



**Oregon Coast Trail
Statewide Landowners Group meeting
February 21 2020**

Participants, Action Items and Discussion Summaries

The agenda, materials and presentations from the 2/21/2020 meeting are available online at <https://orsolutions.org/meeting-materials-and-background>

ATTENDING: (including 2 on the phone)

Co-convener Doug Deur, Oregon Parks Commissioner

Oregon Solutions Project Team members and alternates including:

Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw	Chief Warren Brainard
BLM: NW Oregon District	Paul Tigan, field manager (alternate)
OCT Segment Team - Central	Doug Hunt, Central Coast Convener, Lincoln County Commissioner
OCT Segment Team - North	Sarah Absher, North Coast Convener (alternate)
ODOT	Susan Peithman, Active Transportation Policy Lead (Alternate)
OPRD	M.G. Devereux, Deputy Director
OPRD	Dennis Comfort, Coastal Units Manager (alternate)
Oregon Coast Visitors Association	Marcus Hinz, Executive Director
USFS Siuslaw National Forest/Oregon Dunes (alternate)	Dani Pavoni, Recreation Program Manager

The Project Team staff and technical assistance support including:

Office of Senator Merkley	Stacey Jochimsen, Field representative
Association of Oregon Counties/County Solutions	Greg Wolf, Director
Governor's office/ Regional Solutions	Jennifer Purcell, North Coast representative (Phone)
ODOT, OCT coordinating team	Jenna Berman, Active Transportation Liaison, N. Coast
Department of Land Conservation & Development	Lisa Phipps, North Coast representative (phone)
Department of Land Conservation & Development	Adrian Laufer, Coastal Zone Mgmt Program
Department of Land Conservation & Development	Tanya Haddad, Coast Zone Mgmt Program

Staff:

Oregon Solutions	Karmen Fore, Director
Oregon Solutions	Pete Dalke, project manager
County Solutions at AOC	Michelle Long

Interested parties including:

Dan Hilburn	Advocate
Al LePage	Director, National Coast Trail Association

ACTION ITEMS from the meeting include:

- The “Format for developing preferred alignment recommendations at the connection groups” presented by the Association of Oregon Counties/County Solutions to be updated based on the meeting discussion. The next step: this is the direction that the three Segment Team conveners will be giving to the 19 connection teams. Process:
 - The Segment and Connection Teams develop two alternative alignments using the Format.
 - Statewide group identifies any issues with proposed alignments presented from the Segment Teams and provides feedback.
 - Segments Teams can then decide on a preferred alignment to include in the action plan.
 - It is essential that multiple alternatives are presented to the statewide group. These ideas that come from the community may need finetuning by Parks and ODOT.
 - All stakeholders should look for examples of cities that have already included the OCT in their local planning to use as a model for others.
- The Oregon Coast Bike Route (OCBR) Online Open House is “live” and the link will be shared with the group to offer feedback. There are a few places where the OCT overlaps with a critical need for the OCBR. ODOT is tracking these overlaps to ensure they consider both bikers and pedestrians as they address critical needs for the bike route.
- OPRD is taking the lead on developing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with ODOT and the USFS, for discussion at the next Statewide Landowner Group meeting. The MOU will be a nonbinding agreement signaling intent of the agencies to work together to develop and implement an action plan in advance of completing a Declaration of Cooperation. The MOU between the three agencies that host close to 90% of the Trail can inform creation of a matrix or list of possible administrative options for management and decision making along the entire length of the Trail.
- The Oregon Coast Visitors Association is working with Trail Keepers of Oregon to create ten trail maintenance group to cover 10 different geographic areas comprising the trail route. In May, OCVA plans to launch an aggressive campaign to staff, create awareness and raise money for these maintenance groups.
- OCT Foundation – bring back for more discussion as part of a strategy for completing and maintaining the trail, and setting trail priorities.
- The next landowner group meeting will be held at a coastal location if possible.

Format for developing preferred alignment recommendations at the connection groups

(With revisions following the discussion at the 2/21/2020 Landowner Group meeting)

1. Review existing alternative alignments identified
2. Identify any new alignments that are possible
3. Discuss and select preferred alignments to recommend to segment team.

Parameters

1. Alignments selected must address trail standards as developed by Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD) and adopted by the statewide OCT Ownership Group. Connection groups should also consider alternative alignments prior to selecting a preferred alignment. In addition, alignments should comply with existing laws and requirements such as cultural resource protection and natural hazard requirements.
2. Alignments must have a maintenance strategy that provides for ongoing maintenance of the trail.
3. Alignments must have a connection sponsor that agrees to take responsibility to:
 - Develop funding necessary to construct and complete the trail connection by seeking grants and other sources of support
 - Oversee and manage organizations that agree to maintain the trail connection
 - Ensure the OCT is incorporated in the city and/or county comprehensive plan
 - Advise OPRD and the OCT Ownership Group on issues associated with the trail connection that require their assistance on an ongoing basis.

Decision Making

1. Connection Groups must deliver trail alignment recommendations that address parameters 1 and 2
2. Connection groups that deliver alignments that address parameters 1 and 2 and have also identified a sponsor who agrees to fulfill the role described in parameter 3 (and are acknowledged by the Segment Team, Ownership Group, and OPRD as having done so) will have their preferred alignment included in the State Action Plan as the official alignment for that trail connection. Acknowledgement of the sponsorship role can be revoked if the sponsor fails to perform the responsibilities in Parameter Three.
3. Connection Groups who do not identify a sponsor(s) for the connection may bring their preferred recommendation to the Segment Group. However, the final alignment for inclusion in the State Action Plan will be determined by OPRD and/or the Oregon Department of Transportation.

Prioritization of New Trail Segment Construction

Summary of 2/21/20 Landowners Group Meeting Discussion

OPRD is to submit an annual report to the Legislature on the progress made toward developing and implementing an action plan. The plan is to be developed in cooperation with the Department of Transportation, other interested state agencies, local governments, nonprofit organizations and other stakeholders.

The action plan is to include prioritization of new trail segment construction:

1. Resulting in improved safety
2. Immediacy of implementation
3. Potential project sponsors
4. Sources of funding

Additional Suggested Criteria for consideration discussed included:

- Community Wellness (i.e. quality of life)
- Overall Community Support (is there any controversy surrounding a trail project?)
- Benefits to Community Partners (hospitals; Community building as examples)
- Readiness of projects (dual benefit i.e. overlap with the Oregon Coast Bike Route)
- Maintenance agreements along with sponsorships, and related capacity for local maintenance.
- Segment is identified in a local comprehensive land use plan, transportation strategy plan, recreation plan (could use this criterion as a carrot to get the gap completed?)
- Proximity to communities/population served/ Proximity to underserved communities
- How much of the Trail does the proposed section “open up” (how integral the project is to lengthening the completed sections of the Trail)? How big a gap is connected?
 - How critical is the gap? Example discussed: Yachats area traffic separation vs funding closing a gap.
- Visual Inventory Scores (DLCD has this data) . May help with priorities for areas between communities, or as a scoring example.
- Education opportunities associated with a section of the Trail.

Overarching considerations for new construction prioritization include:

- prioritization be done to allow for (and assure) projects in each of the three segments go forward in an efficient and (at some level) equitable fashion.
- recognition there will typically be several different, and possibly unique, funding sources for specific projects that will need to be considered.

The Landowner Group discussed creating a “weighted” system of criteria to review all projects. Ideas for weighting included:

- Project sponsorship by a local government
- Identified community benefits

Synergies/overlaps among criteria could be considered and result in a higher priority for a project. Weighting metrics for each criterion may aid in more clearly leveraging funding to complete design and construction.

The USFS uses readiness factors and has checklist with metrics for these factors. Transparency in the prioritization of projects will be important. A point system may be important to consider as a part of weighting “to be fair to everyone”. ODOT used a point weighting system for the OCBR as part of the public process.

As the criteria to incentivize projects gets finalized there needs to be a certain chemistry between all the pieces. This may involve starting with “What does a good project look like? Shared agreement of these values for a good project is important.

Conversation also included how the shared resources for gap project planning, design and construction are distributed. There was recognition that if some want to “go it alone” to complete a gap and have resources, there should be agreement for them to “go for it” consistent with the trail standards and expectations for on-going operation and maintenance of the Trail section that have been agreed to by the Landowners Group. Otherwise, completion of all gaps will need to be into the priorities and criteria process.

ADDENDUM TO THE DISCUSSION

Since the 2/21/20 discussion, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for the Oregon Coast Trail has been completed by OPRD, ODOT and the USFS. The purpose of the MOU is to “establish a framework for future cooperation on activities effecting the Oregon Coast Trail”. The Terms of the MOU address prioritization criteria for the OCT action plan stating:

“Prioritization criteria – Safety is the highest priority, but other priorities include making connections to towns, minimizing additional required land acquisition, maintenance needs, proximity to the coast, and others.”

Potential Sources of Funding for New Construction Implementation

Summary of 2/21/20 Landowners Group Meeting Discussion

The Amanda Trail Suspension Bridge replacement project was highlighted as a success story built with the leveraging of funds and labor from a wide variety of local, state, tribal and federal sources.

Some additional resources noted for completing and maintaining the Trail included:

- The compendium of trail funding resources on the OPRD website:
<https://www.oregon.gov/oprd/GRA/Pages/GRA-overview.aspx>

- Oregon Coast Visitors Association
<https://visittheoregoncoast.com/industry-resources/grant-opportunities/>
- Transportation Growth Management grants GRANTS
<https://www.oregon.gov/lcd/TGM/Pages/Planning-Grants.aspx>
- State and local lodging taxes
<https://industry.traveloregon.com/resources/tourism-in-oregon/lodging-tax/>
- Local government Public Works and Parks and Recreation Departments
(Examples include Otter Crest Trail loop project and Tillamook County trail initiatives.)

The discussion about funding started by recognizing that a new Trail segment construction project:

- Must be included in Action Plan.
- Will likely include federal, state, local, tribal and private sources.
- A goal of the Segment Teams is to establish leadership at the local level. Finding local sponsorships for individual gaps will streamline the process of securing funding.

Discussion:

- OPRD provided a list of lottery funded trail projects demonstrating there is already a large amount of trails funding going to coastal projects.
- Projects including local funds are great but projects should not be competing for the same funding resources to leverage their local contributions.
- Strategies for how to coordinate funding should come from the Statewide group before the next grant cycle.
 - It is important to have a local delivery agent as a project sponsor for grants. The Segment Teams can assist with identifying these.
- Quantified Adventures is a private firm providing innovative trail funding in other communities. The Landowners Group may want to ask for them to give a presentation to gain insight as to how this creative funding source can work for Oregon Coast Trail projects.
- ODOT – Oregon Coast Bike Route critical need areas. How will ODOT be prioritizing and what consideration will be given to the OCT overlap areas in the prioritization? Is there a role for the Counties, Area Committees on Transportation, etc. in prioritization?

<u>ADDENDUM TO THE DISCUSSION</u>
Since the 2/21/20 discussion, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for the Oregon Coast Trail has been completed by OPRD, ODOT and the USFS. The purpose of the MOU is to “establish a framework for future cooperation on activities effecting the Oregon Coast Trail”. The Terms of the MOU address a funding strategy for the OCT action plan stating:
“Funding strategy – A review of funding models will include not only grant opportunities, but public/private partnership opportunities for funding new construction and ongoing maintenance of the OCT. Funding and resource commitments will be made through other appropriate instruments.”