

Network Update—Winter 2006

Newsletter of the Network of Oregon Watershed Councils. Vol 2, Number 1

Inside this issue:

Collaborative Salmon Restoration on Cruiser Creek <i>Tillamook Bay Watershed Council</i>	2
Water Conservation on the East Fork Hood River <i>Hood River Watershed Group</i>	3
Economic Stability and Watershed Enhancement <i>Coquille Watershed Association</i>	3
Floodplain Restoration in the McKenzie River Watershed <i>McKenzie Watershed Council</i>	4
Drinking Water Protection in Oregon <i>OR. Dept of Environmental Quality</i>	4
A New Twist to the Willowa River <i>Grande Ronde Model Watershed Pgm</i>	5
In the next issue... ; Transitions	6

Network Interim Board Meets, Elects Officers

By Jason Dedrick, NOWC Chair

jason.dedrick@oregonstate.edu

The newly-elected Interim Board of the Network of Oregon Watershed Councils had its first meeting on January 26 & 27 in Salem. The afternoon of the first day was dominated by procedural tasks that the Board needed to address in order to move forward. The first of these was to hold elections for the four officer positions. Congratulations to the following individuals, listed with their council names, who were affirmed by the Board and will serve a one-year term:

Chair – Jason Dedrick, Crooked River

Vice-Chair – Liz Redon, North Santiam

Secretary – Brad Carlson, Middle Rogue

Treasurer – Dana Erickson, Long Tom

The Board adopted a consensus-based decision making process for all action items. Imbedded within this discussion was a decision to not pursue a formal Executive Committee at this time, but instead work to maintain the simplicity and efficiency of addressing all topics as a full board.

The second day of the meeting was largely dedicated to discussion of Board priorities for the coming months. The Board was joined by Michelle Bussard, Chair of the Organizational Development (OD) Team and Chuck Sams, Chair of the Resource Development (RD) Team to assist with a visioning process for Board and Team priorities. Essentially the Board affirmed the strong statewide message received from councils at the Gathering in Bend last November: focus on attaining the non-

Continued as NOWC on Page 6

Coordinator's Corner...

By John Moriarty, Network Coordinator

john@oregonwatersheds.org

Happy 2006! Time flows as fast as the swollen rivers so many of us are experiencing locally.

Thank you to everyone who worked so hard to make the November 2005 Watershed Council Gathering in Bend so successful. We received overwhelmingly positive feedback on the workshops, individual consulting sessions and the opportunities to network with other councils. On behalf of the Network I want to extend special appreciation to our workshop presenters and professional consultants, all of whom contributed their time and expertise without charge. Special thanks to the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB) for their financial support of the Gathering.

Over 93% of the 60 councils present expressed support for continuing this

statewide effort, and no councils recommended ending this initiative (less than 7% abstained from taking a position). At the same time, councils are asking good questions about the function and direction of the Network. As Jason Dedrick notes in his update from the Chair (see above), one of our primary focuses in the coming months will be to formalize the nonprofit status of the Network, so that we will be in a position to access foundation funding on behalf of both councils and the organization. This will permit us to pursue funds from diverse sources that would not otherwise be available to councils. Councils, please watch your email for updates on this process in the weeks ahead. Your input is crucial.

We have been invited by OWEB to sit down with them, the Oregon Department of Agriculture and the Oregon Association of Conservation Districts (OACD) to craft a unified message about the importance of both watershed councils and soil and water conservation districts in the implementation of the Ore-

gon Plan. Over the years there has been considerable confusion and misunderstanding about the way these local groups operate. This is an opportunity to bring a clear message to the public and to decision makers about the key role that both types of organizations play in their local communities. We'll be working on ways to effectively tell the story about the diversity of roles and responsibilities that councils and districts share throughout the state, as well as the importance of securing sufficient funding for these local organizations. Please contact the interim board member from your area if you have questions about this effort.

Finally, I want to encourage everyone to visit the Network website at www.oregonwatersheds.org. We're continually updating and expanding the information and resources available on the site, based on your suggestions. The more folks use the site and offer ideas for improvement, the more effective it will become as a communication tool.

**Network of Oregon
Watershed Councils**
P.O. Box 40061
Eugene, OR 97404
(541) 682-8323

Interim Board of Directors

North-Midcoast

Todd Cullison, North Coast

Wayne Hoffman, Mid-Coast

Southwest

Brad Carlson, Middle Rogue

Harry Hoogesteger, South Coast

Willamette

Liz Redon, North Santiam

Dana Erickson, Long Tom

Central

Jason Dedrick, Crooked River

Ryan Houston, Upper Deschutes

Northeast

Jeff Oveson, Grande Ronde

Brian Wolcott, Walla Walla

Southeast

Danette Watson, Klamath

Kelly Weideman, Malheur

Statewide Coordinator

John Moriarty
(541) 682-8323

john@oregonwatersheds.org

Assistant Coordinator

Jenny Shine
(541) 682-8365

jenny@oregonwatersheds.org

Contributors to this Issue:

Nils Christoffersen, Jason Dedrick, Sue Gries,
Jennifer Hampel, Denise Lofman, R. Coby
Menton, John Moriarty, Steve Stampfli, Juan
Welch

Editor & Layout: Daniel Newberry

(541) 973-7996

dnewberry@jeffnet.org

Views expressed in the Network Update are of those of the authors, and do not necessarily represent the views of the NOWC or its member watershed councils

Salmon Habitat Restoration on Cruiser Creek

By Denise Lofman, Council Coordinator
tbwc@oregoncoast.com

Traditionally, the Tillamook Bay Watershed Council (TBWC) directs its efforts towards privately-owned properties in the lower reaches of the watershed and is not involved with Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) and US Bureau of Land Management (BLM) restoration projects in the upper reaches. However, in 2004, the council and the Tillamook Estuaries Partnership (TEP), another local watershed organization, were approached by BLM and ODF to help restore key salmon habitat on Cruiser Creek, a tributary in the upper Trask River watershed, 17 miles southeast of Tillamook. The project straddles both ODF and BLM lands and Yamhill and Tillamook Counties.

This unusual partnership began with multiple organizations listing Cruiser Creek as a priority for restoration: the BLM, ODF and ODFW included it in the 2003 ODF/BLM Trask River Watershed Analysis. A key recommendation in the Analysis was to pursue cooperative efforts to improve salmon habitat on stream segments that cross multiple ownerships.

Without the local partners, implementing watershed scale restoration activities across state and federal ownerships created several challenges for the agencies. ODF and BLM required separate contracts with separate contractors that would work around each other doing instream

work and road decommissioning on overlapping land ownership. The estimated project cost was high, additional funding was needed for the project, and there were issues surrounding the routing of funds between agencies.

Together, the Tillamook Bay Watershed Council and the Tillamook Estuaries Partnership were able to help ODF and BLM increase efficiency and save costs on the project by providing overall project management, raising over \$150,000 of additional restoration funding, leveraging funding and resources to expand the scope of the project to a watershed wide scale, developing and managing single contracts for the restoration work that crossed ODF and BLM land, and transferring funds between agencies and other partners.

By the end of February 2006, the \$300,000 Cruiser Creek Restoration Project will have replaced three culverts to allow fish access to an additional 1.5 miles of habitat, restored 1.5 miles of instream habitat using log and boulder structures, decommissioned 2.85 miles of forest road and enhanced 5 acres of riparian area. The project also created a five-year MOU that provides a valuable and useful framework for the partners in Tillamook to work together to increase efficiency and scale of future watershed restoration efforts in the upper reaches of the watershed.

Below: New large wood structures on Cruiser Creek.



Water Conservation on the East Fork Hood River

By Steve Stampfli, *Council Coordinator*
hoodriver@gorge.net

Partners in the Hood River Watershed Group (HRWG) are firmly convinced that helping local farmers and irrigators improve conveyance efficiency via piping is one of the best ways to perpetuate clean water, open space, productive fisheries and a healthy human economy in the Hood River valley of north central Oregon. These partners—including irrigation districts, Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs, Bonneville Power Administration, US Forest Service, OWEB, Oregon Dept. of Environmental Quality, US Dept. of the Interior, Hood River County, and other HRWG members—are working to achieve these four watershed enhancement objectives, by assisting the valley's irrigation districts

obtain project funding and design assistance.

A prime task under the Hood River Watershed Group's 2002 Action Plan is completion of East Fork Irrigation District's "Central Canal Pipeline Project". East Fork is the valley's oldest and largest irrigation district. East Fork was responsible for installing the valley's first fish screens in 1915. Since inception, however, the district has faced many natural challenges, typified by receding glaciers, decreasing stream flow, high glacial sediment loads, and periodic debris torrents. Along with these natural challenges, portions of East Fork's delivery system are outmoded, and display segments of leaky open ditch, fish barriers, and conveyance routes that merge with natural streams. These issues interfere with natural watershed functions, particularly water quality, fish pas-

sage and stream flow. The impacts of these degraded functions are heightened in our valley, based on the presence of five (5) ESA listed fish species. Thankfully with the generous contribution of technical assistance and cost-share dollars from many sources, project partners have completed the first two phases of a \$10.5 million project designed to address these deficiencies.

By completing the upcoming third and final phase of the Central Canal Pipeline Project, valley stakeholders will finally realize the benefits envisioned by the partnership. At a cost of \$3.5 million, Phase 3 will complete construction of the final mile of pipe leading to the Lower Eastside Lateral. The new circuit utilizes an inverted siphon and will eliminate the longtime use of two miles of Neal Creek for routing irrigation water down the valley. By making this

Continued as HOOD RIVER on Page 6

Economic Stability and Watershed Enhancement – the future for Watershed Councils?

By Jennifer Hampel, *council coordinator*
jennifer.hampel@verizon.net

The Coquille Watershed Association (CWA) has recently been awarded a "Local Innovation" grant from the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB). The purpose of this grant is to assist the CWA in creating a stability work plan for its Restoration Crew.

The Coquille Watershed Association is unique in that it has maintained a full time, year round "Restoration Crew" since 1997. The majority of watershed councils use local contractors to complete restoration work. Most of the work, however, is clustered into the summer months with some planting work during the winter. It is difficult to find enough work to keep an employee busy full time twelve months out of the year. The first crew was hired through the "Hire the Fisherman" program, which employed local displaced commercial fisherman to complete restoration work. The CWA used this crew to complete many of the first riparian fencing projects in the Coquille Watershed. The

CWA also took advantage of the Jobs in the Woods program where displaced timber workers were employed and retrained to complete restoration projects such as instream work and road improvements. When these programs ended, the CWA board made the decision to do whatever it took to keep these people employed, with benefits, and at a family wage. These trained local workers were and are an invaluable asset to the CWA as well as other organizations within our community.

Currently the CWA employs nine (9) people. Wage rates per employee are variable but range from \$12.00 to \$18.00 per hour, depending on job duties and experience. All full time CWA employees and their families are eligible for full coverage health insurance after a probationary period of three months. Employees also receive two weeks of vacation and one week sick leave per year, after one year of employment. The Board feels that offering these benefits makes it easier to retain good, qualified workers to help the CWA complete quality restoration projects. Also, having a stable

workforce reinforces to the community the stability of the CWA – making them feel more comfortable when considering whether or not to partner on a restoration project with us.

To "think beyond the fish," we have started to develop projects such as noxious weed control, road inventories, wildlife projects, specialty riparian planting, and surveys, which were normally not part of the CWA's typical project load. These projects can be completed during the spring and fall months, which are the most difficult times to schedule full time work. Other organizations have seen the benefit of using the CWA's crew for their work as well. Because it is not feasible for all organizations to hire and maintain their own crew within a small community, the CWA's crew has been hired out by others. Groups including the Coos Soil and Water Conservation District, Coos Watershed Association, Coquille Tribe, Coos County Ducks Unlimited, ODFW, and a few private landowners. The CWA has also been bidding on contracts that fit within the mission of the organization.

Continued as COQUILLE on Page 6

Floodplain Restoration in the McKenzie Watershed

By Juan Welch

The McKenzie Watershed Council in Lane County is working with several neighboring landowners on a project that underscores the benefits to watershed health of collaboration within the Watershed Council framework.

At the confluence of the Mohawk River and McGowan Creek, roughly 8 miles NE of the cities of Eugene and Springfield, the floodplain has long suffered the consequences of being a desirable urban/rural interface area.

These desirable living conditions, however, have led to increased pressure on the floodplain, and particularly the riparian zone. The Mohawk River and many of its tributaries have been straightened. Restricting the flow has in turn created deeply incised channels, which in turn results in a disturbed floodplain. As a result, the once-dominant native over story component of black cottonwood, Oregon ash, big leaf maple, and Ponderosa Pine has declined. To make matters worse, these trees have been

replaced with a thriving population of aggressive non-native invasive weeds such as reed canary grass and Himalayan blackberry. The loss of the over-story tree component has been detrimental to once-thriving fish populations, as the trees helped keep water temperatures low by creating shade and also provided a source for long term future in-stream wood recruitment, both essential ingredients for quality fish habitat. It is no coincidence that increased human settlement has coincided with a dramatic loss of fish populations over the years in the Mohawk system.

With these watershed concerns as a backdrop, enter the grass roots-oriented Mohawk Watershed Partnership (MWP), a local group consisting of watershed stakeholders who have met monthly for nearly 10 years to discuss and address watershed issues within the Mohawk. The MWP, according to Coordinator Jared Weybright, has "focused primarily on spreading the word at ground level about the possibilities that exist in improving watershed health in the Mohawk watershed", and operates as a formal partner of the larger

McKenzie Watershed Council (MWC). The Mohawk is a 5th field watershed of the larger 4th field McKenzie watershed. Together, the MWP and MWC have been able to collaborate on numerous restoration efforts in the Mohawk aside from the current Mohawk-McGowan project. The MWP used their ability to reach local landowners and identify potential projects and then the MWC stepped in to help secure the necessary funding and coordinate the actual implementation of the work.

At the Mohawk-McGowan site, the MWP and MWC are working with seven neighboring landowners to control invasive weeds within the floodplain and replanting the area with site-appropriate native trees and shrubs. In three of the cases, fencing is being constructed in order to exclude livestock from accessing the newly created riparian habitat. With the landowners each undertaking a share of the physical workload, the MWC has been able to secure cost-share implementation funding from both the Bureau of Land Management and the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board. The funding is

Continued as McKENZIE on Page 6

Drinking Water Protection in Oregon

By Sue Gries, OR DEQ
gries.sue@deq.state.or.us

Protection of Oregon's drinking water resources is critical to accommodate a growing population and to support the continued economic health of Oregon. Safe drinking water is fundamental to the viability of any community and the cost of treating contaminated water is extremely high and can be a public relations challenge with new businesses and residents. Drinking water protection involves reducing the risk of contamination of the groundwater, rivers, streams, and lakes that serve as sources of drinking water for local communities.

Approximately 75% of Oregon's citizens get their drinking water from

public water systems (which have at least 15 hookups, or serve more than 25 people year round). In June 2005, the Departments of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and Human Services (DHS) completed "source water assessments" for over 2000 public water systems in Oregon. The assessments include a delineation of the geographic area that supplies the public water system (drinking water source area) and provide detailed information on the potential contamination risks. The information is intended to help communities reduce the risk of impacts to their water supply. Watershed Councils play a strong role in bringing communities together. The DEQ believes this data on the public water supply areas and potential contaminant sources provides additional information on watershed conditions and potential risks

to surface and groundwater.

Upon request, the DEQ has maps with drinking water source areas and potential contamination risks available at the watershed level. In addition, GIS layers of the drinking water source areas will be available soon on the Oregon Geospatial Enterprise Office website at <http://www.oregon.gov/DAS/IRMD/GEO/index.shtml>. The following information is available:

- GIS shape files of mapped (delineated) drinking water protection areas
- Watershed upstream of drinking water intakes within Oregon
- 2-year, 5-year and 10/15-year time-of-travel zones for groundwater to reach water supply wells
- Recharge areas for springs

Continued as WATER on Page 5

A New Twist to the Wallowa River

By R.Coby Menton, GRMWP, and
Nils Christoffersen, Wallowa Resources

Doug McDaniel grew up fishing on the Wallowa River when it was still meandering across the valley floor. He watched it move to the valley edge against the bluff to improve access and management of pasture, and reduce the impacts of flooding. For over a decade now, he's been trying to restore the natural structure and meanders that provide good fish habitat. When he's 85 and retired, he wants to hobble down to the bank and find a good fishing hole.

The Wallowa River/McDaniel Habitat Restoration Project, an effort to restore a section of the Wallowa River on Doug's property outside of Lostine, Oregon, is finally under way. In 1992, Doug began the process of converting a half mile of straightened river to a natural meandering channel that provides excellent habitat, seasonal flood plain access, and improved water quality. In the fall of 2003, Doug and project manager Nils Christoffersen of Wallowa Resources visited the Bear Creek channel restoration project at Longley Meadows. What they saw impressed them so much, they immediately signed up Vance McGowan of the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) and Allen Childs of the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation to their design and construction management team.

The project design is based on one-foot topographic surveys, current channel surveys, and reference channel details. This information is captured with a survey-grade global positioning system (GPS), aerial photography, and stream survey techniques. These surveys not only describe elevation of the project area, but the current and rebuilt channel length, width, depth, substrate, and hydraulic characteristics. The design methodology includes new channel excavation, logs and root wads to stabilize meander bends and provide fish habitat,

rock grade control structures to maintain channel elevation, and a planting program to restore the riparian vegetation. The new meandering channel extends the length by nearly 800 feet (42 percent increase for that section), and decreases the gradient from a 0.95 percent slope to 0.64 percent slope.

Excavation to re-establish the historic channel characteristics finally began in July 2004. Ken Nash led a Hopkins Forestry team that excavated, separated and stockpiled the topsoil and 29,000 cubic yards of gravel-dirt material over the 2,550-foot reconstructed channel. Terry Jones supplied 600 boulders averaging three feet in diameter, and Dave Turner brought in 150 twenty-foot logs and root wads harvested off of RY Timber land. About 90 percent of the channel reconstruction was completed by late fall 2005.

Following the completion of scheduled excavation work, local contractors, high school students, and ODFW staff initiated an ambitious revegetation program over the fall and winter that included transplanting more than 7,000 sedge plugs, 5,000 willow cuttings, several hundred five- to ten-year-old trees, and distributing over 100 pounds of riparian seed mix. Most of the material came from Doug's own property, with the Wallowa Union Railroad contributing willow cuttings from its right-of-way. Pam Harshfield provided additional rooted stock.

Doug McDaniel provided regular weed control. ODFW established eleven permanent photo points and four channel cross-sections for long-term monitoring.

In July 2005 construction resumed. The final 470 feet of reconstructed channel was excavated to connect it to the Wallowa River and the former channel was filled. The old dikes were blended into the existing topography. Two ponds adjacent to the new channel were re-contoured and enlarged.

In the fall, project implementation concluded with another round of planting.

The project should be completed around Doug's 70th birthday. This stretch of the Wallowa River will nearly double in length; provide excellent habitat for fish, wildlife, and other aquatic organisms; and improve hydrologic, flood plain, and water storage function. These benefits will be realized because a dedicated landowner and persistent project sponsor refused to let an opportunity supported by current knowledge go unrealized.

Below: Wallowa River, post construction



WATER—From Page 4

- GIS layers of locations of DEQ-identified potential contaminant sources (PCSs) within protection areas based on over 100 separate categories of PCSs (covering commercial/industrial, residential/municipal, and agricultural/forestry).
- DEQ and State Fire Marshall Regulatory Database queries (for example, permitted wastewater dischargers, dry cleaners, underground storage tanks, cleanup sites)
- Windshield survey field locating in sensitive areas
- Public Water System owner/operator consultations

[Note that area-wide PCSs (i.e. managed forest lands, agricultural lands, high-density housing) were identified as a point closest to the well or intake.]

For more information on Source Water Assessment methods, technical assistance, or drinking water protection planning, contact Sue Gries, ORDEQ at 503-229-6210

Or visit the following web site:

www.deq.state.or.us/wq/dwp/dwphome.htm

COQUILLE—From Page 3

These partnerships have helped to create stable work for the crew as well as aid in getting more restoration work completed in this area, but the CWA Board is still concerned about the long term viability of our workforce. The CWA feels we need a better plan for sustaining the crew, and increasing our workforce. We have been surviving from year to year, but would like to have at least a two year plan for the crew's work. This will be the goal of the current OWEB local innovation grant.

The unemployment rate in Coos County is the highest in the state of Oregon, with typical pay near minimum wage and without benefits. People struggle to support their families, and often leave the area or sadly, turn to drugs and other illegal activities to make ends meet. Coos County also has the highest number per capita of methamphetamine labs within the state. The CWA board made a policy to hire only local contractors for the larger restoration work (culverts, instream structure, etc). Also, the CWA will continue to maintain and employ the local "Restoration Crew" to complete many of the other restoration projects such as fencing, planting, erosion control, instream enhancement, small culvert work, monitoring, and much more. The CWA Board made it a policy to employ this "Restoration Crew" year round, at a family wage and with benefits. The Board knew this would not be an easy task but thought it was very important to the organization as well as the community.

NOWC—From Page 1

profit status necessary to facilitate receiving funds that could assist with building the capacity of all councils. This includes charging the OD and RD teams with determining and working on the legal and organizational materials needed to accomplish this.

A final outcome of the meeting was the establishment of the Interim Board's meeting schedule for the remainder of the year. Since these meetings are open to all councils, we encourage you to attend. Meetings will be from 1:00 pm – 5:00 pm on the first day and from 8 am – 2:00 pm on day two. These meeting dates and locations are as follows:

- April 27 & 28 – Salem
- July 27 & 28 – Hood River/The Dalles
- September 28 & 29 – Salem
- November 1 – North Coast (in conjunction with OWEB Conference)

Transitions

Welcome New Coordinators:

Jamison Cavallaro, Pudding River; Zach Stevenson, Applegate; David Bowers, Trout and Willow Creeks; Don Nelson, Upper Rogue; Gail Perrotti, Seven Basins

Congratulations

Kara King, Bear Creek, on her new baby.

In Memorium

On December 24, Pam Galey, coordinator of the Upper Rogue Watershed Association for nearly five years, passed away. Her online obituary is located at :

www.mailtribune.com/archive/2005/1229/obit/obit.htm

HOOD RIVER—From Page 3

closed loop connection, watershed partners will realize huge benefits. First, 2-3 cfs of water will be conserved in an over-allocated basin, to be enrolled in the state's Conserved Water Program. Second, a significant fish barrier will be removed from Neal Creek, the valley's most important low elevation anadromous tributary. Third, the new closed loop system will finally eliminate a poorly functioning fish screen on Neal Creek, which annually causes the loss of several hundred fish.

The Hood River valley represents the largest tree fruit growing region in the entire state of Oregon, and its 15,000 acres of orchard contribute an estimated \$80 million to the region's economy. The fact that the valley *also* supports a diverse fish population is a real credit to both current and past stewards of the watershed. While examples of cooperative stewardship are not common in many parts of the American west, participants in the Hood River Watershed Group believe that the pattern being forged during the Central Canal Pipeline Project will be increasingly replicated in many other basins.

McKENZIE—From Page 4

critical to project success and will ripple through the local economy. Every dollar that goes toward projects like this one is put into the local economy. MWC purchases all materials, such as fencing, through local retailers, all trees through local nurseries, and employs local work crews. It's a win-win formula.

In the Next Issue of Network Update...

The Spring 2006 Issue of *Network Update* will be a theme issue: Riparian Restoration. Please submit articles on your successes and lessons learned on such issues as tree planting, native plant propagation, and control of riparian exotics/noxious weeds. Send submissions to newsletter@oregonwatersheds.org by April 15, 2006.

Visit the Network of Oregon Watershed Councils website at www.oregonwatersheds.org