



NATIONAL POLICY CONSENSUS CENTER
Hatfield School of Government

Gearhart City Council Work Session

Agenda: Clatsop Plains Elk Collaborative
Tuesday, December 29th, 2020
6:30 to 7:30 pm (PDT)

Presenters:

Manuel Padilla, Oregon Solutions Project Manager
Paul Atwood, ODFW Assistant District Wildlife Biologist

6:30-6:35 pm General Introductions	Mayor Cockrum
6:35-6:40 pm Introduction to Oregon Solutions & the Clatsop Plains Elk Project	Manuel
6:45-7:00 pm: Information on the Elk Management Subcommittee, Elk Trends in Gearhart, Culling, Elk Movement Corridors, and DoC Commitments	Manuel and Paul
7:00-7:30 pm: Q & A for Manuel and Paul	Manuel and Paul



Krysti Ficker <krysti@cityofgearhart.com>

Clatsop Plains Elk Project: Planning for December 29th Gearhart City Council Work Session

Manuel Padilla <manuelpadilla@pdx.edu>

Tue, Dec 22, 2020 at 10:36 AM

To: Krysti Ficker <krysti@cityofgearhart.com>, Paul M Atwood <Paul.M.Atwood@state.or.us>

Krysti,

Please see the attached documents:

1. Gearhart City Council Work Session Elk Collaborative Executive Summary
2. Proposed agenda for our section of the Work Session

Note: The Executive Summary is very similar to the Executive Summary given to the Council at the Sept 29th Work Session. There is, however, some new information in there as well as a revised commitments list which puts commitments into categories. This hopefully makes it easier to read and make sense of (per Mayor Cockrum's request).

Please let me know if you have any questions. I apologize for the length of the Executive Summary but I thought it important to continue to give the City Council a full picture and explanation on certain items to contextualize the proposed commitments.

Best,

Manuel

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2 attachments



City of Gearhart Elk Project Executive Summary_December 29th 2020.pdf
302K



Gearhart City Council Clatsop Plains Elk Project Work Session Agenda_Dec 29th 2020.docx
83K

The Clatsop Plains Elk Collaborative

The Clatsop Plains Elk Collaborative is a response to the needs of the GCP area in creating better co-habitation of elk and people. Much like the region's response to the reality of living in a tsunami zone, this project seeks to develop a comprehensive, multi-sectoral response to the reality of living in an elk habitat such that a new culture of awareness and action to living in an elk habitat is created.

In April 2019, Governor Kate Brown designated the Clatsop Plains Elk Collaborative as an Oregon Solutions Project. The Governor designated Mayor Henry Balensifer (Warrenton) and Mayor Jay Barber (Seaside) as co-conveners of the project; and, Oregon Solutions formed a project team of 26 members, consisting of key stakeholders, state and federal agency staff, local community and government leaders, academics, Governor's Regional Solutions staff, and area nonprofit representatives to focus on the goals of: *reducing conflict between elk-human interactions, increase safety, and promote cohabitation between elk and people in the Clatsop Plains area.*

The purpose statement of the project is: *"The community in and around the greater Clatsop Plains study area seeks to reduce elk-human related conflicts. We have expressed a sense of urgency and willingness to work collaboratively to identify management solutions and implementation strategies. The purpose of this collaborative is to find viable ways to improve public safety, and reduce property damage, through outreach and education, and a community-wide approach to reducing urban elk interactions while maintaining healthy and viable herds as a valuable cultural and natural resource."*

To best approach its work, the project team organized into four subcommittees: Elk Management, Human Management, Land Use, and Data, as well as through a steering committee. The full project team has met 4 times over the current duration of the project. Subcommittees met on a monthly basis from fall of 2019 through spring of 2020. The subcommittee developed recommendations to achieve the goals within the purpose statement.

COVID-19: Work of the project team was paused for four to six weeks at the onset of COVID-19 so team members could attend to more urgent community matters. The team ultimately adjusted to the changed environment, and subcommittees were reconstituted so team members could continue their work to and reach agreement on a series of commitments and recommendations.

Shared Common Understandings

The full project team has developed common understandings from their work together throughout the Oregon Solutions process. These understandings have helped shape the work of the project team and will guide the actions, implementation, and community engagement of the resulting Management Plan after the completion of the Oregon Solutions project. Central to these understandings, and to the Clatsop Plains Elk Collaborative, is the livability and safety of residents and tourists as well as the necessity to develop a unified, cross-jurisdictional approach for the implementation of our actions, to the greatest extent possible. These shared common are listed below.

Patience and Action: The Clatsop Plains communities have been struggling to cohabitate with elk herds in the urban areas. After years of growing concern, the project team acknowledges that communities are eager for action. It is hoped that the work of the Clatsop Plains Elk Collaborative and this Declaration of Cooperation will be a turning point toward effective, comprehensive approaches to the problem.

Through our work, the project team feels it has achieved better clarity on what is necessary to meet the goals of our purpose statement. We have found there are few appropriate and effective actions that are capable of producing immediate results. Actions that have the best chance of producing immediate results will be prioritized, but it will likely be three- to five-years to see significant impacts from the project commitments.

No Silver Bullet: It is the confluence of various strategies in elk and human management, and land use policies, and sustained action within these strategies, that will yield the highest likelihood for success. No one tool will serve as a 'magic bullet' to solve the problem.

Unified Approach for People: It is understood that flexibility is necessary, but we understand that speaking with a coordinated voice and taking unified actions will result in the most effective and impactful outcomes for both elk and the Clatsop plains communities. Communities will benefit from a unified approach by setting clearer and better expectations for everyone and with easier entry points to participating in the project goals. It is clear that human behavior can and does cause harm to elk and communities alike, including negatively impacting their neighbors (feeding elk, landscaping that attracts elk, higher potential for traffic collisions, and others) which might require elk to be lethally removed as a result of increased safety hazards. This creates the need for a *community culture* where individuals, businesses, and communities see themselves as responsible for changing some of the ways they live in the Clatsop Plains. The community is called upon to work together to adapt their lives within the Clatsop Plains area to both relieve pressure on elk habitat and make urban areas less attractive for elk. This will be paramount for both short and long-term success.

Unified Approach for Elk: It is understood that elk do not acknowledge jurisdictional boundaries. In order for any regulations or guidelines to have measurable and positive impacts, there needs to be *unified and consistent coordination across the jurisdictions* when considering regulatory measures, best practices guidelines, and other management strategies. There also needs to be an ability for local jurisdictions to adapt ordinances and guidance to address community needs. Develop a communication and notification protocol as regulations and guidance are being proposed will ensure a multi-jurisdictional collaborative approach.

Balanced Perspectives on Elk: There is a general understanding there will be some urban presence of elk and that they may continue to pose a nuisance from time to time. We note that people of goodwill can disagree about what to do about this elk population. We also acknowledge that perceptions, feelings, and experiences with Clatsop Plains Elk are diverse and complex, as is resolving elk and humans interaction. Noting this, we find to the greatest possible for a positive outcome for Clatsop Plains communities, we believe elk should not be seen as either a 'pest' or to be 'wholly protected.' Elk are a part of Clatsop Plains' ecological landscape, and are a tourist attraction. Given that livability and safety is central to this project, the needs of humans and elk should be taken into account before actions are taken.

Impact of Urbanization: We understand that elk within urban areas of the Clatsop Plains may need to be reduced from time to time for safety reasons or because of socially unacceptable levels of property damage. We also understand that a significant cause of increased interactions between humans and elk in the Clatsop Plains area are a result of factors including urbanization, and human behaviors and activities that has attracted elk to urban areas in greater numbers. Human activity [like ...?] has increased the ecological carrying capacity for elk in urban areas, but has also decreased the elk's social acceptance for many residents. The right number of elk that are manageable for Clatsop Plains communities will become clearer over time as the impacts of the management actions are implemented.

Tough Choices Ahead: Creating the best conditions possible for elk and people will require some tough choices. Wildlife management strategies will likely need to be employed to reduce the elk population in the short- and long-term. This will likely require initial measures such as expanded hunting and culling to reduce the elk population. Culling will require local jurisdictions to pass ordinances granting appropriate permission. It is the project team's expectation that all meat from culling will be donated to local food banks for community benefit, as is required by law. The project team does not anticipate there being an immediate or significant difference in the current situation (safety and co-habitation) without the inclusion of culling in the project commitments. Culling also has its limitations and is seen as only one part of a holistic management approach.

Everyone Has a Part to Play: Individuals play a role in creating the best conditions possible for human/elk relationships, as well as state and local agencies. There is no one agency or entity that has full responsibility for the management and outcomes of human/elk issues in the urban areas of the Clatsop Plains. At the same time, the project team acknowledges a responsibility to help communities become better informed and take ownership where possible. The project team believes working to remove barriers to meaningful community participation and engagement to reduce the presence of elk in urban areas will increase safety and lead to improved cohabitation.

Recommendations

The project team organized its work through 3 different subcommittees: Elk Management, Human Management, and Land Use. As a result of these subcommittees, recommendations were developed in each of the subcommittee areas related to achieving the overall goals of the project's purpose statement. The project team has agreed to implement the below recommendations.

Elk Management Subcommittee

- Develop fencing options for mass elk exclusion from select areas
- Develop and implement an elk behavior modification plan
- Use deterrents to detract elk from select areas
- Use attractants to attract elk to select areas
- Develop and establish elk movement corridors
- Evaluate and expand ODFW hunting options
- Increase targeted use of hazing and hazing permits
- Conduct culling of elk, at the request of jurisdictions, and donate meat to the Oregon food bank
- Use targeted removal of individual problem elk to reduce habituated elk who pose a threat to public safety

Human Management Subcommittee

- Complete jurisdictional passing of no feeding ordinances
- Develop a comprehensive no feeding guidance
- Develop and disseminate resident education materials on how to reduce interactions with elk. Work with residents on using best practices for elk appropriate landscaping and pet care.
- Develop and implement K-12 education materials, in coordination with local schools, that teaches children about the history of elk in the Clatsop plains, elk biology, and how to live with elk as citizens of the Clatsop Plains.

- Develop and disseminate tourist educational materials in collaboration with relevant partners
- Develop creative and effective fencing options for homeowners
- Develop and disseminate a safe distance from elk guidance
- Establish new signage and rumble strips at highly trafficked elk crossing areas on hwy 101.
Explore the development signage that is reactive to the presence of wildlife

Land Use Subcommittee

Establishing and preserving elk movement corridors, habitat, and buffer areas:

- Identify and consolidate, and maintain in an undeveloped state, targeted land used for elk movement through partnerships
- Review subdivision ordinances
- Establish wildlife habitat buffers or transition areas between urban communities and elk habitat
- Use enhanced Forage and Feeding to attract elk to select areas for viewing and using corridors

Legislative and regulatory revisions

- Work with local jurisdictions, and the Oregon Department of Forestry, to harmonize regulations and address issues in the Forest Practices Act (FPA), related to land conversion, not covered or enforced by the FPA¹.
- Integrate land use recommendations into the County Comprehensive Plan update process
- Review the density transfer plan of Clatsop County

Resident Education

- Coordinate with private landowners who may be converting forest land to residential on potential elk conflicts
- Provide notice if future purchasers' properties are in wildlife movement area
- Encourage flexibility while striving for unified approach
- Identify human/wildlife transect areas and send public notices to ODFW
- Develop local fencing guidance, in coordination with the development of fencing options, and adjust ordinances as needed.
- Identify and create wildlife viewing areas
- Educate residents and decision makers on the relationship between land use planning and wildlife interactions

Data collection

- Increase collecting and analysis of elk movement data to create and protect elk movement corridors and inform other land use actions.
- Track elk movement on both sides of Highway 101 to better understand landscape usage.
- Create a GIS layered map to inform other land use actions.

¹ The previous form of this recommendation in the Human Management and Land Use Executive Summary read "Enhance the effectiveness of the Forest Practices Act, in protecting forested land from becoming residential land, through local ordinances, where applicable."

Culling

--Culling, for elk reduction in an urban area, is generally a short term (or as needed) action as part of a management plan to address a longer-term problem with elk numbers. The goal is an initial rapid reduction in the elk population in a given area that can be used in conjunction with increased population reduction, through hunting, to stem the birth rate of new elk. It is also used in conjunction with human management, land use, and other short and long-term actions that will work together to see an overall decrease of elk living within populated urban areas

--Culling is iterative: a culling plan will be made (including numbers, appropriate areas and times, and a plan for directing meat to the local food bank). Some culling will happen, an assessment will be done, then perhaps more culling may be necessary. There is no precise number that can be predetermined that will mark 'success' or 'mission accomplished'. An initial number to be culled can only be reached through the creation of a culling plan with ODFW and the jurisdiction, after a jurisdiction has passed a resolution authorizing culling to take place and a permit has been sought from ODFW.

--The project team intends to measure the effects of culling against the goals of the project concerning safety and co-habitation: reduced car accidents, reduced property damage, reduced dangerous encounters with elk, and reduced overall visibility and interactions with elk (that comes with a feeling of increased safety).

--It will be hard to tell to what degree culling is specifically responsible for any given outcome as it will be implemented in conjunction with a lot of community education on how to interact around elk and greater enforcing of no feeding laws, hazing, fencing, increased hunting opportunities, better road signs and rumble strips in strategic areas, and things like developing out wildlife corridors, elk behavior modification plans, and different land use tools to increase and preserve land for elk (as well as notify people of the risks of developing in certain areas designated as elk habitat). All of these things will have their own impacts on different timelines. We are reasonably sure culling will be a part of the solution but also realize it is generally ineffective if not paired with other actions.

--The project team is currently acknowledging that the social carrying capacity for elk in the area has been exceeded for many residents. There is already too much damage, too many car accidents, too much fear for safety. The project team is unanimous in thinking we need some culling now and over time in order to achieve the goals of the project. The project team also believes that elk are vital to the area and should remain visible and a part of the community and tourism. This will be the way to strike a balance to achieve an acceptable social carrying capacity of elk for jurisdictions.

--Currently, there is no hard number for how many elk should be in the Clatsop plains project area. There are only numbers set for units, and that is based also on sustainability for hunting purposes, not simply what the land can accommodate. One of the goals of this project is to reduce the presence of elk within populated urban areas to a point where social carrying capacity is acceptable, and thereby learn what number of elk seems appropriate for any jurisdiction.

Clatsop County Considerations for Culling (not yet considered or approved) related to Gearhart culling

1. Support requests for culling permits made by cities within the Clatsop Plains area that would be conducted on unincorporated land outside of city limits when the elk are understood to be biologically attached to the city making the request. This does not require a formal resolution.

Elk Movement Corridors

From Elk Management Subcommittee Executive Summary

Subcommittee Members: Paul Atwood (ODFW), Jason Bangild (Gearhart Golf Links), John Putman (Oregon Hunters Association), Kat Olson (Greenwood Resources), Sgt Joseph Warwick (OSP), Vanessa Blackstone (formerly OPRD), Mark Baldwin (City of Warrenton), Dana Sanchez (OSU Extension)

Elk Movement Corridors: Development of elk movement corridors involves many management actions and coordination with land use planning among the local governments and private landowners within the Greater Clatsop Plains area. Combined with behavior modification, wildlife crossings, and other habitat manipulations, elk movement corridors are a key component to identifying where elk are desired (and not desired) and how to encourage elk movements to and from those areas. There may be federal funding under SB 3030 for infrastructure, such as fencing, to improve wildlife outcomes in municipalities.

What do elk movement corridors mean for Gearhart?

From Land Use Subcommittee Executive Summary

Subcommittee Members: Lisa Phipps (DLCD), Gail Henrikson (Clatsop County), Katie Voelke (NCLC), Denise Lofman (CREST), Chris Knutsen (ODFW), Paul M Atwood (ODFW), Jae Pudwell (ODOT), Ty Williams (ODF), Henry A. Balensifer III (Mayor City of Warrenton)

Human land use policies to date have resulted in a fragmented landscape. Any discussion and recommendations related to land use policies and regulations should emphasize a coordinated approach between the incorporated and unincorporated governing jurisdictions. A unified approach must also provide flexibility to allow local governments to adapt strategies to each community's unique character and vision. Public and private landowners must be included in the discussions and collaborations between landowners, state and federal agencies and local governments that will be required to craft solutions that are tailored to specific locations and issues.

Preservation of Elk Movement Corridors/Streams/Edges

- Through partnership with the North Coast Land Conservancy, federal and state agencies, local municipalities and private landowners within the Greater Clatsop Plains area, identify lands used for elk movement that should be consolidated and maintained in an undeveloped state and identify policies that will ensure that these corridors remain undeveloped. Such corridors also include stream buffers and habitat edges where wildlife movement occurs.
- Municipalities and the County should review their subdivision ordinances to determine whether:

- common undeveloped open space is required within new subdivisions;
- minimum open space size requirements provide adequate habitat for elk movement;
- the regulations result in open spaces that are contiguous within a development and will connect to adjacent developments; and
- open spaces will protect habitat and vegetation that are conducive to elk forage.
- The County and municipalities should consider the possible establishment of a wildlife habitat buffer or transition area between urban communities and known elk habitat. Such buffers should be based on known elk movements and preferred ecology.

City of Gearhart Commitments

General actions

- Hold community forums on the results of the Clatsop Plains Elk Collaborative plan and seek community participation on implementation. Hold townhalls and conduct surveys to collect data and community perspectives on select elements of the plan that would require city council resolutions.

Elk Management actions

- When deemed necessary, pass city council resolution supporting culling of elk that are biologically attributed to areas within the city limits of Gearhart but are not within the city limits of Gearhart where and when culling would take place. Request a culling permit from ODFW in these instances. Develop a culling plan, with guidance and technical support provided by ODFW, for approval. Collaborate on best methods and locations for culling.
- Engage and inform city council and planning commissions for approving movement on work items such as elk movement corridors, land use planning, fencing options, signage for elk, elk guidance, and others *(also related to all other actions)*.
- Align no discharge of firearms ordinance and hazing interpretations with other jurisdictions *(also human management related)*.

Human Management actions

- Provide informational resources on No Feeding Ordinances for other communities.
- Collaborate on fencing design appropriateness for the Clatsop Plains area and for individual communities *(also land use related)*
- Collaborate on elk and ecologically appropriate landscaping, and other mechanisms, for deterring elk in urban areas within Clatsop Plains.
- Assist in the creation of No Feeding Guidance that can be used across the project area
- Change local fencing ordinance to accommodate updated elk fencing designs for residents *(also land use related)*
- Increase enforcement of no-feeding ordinance where possible.

Land Use actions

- Help identify and troubleshoot land development issues with the need for wildlife corridors in mind (*also elk management related*)
- Support Clatsop County in educating residents and decision makers on relationship between land use planning and wildlife interactions (*also human management related*).
- Partner with appropriate entities to help link elk movement corridors through Gearhart to parks and state lands (*also elk management related*).
- Change fencing ordinances, if necessary, needed for Gearhart Golf Links' participation in double fencing trial.
- Review current subdivision ordinances as they relate to elk. Work with partners to propose land use changes (space requirements, wildlife buffers, and others) that would alleviate pressure on elk habitat (*also human management and elk management related*).
- Identify wildlife transect areas within Gearhart then determine need for new ordinances or ordinance changes.
- Conduct local comp plan review for Gearhart in collaboration with Clatsop County comp plan review as related to elk.
- For "notice if future purchasers' properties are in wildlife movement area": After designating land use, create notification requirement/plan (like the flood plain notification process). Land Use Compatibility format (LUCS form) approval item for wildlife (just like septic and other approvals needed).

Data:

- Collect more precise data on elk contact with residents and provide that information to ODFW

Project Team Members

Chad Sweet	City of Gearhart	Administrator
Carla Cole	National Park Service	
Denise Löffman	CREST	
Mark Baldwin	City of Warrenton	Commissioner
Gall Henrikson	Clatsop County	Director, Community Devo
Henry A. Balensifer III	City of Warrenton	Mayor - Co-Convener
Paul Atwood	Oregon Dept/Fish&Wildlife	Assistant District Wildlife Biologist
Chris Knutsen	Oregon Dept/Fish&Wildlife	N.Coast Watershed Dist.Man
Jae Pudewell	ODOT, State of Oregon	Regional Solutions Team
Jason Bangild	Gearhart Golf Links	General Manager/Director of Golf
Jay Barber	City of Seaside	Mayor - Co-Convener
Stacey Garrison	Camp Rilea, OR Military	Installations Division (AGI)
Todd Farmer	Camp Rilea, OR Military	Got a promotion
Jennifer Purcell	North Coast Regional Solutions, Gov. Kate Brown	RST Coordinator
John R. Putman	Oregon Hunters Assoc.	Northwest Director
Katie Voelke	N. Coast Land Conservancy	Executive Director
Lisa Phipps	DLCD, State of Oregon	Regional Solutions Team
Kat Olson	Greenwood Resources	Lewis & Clark Timberlands Area Manager
Mark Morgans	Greenwood Resources	Lewis & Clark Timberlands Area Manager
Matt Brown	Gearhart City	Mayor
Sgt. Jim Pierce	City of Warrenton	City Police
Sgt. Joe Warwick	OSP, Fish & Wildlife Division	State Police
Vanessa Blackstone	ODFW	State of Oregon
Dr. Dana Sanchez	OSU	Wildlife Management Specialist
Ty Williams	ODF	
Sen. Betsy Johnson	State Senator	