

Waterfront Recreation Committee Minutes
June 14, 2006
Expo Center Conference Room

Sherry Bohn opened the meeting at 3:35 p.m. Those present were: Commissioners Sherry Bohn, Hoby Streich; Committee Members Ann Frodel, Steve Gates, Lori Stirn; Staff Mike Doke, Linda Hull. Other attendees were Kirsten Andrews (CGKA), Brian Schurton (School), Adam Lapierre (HRNews), Stephen Ford (kiteboarder), Joy Dorsey (School), Bob Wendler (kiteboarder), Mark Worth (School), Mike Haase (School), Spring Milward (School), Carlos Cornieles (School), Jim Guydon (kiteboarder, USGS), Corinne Bison (School), Diane Barkhimer (CGWA).

Sherry explained the reason for this meeting was to discuss the access issue for kiteboarding due to the high water conditions at the Spit. The Committee would receive information and take it back to the full Commission for a decision, if any.

Sherry also explained that this is a common problem all over the country—in the Delta area, north California, and the Great Lakes. Even Hawaii has access issues so it is not an unusual problem. She stated the Committee would look at all suggestions, but would like to focus on the short-term ones today. Once all suggestions were on the board, the pros and cons of each could be discussed. It could be that this will be an ongoing situation each year because the Corps of Engineers told staff this is the first average year since 1999 for water flowage. Kiteboarding came to the Spit in 2000 at the beginning of the drought years.

Linda had prepared a summary of the Corps of Engineers Reservoir Control Center's current information and the history of the Port's waterfront recreational development since 1983. Steve said the Event Site was developed in part to create a better wind environment for windsurfing and for daily use, not just events. Windsurfing had also outgrown its area on the Marina Beach in the late 1980s.

Jim Guydon stated the Bonneville Power Association's (BPA) Planning Council will review power, fish, recreation, and agriculture needs in considering the Pool levels. It is an opportunity for input, especially by an organized group such as the Columbia Gorge Kiteboarding Association (CGKA) and the schools. They also might consider dropping the levels for big weekends, such as 4th of July.

Issues:

- Accidents and access
- No place for beginners or intermediates now
- Dangerous for anyone except expert
- Should never launch toward land (jetties are on east ends)
- Danger is documented—consider this difference from other watersports
- Should not mix the sports, needs to be segregated
- Safety issue is paramount
- Sport is space-intensive
- Affects all downwind activities, placing others in harm's way
- Hood River is an urban area and is congested in all spaces along the water

Proposed solutions:

- 30-yard slot for non-beginners, mark kites with a "competency" banner given only by schools (Ft Lauderdale City)
- Event Site launch & go only - kite "police"
- Alternate days for windsurfing and kiteboarding
- AM for kiteboarding; PM for windsurfing
- Limit lessons (and number of people using area)
- Marina for teaching beginners only with approved schools

Steve said we need to find a solution without jeopardizing the safety of the public using the areas. He believes the Event Site is too congested at all times in the water, with lessons, families, waterstarts, etc., to be able to mix the two sports. He also said windsurfing has many more participants than kiteboarding here. He did not think it would be a good idea to consider the Event Site for kiteboarding under any circumstance, it's at capacity now just for windsurfing.

Discussion was held regarding the intense community notice that would have to be done, and additional signage, and – would the kiteboard community self-police its participants? Sherry emphasized that the Commission has to find the balance among all the users including fishermen, dog walkers, kayakers, swimmers, waders, picnickers, etc., not just between windsurfers and kiteboarders.

Event Site: Pro and Con

- Pro: Nice space if could be divided, already a booth attendant to police.
- Con: Alternate days considered too difficult to administer, would be dependent upon weather/wind conditions.
- Con: AM/PM considered too difficult to administer, same reasons.
- Con: Agreed that combining the two water sports was not in the best interests of public safety.
- Con: Jetty is an issue when launching here.
- Con: Would have to displace windsurfers and we don't want to create that animosity.
- Con: Congestion and safety concerns preclude mixing sports at the Event Site; not enough space.

Marina Beach: Pro and Con

- Pro: Better temporary location.
- Pro: Could have 2 sections, east and west, divided by middle groin
- Pro: Could divide the launch area with buoys, floats, and cones; create double line with no-man's land
- Pro: Easier to displace swimmers/passive recreation to the eastern beach
- Pro: Wind is better on west end of Marina by Spit; easier to get students to sandbar shallow area
- Pro: Schools could teach again – helps economy of region
- Con: Would need extensive signage and policing; no "show-boating" area – launch & go ONLY
- Con: Who will "police" the area?

Carlos said his top two issues were safety and economics; other school owners agreed. They need a place to teach and it's already a short season here. Brian said the schools need to step up and do the self-policing and the education. Adam suggested the new park on lot 6 would be a good kiteboarding area for the future; even with the sandbar available, it is too congested. Mike said he had suggested to the schools that they be involved in the planning of that park.

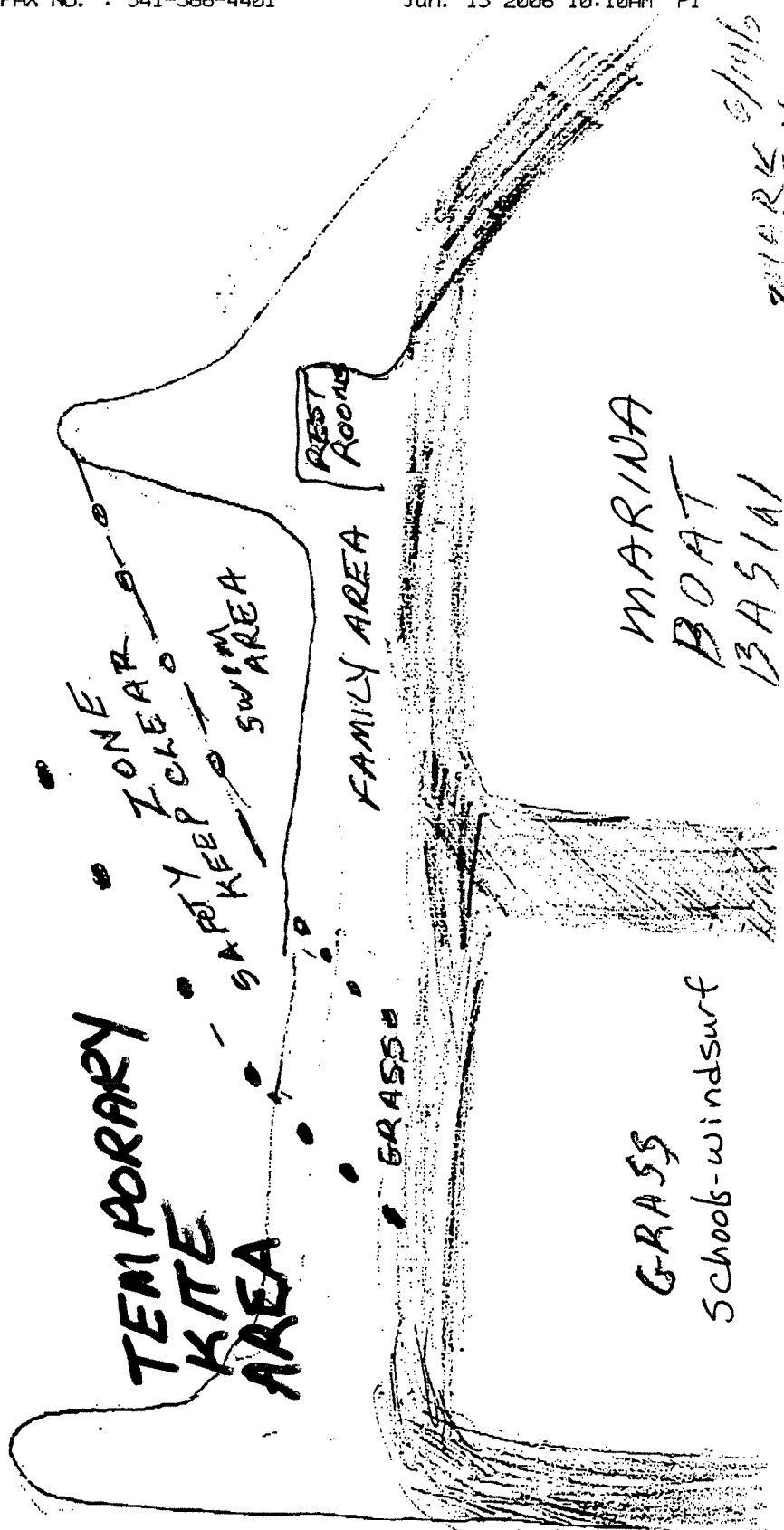
Long-term suggestions discussed included making an area for "advanced only" kites, and limiting kite lessons and access numbers. Attendees believe the sport is growing and we all need to think of future accommodations of the sport for safety reasons.

Sherry thanked everyone for coming and for their suggestions to take back to the Commission and emphasized that it is still "status quo" for the Marina Beach being off-limits. She will meet with staff to determine the next steps to the full Commission for discussion. Kirsten said the CGKA will meet Thursday at 7:00 at Charburger and believes this organization will be a good venue to assist in resolving the issues and conflicts.

Meeting adjourned at 6:00 p.m.

Summer

HOOD RIVER



MARINA
BOAT
BASIN

GRASS
School-windsurf

REST ROOMS

FAMILY AREA

SWIM AREA

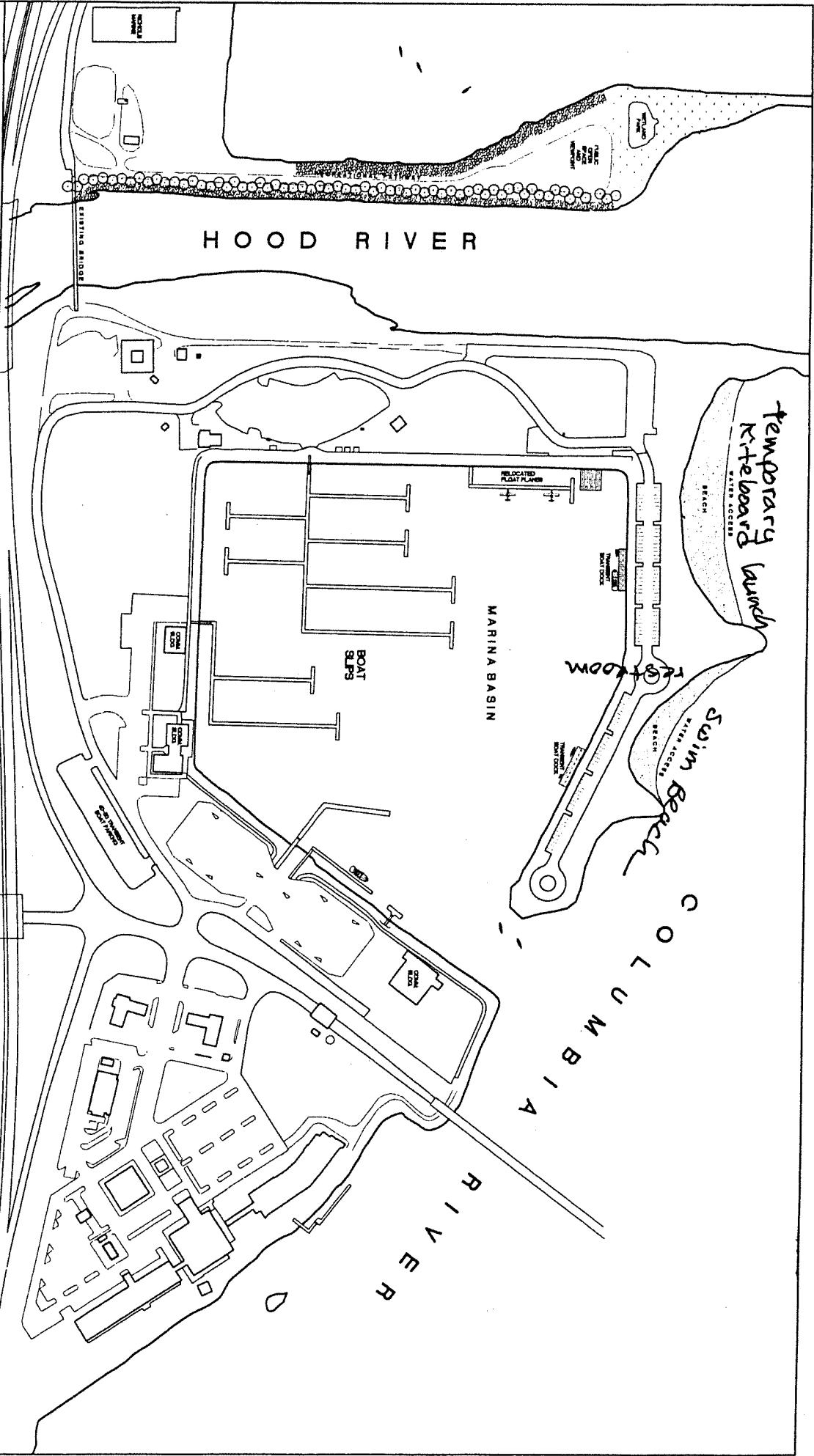
ZONE TO CLEAR

TEMPORARY
KITE
AREA

GRASS

MARK

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MARINA MASTER PLAN
PORT OF HOOD RIVER, OREGON

FEBRUARY 20, 1998

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