

Oregon Dunes Restoration Collaborative
Meeting Minutes – 2/15/19

Welcome and Introductions

Leadership and Structure of the ODRC

To recap the history of this group:

- ODRC has been meeting roughly quarterly since 2014 to support protection and restoration of the dunes
- Key successes so far:
 - Design and printing of *Restoring Oregon's Dunes: The Bid to Save a National Treasure* (the "strategy book")
 - Funding for website design and hosting, brochures & collateral materials printing
 - Funding of RARE staff position
 - 3 field trips to project sites
- USFS has been instrumental in forming and leading the collaborative thus far
- However this is not an appropriate solution for the long term, both in the spirit of collaborative leadership, and due to legal role of USFS / FACA rules
- Group is really starting to hit its stride
- It has been volunteer-led, so having a full-time coordinator through the RARE position has been extremely helpful
- We have accomplished a lot more in the past 6 months because of this increased capacity

Recap of RARE position so far:

- Started September 2018. Will work through July 2019.
- Has spent slightly more time in coordinating the ODRC than managing individual projects, but is helping all working groups to move forward
- Breakdown of hours:
 - ODRC coordination & capacity building – 25%
 - Newsletter, media outreach, social media – 20%
 - Public outreach / events – 13%
 - Developing & distributing collateral materials – 10%
 - Volunteer events / work parties – 8%
 - Office / admin – 8%
 - Professional development / training – 16%
- RARE position can be extended for 1 year, or maybe more, if funding is raised for it
- Thank you to Travel Lane County for providing work space for RARE position

RARE Funding Update

- April 12 is deadline to re-apply for 2nd year of RARE position
 - Funding must be committed by June
- USFS paid for first year of RARE, but those funds are not going to be available for 2019/2020
- Base cost of RARE position is \$23,500
- We are seeking ~\$40,000 to cover the position, travel reimbursement, and other projects
- Submitting an LOI to the Collins Foundation, asking for that amount
- Ford Family Foundation has potential matching funds (\$10K) for RARE
- If we don't get all funding, can USFS contribute any portion?

- **Action Item** – *does the ODRC want to pursue a second year of the RARE position?* – YES
- Other potential funding ideas:
 - Sustainable Northwest
 - Ecotrust
 - Treasured Landscape status
 - USFS challenge cost-share program

USFS would love to see the ODRC stand more on its own from a financial perspective

- It is easier for USFS to approve staff time (who can work with ODRC projects) than to approve funding for outside projects and/or staff
- Stewardship funds can be used for restoration projects

Cascade Pacific's (CPRCD) Fiscal Sponsorship role

- Cascade Pacific is the ODRC fiscal sponsor
- CPRCD can apply for grants in the name of the ODRC
- 10% administration cost

Cooperative Weed Management Area (CWMA)

- CWMA's occur all over the state
- Normally are based on a region; the Oregon Dunes CWMA is based on the specific dunes habitat
- Our CWMA was formed 2 years ago with a PTI (Pulling Together Initiative) grant
- CWMA can be thought of as a technical advisory group to ODRC
- Has raised 100K in restoration and treatment funding
 - Spent 80K so far, remaining 20K will be used for treatment at Baker Beach
- CWMA has also assisted with education and outreach efforts

What has worked / What can be improved?

Financial Information

- Can the working groups be given a regular update of how much is in each account?
 - Yes, CPRCD can start sending out a monthly budget update
- How are funds divided into different ODRC accounts?
 - Current accounts are for: book reprinting, education, outreach, restoration
- How can working groups make a purchase request or get reimbursed?
- Who makes decisions on spending funds?
- Need: a more formal procedure for processing donations
 - Consider how/when funds are given to CPRCD
 - Make sure a thank-you card is sent for large donations
- Each working group should prepare a report and any requests for quarterly ODRC meetings

Current fiscal situation:

- CPRCD is operating as fiscal sponsor
- Setting up own 501c3 status is time-consuming, and involves more legal responsibilities
- Is ODRC covered under CPRCD liability?
 - Not currently, but that can easily be arranged

Example structure we should consider: how are watershed councils staffed?

- Often 1 Executive Director, who handles vision & fundraising
 - Then supplemented by interns, AmeriCorps, etc...
- As ODRC expands, Cascade Pacific can act as “employer of record” for an ODRC staff position
- 2nd year of our RARE position could look developing position description for future ODRC staff
- How are these paid collaborative positions funded?
 - Are they full-time? Part-time?

How does ODRC position itself as a group ready to receive grants and funding?

- We need to continue ramping up our efforts, and need to tell the story of our impact
- Each working group should consider its funding needs for the next 1-2 years so that we can pursue grants with enough lead time
 - Based on requests/ideas submitted throughout the winter, the funding group has ~\$270,000 to try to find
 - If we get grants to fund all proposed projects, could potentially double the acreage of plover habitat restored
 - Could also potentially fund a youth field corps all summer to pull invasive species

NEPA Process Update

National Environmental Policy Act of 1969

- Federal law that spurred other laws: Clean Air Act, Endangered Species Act, etc...
- “Encourage productive and enjoyable harmony between man & environment”
- “Prevent or eliminate damage to the environment and biosphere and stimulate the health and welfare of man”
- “Enrich understanding of ecological systems and natural resources to the nation”
- “Establishes Council on Environmental Quality”
- Allows public to have input on federal environmental policy

Basic Process:

Develop a proposed action -> scoping -> develop alternatives -> complete analysis -> release draft EA for public comment -> release final EA & draft decision -> objection period -> sign final decision

Current Dunes Restoration EA

- ODRC created the “Dunes Restoration Strategy” (3 goals outlined)
- Produced original proposed actions (polygons) which was a subset of the original strategy due to access, cultural resources, habitats, logistics, capacity
- Scoped effects of proposed actions: discovery of and proposed listing of the Coastal Marten triggered a modified proposed action
- Marten may be listed under the Endangered Species Act in October
- Likely that all current shrub and forested areas of the dunes will be listed as critical habitat
- USFS must now balance habitat of marten with full-scale dunes restoration

See Appendix A at the end of this document for links to access the original and proposed action alternative maps.

Questions about the proposed alternatives and the process:

- Can we protect marten habitat within the scale of the original proposal?
 - No, the goal of restoring landscape-scale natural processes, and creating areas for east-west sand migration, is not currently a feasible option due to fragmentation of marten habitat
- Can we still encourage east-west sand migration in some places?
 - Yes, that is what will be doing at Baker Beach, which is at the northern terminus of marten habitat, thus will be minimal fragmentation.
- If we are successful at Baker Beach, can we re-consider other areas?
 - Not sure at this time. There currently is not enough existing habitat
- Can we actively create marten habitat?
 - Yes, but not sure where / how yet
- If we create marten habitat elsewhere, can we then restore open sand in other areas?
 - Not sure yet. More information will be needed
- Will this affect riding areas?
 - No, there can still be treatments in areas outside of marten corridors
- Will this affect our small-scale efforts and volunteer work parties?
 - No, we can continue those projects
- How has the total project area changed?
 - The original proposed treatment areas were ~13K acres
 - The new proposed alternative areas are ~11K acres
- What takes priority? The plover? Or marten?
 - The USFS is managing the ecosystem, not for any particular species
- Will there be a more accurate count of marten? Will it be possible to learn more precisely where the marten are living? Can we choose project locations based on where the marten are?
 - Possibly, but past studies have not collared or tracked every single marten
 - USFS is operating under the assumption that if it is possible marten habitat, its being treated as if there are marten there
 - See most recent USFS plover study
- How do we now talk to the public about our strategy? Are we still “restoring landscape-scale processes?”
 - We are focused on “maintain the best” areas throughout the dunes, while working on larger scale restoration at Baker Beach and learning from that
 - Focusing on Baker Beach will provide experience so that future projects are more focused, and we understand the effects on marten habitat.

Next Steps

- Public comment period (30 days) will be held in April
 - ODRC can post link to comment website
- USFS will review comments in May/June
- Final EA & draft decision to be released in August
- Objection period (45 days) in Fall
- Final EA signed in mid-October
- Project area, even when considering marten, still has tremendous amount of potential projects
- Baker Beach will be a case-study to learn what it takes to create east-west sand movement
- As we learn and adapt management techniques, additional NEPA processes can be considered
- Original goal of “Restoring Landscape-scale Natural Processes” is not feasible right now at a large scale.

- The USFS is ultimately still committed to the goal of restoring sand movement, but marten habitat is too fragmented for that at this time
- USFS doesn't currently know enough about how changing the landscape affects marten habitat
- Marten habitat is basically dense vegetation consisting of berry producing shrubs and trees that occupy the area between the beach from the dunes, as well as areas to the east of the inland sand
 - Opening up that belt to encourage sand movement is destroying marten habitat
 - True wetlands cannot be actively impacted, even if they are unnatural / caused due to invasive plants & ecosystem changes

Working Group Updates

Volunteer Management

- Since start of fiscal year, have had 343 hours of volunteer labor (252 at work parties, 36 on communications and outreach, 16 on education efforts, and 37 on fundraising efforts)
 - Worth ~\$8,500 of in-kind services
- 6 work parties held so far at Heceta Dunes and Lagoon Campground
- Future work parties:
 - 2/22 at Heceta Dunes
 - 3/16 and 3/29 TBD
 - 4/13 tentative event w/ Honeyman State Park
 - 4/20 Earth Day w/ RARE service members
- Bill recently purchased ~\$1,000 worth of tools for work parties
 - Coordinate with him whenever a group or event needs them
- We have submitted an application for an AmeriCorps NCCC team to pull invasive plants
 - Should know in March/April, and if granted a team will work for 2 weeks in May or June
- Volunteers will be staffing tables at upcoming outreach events:
 - Florence Home & Garden Show – 3/1 through 3/3
 - Earth Day in Old Town Florence – 4/20
- Sand Dunes Frontier has provided transportation for volunteer groups in the past and is willing to continue doing so for work parties and/or educational trips

Fundraising

- Please try to identify all projects (including USFS led and ODRC led) 1-2 years in advance and communicate that to the funding group, so that they can pursue grants far enough in advance
- So far, funding group solicited requests from other working groups
 - Categorized requests and are now beginning to pursue funding for them
 - ODRC organizational needs / staffing - \$40,000
 - Outreach & education requests - \$15,000
 - Expanding plover restoration projects (under current EA) - \$65,000
 - Volunteer projects, including hiring youth crews - \$140,000
 - Monitoring projects - \$10,000
- In-process / submitted grants:
 - NCCC team application submitted 2/13
 - Collins Foundation LOI, 34K for RARE position & related projects, due end February
 - Ford Family Foundation, 10K matching funds for RARE, due in April/May

- We have received the federal appropriations forms to request funding, and will begin that process
- Will look for other sources of funding for projects submitted by working groups
- Next meeting – April 4th
- Action Items before next meeting:
 - Review the proposed EA maps and identify project sites
 - CWMA, STRD, and volunteer team can prioritize project sites
 - CWMA can connect with local state parks to see what work can be done there
 - Funding group can connect with STRD to look into funding from OHV companies
 - Review what plover projects can be done under current EA
 - Coordinate large-scale project needs with USFS for federal appropriations form

CWMA

- Had originally asked for ~100K funding (covers entire Siuslaw National Forest) from retain-receipts funding
- Was given ~40K (with 15K for non-dunes projects)
- Therefore only have ~25K for restoration projects in the dunes
- Will need to choose projects carefully and leverage matching funds

Monitoring

- Group met in the winter to continue to refine its purpose and determine data to collect
- 3 focus areas identified (socio-economic benefits of the dunes, site-specific treatments, landscape-scale changes)
- Identified some basic funding needs for equipment and to host a volunteer event
- Sand Dunes Frontier can help with transportation for volunteers or to be a photo-point

Education

- Upcoming / scheduled events:
 - Presentation to Southwest Oregon Community College geology department – 2/25
 - Pub Talk at 7 Devils Brewery, Coos Bay – TBD in spring
 - Public Presentation at Coos History Museum – 6/4
 - UO Museum of Natural History Field Trip – 6/27
 - Also considering a speaker or event at one of the theaters in Florence or Coos Bay
- Other projects:
 - Developing a script for a brief educational video
 - Children’s activity pack / hands-on lessons

Communications & Outreach

- We may need to consider another printing of the books and collateral material for spring
- Considering including images and message to show that we are not an anti-OHV cause
- Produced a generic business card and 1-page fact sheet for use at outreach events
- We are slowly adding more content to the website
- Social media and newsletter were launched in the fall
 - Will consider doing paid ads on social media as we have events to promote
- Earned media – there will be an article in the spring edition of Eugene Magazine
- Advocacy – gave a presentation to Reedsport City Council in January

- Potential future events:
 - Dunesfest, Reedsport, July 23-28
 - UTV Takeover, Winchester Bay, June
 - STRD will have a table at each of these
- We should consider a second printing of t-shirts
 - Dune buggy businesses and others may want shirts that have their logo or allow them to include their logo

Field Trip Planning

- Focus of 2019 field trip will be getting elected officials and their staff to the dunes
- Will “start from the top” and invite Senators and US Reps, then state and local offices
- Will keep the agenda short to accommodate officials’ schedule
- Potentially can show off one of the prioritized sites after work has been done
- Will need to coordinate transportation with USFS or possibly Sand Dunes Frontier

Topics for future meetings:

- Continued updates on marten and EA process
- Should we form a steering committee to guide the ODRC?
 - CPRCD has formed one for the other projects it is guiding
 - How do we determine who is on that committee and what they do?
 - Group leaders may not be the best choice, but each group should be represented
- How to set agendas for future ODRC meetings
- How are other similar collaborations set-up?
- Who is a “member” of ODRC and how is that determined?
- Future staff – how to structure and how to fund
- Potential future partners for ODRC
 - Ducks Unlimited
 - Audubon Society
 - More engagement w/ Confederated Tribes
- Field trip w/ USFWS, Army Corps, and other agencies for them to see and understand “on the ground” conditions of the dunes
- Develop talking points for interacting with the general public
- Propose specific projects
- How to approve/report/reimburse purchases for ODRC

RARE and working group leaders will draft agenda topics for May meeting and distribute to entire group for feedback

Appendix A:

Maps of original proposed treatment areas and proposed alternative treatment areas

The Forest Service's webpage for all public documents related to restoration of the Oregon Dunes can be found at:

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=52946>

To access the maps, click on "Analysis" under the Project Documents heading.

The top three files show the proposed alternative treatment areas, broken into north, central, and southern sections.

The bottom three files show the original treatment plan areas, broken into the same three segments.