

**Agri-Tourism Development Workshop**  
**Oregon Rural Tourism Studio**  
**John Day River Territory | November 2, 2010**

**Attended:**

- Will Boettner, Paleo Adventures, Ltd.
- Robin Hunt-Palazo, Wheeler County
- Beth McCurdy, Sherman County Fair & MCGG
- Jessica Metta, Mid-Columbia Economic Development District
- Canda Rattray, Rattray Ranches LLC
- Rita Rattray, Rattray Ranches LLC
- Cassie Strege, City of Wasco
- Nancy Wilson, Wilson Ranches Retreat B&B
- Kara Wilson Anglin, Wilson Ranches Retreat B&B
- Penny Woodson, Condon Chamber of Commerce
- Georgia Macnab, Sherman County
- Jon Jinnings, Department of Land Conservation and Development
- Kristin Dahl, Travel Oregon
- Scott West, Travel Oregon
- Teresa O'Neill, Travel Oregon

**THE FUTURES GAME: Scenario Planning**

3 groups played the Futures game and arrived at two outcomes:

**2030b “Spawning Sustainable Clusters”**

Degraded and mismanaged natural resources have led to decline but communities are rebuilding themselves through collaborative efforts and starting to tackle environmental improvement of public services and amenities for collective benefit.

**2030e “Gem of the Gems”**

A positive and engaged community that focuses on entrepreneurial activity and building a strong and integrated regional community and economy.

**Futures Game Debrief:**

At this moment there is not one single future in front of you.

A number of key forces/drivers shaping the future of the region

How do you reconcile that?

Scenario planning is a tool to grapple with this

Looked for drivers that are high in importance and high in uncertainty

### *Community debrief questions:*

Where did you end up?

What are the lessons that you drew out of this game that apply to the work of this program?

### *Community comments:*

- One participant noted that they didn't see tourism come up at all throughout the conversations. It's all about economic development. Similar to how things have evolved in Wheeler County – tourism was never a part of the conversation.
- Quality of life for the local population is essential and the heart of the matter
- *What is it that people are coming here for? Are they coming to visit with the people or something else?*
- One table focused on their youth and focused on higher levels of growth for them. Because of that, tourism and renewable energy production did too. That brought in people which then encouraged other businesses to grow.
- *How do you start to create the environment to create that type of economy – where entrepreneurs want to come and start their business here?*
- Another table also didn't talk about tourism. However, if you took the time to envision what they wanted. Take away is that it's good to talk about where we're going with tourism.
- *If you don't know where you want to end up – what framework is your community using to make decisions? Decisions will no doubt be shaping your future.*
- *Most powerful takeaway: that your business does not sit in isolation of what is going on in the region. We need to start thinking about how we knit this stuff together.*

### **LAND USE PLANNING CONVERSATION**

- Good idea to visit with your local planner when you're developing a new concept
- DLCD is on the community's side
- What's a parcel? What's a tax lot? What's the difference? (Jon explained)
- Farmers identified that they're unable to rent their homes without permission from Gilliam County
- For overnight stays on ranches – what are the steps required to ensure an operation is legitimate? Meet with local planner. It is possible to figure most opportunities out.
  - Can you do it within the existing zoning?
  - If not, need to demonstrate that it could be done within the zoning
  - You can request for approval (a conditional use permit) for a 'private campground'. There are some strings attached. A yurt will fall under the campground designation.
  - Local government has discretion of numbers of campsites – there is no state regulation that pertains to this
  - Jon notes that there is a fairly broad level of discretion
- Guest ranch regulation (on 160 acres or more) stemmed from the 70s to ensure that the guest ranch would only be in addition to the ranch operation

- Participant pointed out that we are going to need to have something more of a destination, like a destination resort
- Jon identified a regional problem solving program that can assist with solutions.
  - Need to figure out what the solution is for this region
  - It may require solutions that are different than other regions
  - We really need to figure out what we need. What do we have?
  - Jon would love to have this conversation.
- Jon feels the regional problem solving mechanism is an under-utilized tool. It's a state statute. If a region has an identifiable land use problem (or problem that could benefit from a land use policy), then they can approach DLCD for assistance.
- JDRT has a history of working together. Leadership gets together regularly here. Could be an interesting conversation to figure out what (collectively) is needed to advance this economy. If this is something the region is interested in doing, let Jon (DLCD) know.
- ORS Regional Problem Solving Statute (see details below)
  - Requires a consortium of stakeholders
  - Hold a series of conversations (often requires a budget)
  - Present a product (a solution) to DLCD
- Who are the best entities/organizations for tourism proponents to be aligning themselves with?
  - Governors Economic Revitalization Team. A one-stop shop of services from community development agencies.
  - Three economic development organizations within the region
- Will noted that tourism is internally driven with little \$\$\$. Wind development has been externally driven with a lot of \$\$\$. With fewer resources it can be difficult to even determine what we need to do – what are the steps? Tourism development is more subtle, smaller changes, but big needs.

**Overall, how much potential do you believe there is for a successful agri-tourism industry in the John Day River Territory?**

- Lots/unlimited (as a result of not much going on now)
- Multiple-day tours (recreation on farms and ranches and reasons to spend the night)
- Potential for JDRT organization to serve as a clearinghouse of information
- Potential depends on partners continuing to move things forward
- Requires transferring leadership over time
- Why is there so much untapped potential? What are the limitations and barriers?

**What are the most relevant lessons for a potential agri-tourism industry in the JDRT?**

- Community vision
- JDRT needs to identify what we have here (from a visitors' perspective) and utilize those things.
- Important not to take on something so large that it will fail
- Capitalize on what we have; be creative
- We can expand on seasonal events – find ways to increase the visitors' length of stay

- Collaborators need to have a continued commitment

**What do you think is the best competitive niche or approach for agri-tourism industry in the John Day River Territory?**

- Weave the story of the river through everything; it shapes our recreation, history and culture; and this is a good tie-in with the new Cottonwood Canyon State Park
- Not much has changed in 100 years – visitors are still able to see this pioneering way of life
- Experience genuine fresh air & stars
- Recreational, outdoor opportunities: hiking, cycling, river rafting, hunting, fishing, and “Geocaching”
- Area’s remoteness – we have solitude; but we’re not too far from urban centers
- Dramatic landscapes comparable to the red rock area in the SW used for filming movies
- Racetrack
- “Oh By the Way” while you’re here, why don’t you go see...
- Need to identify and answer ‘what’s here?’ and then ‘what’s the story wrapped around it?’

**What do you think are the next important steps to take?**

- Establish the John Day River Territory \_\_\_\_\_ tourism organization
- Finish the community vision for tourism in this region
- Identify who our stakeholders are
- Identify our project(s)
- Develop a master plan
- Share the plan with local, state and federal agencies (including DLCD, BLM and other relevant agencies)
- Develop means to implement the plan and sustain the effort: funding, action teams

**What is your interest in working on this?**

- Planners (Robin & Georgia): to be involved in the process
- JDRT steering committee – in implementing all of the above

## **State & County Planner Contacts**

### **State/Regional Planners:**

Jon Jinnings  
Community Services Specialist  
Oregon Department of Land Conservation & Development  
541-318-2890  
[jon.jinnings@state.or.us](mailto:jon.jinnings@state.or.us)

Grant Young  
Northeast Regional Representative  
Oregon Department of Land Conservation & Development  
105 Fir St., Suite 210  
La Grande, OR 97850  
(541) 663-1393  
[grant.s.young@state.or.us](mailto:grant.s.young@state.or.us)

### **County Planners:**

Sherman County  
Georgia Macnab  
[georgiamac@embarqmail.com](mailto:georgiamac@embarqmail.com)  
541-565-3601

Wheeler County  
Robin Hunt-Palazo  
[rhpalazo@co.wheeler.or.us](mailto:rhpalazo@co.wheeler.or.us)  
541-763-2126 office | 541-280-3236 cell

Gilliam County  
Susie Anderson  
[susie.anderson@co.gilliam.or.us](mailto:susie.anderson@co.gilliam.or.us)  
541-384-2381

## REGIONAL PROBLEM SOLVING

Here is a link to the Regional Problem Solving Statute:

[http://rvcog.org/rps/Jurisdiction%20Deliberations%20Packet\\_2008/Regional%20Plan/XII%20RPS%20Statute.pdf](http://rvcog.org/rps/Jurisdiction%20Deliberations%20Packet_2008/Regional%20Plan/XII%20RPS%20Statute.pdf)

### **How Does RPS Work?**

*From 1000 Friends of Oregon website*

Statewide Planning [Goal 2](#) requires coordination between jurisdictions when creating and implementing planning documents. Traditionally this has meant that one city must coordinate its plans with the county in which it is located. Coordination between several counties and/or multiple cities, although allowed and encouraged, is not as common.

RPS was created with passage of ORS 197.652 to 658 (or the "[RPS statute](#)") during the 1996 special session of the legislature as a way to encourage that type of coordination. It was recognized that getting multiple jurisdictions to agree to a single plan might be politically difficult, so the authors of the bill offered a carrot: If all of the participants in the RPS process agreed on the problem, the solutions, and a means for implementing the plan, the state may approve local regulations "that do not fully comply with the administrative rules of the commission," or the Administrative Rules. (See the RPS statute, ORS 197.656(2))

The stated purpose for this concession was that it allowed a region some flexibility in identifying one or more problems, and developing creative resolutions tailored to the unique attributes of the region. Full compliance with the Goals and with all Statutes is still required.

## **ONLINE AGRI-TOURISM RESOURCES**

*If you know of others, please inform us!*

### **Travel Oregon's Food & Drink website**

*A website highlighting Oregon's best restaurants that serve food and beverages from locally-grown products and agri-tourism experiences that provide the visitor a closer connection Oregon food.*

<http://food.traveloregon.com/>

### **Farm Stay U.S.**

*Created by Scottie Jones at Leaping Lamb Farm in Alsea, Oregon, this website lists farm stay opportunities across the country. Membership fee may be required.*

<http://www.farmstayus.com/>

### **FoodHub**

*An Oregon-based website designed to connect regional food buyers with regional food sellers. Membership fee required.*

<http://food-hub.org/>

### **Oregon Country Trails**

*Grassroots organization assisting agri-tourism businesses with developing regional agri-tourism trails. Membership fee required.*

<http://www.oregoncountrytrails.com>

### **Oregon Department of Land Use and Conservation**

<http://www.lcd.state.or.us/>