



Spring Creek Peninsula Public Meeting Minutes Boat ramp access and boat ramp parking February 13, 2023 6:00 PM at Spring Creek Recreation Area

A public meeting was held at Spring Creek Recreation Area February 13th at 6:00PM. GFP staff in attendance included Pat Buscher, Erik Richter, Bailey Biegler, Adam Kulesa, Al Nedved, Sean Blanchette, and John Murphy. Approximately 50 members of the public were in attendance between in person and via Zoom.

Regional Supervisor Pat Buscher started the meeting with staff introductions and Planning/Development Administrator Adam Kulesa gave a short presentation that is available on the Spring Creek Recreation Area website. <https://gfp.sd.gov/parks/detail/spring-creek-recreation-area/> The presentation focused on the history of boat ramp access and parking on the peninsula, the planning efforts that are currently taking place to address future access and parking needs, and a recommendation of future expansion locations was shared.

Following the presentation, the floor was opened to questions:

Q&A

Has the preferred site for expansion been vetted for cultural clearances? **Any plans for ground disturbing activities requires the department to adhere to all state and federal laws. Prior to any ground disturbance, the department would secure all necessary clearances.**

What plans have been made for the preferred expansion locations? **The preferred locations do not have any engineered design plans. The public meeting was held to ensure the preferred locations have support from the public. The next steps are for GFP to work with a consultant and our engineering staff to come up with design plans that will be used to gain necessary permitting and clearances.**

Does the proposed expansion have enough capacity to accommodate the potential increase of parking and access demand? **While engineered plans are not yet complete, the areas identified for expansion were chosen for the possibility of continued parking expansion as demand grows on the peninsula.**

What is the timeline for any expansion to occur? **The department is going to allow public demand and our budget to dictate when expansion will take place. Design and clearance approval at minimum will take 12-18 months before any ground disturbance can occur.**

Is there an opportunity for expansion at Cow Creek? **The site conditions, available space, and water depths are very prohibitive in any major expansion at Cow Creek. The department is however looking at the possibility of a courtesy dock that could aid in congestion at the current boat ramp. The courtesy dock location being looked at would be east of the existing ramp near the gravel overflow parking area. The courtesy dock could also be used as a canoe/kayak launching area.**

The proposed locations for expansion may require trees to be removed, does the department need COE clearance for tree removal and what will be the mitigation efforts GFP will go through to replace any trees to be removed? **The department does have the ability to remove trees at ground level without COE clearance; however, stump removal is considered ground disturbance and would require COE approval. Should future expansion require tree removal, the department intends to replace those trees in an alternate location elsewhere within the park.**



SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF GAME, FISH AND PARKS

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Does the department have to get budget approval for expansion projects through the GFP Commission? **The department's capital development budget does not go through approval with the GFP commission; however, it does require approval through the SD legislature.**

Is there an opportunity for expansion at Okobojo Point? **The department has considered expansion at this recreation area and the road leading to the recreation area is the limiting factor. Sully county does intend to add some gravel and grind the deteriorating hard surface into an aggregate surface in 2023.**

What is the useable elevation for the existing ramp at Lighthouse Point and Spring Creek? **Lighthouse point is useable down to approximately 1575 in lake elevation and Spring Creek down to 1574 depending on siltation. The Spring Creek ramp does reduce down to a two-lane ramp at lower elevations but is the deepest ramp on Lake Oahe.**

Where would the Lighthouse point parking expansion occur? **While specific plans have not been developed, the preferred expansion would occur directly north and north east of the existing parking area.**

What is the navigation corridor look like and how does it affect the boat slips in the marina? **As Lake Oahe drops in elevation the corridor for boat navigation does narrow. Management decisions will be made by local field staff on when it will be necessary to move sections of boat slips to ensure a navigation corridor exists for lake access.**

Can the marina corridor be expanded by removing material? **The department has looked into dredging/removing material within the bay. The cost and effectiveness of doing this is not economically feasible. COE approvals, siltation, and cost are the limiting factors. Removal of material could be a temporary solution, but with the movement of silt, it is likely to fill back in very quickly should material be removed.**

Will the department be transitioning to more low water ramps on lake Oahe in 2023? **Water levels will dictate any further transitions to low water ramps. Several low water ramps were installed in the mid 2000's and some of those were transitioned to in 2022. The department will be following updated elevations from the Corps of Engineers. Rocky Mountain snowpack is the largest factor in determining water levels on Lake Oahe and the bulk of their snow typically falls in March and April. The Corps updates their elevation predictions monthly.**
<https://www.nwd-mr.usace.army.mil/rcc/reports/forecast.html>

Respectfully submitted,

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