

## **Rogue River Users' Meeting**

**November 13, 2014, 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.**

**Grants Pass Interagency Office**

**2164 NE Spalding Avenue, Grants Pass, Oregon**

**Public in Attendance:** around 15 people in person & one by phone

**Agency Attendees:** Allen Bollschweiler, Lorelei Haukness, Tina Lanier, Phil Rheiner, Kai Allen, Barbara Zurhellen, Colby Hawkinson, Lisa Byers, Shannon DePuglia, Todd Calvert, Scott Blower, Ernie Fields, Bob Hemus, Don Robinson, Chery Reburn

**Handouts:** 2014 Wild Rogue River Use Report  
Rogue River Bear Observation Summaries  
Forest Service Feedback Form

**Welcome:** Tina Lanier, District Ranger, Gold Beach Ranger District, USFS

**Introductions:** Scott Blower, Facilitator and Civil Engineer, USFS

### **Agency Briefing - 2014**

**2014 Project Highlights** – Colby Hawkinson, Park Ranger, Grants Pass Resource Area, BLM

The FS/BLM completed the following projects in 2014; some using user fee dollars to implement.

- Kelsey Creek Bridge rail replacement
- Winkle Bar shelter roof replacement
- Historic Zane Grey Rogue Driver boat replica
- Fire and veteran crews helped with Rogue River Trail logout and maintenance
- Outhouse re-dug at Horseshoe Bend
- Log rails replaced at Rainie Falls overlook
- Maintenance on Rogue River Ranch tabernacle and blacksmith buildings
- Culvert replacements on Bear Camp Road

### **Anticipated Changes - 2015**

**Rogue River Ranch** – Phil Rheiner, Assistant Field Manager, Recreation Program Manager, Grants Pass Resource Area, BLM

- In 2015, BLM will begin renovations to the Rogue River Ranch museum.
- BLM anticipates that there will be potable water available at the Ranch for the 2015 season.

**Identifying Critical Services** – Lorelei Haukness, Recreation Program Manager, Gold Beach Ranger District, USFS

- The FS has had a large turnover in staff and is asking for user feedback to guide future river program management.
- What do you value the most about your experience on the river?
- What do you want to see done differently, if anything?

- Are there opportunities for the agency to partner with river users?
- Attendees asked that the feedback form be placed on the website so people can fill it out and email it to Lorelei.

### Shuttle Permitting – Lorelei Haukness

- The Forest Service will begin permitting for shuttle service providers in 2015
- In January, shuttle service providers can expect to receive a notification letter and application materials
- BLM is awaiting the release of their new handbook direction before determining if the shuttle permits will authorize use on lands under BLM jurisdiction
- There may be potential, depending on the revenue generated, to use some of the shuttle permit fees to maintain Bear Camp Rd.
- There were additional questions about Bear Camp Road maintenance. The FS can't spend money appropriated for road maintenance on snow plowing. Plowing that has happened in the past was funded by user fees and cost up to \$30,000 annually. Gates will continue to be closed on the BLM side of Bear Camp Rd. during the winter. There is a fault line that runs through the road in that gated section and there is no way to stop rocks from falling down. There was a request that the closed dates be posted somewhere so people can plan for the closure in advance.

### **Group Discussion Topics**

#### Raft Recovery and Navigational Hazards – Deputy Ernie Fields, Oregon State Marine Board (OSMB)

- Law Enforcement wants to tighten up the accident reporting system. OSMB regulations require that accidents that involve injury or death be reported within 48 hours; incidents that involve up to \$20,000 in damage should be reported within 10 days.
- It is important that users report equipment abandoned in the River in a timely manner from a safety perspective. Can the BLM include a permit stipulation that requires the removal of equipment?
- Attendees asked what they can do about known safety issues and how to report. It is important that river users know in advance if there are potential navigational hazards.
- Some reported that more inexperienced rowers may be using the river in recent years, which is leading to more safety concerns
- Question about whether the U.S. Coast Guard could recover rafts as part of the training exercises.
- Questions about who is available to assist with raft recoveries and how this information can be communicated with river users. Could this information be available at Rand or be placed on the permit? Could Rand have an email list for when boat carnage issues occur that gets sent out to the outfitters/OSMB/Law Enforcement?
- Question about replacing the phone at Foster Bar. The FS has been unable to get reliable service for the phone at Foster Bar, which is why it is no longer in service.
- The owner of Paradise Lodge suggested that rafters can use the Lodge phone to call for help or report an incident.
- Attendee commented that there is need for a better portage trail at Blossom Bar. Users should also be educated and encouraged to walk passengers around Blossom Bar, which would lighten the load for the rower.

- Communication between Rand and OSMB/County needs to improve.
- Could outfitters be notified about navigational hazards while ON the river to aid in performing a boat extraction?
- Could the BLM require that users stamp or print a phone number on the boat tags with who/phone number to contact during these situations instead of a piece of paper that is handed out which could get lost easily.
- Someone mentioned that the radio signal in the canyon may be going away – if so what would be the alternative – this could be a major safety risk (this would be the radio signal that all the lodges and the Ranch use to call out).

#### Feedback on the 2014 Season – Scott Blower, Facilitator

##### Positive Feedback

- Some positive interactions between commercial and noncommercial groups occurred.
- Overall seemed like a smoother season with better communication between agencies and users.

##### Room for Improvement

- The shovel size requirement is absurd.
- One user reported an unpleasant experience camping at Horseshoe Bend; there is a sense that commercial groups are not receptive of noncommercial groups using the site.
- One user complained that the signup board is a source of conflict as it is viewed by some as a reservation system.

##### Other thoughts...

- Add SCAT machine to Rand. Most users drive back and pass Rand. This would provide a backup to the SCAT machine at Foster Bar, which is not always working.
- Agency should give out tokens to use the SCAT machine like other rivers do (Idaho).
- There is not a good rationale for the 7 day stay limit. Hardly anyone ever wants to stay more than seven days and this limits the few users that do.

#### Campsite Competition – Allen Bollschweiler, Field Manager, Grants Pass Resource Area, BLM

The BLM and FS want to provide a high quality recreational experience on the river. Related to campsite competition, Allen asked the group, “What do you see as the problem?”. Here is the feedback received:

- Guides should always be professional
- Sign-up board created a pseudo-reservation system and increases conflict because there is a sense of entitlement or ownership when users sign up on the board.
- There is a perceived need among users that the larger sites are more desirable locations. Toilets may contribute to this perception.
- There needs to be additional restrictions placed on hikers.
- Users need to “prepare to share” large campsites
- Concern that the “prepare to share” approach creates a sense of entitlement among larger groups. It is important to consider how the “prepare to share” message is communicated with visitors. All users should attempt to be good neighbors and be considerate of others, regardless of group size.

- Need to be clear about use of the white board at Rand.
- White board works in favor of groups that show up early at Rand.
- The problem is large camp availability and the number of large groups on the river
- Willows and riparian growth are taking over beaches and reducing camping opportunities.

Other thoughts...

- Look at the 1992 study completed by Southern Oregon University; the study addressed campsite competition and safety
- Look at group size if you are going to limit launches.
- No reservation system – “I’m on a schedule every day of my life; I don’t want to have to face a rigid schedule on the River.”

Allen identified several potential management actions and said that the BLM and FS will be moving forward with a formal scoping process before implementing any considerable changes. Users will have the opportunity to comment on the web. A scoping letter will be sent out to outfitters, private users, and folks identified on the lottery lists.

Allen also reiterated that he would really like to see a “Friends of the Rogue” group formed and made up of a mix of users. This type of group could help the agency move forward with addressing issues such as campsite competition.