

**MINUTES**  
**Historic Columbia River Highway Advisory Committee**  
**January 24, 2006**  
**Oregon Department of Transportation Region 1 Headquarters**  
**Portland, Oregon**

Members Attending: Bill Pattison, Jerry Igo, Art Carroll, Jack Wiles, Ernie Drapela, James Hamrick, Karen Viehoever, Cathy Nelson, and Carolyn Wood.

Staff Attending: Jeanette Kloos, Robert Hadlow, Ellen Dennis.

Others Attending: Amy Gillette, Kevin Price, OPRD; George Fekaris, WFLHD—FHWA; Diana Ross, USDA Forest Service—CRGNSA; Dan Bacon, ODOT District 2C; Mark Roddy, Bricklayers and Allied Craftworkers Local No. 1; and Teresa Kasner.

Bill Pattison, chair, called the meeting was called to order at 10:10 A.M. The Advisory Committee approved the minutes from the last meeting as mailed. On event of her retirement the committee recognized and commended Jeanette Kloos for her years of participation with and support of the HCRH AC.

**Public Comment**

Mark Roddy, representing the Bricklayers & Allied Craftworkers Local No. 1, in Portland, offered the services of well-supervised apprentices to assist on masonry projects along the HCRH and at other locations in the Columbia River Gorge. He sees this as an economical way to address deficiencies in masonry along the highway and an opportunity for apprentice masons to gain experience in their trade. Jack Wiles will initiate the paperwork needed for Roddy's crews to work in the State Parks.

*HCRH Signing*

Teresa Kasner asked that the HCRH Advisory Committee reconsider plans to replace the HCRH keystone signs along the highway with Historic US 30 route shields. Teresa would like to see continued use of the HCRH keystone signs, in part, because she had a hand in designing them. She also believes that the sign image is a strong identifier with the route. Robert Hadlow explained that the existing signs need to be replaced, because they are faded and are difficult to read. Replacing them with newer signs does not completely address readability, because the sign design is difficult for drivers to comprehend when traveling along the road. The proposed sign uses a brown guide sign background with white letters "Historic" and "Route" in the font and colors commonly used on highways in the United States. A black-and-white US 30 route shield with the "squared-off" type font used from 1926 to 1947 would be placed in the middle of this field. The sign has the color contrasts and elements that drivers recognize. After considerable discussion, the HCRH AC recommended that both signs be used on the HCRH, with the Historic Route signs forming the primary assurance sign for drivers. In addition, the keystone signs would be more of a tourist sign and used

only at main entrances to the highway and at key intersections. A subcommittee will review proposed locations for the keystone signs.

### *Introductions*

Jeanette Kloos introduced Cathy Nelson, interim Region 1 manager, as the new ODOT representative on the AC. She replaced Matthew Garrett who left ODOT Region 1 to become the agency's director.

### **HCRH Master Plan Revision**

One thousand copies of the Executive Summary have been printed and copies were distributed to the HCRH AC. Jeanette and OPRD will coordinate its distribution to avoid duplications. The revised HCRH Master Plan will be presented for approval to the Oregon Tourism Commission in Cannon Beach on February 28, to the Oregon Parks and Recreation Commission in The Dalles on March 2, and to the Oregon Transportation Commission in Eugene on March 15.

Committee consensus provided direction to Jeanette to add a comment in the section on unresolved issues regarding potential impact to the area when or if a casino is built somewhere in the Gorge. When a more definitive proposal is made then the impacts will be considered and the document will be amended.

The AC asked that a paragraph be added on page 70 to the effect: "When an interpretive sign needs to be replaced, a group of HCRH members and others as assigned will review the text to determine if changes are needed."

The AC asked that on page 23, language be added with a more proactive thrust to ensure understanding that the HCRH AC is in favor of recapturing lost view sheds and protecting and maintaining current view sheds.

The AC voted to accept the HCRH Master Plan with recommended changes.

Committee members will provide suggestions for distribution methods and media format, e.g., paper copies, CDs, etc.

### **Vegetation Management**

Ernie Drapela introduced Amy Gillette, OPRD, and said that great vegetation management and view enhancement work has been accomplished along the Oregon coast. Jack Wiles suggested a two-step process for vegetation management in the Gorge. First, an interagency group would update the Corridor Visual Inventory; with public involvement, this could take 18 to 24 months to reach consensus. In the meantime Amy Gillette will work to get county permits to do some limited site-specific view shed reclamation. The Forest Practices Act allows this type of work. According to Diana Ross the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area Management Plan supports this proposal. However, land ownerships need to be reviewed. Within the ODOT owned right-of-way, ODOT can do maintenance. If work would be on Forest

Service-owned property, with an ODOT easement, there would be an additional process to address. In the past, actual funding for work has been the main obstacle, according to Diana. Action is recommended at this time. Jack Wiles will work with Amy and Diana to set up a meeting to discuss this with Multnomah County. The AC voted to proceed with this plan of action.

### **HCRH Wall Inventory**

George Fekaris, Western Federal Lands Highway Division, Federal Highway Administration, presented the "Geotechnical Assessment, Historic Columbia River Highway, Retaining Wall Inventory," showing an inventory of walls along the HCRH from Larch Mountain to the Ainsworth exit. It categorized wall conditions from "needs action now" to "no action needed." The biggest issue was neglect. A table shows what can be done to prevent further erosion of the wall condition based on priority needs of the areas. The report includes recommendations including reconstruction, repair, or vegetation removal, with costs estimated at approximately \$1 million in 2005 dollars. Native plant society is in support of this action. There are no plans to continue inventory past MP 35 at this time.

Committee members will read the report. The geotechnical engineer will be available at next AC meeting to respond to questions. Jack Wiles requested that a map with mileposts and wall locations be added.

### **STIP Development**

Sandi Bertolani spoke to the AC about how STIP projects are identified and what specialty funds are available. Modernization ("mod") funds are the most flexible, but these funds are usually used for decreasing congestion on major highways. Bike/ped funds are awarded on a competitive basis; applications will be taken in the summer of 2006. HCRH projects can qualify for Transportation Enhancement (TE) funds, but applications are limited to one project per agency per maintenance district. Competition is fierce. Those proposing Transportation Enhancements need to submit notices of intent by March 23. Scenic Byway funds are another option, but HCRH State Trail needs do not fit the scenic byway criteria very well.

### **ACTIVITY STATUS REPORTS:**

#### **ODOT Update:**

Dan Bacon reported that a slide on the HCRH January 10, 1½ miles south of the Troutdale Bridge was cleaned up and the road reopened by the twelfth. Multnomah County is repairing a half viaduct on the Corbett Hill Road just south of Lower Corbett and Interstate 84.

#### **OPRD Update:**

Jack Wiles reported that OPRD has hired an intern, Emily Brown, to complete a plant inventory of noxious weeds in the CRGNSA. He also reported that the Rowena gravel pit is greening up. An interagency group is gaining momentum on tackling garlic mustard plant growth problem. He is attempting to identify funds for bio-control. He has

also talked with Amy Gillette to try to identify herbicides that can be used to control the invasive species, Japanese knotweed.

Kevin Price reported that the new Vista House lift will be delivered soon. The building should be fully open by spring break. The HCRH AC will be contacted about a Vista House re-dedication for May 5, 2006, followed by a month-long series of events through the first weekend in June.

The Volunteers in the Columbia Gorge are working on a plaza and a paver block trail to restrooms and a botanical trail at Lewis & Clark state park. Additional work to provide better access points to the Sandy River will be completed in spring after water goes down.

**USDA Forest Service Update:**

The Rowena Area Open Space plan is done. The noxious weed EIS is done. Multnomah Falls' new fire suppression water tank is full of water. The Forest Service will complete a consistency review for the Warms Springs' casino EIS because the Hood River site is included in options.

**FHWA:**

George Fekaris announced that Dave Sell is retiring from federal service on February 28. Reauthorization (passage of SAFETEA-LU) could improve transportation enhancement funding within the Forest Highway Program or projects in the Gorge. This is more important now because increases in material costs have driven up project construction budgets.

**UPDATES:**

*SAFETEA-LU*—There are three earmarks for work in the Columbia Gorge. These include bike facility improvements between Hood River to McCord Creek, undergrounding of Cascade Locks electrical lines and construction of a new UPRR underpass between the HCRH and Marine Park in Cascade Locks. It is proposed that the bike facility improvement funds be used to begin preliminary engineering on the HCRH State Trail segment from Mitchell Point to Hood River. There is an earmark in the transportation appropriations bill for the Cascade Locks electric undergrounding.

*Scenic Byway Grant Applications*—Two were submitted: Chenoweth Creek Bridge railing restoration and Mosier Civic Center.

*HCRH Interpretive Sites and Signs*—The project will need to be re-bid. All bidders were rejected. Funding will need to be increased significantly. ODOT will first bid out the Oneonta Parking and Vista project and another project in eastern Oregon. If there are enough funds after those are bid, this project will be re-bid in 2006. If not, it will be rebid in Federal Fiscal Year 2007 (which begins October 2006).

*HCRH Gutters*—This project will be awarded soon. It was budgeted at \$3 million, but both bids are above that amount. A contractor should be on board by the end of month.

*Oneonta Parking and Vista*—Final plans will be submitted this week. Because ODOT is still negotiating right-of-way issues with the Union Pacific Railroad, the bid date was moved to the first week of March 2006.

*Eagle Creek Overlook Fireplace Repair*—The Forest Service is the lead agency on this project.

*Casino*—The EIS will include no action option, the preferred Cascade Locks option, and two Hood River site option alternatives. The EIS has a unique purpose and need statement: “to provide economic self-sufficiency for tribes.” When additional information is available, the HCRH Advisory Committee will review for impacts on the HCRH.

*Vista House Lift*—James Hamrick mentioned that crews nearly succeeded in removing the section of the rotunda’s marble floor that will become the lift’s roof in one piece. Some minor fill will be required to complete the cover for the lift. The west side balcony is still leaking but the volume of water permeating the structure is significantly reduced.

*Interstate 84 Corridor Strategy*—The document is complete. I-84 projects will be reviewed for consistency with strategy guidelines.

*Rowena Crest Overlook*—Fence installation and ADA improvements to the trail are done. The Nature Conservancy will maintain the site and place a “you are here” sign on a kiosk OPRD will install for them. Dogs are not allowed on the Nature Conservancy property, so for consistency that restriction will be extended throughout the area. Dogs disrupt the habitat of ground-nesting birds in this area.

*Warrendale to Moffett Creek*—ODOT is requesting earmarks in future transportation bills. Jeanette has requested letters of support for projects by Feb 13.

*Mosier Waste Water Treatment Plant*—The treatment plant is near capacity and the risk of overflow of untreated sewage into the Columbia River is high. So far there has been no spill, but a leak of ground water into the facility from unknown origins is increasing the volumes being treated. The situation will only worsen because a local developer has completed 32 new homes and there are plans for 60 more homes in Mosier.

*City Programmatic Agreements*—The City of Cascade Locks signed the Cascade Locks programmatic agreement and sent it to Hood River County for signatures. The Hood River County Commission postponed action on the agreement from its January meeting to its February meeting.

*Eagle Creek Exit Ramp Bike Project*—The Forest Service has sent traffic control plans to ODOT for review. No issues beyond total cost.

*Crown Point Viaduct Restoration*—WFLHD will do a structural evaluation and will begin the CRGNSA permit application process by the first part of February.

*Viento*—Art Carroll and Bill Pattison will be the HCRH Committee representatives to the ODOT design team for this project.

*Wahkeena & Latourell Falls*—The memorandum of understanding is complete for the Latourell project. Dave Sell should be able to start drafting an agreement before retiring.

#### **DEVELOPMENT REVIEWS:**

Hood River County put a condition on the Tessmer proposal to include an ADA-compliant pedestrian facility. The developer will fund a bond for future work. The Hood River group reviewing bike/ped facilities will come up with a proposal, which would then be funded with the bond money.

Junki Yoshida is proposing to install a new waterline across the Sandy River (Stark Street) Bridge to provide service to a new restaurant at the site of the old Hagars at Viking Park. The line would hang off the sidewalk and be visible from the HCRH. Robert Hadlow asked whether the waterline could be attached underneath the bridge deck behind outermost longitudinal deck girders so it would not be visible from key viewing areas. The project is in Multnomah County's jurisdiction.

A property owner in The Dalles would like to replace an existing fence with a seven-foot wrought-iron fence covered with ivy. The AC has concerns and would like to pursue the issue. Jeanette will respond to Wasco County and seek additional information.

Wayne Stewart reviewed a proposal to build a pole barn on Larch Mountain Road. He said that it would have no effect on the HCRH. So the committee has no comment.

#### **MEMBER ISSUES/AGENDA BUILD/ADDITIONAL PUBLIC COMMENT**

Jerry Igo is encouraged that OPRD is taking on vegetation management issue. He also extended thanks to the Forest Service for completing the EIS on noxious weed management.

Jack Wiles and Kevin Price have been working on the issue of hazardous parking along the Sandy River section of the HCRH because it causes significant congestion. Master Plan has "remaining issue" paragraph about congestion and traffic control in that area. Ernie Drapela said that the parking along the Sandy River is also hazardous for bicyclists, who must move into the roadway to avoid car doors that are opening.

Karen Viehoever is transferring to the international travel and trade section at Travel Oregon. Travel Oregon will have a new HCRH AC representative at the April meeting.

Scenic Byway public service announcements (PSAs) are about to be launched on KGW-TV Channel 8, in Portland. There is one for each route and three will be presented each month, both in English and Spanish.

Carolyn Wood's term expires in June. She's looking for a replacement and will continue to come until she is replaced.

The HCRH AC asked Cathy Nelson if they could play an active role in the process of selecting a new Scenic Area Coordinator.

James Hamrick reported that there is a new Bike Partnership for heritage tourism. He suggested that they be asked to present information at the next HCRH AC meeting. Also, there is an April 1 bike summit in Eugene.

**NEXT MEETING DATES AND LOCATION:**

April 20 in Hood River. The AC will review the proposed Hood River casino site and Westcliff Drive.

September 21 at the Gorge Discovery Center, in The Dalles. The AC will look at the Rowena gravel pit restoration.

Attachments

- Teresa Kasner flyer
- Project Updates
- Development Reviews