

Columbia River Gorge Commission

Special Meeting Notes

August 21, 2009

10am – 3pm

Location: North Bonneville Hot Springs Resort, 1252 E. Cascade Drive, North Bonneville, WA 98639

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE

Harold Abbe

Judy Davis

Dan Harkenrider

Lonny Macy (10:10 am)

Carl McNew (10:15 am)

Barbara Roberts

Joyce Reinig

MEMBERS ABSENT

Don Bonker-excused

Sara Grigsby-excused

Walt Loehrke-excused

Jim Middaugh-excused

Joe Palena-excused

STAFF PRESENT

Jill Arens, Executive Director

Kathy Obayashi-Bartsch, Specialist

FACILITATORS

Roy Sampsel, Tribal Leadership Forum

Michelle Singer, Tribal Leadership Forum

Call to Order and Role Call

Chair Reinig called the meeting to order at 10:00 am and roll call was taken. Chair Reinig said the purpose of today's special meeting is an outreach training session for the Commissioners. This session is a follow up on the Menucha discussion of greater awareness and visibility of the Gorge Commission with federal partner agencies, tribes, and state and federal elected officials. Roy Sampsel and Michelle Singer of the Tribal Leadership Forum will provide the training and facilitate today's discussion.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Opportunity for Treaty Tribes to address Commission

As part of the consultation process treaty tribe members may speak about any issue on the agenda or any other matter. There was no tribal comment.

Work Session

Facilitators Roy Sampsel and Michelle Singer reviewed the federal funding process, appropriations and federal grants. Discussion included possible opportunities, Commission needs, strategies, goals and next steps.

The Commission was encouraged to evaluate needs, prioritize these needs, identify possible funding sources, identify existing relationships and determine if more immediate needs may lead to broader issues which would impact strategic planning.

Opportunities:

Discussion included possible opportunities with federal agencies other than the Forest Service. One example is the Columbia River Treaty between Canada and the U.S.; the parties have until 2014 to decide if the treaty should be revised. The treaty deals with hydro power and flood control, and other issues such as tribal input, fish health and habitat and climate change were not considered fifty years ago. The Commission discussed the relationship with the four treaty tribes and ways that this relationship might benefit future discussion with the federal government.

The Commission discussed the potential assistance that "northwest people" now holding prominent federal positions might provide to the Commission.

The Commission discussed issues that may lead to funding opportunities for the as follows: climate change, Hanford clean-up, water quality, air quality and others

Needs:

The Commission discussed the agency's needs and identified the following items:

- The inability to communicate about the Commission to a broader audience. One idea discussed was a University/Collegiate level academic program about the Scenic Area.
- A comprehensive Recreation Plan update is needed but there is no funding for this.
- A Management Plan review is required in the next few years but there is no funding for this.
- The Vital Signs Indicators Project has made considerable progress but there is much technical work to be done and there is no funding for the start up work of research and development.
- Overall staffing levels are insufficient for current operations.
- Economic development funds (balance of \$1.8 million) and recreation project funds (balance of \$5.5 million) identified in legislation have never been appropriated.

Strategy:

The Commission discussed the strategy to best present the agency's requests. It was noted that the current political landscape is favorable to achieve the goals of the Commission.

Any request must include short and informative answers to the following questions:

- Who are you?
- What have you done?
- What do you want?

-What can we do to help you?

The Commission discussed 1) Congressional requests including multi-year requests and specific projects as well as 2) funding requests to the Administration. In the past, the Commission has only made Congressional requests and had not considered making a request to the Administration. The Commission discussed how federal funding may impact state funding and support.

Timing of requests was discussed and the federal budgets development schedule was reviewed. The federal budget for 2011 is in the works now and requests need to be at the departments by mid-September, and any Congressional appropriation requests should be made by the end of the year and no later than the end of January. The Commission discussed the need to identify funding categories that would be appropriate for the agency's projects.

Goals and Mission:

The Commission discussed the appropriate focus for the Commission and maintaining the correct scope of their activity. They discussed the need to build allies and cultivate relationships with State Parks, tourism, economic development and other segments of the region. These relationships would strengthen the Commission's profile in the region and provide a more diverse and well-rounded frame of reference.

Possible Steps:

The Commission identified several possible steps to bring to the full Commission for further discussion and public comment. The Commissioners identified the following items as possible next steps:

- develop Congressional appropriation requests
- develop a line item request from the federal Administration
- seek funding for Vital Signs Indicators Project, recreation plan/strategy
- seek appropriations for the balance of funds identified for recreation projects and economic development funds.

Lunch 12:00-1:00 p.m.

Work Session-continued

Facilitators Roy Sampsel and Michelle Singer continued the work session discussion with a review of the federal appropriation process and led the discussion on next steps.

Process:

Michelle Singer provided a review of the federal timeline for appropriation requests. She said requests to the administration must be submitted no later than the end of September. Budget development for administration has been going on during the last eight months, so any requests must be made by mid-late September.

The Commission discussed the communication strategy for outreach to legislators and staff. There was discussion about how to approach legislators and staff and the process used within legislative offices for scheduling meetings and obtaining access.

The Commission discussed the process needed for a successful appropriation request. They discussed the communication hierarchy and were advised to contact the Senate first and then the House. They were advised to contact senior leadership first and their state representatives first.

Next steps:

The Commission discussed next steps. The Commission discussed the need to bring forth to the full Commission at the September meeting a request for further action including:

- Take a dual federal funding path with requests to Congress and the Administration
- Request funding for recreation projects, economic development and the Vital Signs Indicators Project as discussed earlier in the day.

The Commission discussed compiling a list of contacts and to make preliminary assignments as to who will contact who.

The Tribes will be meeting soon with the federal government and the Commission was advised to make contact with the treaty tribes before this meeting. The Commission discussed the need to send a letter to the four treaty tribes notifying them of the Commission's intent to make federal requests and request their support.

The Commission discussed back-up plans such as federal partner agencies and federal grants. It was suggested that the Commission outreach to several federal agencies and work with federal staff for grants.

Maintaining and cultivating relationships is very important. There is a leadership change of the Columbia River Intertribal Fish Commission and it was suggested that the Commission meet with the new leadership as soon as possible.

The Commission thanked Roy Sampsel and Michelle Singer for the training and facilitation of the day's discussion.

Adjourn 3:00 p.m.

Approved on 9-8-09
KOB