

The Dalles Watershed Council
MEETING MINUTES
January 10th, 2018 5:30-7:00 PM
USDA Service Center 2325 River Road, The Dalles

Attendees:

Tatiana Taylor, *SWCD*
Steve Byers, *Member*
Ryan Bessette, *SWCD*

Ken Bailey, *Co-Chair*
John Dodd, *USFS*
Martha Blair, *Member*

John Nelson, *Member*

Introductions

Ken Bailey called the meeting to order and led introductions. Ken asked if there were any additions to the agenda. There were none. Ken asked the council to examine the minutes from October. There were no changes to the minutes.

Martha moved to approve the minutes as presented. Steve seconded and the motion passed.

E.coli Monitoring Report- Tatiana Taylor

Tatiana began the report by explaining how *E.coli* monitoring came about in 2009, and how the sites along Mill creek have changed overtime. Tatiana mentioned that she was able to participate in 2 sampling dates this season, in September and October.

E.coli is an indicator of fecal contamination and ODEQ (Oregon Department of Environmental Quality) has two set standards for *E.coli* concentrations. The Chronic Standard is 126 MPN/100mL and the Acute standard is 406 MPN/100mL. ODEQ requires *E.coli* concentrations to be below 406 MPN/100mL to allow water recreation. Tatiana explained the methodology used to collect the *E.coli* samples and mentioned that MPN stands for Most Probable Number. Tatiana explained that MPN is not an exact number of coliform colonies, instead it is an estimate. After samples are collected they are incubated in a Quanti-Tray, which are trays that separate the sample (which has been mixed with a reagent) into wells. After incubation, the wells are examined for fluorescence, which indicates *E.coli*. Wells that fluoresce are counted and then compared to a Most Probable Number chart.

Tatiana explained the results from the samples gathered, which took place from July 11th through October 3rd 2017. There were 6 sampling sites, 3 inside city limits and 3 outside city limits. Tatiana discussed the *E.coli* concentrations throughout the years. Although the trend is not definite, there seems to be a general downward trend throughout the years. The average *E.coli* concentration for each site was concerning because three sites throughout 2017 had an average *E.coli* concentration above the acute standard of 406 MPN/100mL.

Tatiana discussed two outlier data points. Both outliers were on August 22nd, 2017. There was a turbidity spike at the Skyline Tributary. There was an *E.coli* spike at the Mill Creek at 3rd Bridge on the same day. The council discussed possible reasons for these spikes, but no suggestions were definitive.

The presentation concluded with a need for continued monitoring. Tatiana explained that continued monitoring is beneficial because it can provide insight into problem areas along the creek.

Chenoweth Focus Area- Tatiana Taylor

Tatiana presented the work Wasco Co. SWCD has done on the Chenoweth Creek Focus Area. Tatiana presented some background information regarding the beginnings of the program. ODA and the SWCD did a vegetation assessment of the Chenoweth Creek area. This consisted of driving along public roads and trying to identify any areas near the stream that may be potential areas of point source pollution. The results of this vegetation assessment were encouraging. There were approximately three areas spotted along the assessment that were of any concern.

Ryan inquired if any forest lands were evaluated. Ken replied that ODA only has authority over agricultural lands, thus the water quality program only pertains to lands with ties to ag. Ken also

explained that the distinction can become murky because some Oak habitat can be grazed, lending itself to the AG Water Quality program, but if it's used for timber, the land wouldn't qualify.

Ken went on to explain that the Focus Areas arose because ODA needed a way to demonstrate the excellent results coming from the Ag Water Quality Program. Ken mentioned that every district in the area has a focus area.

Tatiana and Ken explained SIA's (Strategic Implementation Areas), and how these are ODA led efforts. The SIA for 2018 is Eightmile creek, and previously ODA has worked on Mill Creek and Threemile.

John Nelson inquired if invasive species were a focus of ODA. Tatiana replied that although this had not been a focus previously, as the last LAC meeting (Local Advisory Committee) ODA had mentioned a new focus on "ecological uplift". This new focus stems from the issue of areas being in compliance, but may have invasive species, or other ecological issues. Ken mentioned that these Focus Areas provide opportunity for uplift, and provide help with native plants.

Martha mentioned that she believes the 'focus area' style approach to a problem is incredibly effective. She suggested that once the results have been digitized that the SWCD could send out a mailing to landowners offering free, non-regulatory help for any areas of concern.

Co-Chair Elections

Ken began the co-chair elections by explaining that previous co-chairs had a set division of responsibilities. Ken explained that previously one co-chair ran meetings and helped with agendas, while the other was focused more on district responsibilities. Ken inquired if this set up was aligned with what Steve had been willing to participate in. Steve agreed to the system of a division of responsibilities.

Martha moved to elect Steve for the vacant Co-Chair position. John Dodd seconded and the motion passed.

Updates and Announcements

Mill Creek Stream Temperature Update- Ryan Bessette, SWCD

Ryan began his update by explaining that last summer was the first year for Mill Creek Stream Temperature monitoring. Ryan explained the basic set up for the program. The SWCD purchased data loggers called 'hobos' to collect stream temperatures. The loggers are not waterproof, so they are wrapped inside a waterproof container, and then wrapped in aluminum.

There are three data loggers or monitors and they take a seven day running average. This uses the high temperature from all seven days and creates a point, which is the same average DEQ uses. Ryan presented several slides that examined the site placement and the data. The data loggers were set on April 19th but the data starts on April 26th, due to the seven day running average. Ryan noted that by May 23rd the side channel had either stopped flowing or the water had gone as the temperatures were much higher at this point. Ryan noted that some of the temperature data points for the data loggers were higher than ambient air temperatures. Ryan believes this to be due to the fact that the loggers are cased in aluminum tubing.

He shared that as of this meeting date the watershed drainage area was at 40-50% of expected snowpack, indicating interesting results for the upcoming season. Steve suggested painting the aluminum tubing white in order to decrease the effect of direct sunlight. Ryan also mentioned the unintentional benefits of the side-channel. Steelhead Redds were sighted at the bottom of the side channel, especially encouraging considering the side channel was originally developed for storm overflow. Ryan again noted that the upcoming season does not look good for fish as the winter precipitation is exceptionally low.

Next meeting is set for April 11th. 2018 at 5:30.

Meeting Adjourned at 7:00pm

Minutes prepared by Tatiana Taylor.