summary of the many regional planning ideas that have been suggested and discussed by the public, stakeholder groups, and our advisory committee.

Navigating the Plan Document:

Section I. Existing Conditions – Read this section to understand the status of state parks in the Columbia River Gorge at the time this plan was written. This section explores the existing uses, facilities, natural and cultural resources, history, and geographical context of the parks within the management unit. Parks are described from a variety of perspectives, with an emphasis on visitor experience.

Section II. Analysis – Read this section to understand the discussion and collective thought behind the proposals shown later in this plan. This section describes the public process for gathering input about the plan, the opportunities and constraints that were identified, and an analysis of the major themes that arose during the existing conditions studies.

Section III. Plan Proposals – Read this section to understand the long-term vision for how OPRD will serve visitors to its parks in the Gorge as well as the management strategies that will be used to maintain these parks going forward.

Section IV. Plan Implementation – Read this section to learn about the steps for implementing the proposals in this plan, including the priorities and phasing identified for improvements to parks, the estimated costs, the permitting processes required to make this plan happen over the next 20 years, and the steps you can take to help make it happen.

Next Steps:

The draft comprehensive plan was presented to the public, partners and staff in October 2014. The resulting comments have been incorporated into the plan for your approval and adoption. If approved, staff will seek land use approvals in early 2015 and go to state rulemaking later that year to formally adopt the plan.

Action Requested: Adoption of Columbia River Gorge Management Unit Comprehensive Plan

Attachments: Columbia River Gorge Management Unit Comprehensive Plan

Prepared by: Jaime English