To the People of Oregon

Oregon’s state parks system is nearing the beginning of its second century. As the decades have swept past, parks have evolved from their role to preserve land, and become what we value most: a place where people can connect with our spectacular natural home. New parks are our gift to the next generation, and we need your help – your knowledge, opinions and passions – to plan Oregon’s largest new state park in a generation.

COTTONWOOD CANYON: A VISION FOR THE FUTURE

Cottonwood Canyon represents Oregon’s vision for the park system’s second century. The new park, between Wasco and Condon in north Central Oregon, will ultimately preserve 16 miles of the John Day River – the longest free-flowing river west of the Continental Divide – and offer extraordinary recreation on the river and in the canyons. This is a rare opportunity to create a park that will preserve and enhance the quality of the John Day River, its salmon runs, and the sagebrush steppe landscape.

We aim to take the best of our past, and move ourselves to the future. A future where parks are a refuge for people and nature in a rapidly changing world. The Cottonwood landscape has changed over countless eons – been deposited, shifted, heaved, carved, ploughed, grazed, channeled, sustained lives and livelihoods. By examining these forces that have shaped this land, and considering those that may affect it in the future, we have an opportunity to interpret these forces for change. We can decide how Oregonians and our visitors will shape their experience with this special place. With your help and thoughtful planning, the park we create over the next century will preserve and add to Cottonwood’s beauty, wildness, and heritage.

A WILD EXPERIENCE AWAITS

At Cottonwood Canyon, you can choose the nature of your experience with a wild landscape. We all judge wildness differently, and the park itself should welcome you with choices – ranging from a comfortable, more intently-managed core, to an outer more natural setting. Seek the comfort of a wild land you already know, or push your boundaries and explore unfamiliar terrain. The wildness here is a changing experience: spend a pitch-black night in a solitary tent after hiking for miles, or perhaps retire to a rustic cabin to enjoy the company of friends as they settle in after a day of paddling and fishing the John Day River. With your help, we can create a premier recreation experience for all Oregonians that protects the treasured wildness of the place.

JOIN US TO CREATE YOUR PARK

Work with us now to set the vision for this place. Make it reflect Oregonian values, demonstrating we are a people who love wild places. The values you’ll see in this document are an expression of what excites us about Cottonwood. This is an open invitation to you: join us in this effort. If wild places are important to you, let Cottonwood be the way this generation shows it. Attend our public meetings (planning starts in early 2010), join us online (www.facebook.com/oregonstateparks), or write us anytime (cottonwood.canyon@state.or.us).

Tim Wood, Director
Oregon Parks and Recreation Department
WITH YOUR HELP, WE WILL MAKE COTTONWOOD CANYON STATE PARK THE PLACE WHERE YOU...

TOUCH THE WILD
See steelhead flash silver in the longest undammed river west of the Continental Divide. Marvel at one of Oregon’s largest herds of free-roaming bighorn sheep. Gaze at the raptors gliding overhead, and inhale the fragrance of a spring wildflower bloom the moment it happens. This park will protect the Wild, and restore it wherever needed.

DISCOVER SUSTENANCE
Walk the lands and stride alongside the river that gives life to fish, plants, wildlife... and people. See how people look to this landscape to produce food, water and shelter. This park will celebrate our reliance on the land.

PLAY, WITH PRIDE
Take an intimate hike through a personal wild canyonland. Dip a paddle in the John Day River for the first time. Feel the thrill of cresting the first (or last) hill of the day. This park will take natural outdoor play to its highest level.

UNDERSTAND THE GRAND SCHEME
Peel back the layers and discover the intricate connections between natural forces that have left their mark on Cottonwood Canyon. Sun, wind, lavarock, grass, river, fish, eagle, human... this park will lay bare the ongoing cycle of creation, decline and re-creation.

PRESERVE THE IRREPLACEABLE
Clean air, water and soils are more than merely beautiful. They are necessary for life. This park will restore to prime health lands and waters – and the fertile boundary where they meet.

TAP INTO THE BOUNTY
Sample the riches created by a bountiful landscape: fish, game, the bounty of local crops and livestock. This park will be a source of wealth for visitors and the nearby community.

BECOME OREGONIAN
Fall for a wild landscape, because that’s what Oregonians do. Not content to simply know the wild places are there, the Oregon spirit compels firsthand discovery through camping, trails, fishing, paddling and more. This park will welcome Oregonians with a passion for both traditional and newer outdoor pursuits.

FIND YOUR PLACE IN HISTORY
Sense the deep, millenia-spanning natural and social history of Cottonwood Canyon. Powerful forces continue to shape this landscape – a mighty carving river, lava flows, the dry Eastern Oregon climate, indigenous cultural values and more recent peoples, rare native grasslands and a vital salmon ecosystem. This park will celebrate the history of this area, and will be known as this generation’s contribution to the Oregon legend.

KNOW THE BEAUTY OF THE CANYON
Drink in sights unimagined, composed by nature’s endless repertoire. This is a land of goosenecked canyons, swaying grass, and silver rivers. From crisp, brilliant sunrises to a night so clear you can see a thousand stars, Cottonwood Canyon is a feast for the eyes. This park will touch the land lightly, and allow its natural beauty to take center stage.
To be whole. To be complete. Wildness reminds us what it means to be human, what we are connected to rather than what we are separate from.

– Terry Tempest Williams

Cottonwood Canyon is a wild landscape that is both timeless and layered. To quote Ellen Meloy’s description of canyons in *Home Ground*, “They stair down and pour off. They gooseneck. They hang. Muley Twist, Desolation, Snap, Lavender, Blue Canyon, Rain Canyon – canyons are where you want to live merely on behalf of their names.” To a list that includes the Grand Canyon, Columbia Gorge and Devil’s Canyon, we now add Cottonwood Canyon.

The evocative names of these publicly owned lands – Grand, Devil’s, Columbia – express the wild nature of place and deep ties to the land. In similar fashion, Cottonwood can also be read through its own local names and markings. Whether it is The Gooseneck, Piano Box Canyon, Dipping Vat Spring, or traces of prehistoric passage that mark the steep walls, each landform, each significant site, seems to have a name or image accompanied by a story. The stories they tell animate the canyon country, make the landscape palpable and the people accountable for their effects upon the land, its wildlife, and each other. This is not to romanticize Cottonwood... only to voice profound respect for the intricate and complex relationship between the transformational forces, its previous stewards, and the still wild landscape they have left us. The words on this page are all place names associated with Cottonwood, they introduce us to the place and through visiting these places, form the values on which we hope to retain the wildness that so excites us.

**IT’S ALL IN A NAME:**

*Cottonwood Canyon State Park*

**OWENS BASIN • SPRING HOLLOW**

**DEVILS BUTTE ROAD • CORRAL HOLLOW**

**MIKKALO LANE • DIPPING VAT CANYON**
Learn to Speak Canyon

CANYONS (20)
They stair down and pour off. They gooseneck. They hang. Muley Twist, Desolation, Snap. Lavender, Blue Canyon, Rain Canyon – canyons are where you want to live merely on behalf of their names.

Ellen Meloy

GOOSENECK (1)
The rivers meandering pattern forms sinuous, sweeping bends. Goosenecks are meanders so tight in succession that their bows nearly meet one another. From one tight looping bend to the next, the canyon layers up squarely on itself, an even sets of folds.

Ellen Meloy

SPRINGS (4)
A natural flow of freshwater from the ground, generally issuing strongly under its own pressure.

Kim Barnes

COVES (2)
A shelter basin is known a cove. A plain or valley that extends into mountains is often called a cove. Coves can be sloping valleys surrounded on all sides by peaks. Even in this use they have a connection to water: the shape of the land tends to funnel moisture into such valleys, creating damp enclaves with tremendous plant diversity. In addition, the term is sometimes used to describe a small, cirque-like nook in a cliff worn into the land by weathering or erosion.

Jan DeBlieu

HOLLOWs (3)
A scooped-out place in the land. In a hollow, land rises up on three sides, up the crease (along which a stream usually flows) and so up the flank of each mountain. The sun shines into a hollow only a few hours a day, and the woods within can be dark and dense. Most hollows don’t have a view. Small hollows are sometimes called cloves, likening them to the space in a goat’s splayed hoof.

Jan DeBlieu

FLAT (1)
One way to advertise land that could become farmland, a town site, or a roadbed was to name it flat. Some flats point out the local vegetation, some flats just locate the site.

ELLen Meloy

BASEN (1)
A basin is a large hollow or depression in the earth, either erosional or structural in origin.

Donna Seaman

GRADES (2)
A tilt in the landscape is called a grade. Generally the term refers to gradient: the climb up, and the going down. In scientific writing, grade is a term of some complexity, referring to the equilibrium between erosion and deposition in streams.

Kim Stafford

EDDY (1)
An eddy is a swirling of water and air in a direction contrary to that of the main flow within a larger system. Eddies refer to river features that develop where the current encounters an obstruction and back on itself upstream of the main current. Waters in eddies flows more slowly than the main stream, averaging a foot per second, and in smaller streams the silt and sand thus transported settle into spits and bars, which in turn evolve into spawning beds for trout and salmon. Eddies are also significant resting places for waterfowl. As a result, techniques for rebuilding streambeds to encourage the formation of eddies are important to artisans restoring wildlife habitat.

William Kitteridge

For more information on how you can help, visit oregonstateparks.org, www.facebook.com/oregonstateparks or email cottonwood.canyon@state.or.us.

A non-profit dedicated to preserving Oregon’s natural and historic wonders.

www.oregonstateparkstrust.org