

APPENDIX D

ARTICLES, NEWS RELEASES AND NOTICES

Media

Local news media ran articles from December 15, 2011 to January 15 2012.

Gazette Tribune – Oroville Tonasket, Okanogan

Omak Cronicle – Omak, Riverside, Conconully, Okanogan

The Star – Nspelem, Elmer City, Coulee Dam

The Quad City Herald – Pateros, Brewster, Methow

Methow Valley News – Winthrop, Twisp, Mazama, Carlton

KOMW Radio, news

KOZI Radio, interview

City Halls were contacted

Social Media sources

County holds meeting on Recreation Plan update in Oroville



Submitted photo

Local high school students work on benches for the Similkameen River Trail. They also helped with signage on the trail.

Survey says: Hiking and walking trails most popular

BY GARY A. DEVON
MANAGING EDITOR

OROVILLE - Ted Murray and Sharon McKinzie with the Okanogan County Planning office came to Oroville last week to discuss the county's efforts to update the Comprehensive Recreation Plan and the results of an online public survey.

"The state and federal governments require an update every six years for the county to maintain grant eligibility," said Ted Murray, Outdoor Recreation Coordinator for Okanogan County. "This doesn't just help the county... the city can draw off it as well."

At the Wednesday, Jan. 4 meeting held at city hall, Murray said the county didn't have a lot in the way of recreation facilities. The biggest facility the county operates is the county fairgrounds and Agriplex. They also have a short riverfront park in Winthrop the county acquired about two years ago. In the northern part of the county there is the recently developed Similkameen River Trail which runs from the

trailhead at Oroville along the old Great Northern Railway bed and along the Similkameen River, across the old steel and concrete railroad bridge to nearly the Enloe Dam powerhouse. Also in the northern part of the county is the Whistler Canyon Trail which is south of Oroville and can be accessed from Highway 97.

Although the online surveys were anonymous, the county could tell what area they came from through the respondent's IP Addresses.

"The largest number of surveys were from Winthrop, with the second largest number from Oroville. About 110 surveys came from outside the county, from places like Spokane, Colville and the coast," Murray said. "Many local kids under 18 jumped online in the last three days."

According to the survey, hiking and walking on trails is the number one activity for those that responded. Number two was pleasure driving, three was swimming and four was picnicking.

"Farmers Markets did real well also across the county, which is not a big surprise," Murray said. "Shore fishing did pretty well too."

Murray said the survey takers answered very similarly across the county, with little difference

PLAN: Survey open for short time on internet

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between those inside and outside the Methow.

"I'm surprised that hunting and gathering did not score a little higher. I'm also surprised that snowmobiling did not come out higher, especially since 50 percent of those that responded said they did it at least annually."

Survey takers were pretty evenly divided for their desires for recreation facilities: Number one was nature and interpretive trails; number two was indoor pool and number three was picnic areas. Several kids from the Oroville area said they would like to see a skatepark, said Murray.

George Thornton, an Oroville teacher who is also a member of the Oroville Chapter of the Pacific Northwest Trail Association, said he had gotten a call where the caller state there was almost a "traffic jam" at Palmer Lake with people trying to get a look at a rare Ross's Gull that was spotted there by a state Wildlife Biologist.

Chris Branch, Oroville's Director of Community Development said, "Even if we do build a pool we would still have to come up with the dollars to maintain it, the same could be said for a community center."

Branch also said building trails around the east side of Lake



Submitted photo

Students put together benches that were installed at various points along the Simlikameen River Trail.

Osoyoos has been the topic of discussion over the last couple years, as well as building a bridge to Driscoll Island.

Murray said the county's population had been growing older, with the greatest growth in those ages 54 to 70 since the 2000 census.

"My years with commercial real estate have taught me that companies that are looking to locate in an area are not just looking at the transportation grid, schools and community, but also the recreation possibilities," said Sharon McKenzie. "With more activities

you bring in companies and that will boost the tax base."

Branch, who just led a workshop on updating Oroville's Critical Areas ordinance, also added that part of a planner's job is to educate people on the value of protected areas.

"If we protect areas and provide public access we then have the opportunity to educate the public on why the areas were protected," Branch said.

The survey is still open will remain online for a short period, those that wish to take it should go to www.okanogancounty.org.

The Town Crier

Your chance to guide the county's recreation plan



OUT OF MY MIND

Gary A. DeVon

Turnout for the Okanogan County Recreation Plan meeting last Wednesday in Oroville was rather disappointing. However, the information gathered in the recreation survey was very interesting from many perspectives.

As a member of the press, a Chamber of Commerce Board member and as someone who enjoys many of the recreational opportunities this county has to offer I think we need to encourage the county to do all it can, with the limited money it has, to enhance the recreation possibilities it offers. The natural beauty of our area is the one constant we have to offer both the people who live here and those that come to recreate here, leaving some of their dollars behind.

That beauty stays with us whether the regional economy is good or bad and perhaps when things are hardest is when we start to benefit the most. When times are tough people who live near here enjoy "stay-cations" and rather than travel



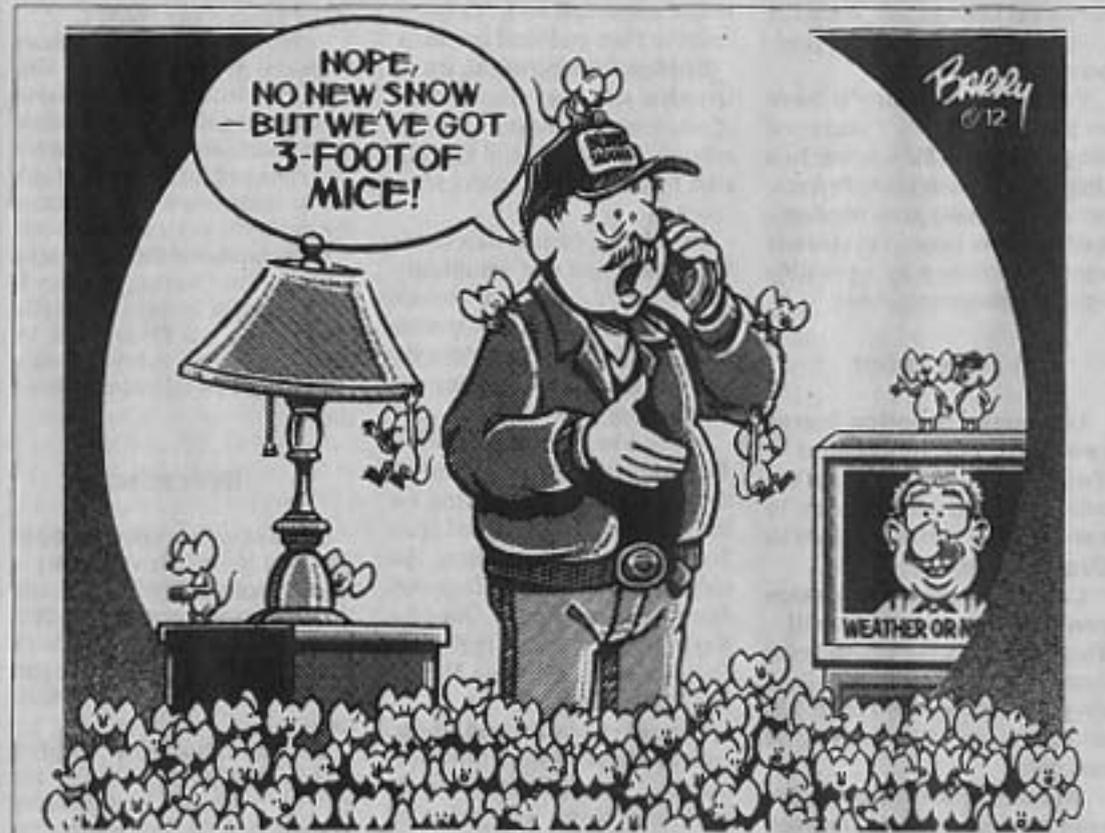
Submitted photo

Whistler Canyon is a popular hiking and horseback trail that the county helped to develop with help from the Backcountry Horsemen, U.S. Forest Service and U.S. Bureau of Land Management.

ing out of the state or even out the country with their vacation dollars. They spend their money closer to home - in places where their dollars go further.

It came as no surprise when Okanogan County Outdoor Recreation Coordinator Ted Murray said that hiking and walking on trails was the most popular activity, according to the recreation survey. Here in the north part of the county we benefit greatly from the work the county and volunteers have done on the Similkameen River Trail and the Whistler Canyon Trail. There is also a trail that starts in Winthrop and follows the river and a park that is very

popular. Hopefully the county will be able to expand its trail system to the benefit of all who live here and those that visit. Working with the state to add a bridge to Driscoll Island south of Oroville would also enhance the trail system in the area. Other potential trails discussed might go north from Oroville toward Veranda Beach Resort and the possibility of constructing a bridge from Oroville's Veterans Memorial Park to existing public trails at Sundalia. Anything that would attract people to the community, especially trails that connect directly with town like the Similkameen River Trail, could be of economic



benefit.

Of course, an indoor swimming pool, a dream of the Tonasket community, was also high on the list for those who filled out the online survey. The top four answers were Hiking and Walking Trails, Pleasure Driving, Swimming and Picnicking. Farmers Markets also did well across the county.

The highest number of surveys were returned from the

Methow, with Oroville second. Several Oroville kids under 18 also returned surveys in the three days leading up to the Oroville meeting. A skatepark was high on the Oroville kids' list. The top three responses about the needed facilities were pretty evenly divided between Nature and Interpretive Areas, and Indoor Pool and Picnic Areas, according to Murray. The recent traffic jam of birders

trying to get a glimpse of the Ross's Gull at Palmer Lake is testament to the draw that wild-life can have to our area.

Time is running short on your ability to fill out a survey, but there is still a little time left. To make your voice known and to guide the county on how their limited recreational funds should be spent, go to the county's website: website www.okanogancounty.org

Recreation Plan meetings scheduled around the county

Oroville meeting Jan. 4, online survey available

BY GARY A. DEVON
MANAGING EDITOR

OKANOGAN - Okanogan County will hold community meetings across the county to hear from residents about recreation and gather comments to update the 2012 Recreation Plan.

The first meeting is scheduled for Oroville at the city hall on Wednesday, Jan. 4 at 6 p.m. The

next will be at Winthrop at the Liberty Bell High School multipurpose room on Thursday, Jan. 5 at 5 p.m. A meeting at Pateros will be held at the city hall on Wednesday, Jan. 10 at 6 p.m. and at the Commissioners' Hearing Room in Okanogan the next day, Thursday, Jan. 11 at 6 p.m.

The county has a community survey available on the county's website www.okanogancounty.org.

"As the state, counties and cities face declining budgets it is more important than ever to focus limited funding toward the greatest benefit to our communities. The recreation survey will

help us to identify needs and level of service for existing facilities and future needs, said Ted Murray, Outdoor Recreation Coordinator for Okanogan County.

The 2010 census has identified a dramatic increase in the county's population of residents ages 50 and above from just ten years ago. At the same time the population under 50 has declined substantially.

"What are the recreation interests of our aging population?" asks Murray, who adds the county is encouraging people to take the time to fill out the survey and share the link with friends who live or recreate in the county.

Comm

County holds recreation plan meetings

Okanogan County is updating its recreation plan, which helps guide planning and allocation of funding for activities including hiking and snowboarding, fishing and swimming, shooting ranges and facilities for indoor play.

County planners are holding a series of public meetings throughout the county to hear from residents about recreation

needs and preferences and to gather comments to update the plan. They hope to complete the draft of the recreation plan in February, according to Ted Murray, senior GIS analyst for the Okanogan County Planning Department.

The plan is updated every six years and connects with city recreation plans.

There is a link to an on-line

survey on the county's home page at www.okanogancounty.org. Additional surveys will be available at the meetings.

The meeting in the Methow is Thursday, Jan. 5, at 5 p.m. in the multi-purpose room at Liberty Bell High School. Other meetings are scheduled in Oroville on Jan. 4, Pateros on Jan. 10, and Okanogan on Jan. 11.

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Current Order

**Threshold SEPA Determination
Okanogan County Outdoor
Recreation Plan , SEPA 2012-1**
NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Okanogan County SEPA Responsible Official has issued a threshold SEPA Determination of Non-Significance (DNS). Ted Murray on behalf of Okanogan County Department of Planning submitted an environmental checklist for the Okanogan County Outdoor Recreation Plan (OCRCP). This plan supersedes the previous plan adopted in 2004. The OCRCP applies to the entire County. The Draft Okanogan County Recreation Plan is available for review on the planning web site at www.okanogan-county.org/planning. A public hearing before the Board of County Commissioners is set for February 27 @ 10:00 am. in the Commissioners' Hearing Room. Comments will be accepted until February 9th. Information about the project is available to the public upon request. Questions regarding this application can be directed to Ted Murray, Outdoor Recreation Coordinator, Okanogan County Office of Planning & Development, 123 5th Ave. N, Suite 130, Okanogan, WA 98840, (509) 422-7118.
Published in the Okanogan Valley Gazette-Tribune and Quad City Herald on Jan. 26, 2012.#361150

Ref. # 4

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