



RS EXCHANGE

REGIONAL SOLUTIONS

Weekly Report

Wednesday, February 24, 2021

Below are some highlights from the Governor's [Regional Solutions \(RS\) Coordinators](#), on behalf of the eleven interagency teams across Oregon.

Regional Solutions (RS) Director – Leah Horner

North Coast Region – Jennifer Purcell

- **NW Oregon Outdoor Recreation Coordinating Committee** – *Background* – Regional Solutions and Oregon State Parks convened regional outdoor recreation partners early in the pandemic to coordinate closure plans, reopening strategies, messaging, and readiness concerns. Cities, counties, ports, state and federal landowner partners, and destination management organizations in Tillamook, Clatsop, Columbia, and Lincoln counties continue to meet monthly.
 - *Update* – Committee members met this week, shifting focus to preparing for the 2021 season. City, county, state, and federal recreation partners shared concerns about scarce resources, limited staffing, and anticipated high demand. All revealed challenges with seasonal hiring, having a difficult time finding staff and camp hosts, and with winter having been far busier than normal, organizations are concerned about the increasing pressure on full time year-round staff. Capacity limits and alternatives like portable toilets may be a solution. With public health precautions and limited staffing resources, in some cases online reservations systems and automated fee machines will help minimize contact and maintain access for the public. Crowd management and parking enforcement are also of concern, particularly along OR Hwy 101 at popular destinations like Oswald West and Pacific City. Oregon State Parks is working with Oregon Department of Transportation and Oregon State Police to plan and prepare.

Anticipating increased visitation, lodging bookings are already at 80% through August and there are some reports of RV parks already being fully booked through July. Oregon Coast Visitors Association provided the following travel and tourism behavior insights:

- Road trip travel intentions are up
- People are willing to travel longer on road trips than normal, extending the Portland “blast zone” to within 5 hours’ drive
- The Oregon Coast is among the most desirable destinations
- People are traveling and planning differently; in summer 2020 we saw increased day trips with zero planning and limited information; expecting summer 2021 to be better, but continue to see limited planning ahead

- Also seeing a high number of people visiting the Oregon coast for the first time
 - Strategies include messaging that makes it easier for travelers to do the right thing, given that they aren't planning ahead; beach, trail, and tidepool ambassador programs have also proven
 - Increased travel and visitor pressures raise concerns for public safety resources
 - Other travel is returning as well; airline bookings are up; may provide some relief
 - Over the holidays, occupancy rates at the Coast were 100%; in contrast, Portland's occupancy rates were 15%
 - No north coast destination marketing investments being made; instead, targeted advertising includes stewardship messaging, such as geofencing high use areas on the coast
 - Stewardship messages focus on impacts identified by local, state, and federal recreation partners, including driving and biking safety, congestion and parking, garbage and food waste
- **WA/OR River Cruise meeting** – North Central and North Coast Regional Solutions co-convened a meeting with Washington State Governor's Office to hear from Columbia River port of call communities and local public health to identify issues and socialize community and local public health concerns relating to river cruise operations. Attendees included local public health and ports of call from Oregon's Clatsop, Hood River, Wasco, Sherman, and Gilliam counties and Washington's Clark, Skamania, Benton, Franklin, and Asotin counties.

Washington State remains in Phase 2 of their reopening plans and given the uncertainty of the virus, no Phase 3 is envisioned or defined at this time. Oregon expects to remain in a risk-based framework, with risk levels and associated guidance and restrictions determined on a county-by-county basis. States and communities continue to balance the need for planning with managing risk and uncertainty, including public health and economic concerns.

US Coast Guard representatives confirmed that while they have jurisdiction over vessels in navigable waters, they cannot enforce CDC or other public health guidance. No decisions have been made about river cruise operations. Both states continue to engage with stakeholders and review the most recent evidence. Next steps include reviewing national guidance regarding cruise operations, requesting cruise operator public health plans, triage and repatriation plans, better understanding expectations of communities and local public health, and determining who has jurisdiction over ships when not at port.

Mid-Valley Region – Jody Christensen

- **City of Detroit Water Project Update** – This week, RS convened a technical project update meeting for the potable and non-potable water projects for the City of Detroit, which has been without water since the 2020 Labor Day Wildfires. Over 20 representatives participated in the briefing including the consultants, staff and elected officials from the City of Detroit and Marion County, USDA Rural Development, DEQ, Oregon Health Authority, Rural Community Assistance Corp., Oregon Emergency Management, and Business Oregon. After the status report, a list of tasks were developed to move the projects forward. The Mid-Valley RST will continue to work with the partners until the completion of the projects.
- **City of Gates Water Resources** - The City of Gates was awarded a \$30,000 Source Water Protection Grant from the Oregon Health Authority and Business Oregon; the city will

collaborate with USGS for the rental and installation of monitoring system related to post-fire water quality.

- **Mid-Valley Community Outreach Alliance** is a BIPOC group meeting regularly, which includes representatives from Pineros Y Campesinos Unidos del Noroeste (PCUN), Oregon Human Development Corporation (OHDC), Oregon Employment Office – Woodburn, Advanced Economic Solutions, Farmworker Housing Development Corp (FHDC), Unidos Bridging Community, Capaces Leadership, Western Oregon University (WOU) Multicultural Center, Mano a Mano – Salem, Oregon Childhood Development Coalition (OCDC), Consulado de Mexico en Portland, and the Chemeketa Center for Business and Industry.
 - This week, Ellie Roberts, the Legislative Correspondent from Senator Merkley’s DC Office, shared the latest information on the newly proposed 2021 US Citizenship Bill. There was a robust conversation about several areas of the bill and the need to elevate concerns about support for BIPOC veterans, delays in benefits, funding to help navigate the application process, and the elimination of the 3-10 year bar requirements. The group shared concerns about fraudulent services already popping “to help” with the citizenship process. Thank you to Ellie Roberts and Stacey Jochimsen for helping with this meeting.
- **Mid-Valley Wildfire/COVID Economic Recovery Team (ERT)** – RS has combined the regional ERTs and is now convening bi-weekly meetings for COVID response and wildfire recovery. The ERT will provide information, discussions, and feedback on response and recovery efforts.
 - This week, the ERT received updates on the American Rescue Plan from Congresswoman Bonamici’s office, the soon to be launched Business Oregon Commercial Rent Relief Fund, Oregon Community Foundation/Meyer Memorial/The Ford Family Foundation’s Wildfire Rebuilding Fund, and the Notice of Funding Announcement for Oregon Housing & Community Services Low-Income Tax Credit program.

South Valley/Mid Coast Region – Sarah Means

- **SVMC Wildfire/COVID Economic Recovery Team** – RS is convening regional partners a minimum of monthly to coordinate on wildfire and COVID economic recovery topics. This week, the group received updates on risk category movement for SVMC counties, commercial rent relief, and the Wildfire Municipal Capacity Fund. A few highlights to report:
 - The business community is suggesting a transition to a monthly, rather than 2x monthly risk category status revision. Businesses have expressed the difficulty in running a business on a two-week window; it has a negative impact on staff, significant challenges for ordering products, etc.
 - The Shuttered Venue Grants program continues to be delayed and that is causing challenges for several businesses in SVMC, of note is the Oregon Coast Aquarium. Senator Merkley recently sent a letter to the Small Business Association (SBA) to emphasize the urgency.
 - Local partners are hearing more about difficulties finding/hiring staff. This appears to be a trend particularly for restaurants and a concern for communities that are preparing for a busy summer season. Local Workforce Boards are going to be connecting with these communities to see if there is some opportunity with youth placement programs.
 - Lane County continues to focus on wildfire survivor housing gaps. Of note is the need for temporary housing for the workforce that will be required as communities begin to rebuild.

- Additionally, Oregon State University (OSU) Extension and Lincoln County invited RS to attend a Latino and Indigenous Communities Listening Session. COVID-19 vaccination was the specific topic for this event.
 - Questions from the community ranged from long-term side effects of the vaccine, what the vaccine is made from, cost associated with receiving the vaccine, and additional information on the variants we are seeing in the State. There was also conversation on how to break down barriers to help get the vaccine to the Latino and Indigenous populations.
 - For background, this initiative is curated by Juntos en Colaboracion. This is a group (OSU Extension, Lincoln County, a community-based organization, and a few community members) that came together to lean in and address what they saw as inequities, which have always been present, but were exacerbated by COVID. The group intends to work beyond COVID-19, although that is their primary focus at the moment. Other projects include leadership training for Latinas, finding a community center, building a community garden space, culturally appropriate food baskets, employer outreach, and needs assessments being done with OSU graduate students. Projects are in various stages of development.

Southern & South Coast Regions – Alex Campbell

- **South Coast Umpqua**
 - **Coos Bay Georgia Pacific Site** – Commercial Development Company, Inc., which specializes in redevelopment of brownfield sites has completed the purchase of the Georgia Pacific site in Coos Bay (GP ceased operations there late in 2019). Regional Solutions/DEQ assisted with the brownfield due diligence. South Coast Development Council has identified several possible end users/potential industrial tenants.
- **Southern Oregon**
 - **Wildfire recovery** – Regional Solutions, with support from OHCS, hosted a workshop among the primary affordable housing providers in the Rogue Valley and several Latinx leaders. The group came to an agreement on 6 priority actions that need to be taken in the next 3-6 months to move housing recovery forward. The number of survivors in state-funded hotel room is up to 837, from about 550 just two weeks ago. Ash & trash / debris clean-up is now well-underway; the prioritization process has been finished and clean-up itself is about 10% complete.

Metro Region – Raihana Ansary

- **Kellogg Creek Dam** – Kellogg Creek dam under OR-99E in Milwaukie prevents effective fish passage into the nine miles of Kellogg Creek tributary to the Willamette River. A full dam removal and bridge reconstruction project estimated to cost upwards of \$20M is prohibitively expensive and has no funding strategy to move forward. The City of Milwaukie and the North Clackamas Watersheds Council are working with the Governor’s Metro Regional Solutions Team (RST)—specifically the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW), the Department of State Lands (DSL), the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT), and the Governor’s Natural Resource Office (GNRO)—to examine the viability and pros and cons of potential lower-cost fish passage alternatives that meet the needs of all state agencies and the city of Milwaukie.
 - Update – Metro RS convened North Clackamas Watersheds Council, City of Milwaukie and ODOT Region 1 leadership and technical staff to review ODOT’s updated estimates

for a full bridge replacement and dam removal. The estimates are high-level and in need of further refinement. Metro RS will convene a follow-up meeting with the parties in order for the North Clackamas Watershed Council to present their channel design study and scope of work, which will help inform ODOT's refined cost estimates. Meantime, many thanks to ODOT Region 1 leadership and technical staff for dedicating additional time and staff capacity to this project.

- **City of Troutdale** – Metro RS met with the City of Troutdale about their growing concerns around houseless encampments, graffiti, and litter along ODOT HWY infrastructure in their community. The City of Troutdale is partnering with the Hope Team and Bio-Clean company to relocate and refer houseless individuals to shelter and to clean-up encampments. The City of Troutdale is offering to fund the clean up, but need confirmation from ODOT on who has the legal authority to issue notice of removal and cleanup. Many thanks to Metro RS team member and ODOT liaison, Vanessa Vissar, for seeking confirmation on this issue.

North Central Region – Nate Stice

- No report this week.

Central & South Central Region – Annette Liebe

- **Jordan Cove tribal/state agency coordination** – RS convened the tribal/state agency coordination meeting to get status updates on the Jordan Cove Energy Project. State agencies are not currently processing any new permit applications for the facility and have been told to expect additional communication on next steps from the company within the next several months. Tribes remain concerned about the perceived lack of engagement with tribes and cultural resource protection.
- **Regional Equity in Recovery Council** – The council conducted its second focus group meeting to identify perceived highest needs/barriers for BIPOC community members. Here's a snap shot of the identified priorities: opportunities to build wealth through homeownership (the council discussed the need to expand the Individual Development Account opportunities), the need for more mentoring, especially in rural communities, increased affordable childcare, connectivity and additional family support resources. Next step will include outreach to additional BIPOC partners to gain their input on needs and survey questions.
- **Regional Emergency Services Training and Coordination Center** – RS convened a meeting with state representatives (State Resilience Officer, Office of Emergency Management, State Fire Marshall, Department of Forestry), key regional leaders, and Scott Aycock, project manager at Central Oregon Intergovernmental Council to explore funding and use partnerships for this facility. The facility will offer training and emergency response coordination for law enforcement, fire and emergency response/management.

Greater Eastern & Northeast Regions – Courtney Warner Crowell

- **Boardman Food Pantry** – Huge congratulations to the Boardman Food Pantry that has been able to open a permanent location during the past year. RS worked with the community and the Association of Oregon Counties to help make this project a reality, but it's a true testament to the hard work of the community. They were able to use Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF) funding from both the City of Boardman and Morrow County to purchase a permanent facility for the Boardman Food Pantry. Boardman did not have a food pantry prior to COVID and throughout the pandemic, it has been clear that it is a huge need for the community. They are continuing to

look for grant funding for more freezers and refrigerators. They also have approval to begin to receive monthly shipments from the Oregon Food Bank. They are planning a celebration and grand opening in early spring.

- **Eastern Oregon Regional Equity in Recovery Council (RERC)** – The Eastern Oregon RERC met this month to discuss regional housing issues. The RERC is very interested in digging into the equity issues in Eastern Oregon and housing, which has been a top issue that kept coming forward over the past few months. RS put together a panel of experts in the region to talk about what is happening related to housing. These included:
 - **City of John Day** – The City of John Day described their housing incentive programs, which created an urban renewal program to incentivize either new home construction or remodel. They are now looking at expanding this program to provide some developer incentive programs to build out subdivisions, both for single-family homes, and multi-family affordable home projects. There was a lot of interest from partners around the region to learn more about how the City of John Day was able to make this happen. Prior to this program starting up 2.5 years ago, the city had three new homes built in the past decade. Since the program has started, there have been 12 new homes built (6 single family and 3 duplex) and 5 major remodels. The tax base has widened by \$1.24M in the first 2 years. All the participants of this program were Grant County residents and the population of John Day has grown by 15 residents (a 1% increase), which is the first increase in 20 years.
 - **Confederate Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR) Lucky 7 Project** – The CTUIR presented on their Lucky 7 mobile home park project that is currently underway. The tribe purchased this mobile home park many years ago and is currently converting it from 26 old homes, to 18 new, energy-efficient homes with more space, privacy, and a community park. They were awarded funding from the Meyer Memorial Trust and \$1M from the Legislature in flood relief funding. They discussed the long visioning process and the hard conversations that go along with manufactured housing preservation projects. Oregon Housing and Community Services (OHCS) also provided a brief presentation on the manufactured housing preservation funding eligible through the state. RERC members acknowledged that many BIPOC members in the region are living in older manufactured housing parks and there are lots of equity issues connected that we need to address. Our RERC has had many conversations about how to tackle the aging manufactured parks in the region.
 - **Veterans Village Projects** – Gust Tsiatsosu is a developer in the region who is focusing right now on small, cottage homes specifically for veterans in both La Grande and Baker City. He has received OHCS funding for both projects and is looking to potentially expand to other communities. He presented the cottage home community concept and so many communities in the meeting were interested in seeing this replicated across the region. There were discussions about how to convert this concept into either homeless housing or culturally specific communities.
- **Baker Early Learning Collaborative** – RS participates in the Baker Early Learning Collaborative and this month we heard updates about the progress toward adding in a child care center in partnership with the local YMCA and local businesses. RS will continue to help with the licensing process to help make this a priority. As background, the Baker Early Learning Center opened this fall in a renovated elementary school in Baker City. It currently houses kindergarten for the school district, Head Start, and Preschool Promise and community partners like Building Healthy Families, a diaper bank, food share, and a dentist that does monthly visits. They will be expanding community partners that will be housed in the center as well as adding in a child care center on site. We also discussed the Cradle to Career collaboration in the community and the process of adding in an early childhood workforce program at the high school level, which would allow high school students to get their early childhood training at the Baker Early Learning

Center. This would help address the workforce shortages in both child care and early learning. This incredible model highlights the collaboration that the community has built over the past three years.