

Middle Deschutes Watershed Council – Virtual Board Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, January 26, 2021 - 4:30 p.m.

<https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/940580453>

Access Code: 940-580-453

Attending:

Staff:

Jenna Keeton (MDWC)

Board Members:

Theresa DeBardelaben (ODA)

Scott Samsel (Willow Creek)

Lisa Windom (NUID)

Guy Chittenden (At Large)

Lloyd Forman (Trout Creek)

Partners:

Staci Merkt (JSWCD)

Victoria Fischella (JSWCD)

Garry Sanders (CRWC)

Jon Kochersberger (USFS)

Lori Campbell (PGE)

Skuyler Herzog (OSU)

Jeff Broderick (City of Madras)

Smita Mehta (DEQ)

Thomas Stokely (OSU Extension)

Tim Porter (ODFW)

Summary of Board Motions

Call to Order: The January 26th, 2021 Middle Deschutes Watershed Council (MDWC) Board Meeting was called to order by Council Co-Chair Lisa Windom at 4:38 pm. A quorum was in place.

Approval of Minutes: The Council reviewed minutes from the August 25th 2020 and October 27th 2020 meetings.

Motion 1: Motion made by Lloyd Forman to approve minutes from the August 25th 2020 meeting. Theresa DeBardelaben seconds, and motion passes.

Motion 2: Motion made by Lloyd Forman to approve minutes from the October 27th 2020 meeting. Theresa DeBardelaben seconds, and motion passes.

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

Motion 3: Motion made by Scott Samsel to approve the Financial Activity Report. Theresa DeBardelaben seconds, and motion passes.

Coordinator Updates

Education

MDWC continues to support Warm Springs K-8 Academy with after-school lessons focused on Watershed Ecology in partnership with Trout Unlimited. MDWC plans to continue this programming throughout the school year. MDWC also is developing relationships with teachers from Culver Middle School and Culver High School as we partner with Oregon State Parks to hold lessons on Crayfish Ecology, Invasive Species, and Aquatic Conservation. Field days and in-class (probably virtual) lessons will be held this spring.

Outreach

MDWC is participating in a webinar for *Beavers in our Landscape* in partnership with BeaverWorks Oregon to explore how beaver habitat restoration can be implemented in Central Oregon. Participating in this effort will help MDWC better plan for an upcoming Upper Willow Creek Landowner meeting where MDWC hopes to gather landowners to discuss conservation and restoration priorities in the area, including beaver habitat restoration. MDWC hopes to hold a community walk or affinity day with Latino Outdoors along the Willow Creek trail in Madras this spring. Jon Kochersberger offered to hold a tour of the Grasslands for community or affinity groups.

Restoration

MDWC received funding approval from OWEB on three grants: removing 36 acres of juniper and 7 acres of conifer thinning on Grizzly Butte, and removing 80 acres of Juniper across 2 properties in Upper Willow Creek. MDWC submitted a grant proposal to the Bureau of Reclamation's WaterSMART Phase 2 Funding Opportunity to cover 380 acres of Juniper removal on the same properties in Upper Willow Creek. We expect to hear back from BOR mid-2021.

MDWC is involved with the Hydrologic Restoration for Steelhead in Jefferson County Conservation Implementation Strategy with NRCS. Jenna prepared a Baseline Monitoring Report with support from Adam Haarberg with JSWCD and Lars Santana with NRCS to document piezometer data collected to date to understand in-stream and groundwater conditions in Little Trout Creek and Beaver Creek (tributaries to Trout Creek) before large scale juniper removal efforts occur nearby. The question we pose is: does water return in-stream post juniper-removal. Jenna will present an update on this effort to the NRCS Local Work Group and to Jefferson County Farm Fair attendees in February and March.

MDWC continues to support JSWCD with a proposal to OWEB to fund Stakeholder Engagement and Technical Assistance to landowners in the Campbell Creek area under a Strategic Implementation Area by ODA. MDWC and JSWCD are brainstorming a future monitoring plan to potentially address concerns on nitrate levels in groundwater. Additionally, in the Campbell Creek watershed, work is moving forward with the Campbell Creek Beaver Dam Analogue Design project. Contractors are working on design efforts and preparing to draft permit applications for project implementation in the future. MDWC plans to submit an implantation proposal to OWEB in April 2021. MDWC and JSWCD are working with Skuyler

Herzog with OSU Cascades to identify pertinent data in the Campbell Creek watershed and identify monitoring questions regarding pesticide retention in beaver dam analogies. Garry Sanders with CRWC offered MDWC sondes to use for monitoring efforts.

Research

MDWC took water samples in the mainstem Deschutes River, Trout Creek, and supported sampling in Shitiike Creek to look for evidence of Pacific Lamprey DNA. This project is funded by PGE. We are still waiting for results from our contractor's lab. MDWC will continue with spring sampling.

MDWC is preparing to tackle the Trout Creek Watershed Assessment as funded by the National Water Quality Initiative. MDWC should receive funds soon and work will begin promptly on updating the current watershed assessment in the upper and lower Trout Creek watershed. Work will include updating statistics on agricultural parameters, updating maps of land use, include restoration actions taken to date, and prioritizing future restoration projects.

Administrative

MDWC presented an Official Letter of Resolution for Jefferson SWCD Board approval to be submitted to the BOR with the grant application. This was necessary because JSWCD serves as MDWC's fiscal agent. From Jefferson SWCD minutes 1/26/2021:

Motion made by Brad Klann to Approve Submittal of a Letter of Resolution to the Bureau of Reclamation WaterSmart Grant for Upper Willow Juniper Removal on Behalf of the JCSWCD Board of Directors. Seconded by Scott Samsel. Motion carried unanimously.

Additionally, MDWC is working submitting a renewal request to OWEB to fund Council Capacity which covers the Coordinator's time. Lastly, MDWC will send Board Members a refresher on MDWC By-laws and prepare an anonymous Coordinator Review sheet for Board of Directors to fill out.

Partner Updates

Lloyd Forman: Trout Creek near Dagner Canyon recently received 0.24 inches of moisture and snow was still clinging to trees. Wy-East is providing landowner in Agency Plains and Crook County access to an electric tractor (30-40 horsepower) to see how well it works.

Staci Merkt: Jefferson SWCD successfully finished their auditing process. A virtual Annual Meeting will be held during Farm Fair on March 4, 2021.

Theresa DeBardelaben: ODA is experiencing budget and staffing cuts, and have moved employees around to fill open positions instead of letting people go. There has been no movement with the Campbell Creek SIA because of COVID restrictions. However, ODA completed their field evaluation.

Scott Samsel: No update.

Lisa Windom: NUID is working on a grant to update automatic gates and add 7-9 measurement sites to understand how much water is flowing and where it is within irrigation canals. This has the potential to save 3600 acre-feet of water and they are currently trialing the software. They are also developing a grant for new piping within the irrigation district. NUID continues to partner with Coalition for the Deschutes and Middle Deschutes Watershed Council on the Plotting for Pollinators project.

Guy Chittenden: Guy asked Jeff Broderick with City of Madras whether he is involved with the Arbor Day Celebrations via the Tree City designation in Madras. Guy also shared with Jenna his contacts with Madras High School: Georgina Monrean (SMILE advisor + science/math) and Mike Dove,

Victoria Fischella: CREP is effectively paused at the moment. FSA is prioritizing primary focus to their COVID relief program. Central Oregon's Redmond Service Center is 2-men shy of the CREP team. The Mark's Creek project still needs cultural clearance before the project moves forward. In total, CREP has enrolled 11.7 stream miles, 328 acres of Riparian buffer in 2020. Victoria continues to work on the Pesticide Stewardship Partnership monitoring tributaries of the Deschutes River but does not have data from 2020 yet from DEQ. Victoria is working on highlighting landowner success in Agency Plains in terms of irrigation efficiency (sediment catchment ponds, transitioning from flood to sprinkler irrigation, redirecting tailwater). Victoria submitted a grant to BOR for a restoration project on 0.76 miles of Willow Creek. The grant detailed hiring an engineer team to research and develop channel reconstruction plans for Willow Creek.

Lori Campbell: Lori will have an update on the Pelton Fund in March.

Skuyler Herzog: Skuyler is helping MDWC and JSWCD understand pesticide data, how Beaver Dam Analogies may capture sediment and pesticides. He is also working with Beaver Works Oregon to highlight the importance of beaver habitat restoration.

Jon Kochersberger: Jon traveled to the Three Sisters Wilderness and shared there is little snow and that Central Oregon is in danger of low precipitation. He is working through National Fish and Wildlife project and will likely be doing work on the ground in August. Jon is also working on Dry Forest Restoration and an associated Environmental Assessment.

Thomas Stokely: Working on the Forest Collaboratives and is also working with the same landowners Victoria is working with in Upper Willow Creek.

Garry Sanders: The Crooked River Watershed Council is working on water quality monitoring on the lower Crooked River. (Garry is interested in talking with Jenna about how the data could be useful with the Campbell Creek BDA project.) The first monitoring effort was completed outside of irrigation season, and poor water quality inputs have occurred during the off-season. They did not find pesticides, but did find excess nutrients. They will hold a collection event in the mainstem Crooked River in the Fall or Winter to try to identify sources of Nitrogen and Phosphorous. This will inform a large-scale restoration project.



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Smita Mehta: DEQ has revised restoration permits OR-1, which effects discharging material into streams, and 1200C which effects construction greater than 1 acre in size. There will be harmful algal boom monitoring on Lake Billy Chinook soon.

Tim Porter: Tim is excited to work with MDWC and JSWCD to improve Redband trout habitat and improve fish passage in Willow Creek.

Jeff Broderick: City of Madras is planning to replace the J street bridge because it is not wide enough. Madras is also redrawing floodplain maps and will apply for help from FEMA.

The next MDWC Board Meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 23th, 2021 at 4:30pm.

The Meeting Adjourned at 5:30 pm.