

White River Watershed Council Meeting

October 7, 2014

6:30 – 8:30 PM

Tygh School Community Center

MINUTES

Attendees:

Abbie Simmons, <i>SWCD</i>	Josh Thompson, <i>SWCD</i>	Dick Sherman	David Deurwaarder
Casey Gatz, <i>USFS</i>	Whitney Olsker, <i>USFS</i>	Chris Rossel, <i>USFS</i>	Jack Scott
Kameron Sam, <i>USFS</i>	Pat Davis, <i>Chair</i>	Bob Larsell	Bruce Lumper
Marolyn Wilks	Kenneth Martin	Richard Blaine	Dan Van Vactor
CoraLee Groce	Roy Groce	John Herlocker	John Herlocker, Jr.
Amy McNamee	Sam Woodside	John McElheran, <i>Co-chair</i>	Anna Buckley, <i>Coordinator</i>

Call to Order and Introductions

Pat called the meeting to order and led introductions. He asked for any additions to the agenda and for council members to review and approve the last meeting minutes. Bob moved to approve, Rick seconded and the motion passed.

Rocky Burn Restoration and Watershed Resiliency Project: Introduction and Opportunity for community engagement *Kameron Sam, USFS Barlow District Ranger, Casey Gatz, USFS, Whitney Olsker, USFS*

Kameron Sam along with Casey Gatz and Whitney Olsker from the USFS attended the meeting to introduce the biggest project the Forest Service is currently trying to put into action. Kameron stated that the Rocky Burn Restoration and Watershed Resiliency Project has a focus area of 24,000 acres. This includes the Eastern boundary of the National Forest, all the way to Sportsmans park, to the north to the Badger Creek area and to the upper part of the watershed, and West to Hwy 48. Creeks that are in the boundaries include: Gate, Boulder, Lower Badger, Upper Badger, Rock and Three mile Creek.

After Kameron gave some background on the project Casey and Whitney went through a presentation that outlined many of the projects objectives. The restoration opportunities represent a project that can be implemented in the near term to provide for long term resiliency, restoration, and habitat improvement across all boundaries. They are hoping this is just the beginning of a much larger integrated restoration potential to the Mt. Hood National Forest. Topics in the presentation included: The project area size and location; The need for action; Vegetation; Fuels; Wildlife; Water quality and quantity; Fisheries; Soils; Botany; Range; Heritage; and partner opportunities. Whitney explained that the goal is to get all of the listed topics back to their historical state so that wildlife and vegetation can thrive. Too many species are working their way out of the system because of missed disturbances and end up not surviving because of pressure from other species.

Kameron talked about opportunities, partnerships, and goals to improve and protect all of the natural resources. He explained the term why here? Why now? He said that the Forest Service is looking to get input from the community and stakeholders and construct a plan on how to reach those goals. Dan shared information on the last burn in 1973 and asked how the USFS has prioritized areas to prevent catastrophic fires coming into other WUI areas? *WUI (Wildlife Urban Interface, anything to do with human structures).*

Kameron explained that they are included in the plan and they are also looking at ways to defend it and the effects afterwards. Bruce asked what the timeframe is for getting work on the ground as well as the collaborative process? Kameron said that this is a huge priority area and that some of the work is already in place. The potential project area is still in the emphasis phase. There is still a lot of work that needs to be done in the next two field seasons, starting now through the 2016 season. By 2016 the goal is to finish surveys, the NEPA process, public comment, and develop a proposed action to move through and get alternatives. Pat asked how the structure of this will work? He said that we have ideas of how we want this project to benefit us and that includes water in our ditches for irrigation. When are we going to get together and share our objectives and specifics and how long do we have to prepare? Kameron said that he would like to set up a time to look at areas this year and get organized this month. He is planning to have meetings once a month for the next six months to invite ideas and collaboration to understand what it is going to look like for end users. Dan added that the tributary water districts should be invited individually to focus on the irrigation districts to share experiences and hopes. Pat volunteered to coordinate with other water districts to get a date on the board and get some broad views out on the table. Bob asked a question concerning the vast amount of entities involved and said how many other bureaucracies are going to have input that will muddy the water? Kameron said that we have a purpose and that is to have more water, prevent insect disease, reduce fire fuels etc. and if we keep a focus on this purpose, stakeholders will be able to help define the desired conditions. Once that is done we hope to bring everybody in to be clear on the plan so the muddy water will be limited. He said that they want to integrate all specific pieces and collaborate to make it happen. Bob also asked how they came up with a project area 3 times the size of the original 8,000 acre area that was previously burned? Kameron said that because of what has been learned and the effects, the scale is much larger so we can look at the entire area. They are looking at the entire watershed range in the planning area to do appropriate mitigations. The goal is to not look at the burn itself but areas that still exist now, that border it, and ways to maintain health throughout the entire watershed. Anna asked about future dates of the collaboration meetings and volunteered to help spread the word to folks and get more of the community involved. If anyone has any comments, concerns or ideas to share, please contact Kameron Sam at the USFS Barlow Ranger Station in Dufur.

Clear Lake resource concerns and opportunity for collaboration on the development of a management plan *Chris Rossel, USFS Barlow District Fish Biologist*

Chris Rossel briefly explained Clear Lake and all of the activities that surround it. He said there is camping, fishing, boating, shore angling, the Pacific Crest trail and grazing allotments. But the main purpose for Clear Lake is the irrigation storage. He said that this area has been a challenge and is difficult to manage. The challenge comes from shooting, trash dumping and other reckless activities. The Forest Service has decided to develop a management plan for the lake and are looking for collaboration to manage over the next winter and into next year.

He said the long term plan will include 5 year goals over the next 10, 15, and 20 years as well as resources to help manage the lake. Chris said that the lake is in the White River watershed and any support or help is greatly appreciated. The point of contact is Clair Pitner, Resource Specialist in Hood River, or get a hold of Chris. John McElheran asked what are we trying to do? Chris said the goal is to identify resource concerns, manage the roads and user groups. He explained the issues that come with dispersed camping like people making their own trails, ruining vegetation, soil erosion and a lot of long term affects. The management plan is to identify those issues with a long term plan and address them. Dan asked what the technical name is, Clear Lake or Wasco Reservoir? Chris said the district map says Clear Lake. Kameron added that the recreation around the primary use (irrigation) is what they are trying to manage and that this is especially important for members here at this meeting who use the water storage at the lake for their irrigation. Anna also mentioned that there is a big concern for protecting this primary use of irrigation for water quality and sediment build up.

Updates and Announcements

Wasco County Watershed Councils action plan grant

Bruce talked about the grant that the Watershed Councils applied for. He mentioned the match that was provided by the SWCD and said that OWEB will be reviewing it on October 27. The coordinating board gave the blessing to have Anna continue forward until it is completed and adopted in May. Bruce explained the overall priorities that will be included, from all Watershed Councils, into the action plan. Anna added logistics and said that the contractor will be hired at the end of this month. The contractor that will be hired is looking to go on a tour of the Watersheds as well as meet Watershed Council chairs. He wants to be able to view the areas first-hand and get all priorities documented. The next Coordinating Board meeting will be December 3rd where they will talk with the contractor and discuss the action plan with the goal of having a draft action plan constructed by the next meeting. Anna also wanted to thank Josh for all of his help in this process because of his tremendous efforts in the White River watershed. She also mentioned that every watershed has an adopted action plan except for White River and the plan is to integrate to get a county wide perspective.

White River Regional Conservation Partnership Program proposal update

Josh talked to the council about the RCPP project that he put together to benefit instream flows, and the proposal that was submitted earlier this month. There are \$400,000,000 up for grabs that will be divided 3 ways (State, National, CCA-Critical Conservation Area). Josh explained that the Columbia River basin was chosen as a potential focus area which means that White River and Tygh Creeks hydrologic code is in that boundary. So far Josh has wrapped up 2.5 million in partner funds and he requested 2.4 million for this project through the USDA EQIP program. Irrigation efficiency improvements were a basis for the proposal and they include: The Highline Ditch, as a match fund \$750,000, Lindell Project, which was number 2 on OWEBs priority list, Rock Creek piping's existing funds, and \$937,000 for the Three mile Diversion. The Three mile diversion is a joint fish screen project where 8,000 feet will be piped and will eliminate two fish passage barriers.

Josh explained that starting 2016-2019 there will be \$100,000 received each year for irrigation efficiency projects for anyone who wants to sign up. Josh says anyone looking for a wheel line upgrade, pivot, pumps sprinklers, open ditch to pipe etc. is welcome to call him. Bruce asked where he is in the application process. Josh said he is through with the pre-proposal and has asked for a full proposal. So far one other applicant has dropped out and he feels that his proposal is very competitive and focused. He also said that he was the only one to receive a commitment letter which he believes is a high probability. Josh mention, also that anyone who wants a copy of the full proposal is welcome to contact him and he can email it to them.

Wasco County LiDar update

Josh gave a really quick update on LiDar. He said that the acquisition was complete and they are currently in the processing stage. They hope to have it all completed by early November.

Others

Residents from the Pine Hollow area attended the meeting to voice their concern about the flooding issues many neighbors have been dealing with over the years and they are looking for help. They said roads are continuously being flooded, culverts are plugged leaving the water with nowhere to go, and nobody to step up and solve the issue. Pat also shared similar experiences and said that there is a diversion in Wamic but the Watermaster calls when high flows may occur to get more water taken out to try and prevent flooding. Pat says it's an issue that can be solved by getting more technical people involved. Josh added that at some point in the future Wamic and Tygh are going to have to incorporate some management. Dan also mentioned that there is a joint agreement between Pine Hollow, Round Prairie and Badger irrigation districts that may be able to help and find a way to get those ditches piped through the Pine Hollow project in some sort of collaboration. Josh said that he would be willing to work on this project. Once LiDar is complete he can look at the hydrology, hydroelectric and put together a budget along with some cost estimates. Pat mentioned contacting flood control districts that get funding from insurance folks. He said it all works together and we

may be able to do some research for the whole area. Dan volunteered and the irrigation district to help wherever they can. Discussion ensued.

Next Meeting Date and Agenda

A date has not been selected for the next meeting. It was mentioned to have it after the neighborhood meetings next year in February. Agenda items were not discussed at the time of the meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 8:30