

Oregon Heritage Tree Committee
Meeting Minutes
Oregon Travel Experience Office, Salem, Oregon
Friday, October 14, 2016
11:00 am

Committee Participants:

Arne Nyberg, Chair
Doug Grafe
Jennifer Karps
Craig Leech

Molly McKnight
Tim Nitz
Nancy Appling
Nate Pedersen

Al Tocchini
Ed Washington
Kristin Ramstad

Absent:

Roger Brandt

Charlotte Lehan

Staff Participants:

Annie von Domitz

Nancy DeSouza

Convening:

Chair Nyberg called the meeting to order at 11:04 a.m. Self-introductions were made to note attendance for the meeting.

Approval of the Minutes:

Nitz made a motion to approve the July 08, 2016 minutes with no amendments. McKnight seconded; seven voted in favor, one abstention. The motion passed.

Heritage Tree Nominations:

Nyberg suggested the committee discuss the Target Tree first, to allow time for Nancy Appling to arrive. The committee members unanimously agreed to the change.

- A. **The Target Tree:** Pedersen nominated a Western Juniper that was used for target practice by early 19th century travelers along the Hunting Wagon Road. The nomination was seconded by Nitz. After a committee discussion it was felt the story of the Target Tree was secondary to the overall story of the surrounding junipers being used to guide travelers along the road. It was decided to amend the nomination to include not just the Target Tree but all the “Blazed Junipers” that mark the Hunting Wagon Road. Appling suggested recognizing “trail of trees” instead of a grove. Von Domitz inquired that if the plaque was placed at the beginning of the road would BLM would be willing to mark one or more of the additional blazed trees along the trail with the same kind of sign used on the Target Tree. The nomination has been tabled until the next meeting so Pedersen can get approval for the change in the nomination from the BLM and to scout out additional blazed trees along the trail. Tocchini moved to table the nomination. Appling seconded the motion.
- B. **Tolo Tree:** Appling reported she hasn’t gotten any additional information for this nomination. Von Domitz will continue to help find more information regarding who to contact about land owner permission and feedback from the appropriate Tribes. The committee agreed to keep this nomination tabled for the next meeting.
- C. **Grove of the States:** Von Domitz introduced the nomination to the committee but said it was not ready since she had not yet secured official support from ODOT as the landowner. The nomination was tabled for the next meeting.

Note: the committee took a short 15 minute break to get lunch.

- D. **Shagbark Hickory:** Pedersen made a motion to consider the nomination of the Shagbark Hickory. Grafe seconded the motion. Nyberg called for discussion of the nomination. Von Domitz reported that a letter of support from the landowner was not included in the nomination. That letter would need to be secured before the nomination could be officially accepted. During discussion of the nomination, committee members voiced concerns about the lack of information regarding the history of the tree. There were also concerns about the apparent lack of support by the landowner who “wants to stay out of the paper.” A few committee members thought there might be more of a story, but it would need to be researched.

Nyberg called for the question. Three votes were yes for tabling the nomination for more information. Eight votes were no. The motion to approve the nomination did not pass.

Von Domitz will contact the nominator and encourage him to resubmit the nomination at a later time if he can find more historical documentation to fill in the story and secure the landowner’s approval.

Recognition for Heritage Tree Remnants:

Pedersen asked the committee if they would consider historic stumps for heritage designation by the program. He shared two examples of potential sites: the Silverton Oak Stump and petrified wood in Bend. Tocchini said the committee had considered this idea early on in the program. At that time, the Abernathy Elm had to be removed and the committee discussed honoring the remnants since it had such a significant history for the state. The committee ended up deciding to stick with honoring only live trees. Grafe is concerned about “mission creep” if the program moves beyond living trees. Washington suggested including stories about significant remnants in the Deep Roots Newsletter and on the website. Pedersen agreed that the committee should put in the effort to include these stories of the “gone but not forgotten” trees in the website. Von Domitz asked committee members to write an article about or memorial to the remnants they feel are important to include on the website or in the newsletter. McKnight said it is a good opportunity to educate the public about protecting trees so that they don’t become stumps.

Old Business:

Nyberg reported that his family’s foundation would like to donate \$2,500.00 towards a granting program for Oregon Heritage Tree arbor care. Von Domitz informed the committee that any grant program would need to be set up as an organization outside of the agency, similar to Friends groups in State Parks. Ramstad said Oregon Community Trees is a non-profit group that might be able to help set up a program like the one Nyberg is suggesting. She would contact them about the idea. Nitz said he would like to see the committee pursue setting up a fund. He suggested committee members could approach companies like Harry & David for support. Grafe agreed the committee members should work on setting something up. Ramstad said the Oregon Trails Advisory Council and Oregon Community Fund are an example of how this could be set up as a partnership with a non-profit group.

Nyberg reported that the Nyberg Chestnut tree is doing fine. It is “retrenching” after two years of drought conditions according to arborist Brian French. Nyberg said that his family has hired French to prune some die-back in the top of the tree.

Ramstad asked if von Domitz had received any more information about the big leaf maple tree Cynthia Orlando identified as a possible heritage tree. Von Domitz has not received any more information. Ramstad and von Domitz will discuss the potential for the tree to be nominated.

Appling asked if tree owners get to keep their Oregon Heritage Tree plaque after a tree is removed from the program (ex: Silver Maple was cut down as a hazard tree.) Von Domitz said the agency does not own the plaques, so the owner can keep them. However, the program will no longer promote those locations as a heritage site in the brochure or the website.

Note: Pedersen left the meeting at 1:10pm

New Business:

OTE Council Report: Washington reported the Council is busy with the normal business of running the agency such as budgets and planning for infrastructure improvements. He always encourages the Council members to come to the heritage committee meetings and events. He also shares the important work the committee is doing for the agency and the state.

Reports from Committee Members: McKnight said she would like to look into Riverview Cemetery again to identify potential heritage trees.

Grafe said his current job responsibilities have caused him to be absent frequently in the past year and it has been hard for him to participate. He said he will start to look for a replacement for his At-Large position. The committee members thanked Grafe for all the important work he has done over the years on behalf of the program.

Leech reported that the Witness Tree will be featured in an article in National Geographic in March. The article is about "trees that tell a story." Leech also reported that OPRD is removing seven trees on the Capitol grounds. Two of the trees slated for removal are next to the Moon Tree, which will provide more growing space. The other trees are being removed due to disease and crowding.

Von Domitz said the 2017 Maynard Dawson Memorial Award nomination forms will be posted within a week. The deadline for nominations will be the end of January 2017.

Next Meeting:

The January Meeting will be January 13, 2017 in Wilsonville, Oregon.

The April Statewide Dedication ceremony will be determined at the January meeting.

The committee tentatively planned to hold the July 2017 meeting in Bend.

Adjourn: The meeting adjourned at 1:30 p.m.