

Middle Fork Willamette Watershed Council
General Council Meeting

15 January 2003
Springfield, OR
6:30 PM

Present: Terri Jones, Amy Chinitz, Dan Cottrell, Greg Taylor, Mike Running, Rick Scott, Jim Reed, Chuck Davis, Marc Paulman, John Barnes, Rick Movsky, Barbara Hazen, Charlie Ogle, Bill Wynkoop, Bryan Huber, Tim Bailey, Kelly Reis, Dennis Joll, Earl Dill, Lil DeSoto, Reggie DeSoto, Emily Rice, Bob Sward, Al Johnson, Stephanie Schroeder, Yotokko Kilpatrick, Keith Perchemlides, Gary Perchemlides, Heather Lintz

I. Introductions

II. Review and Approval of Meeting Agenda - Ms Jones.
Agenda approved as written.

III. Approve November Council Meeting Minutes - Ms Jones.
Minutes approved as written.

IV. Public Comment and Announcements

Mr Davis said that SUB's new water treatment plant on the Mid Fork has been operational for 1 1/2 months; people in Springfield are drinking water from the plant. Things are going well.

V. Coordinator's Remarks - Ms Chinitz

- Our request for a council support grant, which would provide the salary of the coordinator and our operating expenses, has been turned in to OWEB.
- Word from Salem is that the education grant will most likely not be funded.
- Check the Calendar of Events for upcoming events such as the Hazardous Household Waste Round-Up on Mar 15 in Dexter.
- We applied today for a technical assistance grant to work together with the Coast Fork and the McKenzie watershed councils on aquatic species passage improvements.
- Flyers for the small acreage conservation workshops were passed out.
- The next General Council meeting will be Thurs Feb 20. Please note the change in the day of the week. We are trying Thurs in Oakridge in hopes of increasing attendance.

VI. Steering Committee Report - Mr Movsky

- We have finished the work with Mr Runyon and have an Action Plan and a completed Assessment.
- We have identified projects. One we are considering is in partnership with Land Watch Lane County to restore some land in Elijah Bristow State Park which is now covered with blackberry and broom.
- We are continuing to look for other funding sources for the watershed council, both to support the coordinator and our projects.
- At our next meeting we will be doing Ms Chinitz' six-month job evaluation.
- Four Steering Committee seats are up. We will be holding an election today to select from the five candidates to fill these seats.

VII. Vote for Steering Committee Positions - Ms Jones

Each candidate present spoke about why he wanted to be on the Steering Committee. The statements of the two candidates who could not be present were read aloud. The vote was conducted by secret ballot. Mr Davis, Mr Movsky, Mr Niemi and Mr Paulman were elected to fill the seats.

VIII. Walama Restoration Project - Ms Lintz

The Walama Restoration Project is a non-profit group that works to restore degraded ecosystems. They work as restoration contractors doing the actual labor to restore an area; they also work as educators getting kids involved in restoration efforts and presenting "how-to" workshops. Oak savanna, wetland prairies, and upland prairies have been the most impacted and are their chief interest. They have worked in urban parks doing invasive species removal and seed collection. They have worked for the cities of Eugene, Springfield, and Corvallis. They have literature and references available if anyone is interested in hiring an experienced crew for restoration of an impacted area, re-vegetation, or landslide stabilization. They do not use herbicides; they use only manual methods of removal. They can also do landscape planning for restoration and some surveying (birds and invasive species) for land managers. They are interested in networking in the watershed; they could be crew on a project.

IX. Jim's Creek Savanna Restoration Project - Mr Bailey

Savanna is grassland with scattered trees that grades into woodland. In the area around Jim's Creek, fire and possibly Native American burning kept the area open in the past. There are fire scars on the trees indicating frequent burning, possibly every 5 to 8 years. The Native Americans also used the trees as medicine trees. They appeared to have used the camber off one-fourth of selected trees. Grazing in later years also kept the area open. The soil is heavy which may be why the oak prevailed. There are 200-300 year-old ponderosa pines there with 150-year-old Douglas-fir coming up in the understory. The oaks are present in the rocky meadows and are pretty stressed in the dry summer months. There was also probably a dense stand of California fescue there. Douglas-firs are an aggressive tree; as they grew they shaded out the oaks. Mr Bailey found one 46-inch oak trunk minus its bark and sapwood on the ground, it was easily 500 years-old when it died. The area is starting to lose the ponderosa pines as the Douglas-firs take over the canopy and close it in. The area underburned in 1996 which didn't kill anything except where the trees had already died.

The question is: Is there a need to restore this area? There is a proposal to do so but no project yet. There will be a public meeting Feb 1 to see if the public would like the Forest Service to do something to restore the area. This area is in the matrix area of the NW Forest Plan and could be managed to meet the mandate to maintain biodiversity.

These are the answers to some of the questions asked Mr Bailey at the question-and-answer portion of the presentation:

- It is not a forest health issue. The area is in matrix so it can be managed. It was already heavily managed by the Native Americans who provided habitat for a variety of bird, snakes, elks and lizards.
- To remove the Doug-fir now you would have to manually thin, girdle, and clear cut. Fire would not do the trick. It's really too old an area to thin.
- It's a unique ecosystem. The Forest Service is trying to figure out what it should do. They could manage for timber per the NW Forest Plan, they could try to preserve the white oak ecosystem, or they could leave it alone.
- The area is unique for the altitude it is found at. In contrast to oak savanna ecosystems in the valley, it has no invasive weeds except for some St John's Wort and a few grasses along the edges.
- There is a cave in the area with artifacts dated from 7000 years ago.
- In response to a question as to whether there was a hidden agenda to cut old growth, Mr Scott said that the Forest Service hasn't decided yet what it should do and is soliciting public input. There will be a meeting at the Ranger Station in Westfir Feb 1 at 10 AM. There will be more presentations at that time as well as an opportunity for public input.

Meeting adjourned at 830 PM.

Barbara Hazen
Recorder