

DRAFT

**MINUTES
JOINT MEETING OF ADVISORY BOARDS
CORVALLIS PARKS, NATURAL AREAS AND RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD
BENTON COUNTY NATURAL AREAS AND PARKS ADVISORY BOARD
GREENBELT LAND TRUST BOARD
MARCH 17, 2011**

Attendance

Richard Bryant, BCNAPB	Don Williams, PNARB
Charles Fisher, PNARB	Lynda Wolfenbarger, PNARB
Betty Griffiths, GLT & PNARB	Karen Emery, Corvallis P&R Director
Phil Hays, BCNAPB, PNARB & GLT	Steve McGettigan, Corvallis P & R, staff
Tom Kirch, BCNAPB	David Neighbor, Corvallis P & R, staff
Seymour House, GLT	Jeff Powers, BCNAP Director
Joanne McLennan, GLT	Al Kitzman, BCNAP, staff
Jack Mykrantz, GLT	George McAdams, BCNAP, staff
Michael Pope, GLT Executive Director	Mary Simpson, BCNAP, staff
Randy Rasmussen, BCNAPB	Teresa Nix, Recorder
Janine Salwasser, BCNAPB	
Ellen Tappon, BCNAPB	

I. INTRODUCTIONS

Corvallis Parks and Recreation Director Karen Emery opened the meeting at 6:30 p.m. She said this is the second annual joint meeting of the Corvallis Parks, Natural Areas and Recreation Advisory Board, the Benton County Natural Areas and Parks Advisory Board, and the Greenbelt Land Trust Board. This will be a work session and an update of the subcommittee work that has been performed over the past year. Self-introductions followed.

II. WATERWAYS SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATE

Greenbelt Land Trust Executive Director Michael Pope said the establishment of a waterways subcommittee was discussed at the last joint meeting. That effort morphed into two subcommittees – one looking at the Albany to Corvallis reach of the Willamette River, and the other looking at the Jackson-Frazier Watershed.

Willamette River

Pope showed a slide of the Bowers Rock to Truax Island section of the Willamette River. He said efforts around this reach focused on planning and assessment work. Efforts are being made to reach out to land owners to discuss conservation and restoration work; this is an ongoing process. The subcommittee has also discussed opportunities closer to Corvallis in the area of MLK Park and properties further down river; this is in the early stages. The subcommittee has discussed the potential of accessing Meyer Memorial Trust Foundation funding for a more formal assessment along this reach. A potential next step is the formation of a design group.

Pope showed a slide of the Stellmacher-Waggle Conservation Easement. He noted the broad floodplain, the historic channels, and the dynamic nature of the river along this area. The subcommittee discussed having a design group look at this reach and further upriver. The Oregon Water Enhancement Board (OWEB) has identified the Willamette as a focus river for investment; this will make grant efforts much less cumbersome. He then showed a slide of the Little Willamette Conservation Easement and Half Moon Bend area.

Benton County Natural Areas and Parks Director Jeff Powers added that the City of Albany is in the process of tweaking the East Thornton Lake Master Plan; there are interesting partnership opportunities with the City of Albany.

Betty Griffiths said that Kent Daniels has been gathering information from the City regarding Berg Park. Emery related that Berg Park will undergo new master plan process in 2012. She added that the Corvallis Public Works Department is considering flooding parts of Berg Park to create wetlands to cool the Willamette River; a couple of ways to cool the Willamette River are being considered and a final decision has not yet been made.

Jackson-Frazier Wetlands

Pope showed slides of Owens Farm and Jackson-Frazier Wetlands. He said the subcommittee decided to focus on properties already in ownership by the City of Corvallis, Benton County, and the Greenbelt Land Trust. Each jurisdiction has its own management plan. The first steps were to review and find commonalities among the master plans, and then to start talking about jointly working on grant funding and enhancement opportunities.

Powers said he has been working on a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) which would focus on commonalities between the three jurisdictions and a unified approach in long-range planning. Grant applications may play out well with three agencies cooperating on one resource. He hopes to have a draft MOU for subcommittee review very soon. The draft would go to the three jurisdictions for approval and could then be put in place for upcoming grant opportunities.

Pope reviewed enhancement work the Greenbelt Land Trust has done; part of the grant seeking would probably be to continue that enhancement work on the City's portion and then look at invasive species control issues and perhaps reintroduction of some key species.

Griffiths said the subcommittee talked about how far up to go and decided to start small. Once the MOU is initiated, the subcommittee has talked about engaging Good Samaritan Hospital and other property owners.

Janine Salwasser asked about the opportunity for a broader MOU that would cover the entire county. Pope said the subcommittee suggested that the MOU define the responsibilities for this project; it could be used as a model down the road. Powers noted that Jackson-Frazier has been pointed to as a watershed that could be used as model for Benton County; he feels there will be opportunities to expand on this in the future.

III. TRAIL ASSESSMENT SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATE

Powers said one of the directives that came out of the last meeting led to the establishment of the Trail Assessment Subcommittee. The subcommittee saw value in compiling data related to the availability of trails and connectivity opportunities, modeling after what the state has done, and with the idea that information be presented to the public in a unified and consistent way.

Powers gave a slideshow presentation; he thanked Steve McGettigan, Corvallis Parks and Recreation, for his efforts in putting together the slides, and related that the City has been helpful relative to its intern. McGettigan said that intern Jacob Zumwalt came on board in February, 2011, and has been collecting GPS data throughout the entire City trail network. The subcommittee has discussed having Zumwalt begin to map County points. Powers said the subcommittee discussion has been around what data should be collected, again with the idea of being consistent agency to agency in how information is presented to the public.

McGettigan said that collected information includes position points, pathway tracks, distance, and elevation data. The focus is to get the raw data then sit down with the three agencies to figure out how to best present it to the public. Efforts have involved communication with the City and County GIS Coordinators and with OSU. One finished product will combine trail GPS track, elevation and distance profiles, and aerial imagery for public use. Data collection will encompass City and County trails, Open Space points, and other park attractions.

Several of those present expressed appreciation for the good work. McGettigan said he will pass the compliments along to the Zumwalt who could not be present this evening.

IV. TRAIL CONNECTIVITY SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATE

Phil Hays drew attention to *Proposed Trail Connections in Benton County*, distributed in packets. A directive that came out of the last joint meeting led to the establishment of a Trail Connectivity Subcommittee to propose potential trail connections between parks and natural area properties in and around Corvallis and in Benton County. The subcommittee proposed an initial list of connections in and around Corvallis; the list grew over the summer as the County held meetings as part of an overall master plan update during which people were asked where they would like trail connections in their area.

Hays said the proposed trail connections are divided into five parts with a map for each one. He reviewed the suggestions and showed the map for each section: Corvallis – Philomath Area (Benton County Central); North Albany and Adair (Benton County Northeast); Kings Valley (Benton County Northwest); Alsea Area (Benton County Southwest); and Monroe and Bellfountain Area (Benton County Southeast). There are a total of 55 potential connections identified, about half of which are in Corvallis. The subcommittee did not place any priority on the connections and did not identify potential uses (multi-modal, bike paths, etc.).

Hays said the subcommittee completed its goal of identifying these potential connections and the question is whether there is any future need for this subcommittee or whether it should be left to the City and the County to prioritize what it wants to do. Griffiths said some prioritization by the

subcommittee would be helpful; she noted that the members have the knowledge and there is a possibility that all of this work might be shelved without follow up from the subcommittee. Salwasser said that it would be helpful if the subcommittee could do some feasibility ranking.

Hays commented that the County Public Works Director has been very appreciative of this information which can now be used to encourage that connections be included as part of future road work.

Emery said that this work will be used as a resource when the City updates its trail plan. The City cannot adopt this as presented because of the need to go through a public process, but it will be useful background information.

Ellen Tappan said the subcommittee discussed whether it is the right body to assess priority or whether that should be left to staff. Powers said the subcommittee has value and he suggested that prioritization could be a blending of subcommittee and staff efforts. Emery agreed; she said that it is helpful to have staff serve on the subcommittee, and that it is important to keep active communication so efforts don't get lost.

There was general agreement that there is still work for the subcommittee, and that the next work for the group should be related to feasibility/prioritization.

V. TRAIL WEBSITE CONCEPT

Pope reviewed the concept for a website (bentoncountytrails.org) that would include detailed information about the entire trail system in Benton County. Trail users could click on a particular trail and find information including elevation, level of difficulty, plant species, parking areas, biking, horses, etc. He reviewed discussions between the City, County, Greenbelt, and OSU with a web designer in Portland called *The Other Firm* which has submitted a proposal. The first phase would be to build a flexible basic platform. The next step is to seek funding for the project. The Greenbelt Land Trust is taking the lead in this effort.

In discussion and in response to inquiries, Pope said that the web designer is interested in the potential of repackaging the website and taking it out to more regions and perhaps even statewide. The designer is willing to do this at a reasonable price based on the fact that the parties would be collecting much of the data.

Salwasser suggested that, if there is a desire to expand this effort beyond trails, consideration be given to interfacing with Oregon Explorer. She suggested that the County might want to put its investment into data collection rather than website maintenance. She offered to help with an integrated design and linkage with Oregon Explorer and OSU. Emery said the discussion with the designer did include the potential for eventually expanding information on the website to include parks, playgrounds, boat launches, etc.

Hays said much of the information that would be on the website already exists; there is a concern that this not create a lot of extra work for the City and County Parks Departments, but staff needs to be able to update the site with changes, closures, etc. What has been proposed by the web

designers is flexible and easily expandable. Pope said that he would like to focus on trails for now, and that the current approach is appealing to some of the funding agencies.

VI. HABITAT CONSERVATION PLAN UPDATE

Powers gave an update on the Habitat Conservation Plan. Benton County and Cooperators (City of Corvallis, Greenbelt Land Trust, Oregon State University, Oregon Department of Transportation, Pioneer Telephone and Northwest Natural Gas) coverage and responsibilities under the Plan begin immediately. The County cannot mitigate on behalf of private property owners in the Fender's Blue Zone until the County Development Code is revised and acquisition of the two Cardwell Hills mitigation parcels is finalized. Over the next several weeks the County will convene a meeting with the Cooperators to discuss monitoring and reporting requirements, complete Cooperator Agreements, and arrange for baseline habitat monitoring in prairie conservation areas.

VII. OTHER BUSINESS/DISCUSSION ITEMS

Richard Bryant asked if the GIS mapping of trails includes any ability for mapping of trails that do not belong to the public; i.e., Timberhill has a number of paved paths open to the public that belong to the Homeowners Association. McGettigan said that has not been addressed; this would have to be researched.

Randy Rasmussen gave a brief update on the progress of the Corvallis to the Sea Trail Partnership. He said the Siuslaw National Forest no longer enters into MOUs and has asked the Partnership to instead enter into a special use permit application process. The Partnership is exploring what that would entail. Construction on the first segment could occur within the next year or two.

The meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.