

Middle Deschutes Watershed Council – Virtual Board Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, August 25, 2020 - 4:30 p.m.

<https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/284880605> Access Code: 284-880-605

Attending:

Jenna Keeton (MDWC)
Staci Merkt (JSWCD)
Victoria Fischella (CREP)
*Theresa DeBardelaben (ODA)
Catherine Havstad (Agency Plains landowner)
*Scott Samsel (Board Member)
Samantha Bango (Coalition for the Deschutes)
*Jeff Rasmussen (City of Madras)
Smita Mehta (DEQ)
Lars Santana (NRCS)
*Guy Chittenden (Board Member)
Andy Neary (NRCS)
Reese Mercer (BeaverWorks Oregon)
Lori Campbell (PGE)
Jon Kochersberger (USFS)
*Lloyd Forman (Board Member)
*Lisa Windom (NUID)

*Board Member

Summary of Board Motions

Call to Order: The August 25th, 2020 Middle Deschutes Watershed Council (MDWC) Board Meeting was called to order by Council Co-Chair Lisa Windom at 4:39. A quorum was in place.

Approval of May 25th, 2020 Council: The Council reviewed minutes from the May 25th, 2020 meeting.

Motion 1: Motion made by Scott Samsel to approve May 25th, 2020 meeting minutes. Jeff Rasmussen seconds, and motion passes.

Approval of Financial Activity Report: The Council reviewed the current Financial Activity report.

Motion 2: Motion made by Theresa DeBardelaben to approve the Financial Activity Report. Scott Samsel seconds the motion, and motion passes.

Coordinator Updates

Council/Administrative

The MDWC Annual Reports for 2018/2019 and 2019/2020 are officially completed. From the 2019/2020 report, MDWC was involved in 7 outreach events (trail/highway clean-up, farmers markets, informational table at film screenings, co-hosting ecological webinars), 9 restoration projects (riparian plantings, wet meadow fencing, writing NRCS plans, Beaver Dam Analogue design, and other project preparation), 18 education days (1 week of summer camp, 5 field trips, 4 classroom days, 4 Warm Spring Academy after-school lessons). Board Chair Jennifer Mickelson transferred to a position USFS in Montana. Lisa Windom volunteered to be the new Board Chair. Theresa DeBardelaben volunteered to be the new co-chair.

Education

The virtual lesson, Stream Sampling 101 in Jefferson County, can be viewed here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tKqmjWloJBQ&feature=youtu.be>. MDWC is creating supplementary material for students to continue learning about their local watershed. COVID-19 has negatively affected the MDWC Watershed Education Program; the Cove Palisades field trip was cancelled in April 2020, the Warm Springs Academy after-school lessons and summer camps were cancelled in Spring and Summer 2020, and the funding request to Bean Foundation was denied (the foundation focused on COVID relief instead of environmental education). Happily, the MDWC is involved in the Children's Forest of Central Oregon response and planning teams to identify areas where virtual programming can be complimentary and helpful to local teachers.

Monitoring

MDWC continues to help JSWCD execute the Pesticide Stewardship Partnership monitoring. Victoria leads this effort with Spring and Fall 2020 sampling. The funding for this program was in jeopardy, but we received news from ODA that the funding is still secure. Lars Santana asked if funding supported monitoring and analysis, to which Victoria Fischella replied that it did. Lori Campbell asked how long funding was available for. Victoria replied with 2 years and is unsure if there is more funding for more monitoring. Victoria will present a comparison analysis of pesticide loads in 2020 vs. 2019 to see if the water shortage played any role in pesticide transport. Victoria shared that the Crooked River Watershed Council is conducting a similar monitoring program where they sample springs flowing into Crooked River by Lake Billy Chinook. This project is needed because of the continued presence of pollution (nitrates, phosphorous) despite safer agricultural practices. Additionally, the ODA Stream Temperature Monitoring project is going well; the MDWC deployed temperature loggers in Upper Willow Creek in June and will take them out in October to download data. This is year-3 of a 20-year

monitoring program to test whether changes in neighboring agricultural practices have an effect on stream temperatures.

Restoration

1) Warm Springs Riparian Planting

This project is in active preparation. This project proposes to involve the greater community to plant riparian vegetation along the bank of the Deschutes River on the Warm Springs Reservation so that two distinct riparian areas can recover from past wildfires. We received \$4,500 from PGE in Spring 2020. We are presenting to the Warm Springs Small Project team which consists of natural resource specialists (fish, wildlife, geology, archaeology) and tribal council for project approval. If approved, we would likely implement this project in the Spring or Fall of 2021. Coalition for the Deschutes is an active partner and has already written a Letter of Support.

2) Middle Deschutes Lamprey eDNA Distribution

This project is intended to test whether Pacific Lamprey are present in the lower 3 miles of Trout Creek, Shitiike Creek below and above dam removal, and parts of the mainstem Deschutes River below Pelton Dam. In Summer 2020, we received \$180,550 from PGE/Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs for a lamprey eDNA study. We are currently in the planning phase.

3) National Water Quality Initiative – Trout Creek Watershed Assessment

In Spring 2020, we (MDWC, JSWCD, and DEQ) submitted a proposal to NRCS to update a watershed assessment in Upper and Lower Trout Creek Watersheds. If we are approved, we will have two years to complete this assessment before applying for restoration implementation funds. Lars Santana shared that we may hear the NRCS decision before January, but funds may not be received in January. If this project is successful, we could try to repeat this effort for Willow Creek in several years. Smita Mehta with DEQ offered to help with monitoring efforts.

4) Conservation Implementation Strategy – Hydrologic Restoration for Steelhead in Trout Creek

This project was approved by NRCS technical and leadership teams in Spring 2020. MDWC and JSWCD helped write the CIS proposal which can now create a funding pool to fund projects in Trout Creek watershed that aim to clear Juniper trees, relieving upland water stress. Lars Santana shared that this was an issue that came up in local work group meetings as an important need. He also shared that the CIS is like a NRCS version of a business plan; the idea is to try to increase instream flows by focusing on restoring the uplands to create overall watershed health in Trout Creek watershed. MDWC and JSWCD will do their best to address monitoring needs as we move forward with this, though we already have some baseline monitoring in Trout Creek from Adam's efforts.

5) Upper Trout Tributary Enhancement

This is an OWEB funded project in progress to increase amount of woody debris in small streams to create pools and cover for fish in Upper Trout tributaries. Jon Kochersberger will be the USFS representative until we get a replacement in for Jennifer Mickelson. In Auger Creek. Jon and his crew have finished 1.0 mile of hand-felling large wood placement in the upper section of the system and they accomplished ~1.0 mile of mechanical large wood placement and will be back at it next week to finish the remaining 0.5 mile. In Potlid Creek, they finished 1.5 miles of hand-felling large wood placement in the upper and lower sections. In Cartwright Creek: they finished 0.5 miles of hand-felling large wood placement in the upper section of the system. Jon shared that Jen finished the OWEB agreement with our Grants and Agreement folks before she left so they are finalizing it now. Jon also shared that there is a chance that we will get \$100K from the USFS Regional Office next year to jump over to Big Log Creek and Dutchman Creek and complete all of that work so we can close out the Foley Creek sub-watershed. Fingers crossed. With that we may be sitting well on funding for the larger project. Smita asked whether Jon was monitoring temperature to which Jon replied that there are a variety of temperature loggers in these creeks that have been installed for years to monitor stream temperature.

6) Campbell Creek Watershed Enhancement – Beaver Dam Analogues

MDWC is taking over the beaver dam analogue design plan/future construction project in Campbell Creek canyon intended reduce flow, filter nutrients running off of Agency Plains. The contract has been signed with Anabran Solutions.

7) Grizzly Butte Juniper Removal

MDWC is preparing a Small Grant to remove Juniper from Grizzly Butte.

8) Upper Willow Beaver Habitat Enhancement

MDWC is working with BeaverWorks Oregon to host a workshop in Fall/Winter 2020 on understanding how to live with beavers and to highlight how beavers benefit watersheds. Also, Reese Mercer with BeaverWorks Oregon is collaborating with Bureau of Land Management's National Riparian Service Team to execute a Situation Assessment where local landowners have a chance to communicate with restoration specialists on beaver management issues. More detail was shared at the JSWCD board meeting through a presentation by Reese Mercer, Laura Van Riper, and Mike Lunn.

9) Plotting for Pollinators

MDWC continues to support Coalition for the Deschutes, North Unit Irrigation District, and Central Oregon Agricultural Research Center with "Plotting for Pollinators", a project geared towards creating plots of farmland that can host native bees intended to supplement crop production. The group has coordinated multiple drone flight over blooming pollinator plots and have participated in an interview that was written up into a

published newspaper article. Samantha Bango with Coalition for the Deschutes shared that 12 acres of pollinator habitat have been planted this year. Also, this year the group focused on planting annual habitat and next year the group will plan to plant annual and perennial habitat within the NUID and surrounding areas. Lisa Windom shared that this project is intended to connect irrigation districts with local communities and that this is a larger project within Coalition for the Deschutes intended to strengthen community involvement in agricultural practices.

Discussion

Guy Chittenden, Board Member, is interested in supporting the City of Madras with their Tree City Accreditation. Guy shared that there are many critical links between water quality, water quantity, tree health and climate change, citing a Pacific Northwest Climate Research Journal. He suggests the MDWC consider including the Tree City accreditation as part of educational lessons.

Guy also suggested MDWC get in touch with someone from Parks and Open Space as someone who could join the MDWC Board. The Board is curious what qualifications are needed to fill Board Member roles and Lisa Windom suggested inviting someone from the education community. Theresa DeBardelaben suggested looking through the MDWC by-laws for direction.

Partner Updates

Lisa Windom, North Unit Irrigation District:

Lisa shared that this year has been a stressful season with a tight water allotment and may be the tightest felt since 1984. The NUID reservoir is at an advantage because it is a unique storage reservoir with storage rights. NUID is talking at next Board meeting about storage and hopefully planning in a way to not be so tight with water delivery in the future. NUID is putting in a Variable Frequency Drive at end of the season, in line for next year for more steady flows on Crooked River. Biological debris and build-up is occurring on COID and NUID diversions, and NUID is taking care of this. Hopefully NUID will work to update their fish screens. This Fall, NUID will sign the Deschutes Habitat Conservation Plan.

Samantha Bango, Coalition for the Deschutes:

Samantha shared that the Plotting for Pollinators project is developing education and outreach projects and is excited to support MDWC on the Warm Springs Riparian Planting project.

Lars Santana, Natural Resources Conservation Service:

Lars shared that the NRCS is wrapping up recent contracting for the CIS on North Agency Plains, including 8 new contracts in area. The total amount obligated through



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EQIP is \$796,000 and this is all related to irrigation projects, increasing water efficiency, saving water and getting funds into local economy.

Victoria Fischella, Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program:

Victoria shared that CREP has 4 contracts, 3 in Crook 1 in Jefferson. All contracts should be finalized in the next few weeks/month. Total enrollment: 235 new acres into contract, 36 in Jefferson County.

The next MDWC Board Meeting will be held on Tuesday, October 27th, 2020 at 4:30pm.

The Meeting Adjourned at 5:42pm.