



# Hood River Watershed Group

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

## APRIL 25, 2017 MEETING MINUTES

### **Watershed Group Members Present**

Megan Saunders	Chuck Gehling	Ryan Gerstenberger	Laura Street
Daisy Matias	Maricela Castro	Hilary Doulos	Phil Simpson
John Gerstenberger	Jim Wells	Kate Conley	Greg Short
Roger Nelson	Blayne Eineichner	John Buckley	David Tallman
Peiyton Slatt	Connor Truex	Rick Ragan	Cindy Thieman
Steve Castagnoli	Steve Pribyl	Rob Reagan	

### **Welcome and Introductions**

At 6:00 pm, Chuck Gehling welcomed everyone to the April meeting. He thanked everyone for coming and invited everyone to introduce themselves. There were 23 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 March minutes. No changes were noted and the group approved the minutes.

### **Monthly Informational Presentation**

Chuck introduced Ryan Gerstenberger for his presentation "A Migration Study of Spring Chinook Salmon in the Hood River Using Radio Telemetry Methods". The study looked at how well post-Powerdale fish trapping facilities were working. The fish radio tracking information also provided a rich dataset for migration behavior and fish distribution in the Hood River Basin. John Gerstenberger asked what percentage of fish were tagged. They tagged about 50 fish, out of a hatchery run of about 1,800. Kate Conley asked if CTWS would continue the study for future years. Ryan hopes to. Laura Street suggested tagging fish at the Dee weir site. Ryan wanted to avoid tagging at a trap, since it could bias fish towards the Moving Falls trap he was assessing. Phil Simpson asked if Ryan had looked at how behavior might change with flow. Ryan hasn't. Summertime low flows are fairly stable. Changes in turbidity do seem to have an impact though. Greg Short asked if any fish left the basin. Two did. Greg suggested tagging at Bonneville to look at straying. PIT-tagged fish already provide that data.

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

Cindy announced that the SWCD has 150 Western hemlock available from their native plant sale. Let them know if you are interested in any or all of them. Megan announced that Indian Creek Stewards would be holding a volunteer event this Saturday from 9-11am at the Broken Tee restoration site.

*~Short Break~*

### **Old Business**

Cindy reported that the EFID and MHID Conservation Implementation Strategy proposal for NRCS EQIP funds was submitted last month. The proposal would provide funding for on-farm irrigation upgrades in the Central Canal area of EFID and all of MHID. *The group provided second consensus approval for the EFID and MHID CIS application.*

Cindy updated the group on the RCPP pre-proposal. Since the last meeting, the proposal has changed from the whole Hood River Basin, which would have captured all the leverage available from the OWRD grants, to just focusing on the East Fork Basin. Cindy had some discussions with past RCPP recipients. The \$3-4 million she had initially been considering seems unlikely to acquire. The 'East Fork Hood River Watershed Restoration Project' would include the Eastside Lateral Pipeline Project, on-farm irrigation upgrades, and CTWS's LWD project on the East Fork, which rounds out the proposal for streamflow and habitat restoration. The pre-proposal was submitted last Friday. We will find out in July if the EFID/HRWG is invited to submit a full proposal. *The group provided second consensus approval for the RCPP pre-proposal.*

### **New Business**

Cindy explained the OWEB partnership capacity technical assistance grant application. She has discussed this with the Operations Committee. The proposal would include developing a business/strategic plan for the partnership, an updated action plan (that would meet OWEB's criteria for a 'strategic action plan'), a funding plan, and a communications plan (including separate HRWG website). The effort would be focused on expanding the partnership's capacity and effectiveness. The HRWG (with the SWCD as the fiscal sponsor) would be the applicant, but all active partners and organizations would be involved. HRWG's next action plan needs to be consistent with OWEB's criteria for a strategic action plan (including expanded ecological monitoring objectives) in order to qualify for Focused Investment Partnership funding opportunities in the future. The funding plan would look at where the partnership wants to go in the next 10-15 years. Existing funding is relatively strong, but if we want to boost capacity in the basin to meet goals, funding will need to be increased. The proposal would also finalize the communications strategy that the subcommittee has been working on. It would also include some funding to create a separate HRWG website. A website would help the HRWG define its identity for outsiders and would also benefit all partners by showcasing different projects done by CTWS, the irrigation districts, and other partners. A separate HRWG website would provide more room to do this. The OWEB capacity grant would help the HRWG hire consultants to assist with planning, website development, and more. Cindy didn't know the request amount yet. She will have more details in May. The application is due on June 12<sup>th</sup>. Cindy has a phone consultation with OWEB on Friday.

Rick Ragan clarified that a strategic plan could also be considered a master plan or business plan. Cindy reiterated that part of the proposal is strategic planning that goes beyond on-the-ground restoration, such as looking at ways we could share resources more to get better leverage, a staff capacity plan, etc. OWEB will be looking to fund 'the partnership', not an individual watershed council. Rick mentioned that the HRWG is already a partnership, so asked what more would be needed. The HRWG would need to show OWEB that it is already 'the partnership' and that the way we work is different than most

watershed councils in the state. There is also still room and need to make our impact bigger (e.g. implementation of the water conservation strategy, Lower Columbia Conservation Recovery Plan, etc.). The group provided first consensus approval for the OWEB partnership capacity technical assistance grant application.

## **Reports and Announcements**

Cindy presented her monthly Coordinator's report. She is putting together a June 18<sup>th</sup> course for the Master Naturalist program through OSU Extension. Cindy's course will focus on rivers and fish. The course is still in development, but she is talking with Phil about visiting the Moving Falls trapping facility, as well as including water quality monitoring and other hands-on activities. The full OSU program is about \$275.

Megan presented her monthly Project Manager's report. The forestry tour in June is filling up, so register now. The field series will also include a geology of the watershed tour in September. Megan has been working on small grant projects and getting monitoring started for the season.

Phil reported that ODFW's screw traps are in, though currently raised because of higher flows. They started fishing the first week of April. ODFW caught over 100 steelhead on Monday. It has been an inconsistent start.

The Stew Crew is sponsoring a mega-fires talk by an OSU presenter on May 24<sup>th</sup> at 7pm at the Hood River Middle School. Rick reported that the Stew Crew is working with the USFS on an area around Mt. Defiance. The group is somewhat ahead of the USFS, so they are hoping to extend their grant to the end of the calendar year to develop better recommendations for thinning, trails, and road removal.

Chuck reported that CTWS finished releasing about 172,000 spring Chinook from Moving Falls. They are now acclimating winter steelhead at the EFID sandtrap. They will be released next week.

## **Summary of Consensus Items and Establishment of Next Meeting**

### Primary Consensus items addressed tonight:

- HRWG approval of the OWEB Partnership Capacity technical assistance grant application.

### Secondary Consensus items addressed tonight:

- HRWG approval of EFID and MHID CIS application.
- HRWG approval of East Fork Hood River Watershed Restoration RCPP pre-proposal

The next Hood River Watershed Group meeting will be held on Tuesday, May 23, 2017. EFID is hosting at the Parkdale Fire Hall.

## **Adjournment**

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

Reported by: Megan Saunders