

Fifteenmile Watershed Council Meeting

Barlow Ranger District Office, Dufur

September 6, 2016

6:30 – 7:50 PM

MINUTES

Attendees:

Shilah Olson, <i>SWCD</i>	Nate Woodard, <i>SWCD</i>	Abbie Forrest, <i>Coordinator</i>
Caylin Barter, <i>TFT</i>	Chris Rossel, <i>USFS</i>	Jim Olson, <i>Member</i>
Bill Markman, <i>Member</i>	Phil Kaser, <i>Co-chair</i>	Meg Belais, <i>TFT</i>
Katie Pierson, <i>ODFW</i>	Robert Wallace, <i>Mayor</i>	Martin Underhill, <i>Member</i>
LaVelle Underhill	Gary Van Orman, <i>Member</i>	Chris Augustine, <i>EA Engineering</i>
Charlie Remington	Bob Wood, <i>Watermaster</i>	Randy McAllister
John Clausen	Stan Ashbrook	David Brewer, <i>Member</i>

Introduction, Review/Approval of Agenda and Minutes

Phil called the meeting to order and initiated a round of introductions. Council members reviewed the agenda and minutes from the last meeting.

Jim moved to approve the minutes from the last meeting, Bill seconded and the motion passed.

2016 FAST Results – Nate Woodard Fast Coordinator

Nate provided the council with background information about the FAST program. He explained option 1 (full commitment) and option 2 (no commitment). Nate said this year there were 6 more participants than last year bringing the total to 16 irrigators volunteering in the program. There were not any alerts issued this year, although there were a few days that were close, thankfully the creek never passed the thresholds.

Phil pointed out that the elevation stated on the presentation model at the Kaser gaging site is closer to 350ft not 900ft.

The Confederate Tribes of Warm Springs and ODFW both reported positive feedback on the watershed with no reported kills.

Nate shared his recommendations during no flow events. The loosing reaches are downstream of Dufur and Kelly Cut-off (even farther downstream). Nate suggested irrigators volunteer to shut off their water when the Water Temperature Forecast model (that is emailed every morning) shows zero instantaneous or daily average flow.

Bob Wood provided the council with his observations this year. He said 2015 was a bad drought year, and a below average year this year. This summer was not good for the flows, or the Fifteenmile area in general.

Discuss *The Oregonian* Article about 15mile Creek “A Creek in Crisis” – Shilah Olson

Phil started the conversation by stating the council has worked really hard for years. For one person to come and not mention any of the positive that has been done, made him feel that it was not a fair article. Shilah who has been working on a response to the article said she has directed the focus to be on the good work that has been done in the Fifteenmile Watershed. She would like to gather input from the council and have them help her with what the right response should be. She added the article was very misleading. Bill Markman said reading the article, it sounded like it was directed at the wells that are possibly drawing from the creek and making it hard on the fish (as what the fish bio says) and it's the irrigators that are pulling the water. Even though we have been praised for the good work we do, wells haven't been a focus at a council meeting. Katie Pierson with ODFW said the article and accusations are not specific to Fifteenmile; it's happening all over the eastern part of the state and is mainly due to a lack of water. The estimates are just estimates and the wording in the article is false. She added that the statements and estimates are not coming from someone in her office.

Bob agreed, the article was directed to the OWRD agency and the management. There is a need for more intensive groundwater studies state wide. There is really a lack of knowledge in the watershed. Groundwater is difficult to understand and we need more resources to fully understand the problem. The article did not mention the good work and studies that have been done.

Bill said he would like to write a letter to the editor and the Oregonian and also have our local representatives involved. He would like the council to respond to the legislatures and our local representatives to tell them what good work the council has done. Jim stated he thinks we should take a rebuttal to the Oregonian. Chris added that this may be a good opportunity for the council to tell their story across the state. He agreed we need more information and funding to have these studies completed.

Commissioner Kramer mentioned all the representatives and said he has been working to get them informed with what's going on in Wasco County, and the Fifteenmile Watershed in particular.

David said he would like to see some data proving whether fish populations are improving or not.

Phil commented all agencies have been working together in this watershed. Bob agreed, and added this is the most proactive group he has worked with as the Watermaster.

Bill moved to go forward with a rebuttal to the Oregonian's article as well as sending emails to local representatives and the Oregonian, and signing the letters as the Fifteenmile Watershed Council.

Discussion continued about all of the misinformation in the article.

Jim seconded the motion.

David said there is obviously a groundwater issue. The science and data is not there yet and we're working on more funding to understand those issues.

Stan said he is in support of the rebuttal to the Oregonian.

Phil called for a vote and the motion passed unanimously.

Shilah said she had a chance to visit with Rod French who has been getting a lot of negative feedback. He said historically sediment was an issue in the creeks and he wants to acknowledge and praise all the landowners who have converted to no-till for the good work they have done to improve water quality in Fifteenmile Creek.

Shilah will email her letter to council members tomorrow and urged members to provide comments and any input by the end of next week.

Updates and Announcements

DEQ Monitoring – PSP Sampling location and date

DEQ has requested to add a new sampling location further upstream for the Pesticide Stewardship Program. The sampling will take place at Dufur City Park the week of September 19th.

DEQ is also looking for sediment data to paint the picture of good conservation practices through biomonitoring (Macroinvertebrates). DEQ representatives will be trying to collect data at every basin in the state. The ultimate goal would be for Fifteenmile to get delisted for water quality BMP's.

Wheat Producers Tillage Survey

There was a letter and survey sent out a few weeks ago to all producers in Fifteenmile. With this information provided by landowners the goal is to show the reduction in sediment in the creeks. The survey is asking permission to look through our records that show when producers converted to no-till from conventional farming. Landowners have the option to share the data with DEQ, ODA and/or PSU grad student Melanie Malone.

Project Update for the fish passage barrier at the Dufur water intake

Abbie and Marty Olson with ODFW presented the project proposal and draft designs to the Dufur City Council earlier this summer. Robert reported that the council has decided to move forward with the project although there are some lingering concerns. The City wants to make sure they still have the option to use that water in the future. Robert also explained the City is currently working on producing a water budget. The City Council will continue to work with ODFW to draft an agreement and maintenance plan as well as work with Abbie and the SWCD for OWEB Small Grant and SWCD Cost Share funds.

Additional Agenda Item

Phil stated that Gay Melvin will be stepping down from his position as a voting member of the watershed council as a representative from the City of Dufur. Phil asked Robert to see if he can find a replacement to sit on the Fifteenmile Watershed Council as a City of Dufur Representative.

Pacific Coast Salmon Recovery Fund (PCSRF) Tour

OWEB and folks from the PCSRF (who have funded projects in the Fifteenmile watershed) have coordinated a tour for September 14th. Tour stops will include sharing information on the FAST

program, the Three Bridges Ford Elimination Project, flow monitoring, CREP and Olson Fifteenmile water right acquisition. Shilah said she would like to encourage council folks to attend.

ODA Request for Extension of Terms for Reservations of Water for Economic Development

Shilah said the terms for reservations of water has been renewed. She and Abbie worked with Margaret from ODA to provide input for the application request.

OWEB Meeting October 25th-26th in Ashland

OWEB will be meeting in October in Ashland to consider the match funding grant for the subsurface feasibility study. Shilah asked if there was a council member that would be willing to go to that meeting to make a pitch to OWEB to fund this project. Commissioner Kramer suggested council members each write a testimony in support of the grant. Shilah will send council members details about the meeting.

Update on 15mile Subsurface Storage Feasibility Study

The grant agreement is in place with OWRD until December 2017. Because the grant was scored so low from the OWEB review team we are now looking elsewhere for the 50% match. Council members agreed written testimonies from local representatives should be sent to OWEB by October 11th deadline. Local representatives should be Senator Ron Wyden, Rep. Huffman, County Commissioners.

County Reappointments

Phil Kaser, Martin Underhill and Bob Durham all accepted reappointment as voting members of the Fifteenmile Watershed Council. Kameron Sam declined reappointment and suggested Chris Rossel, also a representative from the USFS. Chris accepted the appointment.

Bill moved to reappoint Phil Kaser, Martin Underhill and Bob Durham and appoint Chris Rossel to the council, David seconded and the motion passed.

Meeting adjourned at 7:50PM

Minutes Prepared by Abbie Forrest