



## MARION COUNTY PARKS COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES OF THE MEETING

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**February 5, 2015 ~ 9:00 -11:00 a.m.**

**5155 Silverton Rd. NE, Salem, Oregon in the North Santiam Room**

**PRESENT:** Scott Anderson, Sandy Grulkey, Marty Heyen, George Moeller, Wayne Rawlins

**PUBLIC:** Ben Williams, Friends of French Prairie; Vickie Anderson

**STAFF:** Russ Dilley

**CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS: 9:00 a.m.**

### **APPROVAL OF NOVEMBER 20, 2014 MEETING MINUTES**

Wayne made a motion to approve the November 20, 2014 meeting minutes. Marty seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Ben said he was with the Friends of French Prairie (FFP) and was here today to present a request for an additional Marion County park at the current county right-of-way in Butteville. He distributed a handout and gave an overview. He said other than St. Louis Fish Ponds there are no county parks in French Prairie. Ben said Butteville was a major economic center in the past but now there is only the Butteville store, which is the oldest, continuously running retail business in Oregon. He said the Willamette River Trail has been established and Butteville sits on that trail. He said Champoeg Park is installing a paddle dock and the Friends of French Prairie is proposing the county create a park from the current right-of-way on Butte Street down to the wharfs. He said there could be landscaping and a pavilion with historical information. He said it sits between Champoeg and Wilsonville on the trail, but is currently not a safe place to stop because of chunks of concrete and pilings. Ben said the proposed park would add a component to the community and supplement the Butteville store, which is struggling. He said Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD) operates Champoeg State Park and Willamette Mission Park and own the Butteville store, which is separate from the park.

The commission expressed their support for this project but said there were no funds available from Marion County for acquiring this property. They strongly encouraged Ben to approach OPRD about taking lead and funding this effort. Wayne said there are annual grant funds available through OPRD to acquire property. He also suggested the Oregon Marine Board and Oregon Fish and Wildlife Department. Sandy said based on the parks master plan this is exactly what we want to encourage and suggested contacting independent kayak groups as a separate funding source. Ben said he's had a positive response from Willamette River Keepers. He said OPRD is sensitive to Marion County being the major landowner and until they have conceptual buy-in, they can't move forward.

There was discussion about acquiring additional property adjacent to the right-of-way neither of which is for sale at this time. Ben said another option is for Marion County to upgrade the right-of-way and access to the river. Russ said the right-of-way doesn't belong to Marion County Parks so the request would have to go through Marion County Business Services since they are the owners. Wayne suggested Ben contact Business Services for property descriptions. Sandy asked about FFP meetings. Ben said FFP has been in existence since 2006 and their role is advocating for the preservation of agriculture land and supporting local farming. He said their website is [www.Friendsoffrenchprairie.org](http://www.Friendsoffrenchprairie.org). Ben said he appreciated the opportunity to discuss this with the parks commission.

#### **COMMISSIONER UPDATES**

Sandy said she wanted to follow up on the discussion from the last parks commission meeting about the removal of the dam in Scotts Mills. She said there's an ongoing assessment of the dam by agencies and she's concerned about two human fatalities. Sandy said people walk along the crumbling dam and jump off the cliffs and are injured when they hit dam debris in the water. Marty asked if the cause of death was the crumbling dam or that they choose to jump off it. Sandy said it's hand in hand because debris is crumbling into the water. She said it's now determined to be a mistake to cover dirt with concrete. She said Fish and Wildlife, DEQ, and State Lands all agree that this is an obsolete and non-functional dam and the consensus is that it has to go. She said it's adjacent to the county park and not in the best interest of parks visitors. George asked if the dam is on Marion County park property. Russ said no, and ownership is unsure because no one wants to take responsibility. George asked about swimmers. Sandy said visitation to the park seems to be down greatly in the last two years because of these deaths. George asked what kind of use the park gets. Russ said when the weather is nice it's heavy on the weekends.

Wayne asked Sandy what she is proposing. Sandy said she was making a motion that "**in lieu of recent deaths and the accelerating crumbling of the obsolete dam in Butte Creek in the Marion County Park at Scotts Mills, we support any action that helps protect the health and recreational enjoyment of park visitors. Should the Marion County commissioners find themselves in a position of influence and are asked to give their opinion about the multi-jurisdictional effort to remove the dam on the basis of environmental safety, let it be known that the Marion County Parks Commission supports that effort for those reasons as well as the health and safety of park visitors.**"

She said one thing she forgot to mention in the introduction is that there's endangered species with dwindling numbers and everyone agrees the dam needs to be removed. She said she thinks it's a wonderful opportunity to send a letter to the board of commissioners that people matter too and we stand up for visitors that visit and have access to our parks. George said the motion was quite lengthy and asked her to repeat. Sandy repeated the wording and said it could be in a letter to the BOC. Scott moved that they table this motion until they have a time to read and get additional information. He said he doesn't have enough info on status, responsibilities, and can't take any type of action at this time. Marty asked if we would be saying we're supporting the efforts of other groups due to safety. Sandy said she was fine to table it for now. George asked Russ to follow-up. Russ asked for a wording change to the motion to say "**adjacent to Marion County Park**" instead of "**in Marion County Park**". Sandy agreed to the change and also to tabling the motion for now. George said we can gather more

information and perhaps act on the motion at the next meeting. Russ will look into this matter and see what he can bring back to the group.

Sandy said the annual meeting of Pudding River Watershed is in February and they have a new website. She said they're looking for board members and this would be a good opportunity or contact Anna Rankin who attended the last parks commission meeting. George asked about the proposal brought from Anna Rankin at last meeting. Russ said this issue has been going on for at least nine years without resolution. Sandy said a number of agencies have to get approval so this will take time. She said she doesn't want the commission to get bogged down with detail about the dam removal, but wanted to focus on the safety and recreational enjoyment of the park visitor. She said since the park is the neighbor that puts the visitor at risk. Scott said every water park has a certain inherent risk to personal safety and Scotts Mills isn't the only park to have a drowning, so to separate this from the general issue of public safety in parks he would need to understand the situation a lot better. Wayne said if there is something specific as a member of the parks commission to help with an issue, he wants to do that, but he doesn't want to send a letter to the board of commissioners telling them that if something comes up with a safety issue, they should support it. Sandy said that is her intent. Wayne said he doesn't want to tell the commissioners that. Sandy said she'd like to send the commissioners an opinion that if they're in the position to act to protect the safety and recreational enjoyment of our parks visitors that the parks commission will go on the record stating that is important to us. She said she thinks this commission is the voice of our residents and it's her impression from comments from some people that this commission has not stood up for the safety of its parks visitors and that it should be taking a strong role. Sandy said this is a way for this body to tell the commissioners that we think this is important. Russ asked if the commission wanted him to schedule a field trip to Scotts Mills at the next meeting. Marty asked if it would be their regularly scheduled meeting or a special meeting. Russ said after the next regular meeting is adjourned they would visit the park.

Marty said she was under the impression that Joryville Park is always closed. Russ said it is always open except at night. Scott said the horse facility is closed. Marty said she went to the Salem's Parks Master Plan meeting and it's an interesting process. She will go to the next two meetings as well.

## ACTION ITEMS

### Promotion of volunteer opportunities – George Moeller and Wayne Rawlins

George said he and Wayne met and discussed possible ideas or ways of approaching volunteer involvement with parks. He distributed a handout that outlined candidate activities that can be promoted as a group or individually.

- **MC Parks Volunteer website** – George said the existing site is useful but it could be revised and/or updated annually and made more specific regarding volunteer opportunities. He said a “community opportunities” section could be added and the “adopt-a-park” page needs to be developed more. George asked how much traffic the parks web pages receive. Russ said he's unsure. Marty said the website needs to be kept current because when it's allowed to lapse people don't visit. Russ said there are one or two completed projects that need to be removed, but the rest are ongoing. George asked why the volunteer application asked for the applicant's employer. Russ said he's unsure but some volunteer work may require a background check.

- **Explore approaches that other organizations/agencies have used to encourage volunteerism (e.g., Oregon Parks Association, State Parks, Salem Parks, etc.)** – George said the City of Salem Parks has an organization that helps people to support parks. He said he wants to speak with Tibby Larson about what they do to encourage involvement. Marty said the Jane Goodall Environmental Middle School goes to parks and removes invasive species and they may be a resource for some volunteer work, as well as other middle schools, high schools or colleges with environmental classes. Russ said there are already colleges volunteering at Bonesteele Park. She asked if anyone on staff keeps in touch with schools. Russ said no but he does keep in touch with colleges. George suggested the website have something about school opportunities.
- **Prepare and submit a newspaper item to announce/advertise MC Parks' volunteer opportunities.** George said he sees articles in newspaper about opportunities at City of Salem parks and thought we could do the same for Marion County parks. There was discussion about highlighting a specific opportunity. Marty suggested featuring a “Park of the Month.”
- **Prepare a newspaper article on MC Parks** – George suggested the commission stress opportunities for individual, community, and organizational volunteerism.
- **Develop a PowerPoint presentation to describe MC Parks** - George asked if the department had a PowerPoint presentation highlighting parks. Russ said there was only one prepared for a grant. George said it would take a lot of work to put together and use but some organizations are looking for opportunities to help and this may be a project we could get a volunteer to do.
- **Prepare and distribute a brochure that describes opportunities for volunteer involvement.** George said this can be put on the website and used in conjunction with the PowerPoint. Marty asked if there was a generic business card commissioners could hand out. Russ said there is a parks brochure. George said all parks commissioners should have some brochures they can hand out. Russ said they're available at the front desk and at the Travel Salem office.
- **Participate in MC Fair/State Fair/other events** – George suggested staffing a booth at the state fair or other events to distribute information on Marion County Parks and volunteer opportunities. Russ said this would work if the parks commission wanted to provide staffing but there is no county staff available or funding for it. Marty suggested a booth at Saturday Market, which has an area for non-profits.
- **Hold community meetings at Parks; invite Park users to an “Evening in the Park”.** George said this would give the commission an opportunity to discuss park programs and individual/group community volunteer opportunities. He said they could also organize a “Friends of Marion County Parks” group or a “Friends” of a specific park.
- **Hold a “MC Parks Day”.**
- **Actively search for volunteers to carry out specific, defined projects.** George said they may get more involvement if folks know what the parks program is looking for.
- **Explore opportunities to arrange park sponsors (i.e., businesses, organizations, neighborhood associations, etc.).**

George asked if anyone has additional items. Scott asked the other commissioners to take staff time into account if an idea really resonates because the parks commission will probably have to do it. He said the more specific they can be about what they want people to do, the more likely they'll be to engage volunteers and/or get a volunteer for that job. Wayne asked George if they could ask Cathy

Crocker to come to a meeting as volunteer coordinator to give feedback and ideas of what they can accomplish with Marion County's help. Russ said he would invite her and could also ask Tibby Larson to attend. George said the parks commission could devote half an hour to that at the next meeting and will provide this list to them ahead of time. Sandy suggested also working with unofficial volunteer individuals and groups.

George asked if any parks commissioners wanted to take on any of these items and then bring back to the next meeting for discussion. Sandy said she would look into a fair booth and will try to come up with ideas so it didn't have to be staffed all the time. Wayne cautioned that there may be a cost associated with a booth now. George said he'd like to pursue website options. Wayne said he will see if he can get state parks to put Marion County Parks brochures in their kiosks. Marty said she would talk to the Statesman Journal about writing a "Park of the Month" article. Russ suggested she speak with Zach Urness. George asked if she would also ask about having parks volunteer opportunities added to their local volunteer opportunities. He said it didn't need to be specific and can reference the website.

### **Bonesteele Park Work Plans – Scott Anderson**

Scott said he talked at the last parks commission meeting about educational opportunities and focused on Bonesteele Park, which is one of Marion County's two natural heritage parks and listed as open for educational opportunities. Scott said Bonesteele Park is a 30 acre park east of Salem. He said 10 acres date back to 1930's that are mixed woodlands and 20 acres are under agriculture production. He said the site lends itself to having amenities of an upland prairie. He said in 1998-2002 there was a significant project to eradicate invasive weeds and plant natives. He said they were trying to invoke a return to status of 1854, pre-European impact on this area. Scott said it was generally not successful but a lot of effort was put in by a number of organizations. He said both Willamette University and Chemeketa Community College were heavily involved but there has been minimal maintenance since then. Scott said he and his wife took on the project on their own to do what's outlined in the work plan. He said the work plan is more ambitious than is perhaps feasible.

He said he asked George and Jeff if he could represent himself as a parks commissioner when he contacted organizations about getting involved with Bonesteele Park and they were fine with that. Scott said he plans to contact eight entities: Chemeketa Community College, Willamette University, Marion County Soil and Water Conservation District, Willamette Native Plant Society, The Nature Conservancy, Federal Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), OSU Master Naturalists, Marion County Master Gardeners, and Marion County Public Works. He shared the work plan with some of these organizations and asked if they would like to join the county's efforts, and has received a mixed number of affirmative replies. He said he is currently looking at history work which was available on the website and is now creating a survey of the site so they can say not only what was done in the past but what is happening now. He said they hope to survey and record natives planted from April through the summer. He said once they get to the end of surveying the site, he may come back to the parks commission with a recommendation for something other than a natural heritage park, such as horse trails or walking paths, but they may find that with some enhanced annual maintenance it may still be viable. He said the invasives are pretty well spread and show seedlings on over 50% of the upland prairie, so it clearly has a problem with invasive weeds. He said he would like to get a concurrence from this body for him to represent himself as a parks commission member as he contacts these

organizations. He said he will ask if they can help with the survey, including CCC who did map work in the past. He said this is a work in progress and won't know what to recommend until the end of summer.

Marty made a motion to give approval to Scott to represent himself as a Marion County Parks Commissioner to these organizations when requesting their help with a Bonesteele Parks survey. Wayne seconded the motion. Sandy said if Scott wants to represent the entire board, then she would like to be given the opportunity to approve each individual action. Scott said what he's asking for is only the ability to ask for people's engagement in volunteer activities. He said if he needs approval each time he contacts these entities to ask if they are interested in volunteering and/or have students who would like to participate, he'll hang it up. He said he doesn't feel he can say he's a parks commissioner and wants to be able to introduce himself. Sandy said she understood this was a first step in contacting but not a decision in changes. Scott said the approval would be to ask them to engage in survey work and for access to any electronic files they may have. He said he won't do anything beyond the survey until he comes back to report to the commission. The motion was then voted on and all commissioners voted to approve except for Scott who abstained.

George said the parks commission appreciates Scott work. Sandy asked if this could be added as an agenda item for next meeting and encouraged him to fully document his efforts so it could be shared on the website and possibly as a "Park of the Month." Scott said having looked at the site and seeing what was meant to be done, he wants to be careful how he approaches this project. He said he questions if the original project was viable given the size and amount of invasives that circled the site, and to maintain something like this may be beyond the ability of the parks program.

## UPDATES

- Russ said he and Jeff discussed the idea of gates at Bonesteele Park during the last parks commission meeting. He said they discovered the wood chips were being dumped at night. He said if they have gates, they can be locked at night and that will stop this type of thing. Scott said last week there was garbage and cans dumped there too. Russ said they met with the board of commissioners at a management update meeting and discussed the gates. He said the BOC weren't opposed to it, but due to the parks ordinance needed a recommendation from the parks commission before moving forward. He said he is asking for a recommendation from the parks commission if they like the idea. He said the park would receive gates, which will be opened each morning and closed at night. He said the park would also become a seasonal park, open May through October. Scott made a motion that the parks commission recommend to the board of commissioners that they authorize the gating and locking of Bonesteele Park and change it to a seasonal park. Marty seconded the motion. Wayne asked the cost. Russ said the gates cost about \$3500 and they have put this cost in a capital improvement request for next budget year. He said the county recently changed security companies at a reduced cost so adding Bonesteele Park will be absorbed. The motion was voted on and passed unanimously.
- Russ said Jason Franz, who created the BMX trails at Rogers Wayside, contacted him recently. He said the City of Silverton is pushing bike trails from town through the Oregon Garden and connecting to Rogers Wayside. Mr. Franz requested permission to create a bike trail along the

outer edge of the park property. Mr. Franz said they would create and maintain the trail as they do the other trails. Russ asked if the parks commission would support this. All agreed this sounded good.

- Russ said the playground equipment for Scotts Mills has been delivered. He said it will be installed the second week of April and the operations crew will remove the old equipment, which will go to the City of Scotts Mills for their city park. He said then the operations crew will level out the ground and the installer will put up the equipment. Wayne asked if this was purchased with grant funds. Russ said it came from \$45,000 in general fund dollars.
- Russ said the well at Spongs Landing Park should be up and running in a month. He said all the black locusts trees are down, the stumps have been treated, and juvenile crews are chipping and removing the wood.
- Russ said the summer temp from past years will not be returning so he will meet with operations staff about getting a new summer temp.
- George asked about PacWest disc golf. Russ has not heard from them since the last Parks Commission meeting.
- Wayne said there has been a downturn in real property activity across the United States and asked for an update on how funds are doing at next meeting. Russ said they have stayed pretty steady. Wayne said in that case no report was needed.

**NEXT MEETING: TBD**

**ADJOURN: 11:50 a.m.**