

MINUTES

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

December 11th, 2003
5:30 p.m.

PRESENT: Linda Mooney, Mohawk Watershed Partnership, facilitator; John Allen, Cheryl Friesen, Willamette National Forest; Dorothy Anderson, Eugene Water & Electric Board; Bob Bumstead, McKenzie Flyfishers; Dana Burwell, McKenzie River Guides Association; Kurt Cox, McKenzie Schools; Pat Gripp, McKenzie Residents Association; Don Hampton, Lane County Board of Commissioners; Jack Harris, City of Coburg; Ralph Perkins, East Lane Soil & Water Conservation District; Emily Rice, Bureau of Lane Management; Mike Running, McKenzie River Trust; Wade Stampe, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; John Woodrow, Springfield City Council; Jeff Ziller, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, Council Partners.

Staff: Megan Finnessy, Kate Ferschweiler, Juan Welsh, John Runyon

Guests: Donald Ehrich, Oregon Department of Transportation; Marty Douglass, Gale Baury, Eugene Water & Electric Board; David Primozych, Willamette Restoration Initiative; Jim Thraikill, Douglass Moser, Carol Ach, Residents; Dane Palmer, Mike Rhode, Friends of Leaburg Lake; Sally Nunn, Representative Phil Barnhart Staff

1. REVIEW AGENDA AND INTRODUCTIONS

All those present introduced themselves. Mike Running announced that he was replacing Ryland Moore as the McKenzie River Trust representative on the Council.

Ms. Mooney said that the briefing by the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) would be moved ahead of the EWEB presentation on the agenda.

2. OPENING REMARKS

Ms. Finnessy announced that Jared Weybright had been hired as the Mohawk Watershed Partnership Coordinator. She briefly reviewed the items that were included in the agenda packet, pointing out the at-large membership applications and proposed FY2004 work plan should be reviewed prior to the annual retreat on January 31, 2004. She also noted that the packet contained two Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) related to Green Island.

Ms. Finnessy thanked Emily Rice and Ryland Moore for their work on the Charter Subcommittee and said materials would be available for review at the annual retreat.

Mr. Welsh said that staff were trying to stretch available funds for projects as far as possible, but were relying less than usual on volunteer labor. He said staff was attempting to make everything available and

ready at sites for the contractors and that assistance was needed to move trees from nurseries to different sites on the lower McKenzie River and Mohawk River during the month of February, 2004. He said help was needed to transport between 8,000 and 12,000 trees and shrubs from 7 to 10 nurseries to as many as 18 sites. He said cold storage might also be required. Mr. Ziller suggested that the Department of Forestry might be able to help.

Ms. Ferschweiler reported that salmon talks at local schools had been going well.

3. FURTHER DISCUSSION AND APPROVAL OF DECISIONS MADE AT LAST MEETING October 9, 2003, and November 13, 2003 Minutes

Mr. Welsh pointed out that he was shown as the maker of a motion in the November minutes and as staff, he could not have done so. There was no further discussion and approval of decisions made at the last meeting.

The minutes of October 9, 2003, and November 13, 2003, were approved, with a majority showing a consensus level of three.

4. SHORT ANNOUNCEMENTS/PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no announcements or comments.

5. OREGON DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (ODOT) BRIEFING

Don Ehrich, ODOT Local District Manager, addressed the Council on the issues of reducing the speed limit on the McKenzie Highway from the Leaburg Dam to Vida and the access issue at Ike's boat landing.

Mr. Ehrich said the request to reduce the highway speed limit would be denied because there was no traffic engineering reason for a lower speed limit. He said the issue could be revisited if there were access problems with the boat landing. In response to a question from Ms. Rice regarding what criteria might trigger a reduction in the speed limit, he said that signs would not significantly change that 85 percent of traffic traveled 59 miles per hour or less. He stated the road was recently improved and there were no reported problems or history of accidents. He commented that the problem was more related to the behavior of drivers than to the condition of the road.

Mr. Ehrich said a permit was issued in 1996 to EWEB to operate a boat landing on EWEB property, although the landing did not meet guidelines. When the County completes a new landing, the current landing will be closed as the ramp is not safe. ODOT is beginning to explore solutions. He asked for feedback from Council members about closing the current landing before the new landing was available.

Mr. Burwell observed that most accidents in the area occurred with traffic that was exiting from the pizza parlor. Mr. Allen asked if people would go across the dam if the landing was closed, creating another traffic hazard. Mr. Erich agreed that most accidents occurred at left turns and said that ODOT could consider a deceleration lane or flashing warning lights. Mr. Allen and Mr. Burwell said they did not think it was necessary to close the landing as most problems occurred near the dam.

Mr. Ehrich explained that some flashing lights were passive and some were triggered by events such as pedestrians or approaching vehicles. He said that pedestrian crossing signs, of which there were more than a dozen between Springfield and McKenzie Bridge, were not effective in slowing the 15 percent of traffic that exceeded the speed limit.

Ms. Mooney asked if the speed limit in the Mohawk Valley would be raised from 45 to 55 miles per hour

now that construction was completed. Mr. Ehrich said that was a county road and questions should be directed to Lane County Public Works.

Mr. Ehrich said that ODOT was exploring solutions to the lack of vegetation along the lake and asked the Council for advice on better selection of vegetation and planting techniques.

Several Council members suggested that Council staff could work with EWEB and ODOT to identify appropriate plants and planting techniques and seek funding sources. Mr. Ehrich said he would assign staff to work with the Council on the project.

Mr. Woodrow moved to have Council staff assist ODOT identify appropriate plants and planting techniques. Mr. Burwell provided the second. The motion passed by consensus, with a majority indicating a consensus level of three.

6. EWEB PRESENTATION – Friends of Leaburg Lake Follow-up

Marty Douglass, EWEB Public Affairs Manager, and Gale Baury, EWEB Relicensing Project Manager, presented on EWEB's intention to raise the level of Leaburg Lake and also addressed the issue of a new boat landing.

Mr. Douglass discussed both the proposal to raise the level of Leaburg Lake and the location of a new boat landing. He said raising the level of the lake would make Ike's Landing more unsafe and that considerable discussion had surrounded the decision to recommend moving the boat landing. He noted that finding a new site would be challenging and that EWEB welcomed the Council's involvement in identifying a new landing location, as well as coordinating a public outreach effort, working with stakeholders, and presenting a recommendation to EWEB. He suggested that the stakeholder group be widened to include citizens living upriver and various user groups.

Mr. Burwell suggested that the options should include improvements to Ike's Landing and not be limited to a new location. Mr. Douglass replied that this could be considered among the options, but any landing would need to be in the vicinity of the projects between the Walterville Store and Goodpasture Bridge. Mr. Baury said the license application was intentionally vague and left location options open.

Mr. Running asked if the landing needed to be on current EWEB property. Mr. Douglass replied that other locations could be considered if there was a willing seller.

Mr. Baury presented an overview of the Leaburg Lake project. He referred Council members to a memo dated December 1, 2003, which addressed a number of questions posed by the Council. He said that EWEB was looking at ways to increase the efficiency of power production and raising the level of the lake up to 18 inches would increase production by as much as 20 percent, with a 10 percent average. He indicated the lake raise would not be "money in hand," but rather serve to save money and prevent the need to raise rates.

Mr. Baury stated that EWEB had easements on two-thirds of the properties around the lake to raise the level one foot higher than the proposal and fill or berms would be used to protect properties from inundation. He said that EWEB had submitted its application in 1991, but the process had dragged on and the project timeline had been extended to 2006. He said that EWEB planned to negotiate individually with owners because the impact on each property was unique. According to Mr. Baury, EWEB might require less flow and discussions with property owners would be delayed until after the turbines were installed and the actual flow requirements were known.

Mr. Woodrow asked if the lake was being raised to increase the flow into the canal and whether EWEB had considered lowering the canal. Mr. Burwell asked if deepening the canal would provide greater volume. Mr. Baury responded that EWEB had looked at lowering the canal and determined that it was too expensive to move the powerhouse and the issue was not one of volume, but rather increased flow.

Mr. Woodrow asked how far onto properties the water would encroach if the lake level was raised 12 inches at the dam. Mr. Baury replied that the impact was lessened the further up the lake the property was located. He said the greatest impact would be on properties along the road by the dam and there would be less impact when a property had a steep bank. He commented that environmentally sound materials would be used to protect lower areas and while the license was worded to require mitigation after a complaint, EWEB intended to be proactive.

Mr. Palmer asked what percentage of EWEB-generated power was produced at Leaburg. Mr. Baury replied that Leaburg represented 5 to 6 percent. Mr. Palmer asked if the percentage was so small, what the cost would be to ratepayers if EWEB purchased that power. Mr. Baury responded that each resource must stand on its own and EWEB had determined that it was not economically feasible to let the license expire and build a new project. He said the cost of power generated by the project would be about \$18/megawatt hour (mwh) and would not be subject to market fluctuations, whereas purchased power could cost \$35-40/mwh.

Mr. Bumstead asked what affect the lake raise would have on the fish screen. Mr. Baury said there was still clearance on the screen and EWEB would reevaluate the situation once the lake was raised. He said the issue was one of cleanliness and the screen had been expanded and strengthened, independent of the lake raise.

Mr. Burwell said the Council was willing to be a resource and assist EWEB in identifying potential boat landing sites, but should not be driving the process as its role was that of an advisory body.

Mr. Douglass said EWEB preferred to reach consensus on a site, but if consensus could not be reached, EWEB was willing to petition to drop that from the license.

7. RECOGNITION OF JOHN ALLEN

Departing Council member John Allen, who is moving to Bozeman, Montana to accept a new job, was recognized for his many contributions to the Council by former Council coordinator Jim Thrailkill. Mr. Thrailkill commented Mr. Allen for his vision and leadership and recounted the many projects in which he had been involved.

Mr. Bumstead recited a poem he had composed in Mr. Allen's honor and Ms. Finnessy presented Mr. Allen with a picture of the McKenzie River.

Mr. Allen thanked everyone for their kind words and the picture. He expressed the sentiment that he had received more than he had given through his association with the watershed and those who loved it.

8. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Ms. Anderson announced that Laurie Power would be retiring from EWEB in April, 2004. Several members expressed regret and commented on Ms. Power's influential role in the creation of the Council.

Mr. Bumstead reported on the last Confluence Committee meeting at which Wildish Sand & Gravel had suggested adding 2.5 miles of side channel to the McKenzie River from the new bridge on the north side to allow the river to spread out and interact with the land. He said side channel would require some gravel excavation and he expected the project to occur in 2006.

9. WILLAMETTE SUBBASIN ASSESSMENT

David Primozych, Willamette Restoration Initiative, gave an informational presentation on the Willamette Subbasin planning efforts. He said that the Northwest Power Planning Council (NWPPC) had provided funding to the Willamette Restoration Initiative (WRI) to develop the Willamette Subbasin Plan, which had to be submitted by May 28, 2004. He explained that the plan would represent an accumulation of knowledge to help decision-makers use resources wisely and would identify factors that limited fish and wildlife in the basin and past, current, and planned activities to address those factors. He said the intent was to create a document that would compel funding by convincing the NWPPC that helping the Willamette Subbasin would help to achieve the NPPC's goals.

Mr. Primozych said that Ecosystem Diagnosis and Treatment (EDT) models would be run on Willamette tributaries, possibly including the Santiam, Calapooya, and Mollala rivers and the McKenzie River, which had the last remaining viable population of Spring Chinook making it a good EDT subject. He said the strategy would reflect the ecosystem, rather than be species-centric, and result in a robust aquatic and terrestrial subbasin assessment of fish populations, aquatic habitat conditions, wildlife populations, and wildlife habitat.

Mr. Primozych concluded that a successful plan would articulate needs, achievable strategies, advance Willamette basin conservation, present a case for NWPPC funding, consider factors that could influence future activities, and improve the ability for collaborative planning, funding, and implementation across jurisdictions.

10. UPDATES ON MWC ADMINISTRATION

Ms. Finnessy reported that she had attended a recent meeting in Portland on the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' temperature control project. She said that \$10 million had been appropriated to finish construction on the project and there may be a post-authorization change to eliminate the Blue River project. She said the group would meet again in January 2004.

Ms. Finnessy said that Phillip Farrington had asked to make a presentation to the Council on riparian work in conjunction with the PeaceHealth project. Council members agreed that he should be invited to make a presentation.

Ms. Finnessy noted that the Executive Committee had met and would bring suggestions to the annual retreat on issues such as fund-raising and an award system.

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