

MINUTES

McKenzie Watershed Council
Eugene Water & Electric Board Training Center
500 East 4th Avenue—Eugene, Oregon

April 13, 2006
5:30 p.m.

PRESENT: Ralph Perkins (East Lane Soil and Water Conservation District), Facilitator; Diana Albino (Mohawk Watershed Partnership), Mary Allison (United States Forest Service), Gene Highfill (McKenzie River Guides), Jeff Devore (for Bob Bumstead, McKenzie Flyfishers), Nancy Holzhauser (At-Large Stakeholder), Joe Moll (McKenzie River Trust), Douglas Moser (At-Large Stakeholder), Alan Olander (Hynix Semiconductor), Gary Papé (City of Eugene), Erik Petersen (Army Corps of Engineers), Joe Pishioneri (City of Springfield), Emily Rice (Bureau of Land Management), John Simpson (Eugene Water & Electric Board), Jeff Ziller (Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife), Council Partners; Megan Finnessy, Kate Ferschweiler, Juan Welsh, Grace Gardner, Jared Weybright, Council staff; Chuck Davis, Springfield Utility Board; Chuck Gottfried, Eugene Water & Electric Board; Ray Rivera, Dave Kretzing, US Forest Service; Mark Soka, Greg Taylor, Army Corps of Engineers, David Rodriguez, resident; Marc Wade, ODFW; Craig Patterson, resident.

ABSENT: Kurt Cox (McKenzie School District), Michael Morales (Division of State Lands), Faye Stewart (Lane County), Council Partners.

1. REVIEW AGENDA AND INTRODUCTIONS

Mr. Perkins called the meeting of the McKenzie Watershed Council (MWC) to order. He reviewed the agenda, and determined that Council Partners had no changes to the agenda.

Mr. Perkins introduced new Council Partner Nancy Holzhauser and new Council staff Grace Gardner.

Those present introduced themselves.

2. DISCUSSION AND APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES

Ms. Allison asked that the reference to the “Ruckgard” boat launch be changed to the “Bruckert” boat launch.

Mr. Ziller, who arrived later in the meeting, clarified that the source of funding for the challenge cost shares he mentioned on page 3 of the minutes was the ODFW Restoration and Enhancement Funds, and that the three poster set of fish of the Willamette Valley would be on loan, rather than for sale, as was indicated in the minutes.

The Council indicated approval of the minutes as amended showing Consensus Level 3.

Mr. Pishioneri noted a correction to his e-mail address on the Council Partners contact list.

3. SHORT ANNOUNCEMENTS/PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Simpson reported that due to concerns about the possibility they could get loose and bother other animals, the Eugene Water & Electric Board (EWEB) had decided against allowing goats to graze in the

Leaburg water canal this summer, and had elected to purchase a mower instead.

Mr. Simpson also reported that there would be a meeting later in the month to review the constraints associated with building a new boat ramp with stakeholders and affected agencies, including the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) and Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE). Ms. Finnessy indicated she would also attend the meeting.

Ms. Rice said that the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) had completed 99 percent of the improvements at the Taylor boat landing, and a celebration would be held for the Wissinger family, the volunteers, and BLM staff. She noted that several Council Partners had been involved in the project.

Mr. Papé reported that the City of Eugene was proclaimed to be the Greenest City in the United States by the Green Guide.

Mr. Petersen said that the ACOE had experienced failure at Unit 2 at Cougar Dam, and it would be out-of-service for an extended time. In the meantime, the ACOE would use the regulating outlets for draw-down, and depending on the water quantity that could have an impact on fish. Tests would be run the following week so staff could analyze that impact. He briefly noted that in general, the system was on-target in regard to lake levels.

Ms. Holzhauser noted a concern expressed by a McKenzie resident during the discussion of her appointment at the last meeting, and emphasized that she did not apply for the position because of a desire for work. She did not need any more work.

Ms. Albino announced the annual meeting of the Mohawk Watershed Partnership scheduled for June 6 at the Mohawk Grange. All were invited.

Ms. Allison reported that the replacement culvert projects at Simmonds and Orr creeks were very successful, and US Forest Service biologists had recently discovered a rainbow trout redds in both creeks, which were in the Blue River Watershed.

Mr. Moll thanked those who volunteered for the recent planting on Green Island, which went well. He indicated that another volunteer work day was scheduled for either June 2 or June 3, and the date would be published in the newsletter. He reported that members of the McKenzie River Trust board and staff had done a walk-about on Green Island. Some snorkeling at the crossing revealed very few fish due to the cold. The Trust was seeking to track the changes on the island that resulted from the high water.

Mr. Moll noted the presentation the Council heard at the last meeting regarding wetland mitigation banks and the question that arose regarding what occurred when a third-party holder of a conservation easement went bankrupt. He said that Land Trust Alliance recommended that anytime a third-party took on an easement, that party should be contributing to an endowment that would support monitoring and maintenance of the property. He said that ultimately, the Attorney General and the courts would determine who was best qualified to hold such a property for the public trust.

Ms. Finnessy reported that Rick Hayes of the ACOE, long-time alternate to the Council, had left the agency to take a job with the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs of Oregon. Mr. Peterson said that Mr. Hayes would have stewardship responsibility for 40,000 acres near John Day, and was very excited about the opportunity. Ms. Finnessy circulated a thank-you card for Mr. Hayes.

Ms. Finnessy circulated a brochure regarding the salmon license plate program, noting that dollars collected under the program went to Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB) to support

restoration activities.

Ms. Finnessy reported that the public comment period for Lane County permit required for the Wildish Sand & Gravel expansion proposal closed that week, with a rebuttal period to come.

Ms. Finnessy said the members of the Maintenance and Security Partnership held their annual meeting that week to discuss security checks and maintenance at boat landings in the corridor. She reminded the Council that the Partnership included the Council, BLM, EWEB, Lane County, and the State Parks Department. She said that this year security checks would be random and maintenance would occur on Thursdays.

Ms. Finnessy reported that copies of the updated Lane County Road and Recreation Map were now available. She circulated a copy of the map.

Ms. Finnessy updated the Council on the situation at Cedar Creek, reporting that many agencies had worked together over the last few years on the problems being experienced with the system. The New Year's storms had created new pressure because the river had moved and no water was getting to the headgates. Mr. Davis noted that the Springfield Utility Board's (SUB) water rights were connected to water going through Cedar Creek to support fish. In the long-term, SUB was looking to the Metro Waterways Study to evaluate the hydrology in the creek, and in the short-term, SUB was contemplating some in-gravel work to direct water into the south channel, and pumping. He said that SUB preferred a natural to a mechanical fix, but he did not know if that was possible. Mr. Davis noted the potential that low flows could strand fish, and clarified that as yet, there had been no dead fish spotted.

Ms. Finnessy noted several upcoming volunteer opportunities.

Ms. Finnessy reported that the new regional representation for OWEB was Pat Oman.

Ms. Ferschweiler reported that she had worked with Thurston Middle School teacher Dave Pringle and some of his classes on a tree planting at Cedar Creek.

Ms. Ferschweiler reminded Council Partners that scholarship applications were due May 15.

Mr. Perkins called for public comment.

David Rodriguez requested that the Council allow him to make a presentation regarding Channel Migration Zones at a future meeting. Ms. Finnessy indicated she would work with Mr. Rodriguez to schedule the presentation.

4. COUGAR TEMPERATURE CONTROL PROJECT

The Council heard a presentation from Mark Soka of the ACOE and Marc Wade of the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) regarding the Cougar temperature project. Mr. Soka reviewed the history of the project, which was intended to re-establish pre-project water temperatures to benefit the aquatic ecosystem. He shared intake tower schematics and construction photographs with the Council. Mr. Soka reported that the project was completed in December 2004 and the device became operational in 2005.

Mr. Soka shared a graph illustrating the performance of the temperature control device against the targets established for it, which indicated it was meeting the objectives and fulfilling the goal of reducing water temperatures at the appropriate times for fish.

Mr. Ziller arrived at the meeting.

Mr. Peterson circulated a graph showing up-to-date numbers for the device for 2006.

Mr. Soka discussed the post-authorization change report, which led the ACOE to decide on a different approach to the Blue River project. He shared the recommendation with the Council, which involved the construction of a fish collection facility.

Responding to a question from Ms. Holzhauser, Mr. Soka used the tower schematic to explain how the gates worked singularly and in combination to mix the water.

A member of the audience asked if the ACOE had addressed the losses of those businesses resulting from the agency's failure to complete the tunnel on time. Mr. Soka did not know, and indicated he would forward the question to the appropriate agency staff, George Miller. Mr. Peterson said that the ACOE had no Congressional authority to address those losses, and he was not aware of any initiative in place regarding such compensation. The same individual asked if ACOE had monitored for DDT in the sediments in the reservoir and what the agency was doing in regard to such monitoring and the impacts of DDT on macro invertebrates. Mr. Taylor indicated that the agency was monitoring macro invertebrates but not in relationship to DDT. Mr. Soka indicated he would forward the question to Mr. Miller.

Responding to a question from Mr. Simpson, Mr. Taylor indicated that a large sediment increase occurred in spring 2002. The river had recut and liberated accumulated sediment, which had affected recreation at a time while the water was dropping. That had created the most controversy associated with the project.

Responding to a question from Mr. Papé, Mr. Soka confirmed that the ACOE initially planned a similar temperature control device at the Blue River Dam, but the agency was now contemplating the fish collection project because of the small river reach involved. If the fish collection project was built, fish would be collected at that point and trucked upstream. More analysis remained to be done. Mr. Papé asked about the benefit of a second temperature control device at Blue River. Mr. Ziller indicated that it would have some incremental benefit for the fish, but less habitat was involved.

Mr. Simpson asked if the tower was designed to resist seismic activity under water. Mr. Soka said yes.

Mr. Wade provided an overview of the impacts of ACOE facilities on fish in the McKenzie watershed, which had blocked migration patterns and led to increased water temperatures that affected the ability of the bull trout to spawn.

Mr. Wade discussed the impact of the temperature control project on fish, with an emphasis on bull trout. He contrasted the number of bull trout found in the affected area in 2004 (23 females and 13 males) with the number found in 2005 (25 females and 25 males).

Responding to a question from Ms. Ferschweiler regarding fish predation at the dam, Mr. Wade said there was some predation, but it was not to the degree found in the Columbia River. He anticipated that there was some predation from rainbow trout but they were comparatively few in number and there was no pike minnows found so high in the watershed.

Mr. Wade confirmed, in response to a question from Ms. Holzhauser, that fish mortality from fish passing through the tunnels was about 15 percent. The majority of fish deaths appeared to be due to water pressure changes.

The Council took a brief meeting break. Mr. Peterson left during the break.

5. FISCAL YEAR 2006 WORK PLAN UPDATE

Ms. Finnessy called the Council's attention to the work plan for fiscal year (FY) 2006 and provided a progress report on work plan items.

Ms. Finnessy anticipated that Council staff would produce an annual report at the year's end.

Mr. Simpson thanked Ms. Finnessy for the summary, which he found helpful.

6. COMMITTEE UPDATES

Ms. Finnessy reviewed the Executive Committee minutes, copies of which were provided to Council Partners in the packet. She called attention to the Committee's recommendation that the Council present its annual Landowners Award to Peter Graham. The award would be presented to Mr. Graham at the Council's June meeting.

Mr. Welsh described his experience working with Mr. Graham on restoration activities on his property, and emphasized Mr. Graham's hands on approach. Mr. Wainwright endorsed the nomination, saying that Mr. Graham was one of the Mohawk Watershed Partnership's most active volunteers.

Council Partners indicated support for the nomination by showing Consensus Level 3.

7. ADMINISTRATIVE UPDATES

Ms. Finnessy reported that she had attended a fundraising work shop in Portland and learned a great deal about seeking private funding.

Ms. Finnessy said the McKenzie Watershed Alliance was working on year-end reporting with assistance of the Finance Committee.

Ms. Finnessy reminded the Council that its annual retreat would be held in October, and polled Partners for dates. Several Council Partners expressed interest in having a weekday, rather than weekend, retreat. A tentative date of October 12, 2006, was established, with the meeting scheduled for 2 p.m. to 8 p.m., at a location to be announced.

Council Partners indicated support for a retreat meeting date of October 12, 2006, from 2 to 8 p.m., with all Partners except Mr. Simpson showing Consensus Level 3; Mr. Simpson indicated Consensus Level 5.

The next Council meeting was scheduled for May 11, 2006.

The meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

(Recorded by Kimberly Young)