

**BENTON COUNTY NATURAL AREAS & PARKS ADVISORY BOARD MEETING**  
**November 9, 2011**

**Meeting Minutes**

Park Board Members: Tom Bucht, Bob Chilton, Phil Hays, Tom Kirch, Denise Nervik, Janine Salwasser, Jay Sexton and Ellen Tappon  
Staff: Jeff Powers, Mary Simpson

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:01 p.m.

II. COMMENTS FROM CITIZENS -- None

III. BUSINESS

A. Review & Approval of October 12, 2011 Advisory Board Meeting Minutes

Amendments: page 1, B, bullet 7: re contracting rules for local governments: changed to “It was noted that requirements for government contracts are more stringent than for “friends groups” or foundations (for example, Fair Foundation construction....”

Page 4, E, bullet 2: re plant native riparian plans...changed to “establish native riparian plants...”

The October 12, 2011 meeting minutes were approved unanimously with amendments.

B. Fees Review and Proposals for 2012

- Jeff indicated that the Commissioners (BOC) ask departments and advisory boards to conduct annual fees review and make recommendations for BOC adoption. He noted that fees are based on the market and comparable facilities as much as possible. The group reviewed and discussed the “Fees Review 2011/Comparisons for 2012 Proposals” packet.
- Jeff reported that Beazell Forest Education Center 2012 Saturdays (June through September) are already filling up quickly; these 2012 reservations (all weddings) that are completed during 2011 are not subject to potential fee increases.
- Mary indicated that an increasing challenge has been Beazell Forest Education Center reservation groups accessing the facility, without permission or payment, either the day prior to, or following, their actual reservation date, for prohibited early set-up or late clean-up. Renter groups are informed numerous times that their reservation begins at 7 a.m. and ends at 11 p.m. on the day rented. The groups’ deposit (otherwise refundable) is retained towards the fee for the extra day, and these groups are then billed for the remaining amount for the extra day. However, none of the groups have paid the amount due for the extra day utilized, and it would not be cost-effective for Benton County to pursue payment. To complicate matters, if the reservation group has not completed items on the “Rental Cleaning Checklist” (putting away equipment, cleaning facility, and removing all belongings completely and in a timely manner), additional charges are billed; again, none of the groups have paid the amount(s) due. Fortunately, such “non-sanctioned uses” have not impacted paid reservations yet.
- Jeff and Mary indicated that further complications arise from increasing back-to-back rentals, which leave little time for the Caretaker to prepare the facility for the next rental group. The previous back-up, on-call Caretaker has another full-time position, so we will need to hire someone else as back-up, on-call Caretaker.
- The group discussed “comparable” facilities used for fee comparisons, though it was noted that there are few local facilities that are completely “comparable” rental facilities.

It was suggested that the Marys River Grange and Hanson Country Inn might be included as “comparable” facilities (to Beazell Forest Education Center).

- The group discussed Beazell fee waivers, in addition to those determined by “educational status” (public schools & registered private schools, P-12). Jeff noted that, as with park reservations and special use permits, the Director has the prerogative to waive fees for groups with whom we partner or have joint research and educational pursuits. Fee waivers may also be applied to groups who are sponsored by BCNA&PD or Benton County Commissioners.
- Janine suggested that reservation groups charging fees to attendees should not be allowed fee waiver. Denise recommended reviewing the Corvallis/Benton County Library fee policies, and Tom noted that OSU charges/waivers might also be reviewed. It was suggested that “precedent language” be researched to delineate fee waivers.
- Jeff reported, for example, that Benton County is involved with Eco System/Educational Training through Willamette Partnership, a non-profit group whose mission is to increase the pace, scope and effectiveness of conservation and restoration. Jeff indicated that Willamette Partnership has done “in kind” baseline work and research for us and for HCP, followed by presentations to us from which we have derived, and will continue to derive, benefit. Jeff noted staff concerns about getting “boxed in” so the department won’t receive valuable “partnering” benefits.
- The group reviewed the “Fees Review 2011/Comparisons for 2012 Proposals” packet, including Beazell Forest Education Center, Picnic Shelters, Salmonberry Campground, and Crystal Lake Cemetery.
- It was moved and seconded that the Beazell Forest Education Center “weekend fee” (Friday, Saturday, Sunday, and Holiday) be raised to \$750 per day (7 a.m. to 11 p.m.), to encourage compliance with the rules. It was also moved and seconded that the corresponding weekend security/cleaning deposit be raised to \$750 per event, in order to cover unauthorized early or late access. All motions were unanimously approved.
- It was noted that no changes were proposed for Picnic Shelter fees, including Special Use Permits, Equipment Bag rentals and overnight use fees. The group unanimously decided to propose no changes for 2012 fees.
- No changes were proposed for Salmonberry Campground fees; the group unanimously decided to propose no changes for 2012 fees.
- The group reviewed Crystal Lake Cemetery fees and comparisons, and unanimously decided to propose no changes for 2012 fees.
- Beazell Forest Education Center season summaries (2011, 2010 and 2009) and fee waiver summary (2011) were reviewed and discussed.
- Jeff reported context of costs/expenditures for Beazell Memorial Forest and Beazell Forest Education Center, noting that expenses are not fully covered by revenue, though the house rental brings that trust fund close to breaking even. He noted the need for a sustainability analysis for the Beazell Forest Education Center electric bill, looking for alternatives/suggestions. Jeff reported that the Salmonberry Campground cost center fares well because of RV license fee revenue (involving a complicated formula of factors). He noted a grant proposal to supply electricity to RV sites, which will likely raise fees (in addition to eventual cabin rental fees).
- Jeff indicated that staff continues research and work on potential revenue enhancement in all cost centers and funds. He noted that revenue from the sale of 4.17 acres to CoHo EcoVillage in 2005 is being drawn down; revenue sources, such as a columbarium, need

to be added, since lot/space sales are not sufficient to enhance the cemetery fund. He emphasized that maintenance of an old, historical cemetery site is expensive. Jeff indicated that determining actual costs of most individual parks is difficult, since the majority are maintained through a combined general parks maintenance cost center.

C. Report from Friends/Foundations Subcommittee

- The group reported establishing and reviewing the “Friends” purpose, focused on what we want to do, and formulating mission, strategy, recruitment and support of a board of directors. Discussion items included: how to ignite support, allies; what process to include “share-holders” and researching other “friends” groups; outreach includes contacting already working groups for input. It was noted that “Friends of Linn County” is an advocacy group predominantly focused on land use issues. A group with 501(c)(3) non-profit status generally allows more flexibility than departments within the county; an umbrella fund-raising “friends” group might be more likely to produce revenue.
- It was suggested that the fund-raising group might want to be more project-oriented.
- The group recommended drafting a 1-page “purpose” proposal for presentation to the Board of Commissioners for feedback and/or endorsement.
- Additional discussion: work with local groups with local interest in county parks system; provide avenue for local folks to accomplish goals which are hopefully on the county wish list; partner with groups such as B.C. Historical Society, North Albany Neighborhood group, etc.; how to get folks from outer areas around the county engaged. Phil noted that we don’t want to undercut other groups who are (also) passionate about their own project or purpose. It was noted that groups like the Grand Ronde Tribal Agency (primarily through Spirit Mountain Community Fund grant) don’t donate directly to counties, but will fund “friends” group projects.
- Lining up a key board of directors (3-7 “heavy hitters”) is foremost. Timing of state and federal paperwork is very specific, and must be adhered to.
- Jay reiterated that the group pick a good project for focus by the new “friends” group. It was also recommended to avoid “roll out” of the group that might conflict with a 2012 election. Janine suggested that the “friends” group roll out effort could coincide with presentation of the final Benton County Natural Areas & Parks Comprehensive Plan.

D. Grants/Projects/Budget Updates

- Jeff reported that the Benton County Natural Areas and Parks Comprehensive Plan is being finalized with edits, adding appropriate photos, and efforts to “pretty up” document fonts, spacing, etc. The Comp Plan will then be rolled out for review by identified stakeholders.
- Jeff announced that the Salmonberry Campground grant presentation is scheduled November 21; to be competing with 6 other counties.
- Jeff noted a meeting scheduled tomorrow, to maintain county interest in the Cliff Hall property, and include discussion with Mr. Hall about a potential endowment for “life estate.” Partners include Greenbelt Land Trust, who doesn’t want to manage the house; ongoing meetings and interest will follow.
- Adair & North Albany Parks’ Master Plans – Jeff noted that, with Habitat Conservation Plan backlog and Al Kitzman’s transition from Parks Superintendent to part-time Natural Resource Manager, that either/both master plans will have to wait until at least next Fall.
- Sheridan-Auger House in Pedee – State Parks’ folks interested, since they are renovating the Fort Yamhill house; may try to get State to “partner” for grants, if possible.

IV. ADJOURNMENT -- The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

