

DRONE: Must make fee structure agreement before testing can start

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both manned and unmanned vehicles has been an impediment to further development at the airport and the testing range.

A significant amount of money has already been sunk into the range by the city, which is counting on testing fees to sustain the range in the long term.

At the April 7 city council meeting, Finance Director Linda Carter said service charges revenue was coming in below projections because the UAS range hadn't started operating yet.

Chrisman admitted that he expected the range to start testing by July and didn't account for the bureaucratic hurdles the city would have to clear.

"There are a lot more moving parts than anticipated," he said.

The latest hurdle involves negotiations between the city and the University of Alaska Fairbanks, which acts as an administrator for the all the UAS ranges in Oregon, Hawaii and Alaska.

Chrisman said the city and the University of Alaska Fairbanks need to agree on a fee structure before testing can start.

Three vehicles from two different aviation companies have been approved by the Federal Aviation Administration. Chrisman said those companies require all the involved parties to sign non-disclosure agreements, which is standard practice in the UAS industry to protect intellectual property.

This means the process is further elongated because the agreement has to be approved by the legal departments of the city, the university, the FAA and Peak 3 Technical Services, the company the city contracts with to manage the range.

While UAS testing would sustain the range, the major economic development is expected to come from drone companies building offices and factories in Pendleton.

Chrisman said he intends to reduce testing fees for any company willing to lease space at the airport, establish a satellite office or permanently locate their business in the city.

Duration of the test, testing frequency and the size of the crew a UAS company brings to Pendleton will also garner discounts.

The governor's speech also brought the announcement that range manager John Stevens would be leaving Pendleton to become chief operating officer of SOAR Oregon, the state's drone advocacy group.

While Stevens works toward further unifying the state's three UAS ranges, Peak 3 will search for his replacement.

Chrisman said he doesn't expect to be involved in the interview process, his only input being the candidate should be comfortable in a rural area.

In the interim, a Peak 3 employee is managing the range remotely from Alaska.

City officials aren't the only ones who want to take advantage of the increased interest in UAS.

Art Hill, who heads Blue Mountain Community College's Small Business Development Center, said he would like to locate an incubator building at the airport for BMCC's business accelerator program.

BMCC is creating the accelerator program to connect startup businesses in Eastern Oregon to mentors and investors in the west side of the state.

When asked why he wanted to locate an incubator facility at the airport, Hill quoted bank robber Willie Sutton.

"Because that's where the money is," he said.

Travel Pendleton event recruiter Pat Beard is also looking into how Pendleton's burgeoning drone industry could be turned into tourism opportunities.

Two events he's looking at bringing to Pendleton are a convention on precision agriculture, a field many industry officials say UAS could positively affect, and a drone rodeo at the Round-Up Grounds, an event where college students would build and fly unmanned aerial vehicles.

Beard said efforts to bring either event to town are in their early stages and are far from certain.

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DAM: Spillway weirs have 99 percent steelhead survival rate

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to monitor fish throughout their life cycle.

The majority of fish, however, will pass through the dam's spillway. Spill operations began April 10 at McNary Dam, as more juveniles begin making their long journey toward the Pacific.

Crews at McNary put in weirs at two of the spillway gates in 2007 to allow for passage closer to the surface of the water, where certain species of fish are more likely to approach. Those cost roughly \$3.5-\$5 million each, said Ann Setter, fish biologist with the Army Corps of Engineers' Walla Walla District.

Biologists then conduct a juvenile performance standard test at each of the federal Columbia River dams to gauge survival of the young fish.

A 2012 study at McNary found that 83.5 percent of steelhead passed at the spillway and surface weirs, with 99 percent survival. Fourteen percent passed through the bypass channel, with 100 percent survival. A much smaller number of fish — only 2 percent — passed down at the turbines, with a predictably lower survival rate of 83 percent.

"We have an obligation to mitigate for continued operation of the dams. Fish considerations come first to the table."

— Kevin Wingert, BPA spokesman

"Steelhead are always searching for a surface passage route, which these top-spill weirs provide," Setter said.

Roughly 40 percent of the river is spilled at McNary Dam, which is done to maintain adequate passage and limit amount of dissolved gases plunged into the water.

If the gas levels are too high, tiny bubbles can get into the scales of juveniles and cause them stress, or even death.

Too much spill is also discombobulating to adult fish as they try to find their way upstream to one of McNary's two fish ladders, said Agnes Lut, fish biologist with BPA. Though some environmental groups would like to see more spill at the dams, Lut said the current levels are already enough to protect runs of both adults and juveniles.

"We could have so much water coming through the dam that these adults just stop and don't know where the ladder is," Lut said.

"That can increase their predation rate."

Their claim, she said, is backed by steadily rising adult salmon returns. More than 1 million fall chinook made it back into the Columbia last year, and fishery managers are expecting 925,000 for the 2015 season.

Salmon advocates and the state of Oregon are suing the federal agencies, arguing the way they run the Columbia River hydro system is still not enough to boost needed recovery for threatened and endangered fish species. A hearing is scheduled for June 23 in Portland.

Wingert said they are always on the lookout for new ways and practices that can help them better protect fish at the dams.

"We have an obligation to mitigate for continued operation of the dams," he said. "Fish considerations come first to the table."



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FREY: Taught 4 months at PHS

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over three weeks beginning on March 13, Frey's last day at the high school. The last encounter, according to the indictment, was April 4.

The indictment also states there was a break between each incident in which Frey had the "opportunity to renounce his criminal intent." The teen, by law, was too young to give consent.

Pendleton schools Superintendent Jon Peterson reported Frey taught four months at PHS and March 13 was his last day. After that, Frey began to work full time for the Oregon National Guard.

Capt. Steven Bomar, spokesman for the Oregon Guard, said Frey's military career is on hold during the civilian criminal proceedings. He said the Guard "flags" members under criminal investigation, preventing promotions. But if a member is cleared of criminal wrongdoing, Bomar said, their career can resume.

The Northern Oregon Regional Correctional Facility, The Dalles, was holding Frey for the Umatilla County Jail. NORCOR's online inmate roster no longer shows Frey is in custody there, and the Umatilla County Jail website also did not show Frey.

MINE: 'We are not looking for Bundyville'

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"We are not looking for Bundyville. We are not looking to challenge anything. We are just holding our constitutional rights and property rights in reserve until we get our day in court," Barclay said.

He and his partner, George Backes, believe they do not have to file an operations plan demanded by the Bureau of Land Management because they hold the surface rights on the mining claim, Barclay said. The claim has been continuously owned since 1858, predating the Bureau of Land Management's authority and other mining laws, he said.

The agency has given the pair until April 25 to appeal, and a lawyer representing the claimholders said they would, Whittington said.

Josephine County Sheriff Dave Daniel told the Grants Pass Daily Courier newspaper that he has no plans to send patrols to the area.

"There's no point in some uniform going up there and stirring things up," Daniel

said. "Nothing's blipped up on the radar that gave me an ounce of concern."

In Nevada last year, hundreds of armed Bundy supporters faced off against Bureau of Land Management agents in April to stop a roundup of cattle from public land where Bundy allowed his stock to graze near the town of Bunkerville.

Federal officials accused Bundy of failing to pay more than \$1 million in grazing fees over more than 20 years. Bundy says the federal government has no authority over the land.

Bureau officials backed off, and Bundy and his supporters declared victory. But Bureau of Land Management officials say they are still pursuing an administrative and legal resolution of the dispute.

Earlier this week, a Pennsylvania man pleaded guilty to threatening a U.S. ranger who took part in the armed standoff on the Bundy ranch in Nevada ranch last year. Prosecutors have recommended that he be sentenced to probation.