

Draft Minutes
McKenzie Watershed Council
March 8, 2018
McKenzie Fire and Rescue

PRESENT

Council Partners: Brian Brazil (International Paper), Dana Burwell (McKenzie River Guides Association), Lara Colley (Resident Partner), Darren Cross (USFS), Nate Day (McKenzie School District), Arlene Dietz (Rice Family Farms), Rod Fosback (NW Steelheaders Association), David Kretzing (Resident Partner), Steve Mealey (McKenzie River Guides Association), Karl Morgenstern (EWEB Staff), Ralph Perkins (UWSWCD), Steve Raymen (Resident Partner), Maryanne Reiter (Weyerhaeuser), Mark Schulze (HJ Andrews Experimental Forest), Emily Semple (Eugene City Council), Nancy Toth (EWEB), Sue Zeni (Resident Partner), Jeff Ziller (ODFW)

Staff: Justin Demeter, Jared Weybright, Chase Antonovich

Guest: Randy Harbick (USFS), Jane Kertis (USFS), Steve Acker (USFS), Cheryl Friesen (USFS). Additionally there were approximately 30 members of the public in attendance. A separate sign-in set was kept, but was not universally used by the meeting attendees.

ABSENT

Carol Ach (Resident Partner), Diane Albino (Mohawk Watershed Partnership), Bob Bumstead (McKenzie Flyfishers), Mike McDowell (Resident Partner), Andy McWilliams (Resident Partner), Joe Moll (McKenzie River Trust), Libby Morrison (Wildish), Erik Peterson (USACE), Wade Stampe (Resident Partner), Jennifer Weber (Council Staff), Amanda Gilbert (Council Staff)

PROXIES

1. Introduction and Approval of Agenda

The proposed agenda approved as written, all partners showing consensus level 3.

2. General Public Comment Session

There was no public comment at this time.

3. February 2018 Meeting Minutes

Consensus approval as presented, all partners showing consensus level 3.

4. Presentation: A Discussion on Fire Ecology and the 2017 McKenzie Fire Season

USFS Science Liaison Cheryl Friesen introduced the featured speakers; USFS Ecologists Jane Kertis and Steve Acker, alongside Darren Cross of the McKenzie River Ranger District, and provided a brief overview of their planned presentation on Western Cascade fire ecology, and the ways in which last year's fire season affected the McKenzie River Watershed. Ms. Kertis opened

the discussion with a historical overview of fire activity in the Pacific Northwest region, addressing how this has shaped our current management practices. Following a look at fire management challenges in the future, Ms. Kertis introduced her colleague Steve Acker. Mr. Acker focused on the effects of fire on vegetation, specifically how it affects certain tree and shrub species as well as fungi. Mr. Acker also spoke about how satellite remote sensing of vegetation can help assess fire severity. Darren Cross, the Ranger at the McKenzie River District, introduced Randy Harbick, the McKenzie River District Fire Manager, who detailed the specific fires seen in our area this last year. He outlined the ways in which they work to prevent or mitigate damage, as well as several strategies used by local fire crews to contain these fires. All presentations may be found online via the council's website.

Rod Fosback inquired as to what effects are seen from logging on private lands, considering the forest service is limited on what it can harvest. Mr. Acker responded that logging is a key component in changing landscape patterns and fuel beds.

Steve Raymen, referencing a presentation he had seen in the past, inquired as to what changes we anticipate to the existing hot-zones in the area. The presenters responded that a climate change vulnerability study should be completed soon that will address this question in detail. The study examines changes in vegetation structure due to climate change. Furthermore, they anticipate the largest effect will be to the way fire expresses itself across varying forests.

Steve Mealy asked about recreating the range of variability for a region in an effort to gauge any abnormalities on the Westside of the Cascades when comparing it with historical data. Jane Kertis responded that she is currently finishing up a project that focuses on this issue, with the project concluding soon. Ms. Kertis hopes to have data as well as analysis on the range of variability soon, which she will gladly share.

Additionally, Steve Mealy asked if there is any groundwork to be completed in order to accurately map fire severity, or if they rely solely on satellite imagery. Mr. Acker responded that there is currently not anything in the forest inventory analysis program surrounding this.

Steve Mealy asked about the funding situation for the fire district following last year's heavy fire season. Mr. Cross responded that they are going to continue to do things like sell timber and rely on the receipts from FUELS like last year. They anticipate they are on the same level they were a year ago, with the previous years' fires still being paid for.

A visitor asked how the 300 acres of controlled burning for fuel reduction compares to previous numbers. Mr. Cross replied that in 1980 the McKenzie River District burned roughly 2,000 acres a year and roughly 2,000 additional acres burned on the neighboring Blue River District. The McKenzie River District (which now includes the old Blue River District) currently conducts controlled burns on roughly 300 acres on an annual basis. Funding is generally lacking for hazardous fuel reduction efforts. Northwest Forest Plan constrains also limit the amount of controlled burn activity.

Steve Raymen inquired as to why military equipment is not being utilized during heavy fire seasons when resources are limited. Darren Cross responded that the USFS frequently coordinates with the military to utilize helicopters.

5. Partner Announcements

Nate Day reported that he had begun teaching fly-fishing skills to his students after school, and that he would like to thank Will Rutherford and the fly-fishers for their generous donations.

Jeff Ziller brought up the recent house-bill that would reopen shoulder funding for the Leaburg Hatchery. He noted that they had received funding to implement 100,000 “trophy-trout,” which they plan to spread throughout various ponds and lakes in the Willamette Basin. Similarly, they are going to be rearing 260,000 Chinook salmon smolts for release in the Coast Fork Willamette River in an effort to bolster that fishery. Mr. Ziller also announced that there will be an instruction course March 17th, to train individuals to become angler education instructors. Additionally, Mr. Ziller announced that a finalized stocking schedule is now available online, with the members of Desert Springs Fish Hatchery and USACE reaching an agreement to stock 277,000 pounds of fish. Although this is less than the typical quantity, the McKenzie River will not see much change thanks to the relationship between the McKenzie Guides and Desert Springs.

Steve Raymen reported on the progressive nature of New Zealand’s climate change policies. He has seen their government working diligently to achieve a carbon-neutral state, and hopes other countries will join them.

Dana Burwell reported that the McKenzie River Guides and McKenzie Fire Department have begun gearing up for their life jackets program. He noted that although they lost a few lifejackets last year, they are still putting out roughly 300, and hope to continue the tradition in the future.

6. Staff Reports

In light of the late hour, Jared Weybright suggested skipping the oral presentations of the staff reports. Written staff reports are available within the meeting packets. Justin Demeter asked to share one Education Program update. Mr. Demeter would like to extend a special thanks to Maryanne Reiter and Weyerhaeuser for the donation of macroinvertebrates samples and other collection gear. The bugs have already garnered a couple screams. He also extended thanks to EWEB for donating bacteria sampling equipment and Springfield Public Schools WELL Program for helping with supplies and training at both McKenzie High School and Mohawk High School. Additionally, a generous donation from Idexx provided us with enough sample bottles and quanti-trays to last us through next year.

7. 25th Anniversary Fundraising:

Jared Weybright gave a brief update on the 25th Anniversary Fundraising Campaign. He began by thanking the handful of attendees that were present for Tuesday’s pre-committee meeting at Planktown. Mr. Weybright continued that following the discussion at the February Council meeting, staff concluded that perhaps the presentation placed too much emphasis on fundraising rather than broadening the organizations overall reach. He stated that the Planktown meeting was

successful, with the discussion centered on ways of getting word out about the organization. By pulling in expertise through our partners, the group felt that sufficient organization capacity exists to increase outreach, ultimately setting the stage for meeting future fundraising goals. Mr. Weybright continued that the large turn-out for the fire ecology discussion is an indication that there is a lot of active, and community-centric residents in the area. He hopes to begin utilizing McKenzie River Reflections, and events like the Salmon Celebration to further this goal. Mr. Weybright concluded that he is hoping for additional conversation next month amongst supporting partners.

Meeting adjourned at: 7:10 pm

Next Meeting: Springfield Utility Board, 223 A St. Suite F, Springfield
Presentation Topic: TBD