

BENTON COUNTY NATURAL AREAS & PARKS ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

May 11, 2011

Meeting Minutes

Park Board Members: Dick Bryant, Phil Hays, Denise Nervik, Randy Rasmussen, Janine Salwasser, Jay Sexton and Ellen Tappon

Guest: Anthony Baugher, Santiam Christian Schools Athletic Director

Staff: Jeff Powers, Mary Simpson

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m.

II. COMMENTS FROM CITIZENS -- None

III. BUSINESS

A. Review & Approval of April 13, 2011 Advisory Board Meeting Minutes

The following revisions were made to the draft April 13, 2011 minutes:

- Page 1, section B, 1st paragraph: ...however, she felt that this recent meeting did not involve real discussion (replaces “considerations”) of issues...
- Page 1, section B, 5th paragraph: ...a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) will include the 3 groups (remove “plus OSU Forestry”).
- Page 2, section C, 6th paragraph: Add sentence: “She noted that the Willamette River Water Trail is an interest and concern for many groups/agencies, above and beyond Benton County Natural Areas and Parks Department.”
- Page 4, section D, 7th paragraph: “Oregon Heritage Program” corrected as “Biodiversity Information Center” *has digitized records of the historical* (changed from “original”) *vegetation at Fort Hoskins (and other sites)*.

The April 13, 2011 meeting minutes were approved unanimously as edited.

Advisory Board members complimented Mary on consistently complete and well done minutes.

B. Santiam Christian High School: Adair Park Athletic Fields’ Use and Long Range Plans -- Anthony Baugher, Santiam Christian Schools Athletic Director

- Anthony Baugher indicated that he’s been Athletic Director for almost one year, noting change to K-12 format, not just high school. He noted that Santiam Christian (SC) is a “commuter school” bringing together youth and families from a wide area. Facilities are an issue for SC, with close to 100 acres, but not many developed facilities. It has worked well for SC to utilize areas of Adair Park for baseball and softball, with soccer added, following last year’s advisory board recommendation to try for one year. Anthony noted that SC and parents are appreciative of having fields close to school, especially for youth who don’t drive.
- He indicated that girls’ tennis began at the park this year, with one girl making state. They anticipate beginning boys’ tennis next spring. The two Adair Park asphalt tennis courts are used for SC practice 3:30 – 5:00 p.m., 3 days/week, with no weekend use. SC could re-line the courts, though repaving would be too costly for SC or Benton County.
- Anthony emphasized that SC staff and parents work together to be good stewards, and feel vested with park uses, as well as part of the community.
- SC currently is in the process of putting in an (artificial) field turf for football, in preparation for Fall 2011. This should save on water use and upkeep (of grass fields). The artificial turf has underlayers of gravel and rubber, with tiles for drainage. The field turf is anticipated to last 25 years. The field turf will also be used as a soccer field, and the Adair community will be allowed to use the field when not utilized by SC. Other SC acreage (total of 81 acres

available) will be excavated, to set up for track facility, baseball and eventually another football field. During their 31-32 years, Santiam Christian has never had a track facility. The track facility will help “legitimize” the sport for SC. These fields will also become community resources for Adair Village. Basic rules for fields’ use include taking care of the field, and not allowing dogs on the fields.

- Anthony projected that the track facility should be accomplished by Spring 2012, and baseball/softball fields by Spring 2013. All fields will be lighted. Having additional fields will be an advantage for the younger teams, and will allow working with the Boys and Girls Club and public schools’ teams. Anthony noted that SC will continue to need Adair Park uses, since 74% of their students participate in sports teams.
- Anthony indicated that SC has successfully connected with non-profit groups and parent volunteers, forming an alliance for projects each year, with at-cost materials and volunteer installation. He noted SC’s need for partners, including the County and City of Adair, in order to support applications for particular grants.
- Jeff indicated that Adair Park vision/planning will be shared with Santiam Christian.
- Anthony inquired about extended use commitment for the “Upper Ball Field” (across from Adair offices) for SC use, making the field safer and playable; the field could potentially be used by other groups and teams.
- Jeff noted that our department has not ‘actively managed’ that field for many years, and there is no use of the field via permit. Groups choosing to use the field do so with the understanding that the field is not maintained.
- Phil indicated that the Adair properties are administered by the National Park Service, with oversight through the Federal lands to parks program. He noted that the City of Adair may be looking at adding to their “core” which could include the “Upper Ball Field” making it a “community resource.”
- Jeff indicated that Adair could receive that property only if they donated land of like kind and dedicated it to recreational, public (not exclusive) use. He noted that he will run it by the National Park Service contact in San Francisco, to ensure that we comply with the program of utilization.
- Anthony indicated that any use of the field would be positive, and that team participation numbers might increase with the addition of local, close field(s) to use. He noted that SC staff and parents/volunteers could certainly improve the field for use by SC teams and by the community. The group indicated appreciation for SC’s cooperative efforts and the excellent work of SC parents and volunteers.
- Ellen inquired if we could guarantee that SC has certainty of an amount of time they can utilize the field; that SC can use it long enough to get return on their investments. She noted the likelihood of positive changes if there are steady uses of the field.
- Phil inquired if SC’s uses of Adair Park have caused conflicts with other users.
- Mary reported that staff keeps SC apprised of park reservations and potential conflicts, and SC does not utilize Adair Park areas if conflicts may arise.
- There was a recent miscommunication wherein a group of SC students had a fund-raiser “mud football” game, watering a portion of the field without SC permission or supervision on a Saturday; this was witnessed by disc golf users who called the Sheriff; Anthony was also contacted, and he shut down the event immediately. He noted that “Mr. S.C.” events (only with school approval and supervision) are held annually, which raise money for good causes. He emphasized that any future SC events at Adair need to be in an approved proposal format.

- Jeff reported that SC has taken extra care so our sites have no negative impacts, and the fields are kept in great shape. Park reservations/events are coordinated with SC schedules, which are adjusted to avoid conflicts.
 - “Favoritism” concerns were expressed, even though often the fields aren’t used by anyone. Ellen noted that viable concerns would be conflict with facilities/shelters, or damages caused by particular uses/users.
 - It was noted that SC pays approximately \$600 for each (modified special use permit with addendums) permitted use, including dedicated staff time; water meter portions for SC activities are tracked, and are reimbursed to Benton County by SC. SC performs most field maintenance, with volunteers mowing, seeding, overseeding, and fertilizing as needed. Anthony noted that the SC turf field will be used for varsity home games; Adair grass fields may continue to be used for practice and junior varsity home games.
 - The group discussed how to best approach the department’s associations and agreements with Santiam Christian Schools. Jeff reiterated that all proposals will be run by National Park Service, and again noted that user group conflicts have been successfully avoided thus far. Jeff will also discuss SC associations/agreements with the Board of Commissioners, and noted that everything will be reviewed within the context of the upcoming Adair Master Plan.
 - The group and Anthony agreed that signage should be added (near the permitted fields) that clearly explains that Adair is a Benton County park.
 - Phil recommended that we continue to utilize the annual modified agreement, via special use permit, to include soccer and/or baseball field uses. Jay suggested that the agreement should be a memorandum of understanding (MOU) between Benton County and Santiam Christian Schools, including opportunities for both parties to back out of the agreement.
 - Jay made a motion for department staff to produce a document with details of agreement for baseball and soccer fields’ uses of Adair Park, to include annual advisory board review. The motion was seconded, and approved unanimously. Further discussion included the need for marketing and cross-marketing (department and SC), and importance of Adair Park signage.
 - Ellen made a motion for department staff to draft a letter of support for the Santiam Christian Schools’ track field proposal, and to work cooperatively with Santiam Christian Schools, including sharing information about appropriate grant opportunities. The motion was seconded, and approved unanimously.
 - Phil made a motion for department staff to create a separate and parallel document with details of agreement for the maintenance and use of the “Upper Ball Field” by Santiam Christian Schools for a period of two (2) years, with annual advisory board review. The motion was seconded, and approved unanimously.
 - Jeff reiterated that all items will be proposed to the National Park Service prior to development and implementation of agreements.
- C. Natural Areas and Parks System Comprehensive Plan
- Jeff reported that the consultants are incorporating changes and updates into a revised document, which will be available for staff and advisory board review. He noted that the consultant with financial expertise has not been available due to illness; a staff person will begin revenue option analysis, including system development charges.
 - The group requested receiving the proposed document electronically, in potential edit mode, prior to the next scheduled advisory board consideration.
 - Jeff distributed a “Draft Trails Plan Project List” for review. It was noted that the categorization utilized works well.
- D. Grants/Projects/Budget Updates

- Dick inquired about potential departmental involvement with East Thornton Lake Natural Area (ETLNA), managed through Albany Parks and Recreation (P&R) Department.
- Jeff reported that Ed Hodney, Albany P&R Director, presented ETLNA concepts to the Board of Commissioners, with efforts to gain mutual support through Albany City Council and Benton County Commissioners. Jeff and Ed discussed potential shared management opportunities, since our department has natural area and habitat expertise appropriate for ETLNA, and Albany P&R is more facility/urban oriented (North Albany Park). Jeff noted that Albany applied for an OWEB acquisition grant. He also informed the group of proposed Kalapuya tribal component, educational and interpretive components for all ages, and possible reconnection to the main channel of the Willamette River. Jeff will bring Ed Hodney to an advisory board meeting for further discussion.
- Jeff reported that we have new Beazell rental house renters, a young couple who teach at Kings Valley Charter School; they are excited to be living at Beazell.
- Jeff noted that Salmonberry Campground opens Friday, May 13.
- Jeff indicated that efforts to move the (Sheridan) house from Pedee back to its original Fort Hoskins location are underway. Meeting scheduled with the house mover who moved the Palestine Church, concerning bracing in preparation for possible helicopter moving. Moving the house on roadways include 'adjustments' of 60 power lines. Janine noted that her husband, Hal, is acquainted with folks at Columbia Helicopters. Dick inquired if the Oregon National Guard might provide heavy lift equipment. Phil noted that the Washington National Guard has the closest heavy lift equipment.
- Jeff reported that the Greenbelt Land Trust has made a preliminary offer on the "Sequoia property" which could potentially provide south/Philomath access to Fitton Green. The site has resource values, including prairie habitat and oak, and may provide connectivity.
- Jeff indicated that the Biennium 11-13 budget is not finalized; personnel and health care costs are high; a budget package would provide part of HCP implementation. Proposed CIP projects include 2 cabins at Salmonberry Campground (\$45,000); cabins could provide rent of about \$40 per night. In response to question about considering yurts, Jeff noted that yurts have problems with mold and mildew. Jeff reported that our reserve funds (Clubhouse, Beazell and Crystal Lake Cemetery) have been utilized, with additional cost recovery transfers to administration.
- Thanks to Janine Salwasser for making contact with OSU Animal Sciences Dept. Head, Jim Males, concerning the 'Northwest Passage' trail.

IV. ADJOURNMENT -- Meeting was adjourned at 9:04 p.m.