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# Bowers Rock State Park

## Meeting Notes

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June 26, 2014

Albany City Hall

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### MEETING AGENDA

9:00 am      Welcome, introductions  
*Bud Baumgartner, Co-Chair Calapooia Watershed Council*

Participants:

First Name	Last Name	Interest Group
Tara	Davis	CWC, Executive Director
Bud	Baumgartner	CWC, Council Co-Chair, Forester
Connie	Burdick	CWC
Peter	Kenegy	Local Landowner
Kate	Huber	Local Landowner
Marvin	Gilmore	Local Landowner
Crystal	Durbecq	Benton SWCD
Karen	Scheler	Local Landowner
Julie	Whalen	Oregon Parks and Recreation Dept
Benny	Dean Jr	US Army Corps of Engineers
Andrea	Wagner	US Army Corps of Engineers
Dan	Bell	The Nature Conservancy
Troy	Brandt	RDG, Project Designer
Denise	Hoffert	CC, Project Manager
Kyle	Odegard	Albany Democrat Herald

9:10 am      **Review meeting agenda and ground rules**  
*Denise Hoffert-Hay, Calapooia Watershed Council Project Manager*

#### Ground Rules:

- Be on time, start on-time, end on time
- Stay on subject and follow agenda
- Respect the views of others
- Check your understanding by asking questions
- Focus on issues, problems, and solutions

9:15 am      **Facilitation Exercise:** Three Wishes – Each meeting attendee was given 3 index cards and asked to write one wish for the future of Bowers Rock State Park on each card. The wishes were anonymous (names were not provided on the cards). Cards were collected,

shuffled and re-distributed to the group. Each person was asked to read 2-3 of the re-distributed cards aloud to the group. Denise wrote these comments up on flip-chart paper at the front of the room, sorting them into categories. The wishes/ideas for the future of the Park were broken into three categories as they were being shared out with the group:

### **OPRD Management of the Park**

- Provide a reliable State Park presence
- More clearly delineate OPRD property from private property
- Identify funding to maintain the Park
- Resolve the public access issues (x2)
- Create a safely controlled access so Park visitors feel welcome
- Create a low impact access to the Park with trails, trash bins and OPRD oversight and presence
- OPRD needs to be stewards of the land
- Preserve the agricultural use of the Park
- Create an area to observe and connect to diverse habitat

### **Park Restoration**

- Good fish habitat\*
- Healthy riparian forest\*
- Overall happy ecosystem\*
- Control of invasives on all buffers/ditches on OPRD property\*
- Enhance floodplain hydrology\*
- Increase diversity of wildlife
- Restore fish passage in all Park drainages\*
- Improve channel connectivity after treating/removing invasive plants\*
- Protect native vegetation in existing pockets of high quality habitat\*
- Create a plan to deal with the relict gravel mining pond\*
- Improve water quality\*

### **Future Planning**

- Create a Plan for the Park (x2) (*Note: This issue has been raised at every stakeholder meeting for the project since October 2013. The lack of any written plan for how OPRD will manage this property now and into the future creates a significant uncertainty and frustration for those who live near the property as well as for those who wish to utilize the property*).
- Create/maintain a natural area for people to enjoy
- Public use/access for the Park that is compatible for the neighbors
- Use this project as a model for collaboration for future Willamette Greenway properties
- The Park should remain a limited use area for the public with limited access to areas of high quality habitat
- Identify sources of adequate restoration funding

Denise identified which actions can be addressed through the Watershed Council's restoration planning process and which are issues that will require OPRD cooperation and support to put into action. The OPRD category of actions outlined by the stakeholders was provided to the OPRD representative, Julie Whalen, who was in attendance at the meeting. She said she would bring the actions forward to Dennis Wiley for further OPRD consideration.

The Restoration Actions outlined were categorized by which ones could be achieved with cooperation between CWC and OPRD and developed into actions and projects to move forward to secure implementation funding. All items with an \* are possible items to include in the upcoming Willamette SIP grant round.

The Future Planning category was meant to capture items that might require longer time frames or additional resources outside of the potential SIP funding. These items were also provided to Julie Whalen to provide to Dennis Wiley to help OPRD frame what their future actions should take into consideration for the Park property.

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9:40 am          Park restoration planning presentation  
*Troy Brandt, River Design Group*

Troy provided a PowerPoint presentation on the restoration alternatives for Bowers Rock State Park that can be viewed at [www.calapooia.org](http://www.calapooia.org)

His presentation included three categories:

- Fish usage
- Restoration goals
- BRSP Opportunities

Fish usage in the Park has been documented by Oregon State University researchers. The fish of primary interest include ESA listed winter steelhead and spring Chinook. However, many other native fish are present in the Park including: cutthroat trout, redbreast shiners, sandrollers, sculpins, dace and northern pike minnows.

A diversity of native and non-native species have been documented to utilize the BRSP including the gravel pond and the Coon Creek Slough (labeled Bowers Rock Slough in the presentation). The sampling that has been done for the Park has occurred during Spring and Summer when flow conditions have enabled researchers to access the sites. The sampling has not likely captured the time of year when more of the native fish utilize the system (during winter high flows). The data show that non-native fish have a presence in the system, but native fish are still the majority. With improved connectivity (and expected improvement to water quality) the assemblage of native to non-native would be expected to move toward even more native fish.

He explained that native fish use BRSP seasonally as off-channel rearing habitat and for spawning (non-salmonid natives) and that non-natives are active during spring summer.

- Goals for BRSP Restoration include: improve off-channel habitat connections, improve off-channel habitat conditions, floodplain reforestation, address invasive species control.

The Park map was presented to show the identified restoration project opportunities including East and West sloughs and gravel pond area for a total of 6 potential point projects. The map also reflects potential vegetation enhancement zones. These are the same restoration areas that have been presented at previous stakeholder meetings (except this map does not illustrate the location of the on-hold Little Willamette crossing project).

### OVERVIEW BRSP Gravel Pit Pond:

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- Hub City Concrete, 1975, 50 acre pit, purchased by Morse Bros 1995, permit closed 2003.
- Air photo and discharge analysis shows that the gravel pond connects with the Willamette at a 2-year flow
- Low point of pond is in the north east pocket, it was never mined in the middle area where reed canary pad is now.
- The berm or high ground around west, north area is not dozed off material (or overburden material) from the pit. It is simply higher elevation, with relic trees older than 1975. It's a relic landform, and USGS is helping to determine the age of the landform. Conclusion: high ground adjacent to pond is a natural land surface with limited sections of isolated berm.
- There is a low feature in NE pond corner, maybe for equipment access or to drain the pond. Origin is unknown. This low area allows for connection at a two year flow, it connects from the Coon Creek revetment too. Inundation currently occurs under a two year flow event, less than 4 days per year. But at 23,500 the elevation is 180.87 in Albany, 73 days per year, but BR elevation is 188.5. Perhaps the 23,500 cfs discharge is what we can target. This will help determine the elevation of pond outlet/inlet and to decide average annual duration we want to see in the pond- is approximately 73 days acceptable?

### Goals and Alternatives BRSP Gravel Pit Pond

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- **GOALS:**
  - Improve seasonal fish access to floodplain habitats
  - Improve water quality
  - Reduce ponded water habitat
  - Increase riparian forest

- Minimize effects to adjacent private land
- **ALTERNATIVES:** (NOTE: Details found in Powerpoint presentation - download from Council webpage) - Alternative 1: Channel Outlet, Alternative, 2A: Flow through connection behind the Coon Creek revetment (flow enter from W out to NE corner), Alternative 2B – Flow-through connection (flow enter from SW corner out to NE corner), Alternative 3: Floodplain Channel, 4: No action.
- Preliminary cost estimates and construction schedule for constructing each alternative were presented. The budgets were developed based on recent project bids on another Willamette mainstem restoration project. (NOTE: The budgets only reflect the cost of on-the-ground construction activities and not any of the auxiliary activities – vegetation establishment, archaeology investigation, site access improvements, etc). The least expensive option is Alternative 1, but it also has the lowest ecological benefit. The floodplain channel is the most expensive alternative due to the amount of material that would need to be imported but provides the greatest ecological benefit. Alternatives 2A/B are in the middle both in terms of ecological benefit and cost.

**DISCUSSION:** Group agreed the gravel pond restoration is high priority. Alternative 1 was rejected as not providing flushing flows and would do little to improve conditions for native fish. The group thought Alternative 2 had the best likelihood of being funded for implementation. The group rejected Alternative 3 as being too expensive and would create a lot of temporary construction inconvenience to the neighboring landowners. The group did not think there was enough information on Alternative 2 to determine whether option A or B was the best option. The group agreed that additional on-the-ground data collection and further refinement of the design would be needed.

**Questions on implementation of Alternative 2 included:** Will this pond fill in with sediment from the Willamette? Who will perform maintenance on the inlet/outlet to ensure the elevations remain consistent over time and that it continues to function as designed? Who will create a maintenance plan? Who will ensure it is being implemented? How have other projects on the Willamette addressed maintenance? Will invasive weeds in the pond be fully treated and controlled prior to construction activities? How will construction access to this site be developed? Can the pond edge be re-shaped to create more diverse edge habitat? What are the pond depths? Shouldn't there be more filling of the pond? Why is so much rock material proposed for installation in the connector channels? Seems excessive. Why not create the connector channels with minimal armoring and allow them to shape themselves? Will the Coon Creek revetment be at risk of failure? Would re-connection from the downstream end create opportunity for the mainstem to capture the gravel pond? Recommendation to make sure the project is consistent with SLOPES to ensure ease of obtaining permits.

## Goals/Options for West/East Slough Crossing Projects

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### Goals

- Improve seasonal fish access to floodplain habitats
- Improve water quality

### Options

- East Slough projects:
  - Two crossings- existing culvert at most upstream, huge cottonwood, issues with gravel deposit and beaver dams, not functioning well, needs to be removed from a maintenance perspective and for fish passage.

**DISCUSSION/DECISIONS:** Leave crossing 1 on East Slough in place until OPRD develops a park management plan. The large cottonwood tree at the culvert would have to be removed. Its replacement so close to the east entrance to the property may increase traffic to the park by ratcheting up the visibility of the access.

Crossing 2 provides access to the far east side of the OPRD property. Recommendation is for removal of this culvert, but this will need to be verified with OPRD before a final decision is made. Council will also need to check with the leasing landowner managing the property, Joe Scheler to make sure there is no need for this crossing. The group did not have any objections to removal.

- West Slough crossing projects:
  - Three crossings interrupt fish passage and channel connectivity.
  - At crossing 1 this winter there was connectivity between the ASG pond and the West Slough; Schelers have not filled it to raise crossing elevation; they haven't modified any of these crossings.
  - The second crossing, a power line went down, 18" corrugated plastic pipe, put in by OPRD 10 years ago.
  - Most downstream crossing, a culvert that is collapsed corrugated pipe. Clay pipe extending it- issues with drainage and fish movement problems. There could be enhancement to the sloughs and mainstem river, the bar is covered in reed canary grass.

**DISCUSSION/DECISIONS:** Crossing 1 should be improved to provide a low water crossing to allow winter flows to move over the road surface without creating erosion. The group was in agreement over improving this crossing.

Crossing 2 appears to be used on occasion by the land leasee. It is potentially also used by the power company accessing the property. The recommendation is for removal. The Council will communicate with both potentially impacted users to make sure this will not impact their access needs. A larger crossing could be installed at the site.

Crossing 3 also appears to be used on occasion by the land lease. The recommendation is for removal. The Council will communicate with the leasee to determine their access needs and whether full removal will affect their management. It was discussed that a crossing may be warranted at this location to allow for future use of the Park and development of a hiking trail along the mainstem Willamette. OPRD will need to decide what their future intended use is for the property.

11:30 am      Meeting evaluations. Meeting adjourned.

Questions or suggested future agenda topics can be sent to the Project Manager: Denise Hoffert-Hay email: [hofferthay@peak.org](mailto:hofferthay@peak.org) or phone 541-619-5896.

**Thank you for your continued support of the Bowers Rock State Park Restoration Project!**