



**AD HOC WORK GROUP
PRINEVILLE RESERVOIR
RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN/MASTER PLAN**

Meeting No. 2 Summary

Meeting Date: June 14, 2001

I. MEETING ATTENDEES

AHWG Members: AHWG Members:

Dr. Diane Bohle, Chamber of Commerce
Bill Crawford, Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD)*
Brian Ferry, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW)*
Boyd Goodpaster, South Shore Resident*
Amy Green, Friends of Roberts Bay
Laura Hawes, Prineville Resort*
Jim Hensley, Crook County Undersheriff*
Ed Hodges, Oregon Hunters
Mike McCabe, Crook County Commissioner
Eileen Obermiller, Assistant Planner, Deschutes County Community Development Department*
Berry Phelps, U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM)*
Larry Rasmussen, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)
Wayne Shuyler, Oregon State Marine Board*
Russell Rhoden, Ochoco Irrigators
Dan Skillings, Central Oregon Bass Club*
Bridgette Whipple, Cultural Anthropologist, Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs

Planning Team:

Vicki Kellerman, Reclamation, PN Regional Office, Team Leader*
Connie Wensman, Reclamation, Realty Specialist*
Chuck Korson, Reclamation, Lower Columbia Area Office, Natural Resource Specialist*
Kristen Stallman, OPRD, Master Planner*
Kevin Butterbaugh, EDAW, Project Manager and Principal Planner, Consultant Team*
Jim Keany, EDAW, Terrestrial Ecologist and EA Coordinator, Consultant Team*
Peter Carr, EDAW, Public Involvement Specialist, Consultant Team*
John Petrovsky, JPA, Public Involvement Specialist, Consultant Team*

** denotes attendance at second AHWG meeting*

II. INTRODUCTIONS/AGENDA

This document summarizes the second Ad Hoc Work Group (AHWG) Meeting for the Prineville Reservoir RMP/Master Plan, held June 14, 2001 in Prineville, OR at Prineville Reservoir State Park.

John Petrovsky (JPA) began the meeting by reviewing the day's agenda. Unlike other scheduled AHWG meetings, which are generally evening meetings, today's meeting was an all-day event combining a planning meeting with a study area field trip, conducted by both boat (on the reservoir) and van (to visit access areas and campsites). In particular, John (and the rest of the Planning Team) thanked the members for giving up an entire day mid-week to devote to the RMP/MP planning effort.

The primary intent of this meeting was to gather further, more specific input on key issues to be addressed in the RMP/MP. Reclamation and ORPD's approach to identifying and explaining key issues is to develop a "Problem Statement," which is one of the first steps in the planning process. Several AHWG members were unable to attend today's meeting. Therefore, the Planning Team decided to send a separate letter to absent members, inviting input on issues being discussed. Based on input from the meeting and responses to this letter, John will draft the Problem Statement for later Group review and refinement. The Problem Statement will also be used as a foundation for developing the Goals and Objectives for the plan. The intent of the project visit was to facilitate site-specific identification of key issues, which will feed into the Problem Statement.

Another purpose of today's meeting was for the Planning Team to provide the Group a summary of the latest information on area resources; Planning Team resource specialists provided an overview of the current resource inventory and evaluation, as summarized below.

III. RESOURCE EVALUATION & PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

A. Natural Resources (Jim Keany, EDAW)

Jim Keany noted that our evaluation considers resources both within and outside the actual study area boundary, as resources adjacent to and outside the study area boundary influence the study area and its resources. Existing data on the region and planning area are fairly robust, with information available both at the landscape and more detailed scale. We already have occurrence data for resources such as sensitive species and raptor nests. One of the key goals of our analysis will be to compare species/habitat data with areas of human use and potential disturbance, as well as the specific timing of such use.

Jim gave a brief overview of the physical aspects of the region (e.g., soils, geology, topography). An understanding of such resources is especially important here, as the watershed is highly erodible. This is a naturally turbid watershed, and the EPA has listed Prineville as not meeting standards for turbidity. These processes are linked – for example, sediment loads influence food production (algae/zooplankton), which in turn influence food available for the reservoir fishery.

Regarding the fishery, Jim noted that black crappie were recently introduced, and their presence seems to be depressing the bass population.

Jim also provided an overview of vegetation resources in the study area; the following vegetation coverages occur: developed sites, forested areas, juniper woodland, grassland, shrubland, shrub-steppe, sagebrush, cheatgrass, bunchgrass, wetland/riparian, willow, streamside, woody/emergent wetlands, and rimrock (cliffs). Each of these provides different habitat values for various species. Jim noted that the regional proliferation of juniper woodlands (primarily due to historic fire suppression) has decreased habitat values in Eastern Oregon; juniper shades out native grasses, which limits forage potential for native species like deer.

Other key issues and management considerations noted by Jim are listed below.

Sensitive Habitats – A primary concern is potential impacts to wetland resources, notably from human contact (e.g., off-road vehicle use, people trampling sensitive areas).

Rare Plants - One rare plant species present; it has no federal designation but is a species of concern with a Level 1 ranking with the Oregon Natural Heritage Program (ONHP).

Noxious Weeds – Reclamation already has an effective weed management manual. However, problematic species in the area that require aggressive management include knapweeds, whitetop, and perennial pepperweed. Roadsides and campgrounds are the main areas of concern.

Cattle Grazing – There seems to be a problem of grazing damage from cattle, both on BLM grazing allotment lands and from adjacent landowners.

Wildlife Habitat – Deer winter range is the primary use of the State Wildlife Area (SWA). Regional development has significantly encroached upon regional deer winter range, and federal lands are one of the last remaining sources of habitat. Other important wildlife habitat occurs at Prineville, such as nesting waterfowl, roosting bald eagle, and breeding raptors (prairie falcons, ravens, red-tails, and golden eagles). Brian Ferry (ODFW) noted that federal land is not necessarily secure for winter range; most of the BLM land does NOT have a winter range designation, and it is not receiving adequate protection. Berry Phelps (BLM) noted that the patchwork ownership/management patterns of BLM/Reclamation lands complicate management and understanding of land uses and restrictions.

Rare Amphibian Species – The Oregon spotted frog (a state-listed species) potentially occurs in the watershed, but it hasn't been actually documented at Prineville.

Cryptobiotic Soils – These refer to rare areas of soils with a thin crust that exhibit a unique algae/lichen relationship; these areas are extremely sensitive to disturbance and are important for nutrient and energy cycling.

B. Cultural Resources (Vicki Kellerman, Reclamation)

The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 requires federal agencies to consult with state and local groups, such as the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO), before non-renewable cultural resources such as archaeological sites and historic structures are destroyed.

A large part of the archeological surveys have been completed for the Prineville Reservoir area, and a large number of sites have been recorded. Some sites have been determined eligible for the National Register, some sites need more extensive and formal testing, and many sites have been determined not eligible due to a lack of subsurface information or physical integrity.

Reclamation is constrained at providing cultural resource information to the public and cannot release a map of sites to the public. It is important to remember that our proposals will be subject to review for cultural resource considerations and we can expect some limitations on what we can do at some locations.

Lands in this area are traditional use lands for native Americans and ceded Tribal lands. The federal government's responsibility to Native Americans is distinguished by a unique legal relationship due to the sovereign status of Indian Tribes and special provisions of law. We began consulting with Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation in January of this year. We have coordinated and notified the Tribe Archaeologist on the survey work and will continue to keep her posted of our progress and findings. Indian Trust Assets are legal interests in property held in trust by the US for Indian Tribes, such as lands, minerals, hunting and fishing rights, and water rights. As part of our commitment to consult with the Warm Springs and other interested Tribes, we will assess the impacts of potential RMP actions on ITAs reserved on Prineville Reservoir lands.

C. Water Operations/Water Reallocation (Vicki Kellerman, Reclamation)

A handout (blue) was provided of the status of the Prineville Reallocation Study as of June 2001. The purpose of the study is to resolve competing demands for uncontracted water (more than half) stored in Prineville Reservoir. Use of uncontracted storage space for irrigation is the only use that is within the intent of the original authorization. Any other uses, such as recreation, fish & wildlife, and municipal & industrial uses, will require Congressional reauthorization.

A moratorium put in place in 1974 on the sale of uncontracted storage space remains in effect to this day due to difficulties in negotiating a consensus solution among interested parties.

Reclamation began a Planning Report/EIS in 1997 to once again try and resolve the competing demands for water in Prineville Reservoir. Currently, six alternatives have been developed and it is hoped that the alternatives can be finalized by summer/fall 2001. Final Planning Report/EIS is hoped for winter 2003.

Results of the reallocation are important to recreation; however, the benefits of updating the RMP and completing the State Park Master Plan in the next couple of years are equally important. This is a unique opportunity to coordinate with the State Park Master Planning effort and the BLM Resource Management Planning effort.

D. Recreation and Public Use (Kevin Butterbaugh, EDAW)

Regional View – The area of influence for this study is primarily the Deschutes/Crook County area, as well as the Portland metro area; these 2 user groups make up the vast majority of visitors (with about 60% from Central Oregon and 40% from the Portland metro area). According to the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP), top ranking activities in the region include snow-related use, off road use, camping, nature study, and fishing. Visitors from the Portland area tend to be involved in hiking, water activities, snow activities, and other non-motorized activities. Other similar regional opportunities are provided at Lake Billy Chinook, the most popular reservoir for boaters in the state. High use levels at Lake Billy Chinook seem to be pushing use off to other areas in the region, such as Prineville Reservoir. Prineville is ranked 17th in Oregon for boater days, with use increasing significantly over the past 10 years.

Prineville Use and Demographics – In 1999, overall visitation at Prineville was 423,000 people, representing a large increase over the last decade. State Parks administered a visitor questionnaire last year, providing limited but up-to-date data. According to the questionnaire results, the most common activities at Prineville are resting/relaxation, fishing from shore, swimming, and tent camping. Primary activities were fishing from boat, fishing from shore, resting/relaxing, and waterskiing. The user base has been visiting here for a long time, with an average first year visited of 1978. People don't visit frequently (with an average of 3 times/year), but they stay a relatively long time (over 4 days); most use is overnight, rather than day use. Also, the average group size is fairly large, at just under 9 people/group.

In addition to demographics, the State Parks questionnaire addressed visitor perceptions and attitudes. In general, visitors don't feel very crowded at the campgrounds and other land-based facilities. Crowding is more evident on the water, in site-specific areas such as between the County Boat ramp and the dam, as well as at the boat ramps. AHWG members expressed surprise over these "not crowded" results, as their impression is that crowding is a significant concern, both on the water and on shore. Kevin noted that the State Parks questionnaire was not a scientific, statistically accurate survey, and may not necessarily represent peak conditions. In terms of facility satisfaction, the questionnaire indicated that most visitors were comfortable with the amount and condition of current facilities, with some suggestions to improve/expand picnic tables, docks, launch ramps, and RV dump stations.

In terms of use levels, the State Park is by far the most popular use area at Prineville, with campgrounds full on most weekends during the peak summer season. It also has the deepest boat launch. Of the five developed boat launches on the reservoir, the County Boat Ramp is the most problematic in terms of overall condition, access at low water levels, and crowding. Since the 1992 RMP, several upgrades to various facilities and areas have occurred, including the Big Bend Campground, Jasper Point Campground, cabins at the State Park, and day use facilities at the State Park. Also, the recent paving of Alfalfa Road has facilitated access from the Bend area, dramatically increasing use levels at Powderhouse Cove.

Since the 1992 RMP, user conflicts and overuse at Roberts Bay have decreased, as Reclamation/OPRD now provide toilet facilities and trash pickup during the peak season and the

Sheriff patrols the area on a regular basis; use levels are still a concern at this dispersed area, however. Reclamation/OPRD are currently considering the addition of a floating restroom on the south side of the reservoir, near Juniper Bay. Kevin also described existing use levels at the Resort and within the ODFW-managed SWA; in general, the most significant recreation-related issues occur in the SWA, where unauthorized ORV use and access have created significant problems such as erosion and habitat destruction.

In summary, Kevin noted that significant recreation-related management issues to be addressed include unauthorized ORV use, parking, general overuse (especially at dispersed boat-in sites), and use of vehicles below the high water line and other off-limits areas.

Land Use – In the study area, recreation is the primary land use with the potential to cause significant impacts on the area’s natural and cultural resources. In addition, authorized and unauthorized cattle grazing has the potential to cause impacts. Since the 1992 RMP, significant new development has occurred, and is currently planned, for private lands surrounding the study area; these new developments raise issues such as increasing demand, use, and access.

E. Question/Answer Period

The floor was opened up to questions and answers regarding the current resource evaluation. Questions and answers are summarized below.

Q – What SCORP data were used?

A – SCORP Regions 10 and 7 were examined (Region 10 includes Crook, Deschutes, Wasco, Hood River, Sherman, Gilliam, Wheeler, and Jefferson counties; Region 7 includes Columbia, Clackamas, Multnomah, and Washington counties).

Q – Will the RMP/MP address the increasing development/growth around the reservoir, including outside the study area boundary?

A – In terms of Reclamation’s jurisdiction, we’re limited to areas within the study area; however, we’ll be incorporating information as necessary from areas outside that boundary that may affect Reclamation lands, such as increasing use levels and demand for access. This led to an extended discussion about the multiple planned subdivisions in the area, such as the planned 122-site development above the County Boat Ramp. A management concern is that such increasing development might push recreation and use demand levels beyond the reservoir’s carrying capacity. In addition, there might be increasing demand for access through public lands that currently function as high quality wildlife habitat areas.

Q – Regarding the six alternatives being addressed in the Reallocation Study, are there any with a recreation emphasis? Also, there are rumors of potential hydroelectric development at Prineville.

A – All of the alternatives have a recreation component, and some stress recreation use and flows more than others. And, yes, there is a company that has filed preliminary Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) applications for hydro projects at several east-side reservoirs, including Prineville; these are highly speculative, preliminary considerations.

IV. STUDY AREA TOUR

After the morning meeting (summarized above), the AHWG broke off into two separate groups; the first group toured the reservoir in three boats, while the second group toured land-based facilities on the north side of the reservoir in a van. After lunch, groups 1 and 2 then switched places.

The purpose of the tour was to point out site-specific areas of concern, and discuss issues associated with those sites. Each of the AHWG members brings to the Group a unique perspective on project use, and the tour functioned primarily as an open forum for information sharing and dialog. Site-specific issues were captured later in the day.

Reservoir sites examined included Roberts Bay East, “Social Security Beach” (adjacent to the Resort), Roberts Bay West, the Island, Juniper Point and the County Boat Ramp, Powderhouse Cove, and Juniper Bay.

Land-based sites examined included Prineville Resort, Jasper Point Boat Ramp, and numerous sites along the 5-mile unimproved North Shore Road (including Owl Creek, Juniper Bass, Old Field, various unnamed dispersed sites, and the riparian headwaters area near Eagle Creek).

V. POST-TOUR MEETING – ISSUE IDENTIFICATION AND DISCUSSION

The final portion of the meeting focused on small group discussion of key issues. Small groups were organized according to the following resource topics/categories, with four to six AHWG members present in each of the groups: (1) natural and cultural resources; (2) recreation; and (3) land use, management, and implementation. Each small group discussed and addressed the various issues associated with these summary categories, based on the public input received to date and the dialog that occurred during the project tour earlier in the day. To use as a starting point, each member was given a printout of key issues identified earlier.

During the discussion of each of these issues, one Planning Team member was present to record significant dialog, differing perspectives, and consensus items onto flip charts. John Petrovsky will be using these flip chart notes to help develop the Problem Statement, which will be an organized treatment of each and every issue. The Problem Statement will form the foundation of the development of Goals and Objectives, as well as Management Actions.

To avoid redundancy, the issue discussions are not recorded here in this meeting summary – the issues will be covered in detail in the forthcoming Problem Statement, and the AHWG members will have an opportunity to review and comment on it. The expected draft Problem Statement should be ready for review and distribution prior to the next AHWG meeting, scheduled for August 16.