



## Oregon Solutions – Oregon Consensus State Parks/County Parks Project

### Declaration of Cooperation

November 25, 2013

*Sponsored by:*

*Oregon Parks and Recreation Department*

*Association of Oregon Counties*

*Oregon Parks Association*

*Oregon Consensus and Oregon Solutions*

**Oregon Consensus and Oregon Solutions.** The National Policy Consensus Center is housed within the Hatfield School of Government at Portland State University. It is the home to Oregon Consensus (OC) and to Oregon Solutions (OS). OC provides a neutral forum for diverse stakeholders to collaborate on resolving disputes about public issues. The mission of OS is to develop solutions to community based problems that support sustainable objectives for the economy, the community and the environment and are built through the collaborative efforts of citizens, businesses, government and non-profit organizations. Both programs provide a neutral forum – a place where various interests and stakeholders work together as partners in a collaborative process.

Over the past few months, OC/OS has worked with the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD), the Association of Oregon Counties (AOC), and the Oregon Parks Association (OPA) to reach agreement on a number of issues pertaining to funding of state parks and county parks and to the relationship between the parties on the delivery of parks and recreation services within the State of Oregon.

**Purpose of the Declaration of Cooperation.** The Project Team has worked to facilitate an agreement on potential actions that may be taken to lead to successful project outcomes, including preliminarily identifying which party may be appropriate to take specific potential actions. This collaborative work product is documented in this Declaration of Cooperation (DOC). The DOC is a non-binding *implementation plan* for the project that the parties have been discussing.

**Background to the Project.** In November 2012, the Oregon Parks Association (OPA) released a needs assessment of deferred maintenance in county parks. The purpose of the assessment was to document and quantify the number, type, and cost of existing deferred maintenance

projects in county parks throughout the State of Oregon. As a result of the needs assessment, the OPA joined with the Association of Oregon Counties (AOC) to suggest a change to Oregon law that would bring additional funds to county parks maintenance needs.

The suggested change was to increase the share of funds from Recreational Vehicle Registration Fees flowing to counties under existing state law. Currently, the distribution formula provides that 65 percent of funds from RV registration fees go to the State of Oregon and 35 percent go to County Parks. Through an involved negotiation and lobbying process, OPRD and AOC agreed to request a change to the formula.

As a part of the state's budget process for FY 2013-2015, a "budget note" became a part of the OPRD budget. The budget note states:

*Budget Note*

*The Legislature recognizes that county parks face significant financial distress and \$80 million in deferred maintenance projects resulting in adverse impacts to the economy and limiting access to outdoor recreation opportunities for citizens of the counties and their visitors. County parks play an important role in providing recreational opportunities in many areas not served by state parks.*

*In recognition of this, Oregon Parks and Recreation Department is directed to participate in a collaborative Oregon Solutions effort with county park providers in a neutral forum to develop recommendations that will:*

- a.) Review grant programs and revenue sources that address state and county parks infrastructure needs and develop an equitable sharing of resources,*
- b.) Identify gaps in service provision and develop more efficient ways to deliver services, marketing, and recreational opportunities, and*
- c.) Identify parks that could be more efficiently managed and result in a net savings if managed by another jurisdiction.*

*Oregon Parks and Recreation Department and the Association of Oregon Counties will report to the 2014 Legislature in advance of the February 2014 session regarding the outcome of the Oregon Solutions effort and recommendations to address this budget note.*

OPRD, AOC, and OPA have reached agreement on a number of issues described in the budget note, and recognizing that the recommendations will result in lesser funding to state parks, wish to offset this deficiency by seeking additional revenue sources and operating efficiencies. This DOC, while not a binding legal contract, is evidence to and a statement of the good faith and commitment of the undersigned parties. The undersigned parties to this DOC have, through a collaborative process, agreed and pledged their cooperation to the recommendations described below.

**OPRD, AOC, and OPA all support the following recommendations:**

**Budget Note a. – Review Grant Programs and Revenue Sources that Address State and County Parks Infrastructure Needs and Develop an Equitable Sharing of Resources.**

a. The parties recommend that legislation should be prepared and passed in the February 2014 session to: (1) change the distribution formula for RV registration fees from the existing division of 65 percent for OPRD and 35 percent for county parks to 60 percent for OPRD and 40 percent for county parks effective upon passage in the February 2014 session. (2) change to 55 percent for OPRD and 45 percent for county parks beginning July 1, 2015. (3) Remove the 2015 sunset provision in existing state law so that the division of RV registration fees between the state and counties remains in place into the future.

b. The parties agree to actively support this legislation so as to enable passage and agree not to undermine any attempts to pass the legislation. By January 1, 2014, AOC/OPA and OPRD will jointly develop a legislative strategy to promote passage.

c. The parties recognize that AOC will be in a leadership role, with the support of OPRD, in the preparation of a comprehensive transportation funding bill for the 2015 legislative session. To benefit both counties and OPRD, AOC agrees to take an active role with transportation advocates to include an increase in the RV registration fees and RV trip fees as part of a new transportation funding bill for consideration by the legislature in the 2015 session.

d. AOC/OPA and OPRD agree to work together in partnership to address joint budget-related issues that affect all park and recreation providers, including the preparation of legislative concepts to address budgetary impacts related to changes in the formula for distributing RV registration fees.

**Budget Note b. – Identify Gaps in Service Provision and Develop More Efficient Ways to Deliver Services, Marketing, and Recreational Opportunities**

a. The parties recommend that Regional Recreation Coalitions be created by July 1, 2014, consisting of staff from local government recreation providers and OPRD. Regions will be established by agreement of the OPRD Director, the President of OPA, and leaders from other public recreation providers such as the Oregon Recreation and Parks Association.

b. The purpose of the Regional Recreation Coalitions is to create partnerships to develop intergovernmental agreements on: 1) filling gaps in services between OPRD and county parks and other jurisdictions; 2) more efficient ways to deliver parks and recreation services; and 3) to market and expand recreational opportunities to users.

c. Representatives of AOC/OPA will meet annually in the fall with the State Parks Commission to discuss the work of the Regional Recreation Coalitions and the status of other collaborative efforts.

**Budget Note c. – Identify Parks that Could be More Efficiently Managed and Result in a Net Savings if Managed by Another Jurisdiction**

a. OPRD and AOC/OPA have identified an initial list of properties they see as candidates for possible change in jurisdictional management or ownership. OPRD will enter into a dialogue with the affected counties and jointly conduct due diligence toward such possible changes. The following parks have been identified:

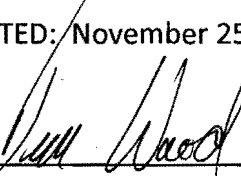
- Government Island (Multnomah County)
- Cascadia Park (Linn County)
- North Santiam Park (Marion County)
- Bald Peak (Yamhill County)
- Alderwood Park (Lane County)
- Ochoco Viewpoint (Crook County)
- Herbert’s Pond, Crab Dock, Mildred Kanipe Memorial Park (Douglas County)
- Whalen Park (Tillamook County)

b. The parties agree that Cascadia Park in Linn County could make a good model for how best to approach other jurisdictional changes. A Project Team from Linn County and OPRD has been established to complete the due diligence on a possible jurisdictional change in either ownership or operational responsibility. The Project Team will make its recommendations to the State Parks Commission and to the Linn County Board of Commissioners by September 30, 2014. As a part of its work, the Project Team will also make recommendations on a standard model or design template for how the due diligence on jurisdictional changes could occur in the future.

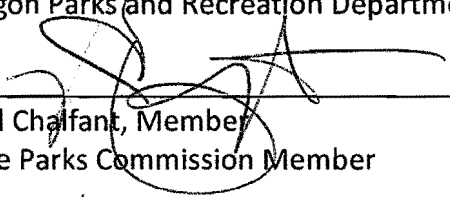
c. Using the Cascadia Park model, OPRD and affected counties will develop a schedule by December 31, 2014, for establishing Project Teams to conduct due diligence for other candidate parks. The goal will be to complete due diligence work on all other parks under consideration not later than December 31, 2015.

By signing this DOC, we agree to actively support the recommendations made above.

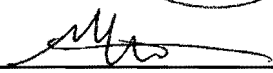
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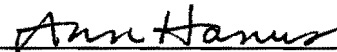
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Tim Wood, Director  
Oregon Parks and Recreation Department



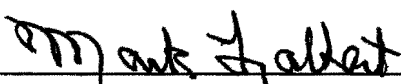
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Brad Chalfant, Member  
State Parks Commission Member



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Steve Lambert, Board Member  
Oregon Parks Association



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Ann Hanus, Policy Manager  
Association of Oregon Counties



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Mark Labhart, Board Member  
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John Potter, Assistant Director of Operations  
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