



Oregon Solutions

Fort Clatsop –to-the-Sea: Legislator as Project Convener

The problem

For approximately 15 years, the US National Park Service (NPS) has been working with the local community and congressional delegation to identify an appropriate expansion of the Fort Clatsop National Memorial boundaries. Fort Clatsop is the site of the Lewis and Clark expedition’s winter encampment in 1805-06. The expansion of Fort Clatsop is a key tourism and economic development initiative for the region and State of Oregon. NPS wanted to construct a trail from the Fort Clatsop National Memorial to Sunset Beach as part of the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial to commemorate the historic trail Lewis and Clark took to reach the ocean from their shelter at Fort Clatsop. Weyerhaeuser Corporation and Clatsop County owned the majority of property in the expansion area. The park expansion posed complicated political issues for the elected leadership in Clatsop County. In addition, construction of the trail would require building a tunnel under U.S. Highway. 101 and would create transportation issues with increased visitors to the area.

With the Fort Clatsop bicentennial events slated for November 2005, timely land acquisition and construction of the Trail was imperative. Governor Kulongoski designated this as an Oregon Solutions project in March 2003 to help the landowners and other stakeholders sort through the issues to identify mutual interests and integrate resources for the development of the Trail route to the Ocean.

A Legislator Convenes the Process

Governor Kulongoski appointed Oregon Representative Betsy Johnson along with former State Park Commissioner June Spence as the neutral co-conveners of the project. Because of the political climate in Clatsop County and the necessity to leverage significant funding for the project, the status and credibility lent by Representative Johnson’s leadership greatly aided the process. The co-conveners’ involvement

“One of the things I can do as a legislator is to invite people of differing opinions to work on complex issues or problems. When I ask people to come to the table, using the OS model, they are generally willing, because they know a collaborative process is important for lasting results.”--Betsy Johnson, Oregon House of Representatives

assured the right stakeholders were engaged in the process, and also enhanced collaboration between the NPS and state agencies. Representative Johnson aided in the meaningful engagement of the state’s Congressional delegation to help assure the Park expansion.

Members of the Solutions Team

In addition to the National Park Service, Weyerhaeuser and Clatsop County, other stakeholders included the Oregon Department of Transportation, Department of Environmental Quality, Division of State Lands, Department of Land Conservation and Development, Oregon Military Department, Oregon Parks and Recreation, and the Trust for Public Land.

The OS Process

The Solutions Team needed to quickly work through significant issues using the Oregon Solutions Community Governance System. These issues included developing tight communication and collaboration among the major property owners involved in the NPS expansion; concurrence on a preliminary alignment of the 5.5 mile trail from the Fort to the Sea; agreement on a means for the trail crossing the major north-south highway on the Oregon Coast; assurances for public access to that part of the trail that crosses Camp Rilea (an Oregon Military Department Army Reserve training reservation) and identification of funding for property purchases and trail construction.

Oregon Solutions projects are implemented using the **Community Governance System:**

A problem or opportunity defined by the community that addresses at least one sustainable community objective.

A neutral community convener from the local community, appointed by the Governor, who can lead a team to address the challenge.

An Oregon Solutions Team of federal, state, local, and other government entities, businesses, non-profits, and citizens who are needed, or can contribute to a solution.

An integrated solution that leverages the resources of the Solution Team to meet the challenge at hand and sustainability objectives.

A declaration of cooperation that team members sign that commits their resources and time in an integrated action plan.

The Product

The Fort Clatsop-to-the-Sea project team members reached agreement on trail location, trail ownership, design, funding and construction, and transportation solutions. In July 2003, the Solutions Team signed a Declaration of Cooperation, outlining the commitments made by each stakeholder.

Subsequently, the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department purchased 149 acres of beachfront property for the end of the trail from the County. Over \$1 million has been identified for trail construction, including a pedestrian underpass at Highway 101. Congressional approval of NPS boundary expansion was achieved through the efforts of Senator Ron Wyden, Senator Gordon Smith and Representative David Wu. The Oregon delegation helped secure \$1.25 million in federal funding for the land acquisition through the Department of Interior. The project has also spurred broad bi-state and bi-partisan support for the creation of a larger NPS Lewis and Clark National Historical Park. An appropriation of over \$6 million for this purpose is before Congress.