

Minutes
Middle Fork Willamette Watershed Council General Council Meeting
Oakridge, OR
16 May 2001
6:30 PM

Present: Margaret Hartzell, James Johnston, Rick Movsky, Al Johnson, Fergus McLean, Barb Hazen, Juan Welsh, Val Rogers, Mike Running, Paul Bell, Chuck Davis, Dean Shinn, Ernie Niemi, Anne Moritz, Marion McLean, Carol Winkler, Leonard Ramsperger, McKenzie Bowerman, Dan Cottrell

I. Welcome and Introductions

II. Agenda

The agenda was approved as written.

III. Approval of the Minutes from the 18 April 2001 General Council Meeting

The minutes were approved as written.

IV. Announcements

Mr Running announced that there was a free seminar put on by Central Cascade Adaptive Management going on at the Hilton in Eugene May 16 and 17.

V. Coordinator's Remarks - Mr Welsh

- May 19 - River Day. We'll be meeting at 9 AM in Greenwaters Park and doing some river clean up and graffiti removal.
- Jun 9 - Our Fish Passage Conference will take place in Eugene at the UO Law School building. It's free and is Willamette Basin oriented. There are posters available for placement around the watershed.
- Jun 29 - Tour Guistina lands. Details to follow.
- Jun 30 - Council support grant terminates and the new grant begins.

VI. Steering Committee Report - Ms Hazen

The Steering Committee has voted to offer Mr Welsh a 12 mos contract as Coordinator. We also voted to continue with operations as they are, recognizing that the funding will be inadequate for the full two-year period and that we will have to raise funds. Anyone interested in helping with grant writing should contact Mr Welsh.

Pam Folts and Alice Sperling from Pacific R C and D attended the last SC meeting. They have an OWEB funded grant to assist watershed councils. It's a free service. We can pick areas that we feel we need help in and they can also observe and suggest areas where we can use help. They will be attending the Steering Committee meetings. We have already asked for assistance with volunteer management and committee formation.

Mike Running from McKenzie River Trust briefed the committee on a potential partnership opportunity known as the Many Rivers Project. (Mr Running was present and described this for the General Council.)

VII. Archeology of the Middle Fork Area - Ms Winkler

The Native Americans in the area are grouped on the basis of cultural ecology. The Mid Fork is in a transition zone between the Coastal tribes and the Columbia plateau tribes who relied on salmon and camas. Each band of the Kalapuya had a watershed. Housing was cedar plank long houses with bark roofs. The oldest one found in the Columbia basin is 5000 yrs old. The Molalla had circular earthen houses that were partially buried that they lived in during the winter. In the summer and fall they were in the mountains. They built fish weirs to catch Chinook and steelhead which they took down after the run was over. They have found some net sinkers in the Lowell area, which were used to weight the nets. The women did the gathering of the camas and processed the bulbs for winter use. They dried them and baked them in an earthen oven; the result tasted something like sweet potatoes. They made 40 pound cakes of camas and mixed in berries, acorns, hazelnuts, and huckleberries. The Kalapuya and the Molalla intermarried. Cedar was the tree of life for them. They made canoes out of it and used its bark for clothes

and baskets. They didn't girdle the tree; they'd cut the bark and peel it half way around the tree. The Ponderosa pine bark was used for medicine. The Kalapuya used fire, burning the prairies in Sept and Oct to bring back the Oak savanna and shrubby trees. European diseases brought by the traders wiped out 80 to 90 % of the native population. The remaining were sent to reservations and the children were sent to boarding schools. From obsidian artifacts researchers have established that the Mid Fork was a major commerce route.

Elijah Bristow was one of the first pioneers. He built the first house in Lane County in Pleasant Hill. Early drawings of his house show sparse vegetation due to the Native American burning. Cy Bingham, from Michigan, was one of the first forest rangers in the area. He left his mark on trees as he passed by. His job was to keep the peace between the cattle ranchers and the sheep farmers. By 1903 there was a logging mill on Fall Creek. There were huge log drives to get logs to the Booth Kelley mill in Springfield. Jasper Hills did some of the early drives. They lost a lot of men in these drives as they couldn't swim and fell into the river. Westfir was a lumber town established by the Western Lumber Co. The mission of the Forest Service in the early 1920s was to develop communities and lumber companies. There was a splash dam on the North Fork. It was built as a means to get the logs down. They'd let a big head of water and logs build up, then they would release it and sluice the logs down. The Incline railroad is 8 miles up the Aufederhyde Dr. It is a pulley system using loaded cars coming down to pull 2 unloaded carts up. It was a 70 % grade. The CCC replanted Huckleberry Flats. The practice in those days was to move the loggers' cabins up to the next site using the railroad. Interestingly, loggers ate about 6000 calories a day. Then came the dam building era. Some Native American sites were flooded when they put the dams in. In the Flood of 1964, 40 acres of wood ended up in the reservoir.

Ms Winkler said that they need volunteers to do oral histories and to rehabilitate sites. On Aug 10, 11 and 12 they will be doing shelter repair. Little Cow Horn Lookout may be put in the cabin rental program. In response to a question about vision quests she said that both men and women went into the wilderness to pray and fast to receive their spirit guardian. It is thought that they marked their vision spot with a small cairn of rocks but the cairns may also have been used to mark territory. Some of this information is documented in the Lookout Mt watershed analysis. The Old Skyline Trail is the one you would take if you wanted to hike the High Cascades. Judge Waldo who is the John Muir of Oregon hiked it. The Lost Wagon Train is recorded in interpretive signs at Greenwaters Park. Del Spencer will give a tour of the route off the OR Trail.

VI. Watershed Assessment Update - Val Rogers

Val reminded the group that we're only currently assessing about 10% of our watershed. The Forest Service owns most of it the land above the dams and has done lots of assessment work. We're aimed at fish and streams and the things that affect them. The Forest Service and BLM have contributed additional funds to the assessment, which will enable us to hire a contractor to conduct stream surveys from the mouth to the headwaters of both Little Fall Creek and Lost Creek. Ecosystems Northwest is the chosen contractor. They will follow ODF protocols. We need to inform property owners along the creeks and get permission for the surveyor to walk up and down the creeks. Greg Vollstedt has volunteered to help notify the Little Fall Creek folks. The Lost Creek group has been working with people on Lost Creek. They're only going to do the mainstem of the creeks. Ms Rogers will talk to Mr Running about mailings and phone calling. Mr Taylor of ODFW wants to put a fish trap in Little Fall Creek. Doug Larson of the Forest Service has found a fish trap and the money to repair it. Need about six people to volunteer to check the trap daily and catalogue the fish. Contact Ms Rogers or Mr Welsh if you are interested. Also need to find a landowner willing to have the trap on his/her property. They need a place 4 ft wide and 4 feet deep to place the trap. Water quality: the Lost Creek Group and the BLM are the primary resources for data, mostly on Lost Creek. Very little monitoring had been done on Little Fall Creek and the lower Middle Fork. Ms Rogers is seeking willing landowners for device placement on their property.

VII. Open Forum -

Mr Welsh noted that some suggestions have been made to the Council that there should be more "open" time set aside at Council meetings every once in a while for people to share personal experiences in the watershed, ask questions, and generally learn more about the council and what it does. This "Open Forum" will become standard every few meetings.

Mr Niemi asked any of the natural resource people attending the meeting what they thought the watershed's problems were. Mr Cottrell, speaking for the Army Corps of Engineers, said that with 4 reservoirs in the area, the Corps could work more with the public. He is looking at the watershed council as a liaison with the public. When asked about the levy down stream from the Dexter dam, he said that it was not a Corps levy. The Corps doesn't usually own things below dams, they usually own the water's edge and behind the dam. When asked about plans for a cultural assessment of flooded artifacts during the upcoming low water he said that the water level would probably not be lower than the usual winter draw down. He said that they are careful not to drop the water level rapidly as that causes more erosion. He recently banned off road vehicles on the Corps property for liability and environmental reasons.

A question was asked about the arsenic in the water, which occurs naturally from Dexter to Cottage Grove in deeper areas. Mr Johnson said that it occurs in areas where there was pyroclastic flows. Mr Davis said that there is no naturally occurring arsenic in the surface water but in Lowell and in wells along the hillside they are finding arsenic when they drill into the basalt formation.

Mr Movsky said that any one interested in the inflow and outflow of the dams can look up this information in the Army Corps' website, which is updated daily. www.nwp.usace.army.mil or www.usace.army.mil and pick Portland.

Mr Johnson said that he thought the protection and restoration of Threatened and Endangered species both, terrestrial and aquatic, was a big issue facing the watershed. The Council could help find funding sources to mitigate a problem or restore a wetland, etc. Mr Niemi asked him about roadless areas and if there were unmaintained roads that are a problem. Mr Johnson said that roads are a critical issue. The Forest Service does have to assess each road and evaluate its risk factors. They don't have the resources to do a full review of the roads on FS land. They could focus on critical roads above critical areas, for example, if there is sedimentation problem above a spawning ground. Mr Welsh added that the County is surveying culverts along with ODFW and the FS is also looking at sediment, perhaps a role for this Council is to facilitate all of this culvert work by the different agencies/entities within the Middle Fork.

Mr Shinn asked to what extent was the watershed council putting Federal assessments together. Mr Welsh said that that the Council does intend to pull all previous assessment work within the watershed together to form a comprehensive Watershed Assessment after the completion of the ongoing supplementary Assessment work. Much of this will be a library type search for existing work and analysis of data. It's vital for the Council to get the assessment work completed to use as baseline in asking for restoration project funding.

A question was asked about what happens if there is a toxic spill into the river. If it was from a railroad car, they have their own crew to clean things up. DEQ would be on hand to assist. The HazMat team from Eugene might come to assist. The mention of the railroad led to an observation that a culvert under the railroad is a barrier to passage on Lost Creek and that we hope to work with the railroad on it.

In response to a comment that the State Forest Practices Act has more lax standards for logging roads than the Federal standards, Mr Bell said that prior to the 1970s there were no state regulations on these roads but now there are regulations. There is still a lot of controversy about road density. The State does look at roads to see if they are draining sediment and is trying to disconnect the roads from the creeks. The regulated roads are ones used for commercial purposes.

Mr Davis said that during the construction of the sand filter treatment plant for Springfield he has found some concerns. Recently the turbidity in the river has been so high they wouldn't be able to operate the plant. As he drove along the river to the meeting today, he discovered that the turbidity goes up to at least Oakridge. Springfield gets its drinking water from as far up as Lookout Reservoir - all of our fifth field study area.

Meeting adjourned at 8:34.
Barbara Hazen, Recorder