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# Planning for Beaver Creek State Natural Area & Ona Beach State Park

December 2012 Newsletter

## **Where are we in the planning process? (What's taking so long?)**

As you may recall, the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD) held meetings in March and April of this year to gather public input on issues and ideas that should be considered in formulating a plan for the future use and management of Beaver Creek State Natural Area and Ona Beach State Park. Separate meetings were held for the Planning Stakeholder Committee, park neighbors and general public. Comments gathered at those and future meetings supplement other information that OPRD has compiled on the conditions in and around the parks that affect the opportunities and constraints related to future park use and management.

The planning process has been taking longer than we anticipated, in part because of some key issues that emerged early in the process and the need to hire consultants and conduct studies to address the issues. We hired a consulting firm out of Portland, GreenWorks PC, to work on park planning and design with the help of their subcontractors, Kittelson and Associates and KPFF. While GreenWorks is helping with planning and design of park uses, the subcontractors are focused on issues related to highway safety. Kittelson has been conducting traffic studies and working with ODOT to determine whether highway improvements will be needed for proposed vehicular access from the highway to new park facilities east of the highway on recently acquired property adjacent to Ona Beach. KPFF is studying options for providing a safe trail crossing to the beach, either a bridge over or a tunnel under the highway. The consultants are currently awaiting feedback from ODOT on the results of traffic studies and possible design options.

OPRD and ODOT have also been discussing the potential for sharing the existing ODOT office and maintenance facilities located east of the highway and south of the "Ona curves." (The access road that serves the ODOT facilities is also the proposed new park entrance.) In addition, OPRD staff began discussions with the Oregon State Police regarding the need to relocate the shooting range currently located next to the ODOT facilities.

You may recall, at our meetings in March and April we showed a preliminary map representing areas where future park management will emphasize natural resource management, versus certain upland areas where we may consider recreational development, natural resource restoration or both. The areas suitable for development and/or restoration are far more extensive than what we would propose for recreational development, so a large portion of these areas is available for restoration. That map, which was formerly based largely on computer modeling of natural resource conditions, has since been refined based on field investigations at particular sites. The revised map is now available for review on our planning web page, titled "Opportunities and Constraints." (The web address is on the reverse side of this newsletter.)

## **What are the next steps? When is the next round of public meetings?**

Our consultants are currently working on diagrammatic designs that will represent, in general terms, where natural resource management activities will be the dominant uses, where various recreational uses are proposed, the maximum sizes and visitor capacities of recreational facilities, and how recreation areas would be connected by roads and trails. These design concepts will be the subject of our next meetings, when we will also share what we have learned about the highway access issues and trail crossing alternatives. We hope to hold the next meetings (Stakeholder Committee, park neighbors and general public) in late March, 2013. Meeting times and locations will be advertised in the next newsletter, on our planning web page and in local newspapers.

## Is any work being done in the parks before this plan is completed?

People who now use the park trails may notice the results of some management activities needed before the plan is completed. If you hike the trails in the south portion of Beaver Creek SNA, you may soon see some repairs to the existing trail bridge where the existing seasonal trail that crosses the marsh meets the uplands. A recent inspection of the bridge found that minor repairs to the decking are needed immediately, or the bridge must be removed in order to meet safety requirements. The seasonal trail across the marsh is among several trails that are being considered for removal, so the bridge may not be needed in the long term, but these decisions are awaiting the final outcome of the park planning process. If the plan calls for removal of the seasonal trail, this proposal will be accompanied by a proposed marsh crossing at a different location using an elevated boardwalk. For now, and until a different crossing is developed, the seasonal trail will continue to be used by some visitors, so it is necessary that the bridge remains safe for the trail users, as well as for paddlers passing under the bridge.

Trail users may also see other trail maintenance underway, such as existing trails on the recently acquired Forest Capital property adjacent to Ona Beach. Brush removal is needed along some of the existing trail routes to provide access for fire response and other management needs. These routes are located where there is little doubt they will become part of the park's planned road and trail system. Fencing or other barriers are also needed at certain locations where unauthorized access has been occurring.

## Remind me, what's the planning process all about?

Ona Beach State Park is a long-established oceanfront park located along Highway 101 south of Newport. Beaver Creek SNA, located a short distance inland from Ona Beach, was recently opened with initial improvements as Park-of-the-Year for 2010. We have recently acquired additional lands, adding to the total park acreage being studied and planned for. Most of the land recently added is adjacent to ONA Beach. A long term plan is needed to guide future resource management and recreational uses in both parks. In the planning process OPRD is taking a comprehensive look at natural and cultural resource conditions and management needs, outdoor recreation trends in the region, areas within the parks that are suitable for recreational uses, measures needed to avoid significant impacts on local public services and neighboring land uses, and related ideas and concerns identified through public input.

## Where can I review the draft plan when it becomes available?

OPRD's planning web site. As materials produced during the planning process become available, including the draft plan, any addendums to the draft, the final plan, newsletters, etc., they may be reviewed at the planning website at [http://egov.oregon.gov/OPRD/PLANS/planning\\_Beavercreek-Ona.shtml](http://egov.oregon.gov/OPRD/PLANS/planning_Beavercreek-Ona.shtml)

OPRD offices. When available, the plan can also be viewed at the OPRD headquarters office in Salem (see address below), and at the South Beach State Park office near Newport, at 5580 South Coast Highway.

## Questions or Comments?

Please direct questions or comments to:

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