



MINUTES

Morrow County Parks Committee Minutes

*Tuesday, September 19, 2023 |1:30pm – 2:30pm| Meeting called to order by Mike Gorman
Location: Morrow-Grant County OHV Park, 71000 E. Morphine Ln., Heppner, Oregon 97836*

Meeting start time was delayed due to technical issues with zoom live feed.

In Attendance – Roll Call

In Person: Rose Kylo, ♦Jeff Wenholz, *Glenn Maret, *Dean Robinson, John Bowles, *Kim Cutsforth, Stephen Wreccics, ♦Roy Drago Jr., Landon Jones, *Geroge Shimer, William Messiclo, Robert Cooley, *Kirsti Cason, *Greg Close

Digital/Electronic Attendance: *Sheryl Bates, *Mike Gorman

*Denotes Morrow County Parks Committee Member ♦Denotes Morrow County Board of Commissioner

Pledge of Allegiance

Pledge of Allegiance conducted.

Minutes Review

The minutes from March 07, 2023, were reviewed.

Motion to approve as submitted: Sheryll Bates

Seconded by: Dean Robinson

Approved: with no changes.

Parks Committee Seats

Kirsti C. – Information regarding the Morrow County Parks Committee (MCPC) seats that were currently vacant, appointed positions and those positions that there have been applications received for.

Coming due March 2024 will be Boardman Parks and Recreation District (BPRD) who currently has Lynn Prag listed as the representative. Morrow County Public Works Department representative who is represented by Greg Close, this position has been filed by the County Parks Manager in the past. Public Park User Group for Motorized Recreation and is currently represented by Mike Gorman.

In the March meeting the committee will review the Park User Group for Motorized Recreation that is open to the public, applications are available for anyone interested in this position. The Morrow County Public Works Department selects their representative and informs the MCPC who the representative is. BPRD will need to provide meeting minutes to MCPC for the formal appointment. Committee applications are available online, and with this agenda packet for anyone that is interested. Once reviewed and recommended by the MCPC the committee list goes to the Board of Commissioners for their review and final approval.

Parks Information & Requests

Kirsti C. – Funding assistance to help with revisions of the County comprehensive plan for the recreation element from Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD) Local Government and County Opportunity Grant programs was researched and OPRD said that the programs were not set up to fund that type of work. They can however work and assist with a park master plan. Discussions with Tamra M. from the Planning Department indicated that it may not be necessary to update the comprehensive plan and believes that changes could be completed internally with some documentation and updates to the Parks Master Plan.

Will be applying for an upcoming Local Government grant from OPRD in hopes to replace siding and windows on the Cutsforth 4-H/Darcy Coil building.

Park users requests continue to have power upgrades as Cutsforth and Anson Wright still have several 30amp services and newer recreation vehicles (RV's) often use 70amp services. The other request is larger sites, with more space between sites. No other complaints or issues that aware of, if there are Greg may be able to provide more detail on that.

Youth Hunt Applications

Kirsti C. – There is a second season spike only youth elk hunt flyer included in the agenda packet and online. There is an application online or can request hard copy. The hunt is for Morrow and Grant County resident youth only, this is a way to give back to the county's residents in which the OHV park resides. Youth must complete the application and turn in by the deadline to the Morrow County Public Works Department. In the past there have been six (6) and ten (10) youth hunters permitted in the park. The past couple of years there has been six (6) or less as there were not enough applications to fill all the allowed amount. If you know of anyone that may be interested, please help spread the word as would like to see all available spots filled to promote hunting and outdoor recreation.

Question was raised as to how youth are selected?

Youth turn in an application, and they are reviewed to make sure that reside in Morrow or Grant County then try to fill with equal numbers from each county. If not enough to split equally fill the remaining with the other applicants.

Mike G. asked for Clarification regarding out of county youth that may have a connection via a relative such as grandparent in Morrow or Grant County to see if they could apply for the hunt.

Kirst C. – Explained that when the program (2nd Season Youth Elk Hunt) started it was decided that priority was to be given to those residing in the counties as a courtesy and to give back to the local communities for supporting the OHV Park.

Sheryl B. – Questioned when is the hunt and can applications be emailed? To try and help spread the word prior to hunt taking place.

Kirsti C. – Yes, can email the Applications. Applications are due October 9, 2024 for the verification and selection process, actual hunting season takes place November 11 – 19. Those that are successful applicants will be required to purchase Oregon hunting licenses, tags, and any other items necessary for hunting. The County only provides land in which the youth may hunt on in specified area, if have a successful hunt park personnel

help retrieve the animal and bring back from the field to the main campground area. Applications are also available on the County main web site and on the County Parks Events page.

Anson Wright Park – Updates/Projects/Grants

Greg C. – Liz Morris Camp host again this year and has helped with upkeep of the park and greeting park guests. Anson Wright is what I believe is a diamond in the rough. Signs at the park were repainted providing a fresh new look helping grab travelers' attention as they pass by. No major projects scheduled at this time. The goal in the future is to enlarge the campsites.

Cutsforth Park – Updates/Projects/Grants

Greg C. – Electrical work with power upgrades as some boxes are just outdated and need to be replaced as they keep grounding out. Cabins have had heaters replaced, painted the interior, replaced mattresses, and added indoor solar lighting. Main gate has been upgraded to have a lock with a gate remote so those that have property on the back side of the park can still have access.

OHV Park – Updates/Projects/Grants

Greg C. Kathy Dill-Spears stepped up after Don Aschoff moved to Cutsforth to fill that vacancy. Ashley Bowling was brought on as an assistant to help Kathy and give her a break. Ashley was already at the park staying as spouse is part of the Oregon Department of Forestry Helicopter crew stationed at the park.

Overall things are going well this year. A Park Ranger full time employee was hired in August that has made a significant difference on the amount of work that is being completed and issues that are quickly resolved.

Group discussion with Greg replying as to what the job duties are for the Park Ranger position.

Oregon Department of Forestry Helicopter crew started using the Helipad in early June. The new asphalt pad is not holding up and has pitted and gouge marks that cause issues for landing. Will be pouring concrete over the Helipad to correct this issue.

Helipad was created for emergency use, however ODF has also been using it during peak fire season to help locate the equipment centrally in area for fire response. There is still room available at the park should LifeFlight be necessary.

The Landing hosted by Off Road Trails and Treats Kellie French and Linda Tagg their contract will be up at the end of the 2023 camping season. Current operators are unsure if want to continue or not in future. Will put out a Request for Qualifications this fall or spring. Discussions regarding having at the park and user comments when it is open or closed.

Logging and Thinning at all parks will be taking place. Mainly thinning for safety. Some of the larger logs will be saved and stored at the park for turning into lumber for use at the park. While some others will be utilized for firewood that is sold to campers at all the parks.

Group discussion regarding who is surveying and marking the trees and other aspects of where and how materials harvested would be utilized. Greg explained that he has been working with Brian Spivey from the Heppner Ranger District to determine what is a safety hazard and is also putting together a plan for harvesting for sale to lumber mill.

Public Comment

Greg C. – Asked the question, is there anything anyone would like to see at the parks as it helps provide direction.

Kirsti C. – A lot of requests for events in the fall.

Discussions to have fishing derby in the fall in addition to one in the spring as seems to be well attended.

Mike G. – What is the park usage this year, is it average below?

Greg C. – unsure but appears to be at least average or above. Offered an explanation that it is not what it was during COVID as park usage skyrocketed during that time once opened as everyone seemed to want to get out and the parks were one of the few places that people could get out and enjoy, so things are down from that but still doing well.

Mike G. – commented that sees many travel trailers and ATVs go by his property so was guessing that would at least be average.

Roy D. Jr. – Question all the amenities and items are available at all the different parks. Is fuel available?

No fuel is not available due to land use regulations thus the reason attempting to get it updated, food at landing, parts room was here once but did not work out. Would like to see a small convenience store with fuel, or even a vending machine. Have vending machines but are going to be utilized for laundry mat area once completed. Also do not want to tread on The landing contractor that also sells small items for now it is a goal to eventually have a small store.

Jeff W. - questioned if there are any plans to install Electrical Vehicle Charging station/s?

Not at this time, Greg replied. Kim Cutsforth commented that you can get an adapter for the RV powered sites that work. Kirsti explained only for the 50-70amp sites as the 30amp sites wouldn't accommodate the adapters.

George Shimer wondered if Cycle Oregon utilized any of the parks in the past or plan in future. Kirsti explained that looked at using the parks but because of the location on the route it was determined that would be used as a rest stop or safety check point. Boardman Parks installed fish cleaning stations, discussions regarding cost and how they work.

Glen M. – explained that work for Pickle ball/basketball courts are moving forward. As well as Phase II talking about another set of docks and more playground equipment. Tree issues that have fallen and clean-up of trees in progress.

Kim C. – Willow Creek Parks reservoir low water levels but still seeing boaters, and the dock needs to be replaced next year. An overlay of asphalt at the RV Park due to asphalt cracking and failing is likely going out to bid in spring. Diane and Gary Lent are hosting and performing maintenance as Vern Keithly retired from doing maintenance at the park. The pool had a good season. Upgraded heater at the pool, repaired roof and looking at resurfacing the pool and spa.

Kirsti C. – mentioned to Kim to have Willow Creek Parks look into the OPRD Local Government Grant funding opportunities for the pool and the bathhouse/restroom repairs as may be an option as seen a couple in the past year approved assist with projects.

Kim C. - Mini Golf Course is back on track Silver Creek, Howard Beth Bryant Foundation and the Heppner Junior/Senior High School TSA program are working together to complete the 18-hole course that will have a clover in the middle. The Mini Golf course will be located where the old pool was that is currently a rock garden park.

Next Meeting and Wrap-up

March 19, 2023 | Time: 1:00p.m. | Morrow County Public Works, Conference Room, Lexington, Oregon 97839

Morrow County OHV Park Site Tour and Lunch at The Landing is available to those that wish to participate.

Motion to adjourn was made at 11:08 a.m. and was passed unanimously.

Minutes Submitted by: Kirsti Cason
 Morrow County Public Works Assistant

Reviewed on: March 19, 2024

Motion to approve made by: Dean Robinson

Motion Seconded by: Greg Close

Date Approved: March 19, 2024

Corrections if any to be noted here:

No changes, minutes approved as presented.