

Annual Rogue Wild and Scenic River Management
Agency Public Meeting Notes

November 12, 2015
6:00 – 8:00 p.m.

Grants Pass Interagency Office
2164 NE Spalding Avenue, Grants Pass, Oregon

Welcome & Introductions (Allen Bollschweiler, Field Manager, Grants Pass Resource Area)
7 non-commercial boaters, 20 agency staff, 13 outfitter/guides, 2 attendees on the phone.

Ground Rules/Agenda Review (Don Ferguson, Public Information Officer, BLM)

MANAGEMENT UPDATES-2015 SEASON

USFS/BLM 2015 Field Season Accomplishments and Review
(Ben Watts, River Ranger, USFS)

- USFS and BLM conducted joint, non-motorized floats through the wild section this past season. The program was positively received and users appreciated being able to interact directly with USFS and BLM personnel along the entire wild section
- The aim was to be more holistic river rangers and understand the resource more fully – not just toilet maintenance and compliance
- BLM and USFS staff got chance to see wild section in its entirety as well as hone their whitewater skills
- Successfully increased agency capacity to take employees from other departments on resource management floats

Law Enforcement Updates

(Greg Filer, BLM Law Enforcement Ranger)

Marijuana is still illegal on all federal land (BLM, USFS, tribal, NPS), and Measure 91 has not changed that fact as it does not affect federal law. Marijuana is considered a controlled substance, and possession is a Federal ‘Class A’ misdemeanor, \$1,000 fine, 1 year in prison and may become a felony under certain circumstances. If you are found smoking or possessing marijuana on public lands you can still be cited through the state.

- Measure 91:
 - One can possess up to one ounce (public jurisdiction only)
 - Cannot smoke on public lands (state or federal)
 - Can smoke at residence only
 - Must be 21 years or older
 - You can get a DUI for marijuana.
- Oregon.gov has a frequently asked questions page regarding state specific marijuana use/possession.

The BLM will seize and cite you for it federally if caught on federal land; FDA has not approved it so it is not recognized as a medical prescription by federal LEO. This includes card holders and any

edibles. Law enforcement will be out enforcing these laws within the river corridor, including the BLM wild and recreation sections.

- Historically not many citations are issued on the river per year, but LE is trying to proactively educate people that the state legalization of marijuana has not changed law on public land.

Q: Why is information on number of citations not available to the public?

A: That level of information has not been requested by any other users, and can be made available to you later.

C: No marijuana smoking currently allowed at lodges – it isn't federal land, but it is still considered a public area and therefore not allowed.

Presentation on BLM Historic Properties Management Projects

(Julie Arwood, Archeologist, BLM)

There is a complex legal framework dictating all decisions made regarding the protection and management of archeological resources on public lands. The National Historic Preservation Act is a large part of that framework –

- The spirit of our nation is founded on its rich historic heritage, and the BLM is responsible for many lands containing those resources.
- Agencies required by law to protect and balance the preservation of archeological resources with recreational and other uses of public lands.

There is a long history of human presence on the Rogue River. However, not everything old is important, and there are certain criteria in place for what resources should be designated and/or protected. A number of federally recognized tribes which that historically occupied the landscape are also have an active presence in the area today.

- BLM currently has two major projects that we are working on:
 - Zane Grey's cabin
 - Constructed in 1926, Grey's books contributed to the popularity of the area as a national recreation, tourism and fishing destination.
 - Cabin has been restored and protected from wildfire and disrepair.
 - Considering volunteer partnerships to continue stabilizing the structure.
 - BLM concerned with preserving the rustic nature of the cabin/property, the contribution of the property to Wild and Scenic river values and balancing these considerations with the possibility of additional on-site interpretive displays.
 - Rogue River Ranch
 - Main building will be focus of next restoration efforts
 - BLM moving forward to hire staff as interpretive presence at the ranch and in the museum.
 - Hiring consultant to conduct archival research and complete National Historic Register application for the site.

Q: Would the proposed interpretive staffer be in addition to the existing ranch caretakers?

A: Yes, additional staff may be provided through BLM Archeology Department specifically to provide technical expertise on care and management of the collection in the museum.

Q: Any changes of use at Zane Grey's?

A: Still under consideration, however the main focus is the Register designation of Zane Grey's cabin.

Q: Did the application for National Historic Register designation include the outbuildings?

A: Yes, the application included the “contributing elements” of the site, including the boat shed, rock wall, and some other adjacent buildings.

RIVER MANAGEMENT - ISSUES IN-DEPTH, POTENTIAL FOR CHANGE & FUTURE DIRECTION

Toilet Talk - Outhouses and Human Waste Management

(Lorelei Haukness, Recreation Program Manager, USFS)

- BLM/USFS inventoried and mapped the entire system of pit toilets this past season. The number of pits (past pits and those still in use) in the river corridor was striking. The accumulation of these pits, and human waste, is a concern.
- In recent years, BLM/USFS personnel have encountered issues when attempting to replace full pits. For example, in 2014 BLM found 2 arrowheads while trying to place a pit. In another example, field employees made 5 attempts to dig a new pit because they kept digging into old pits.
- Current pit toilets do not meet standards, and the practice is environmentally unsound in the event of high water situations along the river in the winter or spring.
- In 2015, USFS started removing old, full pits and canopies on toilets that are no longer being used or in disrepair.
- Both agencies intend on continuing to remove pit toilets as they fill up, and on a case-by-case basis. Some toilets will likely continue to be needed for trail hikers. Visitors need to get used to using their portable toilets – the aversion to using portable toilets on the river is high in some cases.
- Users need to take increased responsibility for the care of the river and not be dependent on agency-provided facilities.

C: Not having toilets for hikers is going to contribute to accumulation of waste on land (this is seen as very important to address). There is also an issue with dog waste as most owners do not appropriately dispose of it.

C: Possible seep from past pits at Missouri? There seems to be a bad smell from around Missouri this fall.

C: USFS – less toilets would allow staff to focus on important tasks like education, compliance, and clean-up at dispersed recreation sites.

C: The agencies should consider additional locations for SCAT machine might help with increased use of portable toilets (e.g. at Rand or in Galice)

Bear Interactions and Management Options

(Lorelei Haukness, Recreation Program Manager, USFS)

- Data from past 10 years of bear report forms is available.
- The USFS has a new wildlife biologist so data interpretation may be slightly different than in the past years.

- Visitors documented a significant spike in number of bear interactions in 2016, with most incidents reported at or below Brushy Bar, Tate and Tacoma campsites.
- USFS will assess the viability of their bear fences, but users also need to be responsible and use the bear fences where available. Visitors should also carry bear resistant containers on the river and store all food and garbage securely. USFS ranger will be inspecting camps more regularly in 2016 to ensure food and garbage are securely stored.

C: There were fewer total bear encounters, but more bear issues reported in 2016.

C: In past years there were more proactive steps taken concerning problem bears (relocation, education) and now that doesn't seem to be happening – may be just a few problem bears presenting a big presence and they not being dealt with by the appropriate agency?

A: Reports indicate that most instances involved people leaving food or garbage out on boats or in camp and in some cases, not even using the bear fences at a campsite where they were available. There is a direct relationship between the foraging success of problem bears and user behavior and compliance. The expectation is that users will practice leave no trace and avoid impacts to wildlife.

Findings from the 2015 Campsite Capacity & Visitor Use Monitoring

(Kai Allen, Recreation Planner, BLM)

BLM implemented a study protocol to begin looking at comparing campsite social conditions with use levels. Study inventoried the number of campsites along the river, classified their existing capacity, and assessed the impact on the social experience in a manner that may help understand camp competition dynamics.

- Study Outcomes:
 - Created a standard, repeatable process for measuring campsites based on capacity.
 - Created a standard protocol to measure the 2016 actual use of campsites compared to inventoried conditions.
 - Analysis of results which may help in future analysis and decisions for remedying reported problems associated with camp competition.

An OSU study in 1991 found differing opinions on river issues – roughly 50% of community users favored limiting party size to 15, designating camps, and using reservation system; 64% private floaters supported limiting party size, but only ~30% supported the other options. And only 43% of users said campsite competition was a problem – is it something management should focus on? It is difficult for agencies to craft solutions when there is seemingly little public consensus about the nature and extent of the problem.

What are the solutions to campsite competition? Many options and differing opinions over many years – more outhouses, no outhouses, campsite reservations, length of stay limits, group size limits, scheduled launches, etc. Many proposed solutions are contradictory and seemingly have little consensus among different visitors using the river.

- So how do we proceed and what kind of recreation experience should the wild section of the Rogue provide?
 - One way to determine the answer is to base decisions on existing legal and policy guidance, such as the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, 1972 Management Plan, Agency regulations, public involvement, and the fundamentals of recreation planning (the focus of this study and presentation)

What is campsite competition and how can campsite competition be measured? Basically camp competition is a supply and demand issue. Its effects can be measured by assessing campsite occupancy rates, which can then be correlated with data on trip density, trip length, number of launches which are recorded at Rand.

- 80 sites identified over 21 miles of river in BLM wild section.
 - Small = 1-5 people, Medium = 6-15 people, Large = 16-30 people.
 - Roughly 38% small, 37% medium, and 22% large campsite distribution in each zone. Roughly $\frac{3}{4}$ of the sites are appropriately sized for groups under 16.
 - Zone 1 – Grave Creek to Lower Horseshoe & Zone 2 – Lower Horseshoe to BLM takeout.

--- Distribution of variously sized campsites affects competition/use ---

Completed a preliminary analysis of 10 sites with the highest campsite occupancy levels from 19 trips down the river in July and August 2016 (the figures don't include lodge occupancy or Mule Creek campsites):

- 8/10 most used sites were large, 2 were medium sized.
- Highest use sites ranged from 47% occupancy to 100% occupancy
- Only 3 had toilets, 7 did not; and average occupancy rates did not differ between sites with an agency toilet and sites without a toilet.
- Most popular sites by occupancy were in just a 7 mile stretch of river between Jenny and Missouri Creek (which is very commonly hit as an overnight stop for nearly all 2, 3 and 4 day trips) indicating a geographic component to the problem.
- All sites were listed in both guidebooks (USFS/BLM and Leidecker)

Are party sizes matching campsite size? (Example of 4 large sites with high occupancy)

- Use at all 4 sites ranged from small groups of 2-3, to large groups of 30-38
- Some sites have high demand—Jenny Creek had 100% occupancy by small and medium groups and no groups over 16 despite site capacity for a larger group.
- Tyee is regularly used by large groups.
- Horseshoe Bend sees a wide range of group sizes. This may be a site where groups might expect to have to share or may be a place where camp competition dynamics may be a management consideration.

Next steps:

- Start comparing this data with number and configuration of launches, trip densities, and overall population of river with campsite capacities.
- Previous studies have shown that the Rogue has a higher number of people on the river than average on many other multi day western river trips.
- Continue to collect occupancy data to increase size of data set.
- Complete similar monitoring on USFS portion of the wild section.

Initial Conclusions:

- Does not appear to be a shortage of campsites.
- There is a geographic concentration of highly desired/high occupancy campsites.
- Large sites with a large enough landing area for groups over 16 people are scarce

- Over 75% of all inventoried campsites are sized for groups 16 or smaller.
- The presence of an agency provided toilet may not be as important and previously thought.
- Presence of toilets doesn't seem to influence camp desirability as much as some other factors do

Management decisions regarding this issue should be informed by social science and recreation planning frameworks, but many other considerations will influence those decisions as well.

C: Disagreement with small effect of toilets – small groups mostly take large sites when there are toilets (supported in one portion of data that was pulled out by Kai)

A: Thanks for pointing that out and I hadn't considered that. I'll take a look at whether there is a correlation between group size, % site occupancy, and campsite size. That was something that I didn't do for this presentation.

C: Communication is a factor – frequent users know where outfitters often stay, and so avoid those sites or ask where they are staying ahead of time; increased communication could really offer a lot of alleviation of issues.

C: This is a small data set, and only limited to information collected on Thursdays and Saturdays throughout the regulated use season.

A: This is a limitation to the conclusions of this data. Ideally, there would be a larger data set over multiple years and different days of the week.

C: Individual experiences that reflect a lack of the stress and problems that others see; my experience on the river is that most users are generally helpful and open to cooperation

C: Definitional problem in designation of campsite sizes in this particular study – as Medium group size here actually describes Large size for private groups, and Large size category here really only refers to commercial groups.

Forward to Change - Public Involvement and Agency Planning for 2016

(Allen Bollschweiler, BLM Field Manager, Grants Pass Resource Area)

- New BLM Special Recreation Permit Administration handbook is out which could change things.
- Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (FLREA) – New legislation may be coming
- RAC (Resource Advise Council) – Cohesive group made up of government, private and commercial entities to note and act. RAC members can speak directly to the Secretary of Interior.
 - Difficult to make changes without a RAC in place (e.g. fee changes).

This spring the agencies will begin outreaching to a wider audience regarding river management issues and future planning. We are broadening the audience of who we want to hear from and will be sending out a “sensing letter” to a large number of river users to see who is interested in being part of this discussion.

- There are no secret meetings amongst management and outfitter/guides; all decisions reached are done so with input and involvement from the public.

- We are exploring our ability to develop a new Comprehensive River Management Plan, but are still in the very early stages of that.
- The Rogue is unique in that there is a large local presence and a hiking component involved, and that should be recognized and considered while still comparing to and learning from other river systems.
- There is a large responsibility of the users to place importance on correct behavior (re: toilets, bears, etiquette etc.); the staff should not have to police and handhold those on the river in order for things to be done safely and properly.

Q: Talk of designating entire Rogue as W&S?

A: We are restricted from commenting on any of that legislation, can address those questions to the Senator.

A: WSR suitability for the Rogue from the mouth of the Applegate to the dam is being analyzed by the BLM Western Oregon Resource Management Plan Revision planning effort.

Q: Talk of revisiting RMP, would this be the time to assess things like limiting number of groups vs. number of people?

A: Yes, the time is right to start bringing up those types of questions, but the process has not been set in motion yet. That conversation will start in earnest in the spring/summer of next year. Announcements for input and dialogue will be offered through mailing list and website.

C: Use and possession of portable toilets should be enforced more strongly in an effort to limit campsite competition issues.

C: Private boaters should not be restricted from attending outfitter meeting.

A: That meeting was strictly limited to outfitter/agency related business and any general management issues were not discussed. The minutes from that meeting will also be published online.

Open Discussion and Feedback on Rogue WSR Management Topics

Group Discussion amongst Attendees and Agency Managers

Feedback, updates, concerns, and comments

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