



Hood River Watershed Group

*“...to sustain & improve the
Hood River Watershed through
education, cooperation, & stewardship”*

MARCH 21, 2017 MEETING MINUTES

Watershed Group Members Present

Phil Simpson	Jason Seals	Brian Nakamura	Kathryn Arendt
Larry Martin	Jordan Kim	Blayne Eineichner	Greg Short
Kevin Liburdy	Erika Maslen	Sara Maslen	Craig DeHart
Chuck Gehling	Herb Good	Ed Delozier	Hilary Doulos
John Sanchez	Kate Conley	Shane Sheldon	Megan Saunders
Niklas Christensen	Rick Ragan	Rob Reagan	Steve Pribyl
Steve Castagnoli	Cindy Thieman		

Welcome and Introductions

At 6:05 pm, Chuck Gehling welcomed everyone to the March meeting. He thanked everyone for coming and invited everyone to introduce themselves. There were 26 people in attendance.

Review and Approval of Last Meeting Minutes

After reading the group’s mission statement, Chuck asked if there were any corrections to the February minutes. No changes were noted and the group approved the minutes.

Monthly Informational Presentation

Chuck introduced Phil Simpson with ODFW for his presentation “Disentangling Summer and Winter Steelhead”. Phil acknowledged the work and support from BPA, CTWS, CRITFC, and ODFW. There are only a handful of basins in Oregon with recognized populations of both summer and winter steelhead. Lower Columbia River steelhead are listed as threatened and the two runs have varying production and escapement goals. It is difficult to assess recovery of the two populations without differentiation techniques. Generally, summer steelhead are found in the West Fork and winter steelhead are found in the East and Middle Forks, but some summers and winters can be found throughout the basin. The summer and winter runs also have some temporal overlap. While each run has a different typical morphology, there is a lot of variation, which makes it difficult to classify fish in the field. Since the mid-1990s, the winter steelhead population has trended slightly up. ODFW lost the ability to monitor the summer steelhead population with the removal of Powerdale Dam, but this population seems to have trended flat. In this study, outmigrant smolts were genotyped to determine run proportion. They found that winters tend to be about 53% and summers about 47% of the total smolt capture. This roughly equates to the number of stream miles available in these run’s preferred locations. Another study looked at adult samples from Moving Falls to determine the discrepancy between field identification and genetic determination. These studies help support model assumptions, increase the accuracy and precision of adult abundance estimates, and will assist with broodstock selection and composition.

Greg Short asked about the new technology that looks at environmental DNA in water samples. Phil wasn’t sure if that technology could determine run-type within a species yet. The technology hasn’t been applied. Kathryn Arendt asked if rainbow trout had been sampled to see if they had a winter/summer signature. They have not, these studies focused on steelhead. Cindy Thieman asked why winters and summers tended towards separate locations. ODFW doesn’t know for sure, but summer runs are typically associated with colder water. Phil noted that the genetics between the winter and summer runs within the Hood River Basin are closer than the genetics of summer/winter runs between basins. Shane Sheldon asked how the spatial distribution maps were created.

Distribution is often based on expert opinion. Herb Good asked how brood stock was collected. Brood are collected at the East Fork weir by Dee. About 10% of the hatchery release are PIT-tagged and can be tracked. Herb asked if ODFW was stocking the summer steelhead run. They halted the summer program in 2009. The summer steelhead target requires that less than 10% of the spawning grounds be open to hatchery fish and, with the removal of the Powerdale Dam, ODFW lost the ability to remove hatchery summers from the river system. Greg asked if the winter and summer runs were actually distinct or if there was overlap. The populations do overlap, since their life history is so variable. Herb asked if mature resident rainbow trout could spawn with a steelhead. This has been studied and they can/do spawn together. Steve Pribyl asked if the populations can maintain discrete status, if they are no longer spatially separated. The genetic data still shows a general separation. ODFW may just be seeing more winters in the West Fork because they are looking. Jason Seals mentioned that weir avoidance is also occurring.

Chuck thanked Phil for his great presentation. The audience gave him a good round of applause.

~Short Break~

Old Business

Jordan reviewed the ODA Strategic Implementation Area (SIA) letter-of-support request. ODA assessed and ranked agricultural properties in the Odell Creek watershed for potential impacts to water quality. They held an open house in late February with landowners. Folks with concerns on their property were invited to work with the SWCD. Cindy and Jordan have been working with those landowners to develop projects. ODA has some funding available for SIA regions, so the SWCD is putting together a grant proposal to install fencing, off-site watering, and water gaps on two properties that have cattle along tributaries to Odell Creek. *The group provided second consensus approval for the SWCD's ODA SIA application.*

New Business

Cindy is planning to update and resubmit the Coe Branch Pipeline OWRD application on behalf of MFID. Last year's application was not funded, but was just below the cut-off. The original application included an on-farm component. The new application will not ask for OWRD funding for on-farm, but will include NRCS funding as match. The total request will therefore be slightly lower. Craig and Cindy have a pre-application call with OWRD next week. OWRD has \$5 million left for the biennium. Chuck asked why the application wasn't funded last round. The nine proposals ahead of MFID's were really good.

Cindy reviewed the EFID and MHID Conservation Implementation Strategy (CIS) application. This was the suggested focus for EQIP funds from the recent NRCS Local Working Group meeting. EFID and MHID's boards drummed up interest in the program. For EFID's Central area and MHID about 35 landowners were interested, totaling about 770 acres. Total interest from all EFID and MHID patrons covered about 1,000 acres. Cindy has been putting together this proposal. The request will be for about \$900,000. The funding future is unclear, but the funds that are allocated to this year's proposals should be available. *The group provided first consensus approval of the EFID and MHID CIS application.*

Cindy discussed the proposal for a Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) for Hood River. This is NRCS EQIP money, but in a different pool. The Columbia Basin Critical Conservation Area pool has more funding available than the state pool. Cindy anticipates asking for \$2-3 million for the EFID Eastside Pipeline and some on-farm irrigation upgrades. Match would include the EFID, FID, and MFID OWRD grants. HRWG would not be the applicant, but the application process would use Cindy's time. Jordan added that if we were invited to submit a full proposal, then the HRWG would want to write a letter-of-support. Kate Conley asked about the timeline. The pre-proposal is due April 21st. We would know if we're invited to do a full proposal in June and the full proposal would be due in July. If we were approved for funding, we would know by the fall. EQIP sign-ups through the program would be next year. For other RCPPs it has taken about a year to get the contract in place before working with landowners on-the-ground. Shane asked who that applicant would be. It is an NRCS contract. The RCPP isn't really a grant, but a proposal with partners. It can be tricky with pipelines because the contracts have to be through landowners. Phil asked if anything could go wrong in the future that

would make the time inputs now an issue. There may be some landowners that flake out, but other landowners will sign-up in their place. The RCPP will be for a few large landowners through pooling agreements and those landowners would have a strong interest in the project given the benefits the pipeline will provide. EFID has easements for their conveyance system. *The group provided first consensus approval for the RCPP pre-proposal.*

Reports and Announcements

Cindy presented her monthly Coordinator's report. The design contractor for the Neal Creek instream enhancement project has been selected. Interfluve will start surveying on Thursday.

Megan presented her monthly Project Manager's report. Indian Creek Stewards will be holding an Earth Day event on April 29th from 9-11am. They will be mulching at the Broken Tee restoration site.

Greg announced that the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation banquet will be April 29th.

Phil reported that ODFW has been struggling with high flows. Their screw traps are on the bank waiting for installation. The adult trap is on its side, although it wouldn't be able to fish in these high flows anyway. Phil introduced their new seasonal Erica. Creel surveys have been non-eventful so far.

Jordan announced that the SWCD's native plant sale was pushed back to April 21-22 because the trees are still under snow. They will be taking pre-orders through the end of March. Greg mentioned that his boss may be willing to donate cold storage space for the plant sale in the future.

Chuck reported that CTWS acclimation of spring Chinook is occurring at Moving Falls. Those fish should be released around April 23rd. Chuck has been prepping the EFID sandtrap for steelhead acclimation.

Kate reported that CLT temporarily closed a section of the pipeline walkway because of a tree fall. A contractor should be repairing the damage next week. Steve thanked Kate for the new ladder at the end of the pipeline.

Jordan announced that the PSP met last week to hear 2016 results from water and sediment sampling. There were no exceedances. Diuron and the breakdown product from casaron were both detected at a high frequency, although at low levels. DDT and its degradants were found in the sediment samples.

Summary of Consensus Items and Establishment of Next Meeting

Primary Consensus items addressed tonight:

- HRWG approval of EFID and MHID CIS application.
- HRWG approval of RCPP pre-proposal.

Secondary Consensus items addressed tonight:

- HRWG approval of letter-of-support for the SWCD's ODA SIA application.

The next Hood River Watershed Group meeting will be held on Tuesday, April 25, 2017.

Adjournment

Chuck thanked the group for attending and adjourned the meeting at 7:50 pm.

Reported by: Megan Saunders