

Clackamas County Water Tourism Study

Purpose:

In spring of 2017 Clackamas County Tourism initiated a comprehensive study to determine if its water recreation assets are being used to their greatest economic potential.

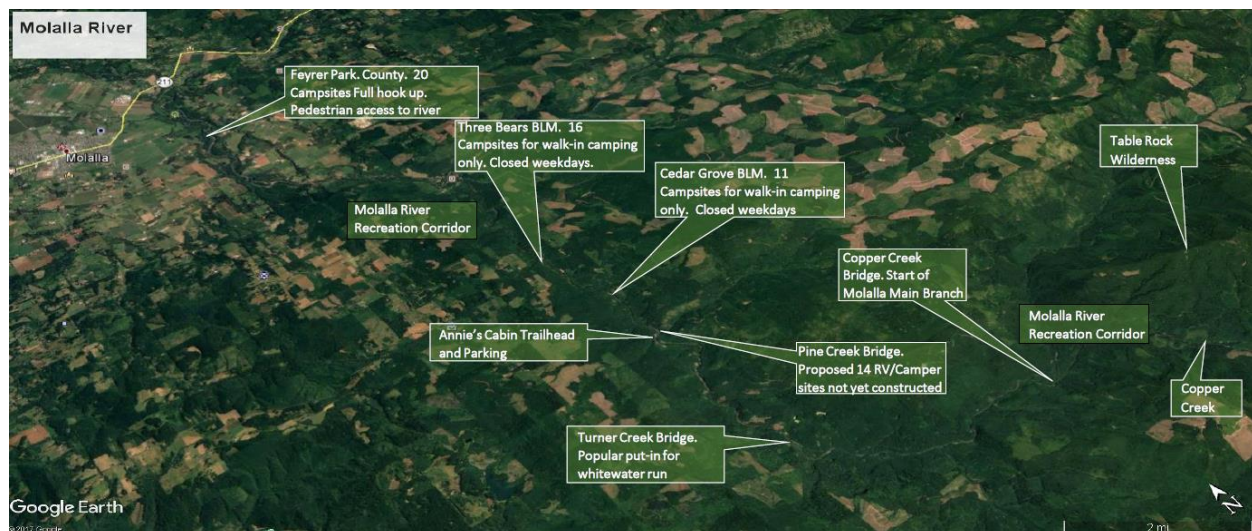
Method:

The study included over 3 months of site visits to the County's water bodies and surveyed 1700 statewide respondents. The results represent the interests of 1.6 million water recreation enthusiasts and a detailed inventory of the County's recreational assets.

Overall Key Findings:

- Oregon's recreational waters are visited 80 million times annually by people looking to recreate.
- Clackamas County's recreational waters attract 1.5 million visitors annually, which result in 240,000 overnight stays.
- Clackamas County's water bodies are equally good or better than the State average for recreational value.
- The public's concern for water quality, habitat quality, public access, information, safety, user conflicts, and crowds are not significantly different in the County than the rest of the state.
- Water-based recreation generated about 12 million dollars in lodging reservations in Oregon in 2016, but Clackamas County captured only about 2% of this amount. Despite above average water assets, the County is attracting below average visitation to these waters due to a combination of physical access, water-recreation management, lack of awareness, and niche product development.

Molalla River Corridor



Molalla River

The Molalla River flows freely for its entire 51 miles from its headwaters in the Table Rock Wilderness to the Willamette River at the Molalla River State Park in Canby. The Molalla River Recreation Corridor, which is approximately the first 15 miles. The BLM estimates that 50,000 annual visitors recreate in the Molalla River Recreation Corridor, participating in rafting, kayaking, hiking, picnicking, swimming, tubing, mountain biking, horseback riding, camping, hunting and fishing activities.

Recommendations:

1. Improvements in Infrastructure
 - a. Upgrades at Wagon Wheel Park - The facilities at this park are in need of upgrades. Improvements include parking lot repairs, bathrooms, picnic tables, interpretation signs, mobility impaired access, and a community gathering facility.
 - b. Increase Camping in Corridor - Walk-in campsites have been created and maintained. The BLM is also considering creating a RV park campground in the corridor
 - c. Improve River Safety - The blockage at Elisha Park Bridge should be removed to increase visitation.
2. Coordination of Community
 - a. Foster and promote the connection between Molalla and the river through infrastructure, policy, programs, and events.
 - b. Increase Number of Days Campsites are Open – Campsites are closed to the public for the majority of the week. The campsites are missing a management structure to allow them to remain open.
3. Improve the Experience
 - a. Expand Tour Products - Offer packages including a variety of price points and abilities increasing the accessibility of water-based recreation. Examples include fishing gear rental, family friendly tours, and increased soft adventure offerings.
 - b. Focus on the Experience - Promote time spent bonding and creating memories while engaging in water recreation.



Next Steps:

View the full 156-page report from Crane and Associates

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/122hp73833fpsog/Clackamas%20County%20Water%20Tourism%20Report%20F.pdf?dl=0>

To discuss the Water Tourism Strategic Plan, Development Grants, or relevant projects contact Samara Phelps 503-742-5910 or email samara@mthoodterritory.com.