

Cottonwood Canyon State Park Interpretive Center
Moro, OR
June 4th, 2012

Introduction and Organizational Perspectives:

The meeting began with introductions from each representative and a brief statement about each organization's perspective and goals for the interpretive center. The common themes that emerged were **education, safety, resource requirements, and economic development.**

- Education
 - Teach safety and stewardship to children and adult visitors
 - Teach the history of conservation in the region, particularly the accomplishments of farmers, and use demonstration projects such as grazing management to show responsible use of natural resources
 - Introduce visitors to the unique John Day River area, ecosystem, and lifestyle
 - Develop partnerships between schools and park in the form of outdoor labs
 - Use facilities and programming to tell stories

- Safety
 - Establish system of emergency communications (to address fire and other public safety concerns)
 - Balance rugged experience with sophisticated communications

- Park resource requirements
 - CCSP will need 2-3 park rangers, 4-5 seasonal ranger assistants, and 3-4 host couples (6-8 people)
 - Tom Peterson, Park's staff has been assigned to CCSP
 - Complete Recreation for Public Purposes (RPP) paperwork in conjunction with Wild and Scenic River designation requirements
 - Ensure financial resources for the park by forming partnerships with Oregon State Parks Foundation (OSPF) and others

- Economic development in Gilliam and Sherman Counties
 - Mitigate any impacts to surrounding ranches or farms from park development
 - Extend economic impact through tourism
 - Clark Jackson from Business Oregon is a possible partner
 - Leverage attraction of "value-added" (local) products
 - Connect communities and parks through advertising, public relations, and partnerships with Wasco and Wheeler Counties

Declaration of Cooperation Discussion

Facilitator Lauren Beeney briefly introduced the DOC as the end goal of the group discussions, emphasizing the importance of the document in establishing written commitments from group members for future actions and contributions.

Sub-Committee Topics Discussion

The group began the process of narrowing its focus in the areas of programming, facilities, and governance.

Programming:

The conversation around programming centered around the best way to **leverage local resources**, ideas for **exhibits and other program content**, and **potential partners**.

- Leveraging local resources
 - There is a farmer's market in Condon regularly, and a one-time market event upcoming in Sherman County
 - Local culture (music, crafts, events) that the center could promote or provide a venue for
 - Condon's Nobel Prize winners
 - Fossil's weight loss program
- Exhibits and program content
 - Exhibits – Sherman or Gilliam County Historical Societies might be interested
 - BPA may be able to provide educational resources
 - Students can provide original research for programming by telling stories about their community
 - Use of technology/distance learning
 - highly dependent on technology capacity of the center
 - Learning laboratory (K-12) for kids and adults to add capacity to the local school system
 - Conservation efforts could tie in to soil concepts
 - The Department of Agriculture has an Oregon Soils unit that covers soil information around the state and meets state standards
 - Hydrology aspect of river basin
 - Animal, plant, reptile identification
- Potential partners
 - OSU Cascades, EOU, Columbia Gorge Community College (CGCC) PSU (The Dalles, Bend)
 - A research project can help the local economy, such as ocean studies on the coast
 - Tribal interests and history
 - Advertising – fairs and events can include displays on CCSP

Facilities:

The conversation around the building's facilities centered on the **physical building** and **program elements** that could be included in the facility.

- Physical building
 - Ensure that the building fits appropriately with the landscape
 - Building capacity
 - Many park facilities are not designed for full capacity but rely on planning and dividing visitors in smaller groups in different locations
 - Plan for three visits per year from Moro, Condon, Arlington , with other outlying school districts once per year
 - Use the barn facility as a backup
 - Central room, with technology and space to sit
 - Satellite stations outside of facility to direct kids to
 - Kiosk, seating area, or clearing with logs or rocks
 - Storage space for teachers or activity leaders
 - Barn tours (already existing) could tie in with barn on park property
- Programming elements
 - Signage along roads for crops
 - OSU extension, agribusiness council
 - Technology is necessary, but a video room may not be
 - Examples of other centers
 - Wild Horses Wind Farm (Ellensburg, WA) has video rooms, screens, exhibits, etc.
 - Wolfree/Streamwatch (not feasible to replicate),
 - State Forest Interpretive Center has dioramas of forest management practices
 - Deschutes Children's Forest
 - Underwater camera that feeds into interpretive center
 - Research facilities that the public can see (big window) or even accommodate small groups inside (eg: Paleo-Lands)
 - Attract people who want to do research, (eg: invasive weeds)
 - Training workshops on weed management

Governance:

The conversation around governance centered on **securing funding**.

- Funding
 - Friends groups can assist with funding needs and establish regional connections
 - Create CC Steering Committee to assist with management and exhibits
 - Friends of Champoeg, Friends of Tryon Creek, Collier State Park are good examples
 - Umatilla Forest Collaborative might be interested

- The operating cost of the park is part of OPRD's operating budget, but they also look for grants and donations
- Plan for bare bones staffing for facility operations in case funding issues arise, and establish a phased approach to development

Closing Comments:

While there was the suggestion of holding conference calls in between meetings, most people seemed to prefer to respond to topic-based issues via email. The facilitators agreed to send out emails with the latest news and requests for feedback.