

MINUTES

McKenzie Watershed Council
Eugene Water & Electric Board Training Room

May 12, 2005
5:30 p.m.

PRESENT: Emily Rice (Bureau of Land Management) Facilitator; Mary Allison (McKenzie River Ranger District), Diane Albino (Mohawk Watershed Partnership), Doug Brooke (Hynix Semiconductor of America), Bob Bumstead (McKenzie Flyfishers), Kurt Cox (McKenzie Schools), Gene Highfill (McKenzie River Guides Association), Michael Kerrick (At-large Stakeholder), John Lilly (Oregon Division of State Lands), Joe Moll (McKenzie River Trust), Douglass Moser (At-large Stakeholder), Ralph Perkins (East Lane Soil & Water Conservation District), Charlene Phipps (McKenzie Residents Association), Joe Pishioneri (City of Springfield), Chris Pryor (City of Eugene), John Simpson (Eugene Water & Electric Board), Jeff Ziller (Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife), Council Partners.

GUESTS/STAFF: Megan Finnessy, Juan Welsh, Kate Ferschweiler, council staff; Shawn Krueger, City of Springfield Public Works; Randy Hledik, Wildish Sand and Gravel Company; Chuck Davis, Springfield Utility Board; Nancy Holzhauser guests.

1. REVIEW AGENDA & INTRODUCTIONS

Ms. Rice called the meeting of the McKenzie Watershed Council (MWC) to order. She briefly reviewed the agenda and determined that no changes were necessary. She introduced Joe Pishioneri, who would replace John Woodrow as the Council partner from the City of Springfield.

Ms. Finnessy announced that Mr. Woodrow would remain on the Finance Committee.

Ms. Rice noted that a list for future Council topics was being circulated and asked Partners to add any suggestions they might have to the list.

Council Partners, staff, and guests introduced themselves.

2. FURTHER DISCUSSION AND APPROVAL OF DECISIONS MADE AT LAST MEETING

Ms. Rice determined that Council Partners had no objections to the decisions made at the April 14 meeting and the following corrections were offered:

- Michael Kerrick was not at the meeting although he was shown as present.
- Dave Kretzing represented the US Forest Service, not the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife.
- Sweet Water Creek should be Sweetwater Creek.

Partners indicated acceptance of the revised minutes showing Consensus Level 3.

3. SHORT ANNOUNCEMENTS/PUBLIC COMMENTS

Ms. Finnessy asked Partners to let her know if they wished to participate in the projects site tour scheduled for Friday, June 10. She said that the first Cedar Creek meeting to discuss another conservation area was scheduled for May 31, 2005. She announced that the Department of Geology and Mineral Industries had announced its annual OR Plan for Salmon and Watershed award to both Delta Sand and Gravel and the MWC. She thanked all those who had helped with MWC projects. She distributed an atlas of watershed councils and noted that a statewide coordinator was now providing support to all councils. She also distributed a letter from Wildish Land Company dated May 12, 2005, and noted that Randy Hledik would speak to the Council regarding a Wildish project.

Mr. Ziller encouraged Partners to view a documentary on Oregon Public Broadcasting at 10:45 p.m. He reported that the salmon run on the Willamette River was significantly lower than predicted and there were far fewer five-year old fish than anticipated. He said that the situation on the Willamette could be similar to that on the Columbia River and the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) would be monitoring the run.

Mr. Simpson reported that Eugene Water & Electric Board (EWEB) environmental staff was collecting agricultural activity runoff for analysis. He said that water flow at the Leaburg Dam looked good and EWEB would begin to raise the level of the lake on Monday, May 16, 2005 as planned. He said the lake raise would occur in 2" increments at 90 minutes intervals, for a maximum of five increments; the purpose was to calibrate new generators and determine the optimum lake level for maximum power generation.

Mr. Bumstead reported that the McKenzie-Willamette Confluence Steering Committee had met and he was pleased that Mr. Hledik would be presenting an exciting project from the committee.

Mr. Brooke invited Partners to participate in an evening walk through marsh and mitigated wetlands.

Mr. Lilly related that there was little activity related to wetlands issues during the current legislative session; however, the public's right to use waterways was a topic of considerable interest. He noted that an opinion was issued by the Attorney General last month on use of waterways not yet declared State-owned and there were three pending bills to clarify the issue, including Senate Bill 1028 that would codify the opinion.

Ms. Albino invited Partners to attending the Mohawk Watershed Partnership's annual meeting and barbecue on June 7.

Mr. Cox described several McKenzie Schools student projects, including the EWEB Solar Challenge. He said that he had up to 15 students available for the hatchery project if they could be of assistance. Ms. Finnessy replied that she would have more information after she had met with staff at the hatchery.

Ms. Allison said the McKenzie River Ranger District would be conducting a field trip to discuss and view contemporary forest management practices on May 14, 2005. She also noted that fishery and habitat improvement projects on the McKenzie River were in progress. To learn more about the fieldtrips Ms. Allison suggested visiting the Willamette Forest Service website.

Mr. Kerrick reported that he had attended a tour through the Hinkle Creek watershed, a tributary of the North Umpqua River, to observe the effect of current forest practices rules on fish.

Mr. Moll announced that the McKenzie River Trust had hired its first conservation director and was advertising for director of resources to handle fund raising and other activities.

Ms. Rice reported on a number of current BLM projects, including the addition of culverts and a boat landing upgrade. She expected the projects to be completed in August 2005.

Mr. Ziller commented that water conditions in the Willamette Valley had gone from extreme drought to almost normal.

Nancy Holzhauser a Horse Creek resident reported that she had met with Ms. Finnessy to discuss a “mini” or “sub” watershed council in the Horse Creek area. Ms. Finnessy noted that was consistent with MWC goals to promote local conservation efforts and Partnerships.

Mr. Krueger displayed a poster that was part of the City of Springfield invasive weed public information campaign and said that copies were available through the Springfield office.

Mr. Davis related that SUB had investigated the Cedar Creek muddy discharged into the McKenzie River and was not yet certain what was causing the high turbidity, although the Lane County road project was determined not to be the source.

Mr. Hledik asked for MWC’s continued support for the Wildish Sand and Gravel Company habitat enhancement and flood control project being proposed in conjunction with the sand and gravel operations located on the north side of the McKenzie River at the confluence with the Willamette River. He said that beginning in 1999 the four major community sand and gravel operators with operations in the vicinity of the confluence joined other land owners, governmental officials and MWC Partners on the McKenzie-Willamette Confluence Steering Committee to discuss common concerns and develop solutions to various land use, flood control and habitat issues. He said the Committee developed guidelines for those issues and proposed several restoration projects designed to balance private and public interests in the confluence.

Mr. Hledik illustrated on aerial photographs the proposed project to build a 1.35 mile fish channel and pond turtle habitat of approximately 19.5 acres. He said that Wildish Sand and Gravel owned approximately 450 acres of property on the north side of the river that was already zoned and permitted for sand and gravel extraction. The purpose of the project was to protect Wildish operations from flooding in a manner that addressed environmental issues. He said that applications had been submitted to Lane County, the Department of State Lands, US Army Corps of Engineers and asked MWC Partners to either individually or collectively support the effort.

In response to a question from Mr. Moser, Mr. Hledik thought the recent article about the project in *The Register-Guard* was generally balanced but expressed disappointment that it did not convey more of the collaborative process that occurred regarding the confluence.

Ms. Finnessy asked if Council Partners were willing to provide a letter of support for the project to the various agencies involved in approval.

Mr. Lilly recused himself from the discussion as his agency would be involved in review and approval of the project.

Mr. Ziller volunteered to be on a review team for the draft letter. He stated that the project concept was good and strove to meet the goals of the Steering Committee through a collaborative process. He noted that the initial fill/removal application submitted to the State had generated negative comments.

Mr. Bumstead commented that a letter of support from MWC would lend credence to the project.

Mr. Hledik said a major concern of neighbors was related to the impact of flood control measures and Wildish had conducted extensive computer modeling of the potential impact and would be sharing that information with neighbors to address their concerns. He said there had been some responses to the public notice regarding endangered species and those could be addressed by information compiled by a biologist hired through the Steering Committee. He said Wildish's intent was to extract gravel on the north side of the river and convey the material across the river to a processing plant that already existed on the south side.

In response to a question from Ms. Phipps, Mr. Hledik said neighbors concerns were related to the impact of the berm on their property.

Mr. Brooke asked if the fill permit was a barrier to moving forward with the project. Mr. Hledik said that Wildish had been conducting extracting operations but needed to construct the berm, which would require local, state, and federal permits, before extracting at a deeper level.

Following a general discussion by Partners, Ms. Finnessy proposed drafting a letter of support for the project to be sent to Lane County, the Department of State Lands, the Department of Geology and Mineral Industries and the US Army Corps of Engineers. She said a draft letter could be available for review at the MWC June 2005 meeting, along with background information on the project.

Members indicated approval of Ms. Finnessy's proposal by showing Consensus Level 3.

4. MCKENZIE WATERSHED COUNCIL HABITAT AND RECREATION ACTION PLANS

Mr. Bumstead provided an overview of the *Action Plan for Recreation and Human Habitat*, which included 4 goals and 14 associated tasks related to recreation and 4 goals and 18 associated objectives related to human habitat. He said that since the *Plan* was developed some of the goals, objectives and tasks were no longer realistic and the purpose of the discussion was to determine which ones were still viable, worthwhile pursuing and within the resources and will of MWC to accomplish. He explained that the Partners would form groups of three to discuss goals and tasks or objectives in each category; each partner would then individually designate, using the adhesive dots provided, the two most important recreation tasks and the four most important human habitat objectives. He said that once voting was concluded the three or four items in each category that received the highest number of votes would be discussed to determine if they represented the top priorities.

Ms. Rice commented that some of the recreation goals had become problematic and somewhat outside the Council's scope and resources. She noted that the vision was originally developed in 1997 and the intent was to maintain and not manage river sites. She asked Partners to review recreation tasks with that in mind and identify which should be retained.

5. ACTION PLAN EVALUATION REVIEW AND DISCUSSION

Following small group discussions and voting, Ms. Finnessy listed the recreation tasks and human habitat objectives that received the highest number of votes. Mr. Bumstead indicated the Partners would discuss recreation priorities first, and then move to human habitat priorities.

Recreation: (there was a tie for third place)

1. Goal 3, Task 1: Stewardship – work with recreation providers to develop and distribute maps and brochures and develop and install kiosks and signs that educate users about river

- access points, river etiquette, and stewardship
2. Goal 4, Task 6: Develop Partnerships with land trusts and conservancies to preserve recreational values and/or improve recreational access in the river corridor
 3. Goal 3, Task 3: Broaden avenues for educational information distribution
 3. Goal 4, Task 4: Work with local law enforcement agencies and federal, state, and local recreation providers to development and implement citizen-supported crime watch and facility maintenance programs

Mr. Bumstead stated that the *Plan* represented a “broad brush” and each of the items it contained was agreed upon by consensus of the Partners. He reviewed the top recreation tasks and noted that the areas of highest priority appeared to be education, access, use, river ethics and safety. He invited comments from Partners.

Mr. Simpson said that a citizen-supported crime watch was tied to safety, as was crime reduction through appropriate design.

Mr. Bumstead noted that river access had decreased; there used to be a boat landing every three miles but gaps now existed. He asked if increasing access was something the Council should address.

Ms. Allison said that the appropriate land management agencies should be responsible for constructing facilities; MWC’s approach should be to present a consistent message to those agencies.

Mr. Bumstead said the Maintenance Partnership worked with agencies to assure that river access points were available, maintained, and safe.

Mr. Moll asked if any pending legislation would provide funding for *Action Plan* items and if so, should MWC support that legislation or wait to determine what role the Council might play if the legislation passed. Mr. Lilly replied that Senate Bill 1028 had a mechanism to provide funding through grants for that type of work, but he was uncertain if the bill would pass; the recreation community had expressed concern about fees.

Partners listed examples of McKenzie River watershed use other than on the river, including hiking and camping and trail use, although there were few ways to access the river other than at boat landings or campgrounds.

Ms. Finnessy noted that on the upper portions of the river 60 percent of the watershed was public access and information kiosks could be developed for that area.

Mr. Cox observed that the old hatchery site had potential for increased use.

Mr. Bumstead suggested that the scope of educational efforts could be widened to include recreational activities beyond the river.

Ms. Allison pointed out that some developed sites already had informational kiosks.

Ms. Finnessy suggested that someone could inventory heavily access areas to identify informational kiosk gaps.

Mr. Pishioneri urged a focus on geographic gaps and river users to make the best use of limited resources.

Ms. Phipps suggested that education efforts be focused on heavily used trails and boat landings where there was habitat degradation

Human Habitat: (there was a tie for third place)

1. Goal 3, Obj. A: Maintain the health of riparian areas
2. Goal 3, Obj. C: Increase the public's knowledge of watershed issues, riparian areas, etc.
3. Goal 3, Obj. B: Maintain the health of the river
3. Goal 2, Obj. B: Communities should be an opportunity area for aesthetically compatible economic development
4. Goal 1, Obj. E Encourage an analysis of cumulative effect of growth and development on the health of the watershed

Mr. Bumstead reviewed the top human habitat objectives and noted that while the focus was at the objective level, each objective had related tasks. He invited comments from Partners.

Mr. Zeller expressed concern that because the focus was at the objective level, some key tasks under objectives that did not receive a significant number of votes could be overlooked.

Ms. Finnessy said that she would prepare a draft recreation amendment to the *Action Plan* for consideration at the Council retreat and at that time the Council would further explore human habitat priorities.

Mr. Bumstead urged Partners to review the action plan and let Ms. Finnessy know if there were key tasks that should receive priority consideration that had not been included under any of the top tasks and objectives during the review.

6. COMMITTEE UPDATES AND ADMINISTRATIVE UPDATES

Executive Committee

Ms. Rice briefed the Partners on Executive Committee activities. She said the Committee was composed of five people; however two members were leaving the committee and Ralph Perkins and Diane Albino were recommended to replace them. She requested asked Partners to confirm the new membership of the Executive Committee.

Members indicated approval of the proposed Executive Committee membership by showing Consensus Level 3.

Landowner Award

Ms. Finnessy stated that there were originally two awards: one for a landowner who was working with MWC and one for a landowner who was not working with MWC. She said that no award would be given in the latter category as there were no guidelines for evaluating potential recipients. She announced that the award for working with MWC was recommended to Gossler Farms and that upon approval a plaque would be presented at the June 2005 meeting.

Ms. Rice asked Partners to indicate support for the award.

Members indicated support for an award to Gossler Farms Nursery by showing Consensus Level 3.

Education Committee

Ms. Ferschweiler indicated that the Committee was brainstorming its direction and would address benchmarks by the end of the summer, specifically the Goal 1 education benchmarks. She would email information to the Committee members about the upcoming meeting.

Ms. Ferschweiler reported that the knotweed grant had not been received and funding would not be available; however, educational efforts were moving forward with an invasive plant theme and a list of the top ten invasive weeds was in the current newsletter. She said the McGowan Creek education site was ready for 4th and 5th graders to visit and thanked the Springfield School District and Bureau of Land Management for their Partnership.

Project Committee

Mr. Perkins reported that the Committee met last week and encouraged Partners to read the meeting minutes. He said a public meeting was scheduled for May 18, 2005, at 7 p.m. on the Willamette restoration process. He encouraged Partners to participate in the projects site tour on June 10. He discussed a presentation on the healthy farms/clean water initiative, which was an EWEB program to encourage appropriate use of pesticides and pesticides.

Mr. Simpson noted that the program also addressed creating markets for agricultural products.

Mr. Perkins pointed out a draft land use agreement document in the agenda packet. He asked Partners to review the document and contact Juan Welsh with any suggestions.

McKenzie Watershed Alliance

Ms. Finnessy announced that the Alliance had received its tax exempt status and staff was discussing the changes associated with the transition. She said there were many changes to consider, including developing donation response and management processes.

In response to a question from Mr. Cox, Ms. Finnessy replied that the tax exempt status was provisional for two years, after which it became permanent.

Quarterly Budget

Ms. Finnessy noted that the quarterly budget included in the agenda packet contained some minor modifications due to CPRCD staffing changes and the format had been updated.

The meeting adjourned at 8:25 p.m.
(Recorded by Lynn Taylor)