

Board of Commissioners Meeting  
November 30, 2010

Present: Commissioner Mark D. Davidson  
Commissioner Steve McClure  
Commissioner R. Nellie Hibbert

Call to Order

Chairman Davidson called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. with all three Commissioners present.

Review of Draft MERA Master Plan

Hanley Jenkins II, Planning Director, explained that the Board of Commissioners appointed two advisory committees; motorized and non-motorized. The advisory committees met a number of times since the purchase of the property and have developed the master plan that is presented to the Commissioners. The Master Plan is a policy guidance document and it will ultimately be supplemented with individual management plans for forestry, grazing, fire, weed, fish and wildlife, cultural resources and motorized and non-motorized management. The advisory committees did go through a process with conceptual trail maps for motorized and non-motorized use. They are conceptual only and they will be specifically identified when on the ground surveys are done. Any ground disturbance will be preceded by a cultural resource survey. There have been two cultural resource assessments done to date. One was for the motorized trailhead at Fox Hill and the other was for the Owsley Canyon and Igo Lane trailheads. There were no cultural resources found associated with the motorized trailhead in a specific site. There was a nearby pioneer homesite that was identified. There are no plans for that specific area and it is adjacent to the youth riding area that has been established. There were cultural resources found in the vicinity of the Owsley Canyon trailhead so there will have to be additional investigations before any improvements are done there. The Master Plan does describe a purpose and intent for the individual management plans. The individual management plans will be very detailed and will identify the management practices associated with each of those listed resources. The master plan establishes a process for future proposals and considerations. That process includes submitting proposals to the two advisory committees for their review and evaluation. The advisory committees will make recommendations to the County Board of Commissioners. The County Board of Commissioners will make final decisions associated with the master plan and the subsequent management plans. The master plan is intended to be adopted by the Board of Commissioners and it will become a policy guidance document for the MERA. Hanley stated that the Commissioners have a draft management plan that has been prepared and submitted.

Commissioner McClure stated that as the County moved through the process of developing the plan there were a room full of people on numerous occasions. There were a lot of citizens participating during that process and a lot of questions were answered in the process and probably the biggest issue that

needs to be dealt with is access on the East side. The recommendation from the Committee was to let the Commissioners make that decision. Three possible alternatives have been reviewed.

Commissioner McClure explained that the master plan process was a bigger effort than he thought it was going to be. There were some conflicting uses.

Hanley stated that new uses came up as the process went along. The snowmobilers came in and participated in the process and expressed interest in having an opportunity to develop use on the site. There was a disk golf proposal that came in. Hanley explained that they haven't addressed the disk golf proposal at this point but it is something that is out there and there was a promise made to them that it would be revisited once this process was done.

Commissioner McClure complimented the Committees. There was always a quorum without any problem and there was participation from various agencies.

Hanley stated that the agency representatives being on both committees and the same people from the agencies participating worked out very well. It will benefit the County in the future not only from keeping them aware of what the issues are but also getting their knowledge as the process went along.

Commissioner McClure explained that there will probably have to be changes made because not everything was anticipated and some of the things that were put in the plan may need to be changed. It is a good starting point and it gives the County a blue print of the things the County needs to do.

Hanley stated that the Oregon State Parks and Recreation Department ATV Advisory Committee have been on the MERA site twice. They were the primary funder in purchasing the property and they continue to provide the County annual grant funds for maintenance and operation and some improvement activities. It has been a beneficial participation on their part in the process.

Commissioner Hibbert commented that the collaborative effort that has happened throughout the process is remarkable given that there have been a few bumps along the way but to have come this far is pretty amazing. She is a proponent of renewable energy and she would like to see on page 7 where it says, "prescribed burning may be used" she would like to add, "or biomass removal may be used as a tool to restore the natural cycle and to decrease fuel loads." That wouldn't be the complete sentence but she would like to have the biomass removal as an alternative to burning. She would like to see that included because that is an industry that is gaining momentum.

There was no public testimony given.

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Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned until the next hearing on December 8, 2010.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ashley Wilhelm  
Department Specialist