

The Harper Bridge Project



Deschutes County Board of Commissioners

June 6, 2018

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Abstract:

The following report has been prepared at the request of Deschutes County Administrator, Tom Anderson, in order to evaluate the hazards surrounding Harper Bridge. The Deschutes River is an increasingly popular recreation site. As the population of Deschutes County continues to rise, along with Central Oregon seeing an overall increase in tourism, this area is bound to see continued growth, as well. The Harper Bridge problem is twofold: (1) Cars currently park in a hazardous fashion which creates congestion and confusion and (2) pedestrians run across the road throughout the day to access the river. There is also another issue to keep in mind: at what point is the county taking on the responsibility of operating a publicly owned recreational facility instead of merely trying to make a hazardous area safer?

The goal of this report is to educate the Board of County Commissioners on the issue in order to remediate traffic and congestion issues caused by recreational activities in the area. The following is, not only, an analysis of alternatives to the current site, but also, an analysis of foot traffic

implications in the area and options on how to mitigate them. This report analyzes possible solutions to the problem and compares them on a number of issues, including, but not limited to: cost, effectiveness, and feasibility. The report also offers some guidance as to possible funding avenues, ADA requirements, and other important information surrounding the issue that the Commissioners ought to be aware of.

History:

The area surrounding Harper Bridge along Spring River Road south of Sunriver has fallen victim to the increase in demand for Deschutes River access. This specific stretch of river is relatively calm, with clear water, and plenty of natural shade along the way. It is surrounded by vast wetlands, as well as being one of the highest density areas for the Oregon Spotted Frog, which is classified as a threatened species by Oregon Fish & Wildlife. The Harper Bridge access is also one of few public entrance points into the Deschutes River in that area. These factors make the trip to or from Harper Bridge very enticing to tourists and locals alike, but also particularly sensitive to other parties involved. A major issue is that this area sees heightened use during the summer, which necessitated a seasonal speed limit of 30 MPH, meaning that locals are used to driving through the area at much higher speeds during the majority of the year. Efforts to mediate the problem have been implemented. Rumble strips have been placed on the east and west portions heading toward the bridge in order to alert pedestrians and

drivers alike. However, the rumble strips have been an issue of contention between the county and residents of Crosswater and Sunriver near the bridge in the past, because residents have complained to the county of the strips' tendency to create too much noise.

There is no solution that will placate all parties. This issue has been addressed but unsolved for nearly 25 years. There is no quick fix.

Today's problem stems from a decision made in 1994, when Crosswater golf course (owned by Sunriver Resort Limited Partnership) was required to dedicate a portion of its land closest to Spring River Road, adjacent to the river, for a public-use area. This was one of the requirements from the County as a condition for Crosswater golf course's Conditional Use Permit approval. At the time, the County wanted to maintain public river access in the area. However, continued access intensified the issue, as continued river access only served to fuel rising popularity. Use is overwhelming during peak season and the launch ramp on the south side is deteriorating. While Sunriver Resort Limited Partnership (SRLP) was required to set aside land for public use

in the area, there were no requirements that they improve, maintain, or monitor the area whatsoever.

Prior to July 2009, SRLP owned and operated a public boat launch in the marina within Sunriver. But, days before the 4th of July in 2009, SRLP closed the boat launch to the public, citing concerns of drunk floaters, environmental degradation, and liability (fig. 1). Because the public could no longer launch from within Sunriver, a spokesman for SRLP suggested launching from Harper Bridge. This only added to Harper Bridges' popularity.

Along the Upper Deschutes, there are boat launch sites similar to Harper Bridge, which have the potential to replace it (figs. 2 & 3). In 2011, staff presented the Commissioners with information gathered by the Harper Bridge Citizen Committee (HBCC). The report ranked and listed 7 options varying from Deschutes River Recreation Homesites' (DRRH) private launch points to Besson Boat Launch or Spring River Road owned by the Forest Service. Each identified replacement for the Harper Bridge launch point lacked in some manner. For instance, DRRH sites

would require a vote of all homeowners in the neighborhood; assembling all homeowners would be difficult enough, but the majority would have to approve of the plans for it to go forward. Ultimately, the HBCC's recommendations to the board were developing the private property to the northwest of Harper Bridge, now commonly known as the Brynwood property. This recommendation failed to take into account the numerous permitting and land use challenges identified by staff, the Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife, and the Department of State Lands. The Commission concluded that if development on private property was the best recommendation, that the process could not be county-driven and the property owner and stakeholders would have to facilitate development and approval themselves.

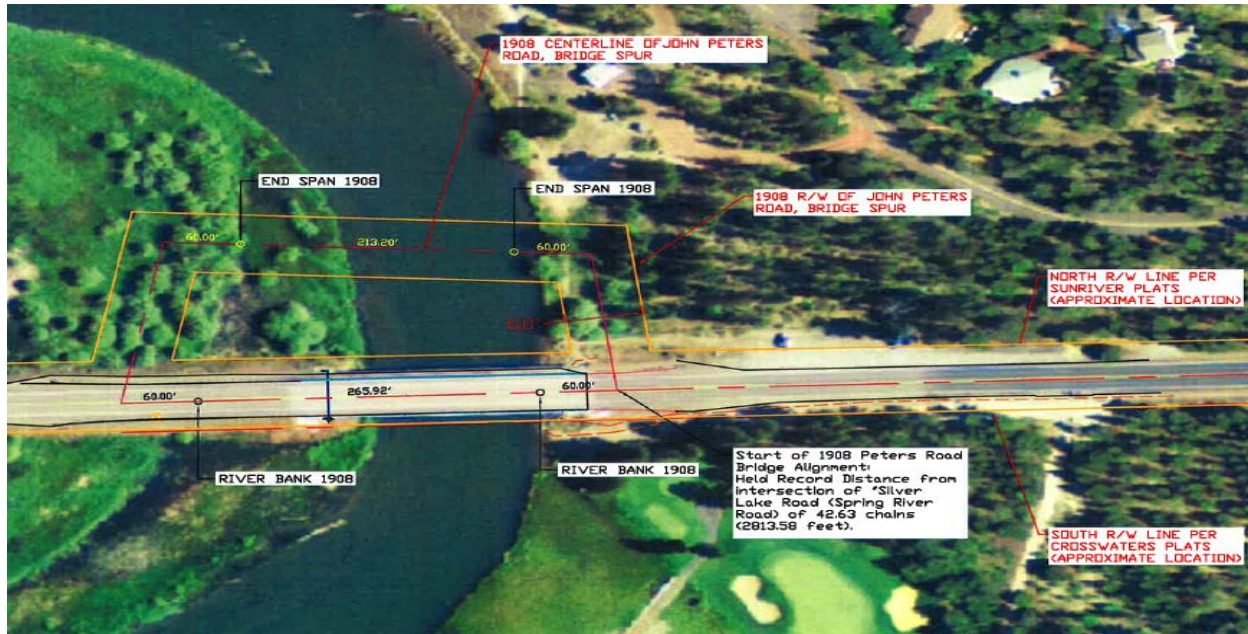
The owner of Brynwood LLC has persistently suggested that the county grant them permits to develop an RV park and public boat launch on their 17.27 acre plot of wetlands on the northwest corner of the bridge site. However, the property owner has not formally applied for any permits or RV Park approval. The county has addressed the suggestion

many times. Ultimately, the owner has a lot of work to do in order for the county to even be able to conceivably allow the permit. These improvements include: amending state regulations, text amendments to the Deschutes County Code, addressing the fact that their property maintains a cluster development with the remaining area (proposed RV park and boat launch) platted as open space with a restriction on development, addressing the fact that there is a conservation easement on the property, and addressing sewage and flood plain issues.

Alternatively, there is land owned by the Sunriver Owner's Association (SROA) that could remedy the issue. Creating a parking lot on the northeast side of Harper Bridge has been suggested in the past.

However, because SROA's Consolidated Plan prohibits the sale of "common area", this lot would require a long-term lease. This option has been explored in the past and SROA published a report outlining what they would like in exchange for the land. Instead of paying for the lease, SROA requested Deschutes County build a boat launch to accommodate the public, and also a private boat launch exclusively for SROA

residents. SROA also requested the county vacate the John Peter's Road Right of Way.



While costs of the parking lot are unknown at this time, the cost of building the two boat launches would be about \$250,000 according to a SROA report created in 2012. However, representatives from SROA have recently stated that it is unlikely they would be willing to lease the property at this point for a variety of reasons.

There has also been talk about going across the road from SROA, and developing on the southeast corner of the bridge. This property belongs to Crosswater golf course (SRLP), and also maintains a conservation

easement. This location would be difficult to create a lot on because of the easement and also the fact that there is not much space between the golf course and the road.

These previously suggested improvements have all failed to address the county's desires on some level, whether cost, accessibility, or feasibility.

The area surrounding Harper Bridge remains the most widely used and well-known launch site. Harper Bridge has the capability to maintain a parking area for many users and is easily one of the most accessible locations along the Upper Deschutes. Additionally, the county retains a 66.5-foot wide Right of Way in the area.



This Right of Way is still intact and able to be maintained for road access. Utilizing the excess Right of Way for a parking area would serve to expedite the process. This is due to the fact that the county would only require an easement (with complete indemnification by the county) from SROA, Crosswater HOA, and SRLP in the area for the banks of the road and storm water drainage to build parking facilities within the Right of Way, as opposed to purchasing land to build on.

Current Status

The current status of the Harper Bridge launch site requires action, in some capacity. Today, Harper Bridge looks like a bustling tourist destination. With a formal boat launch on the south side of Spring River Road, and parking areas on both sides of the road, heavy pedestrian traffic is commonplace on a summer day. On top of this, due to lack of established parking, vehicles of river goers line the road east of the bridge. Some people park haphazardly, whether due to crowding or unstable parking terrain. Regardless, congestion in this area creates distractions and increased risk for drivers and pedestrians alike.



An informal boat launch has manifested on the north side of the road, as there are shallow embankments that make entering and exiting the water comparable to the physical boat launch on the south side. Oftentimes, the boat launch on the north side (pictured below) is more crowded than the physical concrete boat launch on the south side. As this area was not designed for heavy pedestrian traffic, it degrades annually. While it has been an issue in the past, it continues to present problems today. A spokesperson for SROA noted that while degradation and trespassing decreased recently, as long as people continue ignoring the established pathways to the water, the degradation will continue to some extent.



Because of the heightened traffic, Deschutes County has taken measurable steps to improve safety in the area. Rumble strips line the road at both the east and west portions of road leading in to Harper Bridge.



The county has chip sealed over the rumble strips recently, which has lessened the severity of vibrations and noise in the area. The Road Department has future plans to paint the rumble strips as well, in order to alert drivers in the area of their presence even more than the signs that

are currently there. Along with this, radar driver feedback signs have been placed during peak season, and “parallel parking only” signs have been put in place as well in order to address cluttered parking areas.

Promotion

While Harper Bridge was never intended to be a formal recreation site, in recent history it has begun to become one. What was once a hidden gem, is now a popular day use area for everyone from locals to people visiting Central Oregon for the first time. This is due to promotion from various entities throughout Central Oregon. A simple internet search will provide copious references to Harper Bridge as an established boat launch site. From VisitBend, to Sunriver Owners Association, to even the Sunriver Chamber of Commerce (and about a dozen more) everyone is encouraging river goers to enter the river at Harper Bridge (figs. 4, 5, & 6). This promotion has undoubtedly increased popularity of the area.

Floodplain & Wetlands



Much of the area adjacent to the Deschutes River is designated floodplain and wetlands. Floodplain is best described as an area of low-lying ground that is prone to flooding as regional water levels rise. Wetlands can be best described as “saturated lands” or an area that is swampy. Developing near these areas creates some implications. First and foremost, wetlands begin at the river bank and extend 10 feet laterally from the edge of the water. Any development in an area zoned as wetlands requires a conditional use permit, which costs \$2,798 at minimum and has a 150 day decision-making timeline. A conditional

use permit is required for any earthmoving, structures, or vegetation changes in the wetlands. A conditional use permit would likely require a public hearing, which would serve as a forum for opponents to comment on the idea, creating a more time consuming and costly process. The process could result in an appeal, which would further increase the time and cost to process the application. The same permit can cover floodplain as well.

Recreational Immunity

Recreational Immunity's purpose is to protect landowners that provide their land to the public for recreation, in the hopes they continue to do so. ORS 105.682 lays out rules and regulations of Recreational Immunity. The Public Use of Lands Act created Recreational Immunity, and when implemented, drastically increased the availability of land for free recreation by protecting those that allow use on their property from tort liability. But, a recent Oregon Supreme Court decision changed the way that Recreational Immunity operated in the State of Oregon.

Johnson v. Gibson (2016) effectively increased liability and risk for property owners of recreational areas. Before *Johnson*, employees acting on behalf of the landowner were also protected from liability. In *Johnson*, the Oregon Supreme Court ruled that based on the wording of the statute, Recreational Immunity was not intended to extend to the employee of the landowner. The effects of this decision drastically increased liability to landowners offering public recreation. Where Recreational Immunity shielded most landowners from liability, the

Johnson decision allowed plaintiffs to pursue damages based on suing the employee of the landowner, and each employee was indemnified by their employer, which meant that while the landowner couldn't be sued directly, their employees could be sued as proxy and they would still have to pay. In 2017, the Oregon Legislature and Governor Brown recognized the effects of the *Johnson* decision and passed an amendment to fix the problem. Recreational Immunity is back in full effect, but recent events surrounding it should be noted in order to understand the possible changes to liability in the future.

Discretionary Immunity

Discretionary Immunity shields governments from liability when deciding which objectives to act on. ORS 30.265 (6)(c) specifies that employees and agents that are acting within the scope of their employment are immune from liability against any claim based on their discretionary actions. An excellent example of this is snow plowing. The county can not be held liable for failing to clear one street instead of another, as long as they proved they took everything possible into account and had rationale for why they took one action instead of another. Similarly, the county can not be held liable for improving one area of Harper Bridge instead of another. For example. If the county chose to improve the parking area parallel to Spring River Road instead of Brynwood, and later on a river goer was injured and sued the county based on the belief that Brynwood was safer, the county would claim discretionary immunity.

Funding

Transient Room Tax Fund – Taxes are collected from every transient room rented in the unincorporated area of Deschutes County. The proceeds from the Transient Room Tax are split several ways. The first iteration of the tax was implemented in 1975 at a rate of 5%. By 1980, the county voted to raise the tax rates by 1% to 6% total. 80% of that would go to the Sheriff's office and the remaining 20% was destined for the Central Oregon Visitors Association (COVA). By 1988, the voters had approved an additional 1% increase with the proceeds going solely to COVA for the promotion of tourism. A new statute, ORS 320.350, was passed in 2003 limiting the use of future Transient Room Tax revenues. ORS 320.350 (6) states that from July 2nd, 2003 on, 70% of new Transient Room Tax revenues would be spent on the promotion of tourism or on tourism-related facilities, with the remaining 30% being used generally. This change in statute applied when voters implemented an additional raise of 1% to the Transient Room Tax rate in 2014 of which 70% goes to the Fair & Expo (which always counts as tourism

according to statute) and the remaining 30% to the General Fund. The Transient Room Tax Fund has about \$800,000 of reserve cash that is usable for developing in the Harper Bridge area as long as the county can show it is being used for the promotion of tourism or for tourism related facilities.

Parks Fund – The fund maintains about \$200,000 of usable capital. The source of this funding comes from State RV registration fees and is required to be used on “the acquisition, development, maintenance, care and use of county park and recreation sites,” according to ORS 390.134 (5)(a). These funds do not have to be spent on a formalized county park or recreation site, merely a place within the county where people recreate is sufficient to satisfy the requirement. The facilities department has access to this fund for improvements within their department as well, but the Facilities Director, Lee Randall, has explained that he does not have any upcoming plans for those funds, should they be necessary to complete the project. According to the County Finance Director,

Wayne Lowry, the Park Fund is the preferred method of paying for improvements to the area.

General Fund – The general fund has a number of revenue sources, but there are no requirements or restrictions as to where this money can be used, up to this point. There is approximately \$10 million of capital in reserve, however there are several plans by the Facilities Department to use this fund for projects. Using this fund should be the last resort as it would result in county residents using their tax dollars to improve an area that primarily benefits south county residents and tourists.

Right of Way

A Right of Way is a type of easement that allows, in this case, necessary access to an area in case improvements are necessary. In the area of Spring River Road, the county maintains a 66.5 foot Right of Way with the median line of the road being the middle point of the Right of Way. According to Chris Doty and David Doyle, the county has complete control over the property, while the county does not technically have possession of the property. Building within the Right of Way will expedite the process, as well as limit public input and appeal in the area. Up to this point, David Doyle and Chris Doty are unaware of any limits as to what can be developed within the Right of Way along Spring River Road.

Enforcement

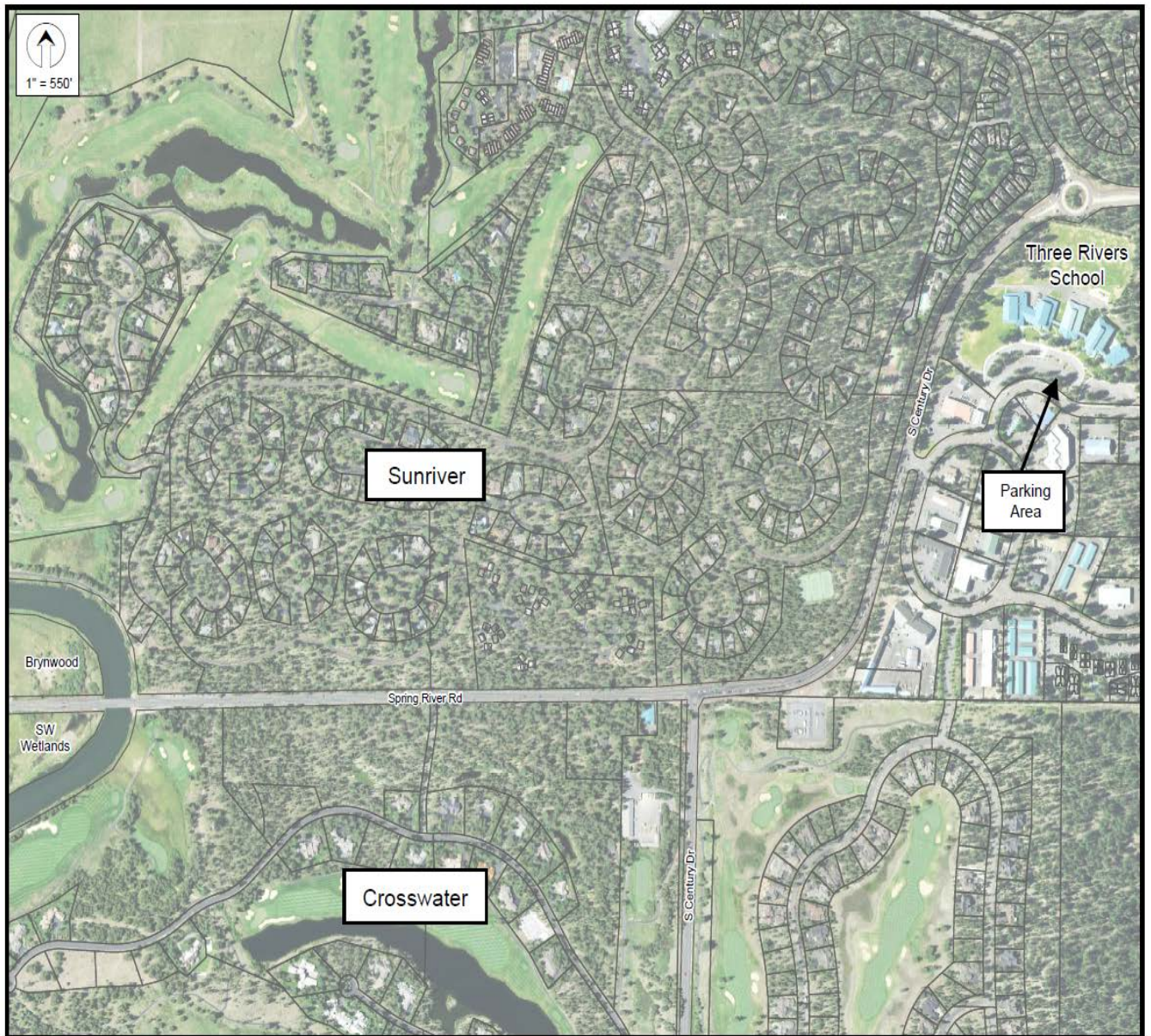
No matter the chosen option, enforcement is key to successful implementation of any proposed solution. The two key law enforcement agencies in the area are Sunriver Police Department (SRPD) and the Sheriff's Office. While the Sheriff's Office is currently the only enforcement agency with jurisdiction at Harper Bridge, that jurisdiction can be expanded to include SRPD, if the Sheriff's Office chooses to do so. Regardless, assurances from both parties will need to be obtained in order to provide the best service to river-goers in the area.

Americans with Disabilities Act

The Americans with Disabilities Act's purpose is to provide relatively equal access to areas for people with disabilities. Disabled Access is required in almost every circumstance, with very few exceptions. In the case of Harper Bridge, some options will require ADA access while others may not. One exception to building ADA access is cost. If the cost of building the expanded access is 20% or more of the total budget for the project, then according to 28 CFR 35.151(b)(4)(iii)(a), it is disproportionate and not required (fig. 7). The 20% takes into account not only the cost of materials and labor, but also the cost of purchasing additional property or entering into a lease agreement or easement. If the county chose to build the parking facility in an area with relatively small space, it may not be able to build appropriate ADA access, and that is acceptable within the eyes of the law. According to County Counsel, regulations can not force the county to purchase or take other people's property. With this, while it may be possible to build a portion of an accessible walkway, if land boundaries prevent walkway completion, the

county would not be required to build anything at all. However, in order to prevent increased liability, it is recommended that the county initially pursue a lease agreement or easement with surrounding property owners in order to see a cost estimate and make a decision from there.

Parking Solutions



Because of the possible implications created by Harper Bridge's Boat Launch, some action may be necessary. There are many choices available to solve this issue overall, but in terms of the Harper Bridge site there are 7 options:

1. Completely block off access to Harper Bridge along Spring River

Road. This would involve placing physical barriers to parking along the road with the possibility of leaving a small, open space as a loading zone. Benefits regarding this option are plenty.

Because there will be substantially less people parked along Spring River road, trespassing issues on adjacent property will likely decline. Following that trend, with decreased traffic, physically degraded areas along the riverbank will receive some relief from traffic. Implementing this option will take little time and will involve very little cost. With this option, it is possible to only have a loading zone on one side of the road, either to the north or south of Spring River Road, which would hopefully decrease foot traffic across the road, but would still serve to allow public use of the area, just not to the current extent. While there are many benefits to this option, there are also drawbacks. First and foremost, preventing the majority of public use in the area would likely create some public outcry and some backlash to all parties involved. With this option, there is also the possibility that since

this area is currently so popular, physically blocking parking at Spring River Road will only prevent parking there, meaning that people may try to park elsewhere nearby.

2. Three Rivers School parking lot.



This option would use the Three Rivers School parking lot during the summer and involve shuttling river-goers to a loading zone along Spring River Road. This option would also include blocking all parking in the area and creating a loading zone for the shuttle. The drawbacks with this option likely outweigh the benefits. On the one hand, this option would decrease parking in the area and contain river-goers to a loading zone area. Another benefit is that

the shuttle operator serves to educate river-goers on proper etiquette and things to avoid doing in the area to increase safety. Furthermore, not having a parking area at Harper Bridge will decrease time spent in the launch area, which would hopefully decrease litter and environmental degradation. Nevertheless, on the other hand, this option would require some up front costs - in terms of either contracting with a shuttle company or purchasing a county shuttle and hiring an employee to operate it, but some costs could be recuperated by charging a shuttle fee. A foreseeable problem with this option is that people may potentially park illegally to avoid the shuttle fee. This option could be difficult to implement because of the multiple stakeholders involved, being: Three Rivers School, the Bend-La Pine School District, SROA, and a shuttle contractor. Another issue is the school year - meaning that "prime season" for Harper Bridge often begins before school is out and ends after school has begun. This creates a dilemma during the school year because it is unlikely that the Three Rivers parking lot can facilitate student and river-goer traffic.

3. Lease northeast property from SROA to build a parking lot.



There are obvious benefits to this system, but also notable drawbacks that may prevent fruition. On the one hand, this option maintains public use. Using SROA's property would allow plenty of extra space to develop walkways and physical barriers to prevent pedestrians from crossing the road. The parking area on SROA's property would be distanced from the road, which would increase safety, with people no longer emptying their vehicles in

the immediate vicinity of Spring River Road. However, on the other hand, this option has been explored in the past, and SROA's list of requests has pushed the cost out of reach and made the project infeasible. Firstly, only the estimated cost of the boat launches, according to SROA's 2012 Executive Summary regarding Harper Bridge, is \$241,500. That does not include the cost of the parking facility. Secondly, per the report, SROA would prefer Deschutes County build a private boat launch for SROA residents only in exchange for the long term lease as opposed to paying for the lease. This preference has far reaching implications as building a new boat launch would disturb wetlands and would involve a lengthy Conditional Use Permit process that is subject to appeal. Furthermore, in 2016 SROA expressed concerns over cutting down the trees in the proposed parking area for a variety of reasons, including: decreased noise buffering, decreased visual buffering, increased crime, and decreased shade for their members.

4. Lease southeast property from Crosswater HOA and SRLP.



Land use barriers as well as golf course proximity to Spring River

Road create substantial hurdles to this project. On the one hand,

the proposed parking area on the southeast side would be closest to

the already constructed public boat launch. If this option came to

fruition, SROA could conceivably block off their property to the

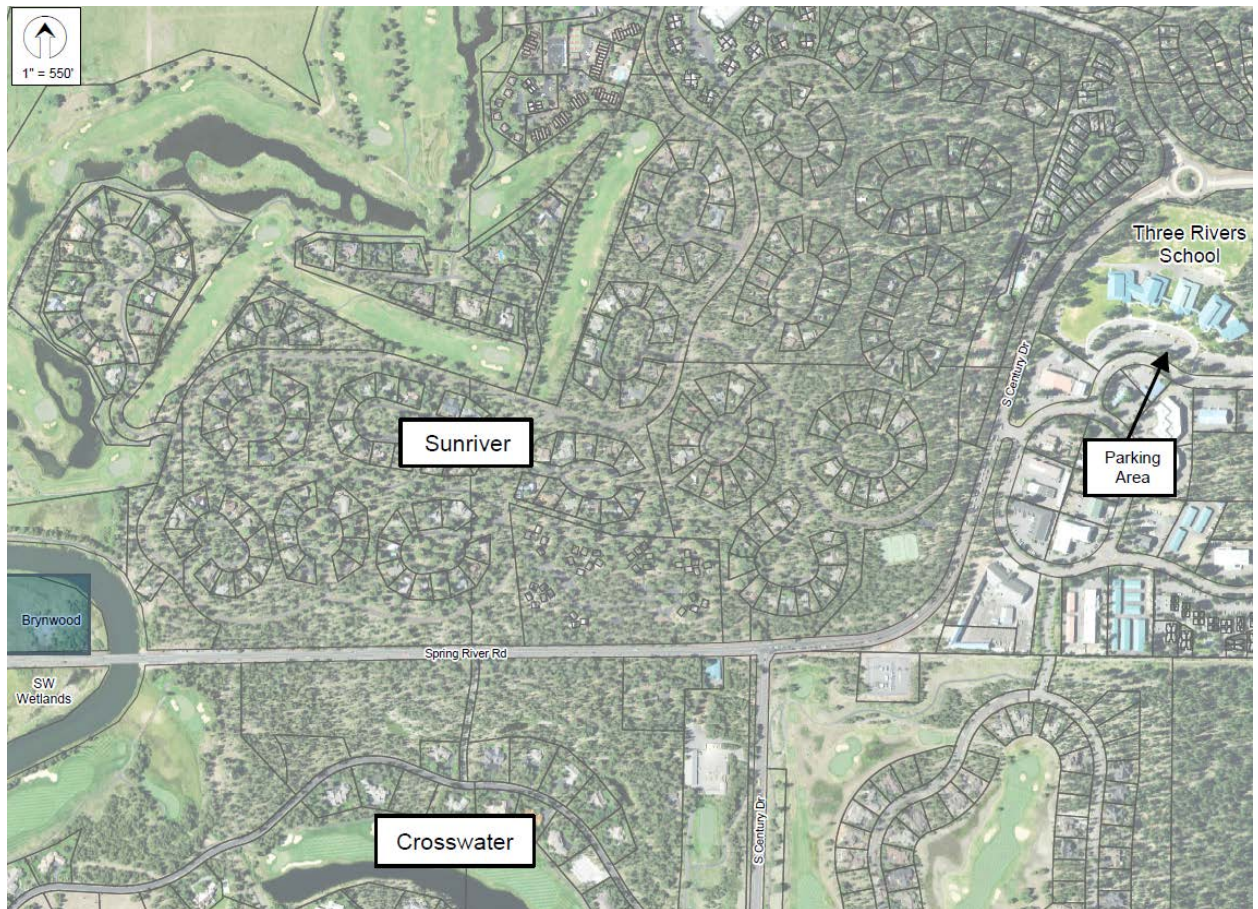
north side to mitigate current trespassing issues. But, on the other

hand, there is currently a conservation easement on a section of the

property that would be leased/sold to the county. This is paired

with the fact that there is not much space between Spring River Road and Crosswater golf course in the first place, which makes building the parking facility on the proposed lot difficult and unlikely, especially one that will be able to facilitate an appropriate number of vehicles. Not only this, but the parking facility would be in incredibly close proximity to wetlands which may have implications of its own. Finally, the last issue involves driver safety. If the parking area were to be on the south side of the road, travelers coming from the east would either have to u-turn right before the bridge to properly park or go past the bridge and u-turn in a parking lot down the road. Furthermore, for people to exit the area going further west, they would be forced to cross the southern eastbound lane which creates a heightened possibility of vehicular collision and area congestion.

5. The Brynwood property concept.



This option's potential to remedy the situation is dwarfed by immense regulatory hurdles. The Brynwood property is on the northwest side of Harper Bridge, not adjacent to SROA or Crosswater land. The owner maintains 17.27 acres in the area, of which 10 acres are undisputed wetlands and the remaining 7 acres maintain an old lodge pole pine forest. The landowner has suggested building and maintaining a parking lot and RV park on

their own dime and having parties involved simply pay a lease for public use. However, the proposed property is not only designated wetlands, but also has been platted as cluster development – meaning that, in 1990, the property owner at the time applied for and obtained a density bonus for an additional dwelling unit in the subdivision in exchange for the designated open space with a conservation easement (17.27 acres). In order to lift these restrictions, the current owner would require a legislative amendment to the existing Deschutes County zoning code, followed by a quasi-judicial reapplication for the cluster subdivision under revised code that allows for the use. The problem here is that amending County Code requires a public notice, hearings, and potential appeals. It is unknown whether these legislative amendments would withstand legal challenges, according to Planning Manager, Peter Gutowsky. To top it off, amending the Code to allow Brynwood development would create implications for other properties in the county that fit the same specifications, which could create unforeseen consequences. Not to

mention, even if the owner were able to surpass the cluster development hurdle, the whole property is designated RR-10 (Rural/Residential with a 10 acre lot size per parcel) meaning that Code prohibits development for public use in that zone. A substantial portion of the Brynwood property is also designated as floodplain, which means in order to develop anything, a conditional use permit would be required, which costs an additional \$2,800 and has an appeal process as well. Furthermore, the owner of Brynwood has offered to build a public boat launch on their parking facility in exchange for Deschutes County allowing them to build an RV park on the property (fig. 8). Building an RV park would not only violate current County Code, but building septic facilities would be a major hurdle due to wetlands in the immediate vicinity. According to concerns directed towards Associate Planner, Cynthia Smidt in 2011, the owner proposed tapping into Boondock's septic system (now The Wallow Bar & Grill). A citizen cited their belief that the bar's septic system lacks the capacity to hold waste from 80 RVs and a public

restroom as a reason for concern. The only alternate would be building a septic system for the site on the north side of Spring River Road, which is not feasible due to wetlands, and likely State of Oregon Department of Environmental Quality regulations. If successful, the RV park would likely create further popularity and travel to the area which would only exacerbate the Harper Bridge issue even further. To close, in 2011 over a dozen letters of opposition were submitted to the County in regards to Brynwood's RV park without an application even being submitted or public notice provided.

6. Lease southwest property from Sunriver Resort (SRLP).

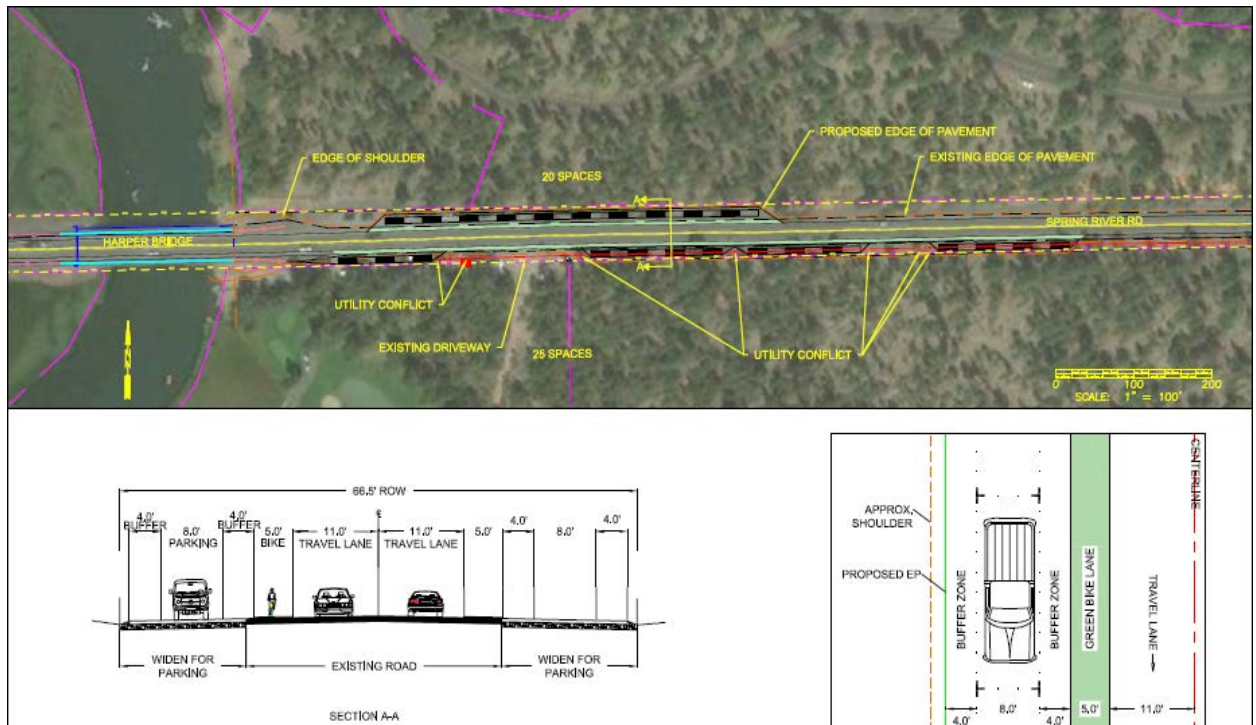


This option has relatively few benefits compared to substantial regulatory hurdles to overcome. While it has been argued that the west side of the river in this area is preferred for entering due to a strong current on the east side, the strong current on the east side is by no means unmanageable. The fact that entering the river on the east is so popular up to this point is a testament to that fact.

However, much like Brynwood, the area is both designated

wetlands and within the floodplain. A recent article in the Bulletin outlines how this region typically floods with water in the summer, which can remain stagnant for months at a time (fig. 9). Along with that, it is also designated as RR-10. What differentiates the southwest and northwest (Brynwood) properties is the fact that SRLP owns the southwest portion of property and has not suggested to the county that they plan to put any money into developing the area into a parking facility or public boat launch, as Brynwood has.

7. Parallel parking along the Spring River Road Right of Way.



The total Right of Way in the area spans 66.5 feet. Currently, the county only has road on 31 feet of the right of way meaning there are about 16 feet on either side that can be developed. It is within these 16 feet that the county could build a parallel parking area.

The benefit to building within the Right of Way is that while the county technically does not own the land, it has exclusive and unlimited ability to develop the land. When building within the Right of Way there are no public appeals processes. Another benefit of building within the Right of Way is that the county will

only have to acquire access to minimal property in order to build the parallel parking, because a slope easement may be required according to Community Development and the Road Department. Storm water will need a place to drain, and that may require a drainage easement as well. These easements would be necessary from SRLP, SROA, and Crosswater HOA. This option keeps river goers parking where they are used to parking which will limit confusion, as opposed to creating a new parking location. Because a lease agreement or land purchase is not required, the cost of building in the Right of Way is relatively low compared to other options that require a lease. However, this option will not solve the congestion issue. The road will remain relatively narrow and travel through this area will not be inhibited, additionally, with parking on both sides of the road, foot traffic across the road will continue to be an issue. The prevalence of trailer use in the area will also create further congestion as they attempt to parallel park in the area, as well.

Pedestrian Solutions

The current configuration results in heavy foot traffic across Spring River Road. Allowing river goers to launch from either side of the bridge will perpetuate the problem of pedestrian travel across the road, regardless of where they park. Furthermore, maintaining parking in the area will always present some level of pedestrian risk. The following options address this issue:

1. Remain with status quo. This option maintains the rumble strips in the area, which serve to alert drivers and pedestrians paired with signs that alert oncoming drivers as well. While residents nearby initially complained about the noise caused by the rumble strips, those complaints have dissipated recently. The rumble strips are an inexpensive fix to the problem that also does not add any additional congestion or confusion to the area. While the rumble strips do alert people in the area, there is nothing that physically prevents or discourages river goers from crossing the road.

However, remaining with the status quo is an unlikely option if the

County pursues an easement with Crosswater, as they will likely require removal of the rumble strips as a condition.

2. Add a crosswalk. While a crosswalk would theoretically serve to help funnel people through one spot on the road in a very inexpensive fashion, just because there is a crosswalk in the area doesn't mean people are actually going to walk through it.
3. Median in the center of the road. The median in the center of the road would serve to physically prevent some people from crossing it. But, it would not physically prevent all people from crossing, which has the potential to create an even more dangerous dynamic where people try to hop over a concrete wall with a floatation device or kayak. Placing the physical barrier in the middle of the road could allow the county to remove the rumble strips. However, this option requires 3 feet of clearance on either side of the median for a buffer zone which would limit the size of the parallel parking zone. Furthermore, this issue would create a substantial hazard for snow plows in the winter as their blades often catch on medians

and cause damage. This option would also prevent u-turns in the area which could have unforeseen implications where river goers head somewhere else to turn around. The medians would cost substantially more than rumble strips, as well as increased maintenance costs.

4. Limit access to either the north or south side of Spring River Road.

If parking and access were limited to one side of the road, the pedestrian traffic issue would be substantially decreased. There would still be limited risk in terms of river goers preparing for their excursion on the side of the road, but to some extent that is unavoidable if the county maintains access at Harper Bridge.

Other Considerations

There remains one final issue the Board should consider, which is whether or not the county should develop facilities to improve floating/launching from this site, as well. The question is, at what point is the county doing more than simply diminishing hazards in the area, but instead developing a more permanent recreational amenity? Some additional things to consider:

1. If the county develops parking spaces for 40-60 vehicles, does the county also provide restrooms? If so, what kind? This may require the county to lease more property and take on additional rent and maintenance costs.
2. Does the Board want to create a sidewalk or develop a trail down to the waterfront on either side to encourage pedestrians to use those paths to get down to the river? The county would be required to build ADA access in some instances - depending on the parking solution implemented.

3. Does the Board want to improve the current public boat launch facility on the southeast side? Reports show that the condition of the launch is deteriorating, however it is still usable.
4. Does the Board want to take actions to mitigate trespassing into SROA, SRLP, and Crosswater HOA property? Nick Lelack suggested a “way finder” sign or kiosk that could include appropriate and inappropriate places to dismount, warnings about water, information about wetlands/spotted frogs, history, etc. There is currently a sign like this on the southeast side (fig. 10), but more information could be helpful.
5. SROA is very interested in the county vacating the 1908 John Peter’s Road Right of Way, which crosses over the Deschutes River just north of Harper Bridge. According to SROA, this is essential in order to garner their participation.
6. SROA also suggests a green bike lane from Harper Bridge to the Sunriver Business Park.

7. Crosswater HOA would like the rumble strips along Spring River Road to be removed.
8. Crosswater HOA is fortunate to be the home to an active eagle's nest. The eagle's presence is very enjoyable to Crosswater HOA members. As such, they are sensitive to any disruptions to the eagles nest, mainly frequent loud noises.
9. Should trash cans be provided? If so, who is responsible for emptying trash cans/maintaining littering in the area?

Fig. 1

3/8/2018

Public will lose access to popular boat ramp in Sunriver,

Published July 2, 2009 at 05:00AM

Public will lose access to popular boat ramp in Sunriver

Sunriver Marina boat ramp closing

Sunriver Resort is closing public access to its private marina boat ramp as of Friday. Sunriver residents with ID can still launch from the site.



The boat ramp at the Sunriver Resort Marina will be off limits to the public starting Friday evening, and staff with the resort will instead be directing floaters and paddlers to public boat launches this holiday weekend and beyond.

Environmental damage at the site, liability concerns, intoxicated boaters and people crowding the parking lot all led to the decision, said Rob Macgowan, the director of recreation with Sunriver Resort.

Members of the Sunriver Homeowners Association will still be able to use the river access site with a homeowner identification card, he said.

But most of the people launching boats and other watercraft don't live in Sunriver and aren't paying customers at the marina, Macgowan said.

"We're having a lot of people floating the river, and they park their car in our facility," he said. "So how much space are we losing for our business?"

3/8/2018

Public will lose access to popular boat ramp in Sunriver;

Tom Hamilton with the marina said that on any given day, about half of the parking lot spots are taken by people not using the marina facilities, which include rentals and a restaurant.

Foot traffic around the boat launch has also trampled and destroyed the nearby riverbank, he said, so the closure to the public is also a test to see if fewer people at the site can allow it to bounce back, he said.

And there seems to be more people using the Sunriver Resort Marina launch since alcohol was prohibited on the Deschutes River through Bend, he said.

“That’s when we really noticed the surge in activity,” Macgowan said. There were “a lot more funky flotation devices, a lot of weird stuff like (air) mattresses, kiddie pools and jumping apparatuses, and lots and lots of alcohol.”

Sunriver Resort promotes a family-friendly river experience, he said, and that doesn’t mesh with people who have spent a day drinking on the river getting out at the marina.

“We’re trying to give our guests a quality experience,” he said.

People can still rent watercraft at the marina and use the resort’s dock, he said, adding that the dock system doesn’t impact the riverbank.

And those who want to use their own inner tubes, kayaks, rafts and other boats can use public launches at other sites along the Upper Deschutes.

“It’s not like the river has now been restricted to public use, that isn’t the case at all,” Macgowan said. “It’s just a private landowner trying to do the right thing.”

People can launch at the Big River Campground, Harper’s Bridge, Besson Boat Launch, the Benham Falls day use area and La Pine State Park, he noted.

3/8/2018

Public will lose access to popular boat ramp in Sunriver;

Sunriver Resort staffers will be at the parking lot this weekend, he said, checking vehicles with watercraft to see if people have homeowner identification cards and handing out maps of the alternate sites to those without them.

Macgowan said he's already received complaints from people saying the change is unfair but added that some callers don't realize there are other nearby options.

The marina is getting too much use, said Geoff Frank, the owner of Alder Creek Kayak and Canoe in Bend, and the closure could cause confusion at first.

"People are so accustomed to using that, I think they're going to have a little bit of an issue until they educate people and get the word out," Frank said. "However, it is a private site."

Employees at his store usually recommend other places to kayak or float, he said, adding that the stretch of the Deschutes River by the marina gets crowded.

"There's 40 other miles of flat-water sections of the river," he said.

Fig. 2

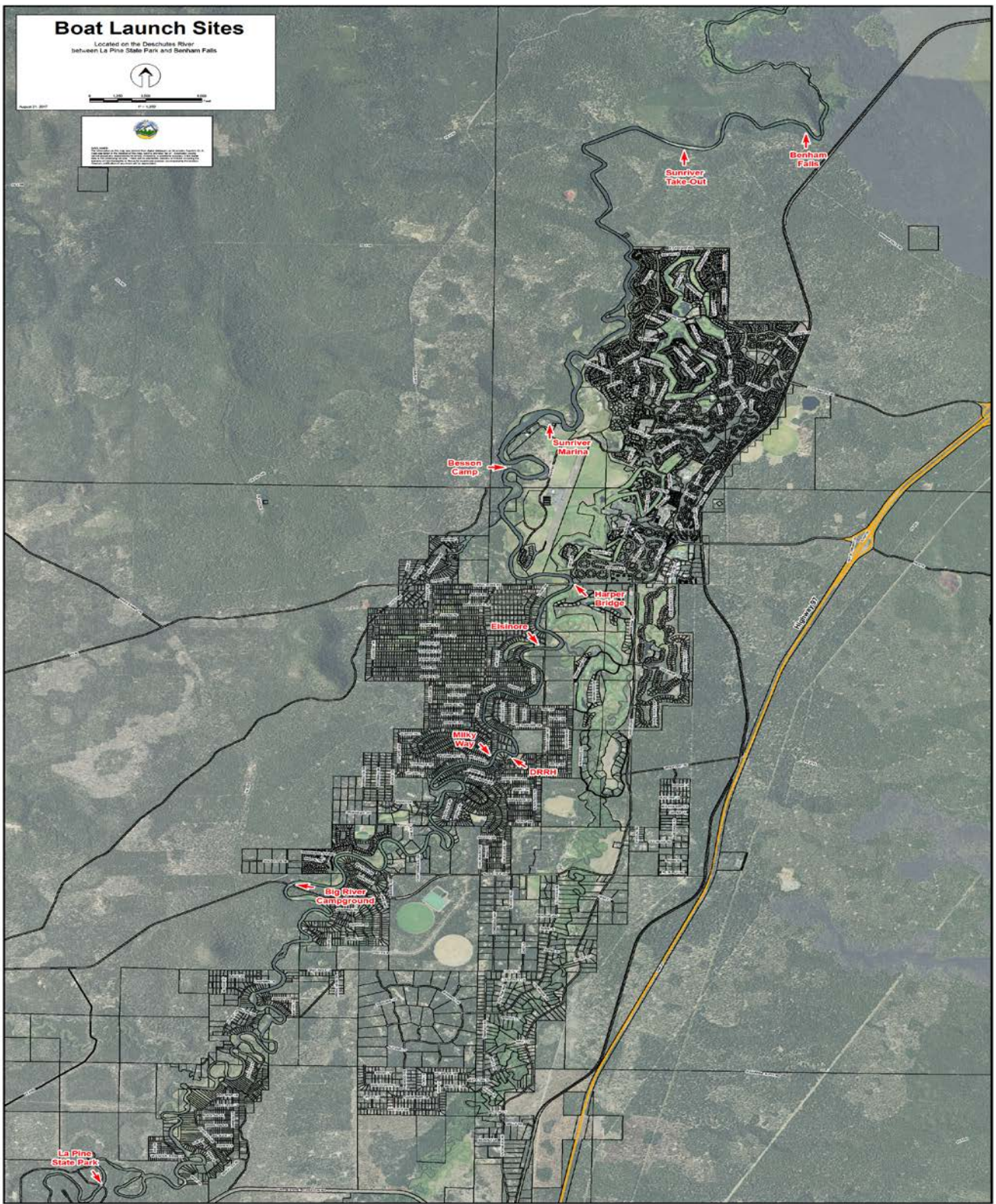


Fig. 3 (Nf-41/Conklin Rd. to Cardinal Bridge)

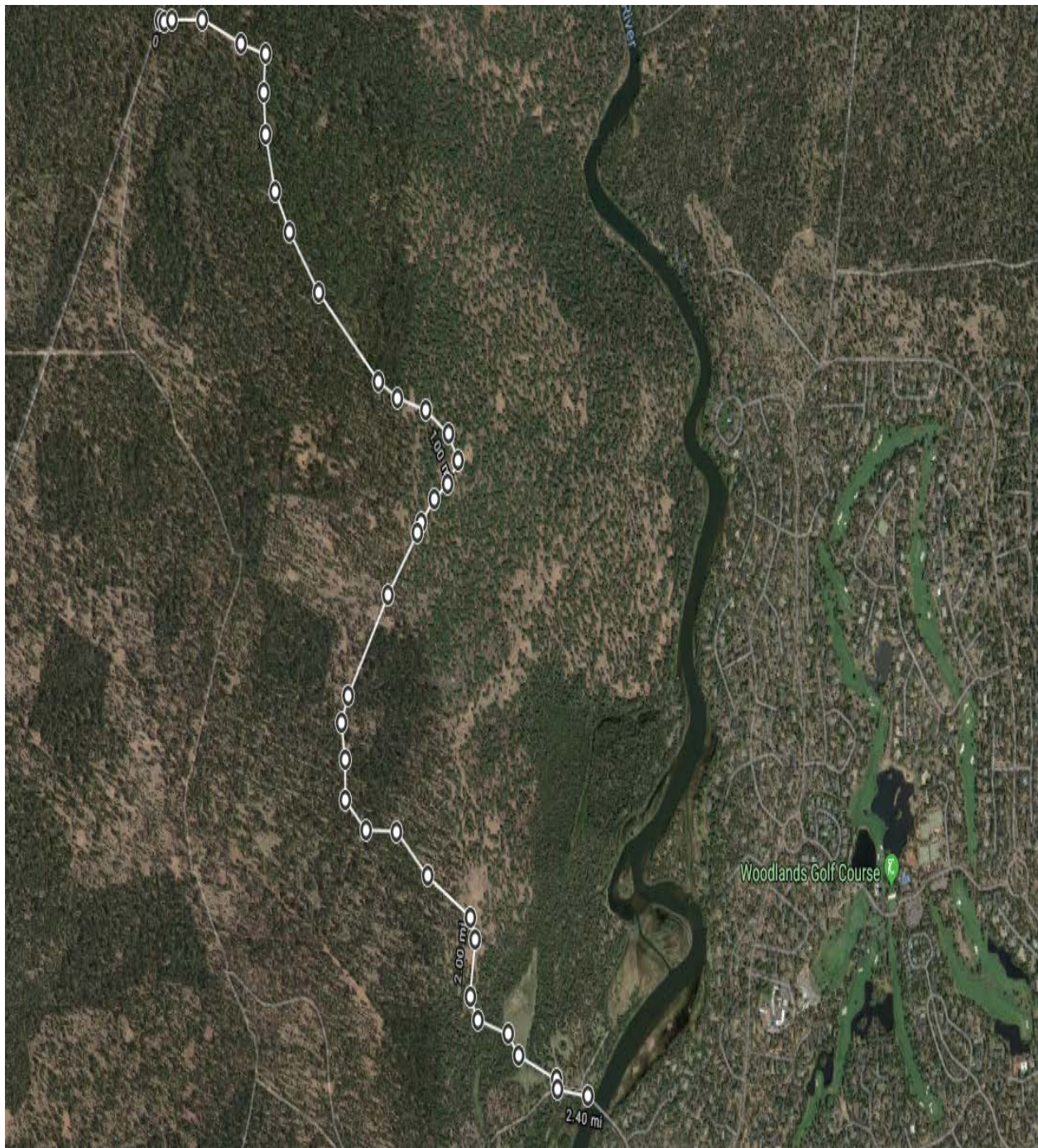


Fig. 4

3/7/2018 Canoeing and Kayaking


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The new state-of-the-art **Bend Whitewater Park** offers a unique experience for paddlers of all skill levels. Three distinct channels offer a safe passage for floaters, a wildlife habitat, and a whitewater park with four distinct waves ranging from beginner to expert. Wave conditions are influenced by electronically controlled pneumatic bladders that influence wave shape, size, and complexity. The park is free and open to the public.

The **Cascade Lakes Scenic Byway** offers oodles of lakes perfect for exploring by canoe or kayak. Devils and Sparks Lakes are two spots where non-motorized boats are allowed, so lollygag along the lake and enjoy the scenery and fresh mountain air.

If a guided outing is what you prefer, **Wanderlust Tours** offers daily half-day canoe and kayak tours on the serene lakes of the Cascade Range. You'll be picked up in town and your gear is included on every tour, along with a knowledgeable naturalist guide. For an extraordinary experience, try one of Wanderlust's **starlight canoe tours** or a **moonlight canoe tour**.



If you'd rather go it alone, [Tumalo Creek Kayak & Canoe](#) is a great place to rent all the gear you need. Then scope out [this map](#) of the Cascade Lakes to get the scoop on navigating your high lake adventures.

The Sunriver area is another breathtaking destination for a kayak or canoe trip along the Deschutes River. Make an entire day of it by putting in at the Harper's Bridge and be prepared to float for 3-4 hours to the pull-out at Benham Butte. If you want a shorter ride or need a place to take a break for lunch, hop out at the Sunriver Marina only a 1 1/2 hour float from Harper's Bridge. You can even rent your canoes, kayaks, and rafts at the [Sunriver Marina](#) located within Sunriver Resort.

For those seeking longer adventures, the [Bend Paddle Trail Alliance](#) offers the "Deschutes Paddle Trail River Guide," which includes a separate fold-out map of the Cascade Lakes. The guide provides a detailed look at 26 miles of the Little Deschutes from La Pine to Sunriver. It also features 95 miles of the big Deschutes from Wickiup Reservoir to the very last take-out in Deschutes County at Lower Bridge. There's even information on non-navigable sections of the river as well as river history and a guide to wildlife and plants. Pick up your copy for \$15 at Tumalo Creek Kayak & Canoe or at the Bend Visitor Center in downtown Bend.

Whitewater kayakers will love the thrill of the First Street Rapids on the Deschutes River in the middle of Bend. Plenty of boulders are scattered through fast-moving water below the rapids, creating perfect spots for eddy turns, peel outs, roll practice, and ferrying back and forth between shore lines. If you're looking to improve your whitewater skills, check out the [classes](#) offered by [Tumalo Creek Kayak & Canoe](#).

For info on whitewater rafting adventures on the Deschutes River, [visit our whitewater rafting page here](#).

- | | |
|--|---|
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Fig. 5

3/7/2018 Sunriver Owners Association - Area Recreation Search



Channel 3 on BendBroadband will go offline around March 1 and remain offline until further notice for upgrades.

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Area Recreation



A four-season recreational community

Below we've included general descriptions and links as applicable to activities available in Sunriver and the surrounding area. A variety of equipment is available for rent from businesses in The Village at Sunriver to help you enjoy your favorite sport or activity.

BICYCLING: Sunriver boasts 33+ miles of paved pathways for bicycle and pedestrian use. For safety reasons, rollerblading, skates and skateboards are not allowed on pathways or roads. Please follow Sunriver's [pathway rules](#), and respect the delicate vegetation by staying on the pavement. Maps are available at pathway kiosks, bike rental agencies, vacation rental management companies and at the SROA office. Try the Sun Lava 6-mile paved route to reach Benham Falls and Lava Lands Visitor Center off East Cascade Road near Circle 7.

BOATING, CANOEING, KAYAKING, RAFTING: Floating or paddling the Deschutes River can be relaxing, scenic and great exercise. Boats, canoes, kayaks, paddle boards, tubes and rafts are available at the marina or other area rental shops in the Village at Sunriver. Anyone can use the public watercraft launch at Harper Bridge, located on the southwest side of Spring River Road and take out just before Benham Falls. Or launch farther upstream at Big River Campground and take out at Harper Bridge (*the Harper Bridge launch is rustic and most suitable for hand-launching canoes/kayaks/tubes/rafts only*).

NOTE: ACCESS to the Resort's marina launch/take out ramp is restricted to *hand-launching only* if you rent from the marina and pay a parking/shuttle fee for access.

The SROA boat launch is for SROA property owners with a Member Preference ID card, and those who participate in the Recreation Plus program with valid ID cards. You must have a card to access the site via a swipe gate.

DISC GOLF: SHARC has a disc golf course open during the summer months. The course is available free to owners with their 2016 Member Preference ID card, Recreation Plus cardholders and is included with SHARC daily admission. Players must check-in at the SHARC front desk. A mid-range disc is included and disc putters are available upon request.

[SROA Parks](#)

[SROA Recreation](#)

[Programs](#)

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Fig. 6

3/7/2018

Sunriver Water Sports



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Water Recreation



When summer heats up, many Sunriver visitors and residents take to the Deschutes River to cool off. On the hottest days, expect to see flotillas of inner tubes, rafts, canoes, kayaks and stand-up paddleboards.

The Deschutes River in the Sunriver area runs wide and gentle through gorgeous mountain scenery, with good wildlife viewing opportunities. This part of the river is rated Class 1 moving water with riffles, minor waves and few or no obstructions.

As inviting as it looks, the river's current is deceptively strong, and the water is much colder than most people expect. The Deschutes River is spring fed and water temperatures rarely exceed 60 degrees. A quick dunk in the river feels good for a few moments on the hottest days, but hypothermia is a real concern for anyone unable to get out of the water. Life vests, appropriate clothing, food and water, knowing in advance the distances and float times and safe boating practices are important to keep the focus on fun.

Popular floats between publicly accessible launch and takeout points in the Sunriver area include:

- Big River (River Mile 199.2) to Harper Bridge (RM 191.7). Distance 7.5 miles. Float time: 3-5 hours depending on wind direction and paddle effort. Note: access at Harper Bridge is on the south side of the bridge next to the golf course.

RENTALS & OUTFITTERS

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541-593-2255
www.4sro.com

Good2Go
541-593-0339
www.floatationnation.com

Sunriver Marina
541-593-3492
www.sunriver-resort.com

Sunriver Sports
541-593-8369
www.sunriversports.com

Sunriver Toy House Rentals
541-647-4433
www.sunrivertoyhousetoys.com

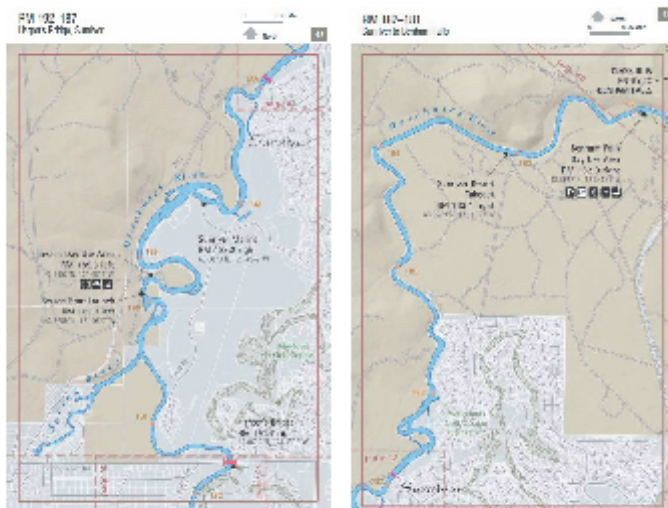
Tumalo Creek Kayak & Canoe
541-647-1640
www.tumalocreek.com

Village Bike & Ski
541-593-2453
www.villagebikeandski.com

3/8/2018

Sunriver Water Sports

- Harper Bridge (RM 191.7) to Besson Day Use Area (RM 189.9). Distance: 1.8 miles. Float time: 45 minutes. Note: Access at Harper Bridge is on the south side of the bridge next to the golf course.
- Harper Bridge (RM 191.7) to Sunriver Resort's Canoe Takeout (RM 183.1). Distance: 8.6 miles. Float time: 4-6 hours depending on wind direction and paddle effort. Note: Access at Harper Bridge is on the south side of the bridge next to the golf course.
- Besson Day Use Area (RM 189.9) to Sunriver Resort's Canoe Takeout (RM 188.2). Distance: 6.8 miles. Float time: 2-4 hours depending on wind direction and paddle effort.
- Besson Day Use Area (RM 189.9) to Benham Falls Day Use Area at River Mile 182.0. Distance: 7.9 miles. Float time: 3-4 hours depending on wind direction and paddle effort.



(Click on image to enlarge or print)

Sunriver Resort operates a commercial marina at River Mile 188.2 off River Road. The general public and guests of the Resort must rent boats from the marina to utilize this facility. Boat rental fees include a shuttle ride back from the Canoe Takeout at River Mile 182.0.

Sunriver Owners Association opened a private launch and parking area in 2015 at River Mile 188.2. Access to this facility is restricted to Sunriver homeowners and their guests. Only those with updated Member Preference and Recreation Plus access cards issued by the homeowner's association will be able to utilize this facility. Information: 541-585-3147, www.sunriverstyle.com/fun-on-the-river.html

Several shops in The Village at Sunriver and the Sunriver Business Park rent watercraft, life vests and other necessary items. State law requires life vests for all watercraft occupants, whether you are in a float tube, kayak, canoe or boat.

For a complete list of public boat launches on the upper Deschutes River between Sunriver and Wickiup Dam visit: www.deschutespaddletail.com

Fig. 7

3/8/2018

2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design

Chapter 10: Recreation Facilities**28 CFR 35.151 New construction and alterations****(a) Design and construction.**

(1) Each facility or part of a facility constructed by, on behalf of, or for the use of a public entity shall be designed and constructed in such manner that the facility or part of the facility is readily accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities, if the construction was commenced after January 26, 1992.

(2) Exception for structural impracticability.

- (I) Full compliance with the requirements of this section is not required where a public entity can demonstrate that it is structurally impracticable to meet the requirements. Full compliance will be considered structurally impracticable only in those rare circumstances when the unique characteristics of terrain prevent the incorporation of accessibility features.
- (II) If full compliance with this section would be structurally impracticable, compliance with this section is required to the extent that it is not structurally impracticable. In that case, any portion of the facility that can be made accessible shall be made accessible to the extent that it is not structurally impracticable.
- (III) If providing accessibility in conformance with this section to individuals with certain disabilities (e.g., those who use wheelchairs) would be structurally impracticable, accessibility shall nonetheless be ensured to persons with other types of disabilities, (e.g., those who use crutches or who have sight, hearing, or mental impairments) in accordance with this section.

(b) Alterations.

(1) Each facility or part of a facility altered by, on behalf of, or for the use of a public entity in a manner that affects or could affect the usability of the facility or part of the facility shall, to the maximum extent feasible, be altered in such manner that the altered portion of the facility is readily accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities, if the alteration was commenced after January 26, 1992.

(2) The path of travel requirements of § 35.151(b)(4) shall apply only to alterations undertaken solely for purposes other than to meet the program accessibility requirements of § 35.150.

(3)

- (I) Alterations to historic properties shall comply, to the maximum extent feasible, with the provisions applicable to historic properties in the design standards specified in § 35.151(c).
- (II) If it is not feasible to provide physical access to an historic property in a manner that will not threaten or destroy the historic significance of the building or facility, alternative methods of access shall be provided pursuant to the requirements of § 35.150.

(4) **Path of travel.** An alteration that affects or could affect the usability of or access to an area of a facility that contains a primary function shall be made so as to ensure that, to the maximum extent feasible, the path of travel to the altered area and the restrooms, telephones, and drinking fountains serving the altered area are readily accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities, including individuals who use wheelchairs, unless the cost and scope of such alterations is disproportionate to the cost of the overall alteration.

(I) **Primary function.** A "primary function" is a major activity for which the facility is intended. Areas that contain a primary function include, but are not limited to, the dining area of a cafeteria, the meeting rooms in a conference center, as well as offices and other work areas in which the activities of the public entity using the facility are carried out.

(A) Mechanical rooms, boiler rooms, supply storage rooms, employee lounges or locker rooms, janitorial closets, entrances, and corridors are not areas containing a primary function. Restrooms are not areas containing a primary function unless the provision of restrooms is a primary purpose of the area, e.g., in highway rest stops.

(B) For the purposes of this section, alterations to windows, hardware, controls, electrical outlets, and signage shall not be deemed to be alterations that affect the usability of or access to an area containing a primary function.

(II) A "path of travel" includes a continuous, unobstructed way of pedestrian passage by means of which the altered area may be approached, entered, and exited, and which connects the altered area with an exterior approach (including sidewalks, streets, and parking areas), an entrance to the facility, and other parts of the facility.

(A) An accessible path of travel may consist of walks and sidewalks, curb ramps and other interior or exterior pedestrian ramps; clear floor paths through lobbies, corridors, rooms, and other improved areas; parking access aisles; elevators and lifts; or a combination of these elements.

3/8/2018

2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design

- (B) For the purposes of this section, the term "path of travel" also includes the restrooms, telephones, and drinking fountains serving the altered area.
- (C) **Safe harbor.** If a public entity has constructed or altered required elements of a path of travel in accordance with the specifications in either the 1991 Standards or the Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards before March 15, 2012, the public entity is not required to retrofit such elements to reflect incremental changes in the 2010 Standards solely because of an alteration to a primary function area served by that path of travel.

(III) Disproportionality.

- (A) Alterations made to provide an accessible path of travel to the altered area will be deemed disproportionate to the overall alteration when the cost exceeds 20 % of the cost of the alteration to the primary function area.
- (B) Costs that may be counted as expenditures required to provide an accessible path of travel may include:
 - (1) Costs associated with providing an accessible entrance and an accessible route to the altered area, for example, the cost of widening doorways or installing ramps;
 - (2) Costs associated with making restrooms accessible, such as installing grab bars, enlarging toilet stalls, insulating pipes, or installing accessible faucet controls;
 - (3) Costs associated with providing accessible telephones, such as relocating the telephone to an accessible height, installing amplification devices, or installing a text telephone (TTY); and
 - (4) Costs associated with relocating an inaccessible drinking fountain.

(IV) Duty to provide accessible features in the event of disproportionality.

- (A) When the cost of alterations necessary to make the path of travel to the altered area fully accessible is disproportionate to the cost of the overall alteration, the path of travel shall be made accessible to the extent that it can be made accessible without incurring disproportionate costs.
- (B) In choosing which accessible elements to provide, priority should be given to those elements that will provide the greatest access, in the following order—
 - (1) An accessible entrance;
 - (2) An accessible route to the altered area;
 - (3) At least one accessible restroom for each sex or a single unisex restroom;
 - (4) Accessible telephones;
 - (5) Accessible drinking fountains; and
 - (6) When possible, additional accessible elements such as parking, storage, and alarms.

(V) Series of smaller alterations.

- (A) The obligation to provide an accessible path of travel may not be evaded by performing a series of small alterations to the area served by a single path of travel if those alterations could have been performed as a single undertaking.
- (B)
 - (1) If an area containing a primary function has been altered without providing an accessible path of travel to that area, and subsequent alterations of that area, or a different area on the same path of travel, are undertaken within three years of the original alteration, the total cost of alterations to the primary function areas on that path of travel during the preceding three-year period shall be considered in determining whether the cost of making that path of travel accessible is disproportionate.
 - (2) Only alterations undertaken on or after March 15, 2011, shall be considered in determining if the cost of providing an accessible path of travel is disproportionate to the overall cost of the alterations.

(c) Accessibility standards and compliance date.

- (1) If physical construction or alterations commence after July 26, 1992, but prior to the September 15, 2010, then new construction and alterations subject to this section must comply with either the UFAS or the 1991 Standards except that the elevator exemption contained at section 4.1.3(5) and section 4.1.6(1)(k) of the 1991 Standards shall not apply. Departures from particular requirements of either standard by the use of other methods shall be permitted when it is clearly evident that equivalent access to the facility or part of the facility is thereby provided.
- (2) If physical construction or alterations commence on or after September 15, 2010, and before March 15, 2012, then new construction and alterations subject to this section may comply with one of the following: the 2010 Standards, UFAS, or the 1991 Standards except that the elevator exemption contained at section 4.1.3(5) and section 4.1.6(1)(k) of the 1991 Standards shall not apply. Departures from particular requirements of either standard by the use of other methods shall be permitted when it is clearly evident that equivalent access to the facility or part of the facility is thereby provided.

Fig. 8

3/8/2018

Sunriver area boat launch an ongoing worry; Various efforts to build a replacement have stalled

Published Sept. 4, 2014 at 12:01AM

Sunriver area boat launch an ongoing worry

Various efforts to build a replacement have stalled



A group of people load kayaks and inflatables into the Deschutes River at the Harper Bridge boat ramp in Sunriver last week. (Joe Kline / The Bulletin)
Buy photo

Sunriver Police Chief Marc Mills was shopping in Bend recently when a fellow shopper struck up a conversation, asking Mills about floating the Deschutes River through Sunriver.

The long, lazy float sounded great, Mills recalled the man saying, but for one thing: Where are you supposed to park?

Through much of the summer, lines of parked cars stretch along Spring River Road, on the east approach to Harper Bridge. On either side of the bridge, well-worn dirt paths lead down to the water's edge, where canoeists, kayakers and inner-tube floaters have launched their craft for years.

Safety around the informal boat launch concerns the chief and others.

"It's a problem. I think it's a problem for all law enforcement and anybody that has to do with public safety," Mills said.

3/8/2018

Sunriver area boat launch an ongoing worry; Various efforts to build a replacement have stalled

Ron Bures, an area resident who's proposed building a public boat ramp on a slice of the 17½ acres he owns northwest of the bridge in exchange for the right to build an RV park, said the congestion from people parking near Harper Bridge gets worse each summer.

As a condition of approving the plan for Crosswater, a golf community directly south of Sunriver across Spring River Road, the county required the developers to dedicate new land for a formal boat launch, according to county documents provided by Bures.

The documents suggest the county was aware the informal launch at Harper Bridge was inadequate for such a facility, but in the end, the developers were allowed to dedicate the Harper Bridge site to meet the county's conditions.

Peter Russell with the county's Community Development Department said even if the county erred by not requiring Crosswater to identify a suitable public launch site, it's too late to revisit that decision. Developing a boat ramp is not an urgent priority for the county, he said.

"We would not prevail in a court of law if we went back to Crosswater and said we need more land," Russell said.

Molly Johnson, spokeswoman for Sunriver Resort, which owns the golf course and real estate development arm at Crosswater, said she's unaware of any serious discussions of future boat ramps among resort management. Sunriver Resort owns the land south of Spring River Road immediately adjacent to the river.

Because Deschutes County doesn't have a parks and recreation department or budget, Russell said, it would look to the Oregon Marine Board for grant funding if it were to build a boat launch. However, as the Marine Board is focused largely on providing amenities to larger, trailered boats, Russell said, it would require more land than is currently available to build a facility that meets the board's standards.

3/8/2018

Sunriver area boat launch an ongoing worry; Various efforts to build a replacement have stalled

Wayne Shuyler, boating facilities section manager for the Oregon Marine Board, said Harper Bridge is a challenging site, but could potentially be developed to accommodate a boat ramp that meets Marine Board standards.

A few years ago, the Marine Board designed some possible layouts for a ramp and parking area at Harper Bridge, Shuyler said. All of the designs would have required the Sunriver Owners Association to commit some property to the project, he said, but the Marine Board was unable to get any partners to sign on.

“It was kind of left with, unless there was a change of heart with the county or the homeowners association having some funds, nobody was going to move forward with that,” Shuyler said.

Brooke Snavelly, spokesman for the owners association, said Shuyler’s version of events was a fair representation of the issue. The land just north of Spring River Road is a common area, collectively owned by members of the owners association.

“We had a lot of feedback from neighbors who lived next to the proposed area, and they hated it, they hated it,” he said. “And I can’t blame anyone who lives next to a proposed boat ramp.”

Mills said an improved boat launch near Harper Bridge could solve some of the parking problems, but it could exacerbate others. Sunriver police have often observed floaters exiting the water downstream of the bridge, Mills said, dragging their boats across common areas and private property.

Launching or pulling out of the water outside of a designated boat launch is officially prohibited in Sunriver, Mills said, while the Sunriver Marina is restricted to lodge guests only and the next-closest takeout is miles farther downstream.

3/8/2018

Sunriver area boat launch an ongoing worry; Various efforts to build a replacement have stalled

“If you float from Harper Bridge and you take out clear down at the canoe takeout, or on down to Benham Falls, it’s anywhere from a four-to-six-hour-plus float,” Mills said. “It’s a long float, and people figure out a way to get out of the river.”

— Reporter: 541-383-0387, shammers@bendbulletin.com

Fig. 9

3/8/2018

What's behind flooding on the Upper Deschutes?: Warm weather, water management, plant life all named as culprits

Published Sept. 18, 2017 at 02:01AM

What's behind flooding on the Upper Deschutes?

Warm weather, water management, plant life all named as culprits



A muddy area remains in the backyard of Nancy Capell's home after it was flooded. (Ryan Brennecke/Bulletin photo)

[Buy photo](#)



SUNRIVER — Water levels along the Upper Deschutes River have slowly receded over the first couple weeks of September, which means life is finally returning to normal for Nancy Capell and her garden.

Capell, 65, saw water from the Deschutes River rise up over its normal banks into the backyard of her home in the Three Rivers subdivision in July, flooding her grass and drowning many of the pea and potato plants in her enclosed garden.

The rising water transformed her yard, and others on her street, into a water wonderland, complete with geese, great blue herons and kayaking neighbors.

“We couldn’t use it for two months,” she said Thursday. “But we did have our own lake.”

While the water volume during the summer was not record-setting, the experiences of property owners like Capell underscore some of the problems along the Upper Deschutes caused by flows that vary dramatically between winter and summer months.

“It’s a fantastic river of the West. Living on it is an honor and a privilege,” Capell said. “I just think it isn’t healthy for the river.”

While Capell said the flooding was far worse than during her two previous summers in the neighborhood, the raw stream flow totals upriver were not much higher than usual. During July and August, the river tends to flow at up to 1,600 cubic feet per second at the gauge downriver of Wickiup Reservoir, and at up to 2,100 cubic feet per second near Benham Falls, according to data from the Oregon Water Resources Department.

While the flow stayed at 1,600 cfs for longer than it had during many recent years, it was not measurably higher at its peak, according to the department’s data.

Tod Heisler, executive director of the Deschutes River Conservancy, a nonprofit group that focuses on restoring stream flow in the Deschutes Basin, emphasized that flooding along the river was due to a variety of factors, ranging from summer temperatures to ongoing litigation on the river.

“This is highly variable,” he said. “It has been a problem in the past, and it will likely be a problem in the future.”

Flows on the Deschutes are low during the winter and spring, when much of the water gets retained in large reservoirs, according to Mathias Perle, project manager for the Upper Deschutes Watershed Council, a nonprofit that handles habitat restoration in the Deschutes Basin.

However, water levels along the Upper Deschutes River rise during the summer every year like clockwork, a consequence of farmers and other customers of Central Oregon’s irrigation districts needing water from the reservoirs as the weather gets hotter and drier. As that water is released, the river rises.

Kyle Gorman, south central region manager for the Oregon Water Resources Department, added that hot, dry summers tend to result in the diversion of more water to irrigation canals. Bend had its warmest August on record this year, while receiving just a trace of rainfall during the month, according to the National Weather Service.

“We had big snow (this winter), but we haven’t had a lot of rain,” Heisler said.

Despite the weather, North Unit Irrigation District, one of eight irrigation districts operating in Central Oregon, has had a relatively normal year for irrigation, according to General Manager Mike Britton. In a typical year, the district, which gets a vast majority of its water from the Deschutes River, begins diverting water in mid-April and continues into October. Thus far, the year has proceeded according to plan.

Britton pointed to increased vegetation along the river as a reason it might be flooding despite relatively normal water flows. Gorman added that plants can cause the river to slow and spread out, spilling over its banks.

However, Patricia McDowell, professor of geography at University of Oregon and a member of the university’s river research group, said a wetter-than-normal winter wouldn’t be enough to affect the river. Unless there were massive re-vegetation efforts in the affected areas, the impact would likely be small.

The overall effect of the seasonal rise and fall of the river depends on whom you ask. While Britton said he’s heard about the flooding along the Upper Deschutes, living in a floodplain means dealing with occasional floods.

Perle said the ebb and flow can cause problems for the Upper Deschutes’ ecosystem as well. He said fish can get stranded on land and die once the water recedes. Additionally, he said riverbanks can lose vegetation from the cycle of rising and falling water, which contributes to erosion.

“Those banks are pretty raw during the freeze-thaw cycle during the winter,” he said.

3/8/2018


What's behind flooding on the Upper Deschutes?: Warm weather, water management, plant life all named as culprits

Several planning efforts, including a habitat conservation plan from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, are intended to help irrigation districts stay in business, while reducing the change to water flow along the Upper Deschutes. Bridget Moran, head of the Bend field office for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, said the conservation plan is expected to be finalized by 2019.


“I think most people realize we can’t go back to pre-dam, pre-history management of the river,” Perle added. “But we’re trying to find the middle ground.”

— Reporter: 541-617-7818, shamway@bendbulletin.com

Fig. 10



Deschutes Paddle Trail



Welcome! The Upper Deschutes River became a National Wild & Scenic River as well as an Oregon Scenic Waterway in 1988. This corridor is known for its outstanding natural features and a myriad of recreational opportunities. Some stretches of the river lend themselves to calm waters suitable for everyone while others require specialized whitewater equipment and advanced skills. **Before venturing downstream, please check the map to identify hazards and determine if you have the proper skills and equipment for this particular stretch.**

River Safety

Rivers are inherently dangerous. River travel requires planning, proper equipment and experience for the difficulty of the river section being traveled.


- Wear a properly fitting Coast Guard approved personal flotation device.
 - Dress appropriately for expected weather.
 - Whitewater sections require specialized equipment and skills.
- Carry a river map for more specific information.
 - Know the location of all rapids and hazards.
 - When in doubt, scout it out!
- Let someone know where you are going.
 - Avoid boating alone.

Hazards & Difficulty

- It is critical to understand the difficulty of the river section **before** launching. See section descriptions, map right.
- Even flat water presents dangers. Always be alert for downed wood and other unknown hazards.
- Only the most difficult rapids are marked on the map.
- Hazards marked on the map are very dangerous and require portaging or expert whitewater skills to negotiate.

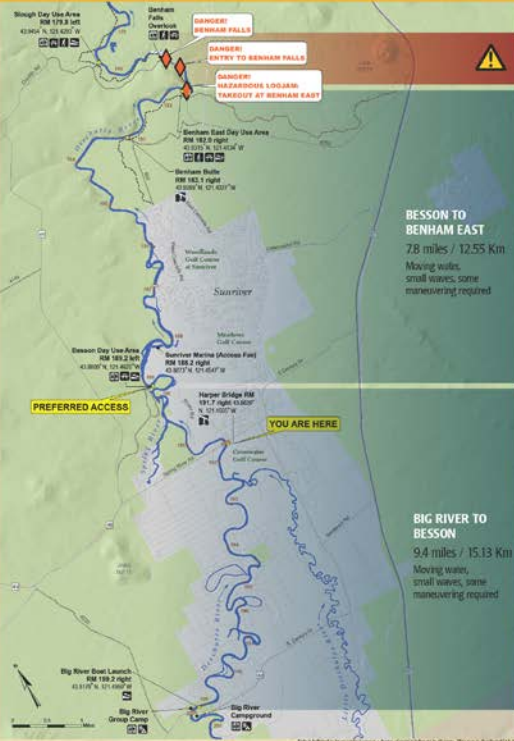
Respect the River

- Use only designated river access points and parking areas.
- Do not tread on riparian vegetation.
- Carry out trash, food and litter.
- An Oregon Invasive Species Permit is required for all boats longer than 10 feet.



**CLEAN
DRAIN
DRY**

Never pour, transport, use trash or equipment



BESSION TO BENHAM EAST
7.8 miles / 12.55 Km
Moving water, small waves, some maneuvering required

BIG RIVER TO BESSION
9.4 miles / 15.13 Km
Moving water, small waves, some maneuvering required

YOU ARE HERE

Significant hazard to life may result in the event of a mishap.

River Access

Now that you've found Harper Bridge river access, you'll notice there is heavy use, traffic and a lack of parking associated with this location. You may find that using the Besson Day Use Area, which is less than two miles downstream, has numerous advantages including ample parking, toilets, picnic tables and an easy to use boat ramp. To get there continue west on Spring River Road approximately 1.8 miles and turn right on Forest Road 41. In a half-mile bear right onto Forest Road 200 and you will arrive at Besson Day Use Area in another 1.4 miles. A Northwest Forest Pass is required May 1-Sept. 30, and is available for purchase at Sunrise-area vendors.

Water Levels

The Deschutes Paddle Trail includes 95 miles of the Deschutes River, 26 miles of the Little Deschutes and a significant number of high Cascade Lakes. The water level in the Deschutes is seasonal because it is a source for agricultural irrigation in Central Oregon. Generally, river sections south of Bend can be paddled between April and October, while sections north of Bend can be paddled between October and April. The Little Deschutes River also has minimal flows in winter.

LEGEND

	Highway	
	Short	
	USFS road	
	Deschutes River Trail	
	Biking trail	
	US Forest Service	
	Private land	

NOTES:
* All approaches are set for May 15/2017
* New data included on speeds to 1 mph

BEND PADDLE TRAIL
Bend Paddle Trail Alliance developed the Deschutes Paddle Trail with major funding from Oregon State Parks and in partnership with the following agencies:

