



Hood River Watershed Group

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

FEBRUARY 26, 2019 MEETING MINUTES

Watershed Group Members Present

Megan Saunders	Chuck Gehling	Brian Nakamura	Sam Doak	Greg Short
Blayne Eineichner	Doug Thiesies	Lindsay Powell	Nate Ulrich	Whitney Anderson
Ryan Gerstenberger	Kate Conley	Maura Moody	Shay Way	Lindy Collamer
Larry Martin	Rick Ragan	Andrew Spaeth	Jurgen Hess	Holly Coccoli
Dan Powell	Les Perkins	Gary Asbridge	Alma Gaeta	
Cindy Thieman	Heather Hendrixson	Alix Danielsen	Kris Schaedel	

Welcome and Introductions

At 6:36 pm, Chuck Gehling welcomed everyone to the February meeting. He thanked everyone for coming and invited everyone to introduce themselves. There were 28 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 January minutes. No changes were noted and the group approved the minutes.

Monthly Informational Presentation

Chuck introduced Shay Way, a biologist from the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, for her presentation on Pacific Lamprey Distribution Survey Results for the Hood River Basin. Shay provided some background on the Pacific lamprey, including the species’ cultural and ecological importance. Shay then outlined the CTWS Pacific lamprey projects, which largely take place in The Dalles, but have been expanding in the Hood River Basin. These projects include PIT tagging, juvenile density surveys, juvenile distribution surveys, and EFID salvage. She then outlined future project plans, including eDNA work on the Middle Fork, additional monitoring on the West Fork above Punchbowl, screening on irrigation canal intakes, and expanded monitoring on Indian Creek. Les Perkins suggested that the lamprey found in Indian Creek could be the result of occasional overflows of FID irrigation water from the Hood River. He suggested additional monitoring in their infrastructure. Shay answered several questions, and noted that the populations seem to be doing well, and as their populations continue to expand, they will provide a good food source for steelhead and salmon in the Basin.

Jurgen Hess made two quick announcements:

The Hood River Tree Committee is having an Arbor Day event on May 3rd to remove invasive trees. He distributed a flier and asked for support from those present and the HRWG for the event. He also mentioned that Columbia Insight has a new Managing Editor and their most recent article on the Columbia River Treaty is a great read.

Old Business

The group provided second consensus approval of Chuck Gehling as Chair and John Buckley as Vice-Chair and second consensus approval for Sam Doak, Greg Short, and Jim Wells to serve on the Operations Committee as the forestry, recreation, and agriculture representatives, respectively.

Cindy reviewed the Watershed Group 2019- 2021 OWEB Work Plan, specifically outlining several projects that she proposed to be removed from the work plan since they are being implemented by other entities and HRWG staff are not involved. Rick asked whether there was another place that these projects could be recorded so that it could be shown they were being done. Cindy mentioned they could be included in the new website, and the Action Plan shows all work being done. Jurgen suggested using ArcGIS storymaps for the website to highlight projects. *The group provided second consensus approval of the 2019-2021 HRWG work plan.*

Chuck introduced Alix Danielsen, the new Restoration & Outreach Project Manager. Alix provided a quick background on her experience.

Megan provided an update on the HRWG website contract. Dee Holzman of Gorge Website Design was hired and staff had a kickoff meeting with her earlier in the day. The group will have an opportunity to review the draft website and weigh in on the design. The goal is to launch the new website in several months.

New Business

Cindy has spoken with a Purdue University PhD student who is researching the relationship between glaciers and ground- and surface water on Mt. Hood and in Glacier National Park. She is applying for a travel grant from Purdue so she can present her research, and requested an opportunity to present to the HRWG, as well as letter of support for the grant. Cindy wanted the group to know about the inquiry and that she had provided the letter – more details will be provided depending on whether the travel grant is awarded.

Cindy provided a quick update on the West Fork at Jones Creek instream habitat project. The OWEB grant submitted to support the Tribes and Forest Service on the project is ranked number one, and Cindy is confident it will be awarded in the spring. Cindy is preparing the construction RFP for the excavation work so that it will line up with the grant award and the project timeline.

Cindy provided an update on the Eastside Lateral Pipeline Project. Cindy submitted an OWEB Technical Assistance grant, which has been ranked second. She is developing a cultural resources RFP, and is exploring additional OWRD grant opportunities for the project.

The Hood River Groundwater Model is currently in the conceptual stage. OWRD and HRWG have been collecting groundwater data for about six years for almost double the sites (~55), and it may be time to rerun the model with the new data. As background, the County relies almost solely on surface water, and very little is known about groundwater resources, and how surface water may be affected if groundwater is increasingly tapped over time. The County has set aside some money to conduct additional research, which Cindy noted could be used as match for potential upcoming grant opportunities to update the groundwater model. Holly asked if they had enough data to rerun the model. Cindy explained that with six years of research and almost double the original sites, there is likely enough data to rerun the model. Greg asked if there might be a wetlands connection issue with groundwater. Cindy noted that the strategic plan is hoping to address this issue as well as wetland mitigation options. *The group provided first consensus approval to explore additional grant opportunities to update the groundwater model.*

Cindy reported that HRWG received a request from Regional Solutions for a letter of support for the Regional Infrastructure Plan. The Joint Ways and Means Committee is considering funding levels for the program. This is a funding source that the Dee Irrigation District recently received for purchasing flow meters, and is money that partners could benefit from in the future as well. Chuck asked whether the group is in favor of the letter of support. *The group provided first consensus approval for a letter of support on behalf of the Regional Infrastructure Plan.*

Reports and Announcements

Cindy presented her monthly Coordinator's report. She opted out of attending OWEB's 20th Anniversary Celebration in Salem after the opportunity to meet with legislators was cancelled. Cindy reported that the

Strategic Action Plan (OWEB FIP funding) is moving along. The restoration mapping is almost complete, and the larger group is beginning to draft an MOU. There is currently not a date set for the next meeting, but there is a community input forum being planned for May 9th.

Megan did not have anything additional to add for her monthly Project Manager's report, but thanked the group for her time as part of the HRWG.

Heather provided an update on the OWEB Small Grant program. There were four new grants awarded in January that will utilize the remaining funds for the current biennium. The new biennium will begin July 1st with ~\$100,000 available for small grants. An announcement will be made this summer for new applications.

Gary Asbridge has returned to the Basin after working for USFS in Prineville for the past few years. He is now working for the USFS Regional Enterprise Team and is based in Hood River. He is attending meetings as a watershed resident, not as a USFS representative.

Doug Thiesies, the County Forest Manager, was happy about the snow. Brian mentioned that the snow water equivalent is up to 89%.

Jurgen Hess mentioned an opportunity to volunteer with WA School for the Blind on May 13th at Teacup.

Cindy mentioned that the Hood River Ranger District just hired a new hydrologist, who used to run NRCS's regional SNOTEL program.

Greg noted that the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation fundraiser is the last Saturday in April. Visit their website for tickets and more information.

Heather reminded everyone about the plant sale. Orders are due by March 22nd.

Summary of Consensus Items and Establishment of Next Meeting

Items that Received First Consensus:

- HRWG approval to explore additional grant opportunities to update the groundwater model.
- HRWG approval for a letter of support on behalf of the Regional Infrastructure Plan.

Items that Received Second Consensus:

- HRWG approval of Chuck Gehling as Chair and John Buckley as Vice-Chair, and Sam Doak, Greg Short, and Jim Wells to serve on the Operations Committee as the forestry, recreation, and agriculture representatives, respectively.
- HRWG approval of the 2019-2021 HRWG work plan.

The next Hood River Watershed Group meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 26, 2019.

Adjournment

Chuck thanked the group for attending and adjourned the meeting at 8:07 pm.

Reported by: Alix Danielsen