

# **Marys River Watershed Council**

## **Board Meeting**

### **October 14, 2008**

Meeting started at 6:35 PM

Board Members present: Mark Taratoot, Curt Seeliger, Jennifer Beathe, Bud Laurent, Wayne Phillips, Ken Crouse, May Dasch

Contractors present: Sandra Coveny and Karen Fleck Harding

Other guests: Van Decker, Jana Seeliger, Mark Hommer

Introductions

**Announcements:** Thom asked Wayne to announce the OWEB 10<sup>th</sup> Biennial Conference, taking place at the Eugene Hilton on November 5-7. Registration is \$150.00 per person prior to October 27<sup>th</sup>.

## **Reports**

### **Secretary**

Approval of Minutes: approved.

### **Treasurer**

There is no report at this time, but the council is planning to have one for the board meeting in November. The new bookkeeper, Anne White, has started working for the council.

### **Coordinator:**

In addition to her written report, Sandra has scheduled meeting tomorrow with Todd Reeve of Bonneville Environmental Foundation, and will email the board a summary of the meeting.

### **Education and Outreach**

In addition to her written report, Karen reported that the Rock Creek project is finished and she is hoping to schedule a site tour on October 25<sup>th</sup> or November 1<sup>st</sup>, for the general public. Blair creek is in progress, two culverts are installed and backfilled, one culvert is yet to be removed for this phase of the project. The Dunn project on Beaver Creek was completed last week. The Cardwell Hill project is wrapping up this week and they are trying to get finished before it rains again.

## **Status of bookkeeper and accounting issues**

Sandra met with Anne White who thought that our financial database has a solid start. She is going to establish our system and Sandra reports that the situation is very encouraging. Ann claims that she can easily generate a treasurer's report by next month. She is billing the Council at two different rates; one for bookkeeping and one for consulting. The bookkeeping rate is lower than the consulting rate. In her consulting capacity, she is providing help to revise our fiscal procedures. Karen and Sandra both noted that Anne is extremely efficient.

Wayne asked about the plan for the long term? Sandra said that the plan is for Anne to get the council finances in order and fiscal policies developed. It is not the plan for her to stay retained by the council for the long term. We do need a bookkeeper for several hours a month on a regular basis. It would be nice to have a volunteer, but that shouldn't be counted upon. Sandra would like to see a bookkeeper that can do some additional administrative work as well.

Bud commented that when he and Sandra talked with Anne, she set a time horizon of six months. Ann has also recommended someone who may be interested in working with her on the bookkeeping duties, to save the council money while Anne works to help us revise our fiscal procedures

## **Joint Letter of Interest with the Luckiamute WC for Model Watershed Project**

Meyer Memorial Trust (MMT) and the Bonneville Environmental Foundation (BEF) are requesting a letter of intent for watershed groups interested in a 10 year "Model Watershed Grant Program". According to its website, the BEF, "employs a comprehensive Model Watershed restoration approach that assures financial and scientific approaches to select priority watersheds over a ten-year period. Within each Model Watershed project selected for support, BEF commits to provide scientific support, the services of a professional independent scientific review team, and funding for monitoring and assessment over the full duration of the project."

The Luckiamute Watershed Council has been selected to develop their approach to restoration and their letter of interest has been accepted. Since the Luckiamute will be applying for the 10-year program and we are also interested in applying for the program, we are considering submitting a joint letter of interest to the BEF/MMT. Sandra emailed a draft joint letter of interest before the meeting and is looking for direction. Bud suggested alternating the order that MRWC and LWC appear in each section of the document. Sandra agreed to continue exploring the option of a joint approach, and if that option seems best, she will continue working with the LWC on the letter. If individual letters are a better approach, Sandra will draft that and continue with working toward other ways to collaborate with our neighboring watershed council.

## **Planning for Membership/Public Meetings**

Thom, who couldn't attend the October Board meeting, asked Wayne to announce that now that we are "up and running" as a board, we should get our membership and public meetings started again.

One idea is: Water Use and the Benton County Water Project. The County is finished with phase one of their water project. Sandra communicated with Court Smith, an OSU professor and steering committee member of the Benton County Water Use forum who agreed that such an event would be well timed and provide good opportunity for the County to unveil its draft plan. Mark will also talk to Adam Stebbins about the possibility of a public meeting on December 9<sup>th</sup>.

Another idea Karen brought up is a tour or presentation on the Rock Creek project. May thought that we should do at least one tour per year on projects. Mark agreed that we want to do tours as well. Maybe if their isn't time to develop a big forum, we can do a Rock Creek project update as a topic

Karen said that Stan Gregory could provide a dynamic presentation on the Willamette River and floodplain and floodplain connectivity. Sandra suggested that we consider combining that with a program highlighting the projects of the watershed council, thus connecting the work on the Willamette with the work on its tributaries. Sandra will contact Stan to see if he is available.

One idea for meeting location is the Corvallis Library. Sandra will check into the availability of that room for the proposed December 9<sup>th</sup> date.

## **Project Development/Selection Committee: Recruit, develop goals and committee members**

Karen-Does the MRWC want to move forward on focusing in more specifically on what projects that we want to do.

Sandra said that when she met with Thom and Wayne they discussed that the council was encouraged to develop a project selection committee. Sandra said that project selection in the past became overwhelming because the process was too cumbersome. Sandra also described how almost all projects were selected outside the established protocol and instead utilized a "fast track" option initially intended only for a minority of projects with short timelines. Karen proposed bringing people in who have insight and more expertise into the development of the projects.

Karen noted that when we contract with River Design Group, we do what the design says, and we typically don't critique the plan that River Design Group suggests.

Mark asked if we have projects that we have decided not to pursue.-NO

May asked how the Council gets the projects prioritized.

Karen said that the projects are building in nature. She/the Council is looking at the whole basin, starting with fish passage and then moving to fish/wildlife habitat.

The Council is also working with landowners who would like to work on specific projects.

May-Was Beaver Creek initiated by the landowner? Yes.

Sandra-Where do the opportunities fit? We haven't updated our priorities since 2002.

We need a context that we agree on to talk through the issues to develop an approach for selecting projects.

Sandra-The board needs to be aware of what is going on

Mark suggested that the Council needs a list for the priorities-committee to determine whether or not to go forward with individual projects.

Bud- It probably matters as to what you are talking about restoring. He wants to see projects done that are enduring so that the money and time and energy spent is not a short term investment. What would restoration look like if it was done in this manner?

Karen would hesitate to stop progress on a small scale project because she considers the small scale as building support for the bigger scale. She thinks that the Council could build from the fish passage committee to a larger/broader group.

Action: Karen will lead a discussion with the fish passage committee about where to go with this.

## **Discuss SWCD MOU and project/mission overlap**

A member of the Fish Passage Committee and SWCD resource conservationist, Donna Schmitz, recently brought up to the MRWC that we have an MOU, signed in 2000, for reference in assessing our project and mission overlap.

A new, updated MOU should reflect current roles. Sandra said that since we do projects now, in which we didn't do before, we could be perceived as being in competition with the SWCD. We are not.

Karen said one idea has been the SWCD should take the lead on all fish passage projects. We'd like to move forward, update our MOU and not be a bottleneck. If we present a new MOU, that might help define our relationship.

Curt said that we need to have our values and goals that we are talking about for our project selection committee to help with the revised MOU. While SWCD is going through their goals and objectives, maybe we need to be doing the same thing.

Karen said that when she goes on a landowner visit, she frequently contacts Donna to see if she wants to join the visit. Karen is not clear that she understands what SWCD expects from the Council.

## **Additional Meeting Comments**

Van Decker, who lives on Decker Road wanted to inform the council that Powell Creek recently had two fish-culvert replacements; one at Peterson Road and the other at Decker Road. He said the prior to the culvert replacements, the culverts were located high in the road fill and the wetland areas above each road/stream crossing served as a reservoir for the stream. This fall the stream has dried up and swamps are gone. Van just wanted to point out that wetlands have evaporated through the project to improve fish passage.

Karen said that she has heard similar comments from others.

Karen explained that the Blair Creek culvert that goes under Highway 34 is not completed. We need to monitor over the winter to see if there are issues with passability

due to the location of waterline in the fill. The culvert may need a modification next summer in order to make it fish passable.

Mark Hommer addressed the Board about stream buffer widths between the Willamette River in downtown Corvallis, and adjacent buildings. He is asking the Corvallis City Council to consider an increased setback and structure height standards for the Willamette River primarily in downtown Corvallis.

The Land, Air and Water Use Committee of the MRWC historically had objectives that included identification and dissemination of information for proposed changes in land, air and water uses.

Mark Taratoot brought up the topic of the website as he is uncertain as to what needs to happen to make the website go “live”. Mark suggests that we get it working properly as soon as possible. The contractor working on it needs to make it “live” and give it back to us so that we can post our monthly updates. Karen thought that we already paid to make the website “up and running”, even though it is not yet.

Meeting adjourned: at 8:25 PM.