

**THURSTON COUNTY PARKS & RECREATION  
ADVISORY BOARD**

**August 11, 2009**

**McLane Building Conference Room  
Olympia, WA**

**MINUTES**

**Members present:** Donna Weaver Smith, Chair  
Chris Colton  
Dave Finnell  
Larry Schaffner  
Candice Rydalch

**Absent:** Ed Cael

**Guests:** None

**Staff:** Cliff Moore, Director, Resource Stewardship  
Lester Olson, Director Public Works  
Kerry Hibdon, Public Works, Parks Division  
Margaret Huff, Recreation Services  
Andrew Beattie, Recreation Supervisor, Recreation Services  
Marilyn First, Parks Board Recording Secretary, Recreation Services

**Call to Order** – The meeting was called to order at 6:35 PM, by Chair Donna Weaver-Smith. Minutes from the previous meeting were shared and corrections made. Larry Schaffner made a motion to accept the minutes as approved; Candice Rydalch seconded the movement, motion passed.

**Welcome & Introductions**

Ms. Weaver-Smith welcomed Chris Colton and Dave Finnell, new members of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board. Mr. Finnell shared a bit about himself and his excitement about joining the Board. He works for Intercity Transit as a Trainer and is personally very fond of Burfoot Park, which was a park much used by his wife as a child when she was growing up in Thurston County. Ms. Colton shared that she too has a great fondness for Burfoot Park, as well as the others in the County. Commissioner Romero had asked Ms. Colton to join the Parks Board, as she has interest and experience working on behalf of the community. She is currently the Chair of the Tumwater Library Board and teaches history at Maple Lane School. Other members present also shared a bit about themselves: Larry Schaffner has been on the Parks Board for three years; he works at the State Department of Transportation in Storm water Management. He has worked in parks, and has a college degree in outdoor recreational planning and management; he said that being on the Parks Board and involved in park and recreation issues once again is like a second childhood for him. Ms. Rydalch shared that her interest in serving on the Parks Board began because she has children who use parks! She is currently the Human

Resources Director for the City of Centralia, and had also worked in the Human Resources Department of Thurston County for a short time a few years back.

Ms. Weaver Smith is a real estate broker from South County and she too, worked for Maple Lane School for a short time, some time ago. Each of the staff present briefly shared their names, titles, and the departments for which they work within Thurston County.

### **Specialized Recreation Report – Margaret Huff, Recreation Services**

Ms. Huff reported on upcoming events in Specialized Recreation (SREC): the request for proposals and re-application of the Millage Grant Awards, through the Thurston County Health Department. For the next year's grant application, staff is planning to expand offerings and bring funding back so that a full-time position to oversee the programming can be re-established.

Ms. Huff also shared the Fall SREC brochure and described in vivid detail the open registration event for Specialized Recreation on August 27 at the County Courthouse, Room 152. Specialized Recreation programs include day trips, dances, bingo, movie & pizza nights and sports training programs. At this special event, nearly 100 people will eagerly await the beginning of their fall planning & scheduling for 200 to 250 *unduplicated* programs and activities taking place in the immediate, urban areas as well as in Yelm and Rochester. At the registration event there are announcements and then a well-choreographed registration process with participants, parents and group home staff helping to get registrations set up for the fall season.

Ms. Weaver asked if there are any similar programs to the Specialized Recreation Programs in the area. Ms. Huff reported that the only organization that serves Specialized Needs populations is a group called *Parent to Parent*; however, this is a support group only and it does not provide the recreation and social activities that Specialized Recreation Programs does. Since it is the only program available in the county, the program is *very very* important to its clients. (Sometimes clients show up *hours* in advance of the registration in eager, excited anticipation of events not scheduled for several more months, such as the annual Christmas Cruise in cooperation with the Olympia Yacht Club)

Ms. Huff shared that certain Specialized recreation participants, learning of budget cuts in March, went to the Thurston Board of County Commissioners to share their concerns about the lack of such programs should the county choose to eliminate them. Ms. Huff noted that in many cases care providers have *no other* respite from providing care, than Thurston County's Specialized Recreation programs. Ms. Rydalch asked if the Specialized Recreation Program is self-supporting. Cliff Moore responded that the Millage Grant funds, from the State Department of Health, through Thurston County Public Health, funds overall coordination of the program, and that programs generate some revenue through participant fees, but not enough to cover all the costs of administration, reservations and accounting. Further discussion on other possible funding sources and other ideas or assistance that might be helpful to staff followed. Ms. Huff shared her telephone number, for any additional ideas, comments or questions.

### **Parks Update**

Kerry Hibdon reported on a "training burn" by Department of Natural Resources volunteers at the Glacial Heritage Park, a 1000 acre preserve south of Little Rock and Rochester. The burn

eliminates invasive species such as Douglas fir and others and is done during parts of the year where there is the least effect on wildlife. Before the burns, (which are sometimes postponed if conditions aren't right) care is taken to closely monitor weather conditions, wind, etc. so the burns can be kept completely under control. Kerry reported on the "Gate to Belmore Trail" a 12-mile undeveloped rail road near the Yelm/Tenino Trail, near Quality Rock. Repairs to a bridge will be made with Real Estate Excise Tax funds. Negotiations for a land trade near Tenino with a private land owner are underway, to provide a safer flow of traffic in the area. It is expected this will take up to one year to complete.

Kenneydell Park was heavily used during the recent high seasonal temperatures experienced in the area. A float line was vandalized there. It provides important safety for swimmers from boats in the lake. Six hundred feet of new float line was installed, and a log that had been stuck on the bottom of the lake, but protruding from the water was removed at the same time. An injury occurred there recently as a result of someone being cut by debris on the bottom of the lake. The cut required fourteen stitches. The Sheriff's Dive Team was able to come into the lake, and as a diving training exercise, remove debris from the lake's designated swimming area. Over three large garbage bags of trash were removed.

Kerry then described "Bridging the Gap" on the Chehalis Western Trail over I-5 between Pacific and Martin Way near Lacey and that it will be finished in spring of next year. Although media releases and signage indicating that this portion will be closed have gone out, there are still large numbers of phone calls coming in about this. Staff is continuing to work to minimize confusion and to provide information on alternate access points. Kerry described the improvements the County is providing to the portion of the trail near Rainier in preparation for the "Rainier Round Up" on August 18<sup>th</sup> with final work to be done in the fall. Les Olsen pointed out that the Town of Rainier has agreed to provide the mowing and removal of litter on this portion of the trail.

Kerry shared another safety concern on the Chehalis Western Trail where gate changes are made....it was reported back to Kerry by the Seattle to Portland organizers that 8 or 9 individuals hit the posts near the gate changes and are concerned about biker safety. For next year the plan is to remove *all* posts and use a triangle of traffic cones around the area, to clearly indicate the change. Burfoot Park, which is heavily used this time of year, had a main water line break underneath the restrooms. Public Works brought in portable toilets while the necessary repairs were made.

Cliff Moore then asked that Les Olson, provide updates on the proposed Dog Park plans. Les provided drawings and details for the two options:

**Option I: "Build the Park Now"**

- Size: 5 acres
- Cost: \$300,000
- 2 separate areas with walk way between them for:
  - a) Small dogs & large dogs
  - b) another area, also for both large/small dogs (to be "rested" while the other area is used & vice versa)

Option I would also include:

- Parking, fencing, shelters, water
- Rental area for agility training
- Potential for “memorial garden” for deceased pets
- Potential for “pavers” on the walk ways as a fund raiser

Option I would be located immediately across from the new Intercity Transit Park & Ride.

### **Option II: “Build the Park Later”**

- Size: 6.11 acres
- Cost: \$200,000

Option II would include the same amenities as Option I, but have more area for the dog park and a larger parking lot.

Discussion and description of the two options, locations, and amenities was discussed at length. Mr. Olson asked for the Board’s thoughts, ideas and recommendations on the two options. After further questions and options for re-locating parts of the park such as the Memorial Garden, and utilizing the proximity of the Master Gardener’s Closed Loop Park & Demonstration Garden as well as the local non-profit group, *Sound Hounds* in the planning, the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board unanimously supported Option II, which has more room, more parking, and costs \$100,000 less.

### **Tolmie State Park Update**

Cliff Moore reported last month and again that the State of Washington has proposed the transfer of Tolmie State Park to Thurston County. Thurston County and the Nisqually Tribe have lawyers working through the elements of this agreement:

- The Park will be used for only *passive* recreational uses
- The Nisqually Tribe will provide maintenance of the Park for the 1<sup>st</sup> 2 years
- In year 3, the costs will be divided between Thurston County and the Nisqually Tribe 50:50 for operations and maintenance
- The Nisqually does not seek *regular* shellfish harvesting rights, but occasional harvesting rights
- Currently, when the State is not using the Park for Recreation, the Shellfish Harvesting rights revert to the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). Lawyers are currently working out the effects of that ruling when the County is in ownership of the Park.
- Displays and signage would be very much like those at Burfoot Park.
- There are nice shelters at the Park, including an enclosed shelter that would be updated for use as a lodge
- Parking is an issue at the Park
- There is no playground
- Rumors that the Park could be converted into a casino are merely rumors
- An example of how the Nisqually Tribe may like to use the Park could include a rendezvous for its annual South Sound Tribes’ Canoe Trip

- It is hoped that the tidelands will be kept with the Park and not reverted to DNR

As a separate item, Mr. Moore shared that he had been approached by a commercial geoduck harvesting company, which is interested in harvesting geoducks on Thurston County's parks' tidelands. Possible income for this sustainable harvest could bring in as much as \$1 million annually.

### **Advisory Board's & Work on Behalf of County Commissioners**

Members began the discussion on their thoughts and observations on their role(s) as Board members, and how they can offer a much different perspective to Parks issues than staff are able or expected to. Members who have been on the Board shared their recollections of materials they were given as new members, and how these might be used again to help orient new members to the Board as well as staff. Larry Schaffner agreed to search for his copies of the information he had been provided as a new member and to send them on to staff to consider for further distribution.

Cliff Moore added insight on the County Commissioners goals in relation to the 2010 budget development process. Asking Marilyn to send these written goals to Parks Board members, Cliff described how Commissioners' goals and the Parks Board's work might be more closely linked, such as the Commissioners' interest in a possible municipal parks district in cooperation with the Olympia, Lacey, & Tumwater. Examples of other such park districts were mentioned, including the Tacoma Metro Parks Department and another in North Bend. More discussion about taking a field trip to one of these districts to see and learn more followed. The possibility of asking Cori Carlton, Master Gardener/Master Composter Manager, who recently joined Thurston County from Tacoma Metro Parks to attend an upcoming Parks Board meeting, and a field trip to a Thurston County site, not typically open to the public for a Parks Board tour. Possible dates and times for these will be discussed by email and/or at the next meeting.

### **Other Business:**

Members expressed a desire to have more time with minutes and the agenda for the following meeting. It was suggested that, as in the past, that minutes get distributed 2 weeks after each meeting with a call for agenda items to be sent out on week before the meeting so that members have more time to think about the meeting and plan accordingly. Larry Schaffner asked that we consider rotating items on the agenda so that more meeting time can be spent on action items, and specifically noting items on the agenda requiring Park Board action along with a description of the nature of the action requested. The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, September 8, 6:30-8:30 PM.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:25 PM.

Marilyn First, Recording Secretary