

MINUTES

McKenzie Watershed Council
Eugene Water and Electric Board - Training Room, North Building
500 East 4th Avenue, Eugene

June 10, 2004
5:30 p.m.

PRESENT: Emily Rice, Bureau of Land Management, facilitator; Betty Taylor, Eugene City Council; John Woodrow, Springfield City Council; Dorothy Anderson, Commissioner, John Simpson, Commissioner-elect, Eugene Water and Electric Board; Kurt Cox, McKenzie Schools; Michael Kerrick, Douglass Moser, At-large Stakeholder; Will Bondioli (alternate), East Lane Soil & Water Conservation District; Charlene Phipps, McKenzie Residents Association; Mike Running, McKenzie River Trust; Jeff Ziller, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife; Bob Bumstead, McKenzie Flyfishers Association; Ralph Perkins, East Lane Soil and Water Conservation District; Doug Brooke, Council Partners.

Megan Finnessy, Kate Ferschweiler, John Runyon, Juan Welsh, staff.

Chuck Davis, Springfield Utility Board; Gary Markus, Ralph Christensen, Tom Lininger, Don Nelson, Jim Bro, Linda Egbert, John & Shirley Lewis, Santiam Fish; Bill Kelly, Barbara Allen, Springfield School Teachers; Sally Nunn, Rep. Barnhart Staff; Susan Fouester, Carolyn Kinan, Mary Hogan, , Jim Broughton, Donald Nelson, Save Our Valley; Kathy Giny; Mark Robinowitz, Craig Patterson, Ralph Christenson, EGR & Associates, Inc. Diane Moore, Gary Marcus, West Cascade Energy; Carol Ach, Institute for Regenerative Agroforestry; Artemio Paz, Beth DeGeorge, Jeff Leonard, John Davison, Constitutional Law Foundation; Joanne Vinton, David Monk, OR Toxics Alliance; Linda Egbert, John Hall, Carol Jacobs, Tom Reid, George Grier, Tom Bowerman; guests.

ABSENT: Glen Love, Cheryl Friesen, Pat Gripp, Don Hampton, John Lilly, Gene Highfill, Michael McDowell, Linda Mooney, Charlene Phipps, Council Partners.

1. REVIEW AGENDA AND INTRODUCTIONS

Ms. Rice convened the meeting at 5:43 pm. There were no changes to the agenda.

Those present introduced themselves.

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

There were no objections or further discussion of decisions made at the last meeting.

The minutes of May 13, 2004 were approved, with a consensus level of three.

3. SHORT ANNOUNCEMENTS/PUBLIC COMMENT

Ms. Finnessy announced that she was placing information submitted to her for distribution to the McKenzie Watershed Council (MWC). She asked that Partners look over the information and take copies of any items that were of interest to them. She circulated copies of the Eugene Water and Electric Board (EWEB) Leaburg-Walterville Recreation Plan.

Ms. Finnessy thanked the events committee. She reported that the committee had concluded its operation and would present a recommendation on potential fund-raising activities.

Ms. Finnessy passed around a Partner organization profile. She asked those present to fill in the requested information and share any skills they had that could be of benefit to the MWC.

Ms. Finnessy stated that the restoration site tour was scheduled for June 15 and she had yet to hear from many members regarding whether they intended to participate.

Mr. Welsh provided updates on project proposals. He said the Upper McKenzie project was funded and the Mohawk-McGowan was not. He noted that staff would continue to seek funding for the latter and that between five and eight land owners were “ready to go.” He commented that it was difficult to have the enhancements ready but no funding.

Mr. Walsh related that a proposal for funding had been submitted to the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB) for the upper aquatic large woody debris project and the Simmons Creek culvert project. He felt optimistic as OWEB had asked to see both projects.

Mr. Walsh noted, with sadness, that Joan Helfrich had passed away.

Ms. Ferschweiler reported that school was out and that she had conducted classes on groundwater, riparian zones, and bugs. She said she would have an educational booth at the upcoming Free Fishing Day.

Ms. Ferschweiler announced that funding for her position ended on June 30. As such, she stated that she would be “phasing down” her work.

Mr. Cox announced that a McKenzie High School student won the MWC scholarship. He thanked the MWC, adding that the student was a “great kid.”

Ms. Ferschweiler noted that there had been six applicants for the scholarship.

Mr. Bumstead said the Salmon Watch was “going gangbusters.” He related that he would be taking more children to look at salmon in the fall and asked for anyone interested to volunteer for the event.

Additionally, Mr. Bumstead stated that the next McKenzie River clean-up was scheduled for June 27 and would meet at Hendricks Park. He hoped those present would consider participating.

Ms. Anderson introduced John Simpson, Commissioner-elect for EWEB, and conveyed his interest in serving as the EWEB representative on the MWC.

Ms. Anderson also noted that EWEB held another meeting for McKenzie Valley residents. She reported that attendance was low, with only two people at the last meeting. She said the second July EWEB Board meeting, scheduled for July 20, would be held upriver at the Vida Community Center.

Mr. Ziller shared that he had been working with the Willamette River flow issues and that the steelhead were in trouble. He reported that there had been serious concern prior to rainfall in May, but the flow below Salem was now adequate at 20,000 cubic feet per second (CFS).

Mr. Ziller announced that the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) would also have activities for children during Free Fishing Day.

Mr. Ziller related that a public hearing on angling had been held and only two people showed up. ODFW is developing angling regulations.

Continuing, Mr. Ziller stated that there were problems with the Walterville tailrace barrier. He added that fish were getting hung up on the new barrier EWEB had installed.

There were no members of the public who wished to comment.

4. WEST CASCADE ENERGY FACILITY

Ms. Rice explained that Gary Markus, potential developer of a gas-fired power utility to be located outside of the City of Coburg, would provide a presentation on his proposed development and then former County Commissioner, Tom Lininger, would provide counterpoint.

Mr. Markus began by indicating that he would support solar power if the technology had reached the level at which he wished to generate electricity. He remarked that he owned a hydroelectric facility on Falls Creek and that it was one of only eight in the country that was certified “green.”

Mr. Markus asked those present to keep an open mind regarding his proposed power plant. He showed a map of Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) power grids. He explained that the decision to build it north of Coburg was due to the placement and capacity of transmission lines and to the concentration of power users. He stressed that the plant was not intended to sell power to California.

Mr. Markus described the function of the plant, slated to have an output of 900 megawatts (MW). He said the modular design would allow power to be brought on line incrementally. He asserted that it would be concealed from view by trees and that it would not have an excessive output of pollutants. He stated that a gas line could be easily piped to it and that the resulting electricity would be directly connected to Portland Gas and Electric (PGE), Springfield Utility Board (SUB), EWEB, and the Emerald Peoples Utility District (EPUD). He alleged the power would be cheaper because there would be no “middleman.”

Regarding water usage, Mr. Markus asserted that the water leaving the facility would be cleaner than the water was when it was taken in. He said the utility would only use three percent of the water flow, slated to come from the McKenzie River for half the year and from Muddy Creek for half the year. He declared that he intended to improve the creek, existing MUP pumps would be removed and remodeled, and fish screens would be replaced.

Ralph Christensen, consultant on geological resources, discussed the chemicals to be used to

control salt and algae. Hypochlorite, the same chemical used to maintain water quality in swimming pools, would be used to control algae and would dissipate as the water sat in a holding tank prior to being returned to the creek or river. He said a scaling compound would also be used in order to keep the mineral film to a minimum. He asserted that any water put back into Muddy Creek would not hold excessive concentrations of the chemicals.

Tom Lininger, former County Commissioner, admonished those present to be careful when embarking on any development that would increase pollution. In all things, he said, one needed to balance the benefits against the harm caused. He asked what the value of electricity was in this situation. He noted that power needs of the State would be adequately met by plants planned to be built in Oregon. He opined that development of the gas-fired power plant was unnecessary and questioned building a generation capacity of 900 MW when there was far less need. He noted that EWEB Commissioner, Sandra Bishop, had called the plant “inappropriate for Lane County.”

Mr. Lininger alleged that natural gas stores would run out and it was an unwise choice to build a plant in which power generation was based on natural gas.

Mr. Lininger said advertising about the plant had indicated it would provide 30 jobs. He questioned the worth of 30 jobs in comparison to the output of pollutants into the atmosphere and water. He related that he had discussed this with the Lane Regional Air Pollution Agency (LRAPA) and had learned the power plant would be the second largest point source of two pollutants: nitrogen oxide and PM10, i.e. particulate matter ten microns or smaller. He stated that a lumber mill that polluted more provided a significantly greater number of jobs. He noted that Lane County was the seventh worst County in the country for short-term discharge of PM10, something that contributed to a statistically unusual amount of people who suffer from asthma.

Mr. Lininger acknowledged that Mr. Markus would pay into a trust fund, as required for any industry that put a sizable quantity of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. He asserted that the plant, according to its application, would generate 100 million tons of carbon dioxide over a 30-year period.

Mr. Lininger expressed concern regarding the amount of water the plant would draw from the McKenzie River. He felt the withdrawal of 10 cubic feet per second (CFS) would impact fish populations. He recommended monitoring the river below Coburg. He felt that merely taking the applicant’s word that the water would be placed back into the stream in better condition than when it had been withdrawn was not appropriate.

Mr. Lininger opined that the esthetic impact of the plant could not be denied. He alleged that it would have a significant effect on people in Coburg as tourists would be less inclined to visit the City. He said the plant was planned to be taller than the Statue of Liberty.

Mr. Lininger felt the residents of Coburg needed more information as there had been no public presentations on the proposed power plant. He noted the website had been taken off-line.

Mr. Lininger averred that the decision to allow the power plant to be developed should be made by elected officials.

Mr. Lininger quoted paperwork filed by the proponents of the power facility in 2001 wherein it stated that the power generated would be sold to any utility from San Diego, California, on north.

He noted that Mr. Markus had claimed the opposite before the MWC.

Mr. Markus asserted that what was important was the air people breath. He alleged that the emissions from the power plant would be put into the atmosphere 4,000 feet in the air. He asserted that the total emissions slated to come from the plant were 1,000 tons and would not be at the level where people could breathe it.

Mr. Markus disagreed that the stacks from the power plant would be taller than the Statue of Liberty. He referred to a website which indicated the monument was over 300 feet tall, including its pedestal. He conveyed his dedication to keeping the plant as invisible as possible.

Mr. Markus remarked that half of the property taxes from the power plant would be dedicated to the community of Coburg. He also felt that jobs that provided \$60,000 per year in salary should not be discounted. They would help the community as well.

Mr. Lininger suggested Mr. Markus answer all of his questions and post the answers on the Web. He countered Mr. Markus' assertion regarding emissions that "throwing them up" into the atmosphere did not make them "disappear magically." As such, he said it did not diminish the health effects.

Mr. Lininger reiterated his concern that the plant would negatively impact Coburg esthetically and environmentally.

Ms. Rice called for questions from the MWC.

Mr. Bumstead expressed confusion as to which water source would be used. Mr. Christensen clarified that there were two options, one would use Muddy Creek and the other would use the McKenzie River.

Mr. Lininger pointed out that several farmers were opposed to having their land used for this purpose. He said the alternative was to run a pipe from Armitage Park in roadside ditches to draw water from the river.

Mr. Woodrow asked how much water would be drawn from Muddy Creek on an average day. Mr. Markus responded that the plant would take approximately 2,200 gallons per minute on average and about 25 percent would go back to the creek on most days and 10 percent would go back on the hottest days.

Mr. Lininger predicted this would impact fish populations. Mr. Markus asserted the water was available for withdrawal.

Mr. Ziller remarked that the water rights for industry did not reflect what wildlife proponents wanted to see on the river. He called the methods used for calculating such things "archaic." Mr. Moser agreed, adding that he did not think the full amount of water rights could be exacted from the river without impacting it greatly.

Mr. Christensen felt this was a legislative issue and not the concern of the proposed power plant. He said the power plant only opted to take what was available. He reiterated that any work to protect the river had to be addressed at the legislative level.

Mr. Lininger commented that a plant that used such a significant amount of water should provide more jobs than this one proposed to provide.

Mr. Christensen countered that electrical demand will increase, regardless of how many jobs were created. He asserted that the plant would be built regardless of whether it was built outside of Coburg or not, because demand would require it. He called it “environmentally unconscionable” to place a power plant in “someone else’s backyard” and clear a 100-mile corridor of trees to transmit the power to the local area.

Mr. Lininger reiterated that Lane County was the seventh worst county for air quality. He said local demand for power generation was projected to increase by 175 MW and questioned the necessity of building a plant that would generate 900 MW. He asked why, in the face of this alleged need, were the local utilities silent on the proposed plant.

Mr. Cox commented that water entering the river at 64 degrees could constitute thermal pollution. Mr. Christensen responded that the critical time was in the summer, but even then it would not raise the temperature of the river.

Mr. Lininger cited this as a strong reason for the placement of monitoring equipment for temperature, quality, and quantity of water downstream of the plant.

In response to a question from Mr. Bumstead, Mr. Markus explained that the amount of water sent back to the river was less than the amount that would be taken from it. He said it was cooled in a radiator-like system and the water temperature would be monitored as it left the system.

Ms. Rice called for questions from the audience.

Jeff Leonard called the esthetic question “very important.” He related that the town had fought hard for its historic designation. He felt 200 foot towers would give Coburg a change of identity. He asked Mr. Markus why he chose to place the power plant close to the town.

Mr. Markus replied that he did not think it was in close proximity to Coburg. He expressed willingness to work with the town to make the plant more tolerable. He related that, of sites considered, there was no other option for him. He stated that there was no other location that had the existing gas line, the infrastructure, five utilities within the area, and was also zoned for industrial development. He did not think the power plant would be visible from the town.

Mark Robinowitz expressed concern regarding the finite amount of natural gas. He questioned the wisdom of building power generation for a resource that could run out.

Mr. Markus responded that the State of Oregon had decided against coal-fired power, nuclear power, and against building any further hydroelectric facilities. He felt natural gas was the only alternative. Mr. Christensen projected that the plant would not run out of natural gas in its lifetime.

Mr. Lininger provided the Web address at which the plant design could be found, as follows:

www.energy.state.or.us/siting/document

Ms. Rice closed the discussion and called for a break.

The MWC reconvened at 7:40 p.m.

5. WILLAMETTE SUBBASIN PLAN

Mr. Runyon provided a presentation entitled *McKenzie Ecosystem Diagnosis and Treatment*. He explained that he had been asked to help with the Willamette Subbasin planning process. He said the planning process was the “other end” of the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) power generation equation. He stated that approximately \$15 to \$20 million per year have been allocated for fish and wildlife restoration and protection projects throughout the Columbia Basin. It was decided that funding allocation should be based on the needs of 28 river subbasins.

Mr. Runyon stated that he had begun work in November, 2003, and had created a database of fish resources. The entire plan for the Willamette Subbasin, completed in May, 2004, was 1,500 pages long and was available for perusal on the Web. He related that two subbasins were selected for more intensive study, the McKenzie Subbasin and the Clackamas Subbasin.

Mr. Runyon reported that the watershed conservation strategy had been completed for the McKenzie. He called it a “hotspot” of biodiversity. He stated that there was significant habitat in the lower part of the river that warranted protection and restoration. He said a modeling system called *Ecosystem Diagnosis and Treatment* was being used to analyze the spring Chinook population. The selection of the Chinook salmon was largely based on resource availability. He explained that all stages of development would be looked at and analyzed for abundance, productivity, and diversity and that the present condition of the ecosystems would be compared with historic conditions. He reported that the lower McKenzie River had been determined to have the greatest capacity for restoration.

Mr. Runyon said the ultimate message was that the system was interconnected, there were tremendous opportunities for restoration and for protection, and it was important to think about the lower McKenzie River as a high priority and to acknowledge that this area was where the private lands were located and where growth would occur. He related that the study also indicated that the “Eugene reach” of the Willamette River was extremely important for Chinook salmon. He said, for this area, more obstructions were needed to provide habitat for young salmon.

In response to a question from Ms. Ferschweiler, Mr. Runyon said chemical contamination was the largest concern for the “reaches” by Newberg and Portland.

Ms. Rice asked if any new information had been uncovered. Mr. Runyon replied that it confirmed what was already known and was then packaged in a different way.

Mr. Running asked if any funding would come from this study. Mr. Runyon responded that this study would establish funding priorities for the system and would be an important document to cite when writing a request for funding proposal (RFP).

6. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE UPDATE

Ms. Rice explained that it was time to confirm new and existing members to the Executive Committee.

Mike McDowell and Ms. Rice’s membership to the Executive Committee was renewed by a majority consensus level of three.

Ms. Rice stated that Pat Gripp and Mr. Woodrow had agreed to serve on the Executive Committee.

The appointment of Pat Gripp and Mr. Woodrow to the Executive Committee was approved by a majority consensus level of three.

Ms. Rice solicited Partners interested in serving on the Board of Directors. She explained that it was required by by-law to consist of three people, but currently only two were serving. Mr. Running offered to serve on the Board of Directors.

The appointment of Mr. Running to the Board of Directors was approved by a majority consensus level of three.

7. UPDATES ON MWC ADMINISTRATION .

Ms. Finnessy said another Cedar Creek tour had been conducted. She conveyed the Council's gratitude to Eric Gossler, who paid the application fee for the permit. She reported that they were still working on putting the necessary gauges at the headgates. She stated that she was working with the City of Springfield and the Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) on the possibility that Springfield would purchase the headgates and the ACOE would monitor them. She related that Mike Mattock had indicated that as long as the project was moving forward, he was "okay with it."

Ms. Finnessy called the Down by the Riverside event a success in that the bark mulch was placed on the trail. However, she expressed concern at the extremely low attendance by Council Partners. She asked for a better turn-out for the upcoming River Cleanup event. She added that it was necessary to coordinate the boats and Partners should let staff know as soon as possible whether they could participate.

Ms. Finnessy reported that the City of Coburg was no longer represented on the Council. She was uncertain whether another representative from Coburg would join the Council.

Ms. Finnessy stated that three grants had been submitted and staff was working on another one, in particular to attain more funding for Ms. Ferschweiler's position. She shared that staff was also pursuing the possibility of getting a GIS intern.

Additionally, Ms. Finnessy noted that the Walterville Fair was scheduled for September 11 and Linda Mooney had offered to run it for the MWC. She said this left the July 24 Leaburg Fair without someone to run the MWC table. She asked for a volunteer to help with it. She added that the MWC would not be attending the Lane County Fair this year.

Mr. Running suggested sending an email out just before one of the events in order to increase Partner attendance at them. Mr. Ziller commented that information could be disseminated at a fair without a Council representative.

Ms. Finnessy announced that the July 8 meeting would be held at H.J. Andrews Experimental Forest. She instructed members to meet at the Springfield Bus Station to carpool to the meeting, which would include a tour and discussion of the work plan over dinner.

Mr. Bumstead remarked that this year's River Cleanup event was the best it has ever been organized.

Ms. Finnessy noted, in closing, that the Flyfishing Association Dinner was scheduled for June 21.

The meeting adjourned at 8:25 p.m.

(Recorded by Ruth Atcherson)