



# The Dalles Watershed Council

Fostering stewardship of Threemile Creek, Mill Creek and Chenoweth Creek watersheds

c/o Wasco County Soil and Water Conservation District

2325 River Road, Suite 3, The Dalles, OR 97058

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## MEETING MINUTES

**January 20th, 2016 6:30 – 8:30 PM.**

**USDA Service Center 2325 River Road The Dalles**

### Attendees:

Abbie Forrest, *Coordinator*

Pat Davis, *CB & WR Chair*

Steve Byers, *Member*

Ryan Bessette, *SWCD Tech*

Bruce Lumper, *Co-Chair*

Mark Poppoff, *Member*

Paul Halliday, *Volunteer*

John Dodd, *Member*

Ken Bailey, *Co-Chair*

John Nelson, *Member*

Gary Wade, *Member*

### Introductions, Agenda Review & Approval of Minutes from Last Meeting

Bruce Lumper called the meeting to order and asked for any additions or changes to the agenda. None were made. Bruce requested edits to the last meeting minutes, and shared some of his requested changes. In order to save time, Abbie will send him the minutes in Word format to show track changes and will present the edits for the council to review at the next meeting.

John Nelson provided follow-up after his discussion with Columbia River Keepers. He said they are planning an event in August and he will keep the council informed as more information becomes available.

### Coordinating Board prioritization strategy for restoration projects

Abbie shared with the council four documents: an excerpt from the Action Plan; a restoration project ranking sheet; and two work plans, one in the old format and the other a revised version. The Action Plan excerpt describes questions that can be used to help prioritize projects. The Ranking sheet is a worksheet that Abbie put together, using the questions from the Action Plan along with a numbering system. The old Work Plan is a spreadsheet showing all projects that were previously ranked by priority (high, medium and low) by the watershed councils. The Work Plan also shows the status of each project, funder and which watershed council it pertains to. The new version was put together at the request of the Coordinating Board. The new version now has different sections that were separated out to show which projects are completed; OWEB requirements; projects that are funded, annual and on-going; and projects that will need to be ranked.

Bruce complimented how helpful it is to see all of the projects the councils are working on. He also said it is great to actually be using the Action Plan to prioritize projects. Ken added that it's a great benefit to share all of this information, seeing what's going on in the county and supporting each other.

Abbie and Pat explained the discussion from the Coordinating Board meeting about a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC). Gary said that TAC's do very good work. Ken said that if we know who we need technical help from, we will go directly to that agency. Gary suggested finding a way to differentiate between watershed council type projects and SWCD projects. He said he doesn't want to see government money set aside for watershed restoration, not being used for those types of projects. Gary added that there is a need to recognize

they aren't OWEB projects. Pat said that it is an important issue. There are watersheds in Wasco County that do not have salmon. However, if a project is removing a fish passage barrier in an irrigation system, the project benefits both; the irrigator and the watershed. Ken added that as councils are getting projects done, it is good to show we are benefitting the watershed, even though it's not a "watershed restoration" project. Bruce asked how we get additional benefit by that delineation.

Ken said that the main thing is, the Coordinating Board is just getting started on the list of priorities. Gary said if we have a list of priorities that end up high, that aren't really restoration based, then you get restoration projects that are low. Pat added that the value of having the delineation is we're going to OWEB for funding and it helps to show our culture and how we look at things. At some point it's going to put money in our pockets.

Ken shared an example of how Mid-Columbia Economic Development District (MCEDD) prioritizes their list of projects. He said we have to be flexible when looking at the ranking sheet, because money becomes available, and things change. This is new and we're going to make mistakes and changes. John Dodd suggested having some of the ranking factors weighted. There are some questions that may be more important than others and should have more significance.

### **Update the Annual Work Plan**

The council had great discussion about adding the Mill Creek Trail to the Work Plan; Riverfront Trail Efforts; and the Creekview Property.

Paul suggested having the Creekview property under a broader scope and using it as a tool for education. The Mill Creek Trail isn't a planning project or a restoration project, but when ownership changes from The City to Parks and Recreation District (Parks and Rec.) there will be a lot of opportunities for planting, weed control, maintenance, etc. Gary asked about the Trail paths and maintenance. He asked what is necessary and if it actually benefits watershed health. Paul shared his thoughts on keeping the site as natural as possible. Council members discussed the need to find out if the City wants to do some of the preparatory work like leveling and trimming before we decide to plant.

Ken agreed to add the Mill Creek Trail to the work plan and suggested removing the tunnel project. The tunnel is so far away, we're not even yet in the planning process.

Paul asked if the Trail going through the Creekview property is a high priority. Paul said he is in support of trying to improve the stream and greenway through there. Ken added that having the Trail will get community involvement and support. Gary commented it makes sense to look at all aspects of a project and keep the pieces together.

*Gary moved to add the Mill Creek Trail to the Work Plan as a high priority planning project, Mark seconded and the motion passed.*

Steve said there is a possibility to add logs and root wads to Mill Creek at the Creekview property. Ryan said that he talked with ODFW about the idea of adding logs and root wads and ODFW did not recommend that type of project. ODFW said they don't want the fish hanging out this low in the system; however, boulders would be

okay. This is why we have to talk to our partners because if we don't, it could really backfire. Ryan said the SWCD and watershed council will have ODFW engineers look at placing boulders in Mill Creek and share their ideas with the council. Steve added that it is really important to figure out what Parks and Rec. wants to do with the Creekview property. Mark suggested that the council meet with the City and Parks and Recreation District to get input on their plans so the council's planting efforts are not crossing the Trail. Paul said he would be willing to talk with all the involved parties and put together a presentation to share with the council.

Bruce suggested adding the Riverfront Trail efforts and on-going work to the work plan. Steve thought that Riverfront should already be in the plan and that the council has discussed it since the work first started. Discussion ensued. The Riverfront Trail and on-going work will be discussed at the next meeting.

Gary added that to identify projects you need to do an analysis of the entire watershed. It's important to look at the need of the watershed before the council can say what is important. The council discussed the need for a watershed assessment regarding what information we already have. Ryan suggested the council look at The Dalles Watershed Assessment which is available on the SWCD website for more information. Bruce, Gary and Ryan will work together on providing more information to the council at the next meeting.

Steve asked what is being done on Threemile Creek. Ryan shared information on the Strategic Implementation Area and the meeting that was held with ODA on January 12<sup>th</sup>. He said ODA had only identified 2 or 3 properties that that were classified as a significant concern. He said the SWCD has been and will be working with those landowners.

### **Mill Creek Trail**

The council decided to not discuss the Mill Creek Trail any further at this meeting. It was discussed while updating the Work Plan.

### **Creekview Planting**

Paul provided the council with a brief update. He shared an aerial photo of the Creekview property that included drawings of where the Trail would run through and potential planting sites along the creek and hill side. Paul said he would like to line up a few willows to plant along the creek. He would also like to add some sort of ground cover in hopes it would out-compete the invasive plants. One idea Paul had was to turn the cul-de-sac into a native plant garden. Paul explained that the hillside is pretty open with grass and would be a good spot to add a few pine trees. He also said there are oaks that are establishing themselves up there as well. One council member said pines and oak trees were planted up on the hillside in the past and some of them may have lived.

Paul showed the council locations on the ridge where boulders are falling down. He said the falling oak trees and boulders are causing erosion and safety hazards.

The council discussed different plants that would be good to use at the site. Paul said that if the council decided to do a work party there is ivy that will need to be pulled as well as reed canary grass. The council also discussed using mulch and mats to keep the grass down to help the new plantings get established.

The council decided to use the left over trees from the SWCD Tree and Shrub sale to plant at the Creekview property. The trees from the sale will be available mid-March. The planting date is set for March 19<sup>th</sup> and a follow-up planting day or work party is scheduled for March 26<sup>th</sup>.

### **Officer Elections**

Bruce and Ken said they would both like to continue as The Dalles Watershed Council Co-chairs.

*Gary moved to re-elect Bruce and Ken as Co-chairs, Mark seconded and the motion passed.*

### **SWCD Annual Board Meeting**

Ken shared that the program for this year's annual board meeting will be showcasing all of the success from the watershed councils and the SWCD. Abbie will be putting together an Annual Report for the watershed councils, similar to the SWCD's Annual Report that will be available at the meeting. The meeting is February 18<sup>th</sup> starting at 5:30 PM at the Discovery Center. Call the office if you would like to make a reservation.

### **Updates and Announcements**

The next meeting is scheduled for March 9<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 PM. Agenda will include the annual Pesticide Stewardship Partnership 2015 sampling data from Kevin Masterson with DEQ.

The OWEB Lower Deschutes Small Grant Program is taking applications. Contact Abbie if you would like more information.

The next Coordinating Board meeting will be April 6, 2016 at 10:30 AM. Note the time change.

Meeting adjourned.

Minutes prepared by Abbie Forrest.