

May 29, 2023

Commissioners,

You requested a campground feasibility study to examine the potential of developing RV parks on three County owned sites. The stated rationale was to address camping facility deficiencies in Deschutes County that are hindering our recreational economy. The resulting ECONW report does not provide adequate justification for the County to develop the Ft. Thompson site, and the report even said that Drafter Rd was the preferred option. The report's introduction starts off saying:..."*A scarcity of camping opportunities in Central Oregon...*" but the report never documents this statement. However, it is this undocumented and inaccurate scare that is being used to justify the Ft. Thompson project. I have attached a detailed evaluation of the report looking at what the report actually says about camping supply and demand, not the image it tries to project. I encourage you to read this analysis.

Normally, we identify and document a problem. Then we identify a range of solutions, and try to choose the best one. If, and this is a big if, we truly have a camping facility deficiency, what are the potential solutions and where is the documentation that the County owned lands are the best fix? It appears that in this case you have your desired solution, and you are trying to find a rationale to make it work.

If there is a deficiency of RV park facilities, why not try to provide incentives for existing RV parks to expand, or incentives for new RV parks? And isn't the 176 unit RV park being constructed right now on Murphy Rd addressing our purported shortage? This project was not even mentioned in the report. Most importantly, where is the justification for the County to get directly into the commercial RV park business?

If there is a traditional campground problem, is it even a problem the County should directly fix? Deschutes County consciously does not have a parks and recreation department. Why should the County now jump into this function, and without any real and public discussion of adding this new role? If the County believes there is a campground problem, why would it not work with the US Forest Service, the BLM, Oregon State Parks, its cities, and the Bend Park and Recreation district to find ways to provide more camping? These are the governmental entities already in the recreation and camping business.

Commissioners, I strongly urge you to not put any more time and resources into trying to develop the Ft. Thompson site; a RV park at Ft. Thompson is not appropriate.

Thank you,

Bruce Halperin  
20655 Sunbeam Ln,  
Bend, OR 97703