

APPENDIX C: STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEW SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

This discussion paper provides a summary of the stakeholder interviews that have been completed as part of the Dorris Ranch Living History Farm Master Plan Update. As part of the community assessment process, it is important to gather the experiences, ideas and any concerns from community members closely associated with Dorris Ranch. These perspectives provide information about the park's most valuable assets, programs, facilities, opportunities, and constraints.

MIG conducted five stakeholder interviews with a variety of individuals with close ties to Dorris Ranch. These interviewees spoke about their personal and professional experiences with the site and how to increase its successful integration in the community. The list of interviewees, including representatives of public agencies in education, historic preservation, and planning, as well as individuals representing the interests of local businesses and residents, was generated in consultation with the Willamalane Park and Recreation Department and the MIG Planning Team. Those interviewed were:

- Evelyn Abraham, citizen with lengthy involvement with Dorris Ranch
- Dan Egan, Springfield Chamber of Commerce
- Linda Pauly, City of Springfield Planning Department
- Stephen Poyser – Oregon State Historic Preservation Office
- Robert Young, Lane Education Service District

This discussion paper is organized by the questions that were asked and provides a summary of the answers received from the interviewees.

Comments made by interviewees that were similar were consolidated into one summary statement, while comments that were unique were included as solitary statements. Overall, care was taken to utilize phrasing and word

choices used by those interviewed to capture their meaning and tone as closely as possible.

INTERVIEW RESPONSES

What is your background/experience with Dorris Ranch?

The interviewees have had various experiences and histories with Dorris Ranch including as educators, partners, volunteers, event and program participants, consultants for planning and management decisions, and passive recreation users. For example, one took classes to Dorris Ranch for field trips, another volunteered at the Filbert Festival, some took walks and attended classes, while others have been involved in shaping past master plans and management documents. Many have attended various events and promoted the use of Dorris Ranch by its surrounding community throughout the years.

BENEFITS OF COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

What do you value most about Dorris Ranch?

Dorris Ranch provides a unique opportunity to experience a specific time in history. It provides first-hand, engaging educational experiences, and various interests for visitors. It is a great place for walking, and a unique attraction for Springfield. A beautiful, wonderful place!

How do you think Dorris Ranch improves the quality of life in the Springfield area?

People benefit from experiences they wouldn't otherwise encounter in everyday life. It's a rare and valuable historical experience. Many activities are provided for the community and a great depth of knowledge is conveyed through the site's resources. Dorris Ranch provides high-quality programming and valuable events, especially for children, which is really important. Providing an educational experience in a relaxing, beautiful green space is a great value to the community, and improves the

quality of life for the whole community. It also holds many unique and valuable ecological resources.

COMMUNITY NEEDS

In your opinion, are improvements needed at Dorris Ranch? If yes, what is needed?

Dorris Ranch should expand their offerings of programs and events, scheduling activities on a more regular basis. The living history program and interpretation of historical elements are extremely important, and should be expanded. Encouragement of use by families and people taking walks and riding bikes should be increased, in addition to increased connectivity to other places in the community (e.g. Glenwood, Mount Pisgah, and Willamette River). Dorris Ranch could also make itself more attractive and usable for visitors, especially as the community becomes denser. A store that sells filberts and other related products would be popular, and we could make it available to visitors for meetings and other event rentals.

In your opinion, are additional open space and natural area protection efforts needed at Dorris Ranch? If yes, what efforts are needed, and what protection efforts/resources should receive priority? If no, what existing protection efforts/resources should receive priority?

Open space and natural areas are of utmost importance, and this issue needs to be stressed more. However, there must be a balance, so we don't overprotect it. A sign of success should be more visitors, when the park is more accessible. The more popular it becomes, the more pressure there will be to protect this valuable resource. Perhaps an off-leash area for dogs would help attract more visitors. Overall, it should be kept a natural, outdoor space. We should look toward eco-restoration, removing invasive species, improving habitats, and maintaining the riparian forest.

In your opinion, are additional protection efforts needed for the historic resources including the buildings, structures and historic

filbert orchards? If yes, what efforts are needed and which protection efforts/resources should receive priority? If no, what existing protection efforts/resources should receive priority?

Historic buildings and the layout of the farm should be preserved as best we can. Maintenance of the ambiance is important. So is preserving the filberts!

What park and recreation activities and events are most needed at Dorris Ranch?

Historical events are very important. It's imperative that we interpret the old, traditional way of life – agricultural crops, a living historical farm. It is important to preserve the historical elements and interpret these resources in the proper way. Local history is a good focal point.

More emphasis should be placed on outreach to the community to attract more people to the park. Some activities that could increase visitation include:

- Filbert-related activities, like harvesting, pruning, showing history of how it began
- Living History Festival
- Increasing the viable use of the Tomseth House
- Children's and family programming
- Craft sales
- Native American celebrations
- Educational programs
- Guided plant walks
- Day camps
- Chautauqua-type activities
- Summer evening events
- Campfire events

What improvements, if any, to Dorris Ranch do you think should be the highest priority for Willamalane?

As far as programming, we should make sure we preserve the context of the era. Living History exhibits and activities should be expanded, perhaps with archaeological and other interactive activities. For facilities, a larger meeting facility and improved signage is needed, plus trails and riparian areas need continued maintenance. Improving outreach to attract people to the site year-round so Dorris Ranch becomes a place people want to visit more than once a year. Bike paths and other connections to the community would be great.

Limited tax revenues have led Willamalane to rely on revenue generated by the orchard operations, events and rentals to fund a major portion of operations and maintenance at Dorris Ranch. Should Willamalane reconsider using more of their tax dollars to fund Dorris Ranch operations and maintenance rather than relying on generating revenue at Dorris Ranch?

Yes, more tax support should be shifted to support Dorris Ranch. Greater investments should be pulled from the tax base in order to increase income and revenue. It's not realistic for the park to be self-sufficient. Dorris Ranch has been a "monetary orphan," but is a "non-renewable resource" and "once it's gone, it's gone." Maintenance for such a unique place requires a lot of resources.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

In your opinion, how familiar is the public with the resources, facilities and opportunities provided by Dorris Ranch?

It should come to mind very easily, but Willamalane could publicize its resources more widely. People are barely aware of it, and half the community has trouble finding it. However, awareness has improved a lot since the recreation center was built. People are exposed to a lot more information through recent articles and other outreach elements.

Who should Dorris Ranch serve? Local residents, tourists, schools, other? And how can they best serve that group/those groups?

Dorris Ranch should be valued by all! Education enthusiasts (e.g. teachers) need to teach people the value of history, and Dorris Ranch is the best way. Schools are the most important, but tourists and residents are also important for the facility. Children are a captive audience, and the future users of the park. Dorris Ranch should also be put on lists of local attractions for tourists. But at the end of the day, it is the residents that will support the park.

The following events could be used to promote Dorris Ranch:

- Theatre events such as Shakespeare at Dorris Ranch
- Music festivals such as Bach Festival, “Bach to Nuts”
- Civil War events or similar history programs

How could Willamalane and your organization partner or build upon existing partnerships in the future to improve the facilities, resources, events or programming at Dorris Ranch?

There are many opportunities for partnerships. The Oregon Preservation Alliance would love to work with Willamalane. Commercial partnerships could focus on developing a Willamalane store that could sell Lane County souvenirs and items that embody “the Northwest essence.” Selling goods and crafts could promote the unique value of Dorris Ranch, and help foster a “postcard” experience.

Finishing the master plan, making decisions, and expanding on past successes will facilitate the development of partnerships, especially through the improvement of interagency communication and cooperation. Developing a vision for Dorris Ranch will allow groups to identify collaborative partnership opportunities. For instance, the Chamber of Commerce could promote business support of Dorris Ranch.

In the past, there has not been enough coordination in terms of long-range planning, but partnership opportunities could be identified to

improve facilities and resources such as green infrastructure in parks, bicycle paths and access, and commercial opportunities.

Do you have any other questions or comments?

- Please stress the important of publicizing!
- Am pleased that Willamalane is addressing future planning issues for Dorris Ranch.
- Everyone in the organization is top-notch, especially Scott Dano, who is very supportive of schools and school organizations.
- Disappointed that couldn't buy filberts at the Filbert Festival.
- This plan is overdue. It's important to create a five-year plan to put Dorris Ranch on the map or turn it over to someone who will.
- The Civil War event is unfortunate – it takes over the site and doesn't have anything to do with Dorris Ranch. It overshadows the Living History Events.
- As Glenwood becomes more populated, Dorris Ranch will become more valuable as an open space.
- As connectivity improves, more people will visit and use Dorris Ranch.
- We need to protect Dorris Ranch against misuse, including bikes.
- If there are illegal camping issues they should be addressed.