

Lower Deschutes River Managers Meeting Minutes

November 4, 2022

10 AM – 1 PM

Prineville BLM

3050 NE 3rd St.

Prineville, Or. 97754

This will be a hybrid meeting/ in person and zoom.

Chair: Brenda Bremner (via ZOOM)

ZOOM: 837 4982 8347

Password: 434129

10:00 AM Welcome and Introductions : Brenda Bremner (BIA); Lisa Clark (BLM); Jeff Kitchen (BLM); Beth Hartwood (BLM); Lane Magill (Sheriff – Wasco Co.); Scott Hege (Local Government); Mike Millay (BLM); Josh Mulhollem (OSMB); Steve Memminger (OPRD); Corey Heath (ODFW); Katie Gosses (BLM); Chase Brown (ODFW); Mary Fleischmann (Facilitator); Brad Houslet (CTWS); Public: Rob Miles (Imperial); Gabe Parr (SRP Holder); Andy McCarthy (SRP Holder); Liz Shirley (NCOAE – National Center for Outdoor & Adventure Education); Austin Dannen (Sun Country Tours);

Review/Additions to agenda/Approval of agenda (motion/vote)/

Approval of Minutes from May 20th, 2022 Meeting

- Lisa made motion to accept the agenda, Scott 2nd. Motion passed
- Scott made motion to accept minutes from May 20th meeting, Chase 2nd. Motion passed.

Old Business/Ongoing business

- Updates of charter committee work /Jeff shared that he will get together with Lisa and Mary after the New Year begins. Will review the Members-Mary shared the review committee is made up of: Chase Brown (OPRD);

Jeff Kitchens (BLM); Lisa Clark (BLM); Steve Memminger/David Spangler (OPRD); Brad Houslet (CTWS); and Mary Fleischmann (Facilitator). Question brought up of why the review is important. Jeff explained that pre-pandemic meetings were set up a certain way and now we do meetings differently. Need to look at changes or improvements to the charter with more clarity and flexibility. Need to review this every 5 years for a quick review to make sure things are relevant. With staff turn overs thru the years, this charter paves the way of how meetings and other things on the Lower Deschutes functions.

- Discussion of transfer of permits from Segment 4 to Segment 1 when fishing is closed – Scott opened up the discussion regarding the transfer of permits when the lower section of the river doesn't have fishing. Question is whether Rec.Gov can make this happen. Need to also look at impacts on limited entry which Segment 1 has been in limited entry. Concerns for commercial is that they are stuck with permits despite bad or no fishing. Jeff gave background about this issue. The intent about the transfers was about fishing switches when fishing is down. Commercial guides wanted the switch. The idea was to 1) cancel permits in one section and add to another at no extra cost. This would require cancellations and new permits with no transaction fee. Rec. Gov. cannot set things up that way. Staff also cannot handle the work load. 2) There were concerns about hoarding of permits. Depending on availability there would not technically be hoarding, but would need to see how the mechanics would work on this. It would also require a review of the plan. 3) If started the transfers from Seg. 4 to Seg. 1, this would allow for greater use in Seg. 1 and the potential of more limitations for use in Seg.1. Question raised about how often fishing is closed. Discussion that when wildfires create issues that transfers from one segment of river to another isn't available. Cancellation of permits happen when a section is closed and refunds are made available. Another concern is that would have to broaden these transfers to one and all...difficult to tease out. Corey shared that last year's fish closure for majority of the season was rare. There has been only been one before. ODFW is in a position now to better predict for next year and at this point looks like next year will be open. Scott brought up that the issue came up by guides due to bad fishing, river blow-outs and not necessarily due to fish closures. Questioned whether Rec.Gov. can do any modifications. The next question is whether we want to actually do this. It was shared that Rec.Gov. did talk with BLM and they can do this but is far too complicated. BLM could look at a case by case basis and waive fee's which would require the need to cancel and then redo new permits. Bottom line is at this time there will be no major changes regarding the transferring of permits and fishing should be back

on track next year. In regards to the blow-outs, that is just part of nature on the Lower Deschutes. The conversation will continue.

- Review of the ODFW field trip: Corey gave history of why the field trip came to be. He explained how it works to count fish. Discussed bass in the river and how the trap works. We did see Salmon while on the field trip. Scott shared the importance of understanding about the fish trap and how it all fits together. He learned a lot about the intricacies of fish tagging.

New Business

- Fire season on the Lower Deschutes for 2022 –Lisa shared that there was on fire on private land and it did not touch BLM land. There was lots of support to stop the fire quickly. It was approximately 11,000 acres. Overall it was a fairly quiet fire season.
- Updates on Lower Deschutes boating with limits for 2023

Round Table Discussion and Update

- Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs –November fall Chinook work will be done on the Deschutes. Carcass counts on river through late January on most segments of the river above Sherars Falls. Working committee with Tribes to look at regulation changes with tribal fishing permits. Also looking at separating out camping permits and fishing permits – not linked together. Price changes as well regarding fishing and camping sites. More final information available in early 2023. Scott asked about the leasing of Harpham Flat so that tribes don't have to try to collect fees the way they are currently doing so, trying to make things simpler. Brad shared there have not been any discussions. A couple of years ago the decision was no and that remains the case. Can't figure out with Rec.gov how to make this work for their separate fees. Looking at more compliance in the coming year and also at 100% on line is the recommendation but currently on the backburner. With on line there will be no more tolerance of "I forgot to pay my fee". Scott shared that a discussion of how to better streamline the fees getting to the tribes should be ongoing.
- OSMB/Oregon State Marine Board –Josh had no updates.
- OSP/Oregon State Police – No one here to report out.

- ODFW/Oregon Dept. of Fish and Wildlife – Chase shared that the fall season is kicking up activity primarily due to deer hunters. Signage posted at river mile 2 regarding no E-bikes. Word is getting out and there were two citations. Corey shared October 27th there was a fish count at the fish trap and found 131 wild steelhead compared to last year's count of 47. November 7th the traps will discontinue for the season. Projection of 1000 – 15000 steelhead will escape up river this coming May at the start of the season. We should have an open fishing season next summer.
- Wasco Co. Sheriff Dept. – Lane reported that they worked a lot with fire work this past year. Not a lot to report with work with BLM. Lost 2 more deputies and so down by 6 right now. Working on recruitment. Thefts same as last year with car break-ins specifically at Sandy Beach as well as illegal camping for longer periods of time than allowed. Lane gave a shout out to Rob with Imperial regarding a donation of accommodations for the Annual Sheriff's Association fundraiser.
- ORPD/Oregon Park and Recreation Dept.- Steve had no updates.
- BLM/Bureau of Land Management –Report of multiple break- ins and not sure what to do. Have had cameras but those have also been stolen with most recent at Oak Springs. Lane shared that he still has working patrols and willing to do investigations but need list of where these activities are happening. Recreation site maintenance is back on track with floating toilet maintenance. Installed 21 camp rings at Mack. Bakeoven facility is progressing. Contract with Rob for river salvage is short term and only gets paid for cost of work. Looking at how this fits with SRP's and need clarity from the state office.
 - Segment 4 EA – There has been an increase use of jet boats as well as increase use by non-boaters. Historically there has been minimal need to do more but since then the increase of use on the river, specifically on segment 4 there is a need to review the impacts. Need to know the number of non-boater and motorized boater who are using this segment. Have worked with OPRD in the past to look at the EA and gather data when had staff available. BLM was reviewing acceptable change, then COVID hit and have been struggling with not enough staff since that time. Have data counters but again need staff, as does OPRD to collect and review the data. Know that use has exploded and that a focused effort is needed. Are the issues the same or are there additional issues. The biggest issue right now is funding as this effort is costly. BLM

asked for additional funding and did not get it. Once this is also put into motion there will need to be a public meeting for input along with lots of work which entails staff time, money, etc.

- BLM did hire a river manager who will be the lead operator in Maupin. Jeff's position should be in place soon.
- Local Government – Scott also touched base on the staffing levels in the Sheriff's office as well as concerns about staffing issues with lots of organizations.
- BIA/ Bureau of Indian Affairs –Brenda had nothing to report.

Public Comment

- Rob shared that this summer he did some camping on the river to just see first-hand what is going on at campsites on the river. His observations were the following: Pay boxes are broken into, maintenance at campground areas (Blue Hole) are lacking. There are falling down fences, no signage regarding parking or camping, bail wire fences are broken, wooden fences are broken and overall sites need some sprucing up, specifically Harpham Flat, Sandy Beach, Oasis and others. He asked about when roads are graded and how tight the roads are as he experienced losing a mirror on shuttle vehicle due to how close both vehicles had to be. This is especially true between Harpham and Wapinitia. He also described four spots between Harpham and Sandy Beach where road is extremely narrow. Talked about pinch points such at Oak Springs which with some brush clearance could make a difference. Concerns are pretty much maintenance issues.
- Liz shared that her groups runs trips during the week days. Asked about SRP's and shared that they may be looking at seeing some changes on days of use.

Final Discussion, Follow up, Actions Items, Recommendations to Managers

- **New Chair-** 2023 new chair for IIT will ODFW (Oregon Dept. of Fish and Wildlife)
- **New Chair** – 2023 new chair for Managers will be OPRD (Oregon Park and Recreation Dept.)
- **Mary wants to thank Brenda for chairing Managers this past year as well as Matt chairing the IIT.**

- Contract renewal for Mary to facilitate in 2023 / agency approval
- Re- invite Ben Kirsch, Attorney Deschutes River Alliance for a presentation.
- Charter committee to report to IIT for recommendations to Managers group.

Next Meetings:

- Schedule for 2023 for Managers and IIT meetings. 10 1m – 1pm
- February 10th 2023 – IIT - Location to TBD
February 24th 2023 – Managers meeting – Location TBD
- May 5th 2023 – IIT – Location – The Dalles
May 19th 2023 – Managers – Maupin
- November 3, 2023 – IIT- Warm Springs
November 10, 2023 – Managers – Prineville
- Summer field trip to be decided.

Meeting adjourned

Noon