

MINUTES

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

May 11, 2006
5:30 p.m.

PRESENT: Mary Allison (United States Forest Service), Kurt Cox (McKenzie School District), Gene Highfill (McKenzie River Guides), Nancy Holzhauser (At-large Stakeholder), Douglass Moser (At-large Stakeholder), Alan Olander (Hynix Semiconductor), Gary Papé (City of Eugene), Erik Petersen (Army Corps of Engineers), Ralph Perkins (East Lane Soil and Water Conservation District), Joe Pishioneri (City of Springfield), Ron Farmer (for John Simpson, Eugene Water & Electric Board), Jeff Ziller (Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife), Council Partners; Megan Finnessy, Kate Ferschweiler, Juan Welsh, Jared Weybright, Council staff; Chuck Gottfried, Eugene Water & Electric Board; Phyllis Highfill, David Rodriguez, Erica Vitko, Sandy Baker, guests.

ABSENT: Bob Bumstead (McKenzie Flyfishers), Joe Moll (McKenzie River Trust), Michael Morales (Division of State Lands), Emily Rice (Bureau of Land Management), Faye Stewart (Lane County), Council Partners.

1. REVIEW AGENDA AND INTRODUCTIONS

In the absence of Ms. Rice, the scheduled facilitator, Ms. Finnessy facilitated the meeting. She reviewed the agenda. There were no changes to the agenda.

2. DISCUSSION AND APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES

The minutes of April 13, 2006, were approved as submitted, with Council Partners showing Consensus Level 3.

Council Partners reviewed the consensus decisions arrived at during the April meeting to give Partners not in attendance at that meeting the opportunity to comment. Mr. Cox, the only member present not present at the April meeting, indicated acceptance of the consensus decisions.

3. SHORT ANNOUNCEMENTS/PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Cox said the McKenzie district's fifth graders would soon be attending Outdoors School at H. J. Andrews Experimental Forest. He reported that many kids had been asking about the Down by the Riverside Program, which had gone over well the previous year. He said that students were in the last month of school and trying to complete all their work in that time. He noted that Ms. Ferschweiler continued to work with students on the pond study, and students were becoming familiar with the testing process.

Mr. Petersen said it had been dry recently and the Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) would likely have difficulty filling some of the reservoirs, which had to do with the timing of precipitation. Lookout Point, Cougar, and Detroit outflows were matching inflows. The ACOE was working to maintain Willamette River mainstem targets to support spring chinook populations. He hoped for some spring rain before the

summer commenced.

Ms. Holzhauser said a neighbor living on Deerhorn Road recently received a letter from an insurance company who wished them to institute a wild fire mitigation/suppression program, which included measures such as tree cutting. The letter asked the neighbor to take steps to mitigate wildfire and indicated a visual inspection of their property was planned by the company. She thought that the letter had repercussions for residents living up the river. Ms. Finnessy noted the Council's upcoming summer workshop, which would focus on wildlife suppression and mitigation. She briefly described the program, which emphasized landscaping for fire prevention. Ms. Albino noted the County was considering an ordinance regarding the issue.

Mr. Papé arrived.

Ms. Albino considered the County ordinance short-sighted because it did not consider the effect of the loss of shade trees and that trees cool the landscape. She thought that clear cuts around houses would make the landscape hotter. Ms. Finnessy suggested that Ms. Ferschweiler be prepared for many people with questions regarding this issue at the landowner workshop.

Ms. Friesen indicated she could bring in guest speakers to address fire suppression and mitigation issues if the Council desired. Council Partners expressed interest. Ms. Finnessy indicated she would place the item on a future agenda.

Ms. Albino suggested the watershed council find out what five chemicals Lane County had recently approved for use along roadsides. She asked if it was possible if the Council could get notice of chemical use in the watershed. Mr. Moser noted his membership on the committee that made a recommendation to the County regarding the use of the chemicals in question and reported that no one had testified in support of the chemicals use but the Board of County Commissioners went forward anyway and agreed to their use.

Ms. Allison announced that the Council and many of its Partners, including the Forest Service, had been nominated for and had received the Riparian Challenge Award from the American Fisheries Society in recognition of the Upper McKenzie Maintenance Partnership. Ray Rivera of the Forest Service would fly to Bozeman, Montana, to receive the award, and there would be a presentation at the next Council meeting. She said the Council could be very proud of the award. Ms. Finnessy agreed that the award was a great accomplishment for the Council and all the Partners involved in the work being done up the river.

Mr. Pishioneri circulated a letter from the Springfield City Council to members of the Northwest Power and Conservation Council urging funding support for the Council. Ms. Finnessy called attention to an e-mail she had sent to Council Partners the previous week about the need for letters of support to be sent to the state and federal legislators and members of the Northwest Power Conservation Council. She reminded the Council that the annual Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) contribution represented a large part of the Council's budget and that was now threatened. She asked that Council Partners send similar letters on behalf of their agencies and/or organizations. She invited Council Partners to call her with questions.

Mr. Ziller reported three reports of bull trout below Deerhorn had been received by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW). He said that ODFW had contended for some time that the bull trout used the entire river, and the sightings added to the data base and provided more incentive for the enhancement of bull trout habitat in the lower part of the river.

Mr. Ziller said that the spring chinook run began, with 10,000 fish over Oregon Falls to this point. He suggested that now was a good time to go fishing.

Mr. Ziller said he was involved in recover planning efforts for Spring Chinook and Willamette River steelhead. A technical team was examining limiting factors in the Willamette basin and its recommendations went to a planning team, which would have input about appropriate actions needed to mediate the limiting factors. The planning team's recommendations would go to a stakeholders group that would begin to meet in July to attempt to reach consensus on recovery strategies. The draft plan was expected to be ready for public review in July 2007, with a final report in October 2007. Ms. Finnessy noted she was a member of the stakeholders group.

Mr. Perkins said he recently spent two fun days working with Ms. Ferschweiler and a group of Springfield students in a wonderful old growth setting. He thanked Ms. Ferschweiler.

Ms. Finnessy said that John Lilly of the Division of State Lands, a founding Council Partner, sent a heartfelt thank you to the Council for its recognition of his service on the Council.

Ms. Finnessy noted Mr. Simpson's recent motor scooter accident and circulated a get well card.

Mr. Finnessy updated the Council on the Coburg proposal to connect to the Metropolitan Wastewater Management Commission, saying no progress had been made. Coburg still had the option of discharging to the McKenzie River, but was in the process of negotiating with the elected officials of the metropolitan area. She anticipated that Lane Council of Governments staff would make a presentation on the issue at a future meeting.

Mr. Papé asked about the Council's ability to influence the issue. Ms. Finnessy indicated that the Council's input was a question of timing. Members briefly discussed the Coburg proposal and the timing of the decision process at the elected officials' level. Mr. Farmer anticipated more such regional issues as other communities grew. He regretted the lack of regional planning around such issues. Mr. Farmer reported that the smaller communities, such as Veneta and Creswell, were running out of water and coming to the Eugene Water & Electric Board for relief.

Mr. Highfill noted the recent improvements at the Olallie landing. He said that a resident on Rainbow Drive had a building permit issue and was doing some riparian work in the river; he had referred that to one of the regulatory agencies, which declined to act because the problem was insufficiently large. Lane County was sending a letter to the property owner requiring compliance. Mr. Ziller indicated that he and staff from several other regulatory agencies would be visiting the site the next day.

Responding to a question from Mr. Moser about the Cedar Creek situation, Ms. Finnessy noted that meetings had been held but she had no update. She said that Mr. Welsh would provide an update to the Council at the next meeting.

Mr. Gottfried said that the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) was updating its Standard Design Specifications Manual, which impacted how it developed and executed projects affecting natural resources.

Mr. Weybright announced two upcoming Mohawk Watershed Partnership events: a May 12 tour of restoration projects in Cache Creek at 12:30 p.m., and some dump site cleanups at Shotgun Creek the weekend of May 20 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Ms. Finnessy invited public comment.

Erica Vitko and Sandy Baker of Noah's Nibblers LLC were present to introduce their firm, which used goats and sheep to control noxious weeds, to the Council. Ms. Vitko noted some of the services provided by her company and answered questions from the Council about the scope of services and where provided.

David Rodriguez said he continued to hope that the Council would become interested in Channel Migration Zones (CMZ). He noted a University class would soon be visiting the McKenzie River to assess future changes that could be expected in the river.

4. CENTRAL CASCADES ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT PARTNERSHIP

The Council was joined by Cheryl Friesen of the United States Forest Service (USFS), who provided a PowerPoint presentation on the Central Cascades Adaptive Management Partnership. She shared a map of adaptive management areas in the northwest, and noted that the Central Cascades Adaptive Management Area was one of nine in the region. The management areas were a way to develop and test alternative approaches through innovation and creative. The Partnerships included a variety of state and federal agencies, including Oregon State University and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM).

Ms. Friesen noted the fact of the H. J. Andrews Experimental Forest in the adaptive management area, and said much of what the Partnership did was centered on that facility. She noted the current focus on young stand management, alternative approaches to landscape management, watershed processes/ hydrology, fire ecology, and wood utilization. She reiterated she would be happy to bring resources to the Council regarding fire ecology.

Ms. Friesen said the Partnership worked to build a credible scientific foundation for its projects, to bring people together, and to share information. It was a two-pronged approach that included large investments with a delayed return, which she termed big boats, and small investments with a quick return, which she dubbed small boats. Ms. Friesen shared examples of the large, long-term investments and emphasized the political will that some of the projects required, and the high cost of such projects. In addition, people were risk adverse to such investments and it was difficult to define their success.

Ms. Friesen suggested the "small boat" projects provided more opportunities for the Partnership to Partner with watershed councils to test methods of restoration. She cited road obliteration and meadow restoration as examples. She believed that the Partnership and Council had a natural connection over the subject of water.

Ms. Friesen said that her agency continued to work to improve its communications with the public. She recalled that five different social assessments had been conducted in the watershed. The USFS tended to receive such reports and then fail to act on them; she anticipated that in the future the agency would work with social scientists to more fully employ the information from such assessments. The assessments indicated a high level of public interest in what the agency was doing and planned to do, and she did not think the agency did a good job in that regard because of a lack of resources.

Ms. Friesen briefly overviewed a proposal to employ poets and writers participating in the writer in residence program at the H. J. Andrews Experimental Forest to provide a different perspective on the work the agency did. She said that workshops, newsletters, field trips, summits, networking, and chat groups were also tools the agency used to communicate, and it continued to look for new ways to communicate with an increasingly busy public. Ms. Friesen said the agency wanted to join with other parties to create synergies, build relationships, and communicate with the public. She solicited ideas from the Council.

Mr. Welsh asked if the USFS had given thought to working in disturbed sites and riparian corridors in the floodplain areas. Ms. Friesen said that more was being done in that regard; for example, work was being done on the Amazon Creek. She had found there were many graduate students at OSU looking for projects that could be accomplished for little or no money.

Ms. Holzhauser asked if the USFS was doing anything with noxious weeds. Ms. Friesen said yes, including experimenting with a machine that blew hot coconut milk on noxious weeds to kill them. She invited ideas in that regard as well.

Responding to a question from Ms. Holzhauser, Ms. Friesen said that she had a document summarizing the social assessments that she would provide to Ms. Finnessy for distribution to the Council.

Mr. Moser questioned why the USFS eradicated rather than learned more about the potential use of noxious weeds, such as those who could be used for biofuels. Ms. Friesen noted that a book had been written about the language used in the noxious weed “war.” Botanists were now considering some of the noxious weeds as naturalized invaders and were trying to determine how they could be lived with. She said that some such weeds, such as false brome and reed canary grass, completely eliminated the diversity of the habitats they invaded, and the focus was shifting to them.

Council Partners thanked Ms. Friesen for the presentation.

Ms. Finnessy called for a brief meeting break. Mr. Pishioneri left at the break.

5. PROGRAM UPDATES

- **Education/Outreach**

Ms. Ferschweiler reported that she had been contracting with the Springfield School District to run a science program that involved taking students to an old growth forest site (McGowan Creek). The concepts from the fifth grade science kit were taken into the woods, and the kids were having a very good time. The grant supporting that program was a cost-share match with the BLM.

Ms. Ferschweiler said that she had the assistance of a University of Oregon student to develop the Education Outreach Plan and she would convene the Education Committee soon to complete that work.

Ms. Ferschweiler announced that the landowner workshop on wildlife mitigation/suppression was scheduled for August.

- **Monitoring**

Ms. Finnessy said the ambient monitoring program formerly operated by the Department of Environmental Quality had been taken over by local agencies and now monitoring was conducted every other month using volunteers. About five months of monitoring had occurred to date. After a full year of data was collected, a report would be issued annually to more accurately address local issues impacting water quality. Ms. Finnessy noted that EWEB was led in the monitoring effort.

Ms. Ferschweiler said she would have to submit another grant application to continue student monitoring at Cedar Creek for the summer.

- **Events**

Ms. Ferschweiler described some of the activities associated with the Down by the Riverside event, scheduled on May 20. She also noted that Free Fishing Day would occur on June 10 and the Adopt-a-Highway cleanup was scheduled for Saturday, June 24. She encouraged Council Partners to participate in the highway cleanup. Ms. Ferschweiler announced the annual McKenzie River Cleanup, scheduled for July 15.

- **Projects**

Mr. Welsh reported that project effectiveness monitoring was underway and reports to the funding agencies were generally due in the spring, creating a work load issue for staff. He indicated he was working with a University class on a template for the Council to use in its reporting. He believed that given monitoring reporting requirements would always be in place, if the Council could develop something uniform that volunteers could easily use, it would be very useful. He said that it was a statewide issue and not one unique to the Council. Mr. Welsh said staff was trying to get a handle on maintenance needs at restoration sites, particularly in sites where the funding had run out.

Mr. Welsh reported he had submitted several project proposals to the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB) that included some projects in the Mohawk to build on current projects. He said that he had also submitted a proposal with the MRT to OWEB for restoration work on Green Island. He invited inquires about the proposals.

Mr. Welsh recalled past culvert replacement projects and said that staff was still trying to identify new projects. He and Mr. Weybright identified two in the Mohawk watershed for inclusion in the grant. Two projects were still in the planning stages and would be done in upcoming seasons.

Ms. Finnessy said the Confluence Steering Committee met since the last Council meeting, and coordinator John Runyon updated the group on the Wildish north bank expansion proposal, which was still in the permitting process. She reported that there had been discussion between Wildish and the USFS about a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to examine downstream mitigation projects. That MOU was not tied to the north bank expansion proposal. Mr. Runyon had also reported on Eugene Sand & Gravel's proposal to deepen its confluence pond, and indicated he would have more information for the Steering Committee later. He believed there was a potential of restoration in the area. Mr. Runyon had also reported on several new potential restoration projects in the confluence area and would apply for funding for those. He had indicated OWEB had provided grant funding to continue his position, and he would be working to diversify program funding in the future.

6. ADMINISTRATIVE UPDATES

- **Second Quarter Fiscal Report**

Ms. Finnessy called the Council's attention to the report, which was included in the meeting packet. It included the coordination budget and projects budget. She invited questions. There were none.

Ms. Finnessy commended the work done by the Executive Committee in helping to establish the McKenzie Watershed Alliance.

- **Partner and Volunteer Recognition Policy**

Ms. Finnessy called attention to the new Partner and Volunteer Recognition Policy, included in the meeting packet. She briefly reviewed the policy.

- **Annual Retreat Date**

Ms. Finnessy confirmed the annual retreat date of October 12, 2006, from 2 p.m. to 8 p.m., at a location to be announced.

The Council briefly discussed the water rights in the McKenzie River held by the Eugene Water & Electric Board.

The meeting adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

(Recorded by Kimberly Young)