

# **Marys River Watershed Council**

## **Board Meeting**

### **September 8, 2009**

The meeting began at 6:35 PM

#### **Announcements**

Bud and Xan met with the assistant manager and manager of Citizens Bank to encourage interest in the MRWC board. Bud and Xan later discussed creating a 1-2 page summary of what it takes to be a board member. Bud has been working hard to recruit new board members for the MRWC. Though they did not mention it, Curt and Thom have also worked hard at recruitment.

#### **Introductions**

Board Members present: Jennifer Beathe, May Dasch, Ken Crouse, Bud Laurent, Wayne Phillips, Curt Seeliger, Mark Taratoot, Thom Whittier  
Contractors present: Xanthippe Augerot and Karen Fleck Harding  
Guests present: Meleah Ashford and Holly Campbell

#### **Chair's report**

Thom has met with Xan about council business in person and via email many times. Thom spoke with John Souder, the director of the Coos Watershed Association. The Coos WA is implementing a Model Watershed Program and John is willing to share his his experiences with Thom.

Wayne will serve as chair while Thom is on vacation.

#### **Treasurer's report**

The balance is about the same as last month. Bud passed out a written report.

#### **Outreach and Education report**

Thom asked Karen if the lamprey found in the Tum Tum were adults and Karen said that they were. These lamprey seem to be a late arrival in comparison to the earlier migration in coastal streams.

Bud asked about the USFW Cooperative Agreement and Karen explained that it establishes a relationship with USFW so that they can contribute to projects without a lot of additional time, process and paperwork. The agreement allows the council to act quickly if funding is available and requires a federal partner.

Oregon Trout/Freshwater Trust is trying an alternative outdoor school in Corvallis. Part of the offering is Salmon Watch in addition to other activities. One activity is taking students to Marys Peak with a yet to be determined watershed tour along the way. Karen has been asked to help develop the schedule and the MRWC has been invited to volunteer a day (October 20<sup>th</sup>) to be on Marys Peak to help with the project. Board members expressed hesitation in committing to being involved because it's not clear what is expected and it might be too much of a time

commitment from Karen and/or Xan and/or board members and/or volunteers, as the council would be required to recruit sufficient volunteers to staff the event

Karen said that this opportunity is a good example of how the MRWC would benefit from having an active plan or direction on how to spend education time and funding.

### **Coordinator's report and updates on Council transition items**

Financial Stewardship Resources, Inc provides board trainings for nonprofit organizations. Xan said that it would be useful to send at least a couple of board members to such trainings. There is also a workshop in Portland in October 8<sup>th</sup> (Reliable Fundraising in Unreliable Times-Kim Klein, Founder of the Grassroots Fundraising Journal) where OWEB will pay for one staff person and one board member to attend. The board would like Xan to attend. Bud is interested in attending, but it will depend on his travel schedule. Holly Campbell, Board candidate, indicated her interest as well. Xan will register our council as attendees.

### **Annual Budget**

Xan passed out a draft profit and loss budget overview. With this sort of document the MRWC will be able to compare current profit and loss with budgeted profit and loss at any time.

Mark asked why some items were down to the penny if they were rough estimates. Xan said that grant-associated lines are actual amounts that are remaining in grants and administrative expenditures are projected amounts, based on our last two years' expenses.

Bud asked about the bank balance and how much money in the checking account is totally unrestricted. Xan said approximately \$15,000. Xan believes that she could come pretty close to accounting for all the money in the checking account and that there are no longer monies in the account that can't be accounted for. Ken asked if the money is estimated or firm and Xan said that it's all firm – she has not included any proposals or projected funding in the budget.

### **Assessment of recent OWEB actions**

Xan presented an assessment of OWEB reviews and funding relative to our recent proposals. The MRWC was not funded for two proposals submitted last April. The Technical Assistance proposal reviewed well and was recommended, but faced stiff competition and fell below the funding cutoff. Thus, we will not receive money for outreach for Karen's time on the Upper Marys, Tum Tum and Greasy creeks. We also had submitted a proposal for more work on Blair Creek, but it was not recommended for funding due to its relatively low ecological value compared to other MRWC projects and projects proposed to OWEB.

OWEB meets next week and typically goes with the recommendations from the technical review team and OWEB staff. Technical review team has unofficially placed more value for projects on listed species but it seems that emphasis has increased with limited dollars for funding projects. ESA Listed species could become formal criteria in the upcoming OWEB strategic plan. Funding pressure is much more intense, especially for non-capital projects such as outreach and education.

### **MMT/BEF Letter of Interest**

In reviewing the draft, four page letter of interest (LOI), Bud asked if we are talking about restoring lands that have the best ecological potential. He wants the letter to address what we

want to restore the habitats from. Thom commented on the second paragraph saying that he read it as “the ecological value is second to partnerships”. Thom recommends adding verbiage to address the importance of ecological potential/value and that we shouldn’t be proposing projects that have more partnership potential than ecological value/potential.

Meleah asked if the projects are intended to benefit the Willamette River and if so, that fact should be promoted in the letter. Xan addressed that briefly in the first page.

Curt asked how much habitat is in the Marys. Xan asked what kind of habitat...there are a lot of unknowns, especially in the coast range basins on the Willamette. The Cascade tributaries to the Willamette have established runs of ESA-listed salmonids.

Bud asked about the possibility of putting in some measure of how much habitat proposed for restoration has been degraded, and to what degree. Xan would like to look at 1850s land survey data to find information about riparian conditions, and she hopes to have the ability to infer something from that.

Karen said that Marys Peak should provide the coldest water in the east side of the coast range because of its elevation, and that it might be a good piece of information to note. She said that it’s also important to note major changes such as channel incision and lack of connected broad floodplains.

Xan plans to accept Thom’s edits and continue to edit the letter from there. Several board members plan to give Xan additional feedback.

## **Board Election Procedures**

The MRWC will not entertain write in votes on the ballot at the annual meeting on the 29<sup>th</sup>. The MRWC will accept nominations for board members until September 18<sup>th</sup>. Bud and Xan received suggestions for candidates at the meeting with the Citizens Bank managers. Bud wants the board to continue to search for board members. Bud suggested that change ought to be gradual so that there can be continuity on the board. His hope is to add a couple new members in early 2010.

Xan would like to know who is going to count the ballots. Curt and Ken will count the ballots because they are no longer going to be on the board.

Xan plans to develop (and would like some help) a Board member notebook that includes bylaws, a map of the watershed, board member expectations, council accomplished projects, the Oregon Department of Justice’s guide to nonprofit board service (<http://www.doj.state.or.us/charigroup/pdf/nonprofit.pdf>), and any other useful documents.

Do candidates have to be approved by a 70% of the members who cast ballots? Yes, per our current by-laws. Bud expressed that he favors a simple majority as the requirement for election of board members.

Bud commented on the recent email conversation about bylaws changes and he would like to see a bylaws committee formed. Bud proposes that we begin one this Fall and he will serve on it.

Xan asked about membership and what constitutes a member. No waiting period is required, those attending the annual meeting can be a member at that time. One of the main responsibilities of members is to elect the board.

Xan asked about fliers and it was agreed that they should be put up a week to 10 days prior to the meeting so they don't get covered up. Karen noted that e-mail notices went to members on the listserv and physical mail went to members not on the listserv with at least 30 days notice of the election.

## **Council Strategic Plan/ Work Plan**

Xan presented a revised draft of a work plan. Bud said that the goal should be "to enhance the ecological functionality of Marys River Streams." Xan said that if we do that, we should look at the goals differently. Bud asked if we are focusing on aquatic ecosystems. Meleah asked about "protecting" as a goal, citing her experience that uplands in the watershed are generally in the best condition and those upper portions should go into public ownership so they can be protected.

Mark suggested a better way to phrase that might be to "maintain functionality" rather than protect because the word "protect" can have unintended connotations..

Jennifer agreed that it would be better to say "maintain functionality" because, as a forest landowner representative, private land doesn't mean that cold water and good ecological habitat isn't being provided for. Private landowners believe that they can provide cold water and good habitat.

Next year, Xan would like to develop an organizational handbook that will address the council's policies and procedures for fiscal policies, human resources, and board recruitment.

Karen asked about goal III, suggesting that T&E species is removed and replaced with "Oregon conservation strategy species".

Xan would like to announce at the annual meeting that we are beginning a strategic planning process and she would like to solicit volunteers to help in various ways.

Xan can pass around a sign up sheet, or come to see Xan, or have business cards available.

## **Board roles and responsibilities**

Thom passed out a two pager on expectations of Board Members and an example of board roles and responsibilities. Bud would like the board to review and think about what this might look like.

## **Upcoming OWEB Grant Cycles**

Grant proposals are due to OWEB October 19<sup>th</sup>. Xan has a list of potential OWEB grant application projects. Wendy Hudson of OWEB suggested that we not submit more than two proposals for each project type.. The competition is stiff, and having too many applications could hinder the strength of any of them.

Karen said that the restoration proposals are a follow up to our technical assistance grants, so there is a connection between the projects.

Xan said that in regard to work with Benton County, we need to be aware of not taking on county work as a “favor” to the county. Karen clarified that this was not why we took on the Blair Creek project.

Education and outreach: OWEB expects only 50% of the proposals to get funded and the competition will be very intense. It depends on how well we can develop some alternatives in the interim. If we can, then we should move forward, but we need clear direction. They have the least resources in this category. Previously, OWEB was able to fund almost everything and now they can't because of funding constraints.

We currently have two Beaver Creek technical assistance grants: 1) a rapid bio-assessment and landowner recruitment and 2) culvert designs for Starr & Duffy tributaries. Steve Trask had suggested we could add value to the Duffy Creek fish passage proposal by including large wood placement, but Karen and Xan thought that we'd be jumping ahead of the planned community process because there hasn't been a landowner meeting to present and discuss the results of the rapid bio-assessment. In Starr Creek, the opportunity to improve habitat looked worse on the ground than it did on the restoration screening map. The most probable restoration proposal we will submit in October is for Duffy and Starr culvert work. We will follow up with a large wood instream project on Duffy Creek for the April OWEB competition.

### **Other**

Bud suggested a token of appreciation for the outgoing board members thanking them for their work on the MRWC board. Xan will follow up.

Executive session at 8:35 PM

The board discussed a potential legal issue related to a completed project and the potential need for legal consul.

Meeting ended 9:00 PM