

Lower Deschutes River Managers Meeting

February 25th, 2022

10 AM – 12 NOON

Zoom

Chair: Brenda Bremner/ Bureau of Indian Affairs

10:00 AM **Welcome and Introductions:** Scott Hege (Local Government); Mary Fleischmann (Facilitator/Admin. Assistant); Tim Schwartz (OSP); Brenda Bremner (BIA); Corey Health (ODFW); Jeff Kitchens (BLM); Josh Mullholem (OSMB); Beth Hartwood (BLM); Lane Magil (Sheriff- Wasco Co.); Todd Honeywell (filling in for OPRD); Kat Smith (BLM); Brad Houslet (CTWS); Jeremy Eisner (BLM);
PUBLIC: Sam Sickle (SRP- fishing and guiding); Rob Miles (SRP- Imperial); Ben Kirsch (Attorney- Deschutes River Alliance); Gabe Parr (SRP holder- Stillwater Fly Shop); Amy Hazel (and John – SRP holders board of Deschutes River Alliance); Curtis Norsen (SRP- Sunriver Tours); Troy Lafayette (SRP); Sam Sickle (SRP – Fish and Guide); Rod Woodside (Private land owner); Kevin Hoar (SRP); Nathan Van Amberg(SRP – Nates River Adventures); Brad Staples (SRP – Jet boat Fish and guide); Chuck McClaugherty (SRP – Oregon Adventure); Liam (SRP – Orion);

Review/additions to agenda/Approval of Agenda/ Approval of Minutes from the November 5, 2021 Meeting.

- No additions to the agenda. Motion made by Brad Houslet to approve agenda, second by Scott Hege. Motion Passed.
- Motion made to accept minutes from November 5, 2021 meeting. Motion made by Brad Houslet, second by Jeff Kitchens. Motion passed.

Old Business: / Ongoing business

- Updates on Lower Deschutes Business plan and fee proposals as well as coordination of fees for overnight walk in camping in Segments 1 and 4. Jeff gave overview of the Business plan and fee proposals that went before the RAC and then the Managers and has been approved. This will be an amendment to the existing fees which is a flat fee of \$5 per night for walk-in, bike in or horse in camping in Segments 1 and 4. There will be more information coming out next week but the hope is implementation April 1st. Mike Millay with coordinate meetings with State agencies, Tribes, Government agencies regarding how to implement the fees, specifically in Segment 4. The Federal registration still needs to go out and then have more public input and information to the public sent out.

- ZOOM account to try to continue virtual meetings. Mary is working with OPRD who want to see how they might be able to assist with this. More information to follow.

New Business:

- Review of Lower Deschutes Managers Group Charter: Charter was created in May 2018 to outline the work of the Managers Group and those who participate. The plan had been to look at annually, but with COVID have not looked at. Need to change some language such as a robust virtual options for meetings – update to current needs. Jeff will work with a committee to review, add language and present at the May Managers/IIT meeting. Those who volunteered to be on the committee are: Jeff Kitchens, Brad Houslet, and Mary Fleischmann, Corey Heath (or someone from ODFW) and ask who will represent OPRD.
- Fire season for 2022. Would like to have a meeting with agency partner's preseason. This would include fire personnel from all agencies. Due to concerns from past 4 years, need to have discussions if a fires starts, who gets notified, coordination so that everyone is on same page. Brad H. inquired about how to manage river closures...need to have more discussions. Brenda shared that she will talk with folks regarding having this coordination to set something up and expand officials from each agency. Those interested in participating are: Chase Brown (ODFW); Jeff/Kyle Hensley (BLM) (or Loraine Gillery); Brenda Bremner (BIA); and possibly Steve Memminger (OPRD).
- Delbert Anderson – was supposed to give a presentation but had an emergency and so not able to be present. Delbert is in the Artist in Residency program and is making plans to have cultural concerts on the river with coordination the tribes. This will take some work as many areas along the river do not have electricity and so looking at additional logistics.
- Rob Miles proposal regarding salvage/rescue operations on the Lower Deschutes River. Jeff gave introduction. Imperial River is willing to fill in for this support operations. Jeff shared in the past there have agreements, but most of those were basically a handshake. He is working on establishing a guiding document which will be more formal. Have not looked at the financial end of it before, but Rob has stepped up. Rob presented his proposal. In the past Mark Angel had done all of this work, but he is not available anymore. Rob has worked with him in the past. Rob shared that he has assisted before as he has equipment, boats and has removed things in the river before. He wants to provide the service but needs to have the ability to run a motorized boat in Segment 1. The big ask is to have access to the whole 100 miles of river on a need to basis (when needed). Looking at having no more than 4 trainings from Harpham Flat to Whitehorse for a seasonal training from October 15th to April 15th. No one wants to see anything motorized in Segment 1 but if there is an emergency need to be able to do that. Fees would cover basic expenses and

that people do expect a decent wage. He also asked about working on the John Day River with similar authorization for a when needed basis. Rob shared that this would also mean contacts with BLM and Sheriff dispatch when these salvage/rescue operations need to happen. Jeff shared that right now the focus would strictly be on the Lower Deschutes River – not the John Day River. Sheriff Magill is in support of the presentation and representation of Imperial. He is looking at getting his staff trained on jet boats and search/rescue and would like to partner with Imperial. Recognizes that there have been regular losses of boats on Whitehorse Rapid. Supports the request. Josh with OSMB shared he has no concerns regarding regulations from the Marine Board. He had a question about a written agreement with BLM that something is exempt regarding rules of motorized on the river. The plan states with the exception of segment 4 no motorboats are allowed on the river. Need some kind of BLM contract exemption. Jeff shared that BLM does have administration use of the river which there are historical uses outside of the norm for emergencies. They can issue authorization and a permit to Imperial for these purposes. BLM just wants clear expectations and also to make sure there is notification. Because of BLM's authority to take action in emergencies, OSMB is okay. Brad H. brought up trespassing on Tribal land and that when it comes to emergencies they can/will authorize people to do what they need to do. They will not interfere in emergencies, but should be notified. Kevin Hoar asked about how quickly this can be put in place, wants a timeline. Jeff shared that as soon as BLM can process this and in case of emergencies will coordinate with Tribes.

- Annual Law Enforcement Meeting: Lane shared that it is scheduled for April 8, 2022, from 8:30 am to noon at the Maupin City Hall. Lt. Schwartz with OSP is helping set this up. The plan is to meet with all the partners. He shared that they need to figure out a slot specific for guides and public to participate. Want to look at patrol plans, float operations, marine operations and leave time for questions. Brad H asked if Conservation officers have been notified, Lane shared they should be on the list.
- Todd brought up that Steve shared he had conversations with Managers regarding renewing/extending Mary's contract for facilitating meetings/giving administrative support. Motion made by Jeff to extend the contract, second by Scott. Motion passed. This will go through 2022.

Round Table Discussions and Updates:

- Confederated Tribe of Warm Springs: Brad shared not a lot right now as early in the season. Fall Chinook and Red band Trout carcass counts are wrapping up with boat operations. There is no season for Sherars Falls yet, and no changes in operations. It is status quo regarding COVID. Elections are coming up regarding Tribal Council.

- Oregon State Marine Board: Not a lot of updates. Question has been raised about the Executive Order 1426 regarding impacts on guides with wages. Does this apply to Federal waters? This order would increase minimum wage for federal contractors – so are guides on the Deschutes and other rivers federal contractors? Jeff has not seen anything coming his way regarding this order. He will ask headquarters about this – does it fit, do we need to be concerned, what would be next steps.
- Oregon State Police: Tim addressed Brad H. question regarding who should be invited to the Law enforcement meeting. Tim shared an invite will be going out. Vanderwerf will no longer be attending the IIT meetings and Officer Newby out of The Dalles will be the attending person. He is a new trooper out of Madras.
- Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife: Corey shared that their agency should be able to attend in person meetings come May as their offices will be open as of May 1st. Office space in The Dalles has changed and all staff now meets/has offices in the Screen Shop where it is staffed by the biological staff. May not be the best place for meetings. Upcoming steelhead season on the John Day and Idaho border as well as Columbia River is not looking great. ODFW does have a public outreach plan which will roll out in March. There will be public meetings in late March or early April.
- Wasco Co. Sheriff: Lane shared that they have a Deputy with the Marine program that currently has a broken leg so are making adjustments regarding coverage. They start off with patrols in April. They are getting reports of criminal activities on the river. Deputy Roberts is following up on these and working with JD (BLM) regarding patrol tactics. Oak Springs, Wapinitia, Blue Hole are having issues with boxes with campfire fees being hit. Their focus is on that otherwise not expecting anything out of the ordinary and expect more people this year. They are prepping for heavy fire season and there is movement for partnering with different RFJP fire districts. These are with Tyge Valley as well as on the Bakeoven side...there are benefits to get relationships with these RFPA's. Have a MOU with BLM. There may be a late fire season this year due to what rain we have gotten and then the growth of weeds...
- Oregon Park and Recreation Department: Todd is filling in for David and Steve. David is in the middle of hiring seasonal employees. Sidell will be the lead river ranger and patrols will be happening in May. Chris Parkins is back with OPRD, but working on the coast.
- BLM: Update on toilets. There have been replacements or removals for the past 5 years. This has entailed a lot of complex issues. Some of which is access to private lands. These toilets are on Segment 1 and 4. There are several toilets which do not meet DEQ standards. There are also several on Segment 4 that need to be replaced as they were lost to fire. Some toilets will be closed and replaced and there are those that are antiquated which mean a more extensive review process in regards to replacement or if they can be replaced. Some of the issues with some toilets are more complicated and may simply need to be closed. BLM does not

want to have problems like they have in the past which caught boaters off guard (despite the fact that they are supposed to carry toilets). The Scat machine has been replaced and has more permanent housing in City Park. There has been a lack of a formal agreement in the past, but after approval from the City will have a more formal agreement. This should be ready to go when the season begins. BLM is working with the City of Maupin to turn the Depot House into a public information center. Currently the internet bandwidth is not good, not hooked up to the main line, but will continue to work on this. Kat shared that the construction of the Bakeoven facilities is moving along. She is working with the engineers regarding the compound remodel/building. Walls are up, roofing is coming next along with plumbing and insulation. The building for crew quarters is the priority and hopes to be ready for the season. Have been working with Wasco County regarding previous permits which have been difficult to pull together, but the County is working with BLM to make this happen. A message was sent out to commercial SRP's regarding renewal paperwork which is due March 15th. (AOA paperwork). Beth wanted to thank the SRP holders, she appreciates their patience and getting paperwork in early. Jeff shared the annual spring partnership meeting for operators is scheduled for April 12th from 10 am to noon. Was looking at having meeting in Madras but will most likely be at BLM office in Prineville. Again mentioned Delbert Anderson as an artist in residence who will be offering mixed cultural events on public lands. These performances will be about tribal cultures and he has been working with BLM and the Tribes regarding use of certain sites on the Deschutes. Changes are happening in the budget. The final report of fees and how those fees are used will be presented at the May meetings, and will go out to the public.

- Local government: Scott had a question for the Tribes regarding the status of campground closures- re-openings. Brad H. shared that there are no changes at this time, it is status quo and closed to overnight use. Anticipates changes and it will be brought up again to the Tribal Council has elections coming up so shall see what that outcome is. Right now simply do not know.
- BIA- nothing else to share right now.

Public Comment:

- Gabe Parr had a question regarding issues last year due to closures and the new Executive Order. What is the outlook for 2022 regarding fisheries? Corey (ODFW) shared that the report is not looking good for steelhead. There have been 96,000 that have gone over the Bonneville Dam of which 20,700 of those are wild- this is the lowest on record last year. Looking at a little uptick, but not sure at this time. The plan is to getting information out early and at different time periods. ODFW hopes that you can know what to expect/ anticipate when closures happen by looking at counts at Bonneville. Discussion of other offerings to move things around to deal with closures...mitigation/plans, look at other seasons and fishing opportunities. Biggest question is how are guides going to manage this? The hope

is to carry the ODFW plan into the coming years and recognize that things will be different, season may even be different as well as fishing on different tributaries.

- Brad Staples shared he appreciated the comments. Wanted to know if there is an approximated timeline for the season? Brad shared there are no hard date or hard season until they talk to people. Want to have public meetings, can that be done ASAP. Corey shared that the latest would be late March or early April. Want to get a framework out soon after that meeting regarding what to expect. By the First part of May there should be a plan in place. Brad shared that taking into consideration how to count the fish over Bonneville Dam and that this is the 2nds best year of ocean conditions that has been had for year and that everyone wants to make sure to protect the fish in the Deschutes. Corey again shared that anyone can look at the counts over Bonneville to get an idea of fish conditions.
- Sam Sickles directed his question to BLM. He is booked for the season and has boater passes, can he get a refund if they aren't able to use them? Jeff shared that there is nothing in place to refund boater passes (the exception is if the river is closed due to fire or other emergencies). Can shift boater passes from one section to another. The managing agencies need to make sure that there is no hoarding of permits. Brad Staples added that they are actively buying boater passes, their season are filled and if there are restrictions or closures should be able to get back the money they paid out. There should not be issues if they are not able to fish. Brad also shared they can't move people from Segment 4 to 2 or 3---they have jet-boats, transfers doesn't work out for them. If ODFW closes the river to fishing, they should be able to get refunds. Jeff shared that need to look at incentives to allow refunds within what the plans allow. Need more background for discussion.
- Brad Staples shared that we will be looking at potential closures in the next several years as well as the fish cycle could be a problem this year and next year. There are a lot of dollars being put out for passes. Jeff shared that BLM will bring this issue up at the IIT. Meanwhile BLM is held to the management plan, under emergency situations that interfere with assess, they can give refunds. Can give refunds if purchased within 24 hours, but otherwise things are a case by case situation for refunds.
- Corey shared that from the fisheries point of view, differential seasons won't happen on the river.
- Sam Sickles asked about the recent full packet he received from BLM regarding renewing his SRP. He has a 10 year permit so was wondering why he got a renewal packet. Beth shared that they simply sent out a batch letter to get the information out – a scattered approach. They did not look to see who currently had a 10 year AOA....but will revisit how to do this in the future.

Final Discussion, Follow up, Action Items, Recommendations to the IIT.

- Review of Charter after committee meets to go forward to the Managers group.

- BLM budget presentation
- Update of ZOOM meetings/virtual/ physical locations
- Follow up with Delbert Anderson
- Transfer of permits/ from section to section (conversation). What flexibilities with addressing changes in climate change?
- Update with fishing on the Deschutes for the season
- Tribal lands and openings for camping
- Update from Law Enforcement meeting
- Update from Fire Emergency partnerships meeting.
- Update/discussion about Executive Order 1426 regarding Federal contracts and minimum wage and if that applies to Guides/Outfitters with SRP's on the Lower Deschutes.

Next Meetings (*tentative locations)

- IIT meeting: May 6th 10 am – 1pm - ODFW/ The Dalles
- Manager meeting: May 20 10 am – 1 pm – Maupin Civic Center
- IIT/Managers – Field Trip? August 12 – this totally depends on fire season
- IIT meeting: October 14th 10 – 1 pm – Warm Springs Enterprises
- Managers meeting : November 4th 10 – 1 pm – BLM, Prineville office.

Meeting adjourned: 12 PM