

Willamette Falls Locks Task Force

Action Items and Meeting Summary

Friday, April 15, 2016

Clackamas County Services Building

Task Force website: <http://orsolutions.org/osproject/willamette-falls-locks-task-force>

Task Force Members present: Russ Axelrod, Chris Didway (on behalf of Representative Brent Barton), Sandy Carter, Carlotta Collette, Senator Devlin, Jack Griffin Jr., Rachel Graham, Jeff Hampton, Fred Meyer, John Mullen, Representative Julie Parrish, Peggy Sigler and Tootie Smith

Convener present: Honorable Barbara Roberts

Facilitation Team: Peter Harkema and Amy Delahanty

Tribal Representatives: David Harrelson (Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde), Aaron Jackson (Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation) and Louie Pitt (Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs)

Staff and Interested Parties: Jose Aguilar, Andy Cotugno, Amy Croover, Danielle Cowan, Kimberly DeSantis, Gerald Fox, Jon A. George, Darlene Hooley, J.R. Ingils, Louis Landre, Annette Mattson, Jim Mattis, Megan Mckibben, Brian McIlraith, Alice Norris, Lisa Naito, Samara Phelp, Sara Thompson, Mini Sharma-Ogle, Christina Robertson-Gardiner-Ferder, Julie BlueHorse Skelton, Christine VanOrder, and Trent Wilson

Convener Governor Roberts welcomed the Task Force members and interested parties and thanked them for their participation. She reminded the group that the Willamette Falls has long been and remains a sacred gathering and cultural site for Northwest tribes. Gov. Roberts shared that we have the distinct honor to listen and learn about some of the past and current practices, cultural values and stories behind the tribal use of this site. Given the task force's focus on the locks, we will have the opportunity to learn about history and tribal perspectives related to the locks. We have representatives from the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs and the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde.

After Governor Robert's brief remarks, a number of tribal members opened the meeting with a (drumming) blessing ceremony.

Project manager Peter Harkema then provided an overview of the agenda and meeting objectives. He noted that as the Task Force moves forward in building a set of recommendations about the potential reopening the Willamette Locks, understanding the tribal perspectives is a critical component of that discussion. Peter noted that invitations to present had also been extended to the Confederate Tribes of Siletz Indians of Oregon, the Nez Perce Tribe, and the Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation but presenters were not able to attend this meeting but their perspectives will be important to consider as the process develops. He then welcomed Aaron Jackson from Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation to kickoff the presentations.

Presentations from Tribal Representatives:

The following is not intended to be a comprehensive description of all information or perspectives shared with the Task Force but rather to serve as a brief high-level summary. If you would like additional information please contact the Tribal presenters or Oregon Solutions staff.

Aaron Jackson from the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation provided a brief history and background of the Willamette Falls and shared the significance of the Pacific Lamprey to his Tribe and other native people. Aaron then invited members to watch the, [The Lost Fish](#), a short film Produced by [Freshwaters Illustrated](#) in partnership with the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission, and in cooperation with the [US Fish & Wildlife Service](#).

Film Description (23min):

In the heavily dammed Columbia River Basin, millions of dollars have been spent on life support systems for Pacific salmon. Yet, the little-known Pacific lamprey has slipped through the cracks of conservation efforts and is now lost from most of its historic range in the Columbia Basin. Desperately, members of the Nez Perce, Umatilla, Yakama and Warm Springs tribes have taken the management of Pacific lamprey into their own hands and are now fighting to bring political attention and social will to the struggle of a lost fish.

Louie Pitt from the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, was then invited to present to the Task Force from the perspective of the Warm Springs Tribe. Louie shared information related to treaties between Northwest tribes, including the Warm Springs, and the U.S. government – and the rights guaranteed therein, Willamette Falls as a ‘usual and accustomed grounds and sites’, perspectives on access and protections in such areas, and perspectives about the Columbia River as a main highway that brought people together. He shared his appreciation of the Willamette Falls Task Force in engaging with the tribes and offered to continue to serve as a resource to the group.

David Harrelson from the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde thanked both Aaron and Louie for the work they have done and their presentations. David noted the work of the Umatilla Tribe has been exceptional in highlighting the importance of Lamprey to native people and ecosystem restoration. David then shared a brief presentation, “Willamette Falls: A Grand Ronde Homeland.” In his presentation, David presented on following topics:

- Tribal overview,
- Ikanum oral histories (noting several stories from Coyote Was Going There),
- Willamette Falls as a trade center,
- Continued connection, and
- Ongoing connection.

David offered to continue to serve as a resource to the Task Force, noting also that Jack Griffin Jr. serves as a Task Force member and would also continue to share his perspective with the Task Force.

Discussion and Reflections:

Governor Roberts then invited Tribal members to share any additional reflections or information that had not yet been mentioned or that had arisen while listening to the presentation. Below is an aggregated summary of these reflections.

- The amount of energy that it used to take to get people around the table 30 years ago was tremendous. That process versus this process, where you are including us and where you are talking and listening to us, is really something to be commended.
- I appreciate the other tribes that have been here and hope others will also become involved.
- A number of reflections were offered related to Lamprey with some noting that dedicating one third or more of this presentation to Lamprey is very fitting because this area (the Locks) is the a critical place for Lamprey and the only remaining place for harvest.

Others described some concern around about the impact of the Locks and what is going to happen next on harvesting Lamprey.

- When we were provided opportunity to comment on the Locks, we shared that story of how our ancestors helped construct the Locks and how we took our canoes through the Locks.
- Some noted that impact of the closing of the Locks on the annual canoe journey, which included access to and viewing the Falls, was considered as an ‘adverse effect;’ during the Corp’s Section 106 Consultation. Our history is written on the landscape. That’s something that we have embraced with the regional canoe journey.

Discussions and Reflections from the Task Force

The Willamette Falls Locks Task Force members were then given the opportunity to share brief reflections, comments, or ask questions of the presenters. Below is a summary of the discussion. Please note that this is not a comprehensive description of all that was said, nor do questions or responses represent the formal positions of any of the participating entities.

Task Force members thanked the presenters and posed a number of questions to the tribal presenters. Many of the questions surrounded how the Task Force can best engage its efforts to make sure that both tribal heritage and current cultural practices are considered as it works to evaluate the potential reopening of the locks. Presenters responded with appreciation to attend today’s meeting and that ongoing communication and coordination would be very important and that access would be a topic of significant importance for Tribes.

It was noted that sending a letter to the tribal chairperson mentioning that tribal representative(s) attended this meeting to make a presentation would be helpful to involve the tribes in ongoing discussions. Ultimately a formal memorandum of understanding could be a mechanism for establishing engagement. Jack Griffin Jr. noted that he can share the Grand Ronde Tribe’s perspective as an ongoing member of the Task Force. Some wondered whether there might be value in creating a Tribal Advisory Committee that could consult with the various ongoing efforts at Willamette Falls, including the Locks Task Force, Legacy Project, and Heritage Area Coalition. There was some discussion about this idea and a number of people suggested it was an idea worth further consideration, though challenges related to jurisdictions could arise and significant coordination would be required among Tribes with historic and current ties to the Willamette Falls and Willamette Falls Locks.

There was also a robust discussion of the importance of Lamprey and salmon runs to Northwest Tribes. Some wondered how Lamprey harvests are currently regulated, with respondents noting that the relationship with the State has been challenging related to permitting for Tribal eel harvest. Others highlighted the ongoing need for scientific research about Lamprey as well as what some perceive as an unbalanced system with sea lions.

Co-Convener Gov. Roberts highlighted that there are many different stakeholder perspectives and as the Task Force continues, it's going to take a lot of hard work to continue to work productively and that continued conversation and engagement among all the diverse interests is critical. She then opened up the floor to other tribal members in the audience who wished to share reflections on the presentations and discussion.

Judy BlueHorse, a faculty member at PSU, shared that many of her students are excited about this collaborative process, as it includes native voices and tribes at the table. Additionally, she stated there is an opportunity here for healing. She reminded the Task Force and audience members that tribal involvement is a long-term investment and there are many students who are waiting to get involved in things like this.

Peter thanked the tribal members for coming, sharing their time and culture. He also thanked the Task Force members and reminded everyone that the next meeting would be May 9th, 2016.

4:00p.m. The meeting adjourned

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