

**Parks Advisory Committee
September 18, 2006**

Members Present: Damien Gilbert, Emily Schue, Merle Bottge, Steve Davis, and Marie Kennedy

Members Absent: Catherine Koehn and Johnny Medlin

Staff Present: Todd Winter and Christine Johnson

Guests Present: Darrell Bowes, Volunteer of the Year

Damien Gilbert, Chair, called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

I. Announcements/Agenda Modifications

There were no announcements and or agenda modifications.

II. Approval of Minutes – May 8, 2006 Parks Advisory Committee Meetings

Gilbert asked that the minutes from the May 8, 2006 meeting be approved. Bottge moved that the minutes be approved. Schue seconded the motion, and the vote was unanimous in favor.

III. Public Comment (Maximum of 20 Minutes)

There was no public comment at this time.

IV. Volunteer of the Year Award – Darrell Bowes

Winter introduced Darrell Bowes as this year's Volunteer of the Year. Mr. Bowes lives across the street from Whitely Boat Landing, which is a gated site that requires opening and closing each day. As we don't have the staff to do this, Mr. Bowes has stepped up to the plate and takes care of clearing the park each evening and locking the gate. Winter presented a plaque to Mr. Bowes in recognition of the time he has given to Lane County Parks. Mr. Bowes added that he does not do this entirely for Lane County Parks, but mostly in self-defense for himself and his neighbors. He went on to describe some recent incidents that have occurred at the site, including dumping of home trash, stolen cars, deer carcasses as well as a man with a gun in the park and police involvement.

V. Discussion of Oregon State Park's Discounted Rates Program for Foster Care Providers Being Extended to Lane County Parks

Winter stated that the Board directed him to bring this issue to this Committee for discussion after Commissioner Morrison received an e-mail Mark Mason, a resident of Noti, Oregon and a foster care provider. Winter distributed a copy of the letter and then read it to the Committee, which basically said that the State of Oregon provides a discounted or free use of Oregon State Parks day use and camping facilities to foster care providers. Mr. Mason would like to see this program extended to Lane and other Oregon county park facilities. Winter reminded this Committee that we currently provide a 50% discount on our Season Admission Passes to those persons holding a Golden Age Passport, which is issued to senior citizens by the Federal Government. He also stated that we have been approached by the disabled citizen's who carry a Golden Access card and from the Veteran's groups also wanting discounts for use of Lane County Park facilities. Bottge asked if we knew what kind of fiscal impact this has on the State

and Winter responded that the State didn't track this information so there were no statistics available. Winter feels that the impact to Lane County Parks would be low initially, but it would also open a "Pandora's Box" to all the other groups out there wanting discounted or free use of Lane County Parks.

Discussion followed regarding discounts only being available during off-peak hours, or only providing a certain amount of passes that are distributed through a type of lottery each year. Also discussed was the difficulty in managing any type of program and the lack of staff to do it. Davis added that aren't the foster care providers getting paid to provide foster care and how is that different than the low income families who are unable to pay for camping, etc. Oregon State Parks also has a huge budget and Lane County Parks is constantly struggling just to make ends meet. Bottge said that she would feel better about this type of program if we had a more generous budget or if Lane County Parks could be reimbursed for this type of program – then maybe it could work. Winter was asked what other Counties with similar budgets are doing -- he will check into this and report back at the next meeting.

VI. Division Manager's Report – Todd Winter, Division Manager

- **Mt. Pisgah – False Brome Eradication Issue -- Update:** Winter reminded everyone of the request for support that Chris Orsinger put before this Committee at the May meeting regarding a False Brome Eradication program for Mt. Pisgah. On June 21st this eradication program was taken before the Board of County Commissioners and passed unanimously. Chris Orsinger and the Friends of Buford Park and Mt. Pisgah will be taking the next steps to implement this program at Mt. Pisgah.
- **Move to New Park's Offices:** Winter said that the Qwest buildings and property located right next door to the Lane County Public Works complex was purchased using Road Fund dollars to provide room for future expansion of Public Works. It is currently in the planning stages to renovate and furnish this space for the Parks Division to move into. The Park's offices located at Armitage are slowly slipping of their foundation, causing some damage that could become significant in the future, so it is the perfect time to relocate. Parks will not have to pay for any of the upgrades to the Qwest building, we will just become tenants and pay rent. Some of the plusses include having more space and amenities – including meeting space for our PAC meetings, and all of our equipment will be under cover and secure. Winter added that we have not yet determined what the vacated office space at Armitage will be used for.
- **Staff Changes:** Winter announced that Jana Sorenson, Parks Superintendent, made the decision to leave County employment as of about one month ago. We will probably not be able to fill the position until after the first of the year.
- **1st Annual Appreciation Barbecue for Advisory Committee Volunteers:** Winter said that Lane County is sponsoring this barbecue to thank all the volunteers for their continued commitment. It will be held tomorrow evening at 5:30 p.m. at Site J at Armitage Park. All volunteers will get a t-shirt whether attending or not. Winter hoped everyone will be able to attend.
- **Glenada Property – Update:** Winter said that the final details for the sale of this property are still being worked out. There are five 20' x 50' privately owned pieces of property that we will be going to the Board for permission to open negotiations with the property owners to purchase. Once that process is complete, we will then be going back to the Board to request vacation of the roadways in this area that were plotted back in the late 1800's. Once this process is complete, we can finalize the sale with the State and receive payment. Bottge asked about the Park's Master Plan and how far is it from being complete. Winter said that he spoke with Celia Barry recently and she has completed three of the four chapters including the introduction, the financial chapter and the history chapter. The complete first draft will hopefully be available by October for review. With one of the projects that Parks wants to begin once we receive the money from the sale of the Glenada property being the campground

at Armitage Park, a complete master plan will be necessary for the grant process. Winter added that the Armitage campground may also require an amendment to the Metro Plan.

- **VenTek Fee Collection System -- Update:** During this past season, Winter stated that four of the VenTek fee machines were broken into or vandalized or both and some on more than one occasion. It became apparent that it cost more to repair the machines than we were taking in, so Winter informed the Board that we would need to restructure our fee collection process for the remainder of the season. We pulled four of the machines from the field, leaving the four that were still intact where they were and went to a manual fee collection process on holidays and weekends through Labor Day at the sites without the machines. During the winter, we will be looking at how to restructure our fee collection process. We also dealt with a break in at the Richardson Campground office, where the safe was stolen along with all the keys to the shower fee boxes and the Pepsi machine, which they also broke into.

- **Preliminary Campground Stats:** Winter said that Christine had put together some preliminary reservation statistics that cover both Richardson and Harbor Vista Campgrounds from January 1 through Labor Day weekend. At Richardson in 1998, the first year we began taking reservations, we did a total of 474 reservations and total revenues of \$74,809. This season so far with the new on-line reservation system, we have had a total of 1,400 reservations and revenues so far of \$131,666. At Harbor Vista Campground in 1998 we did a total of 332 reservations and total revenues of \$56,344. This season so far at Harbor Vista we have had 798 reservations and revenues of \$112,440. Winter added that we wouldn't be adding Baker Bay to the reservation process next season as we had hoped because we still have a lot of bugs to work out with the system before this can occur.

VII. Good of the Order/Concerns of the Committee

There was nothing presented for the good of the order.

VIII. Adjournment:

As there was no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 6:35 p.m.

Submitted by Christine Johnson, Secretary