

MAR 21 2022

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BOCC Wrap Up Meeting

Information provided by Connie Riker, Director of Lewis County Parks & Recreation

Lewis County is re-prioritizing Parks as a necessity to the community.

- They hired me as Parks & Rec Director in June and moved the management of the parks under the Parks & Recreation Department instead of the Facilities Dept.
- We've hired repair and maintenance staff who have dedicated time to parks
- Purchased playground equipment for 5 parks
- We are really looking at Parks with a strategic view to benefiting the community such as looking to increase the hours and days they are open so they can be enjoyed more

Regarding Packwood State Park itself, here's the order that I have been charged with:

First, obtain ownership of the park. Which we are working on as State Parks has already determined it is surplus property. The County is very interested in the Park as we believe it will be a great asset for the community as a whole as a County Park.

Continue with status quo on the Park, with the exception of taking over the responsibility for maintenance, while we work on other parks. This will allow the community to see specifically by our actions, that we are not moving too quickly and are purposeful in our decisions.

Allow the larger Packwood area planning process to complete so we can see where recreation falls for the community as far as their strategic plan for the community in general. This larger Packwood area planning will not address the park specifically, but will be addressing recreation generally.

We want to ensure that we are making decisions smartly, not quickly.

Next, we intend to hire an outside consultant to help with the planning process for the park itself and including substantial public involvement. This will take some time and expense.

And finally, the steps for any development will depend on the results from the consultant's planning work. It will be quite some time, with an extensive planning process, before any changes could even be considered.

I have heard from quite a few community members, some against any type of development, the perspective which I believe Mr. Serrahn is here to present, but I have also heard from community members who are very much in favor of the county taking over this Park. This is why the park planning process, once we have ownership, is so important.

I am assembling contact information for those who wish to remain apprised of the planning process as we progress. Anyone who would like to be added can contact my office. (360-740-1495)