

Network of Oregon Watershed Councils

Update

Spring/Summer 2005

Fall 2005 Watershed Council Gathering

SAVE THE DATE! Calling all councils to the “Fall 2005 Watershed Council Gathering” to be held in Bend, Oregon on Thursday and Friday, November 3 & 4, 2005. Join us for workshops, networking and celebration! This is an opportunity to learn from both outside specialists and our own experienced watershed council experts; to celebrate the hard work and accomplishments in each watershed; to talk about statewide issues; and to network with each other for a couple of days.

We want all councils to be able to participate and will keep this gathering low-cost but high-quality (the Council way!). If you find costs to be in your way, the Network capacity grant provides for some travel support for council coordinators and members. We will keep you informed as we work out the details. Please plan to come, and start asking your council members who you think could take advantage of this opportunity.

In addition to the full gathering, a training designed specifically for new coordinators will be held one day prior, on Wednesday, November 2nd (for details about the new coordinator training contact John Moriarty - john@oregonwatersheds.org).



The Upper Deschutes River, which runs through Bend, the destination for our state-wide gathering.

Oregon’s watershed councils are gathering in November, and your participation is crucial! Contact Gathering Coordinator Denise Hoffert-Hay if you have questions, comments or suggestions regarding the event—calapooia@peak.org.

Network Website Development— going live in July

Progress continues in our effort to develop and launch a website for the Network of Oregon Watershed Councils. Working with Internet consultants ONE/Northwest in Portland, we are plugging away at the upfront tasks that will result in a useful, attractive and clear site.

Early in the process, we recognized that we want the site to serve two broadly different functions. First, the website will improve the ability of watershed councils to communicate with one another. Increasing information sharing and collaboration among councils is a critical role for the site. Second, it will serve as an outreach and information sharing tool to the public and our partners. Of course, many aspects of these two needs can be met simultaneously, but others are unique to one area or another.

After receiving information and bids from several potential contractors, we settled on ONE/Northwest for a number of reasons. They work with an “open source” content management system called ‘Plone’ that is well-accepted in the Internet world, yet reduces tremendously the cost of providing complex functions on the site. For instance, as we move forward with development, it will be possible for councils who don’t currently have a website to develop one through the network site that will have a unique look and an independent web address. But, because the local council sites share the content management system, when information is updated on the local site (news, events calendar, volunteer opportunities, etc.) it will automatically update the main network site. This is a crucial feature, given that we don’t currently have the resources to hire an information specialist to maintain the site.

Other features we are considering are a password-protected area for Network members; a searchable database of lessons learned; templates or examples of grant applications, reports, manuals, RFPs, etc.; links to council and partner websites; regional event calendars; and more. We are still in the planning stages, so feel free to contact Jenny Bayn <jenny@oregonwatersheds.org> or John Moriarty <john@oregonwatersheds.org> with suggestions and needs, and we’ll investigate what is possible. We’re aiming to go live in July, so stay tuned for more information and a chance to look over the site in advance...

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The Network of Oregon Watershed Councils was initiated in 2004 by watershed council coordinators from throughout Oregon, to provide support to councils all over the state. The Network supports councils by working to fulfill three principles agreed to by council coordinators and members in February 2004:

1. Build the capacity of councils
2. Improve key relationships
3. Promote public awareness of watersheds and watershed councils

State-Wide Atlas Production

Thanks to the contributions and collaboration of watershed councils throughout the state, "Watershed Councils in Oregon: An Atlas of Accomplishments" has been completed and (mostly) delivered. With your support, we were able to meet our deadline, complete printing of the Atlas and distribute it to members of the legislative committee considering council support funding in advance of their hearings in early May.

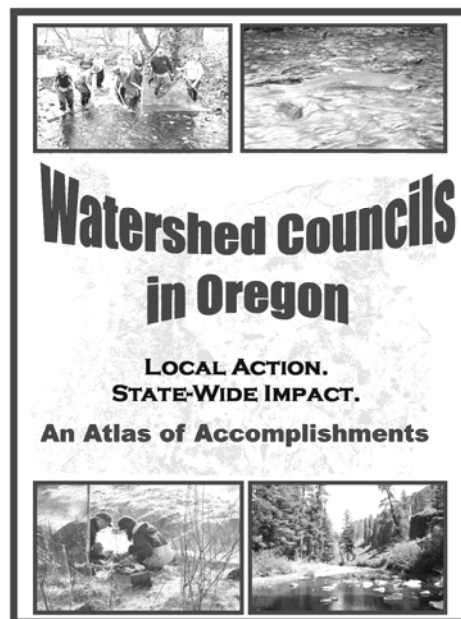
Then, in the weeks that followed, council coordinators and members continued delivering the Atlas to all members of the Oregon legislature. In addition, copies were presented to the members of the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board at the start of their May 25th meeting as they considered council support funding for the 2005-2007 biennium.

Each council that provided input for the Atlas should have received two complimentary copies in the mail. Additional copies are available for the printing cost of \$10.00/copy. In addition, several copies were distributed to OWEB staff and to key partners at the statewide level.

If you have suggestions for statewide partners to include in the distribution of the Atlas or

you would like to order additional copies, please contact John or Jenny at the Network office. A PDF version of the Atlas will be available on the Network website as soon as the site is fully developed.

Thanks again for your assistance, and please let us know how the Atlas could be improved in the future.



Region 5 Meeting- La Grande

Thanks to Region 5 for the great turn out at the meeting on April 11, 2005 in La Grande! Also, a big thank you to the Grande Ronde Model Watershed for hosting, Karen Leiendecker for facilitation, and Brian Wolcott and Cyndy Coleman for organizing assistance. Councils throughout the region was represented. Nine council coordinators including both Region 5 regional representatives, four council members and two NOWC staff attended the meeting. Guest presenters were Ken Bierly, the Deputy Director of OWEB; Karen Leiendecker, OWEB's Region 5 representative; Greg Siegletz, OWEB Monitoring Program Team Leader; and Diane Snyder, OWEB Board member and executive director of Wallowa Resources.

Those participating in the meeting had the opportunity to share successes about their council's work and ask their colleagues for

advice on issues they were facing. Karen and Ken gave updates and answered questions regarding upcoming grant deadlines and budgeting for future council support. Diane provided insights on how to diversify funding based on her experience with Wallowa Resources. Greg discussed the OWEB effectiveness monitoring program and answered specific questions about its operation. The meeting ended with an update from the Network and time for input from the councils on what the Network could do to support them, as well as what sorts of things they would like to see at the state-wide gathering in November.

We look forward to another great turn-out at the next regional meeting and to incorporating your ideas into our work! We also hope to work with other regions to assist in organizing similar meetings/trainings with you.

Moving Forward: Organizational process and structure

The Network of Oregon Watershed Councils is living in exciting times...which is not a curse, it's a blessing. As a new organization, our potential for providing great service to watersheds and watershed councils is nearly limitless. And our enthusiasm and energy is right there to match our potential. At the same time, in our first attempt at creating such a service organization, we have little in place to guide our progress. Our interim steering committee, composed of the council coordinator regional representatives who put so much effort into creating the network, is offering great support and guidance. Yet, no one can anticipate all of the challenges and requests that will arise for the fledgling organization.

Toward that end, staff has been investigating what makes other successful network organizations function well. John Moriarty, statewide coordinator for the Network, interviewed staff from several diverse organizations, including the Marine Fish Conservation Network, the Oregon Micro Enterprise Network and the Environmental Law Alliance Worldwide. All of them were generous and forthcoming with their time and information.

Clearly, communication and transparency are a couple of the keys to success, and we are striving to model those attributes. The Network held an organizational development meeting on April 28, 2005. All watershed council coordinators and a member from each council were invited to attend, and 8 council coordinators from throughout the state participated. In addition, we had—and will continue to have—volunteer assistance from Katherine Luscher of River Network.

The objectives for the meeting were to:

1. Identify the characteristics of a healthy network organization
2. Create our charter committee to move the process forward
3. Begin developing a draft proposal for a network decision making process for circulation among all councils statewide for review and input (as part of the overall development of a draft charter)

These objectives were viewed in the context of the three principles of the statewide organization:

1. Build council capacity
2. Improve key partnerships
3. Promote watersheds and watershed councils to the public

Participants met the first two objectives, with an important modification in objective 2: they didn't feel comfortable calling the committee a "charter" committee, but instead preferred the name "Organizational Development Team." It was felt that this better reflected the need for statewide input at this point, and doesn't imply that an organizational charter is necessarily the document that will result from their work. This group of dedicated volunteers has agreed to work together to draft possible organizational structure ideas to circulate among all watershed councils in the state for review and input in advance of the Fall 2005 Watershed Council Gathering; and then to present to the Gathering a final draft that reflects that statewide input.

Your input on these draft documents, as they circulate in the coming months, will be important to creating the most effective organization possible. Watch your email inbox for messages related to statewide structure and process. Building our network of councils will be challenging and rewarding...let's meet that challenge together.

Update: Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board

OWEB Board Meeting in Salem, May 25 & 26, 2005

Background:

The OWEB Board met in Salem on May 25th & 26th. The first day was dedicated primarily to council support testimony, the staff recommendation on council support and the Board's decision. The day started with a presentation of the University of Oregon study about the economic and community impacts of watershed councils, by Michael Hibbard and Susan Lurie. If you haven't received a copy of this report yet, contact the Network at info@oregonwatersheds.org and we will email you an electronic version. It provides good information about the importance of councils in local communities.

Presentations and Testimony:

After the presentation by Drs. Hibbard and Lurie, John Moriarty presented the Atlas of Watershed Council Accomplishments to the Board. The Atlas was very well-received. As part of his presentation, John reiterated the importance of sufficient council support throughout the state.

After that, coordinators and members from 21 watershed councils came up to testify about the importance of support funding to their work. While highlighting the importance of sufficient funding to their own council (and almost no council is receiving what they need), most of the testimony also underscored the importance of sufficient support to all councils. Much of the testimony recognized the effort that OWEB staff put into creating a transparent and functional grant process, and also pointed out problems, inconsistencies, and other issues with the process as it currently stands.

The Board appreciated the testimony, both in content and tone. They received constructive criticism of the process and suggestions about how it could be improved. They also seemed to sense the cooperative approach that councils were trying to take: bringing the message that the council support results are not just an issue for individual councils, but indicate the insufficiency of support for all councils. There was a clear recognition on the part of the Board for the importance of supporting a council coordinator at a reasonable salary, and there seemed to be broad agreement that adequate base funding is necessary, with a merit ranking system determining funding beyond that base.

Transitions

With councils statewide only having the opportunity to gather once every year or two, significant changes often occur without people being aware of them. We will attempt to let you know each quarter who has moved on to new adventures, and who is finding their new adventures with a watershed council. Due to limitations of time and space, we will be noting changes in staff and contracted personnel only, and not in council members. Please let us know if you find this a helpful addition. Also, if we've missed someone, contact us and we will include them next time. (This list is meant to include those who've made a change since the last newsletter was published in February.) All the best to our colleagues who are pursuing new challenges, and thank you for your years of hard work on behalf of Oregon's watersheds.

Goodbye, and all the best!

Coordinator

Dave Sahagian
Bob Roth
Scott Eden
Robin Jenkinson
Amy Chinitz
Eve Montanaro
Cyndy Coleman

Watershed Council

Scappoose Bay Watershed Council
Salem Kiezer Area Watershed Council
Pudding River Watershed Council
Hood River Watershed Council
Middle Fork Willamette Watershed Council
Luckiamute Watershed Council
Harney County Watershed Council

Welcome!

Coordinator

Janelle St. Pierre
Steve Stampfli
Eric Heartstein
Eve Montanaro

Watershed Council

Scappoose Bay Watershed Council
Hood River Watershed Council
South Santiam Watershed Council
Middle Fork Willamette Watershed Council

OWEB Update (cont.)

(Cont. from p. 3)

Their decision:

In the end, the Board recognized the need for more support for local watershed groups in general, and watershed councils in particular. They adopted the staff recommendation for total council support funding of \$4,480,580, subject to available funding from the legislature. This amount represents the original OWEB request for \$4.1 million for council support, plus an additional \$0.5 million

for various umbrella councils as defined by Oregon statutes. In addition, the board directed staff to return to the September Board meeting with recommendations for 1) supplemental funding to provide a base level of council support, and 2) supplemental funding to enhance capacity for other local groups.

Kudos to the Board and Staff for their continued recognition and support of watershed councils and other local watershed groups in getting restoration work done on the ground.