



MINUTES

Morrow County Parks Committee Minutes

Tuesday, March 07, 2023 | 1:30pm – 2:30pm | Meeting called to order by Mike Gorman

In Attendance

In Person: Kirsti Cason*, Glenn Maret*, Greg Close*, Mike Gorman*, Jeff Wenholtz♦, Sheryll Bates*

Digital/Electronic Attendance: Lynn Pragg*

*Denotes Morrow County Parks Committee Member ♦Denotes Morrow County Board of Commissioner

Pledge of Allegiance

Pledge of Allegiance conducted.

Minutes Review

The minutes from the September 28, 2022 were reviewed.

Motion to approve as submitted: Sheryll Bates

Seconded by: Greg Close

Approved: with no changes

Parks Committee Seats

Kirsti C. discussed the seats that were currently vacant, appointed positions and those positions that there have been applications received for. Advertisements for public vacancy position (Hiking/Biking) was publicized in the Heppner Gazette and North Morrow Times.

- Boardman Parks District has appointed Lynn Pragg will be replacing Rebecca Hall pending appointment documentation for Boardman Parks District.
- Irrigon Park District current appointee is Glenn Maret, documentation received today.
- Willow Creek Park District appointee remains Kim Cutsforth, pending appointment documentation from Willow Creek Park District.
- Morrow County Public Works representative remains Greg Close.
- Umatilla National Forest – Representative from Heppner Ranger District remains Doug McKay, but has not yet attended a meeting.
- Park User Group – Equestrian – Dean Robinson.
- Park User Group – Motorized Recreation – Mike Gorman (Chairman)
- Park User Group – Hiking/Biking – one application received
- Park User Group – Hunting/Camping – Kirsti Cason

One application was received from Sheryll Bates of Heppner, Oregon for the Park User Group – Hiking/Biking representative.

APPROVED

*Motion to accept Sheryll Bates as Hiking/Biking representative for the term of Mar-2023 to Mar-2026: Glenn M.
Seconded by: Greg Close Approved: Unanimously*

Seats and terms after approved motion are:

- Mar 2021 – Mar 2024 Boardman Parks District – Lynn Pragg (Pending Documentation).
- Mar 2023 – Mar 2026 Irrigon Park District - Glenn Maret.
- Mar 2022 – Mar 2025 Willow Creek Park District - Kim Cutsforth (Pending Documentation).
- Mar 2021 – Mar 2024 Morrow County Public Works - Greg Close.
- Mar 2023 – Mar 2026 Umatilla National Forest – Rep. Heppner Ranger District - Doug McKay.
- Mar 2022 – Mar 2025 Park User Group – Equestrian – Dean Robinson.
- Mar 2021 – Mar 2024 Park User Group – Motorized Recreation – Mike Gorman (Chair.).
- Mar 2023 – Mar 2026 Park User Group – Hiking/Biking – Sheryll Bates.
- Mar 2022 – Mar 2025 Park User Group – Hunting/Camping – Kirsti Cason.

Discussion regarding availability and attendance of Umatilla National Forest Service District Ranger and having the Recreation representative possibly attend in his place.

Host Applications

Kirsti C. – Provided process for selecting camp hosts positions at the park each year, along with a wage study from surrounding parks on what hosts are paid or compensated. The wage study was conducted as current and past hosts believed that they were not being paid enough for their work. Morrow County Parks remains one of the highest paid for the surrounding area. Positions are being advertised and the contract are for a one-year term.

Discussions regarding why the host wages are different at each park. Foot traffic at the parks, number of campsites and amenities that require host attention, total overall work performed at each park.

Question was raised about the camping rates at the parks, \$19 dry/tent, \$22 water only, \$25 partial (power/water), \$29 full (power/water/sewer, cabins are \$49 with exception of the log Juniper cabin at the OHV park that is \$88 all rates are per night, with weekly rates being 7th night free.

Greg C. provided information on those individuals whom expressed interest on being a park host for the upcoming season.

Parks Information & Requests

Kirsti C. – discussed events and groups that have reached out and scheduled events that include bicycling events, ATV poker runs, motocross race, youth fishing derby, and youth elk hunt.

2022 Cutsforth Park Youth Fishing Derby had a total of 45 participants not bad considering terrible weather and many events that weekend.

Youth elk hunt at the OHV Park that is only available to Morrow and Grant County Youth. In 2022 there were 6 applicants 1 from Grant County and 5 from Morrow County, none were successful on filling their tag for the season, but all reported having an opportunity to see and take a shot at brining one home.

Regional FFA Soils Judging Contest held at the OHV park again for the third time in the past 10 years. Larry Lutchter coordinated this event that brought FFA chapters from all over the region to compete in the judging event October 2021.

Ione School District in of June 2022 held an elementary outdoor school event at the OHV Park where youth were able to learn about wildlife in the area, fish, take a hike, have lunch and event make some smores around a campfire.

Annual Tri-County 4H camp was heled in June 2022 at Cutsforth Park where youth camp out for the week and learn about the area, camping and recreation.

OHV Park hands on evaluations for 2022 was down just slightly from 2021 but there were still 58 youth that went through the evaluation program to meet the state requirements to ride an ATV or motorcycle. There are two programs one that is extensive and in-depth through Oregon State University Youth Riders Endorsement Program (OASYREP), and one that is geared towards those who already have the basic riding skills through the Oregon Motorcycle Racing Association Youth Safety Endorsement Program (OMRA YSEP).

Wildlife in the area contrary to what the neigh-sayers say about machines and people keeping wildlife from the area there is wildlife abound at all the parks. Cougars, bears, elk, squirrels, turkeys, to name a few roam through the parks and guests often speak about seeing them.

All parks are scheduled to open May 05, 2023 for the 2023 camping season.

Reservations are looking about same as previous years with about a 50% return rate.

Anson Wright Park – Updates/Projects/Grants

Greg C. – Crews have been thing and clearing brush and trees and repairing tables.

Cutsforth Park – Updates/Projects/Grants

Greg C. – Electrical work with power upgrades as some boxes are just outdated and needing to be replaced as they keep grounding out. Cabins have had heaters replaced, painted the interior, replaced mattresses, and added indoor solar lighting. Main gate has been upgraded to have a lock with a gate remote so those that have property on the back side of the park can still have access.

OHV Park – Updates/Projects/Grants

Greg C. – Plowing snow, brushing and trimming trees with a brushing head purchased with ATV Grant monies then following up with a flair mower to mulch the larger material. Cabins upgraded installing new doors, windows and mattresses in A-Frame cabins. The tough-shed cabins are also receiving upgrades with solar lighting options from previous propane lantern style lighting.

ATV 2023-2025 Operations and Maintenance grant was presented to State Parks in February 2022. We have received information from the state sub-committee that the grant has been approved, but is pending State budget final review and approval. This grant will fund the two current full-time employees add an additional full-time employee, and retain 2 part time employees. A new pickup will be purchased with this grant to replace an aging vehicle.

APPROVED

The grant purchased sawmill has been utilized making lumber that has used materials harvested off of the parks to create structures, and build tables for all the parks.

The Landing facility will be operated by Off Road Trails and Treats for the 2023 season with their contract ending once the parks close in November 2023.

Kirsti C. - Trying to apply for a Local Government grant to get funding for updating the Goal 4 exception of the County Comprehensive plan so that would help meet the parks master plan development goals.

Equestrian area has been proposed at the OHV park and hoping to move forward with its development.

Public Comment

Glenn M. – Discussed happenings at the Irrigon Park District installed new docks and still have one to replace. One phase of parking is done and proposing other ideas on additional parking. Hoping to fund with grants. Discussions have been taking place regarding the maintenance of the marina, working on a dog park, pickle ball court, and play ground. Projects have received financial assistance from CREZ to help complete trails through the area.

Lynn P. – Boardman Parks District is has recently upgraded a playground and docs. Lynn explained that she is the intern manager until a new manager can be hired.

Mike G. – Snowmobile club held annual play day gathering at Kelly Prairie. Snow grooming is conducted on 8-10 mines trail. A fund raiser was held to help a family that had a loss due to a traffic accident, 70 members collected \$2,500 and the club matched an additional \$500 so total contributing provided to the family was \$3,000.

Sheryll B. – Blue Mountain Century Scenic Bikeway ride conducted the third week each year in September. This year the event will be September 16-17, 2023 and Cutsforth will be a stop along the route. Discussions regarding the event.

Next Meeting and Wrap-up

September 19, 2023 | Time/Details To Be Announced | Morrow County OHV Park – Site Tour and Lunch
Motion to adjourn was made at 2:33pm and was passed unanimously.

Minutes Submitted by: Kirsti Cason
Morrow County Public Works Assistant

Reviewed on: September 19, 2023

Motion to approve made by: Sheryll Bates

Motion Seconded by: Dean Robinson

Neigh's: None

Date Approved: September 19, 2023

Corrections if any to be noted here:

No corrections – approved as submitted.