DERT AS A PARTICIPANT IN THE DES COMMUNITY SOUNDING BOARD

APRIL 19, 2024

DERT is a participating member of DES's Community Sounding Board (CSB), which solicits and considers community stakeholder feedback around the recreational use of the waterbody and certain aesthetic issues (Boardwalks, 5th avenue dam, etc.). The stated purpose of the CSB is:

> "*Enable a diverse group of people representing key interests and organizations to engage in focused discussions, and individually and/or collectively provide input, feedback, perspectives, and recommendations around substantive topics relevant to the design of the Deschutes Estuary Restoration Project, and to help shape the future of the waterbody*."

The first of 3 CSB meetings has already occurred, and the meetings are open for public observation (https://deschutesestuaryproject.org/meetings/). DERT remains invested not just in the environmental restoration of this space but also the biocultural restoration of the estuary (i.e. restoration and revitalization of cultural and human relationships with place). Recognizing the challenges of reaching all stakeholders, DERT is seeking to gain a deeper understanding of how our community creatively envisions the future of this space, with an emphasis on voices directly impacted by the damming of the Deschutes River.

As such, DERT is excited to introduce our Community Envisioned Deschutes Estuary project, or CEDE.

This process is fashioned after the highly successful community engagement format at Kennedy Creek led by Kerensa Mabwa. We aim to bring together a diverse group of stakeholders, prioritizing those impacted by the damming of the Deschutes, to engage in several monthly meetings at 2 hours each centered around co-learning and co-design to develop consensus on restoration targets. We have already identified potential collaborators, which include local government, non-profits, educational organizations, technical experts, and tribal members, and see this as a parallel track to the CSB that will result in still greater community engagement.

Through this collaborative process, our members will be able to explore not just aesthetics, but values and possibilities, cultural ecosystems, community resilience, and meaningful multicultural uses. With DES working to meet a 30% design goal by the end of 2024, in which a rough delineation of most of the project components will already be outlined, DERT is committed to ensuring voices not included in the CSB are heard and that we are considering the full breadth of regional and cultural experiences.

DES and Floyd Snider continue to do a great job with thorough project planning and development, including collaboration with the Squaxin Island Tribe's Natural Resources Department. DERT is happy to be part of a stakeholder group that can provide input to the project that we have long advocated for. As inhabitants of the region, we have an opportunity to simultaneously manage ecological catastrophe, increase multicultural use of and relationship to

place, and advocate a restored estuary that reflects and respects the history and cultures of the South Salish Sea.