

AGENDA
McKenzie Watershed Council
Thursday, February 8th, 2024
5:15 – 7:10 p.m.
McKenzie Fire & Rescue
Leaburg

1. Approval of Agenda **5:15 - 5:20**
Facilitator: Jared Weybright
Action Requested – Approve February 2024 Meeting Agenda.

2. Approval of January 11, 2024, Meeting Minutes **5:20 - 5:25**
Attachment: January 2024 Meeting Minutes
Action Requested – Approve December meeting minutes.

3. Presentation: Pacific Lamprey Dam Passage Study 2019-20 – Leaburg Dam **5:25 - 6:10**
Jeremy Romer, Assistant District Fish Biologist with ODFW, will present the results of a recently completed research project that addresses the highly variable Pacific Lamprey passage counts at Leaburg Dam. This study helped determine the detection efficiency at the dam and determine how fish distribute themselves in the upper river following dam passage using radio tracking and passive integrated transponder (PIT) tags.
Information Only

BREAK **6:10 – 6:20**

4. Partner Updates and Public Comment **6:20 – 7:00**
Information Only

5. Director’s Report **7:00 – 7:10**
Information Only

Next Meeting:

- Date: March 14th, 2024
- Time: 5:15pm – 7:00 pm
- Location: International Paper
- Topic: MWC Internal Business Meeting

Contact: Jared Weybright, 458-201-8150, jared@mckenziawc.org, www.mckenziawc.org

McKenzie Watershed Council
Meeting Minutes
January 11th, 2024
Virtual

Present: Diane Albino (Resident Partner), Brian Brazil (International Paper), Arlene Dietz (Rice Farms), Rod Fosback (NW Steelheaders), Chad Helms (USACE), Dave Kretzing (Resident Partner), Mike McDowell (Resident Partner), Steve Mealey (McKenzie Guides), Todd Miller (City of Springfield), Ralph Perkins (UWSWCD), Jeremy Romer (ODFW), Carla Rothenbuecher (Resident Partner), Mark Schulze (HJ Andrews), Emily Semple (City of Eugene), Wade Stampe (Resident Partner), Sue Zeni (Resident Partner)

Proxys: Carla Rothenbuecher for Darren Cross

Staff: Chase Antonovich, Andy Petersen, Jared Weybright

1. Approval of Agenda and Zoom Logistics

Andy McWilliams motioned to approve the January 11th meeting agenda. Agenda approved as written, all Partners showing consensus level 3.

2. Approval of December 14, 2023, Meeting Minutes

Ralph Perkins motioned to approve the December 14th meeting minutes. Meeting minutes approved as written, all Partners showing consensus level 3.

3. Presentation: Riparian Planting Program

Olivia Duren, Restoration Program Manager with The Freshwater Trust, presented on the Metropolitan Wastewater Management Commission sponsored riparian planting program underway in the Upper Willamette Basin. Olivia described the mission and objectives of The Freshwater Trust before describing the location and metrics of the Upper Willamette shade program. Ms. Duren then described the need for a water quality trading program and how the process works. Lastly, she covered where the Upper Willamette shade program is now, and the direction that the program is heading.

Wade Stampe asked if the program is restricted to residents only on the South side of the river. Ms. Duren responded that it is a restriction of this kind of funding, and that additional funding sources are being used to restore other portions of the river.

Todd Miller commented that this program is dependent on the relationships developed through the Pure Water Partners Program, and that these are rate payer funds and thus the funds are restricted to things that do not produce rate payer benefits. Mr. Miller continued that this frees up funds from the PWP and other sources to complete restoration work on the North bank.

Mike McDowell asked if there are any other forms of technology in the works to cool water outside of shade, like the cooling ponds at International Paper. Todd Miller noted that currently the environmental benefits to riparian shade far outweigh those of cooling towers.

4. Partner Updates

Andy McWilliams reported that trenching has been completed at the Wayfarer so they will soon be able to pull power underground as they continue to rebuild cabins. He continued that the Guides Association is finalizing the amount of money that they will contribute to Randy Dersham and his film Oregon's Boat.

Chad Helms reported that the deep drawdowns are officially over at Green Peter and Lookout Point. He continued that the reservoir levels are back up to the minimum conservation pool with boat ramps back in operation at Green Peter.

Brian Brazil noted that regarding the cooling ponds being used by IP, the goal at the mill is to currently reuse the water rather than continue to draw from the river. This would result in wasting less water and conserving more heat and eventually the cooling ponds would no longer be being used.

Jeremy Romer reported that Jeff and Martyne will both attend the McKenzie Guide's Association meeting next Saturday. Mr. Romer will also be presenting on the recently completed lamprey PIT tag study at next month's meeting.

Rod Fosback reported that the NW Steelheaders will be opening their trap and collecting eggs as soon as the water levels drop.

Steve Mealey reported the UWSACE released a draft management plan for the operation of Cougar and other dams in the Willamette subbasin. The comments from the Guide's Association were centered around the concerns of sediment production resulting from drawdowns. Mr. Mealey continued that they have yet to hear back from the USACE and he is not sure if they will. He continued that on the issue of water temperature, there was a lawsuit filed in 2023 regarding the input of water from the hatchery into the McKenzie which could result in the decommissioning of Leaburg dam. Lastly, the USACE will be cutting funding significantly for the hatchery production of trout in the McKenzie after 2024. On a positive note, Mr. Mealey noted that OMSI will be helping plan the exhibits for the McKenzie Discovery Center.

Todd Miller reported that as he discussed last month, DEQ is reissuing the TMDL document and is now including the entire McKenzie and its subbasins. He continued that it has just been released for public comment today.

Wade Stampe reported that several of the motorhomes have been moved up onto McKenzie View Dr. from the area under Armitage Bridge, although there is still a great deal of trash and vehicles under the bridge. He is not certain what the next steps will be to finish cleaning up that area.

Adam Spencer reported on behalf of EWEB that there was a board meeting held last night and that a number of funding was approved for the MWA including work on Quartz Creek and Tribal Liaison support. He continued that anyone in the McKenzie watershed upstream of Hayden Bridge may qualify for EWEB's septic funding dependent on income.

5. Director's Report

Jared Weybright reported that the MWA continues to work towards hiring additional staff. The second round of interviews for a mid-level management position, PWP Coordinator, was held in early January and we hope to have this position filled by the end of January. He continued that in addition to Alliance By-laws and the MWC Charter, the staff is finalizing draft revisions to the MWA Financial Policy and the MWA Employee Handbook. All documents will undergo a legal review before finalization. Mr. Weybright continued that the February MWC meeting will occur at the McKenzie Fire & Rescue Training Center in Leaburg. The focal presentation will be the results of a McKenzie Lamprey Radio Tag Study from Jeremy Roemer, Assistant Fish Biologist, ODFW Springfield Field Office. Regarding restoration, Mr. Weybright reported that the MWC and BLM are nearing completion of a solicitation process to select a contractor

for a Phase 2 restoration project on Marten Creek. Additionally, planning and development work is underway for Quartz Creek restoration as well as Phase 3 of Lower South Fork restoration.

Meeting adjourned at 6:50 pm

**McKenzie Watershed Council
Directors Report
February 2024**

1. Operations

Staffing

The organization continues to work towards hiring additional staff. The second round of interviews for a mid-level management position, PWP Coordinator, were held in early January, and an offer was made in mid-January. Unfortunately, our top candidate declined the offer, and we decided that the other candidates were not ideal fits. We plan to repost the job announcement within a couple of weeks and explore additional posting options and recruitment strategies. Because of this delay, we are considering accelerating hiring project management-level position(s) and hope to post that job announcement soon.

Trainings

Four staff members attend a 3-day event in Portland called Within our Reach. [Neskia Wilamut](#), an Indigenous-led organization formed out of the Meyer Memorial Trust-led Willamette Initiative, facilitated the event. The event focused on meaningful engagement with Native organizations, tribes, and people. We also plan to send four staff to the [Connect Conference](#), in Sunriver, April 16-18. The Connect Conference brings together watershed councils and Soil and Water Conservation Districts from around the state. PWP-affiliated staff have expressed an interest in additional safety training, and we are working with the McKenzie River Trust to provide wilderness first aid training. Joe will begin an online training course to prepare for the certification test to become a drone pilot. We plan to purchase a drone this winter and add that capacity to our organization by summer 2024.

Ice storm

The recent ice storm heavily impacted staff and partners. Four staff members were without power for most of the week. Those with rural, forest, or agricultural property also suffered significant damage. Several colleagues and PWP members were also heavily impacted.

Governing Document Review and Revision

Management and administrative staff finalized a review and revisions to the MWA Financial Policy in January. This document and the Charter revision and Board and staff questions on the By-law revision will be submitted for legal review in early February. Staff met with a Center for Non-profit Law lawyer in early February to review several aspects of the revised By-laws. Pending the completion of the legal review of these documents, we plan to bring them to the Council at the March meeting, which may be a working meeting.

2. Restoration Program

The MWC and BLM awarded a contract to Columbia Helicopters to implement the Marten Creek Habitat Restoration Project Phase 2. The project will place approximately 500 pieces of large wood into the creek on BLM-managed lands. The work will occur during the in-water work period, July-August in 2024. We anticipate three days to complete the project.

The final significant post-holiday Farm Fire planting will start in early February. The project will plant roughly 90,000 stems covering 80 acres on PWP-enrolled properties. A related effort will plant 87 acres on the MRT's Finn Rock Reach property within the floodplain restoration project area. Several small project sites are under development, including one at McKenzie Schools, where students participated in the design development and will assist with planting. The PWP Naturescaping program is also starting to

pick up increased interest. We have six landowners in the pipeline for fee-for-service contracts. The PWP provides capacity support for initial consultation and 2 hours of design assistance. Additional services are done through a fee-for-service contract between the property owner and MWA.

Restoration design and permitting for the Quartz Creek Ecosystem Resilience Project continues. The MWC is primarily responsible for the large wood round-up contract at this stage of the project. The USFS is leading design development and coordinating with NOAA on NEPA compliance, the MRT continues to work on acquisition opportunities, and EWEB supports a range of project elements, including permitting and cultural resource compliance.

Planning and development work continues for Phase 3 of the Lower South Fork McKenzie River restoration project. Partners are waiting on pending funding applications to NOAA and USFWS. The MWC will likely submit an additional application to OWEB for this project during their Spring Open Solicitation cycle.

The BLM and MWC continue to monitor two projects on North Fork Gate Creek and Deer Creek (lower) that were treated with high volumes of large wood following the Holiday Farm Fire. Both sites had large amounts of woody debris and sediment washed into the project areas from upstream areas impacted by the wildfire. Several jams on both sites broke part during winter high water events, though downstream jams caught the project wood. The Deer Creek project is impacting a 300-400 foot section of the adjacent BLM road. Partners are meeting with OWEB on February 7th to discuss administrative options to reallocate previously approved funding for work on other BLM sites to address this situation. We are also in communication with one of the private timber companies who own land above the project and need to use the road for tree planting and other near-term maintenance work.

3. Funding

We are still developing two applications, each for \$396,000, to support BLM-focused projects. The applications are through OWEB, which manages federal funds from the BLM through the [Good Neighbor Authority](#). One project will support a culvert replacement project on Cash Creek in the Mohawk Watershed. The second application was originally earmarked for Marten Creek, and we are working to reallocate those funds to various other projects, including Deer Creek as mentioned above.

The MWA, OSU, and HJ Andrews partners were successful with an application to the National Science Foundation. The proposal focuses on raising awareness of experimental forests and local participation in HJ Andrews's planning, particularly around wildfire response and recovery. We will follow up on this project once we learn more about timelines.