

# Mid-Fork Willamette Watershed Council

## General Council Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, June 15, 2005

Lowell Forest Service Center, 6:30 – 8:45 p.m.

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Attendees: Eve Montanaro (Council Coordinator), Chuck Davis, Al Johnson, Matt Rea, Rick Hayes, Mike Beitz, Warren Weathers, Nena Lovinger, Jim Reed, Fred Sperry, Robert Emmons, Jared Rubin, Sean Stewart, Don Hampton

**Review and Approve Meeting Agenda** – Eve reviewed the agenda. There were no additions or deletions.

**Approve May Council Meeting Minutes** – Eve asked if there were any changes to the minutes. There were no changes required and the minutes were approved as mailed.

**Public Comments and Announcements** – Jim Reed reviewed the progress that has been made for our culvert inventory project. Jim reported that the project is nearly complete, and the final report and database will be delivered in the near future. Jim was asked about coordination with the Lane County, and reported that the County's data has been incorporated into our inventory. Jim reviewed some of the criteria used in the database for helping to evaluate the importance of the culvert to fish passage. Some of the criteria used was:

- The fall from the culvert discharge to the stream bed
- Slope of the culvert
- Depth and amount of fill over the culvert
- Watershed area above the culvert
- Quality of streambed for fish production above the culvert
- Other barriers above the culvert that would impede fish passage

Warren Weathers discussed a specific stream culvert near Oakridge. He felt the property owners might be interested in culvert improvement removal and stream restoration along their stretch of the creek. Eve will follow up to see what might be possible. Matt Rea with the Corps of Engineers indicated that some of the data that is collected as part of the culvert mapping and prioritization project could complement the program for the Willamette Floodplain Feasibility Study that he will report on later. Jim and Eve will review this in more detail with Matt.

**Steering Committee Report** – Chuck Davis, Steering Committee (SC) Member, reviewed the SC Meeting Minutes and reported on the SC activities for the last month. The SC is still looking for an environmental representative to replace James Johnston with the Cascade Wildlands Project who had been on the SC for several years. Our goal is to have a replacement by the June 22, SC meeting. The SC members are setting up one-on-one meetings with Eve, and we are continuing discussions on the recommendations that Amy Chinitz had made for improvement to the SC and Watershed Council process. The SC reviewed the OWEB recommendation for council support funding and the Council coordinator contract. Additionally, the Committee

reviewed the importance of participating in the Willamette restoration priorities process that is being worked on under contract for OWEB.

**Coordinator Update** – Eve reported that the Lost Creek confluence project progress is continuing, and that the SC will review the progress at their meeting next week. The Little Fall Creek Outreach project is scheduled for July 14 at the Little Fall Creek Christian Church from 6:30 – 8:30 in the evening. There are six children who will be taking advantage of the Council’s scholarships for attendance at the Mt. Pisgah Arboretum week-long day camps this summer. These scholarships were funded through a grant from the Dirk-Edmonds Estate that came to us through OWEB. Eve announced that the July council meeting will be on July 20, and would be a tour of three restoration sites in Lost Creek. It will be followed by a potluck at Dave Bontrager’s home on Lost Creek. Everyone is encouraged to come. We will meet at the Dexter hardware store in Dexter to car pool and caravan to tour sites.

**Army Corps of Engineers Willamette Floodplain Restoration Feasibility Study** – Matt Rea updated the group on this study that was authorized by Congress in 1998. Matt reviewed the process that the Corps needs to go through in order to be able to begin work on studies like this. The Willamette partnership and others completed the initial evaluation for the potential project in 1996. The report was finalized and delivered just as the 1996 floods were cresting, which helped focus on the potential benefits of the study.

This is a general investigation study, which the Corps needs to complete to identify work on water resource problems, trying to find ways to address the issues. The outcome that is expected from a GIS study is the identification of a project funding recommendation. These types of studies help address complicated technical problems and coordinate as many of the issues as possible. The required cost sharing is between the Willamette Partnership and the Oregon Division of Fish and Wildlife, who are the major funders. This project will need additional funding partners in order for it to be completed in a meaningful way. The estimated cost of the project is \$2.96 million of which \$1.48 million is the required local share. Current funding appears to be less than this amount at the current time.

A couple of the major potential outcomes from this work are an update to the FEMA flood plain maps and the development of flood plain management tools. The initial time-line for completion of the report to Congress is October of 2007.

There are several areas of related work that are being coordinated with this project. They are:

- Eugene/Springfield Metro Areas Waterways Study
- Willamette Reservoir Project ESA Consultation
- Willamette TMDL Project
- WRI Hyporheic Flow/Flood Plain Project

The digital elevation model has excellent detail and a 2-foot contour requirement. Everyone is excited about the scale and clarity. The base condition hydrology report is completed. The hydraulic models are expected to be completed in the spring of 2006, which will allow for model runs on how physical changes in the river corridor will affect the river flood plain. Additional model runs will be done on how reservoir operations will impact the flood plain. One of the great benefits of these projects is that the models are public domain, and they can be used by

anyone. The hydrogeomorphic indicator study is starting and will be completed by Dr. Bruce DiCarr.

**The Metro Waterways Study** – Rick Hayes with the Corps of Engineers presented the work that is being completed in the Metro Area that complements the Willamette Floodplain Feasibility Study that Matt reported on. Rick said that it had been recognized for several years prior to the 1996 floods that the flood maps in the metro area needed to be updated. With the 1996 floods, it became very obvious to the communities and the Corps that updates needed to be made soon. Doing the study became a local government metro-wide priority, and funding for the project was supported by Peter DeFazio who was able to facilitate Congressional approval for the Corps to do the work. This project is starting with two specific projects that have issues that are representative of a wider problem and which the local governments are focusing their work efforts on. Since the local governments had these projects as priorities, this project has had adequate funding.

The first two projects are the Cedar Creek area in east Springfield (a tributary to the McKenzie) and the Amazon Creek in West Eugene (a tributary to the Long Tom and Willamette). Rick asked that we take the time to fill out the questionnaire that is available online at [www.metrowaterways.org](http://www.metrowaterways.org) and provide feedback that will help direct the work activities on these projects. To fill out the questionnaire, click on the “Provide Input” tab and then the “Metro Waterways Study Questionnaire” tab.

Both Matt and Rick stayed through the break and after the meeting to answer questions about the projects, to coordinate with the Council on activities going on, as well as assisting with the technical advisory group.

**Toxic Cyanobacteria (Blue-Green Algae)** – Al Johnson with the US Forest Service provided a Power Point presentation on Cyanobacteria and how their presence will affect how we use the lakes and reservoirs in the watershed, as well as state and worldwide. Al presented a primer on how these organisms live and contribute to our environment. He moved quickly to where we are seeing them occur in our area. Diamond Lake is one of the most publicized problem areas for Cyanobacteria as well as several of the coves on Hills Creek Reservoir, which have annual blooms that require posting health notices and sometimes closure.

Chuck Davis, Springfield Utility Board, gave a brief presentation on why Springfield and Lowell’s water supply professionals are watching for the presence of these organisms in Dexter Reservoir, as well as why the Corps of Engineers and Oregon State Parks are watching in order to protect the public who uses the reservoir. Chuck said these four organizations are working to pool some of their resources in order to do more samples on Dexter Reservoir and anticipate any problems. Al Johnson handed out the draft public notices that will be posted in areas where there are high concentrations of Blue-Green Algae, as well as a brochure that was published by the US Forest Service, the Corps of Engineers, and ODA.

We adjourned at 8:45 with many people staying to share information and coordinate their projects.

Recorder: Chuck Davis