

4/1/21

COMMISSIONER MORRIS TESTIMONY:

Chair Witt, Vice-Chairs Breese-Iverson and Hudson, and members of the House Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources, my name is Kelley Minty Morris, and I am a Commissioner in Klamath County. I am here to testify in favor of HB 3162.

As a Klamath County Commissioner, I have the pleasure of living and working in the Home of Crater Lake.

This Park is truly a gem for all of Oregon and deserves your Committee's consideration for memorializing its status by denoting each May 22nd as CRATER LAKE NATIONAL PARK DAY throughout Oregon.

I have the privilege of working with many people in the region who are passionate about Crater Lake and are doing amazing things to preserve and enhance this state treasure. You'll be hearing from a few of them shortly.

They will be amplifying several points about Crater Lake and its impact the Committee may or may not know but I'll hit on a few points right now.

Of course, Crater Lake is the deepest lake in the US at 1943 feet in depth. It's also got some of the clearest and pure water on the planet, with clarity down to 143' which makes it the clearest lake anywhere.

*Geologically speaking, when Mount Mazama erupted about 7700 years ago, it then collapsed into a deep caldera. This event was rated a "Super Colossal" event, the second highest rating on the volcanic eruption scale. To put this into perspective, this event was **at least** 35x more powerful than the Mt. St. Helens eruption which occurred in 1980.*

The Park is also home to abundant wildlife: deer, elk, black bear, mountain lion and several threatened and endangered species (white bark pine, northern spotted owl, Sierra Red Fox, Pacific Fisher, and Timber wolf) as well as endemic species like the Mazama Newt.

Also, the Park is one of the most pristine habitats for native plant life in the NPS. Park Staff have done a lot of work to eradicate and prevent invasive plants, so the landscape visitors see today is more like the primeval landscapes naturally occurring in other national parks.

And finally, this Park has cultural significance with Oregon's indigenous peoples, including the Klamath Tribes, who resided in the region well before western settlers arrived.

And with that I conclude my testimony.

As this time, I would like to pass the mic to Klamath County's Director of Tourism, Jim Chadderdon

JIM CHADDERDON TESTIMONY:

Thank you, Commissioner Morris, for that wonderful overview to open this session of testimony on House Bill 3162.

Chair Witt, Vice-Chairs Breese-Iverson and Hudson, and members of the House Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources, my name is Jim Chadderdon and I am here to testify in favor of HB 3162.

As Department Head for Klamath County Tourism since 2009, I have had the pleasure to visit Oregon's only National Park on more than a few occasions. In my ten plus years as a destination marketer of this state tourism asset, I've gotten to know a lot about the Park, including its people, operations, initiatives, growing pains and more.

As they say: "It takes a village" to operate a place a half hour off Highway 97 which receives upwards of 40' of snow annually.

Despite challenges which include: remote location, fires, draught, covid, growth in visitation, sporadic internet service, large scale event management and more this Park is not just surviving it is thriving.

Here are a few things you probably know about Crater Lake National Park, and a few things you might not know:

- **# visitors**

The number of visitors has been increasing over the years. 2020 set all time records for July and August. In a typical year over 750,000 visit the Park. This is up by at least 50% in the past ten years. Visitors arrive from all over the world. Several of the past few years have exceeded 800,000. This is up from 450,000 less than 10 years ago.

- **Economic Impact**

Ten years ago, the impact to surrounding communities was \$40mm annually. Today it's over \$81mm.

- **Sister Parks**

Similar to the concept of a "Sister City", Crater Lake has become an innovator within the NPS by establishing not one but two Sister Park relationships. One park is called Mt. Wuyi and it is in China and the second park is named Triglav NP and it is in Slovenia.

- **Science & Learning Center**

You'll be hearing more about this momentarily, but CL supports science and research in a big way. The CL S&LC connects scientists with teachers, students, and the visiting public. There is worldwide interest in volcanos and this initiative supports those efforts.

- **CL Natural History Association**

The CLNHA runs two high-volume retail stores in the Park. Funds flowing into this tax exempt non-profit are returned to the Park in many ways with the focus and goal of fostering preservation of natural and cultural resources within the Park.

- CL National Park Trust
Again, you'll be hearing more about the Trust shortly, but in sum, the Trust exists to help protect, promote and enhance the Park. This adjunct non-profit serves to fundraise for important Park projects, such as the successful CL License Plate Program.
- CL Ski Patrol
The CL Ski Patrol was founded to support and enhance back country experiences of winter recreationalists, while providing a safety net for people exploring the 183,000 acres of CLNP. The Ski Patrol not only rescues those in distress, it provides a safe environment for visitors and employees. This work is tough and requires extensive preparation, training, the latest gear, and the heartiest of souls who brave some of the toughest weather. Anything can happen out there - and it usually does.
- FOCL
The Friends of Crater Lake is yet another non-profit focused on stewardship of the Park's natural and cultural resources. This group of volunteers takes on the toughest of challenges and projects and boy do they deliver. From Trail Maintenance to staffing events, the Friends of Crater Lake are a team of dedicated volunteers who take pride in their Park.
- Special Events
As if all of this were not enough, CL is the home to many large-scale productions and events such as RTR – 8 years running and now Oregon's 2nd largest road cycling event with nearly 5,000 attendees hailing from 30 states and 10 countries. And there are other events too, such as the Crater Lake Rim Run. The Artist in Residence Program. Naturalization Ceremonies for new US Citizens. And because Crater Lake is a beautiful place people want to film there, which again presents logistical challenges, such as was the case a few years back when the movie WILD was on-site for filming.
- New Visitor Center
Aspiring for more, the stakeholders you just heard about, and others, have wanted a new Visitor & Welcome Center on the Rim. Well, that project has been several years in the making and we hope to elevate the Park further with a new 10,000 sq ft, 3-story welcome center with over 30 exhibits, shopping, interactive interpretation and more in the next couple years. Stay Tuned.

In closing, on behalf of the Board and Staff of Klamath County's Tourism Agency, Discover Klamath, I thank you for accepting this testimony today.