

**Middle Fork Willamette Watershed Council
General Council Meeting**

**21 Jun 2006
Lowell, OR
6:30 PM**

Present: Eve Montanaro, Pat Burns, Don Hampton, Nena Lovinger, Stephanie Schroeder, Nancy Sawtelle, Kelly Reis, Dave Bontrager, Eric and Gail Hawes, Mark Wilkening, Theresa Conley, Kim Craig, John Eichorn, Barbara Hazen, Sean Stewart, Andy Reasoner

I. Welcome and Introductions

II. Review and Approve Meeting Agenda - Ms Montanaro
The agenda was approved as posted.

III. Public Comment and Announcements - Ms Montanaro

- Mr Hampton – Greenwaters State Park has a new amphitheater and will be having concerts in the park this summer. The first one is a classical music concert on July 1 from 3 to 7 PM. Misty River will be there Aug 13, doing a fundraiser for Oakridge's food bank. For more information look for the promotional brochures. They will also be advertising on KLCC.
- Ms Reis – ODFW and the Forest Service will be putting on Fishing Fun again this year at the Lane County Fair. Anyone who is interested in volunteering to help introduce children to fly fishing and other fishing skills should contact her at ODFW.
- Mr Stewart – The Equestrian Trails Group has just finished 4 days of trail restoration in Elijah Bristow State Park (EBSP). The next dates for trail work will be in the fall. The Upper Lost Creek Restoration Project (a 6 A parcel of Japanese Knotweed and blackberry near his office) has been mowed and sprayed. It is an interesting spot. He will eventually be looking for volunteers to help replant it.
- Mr Stewart just received his first grant. It is a \$9000 grant to do invasive weed removal and replanting at the Jasper Recreation Site. He'll be looking for volunteers there also.

IV. Coordinator's Report – Ms Montanaro

- The group working on the Army Corp's Floodplain Restoration Project held 3 public information meetings. About 100 people attended from all interest groups. At this time there are no follow-up meetings planned, but they will continue to engage landowners about proposals and opportunities. The information presented was good for the landowners, it alleviated anxieties about participation and process. Any participation is voluntary.
- The Education Committee is developing a natural resources curriculum for elementary school children. There are 10 – 12 people involved in the group. They will also establish some outdoor projects for the children to be involved in.
- We are starting a Projects Committee to oversee the contracts and deliverables on our projects. We are currently looking for a volunteer to be on the Committee for the Lost Creek Confluence, Phase II project. If you are interested, give Ms Montanaro a call.
- Jun 24 there will be a kid friendly tour of Little Fall Creek. It will start at 10 AM. RSVP to Ms Montanaro.

V. Steering Committee Report – Ms Hazen

Highlights of the Steering Committee meeting held in May are as follows:

- Ms Sawtelle asked if we had any upcoming restoration projects that needed river lupine. The BLM had some lupine plugs that had been harvested along the Willamette that needed a home. She and Ms Montanaro had some ideas.
- Mr Ulrey said that he and Mr Dill had been out surveying culverts in support of the fish passage project. Unfortunately there are now locked gates on some of the private land. They will be working with Ms Sawtelle at the BLM office and with Mr Hart from Guistina to get access.
- Mr Davis reported that the City of Springfield is in the public comment period for their stormwater drainage plan. Currently there isn't a plan for how to deal with new subdivision discharges into the Mid Fork. At the moment the drainage goes into bioswales and uses the creeks for discharge. There are 4 more subdivisions planned for the Jasper Road area. This is the time for us to comment. Comments need to address keeping the river clean for drinking water purposes. A representative from the City might be able to attend our General Council meeting in July. (Ms Montanaro confirmed that a representative would attend.) The City Council will adopt their new plan in October.
- USFS Jim's Creek Project – The EA for this project has gone forward and is ready to mail out for comment. Tim Bailey is the person to contact. They have to get a NEPA decision. They will be doing public outreach including tours soon. There will 3 meetings, 1 in September, 1 in October and 1 in November. The tours have to be completed by the 2nd week in Oct to avoid elk season.
- On Jun 13 there was a condensed version of the training for board members of watershed councils put on by the OSU Extension and the Network of Watershed Councils. Three of our members attended and will be sharing their insight at the next Steering Committee meeting. If you are interested you are welcome to attend the meeting.
- Ms Montanaro reminded members about the trail maintenance opportunities coming up in EBSP. (Several MFWWC members did participate.)
- Next Steering Committee meeting is Wed, Jun 28 at 6:30 in Lowell. The public is welcome.

VI. Preserving Your Land: The McKenzie River Trust – Mr Reasoner

Mr Reasoner is the new Conservation Director of the McKenzie River Trust (MRT). He is an Oregon native, growing up in the Klamath Basin. He is a trained biologist and worked with Jeff Ziller locally. He moved to Washington to work on wetland restoration projects before returning to this area.

He said that land trusts are a recent phenomenon. The McKenzie River Trust was chartered in 1989 with a goal to protect riparian lands in perpetuity. It's a voluntary organization; they buy conservation easements and special properties from willing landowners. They also accept donations. They become partners with the landowner in the restoration and stewardship of the land. MRT works in the various watersheds in Lane and Douglas counties. They try to focus their work in areas that they have determined to be a priority. When MRT buys a property it buys it at fair market value. Most owners sell an easement that prevents some action such as logging from happening on their property forever; each landowner can craft his/her own easement prescription.. The landowner is contracting with the MRT to enforce his/her values in perpetuity. However, an easement keeps the land in private ownership. When the property changes hands the new owners are bound by the easement which also has to be disclosed as part of the sale. The landowner benefits by being able to protect a special site forever as well as there are some tax benefits for selling an easement. The MRT benefits by purchasing

easements as they are less expensive than acquiring the whole property. By 2000, local land trusts in the US had protected 2.59 million acres of land. 68 % of the land is protected by easement and remains in private hands. The MRT tries to protect riparian lands, lands of strategic importance, critical open space and key links to other protected lands. They may partner with city councils and watershed councils on an acquisition. They are currently interested in the lower McKenzie as that is where Eugene gets its drinking water, it is a world renowned river and has the last viable run of wild Spring Chinook. They are currently working on buying easements on Green Island.

VII. Discussion and Vote on Becoming a 501c3 organization – Mr Wilkening

Ms Schroeder and Ms Montanaro have copies of the 1990 Oregon Watershed Board report detailing how to become a 501c3 organization if anyone is interested. Discussion followed about the advantages and disadvantages of becoming a non-profit organization, Advantages: we would be a fiscal entity and would be our own fiscal agent. This would allow us to save the fees to our current agent as well as have our own bank accounts, etc. We would obtain limited liability for the board of directors, trustees, officers and technical teams as creditors can only reach as far as the corporate assets, not into the personal assets of the board members. We would be eligible for financial support from a broader group of grantors such as private foundations. The public could receive tax deductions for their contributions to us if we were a non-profit organization. It would be easier to work with some partners. There are disadvantages: accounting would fall to the MFWWC; there are several major reports due to the IRS and the State annually. It will cost approximately \$1500 to hire an attorney to help us with the process. We would have to raise this money as we can't use OWEB money. A non-profit can't be politically active but a watershed council also cannot be politically active. There would be liability insurance expenses. Members who work for Federal agencies might have to abstain from votes or from being on the Board of Directors. The original Bylaws will have to be changed to reflect the new type of organization. There will be decisions about how we will look that will need to be made in the future. Decision: Does the General Council, as represented by the members present authorize the Steering Committee to pursue becoming a 501c3, non-profit organization? Passed unanimously.

VIII. Closing Public Comments

- Mr Stewart said that sometime in the summer there will be a culvert removal at EBSP. The Lane Co Youth Corps will be doing it. More details to follow.
- Ms Montanaro said that Phase II has begun. The site was surveyed for native species. The children from Lundy Elementary have potted the native species and the plants have been moved to the park nursery. There will be another salvage party in early July.
- Ms Reis said that they have found the first bull trout fry naturally produced since ODFW started restoration in 1990. The fry were spotted at Iko Springs.
- Mr Stewart said that they had Western pond turtles hatching at EBSP in Apr and May.
- Ms Hazen asked about the blue tubes surrounding the trees planted in Phase I at EBSP. Ms Montanaro said that she would ask Mr Blazar or Sheila from Trillium Gardens about the timing for tube removal and if we should irrigate for another year.

IX. Next Meeting

July 19, 2006
ODF Building
Springfield, OR
6:30 - 8:30 PM

Meeting adjourned 8:40PM.

Barbara Hazen
Recorder