

# Oregon Parks and Recreation Commission

February 23 2023

Agenda Item: 10d

Information

Topic: Driftwood Beach SRS-Easement to OSU/PacWave Update

Presented by: Guy Rodrigue

Driftwood Beach State Recreation Site is an approximately 27-acre state park site located north of Waldport. The site is improved with a parking lot, restrooms and trail access to the beach. Oregon State University (OSU) began construction of their PacWave South (Project), the Nation's first pre-permitted, grid-connected wave energy test facility, in June 2021. The Project is located in the Pacific Ocean, approximately seven miles off the coast of Newport, Oregon. The Project will eventually support up to 20 commercial-scale wave energy converters and transfer power to the Central Lincoln People's Utility District electrical distribution system. OSU is utilizing Driftwood Beach State Recreation Site (Driftwood) in Seal Rock, Oregon as the subsea cable landing and splicing location.

Under an Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA #8780) and an associated Easement, OSU has constructed a concrete splice vault under the parking lot at Driftwood Beach and installed the underground conduits needed for the project. OSU was also required to obtain an ocean shore alteration permit (#2920) from OPRD for conduits underneath the beach adjacent to Driftwood and obtained all other necessary state and federal permits and authorizations. Construction operations at Driftwood will occur in three phases, occurring over separate time periods.

Phase A began in June 2021 and was completed the week of May 16, 2022. The construction work involved the installation of the underground project components utilizing Horizontal Directional Drilling (HDD) and related equipment. Phase A activities included disturbance to the entire paved parking area and sidewalks at Driftwood. Figure 1 shows the new parking lot. Work also included areas necessary for the temporary installation of wirelines to guide the drilling



Figure 1. New parking lot and sidewalks at Driftwood

activity, both on the beach and through the wetland areas of the park.

During Phase A the park was open for pedestrian beach access. The park website included updates on the closure and links to the Project website at: <http://pacwaveenergy.org/>. Interested members of the public were included on an e-mail list for regular Project construction updates. OPRD staff met weekly with OSU PacWave staff to discuss project updates and resolve issues as they came up.

OPRD staff worked with OSU and partner agencies to resolve the inadvertent release (IR) of drilling mud that occurred in the wetland on the east side of Driftwood near Friday Creek (for a detailed description of the IR event, see the February 2022 agenda item). As a part of this process, OPRD requested that OSU hire a spill response specialist and wetlands specialist to develop a mitigation plan. OSU contracted NWFF Environmental (NWFF) and HDR, Inc. The contractors concluded that much of the bentonite was flushed through the system into the ocean after a significant rain event soon after the IR. However, there was still some bentonite clay in the stream bed in localized areas. This was confirmed by OPRD and ODFW staff during multiple site visits. The recommended approach to minimize impacts to the sensitive wetland vegetation was to employ passive restoration and monitoring to determine needed adaptive management. OSU adapted the Department of State Lands (DSL) Wetland Mitigation tool used for estimating permittee-responsible mitigation. This tool can be used to calculate mitigation associated with both wetlands and streams and is based on the linear feet of impacted stream and the acreage of impacted wetland. An estimate .35 acres of wetland was impacted by either the IR event or the disturbance necessary for the temporary installation of the wirelines. Mitigation costs of \$50,000 were calculated. OPRD calculated the monitoring costs independently based on staff time to conduct site visits and periodic evaluations of the site and related meetings. Those costs are estimated to be approximately \$11,500. Additionally, OPRD staff estimated the costs for the development of an interpretive panel to be installed at the park to be approximately \$5000. OPRD has worked with OSU and amended the IGA to incorporate the additional terms regarding mitigation payments.

Phase B will involve installation of cables (both subsea and terrestrial) into the previously installed conduit and splice vault infrastructure under the parking lot. Phase B operations are not expected to cause site disturbance beyond a partial closure of the parking lot for safety reasons. Phase B is not to exceed 180 days and is expected to be completed no later than December 2023. Once installed and tested, there is no routine maintenance required in the splice vaults, as the cables and splices have an expected life beyond that of the project (25 years). Therefore, recreational use of the parking lot will not be impacted once cables are installed. The only visible impact of the installed underground infrastructure at Driftwood will be the five manhole covers at grade level within the parking lot itself. These will be similar to utility manhole covers used in roadways, parking lots and sidewalks. In figure 1, above, you can see the outline of the vault (which will be paved over) and the manhole covers.

Project monitoring period (Phase C) is predicted to be 25 years and OSU will be responsible for decommissioning of the Driftwood Infrastructure, including the splice vault at the time of early Project termination or at the end of the 25 years of Project's FERC licensing (whichever occurs first) in accordance with the Decommissioning Plan. There will be no use restrictions resulting from the installed underground project infrastructure and no adverse impact to the public's outdoor recreation experience at the site post installation.

Improvements to the park system as required by OAR 736-019 include:

- Funding in the amount of \$10,000 for habitat restoration work at Driftwood (pending).
- Replacement of the parking lot and sidewalks, including resurfacing of all areas currently paved for vehicle use, both disturbed and undisturbed by Project activities (completed).
- Repair and upgrade of the drainage/stormwater system on the western edge of the parking lot (completed).
- A ramp and pathway that provides access from the parking lot to the restroom facility (completed). See figure 2 for one of two pathways to the restroom from the parking lot that also connects to the beach access trail.
- A viewing platform for visual access to the beach and ocean near the southwestern edge of the parking lot (completed). See figure 3 for a photo of the new viewing platform.



**Figure 2. Pathway from parking lot to restroom**



**Figure 3. Visitors enjoying new viewing platform**

**Prior Action by the Commission:** Informational item April 17, 2018, action item November 20, 2019 approving the easement subject to OSU meeting obligations and provisions outlined by staff. Delegated Authority Report from April 15, 2020 included Ocean Shore Alteration Permit #2920, Information Item June 2021, Informational Item February 2022.

**Action Requested:** None

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