

Commissioners hear plans for Joseph airport

By **BILL BRADSHAW**
Wallowa County Chieftain

ENTERPRISE — The final draft of a master plan for upgrades to the Joseph State Airport was presented to the Wallowa County Board of Commissioners during its meeting Wednesday, Feb. 2.

The PowerPoint presentation was made by aviation planner Sarah Lucas of the Oregon Department of Aviation.

“We are at the close-out phase of the master plan,” Lucas told the commissioners. She said the purpose was to update the 1993 plan — the last for which a master plan was created. The plan was released by the ODA on Jan. 27. A briefing similar to that presented to the commissioners was given to the State Aviation Board on Feb. 3.

Changes

The primary upgrades involve “airside” improvements. These include:

- For instrument approach, options to pursue either a non-precision straight-in or a non-precision circling approach were discussed in the planning phase of the master plan update. It was decided with input from the Planning Advisory Committee and LifeFlight Network that a circling approach would be pursued.

- Clear a slight berm in the taxiway for an object-free area.

- Expand the fueling apron.
- Remove direct access

from the fueling apron to the runway.

This last item is pressed by the Federal Aviation Administration, Lucas said.

“They want pilots to really be thinking about what they’re doing before they get on the runway,” she said.

Secondary goals for the plan would add hangars, replace or relocate the existing pilot building with a mixed-use building, expand the aircraft apron to provide hangar access and large-aircraft parking including for Medevac aircraft. The secondary goals also would remove 12 small-airplane tiedowns, reconfigure vehicle access and parking, relocate or upgrade the electronic south and west vehicle gates and expand the aircraft fueling apron.

A portion of these goals are expected to be accomplished in the next five years, Lucas said at a cost of an estimated \$4,528,190, with the majority of the funding coming from the FAA.

As for establishing the type of approach aircraft take to the runway, Lucas said the FAA prefers a circling approach rather than a straight-in approach, which satisfies the needs of LifeFlight.

The circling approach brings an aircraft to the airport vicinity, when it can then make a landing.

“There are so many obstacles out there to get a straight-in approach,” Lucas said.

She said to reconfigure the airport for a straight-in



Bill Bradshaw/Wallowa County Chieftain
Sarah Lucas, an aviation planner with the Oregon Department of Aviation, describes details of the final draft of the Joseph State Airport Master Plan during a PowerPoint presentation Wednesday, Feb. 2, 2022, for the Wallowa County Board of Commissioners.

AIRPORT MASTER PLAN

<https://centurywest.com/joseph-state-airport-master-plan/>

approach would require expanding some of the design surfaces.

“It just isn’t cost-effective,” she said, adding that it also does not provide significant operational gains.

Obstacles

Some of the obstacles she mentioned — that she said she’s well aware the commissioners are familiar with — include the surrounding mountains, the Enterprise watershed that comes near the northern end of the airport and a cemetery to the south of the runway.

Some of the improvements involve expanding the airport property. The most feasible expansion, Lucas said, would be into what is now the city of

Joseph’s waste transfer station at the west corner of the airport. But purchasing that 2.1 acres is still far down the road and beyond what the initial plans call for.

“In full disclosure, we (the ODA) haven’t talked to the city about that yet,” she said. “They may say no. But we don’t want to get the cart before the horse.”

There also is a privately owned parcel on the east side that is considered in the master plan, but it, too, is not yet under consideration.

Commissioner John Hillock asked if the state would consider such an option, if the landowner is willing and requests a zoning change.

“It can, but the state, it’s

not in our budget to fund that,” Lucas said, though she couldn’t really give a firm answer to Hillock’s question.

What’s ahead?

The final steps for the plan include:

- Complete a state agency coordination review with the Wallowa County Planning Department and the state Department of Land Conservation and Development. A final draft was sent Jan. 26. Lucas said she received letter from DLCD on Feb. 1 saying the department found the plan to be compatible with state planning goals.

- Closeout grant with consultant.

- The plan is available for public review on the project website.

- Send the final master plan to Oregon Aviation Board for adoption at its April 2022 meeting.

- Seek to have the master plan incorporated into the Wallowa County Comprehensive Plan.

Lucas said of the three-phase plan, only the first five-year phase is solid. The latter phases can be expected to change.

Hillock agreed.

“The FAA’s always going to want more improvements,” he said.

“I have to say I’m a huge advocate of that,” Lucas said. “I know that in the past, the state has not been the most proactive with work-

ing with all of the airports. We own and operate 27 airports with one airport manager. They range from Aurora State (south of Portland), a busy general aviation airport, to McDermott (State Airport in Malheur County) and 2½ maintenance employees to maintain that. I really don’t want to make it sound like an excuse, but I do know and I understand why the tenants have felt neglected. That is the reason I took this job is to try to be that middle person. I have seen changes, like those tenant meetings you’ve been a part of. ... If nothing else comes out of the (Airport Layout Plan), it’s starting those conversations.”

Other business

In other business Wednesday, the commissioners:

- Approved an agreement to donate 6 square feet of sidewalk in Joseph to the Oregon Department of Transportation. It will accommodate the ODOT’s work this summer to make sidewalks and ramps compliant with Americans with Disabilities Act standards.

- Approved an easement for Randal and Mary Johnson to replace a culvert on Promise Road.

- Hired Sean Cariss as a reserve deputy with the Wallowa County Sheriff’s Office.

- Rehired Amy Stangel as a counselor with the Department of Youth Services to catch up on some work.

IN BRIEF

Homeland to raffle elk hunt tag

WALLOWA COUNTY — A three-day guided elk hunt on the Zumwalt Prairie Preserve is being offered in a raffle by the Nez Perce Wallowa Homeland, according to a press release.

The hunt is for one hunter and two guests with a landowner preference bull elk tag donated by the Nature Conservancy.

Raffle tickets for the right to purchase the tag will be sold through March 27 — or until they sell out.

Tickets cost \$50 each, with only 200 tickets to be sold. In order to ensure opportunity for Nez Perce people to participate in the raffle, 50 tickets will be reserved for Nez Perce only until March 1.

Tickets are available online at wallowanezperce.org/elk-tag-raffle. The winner of the raffle will be announced live, with the date and time still to be determined.

Proceeds from the sale of raffle tickets will support the Homeland’s annual Snake River School float trip, a multiday outing for Nez Perce youths to learn STEM and TEK from tribal instructors while connecting with their ancestral homeland by boat.

Fishtrap to receive \$10,000 grant for youth writers

ENTERPRISE — Fishtrap is among the 23 arts organizations statewide that each will receive \$10,000

their educational projects in partnership with Oregon schools through the coming fiscal year, the Oregon Arts Commission Arts Learning funding announced Tuesday, Jan. 25.

Shannon McNerney, executive director of Fishtrap, said the grant is critical to the group’s funding and they have received similar grants for several years.

“It’s a cornerstone for our youth funding,” she said. “It’s one of the

key components.”

McNerney said Fishtrap plans to use some of the money to bring in a playwright writer in residence this spring, as well as use the money to fund the scholarships Fishtrap provides to youths of about \$550.

The OAC’s announcement said Fishtrap will use its grant to support the continuum of arts learning opportunities it offers to youths across Eastern Oregon. In 2021-22, it hopes

to engage 500 young rural writers ages 7-18 with its youth writing programs.

“We’re looking forward to getting kids writing again,” McNerney said. “We miss their faces and look forward to seeing them this spring and summer.”

— *EO Media Group*

This week’s featured book

The Price We Pay

by Marty Makary, MD

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Hello everyone!

We are hosting a virtual Pampered Chef party as a **FUNDRAISER** for the Wallowa County Humane Society!

All NET proceeds will go to the humane society. Everyone wins. You receive quality Pampered Chef products, and the humane society will receive much needed funds to be used to continue the great work they do for this community!

We are hoping to have enough sales for a **BIG** donation!! Let's help reach their goal!

Please feel free to invite friends and family to join us and help with the needs of the humane society.

Gift With Purchase

- SPEND \$80 — Get a FREE Stainless Steel Mini Whopper.
- SPEND \$100 — Get a FREE Stainless Steel Mini Whopper AND the Small Batter Bowl.
- SPEND \$150 — Get both gifts + FREE standard shipping on your entire order!

Please share this party link with them, <https://www.pamperedchef.com/party/rondamclaughlin0218?redirect=shop-landing-page>

A few catalogs will be on site at the WCHS office across from the Courthouse Gazebo.

Let's Raise Funds!

A percentage of all sales will be donated to Wallowa County Humane Society. Orders can be placed until 2/27/22

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