

Wallowas Management Unit Master Plan Meeting
September 7, 6 – 8 p.m.
Joseph, OR

Staff in attendance: JR Collier, Matt Rippee, Ian Matthews, David Stipe, and Carrie Lovellette

There were approximately 10 members of the public in attendance.

JR Collier gave introduction and overview of the parks, then David Stipe and Ian Matthews presented the planning process and timeline.

Minam State Recreation Area

Ian Matthews discussed cultural resource, natural resource, and visitor experience assessments, then there was a discussion of OPRD-identified needs and development proposals.

There was a question about why the proposed hiker-biker site is located close to the highway.

(Staff replied that the intent was to avoid making cyclists ride an additional two miles down a bumpy road)

There was a comment in support of building a bridge across the Minam River and a question about whether a trail could be connected from the park to public trails along the Minam River.

(Staff replied that no discussions have been had and it would require partnerships with adjacent property owners, but OPRD would be open to the possibility)

Wallowa Lake Highway Forest State Scenic Corridor

Ian Matthews discussed cultural resource, natural resource, and visitor experience assessments, then there was a discussion of OPRD-identified needs and development proposals.

There was a question about whether OPRD had plans to restore riparian areas along the road where construction damaged vegetation.

(Staff replied that the natural resource management plans do include restoration of some riparian areas along the corridor, but primarily at developed rest areas – much of the construction impacts are within ODOT right-of-way)

Wallowa Lake State Park

Ian Matthews discussed cultural resource, natural resource, and visitor experience assessments, then there was a discussion of OPRD-identified needs and David Stipe led discussion of development proposals.

There was a question about the rationale for the proposal to change the flow of the river.

(Staff replied that it is primarily aimed at enhancing fish habitat and reducing erosion on the east bank)

There was a question about how to deal with the bear problem in the park and suggestion to use bear-proof trashcans.

(Staff replied that a trash compactor will likely be installed in the park and is the preferred solution since bear-proof garbage cans can discourage people as well and are less efficient for collection)

There was a question about the ratio of tent camping to RV use in the park.

(Staff replied that they are unsure but that there are more hookups in the park than tent sites and that RV use is anecdotally more consistent and higher than tent camping)

There were a number of questions about the Irrigation District's proposal to rehab the Wallowa Lake dam and increase lake levels, as well as concerns that the park would be flooded.

(Staff replied that there may be some impacts if that plan is realized but that most impacts would be to the shoreline in the day use area and that the District would likely not operate the dam at a level high enough to flood park facilities, however, acknowledged that there no guarantees at this point)

There was a question about drainage from the Marina parking lot into the lake and concern that oil from boats and cars is going directly into a public drinking water source.

(Staff replied that if proposed improvements are made to the parking lot the stormwater outlets would be upgraded to comply with standards per state and county requirements)

There was a comment in opposition to the proposed parking lot at the day use area if it is located on the grassy field because of the current appeal of that area and possible visual and other impacts from the proposed parking lot.

Also a comment that the grassy area used to host a "jazz at the lake" event and it would be great to use it like that again.

There was a comment urging OPRD not to prioritize accommodating large vehicles and maximum visitor capacity in the park. OPRD should focus on preserving the delta region with its

cottonwoods and wildlife.

Also a comment that the Marina parking lot is in the best location in the park from a visitor experience perspective and maybe should be moved to allow that area to be natural.

(Staff replied that OPRD values the existing natural resources and is not proposing to develop the park to cater solely to RVs and maximum visitor capacity. OPRD understands that there are two distinct communities that the park serves – the day users and the campers)

There was a question about whether OPRD could reduce parking capacity, especially at the Marina.

(Staff replied that there are some minor parking reductions proposed but that a number of businesses depend on the parking as well as park visitors)

There was a question about whether OPRD planned to plant more trees in and around the parking lot as part of the proposed upgrades.

(Staff replied that there would be an opportunity to plant trees in the proposed islands)

There was a suggestion that there be non-motorized times or days on the lake when only non-motorized boats and paddle boards could be used.

(Staff replied that they could look into the concept)

Meeting adjourned.