

**Marys River Watershed Council
Annual Meeting
Corvallis Public Library
September 29, 2009
6:30 -8:30 PM**

Thom Whittier, chair of the MRWC board welcomed everyone to the meeting. He began by telling the audience about some of the recent accomplishments of the council, including changing the bylaws (2008) and completing many restoration and education projects. Thom complimented Karen Fleck Harding on the great work that she has done as Education and Outreach coordinator. Thom went on to explain that the council would like to diversify its funding sources in part because funding for council work from the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB) has been reduced. One example of diversification is that the MRWC is a finalist for a Meyer Memorial Trust/Bonneville Environmental Foundation Model Watershed Program grant.

Thom introduced the current members of the MRWC board and thanked exiting board members Curt Seeliger and Ken Crouse for their work on the board. Thom presented Curt and Ken certificates of appreciation and a small gift.

Election

The ballots this year include a bylaws change that changes the officer title of Chair Elect and replaces it to Vice Chair. There were three candidates for the board. The election took place and Curt Seeliger announced the results. The bylaws change passed by supermajority and all three candidates (Meleah Ashford, Holly Campbell and Dan Sundseth) were elected to serve on the board.

Coordinator Welcome

Thom introduced the new MRWC council coordinator, Xan Augerot. Xan shared her professional background, gave an overview of council projects such as Rock Creek monitoring, Woods Creek log placement, Japanese knotweed control, rapid bio-assessment and prairie and oak restoration activities. Xan said that the council will embark on a strategic planning process beginning in October. There are plans to invigorate existing committees in the council and to expand the committees to include fundraising and monitoring. Please contact Xan (coordinator@mrwc.net) if you are interested in volunteering for a committee, helping in the office, or with project maintenance in the field.

Program

The program featured Pacific lamprey, also informally called eels. We hosted three speakers. Michael Wilson of the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde, spoke about the cultural significance of Pacific lamprey, and told us that the Chinookan jargon for lamprey is *skakwal*. Rebecca McCoun, also of the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde, spoke about tracking lamprey movement in the upper Willamette River. Ben Clemens, an OSU Fisheries and

Wildlife Ph.D. Candidate, presented his data and results about the freshwater biology of returning adult Pacific lamprey.

There have been declines in the number of lamprey that seem to follow a similar pattern to that of salmon. A 2003 petition to list Pacific lamprey under the Endangered Species Act was denied by the USFWS due to insufficient information. Current research is designed to fill knowledge gaps about the lamprey life cycle, population structure and habitat use. So far, researchers have learned that lamprey migrate to spawn in all of the Willamette River subbasins, moving primarily at night. Because lamprey do not feed once they return to freshwater from the ocean and, similar to sharks, they have no bones, they actually shrink in length as they migrate upstream. This shrinkage provides researchers with clues about how long specific lampreys might have been in freshwater – many appear to spend one or even two winters in freshwater as adults before spawning in the spring.