



# Hood River Watershed Group

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

## JANUARY 23, 2018 MEETING MINUTES

### **Watershed Group Members Present**

John Buckley	Chuck Gehling	Kate Conley	Sam Doak
Mikel Diwan	Holly Coccoli	Greg Short	Brian Nakamura
Blayne Eineichner	Jim Wells	Jordan Kim	Megan Saunders
Cindy Thieman	Marla Harvey	David Michalek	

### **Welcome and Introductions**

At 6:05 pm, Chuck Gehling welcomed everyone to the January meeting. He thanked everyone for coming and invited everyone to introduce themselves. There were 15 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 November minutes. No changes were noted and the group approved the minutes.

### **Monthly Informational Presentation**

Chuck introduced Marla Harvey for her presentation "Hood River County Energy Plan". The plan's goals include: reducing fossil fuel use, increasing resiliency and energy independence, and increasing local investment. Brian Nakamura asked if conversion to electric tractors, etc. was included in the transportation focus area. The focus area asks jurisdictions to transition to electric vehicles, but it does not specifically call out agricultural vehicles. David Michalek asked about micro-grids for packing houses. Battery backups or micro-grids can provide key services. Any renewable that could be generated locally would work. The steering committee is talking with Cascade Locks about biomass. Chuck mentioned that the biggest opportunity for fossil fuel reduction was in changes to transportation. Jordan Kim asked if wind was being considered. Wind is not very attractive politically, but that could change. Jordan asked about smaller rooftop units. David explained that microturbines are not economically feasible. Sam Doak asked how this plan overlapped with the Westside Concept Plan. There are some policy changes within the Westside Concept that would be in line with the Energy Plan, which could be potentially expanded to other urban areas. The plan is very wide-ranging and long-term, so there are not many specific actions. Greg Short mentioned that agriculture is still using old equipment because it is cheaper and more durable. He was worried about battery cost and disposal. Greg did see an opportunity for rooftop solar on cold storage buildings, although a government incentive would be needed.

Mikel Diwan thought there was a big difference between a single company or farm upgrading equipment and a collection of entities upgrading systems. Mikel asked about the political component of

the plan (e.g. people don't like to be near wind farms). The steering committee will begin a strategic planning process in March. Interested folks should contact Marla. Chuck thought the HRWG and SWCD's strategic planning processes created a good opportunity to work together. A lot of what is in the Energy Plan is in-line with our work. There may be an opportunity to get something out of the effort, as well as contribute to it. Chuck suggested the HRWG consider over the next year whether to endorse the plan. Cindy will send the final plan out to the HRWG. Blayne Eineichner asked how hydropower development would be balanced with fish demands. Water conservation is the first step. Electricity generation would be via water movement in-pipe.

Chuck thanked Marla for her great presentations. The audience gave her a good round of applause.

*~Short Break~*

### **New Business**

The HRWG elects their Chair, Vice-Chair, and some Operations Committee representatives each January. Cindy asked for nominations for Chair and Vice-Chair. The group selected Chuck as Chair and John Buckley as Vice-Chair. The Operations Committee representatives up for election are natural resources, irrigation district, and at-large. Phil Simpson, Craig DeHart, and Kate Conley have each agreed to serve again. *The group provided first consensus approval of Chuck Gehling as Chair, John Buckley as Vice-Chair, Phil Simpson as natural resources representative, Craig DeHart as irrigation district representative, and Kate Conley as at-large representative.*

Cindy reported that the Meadows Creek fish passage design project had been approved for \$50,000 from USFS retained receipts. This project would have designed the culvert under Teacup Road. The USFS has since found out that the FLAP grant for the replacement of the Meadows Creek culvert under Highway 35 was also able to design the Teacup Road culvert. Since the \$50,000 had already been allocated, the USFS would like to spend it on a similar project. They suggested a culvert replacement design for Bear Creek to remove a juvenile passage barrier to steelhead, coho, resident trout, and, potentially, Chinook and bull trout. This funding would cover engineering and design. Implementation would occur after the Redhill timber sales and would be funded with future retained receipts.

Cindy announced that 1,800 acres of land in the upper West Fork has been purchased from Weyerhaeuser by Ecotrust Forest Management. This land in the in-holding the USFS has been hoping to purchase (with the help of Western Rivers Conservancy) for many years. Cindy plans to invite Ecotrust Forest Management to come present at a future HRWG meeting. This purchase opens up a lot of opportunities for restoration. Cindy discussed a proposal for 2019 USFS retained receipts: the Upper West Fork Riparian and Pollinator Habitat Project. This project would increase riparian buffer widths via planting and pilot pollinator habitat enhancements under the powerlines. Cindy expected the project to cost \$20-30,000. The project would include invasive species treatment. Blayne mentioned that BPA would need to set up a maintenance agreement. He will pass on the BPA contact. Kate asked how long Ecotrust expected to own the property. They normally own property for 5-10 years, but it could be longer. Jordan had some concerns about investing money with a temporary landowner. This would be USFS funds adjacent to USFS lands. The pollinator project would be a small investment. Blayne mentioned that the USFS is trying to work with BPA on road maintenance, weed treatment, etc. HRWG would manage the grant, implement the plantings, etc. Staff time would be funded through the grant. Cindy was asking the group if she should continue project development. Retained receipts requests are due February 2<sup>nd</sup>. She can present more specifics next month. *The group provided first consensus approval for the Upper West Fork Riparian and Pollinator Habitat Project.*

## **Old Business**

Cindy reported that the EFID RCPP was funded for \$1.8 million. \$1.3 million is for the Eastside Lateral and \$500,000 is for on-farm irrigation upgrades. CTWS is providing \$1 million in match. John Buckley thanked Cindy and CTWS. Cindy mentioned that CTWS' instream habitat enhancement in the East Fork made the project a compelling package. Piping the Eastside Lateral will be phased. This money will cover about ¼ of the project, but it can be used to leverage other funding requests.

## **Reports and Announcements**

Cindy presented her monthly Coordinator's report. The HRWG strategic planning process is underway. Cindy has been spending a lot of time with the forest collaborative. She hopes to have the Stew Crew present to the HRWG.

Megan presented her monthly Project Manager's report. Greg's steelhead fishing class will be February 24<sup>th</sup>. The Small Grant Team meeting is tomorrow. They are considering six applications and will have another funding round in March.

John announced that EFID's Highline Pipeline is almost done. They have about 20 hookups to complete. Greg mentioned that the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation banquet will be in April. Greg is now on the board of Trout Unlimited – Goldendale and is on the Columbia River Sportfishing Regulations Advisory Committee. Brian announced that growers attended an elk damage meeting. ODFW has tagged 7 of 12 elk. The preliminary data on elk movement is not what they expected.

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

### *Primary Consensus items addressed tonight:*

- HRWG approval of Chuck Gehling as Chair, John Buckley as Vice-Chair, Phil Simpson as natural resources representative, Craig DeHart as irrigation district representative, and Kate Conley as at-large representative.
- HRWG approval of the Upper West Fork Riparian and Pollinator Habitat Project.

### *Secondary Consensus items addressed tonight:*

- none

The next Hood River Watershed Group meeting will be held on Tuesday, February 27, 2018.

## **Adjournment**

Chuck thanked the group for attending and adjourned the meeting at 8:10pm.

Reported by: Megan Saunders