

# MINUTES

McKenzie Watershed Council  
Eugene Water & Electric Board Training Room

March 10, 2005  
5:30 p.m.

**PRESENT:** Douglas Brooke (Hynix Semiconductor), Facilitator; Chris Pryor (City of Eugene), Mike McDowell (Weyerhaeuser), John Simpson, (Eugene Water & Electric Board), Faye Stewart (Lane County), Emily Rice (Bureau of Land Management), Bob Bumstead (McKenzie Flyfishers), Kurt Cox (McKenzie Schools), Mary Allison (McKenzie River Ranger District), Pat Gripp (McKenzie Residents Association); Diane Albino (Mohawk Watershed Partnership), Gene Highfill (McKenzie River Guides Association), Douglass Moser (At-large Stakeholder), Ralph Perkins (East Lane Soil & Water Conservation District), Erik Petersen (Army Corps of Engineers), Charlene Phipps (McKenzie Residents Association), Michael Kerrick (At-Large Stakeholder), John Woodrow (Springfield City Council), Jeff Ziller (Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife), Council Partners.

Megan Finnessy, Juan Welsh, Kate Ferschweiler Jared Weybright, Council Coordinators

Chuck Davis, Springfield Utility Board; Mike McCann, Catrin Van Donkelaar, Gale Banry, Eugene Water & Electric Board; Kathy Keable, H. J. Andrews Experimental Forest; Ramon Rivera, McKenzie River Ranger District; Phil Raab, United States Forest Service; Mark Wade, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife; Nancy Holzhauser, Environmental Solutions LLC; Jeff Gaby, Marina Wensch, Andy Gilmore, Carol Ach, guests.

## 1. REVIEW AGENDA & INTRODUCTIONS

Mr. Brooke called the meeting of the McKenzie Watershed Council to order. He briefly reviewed the agenda.

Council Partners, Coordinators, and guests introduced themselves.

## 2. FURTHER DISCUSSION AND APPROVAL OF DECISIONS

Council Partners considered the minutes of February 10, 2005.

Mr. Perkins referred to the presentation on Japanese knotweed mentioned in the minutes and indicated the reference to the herbicide Roundup in the second paragraph on page 4 should actually be to the herbicide Rodeo.

Partners indicated acceptance of the minutes with above mentioned change showing Consensus Level 3.

## 3. SHORT ANNOUNCEMENTS/PUBLIC COMMENTS

Ms. Finnessy reported that Phillip Farrington of PeaceHealth had requested that the Council consider potential changes to the Restoration Plan to facilitate the development of the hospital's RiverBend site. She and Mr. Welsh would be meeting with Mr. Farrington to discuss those changes.

Ms. Finnessy noted the recent introduction of legislation in the Oregon Senate, Senate Bill (SB) 894, which would stipulate that every national highway system would be considered a freight route. She said a counter bill, SB 566, had been introduced, which would prohibit the Oregon Transportation Commission (OTC) and Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) from designating historic highways as freight routes. She recalled that the OTC had recommended against the designation of Highway 126 as a freight route.

Ms. Finnessy distributed copies of a PowerPoint Presentation about drought conditions in the Willamette basin entitled *Willamette Basin Status* and an update from the Aquatics Technical Group regarding EWEB's Carmen-Smith relicensing effort.

Mr. Brooke announced that May was Wetlands Appreciation Month. He said that the Willamette Resources and Educational Network (WREN) put on a series of educational programs on the wetlands and he encouraged Partners to find out more about those events on the WREN Web site. He hoped that Hynix would add to the events being planned with a tour of Hynix' storm water treatment facilities and wetlands mitigation pond.

Mr. Perkins reminded the Council of the new soil testing service offered by the East Lane Soil and Water Conservation District.

Ms. Phipps said she frequently hiked in the watershed and reported that the effects of the lack of rain on the forests were becoming very clear.

Mr. Peterson said that the Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) had scheduled public meetings in Detroit, Sweet Home, Oakridge, and Eugene to discuss how the ACOE was managing the local reservoir system to maintain some water for summer flows. He indicated that unless conditions improved, drought conditions in the upcoming summer could be record-breaking.

Mr. Peterson also reported that ground breaking on the Fern Ridge Dam repair would occur June 1.

Mr. Simpson noted that February 2005 was the second driest on record. After five years of drought, the Eugene Water & Electric Board (EWEB) had adjusted its financial assumptions regarding water levels. He said that it appeared that EWEB would soon lower electricity rates by about 1-1/2 percent; he suggested the drought could cause the commissioners to reverse that.

Mr. Simpson noted EWEB's recent contribution toward the costs of maintaining Council coordination.

Mr. Simpson said that EWEB required 3,500 cubic feet per second (CFS) to divert 2,500 CFS to the Leaburg Canal to maintain a minimum flow in the McKenzie River. That level was not being achieved, and he questioned whether it would be achieved at all this year. EWEB was doing further examination of the consequences if flow in the river went below 1,000 CFS.

Mr. Cox noted his previous report about brush clean up at the Blue River High School Track and said he anticipated some plantings would also be done. He said that the high school was also considering expanding its pond for water quality sampling by students.

Mr. Bumstead said that a great meeting had occurred earlier that day of the McKenzie Willamette Confluence Steering Committee. That Committee had come out of concerns expressed by the aggregate operators mining gravel in the confluence area. The Committee included representatives of the aggregate

companies, various State agencies, and the watershed council, which was represented by Ms. Finnessy and Mr. Welsh. Mr. Bumstead said the meeting was intended to recognize past success, such as the Green Island purchased by the McKenzie River Trust and the backwater constructed by the Delta Sand and Gravel Company for pond turtles. He said the Committee had been all about communication; the aggregate people learned about what the fish needed, and the fish people learned about what the aggregate people need.

Mr. Bumstead reported that that Wildish Sand and Gravel, which would be mining from the north side of the McKenzie River in the future, had constructed a conveyor-belt type bridge across the river to process the gravel on the south side. Pending the necessary permits, Wildish would install a channel on the north side of the river to provide habitat for fish and wildlife. The channel would be quite extensive and opened up a 3.5 mile one channel along the north bank. This would provide an opportunity for the McKenzie River to establish its former channel and reconnect with the land. He said the project was very exciting, and he was pleased to have seen it occur. Mr. Bumstead noted that many regulatory processes faced the project. Discussion was occurring among Committee members about how to streamline the regulatory process for projects that were intended to accomplish good. He anticipated the Committee would continue its work for some time.

Mr. Bumstead confirmed, in response to a question from the audience, that woody debris would be placed in the channel. It would probably take two years to open the channel on the north bank, and some additional time to establish some adjacent wetlands.

Speaking to Ms. Phipps comments about the signs of drought, Ms. Albino said she recently traveled to Mount Hood and there was no snow pack at 6,000 feet, and the road was already dusty.

Ms. Gripp said she attended the recent Public Environmental Law Conference and had attended several seminars, including one on recreating in the McKenzie basin. She said that several panelists had expressed appreciation for the work of Ms. Allison. A slide presentation of the corridor and its features was shown, and the tree cutting planned was discussed. A student discussed a plan to organize protests. She understood there was a class project involved. A video presentation featured the Warner protests and various clear cuts in United States forests. When asked what they wanted the Forest Service to do in regard to the planned logging, the representative of the Oregon Natural Resources Council indicated they preferred no cut. She briefly described the format of the conference, and indicated it was well-attended.

Ms. Gripp reported that Bicycling magazine had designated the McKenzie River Trail as one of the top ten mountain bike trails in the United States. She added that the magazine intended to publish an article about the proposed logging.

Ms. Gripp circulated a copy of a document entitled “Exposing the Truth—The National Forests Aerial Photograph Project.”

Mr. Pryor noted the City of Eugene’s interest in the work of the Council and said the City’s interest in the McKenzie River parallel that of EWEB.

Mr. Pryor recalled the presentation the Council heard in February regarding invasive weeds and said that recently, while walking through East Alton Baker Park, he had viewed the ivy removal project occurring in that area. An enormous amount of ivy had been removed, and it had made a considerable difference.

Mr. Pryor noted his employment by the Willamalane Parks and Recreation District, which owned some properties near Cedar Creek. He reported that the district was currently in the process of doing a master

plan on Lively Park adjacent to the creek.

Ms. Allison reported that she had been meeting regularly with representatives of such organizations as ONRC. She said that the upcoming season was somewhat unusual in that there had been a back log of timber sales, some as old as seven years, which for some reason or another had not yet come to market. Now they were approaching the end of their contract time and must be logged or lost. There would be about three times more logs being harvested than normal, and the Forest Service was very conscious of the potential of protests.

Ms. Allison said the Forest Service recently sponsored a Collaborative Stewardship Training, which was attended by Ms. Finnessy. She said the Forest Service would be meeting with some people involved in that training in a few weeks to discuss some possible projects to do in collaboration, such as the “McKenzie Tribs” on either side of Road 19. There are also some areas requiring thinning. She said she would report back to the Council with more information at a future meeting.

Mr. Kerrick said he recently returned from a visit to southwest Florida, which he termed the “poster child” for unbridled development. Speaking to Mr. Simpson’s comments regarding water flow in the McKenzie River, he noted that the price tag to restore water flow in the Everglades was estimated to be \$8 billion. He suggested that was the price a state paid for bad land use planning. He said it was always good to come home to Oregon to see the results of 30 years of good planning, although he was concerned about the impact of Ballot Measure 37. However, he hoped Oregon could do a better job than Florida in addressing the measure’s ramifications.

Mr. Welsh provided an update on recent plantings, noting that some plants had to be repotted for planting next year due to the unprecedented good weather; some of the plantings done in early January were not doing well. He said Board of County Commissioners approved funding for the Simmonds Creek culvert project. Work was ongoing on the funding transfer agreements. He believed that all three planned projects could be completed this year.

Mr. Welsh commended the work of Ray Rivera of the Forest Service, saying it was due to his work that the culvert projects would be done this year. Mr. Rivera noted the time line for the design and construction process.

Ms. Ferschweiler said that in response to the Council’s discussion at its February meeting about invasive plant control in the watershed, she was preparing a proposal for knotweed removal in the upcoming summer in the Mohawk and mainstem of the McKenzie River. She would have more detail about project sites in April.

#### **4. ODFW BULL TROUT RESEARCH**

Mark Wade, Research Biologist for the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) provided a presentation on the research done by the ODFW on bull trout in Oregon, particularly in the Willamette basin and the McKenzie sub-basin. He described the methodology used by the ODFW to increase bull trout populations, including reduced harvests, improved prey base, and habitat improvement and improved access to habitat. Mr. Wade noted the physical improvements that facilitated bull trout habitat and access to habitat, including various culvert replacement projects and the temperature control device recently installed at Cougar Dam.

Mr. Wade reviewed data regarding bull trout numbers in the basin and briefly noted the recovery criteria established for the species.

Mr. Brooke called for a brief meeting break.

## **5. CARMEN SMITH RELICENSING: FISH AND WILDLIFE RESEARCH**

Gale Banry, Catrin Van Donkelaar, and Mike McCann of EWEB were present for the agenda item. Ms. Donkelaar provided a PowerPoint presentation on the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) relicensing of Carmen Smith Dam. She briefly noted the time line for the relicensing process.

Ms. Donkelaar described the purpose and elements of several studies being done as part of the relicensing effort, including fish population distribution and abundance, fish entrainment, flow fluctuations and stranding, in-stream flows and habitat, population dynamics, fish passage, geomorphic, sediment input, fluvial geomorphic processes and channel morphing, and habitat connectivity.

Responding to a question from Ms. Gripp, Mr. McCann confirmed that Leaburg Dam went through a similar relicensing process, although the process had become more complicated since that time.

Mr. McCann described the purpose and elements of several non-fish related studies being done as part of the relicensing effort, including water quality and temperature, vegetation and wetland mapping, botanical field surveys, wildlife distribution, wildlife analyses, historical and archeological, recreation, whitewater boating feasibility, aesthetic resources, and land use.

Responding to a question from Mr. Bumstead about the possibility that EWEB would form a citizen involvement committee for the project, Mr. Banry said EWEB was conducting a public outreach effort involving public agencies and private parties and had conducted several tours of the area. He indicated that information about the project was available on EWEB's website.

Mr. Cox asked what would happen if EWEB discovered a problem with dissolved gases, for example. Mr. McCann said that one method to address that problem was to install a mechanism in the tail race to create turbulence to give the gas a release mechanism. He did not think that EWEB would have to do that as TDM measurements were within range allowed by Department of Environmental Quality.

Mr. Brooke asked how the studies would be used. Ms. Van Donkelaar said that the studies would be used to better understand how the project affected the system now, what could be done to enhance the system, and how the studies could lead to changes in operations, for example. EWEB was also required to look at ways to improve generation and the studies could inform those changes in operations. Mr. Banry said the fish ladders could be a result of the studies. Anything that was proposed was considered in light of its impact on other proposals. Responding to a question from Mr. Brooke, Mr. Banry said EWEB did not yet know if the project would require an Environmental Assessment or Environmental Impact Statement. He said that EWEB would likely be required to do an Endangered Species Act consultation as well.

Mr. Simpson said that the number of studies being proposed seemed quite formidable, asked about the origin of the list of studies, and if EWEB had added more studies to the list. Mr. McCann said that EWEB proposed a list of studies and added only one, the whitewater boating study. Only the scope of the studies was unknown when the list of studies was compiled. Mr. Banry indicated that if there were studies on the topic areas already available, EWEB would have taken advantage of them. Mr. Rivera clarified that some information was available from the watershed to inform EWEB's studies. Mr. Banry agreed. He noted that EWEB would make these studies available to all and he believed they would be very useful to agencies such as the Forest Service.

Mr. McCann encouraged Council Partners to contact EWEB staff for more information about the relicensing effort.

## **6. COMMITTEE UPDATES**

### *Education Committee*

Ms. Ferschweiler indicated the Committee would meet the following week on March 16 at Ike's Pizza at 6 p.m.

### *Executive and Finance Committees*

Mr. Brooke reported that the Executive Committee approved a new conflict of interest policy provided by Nonprofit Support Services, the Council's attorney. The Committee also approved a petty cash handling policy and agreed to use Citizens Bank to handle the account for the McKenzie Watershed Alliance, the 501(c)(3) being formed by the Council.

Ms. Phipps requested a copy of the new conflict of interest policy.

Mr. Brooke said the Committee also looked at letters of support for the post-construction project monitoring at Cougar Dam and had approved them. He anticipated the Committee would review a new budget form at its next meeting,

Ms. Rice requested the Council support adding Mr. Brooke to the Executive Committee. She noted that the McKenzie Watershed Alliance's Board of Directors, which mirrored the Executive Committee, included Mr. Brooke. She said the Board of Directors and the Executive Committee frequently met together, and the committee agreed, for ease of operations, to recommend Mr. Brooke be added as a member.

Council Partners indicated Consensus Level 3 to add Mr. Brooke to the Executive Committee.

Ms. Finnessy clarified once the Council received nonprofit status she anticipated it would employ the McKenzie Watershed Alliance as the entity for submitting grants. Following that, the Council would decide whether to transfer administrative authority to Cascade Pacific RC&D.

### *Water Quality Committee*

Ms. Finnessy said the Committee recently met and heard a presentation from Steve Mrazik of the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) on water quality monitoring in the McKenzie River. Each year the DEQ prepared a water quality report for the river which includes a trends analysis. The committee had decided to take on responsibility for the trends analysis and would begin that effort at the next meeting. She anticipated the Committee could potentially produce a trends analysis every two years.

Mr. Moser noted that six of the top ten water quality sites (Oregon Water Quality Index) monitored by the DEQ were on the McKenzie River.

## **7. ADMINISTRATIVE UPDATE**

Mr. Brooke invited suggestions for nominations for the Community Awards. Ms. Finnessy indicated there would be two awards, one for landowners working with the Council and one for landowners participating

in good management practices independent of the Council. The nominations would come to the Council for a final decision. She hoped the awards would take place in June.

Ms. Finnessy reported that the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board ranked the Council's education grant second for funding, with the caveat that most of the funding comes from a federal match to State lottery dollars, and the amount of that grant was not decided. She said that OWEB was experiencing a decline in federal dollars.

Ms. Finnessy said the review team that reviewed the council support grants had several questions and staff had drafted a response to those questions. She hoped to learn about the amount of funding that was available in July.

Ms. Finnessy noted that the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) was in the process of converting its scope of work process into new software, so work plans and progress reports that the Council received would begin to look different. The Council must create milestones for the tasks in its work plan. She anticipated a rolling provincial review of the McKenzie Watershed Council would occur in 2006. She noted that she though the Council had a good chance of receiving continued BPA funding through the next fiscal year.

Mr. Woodrow left the meeting.

Ms. Finnessy said that staff from the Lane Council of Governments and the ACOE recently had a tour of Cedar Creek in association with the Metro Waterways study; agencies are gathering information about the Cedar Creek system.

Ms. Finnessy said that due to a decrease in public funding, the Council needs to demonstrate the economic benefit of its work. She urged Council Partners to talk to the local decision makers about the importance of the Council's work.

Responding to a question from Mr. Highfill, Ms. Finnessy said that the Council's projects program received about 60 percent of its funding from OWEB. This was the first year the Council had sought support dollars from OWEB. It currently received the majority of its support dollars from the BPA.

The meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

(Recorded by Kimberly Young)