

ODFW plans education site in Camp Sherman

By Kathryn Godsiff
Correspondent

There's a hidden gem in Camp Sherman that's under consideration for development into an educational site. The proposal is causing some consternation among neighboring property owners.

The site in question is the old Metolius Fish Hatchery, 15 acres near Spring Creek owned by Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW). A proposal to develop a youth fishing and salmon acclimation pond has been in the works for many months. A public meeting was held on April 18 at the Camp Sherman Community Hall to present the latest iteration of the proposal and allow for public comment.

The hatchery was constructed in 1947 by the Oregon Fish Commission and was used for 20 years before being decommissioned in 1967. The site is currently used by ODFW's Salmon-Trout Enhancement Program (STEM) for youth education programs, and is part of the wider Kokanee Karnival program that introduces 4th- and 5th-grade students to many things aquatic, including fishing and awareness of Oregon's water resources and environment.

The proposed development is to enhance use of the area by building a half-acre pond for youth (17 and under) fishing in the summer

and chinook salmon acclimation during the fall-spring. The area will be open to the general public during the summer months; other usage will be by school or other educational groups. Picnic tables, a walking path, interpretive signage and perimeter fencing are part of the facilities envisaged for summer use.

A parking lot and vault toilet and space for a site host/caretaker is proposed in the northwest corner. This is the aspect that is causing concern for neighbors. The proximity of the toilet to their property lines and the prospect of increased traffic caused several to speak against the project in its current state.

ODFW staff agreed to consider moving the toilet and planting more buffer vegetation in the area.

Some neighbors also had concerns about the degree of noticing and outreach conducted by ODFW regarding the proposal.

Chip Dale, an ODFW manager and Camp Sherman resident, and Brett Hodgson, Upper Deschutes district fish biologist for ODFW, reminded those present that ODFW has a mission as a state agency to put any property owned to its highest and best use. However, staff noted, a very real alternative for the property, if consensus can't be reached about the proposal, is that the state would sell it.

GOLFERS: 364 golfers participated in weekend event

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three weekend days. The tournament also includes one gross division, four net divisions and ladies net and gross payouts. Each round is played at a different course.

This unique team format has helped turn the tournament into a success, Malone said. Groups of teams, representing Oregon cities such as Astoria, La Grande, and Portland, as well as Seattle, travel to Central Oregon each year to participate in the tournament.

"It really is about the camaraderie," Malone said. "We have a number of groups that come from different cities and come with a lot of teams. For them, the tournament is a chance for a group of buddies to come and enjoy the team format. It really is about the camaraderie and



PHOTO BY JIM CORNELIUS

Golfers braved blustery spring weather for Central Oregon Shootout.

the fun that they have golfing together."

The Central Oregon Shootout has proven to be a boon for the economy of Sisters and the surrounding area. About 85 percent of its participants travel from outside Central Oregon.

According to an annual players survey, each participant spends on average nearly \$1,000 on lodging, entertainment, food and more. That

figure does not include the tournament's \$300 entry fee.

"It was designed to be a season-opening tournament that will bring in a number of players during what would typically be a slow time: the shoulder season between winter sports and summer sports," Malone said. "And it has been a shot in the arm for the golf courses, the restaurants and the area hotels."

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