



# Hood River Watershed Group

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

## MARCH 26, 2019 MEETING MINUTES

### **Watershed Group Members Present**

Chuck Gehling	Brian Nakamura	Greg Short	Blayne Eineichner	Ryan Gerstenberger
Kate Conley	Maura Moody	Jim Wells	Heidi Hartman	Roger Nelson
John Gerstenberger	Steve Pribyl	Jackie Pribyl	Paty Fernandez	Mariam Fox
Heather Hendrixson	Alix Danielsen			

### **Welcome and Introductions**

At 6:04pm, Chuck Gehling welcomed everyone to the March meeting. He thanked everyone for coming and invited everyone to introduce themselves. There were 17 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 February minutes. No changes were noted and the group approved the minutes.

### **Monthly Informational Presentation**

Chuck introduced Ryan Gerstenberger from the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs, who presented on *Making Better Hatchery Chinook... with Science*. Ryan provided some background on Chinook in the Basin, and the history of the Tribes' Hood River Production Program. The program was initiated in 1991, but the signing of the 2008 Fish Accords with BPA included research funds that were used to partner with NOAA Fisheries to reform the HR Production Program. The study involved raising stock at three different locations (Pelton Round Butte, Parkdale, & Carson, WA) and assessing/comparing smolt quality (size, lipids, growth, development, and rates of early male development or "mini jack" rate) by monitoring performance post-release via PIT tags. Results showed that Pelton fish performed the best, followed by Parkdale, then Carson. Pelton fish had the best smolt to adult ratio, and the best migration pace (km/day). The Pelton results were consistently better than other programs outside the study (Parkdale was average), which Ryan attributes to the fish being big but not too fat, and that they experienced seasonal temperature and growth variation and time in a "semi natural rearing habitat". Based on the study results, facility upgrades at Parkdale were made, including the addition of a new acclimation site at Moving Falls on the West Fork for earlier and more natural acclimation. The facility also developed a new "Wild Type Rearing Template" – a feed model that allows for control of how and when to feed, with seasonal growth and size targets and temperature manipulation. After the upgrades were put in place, the survival rate positively diverged from other Spring Chinook programs in the region, despite declining ocean conditions. Mariam Fox asked how/which stock was chosen. Ryan explained that the program used Deschutes stock because it was more recently domesticated and had other logistical advantages. If he could have done it over, Ryan would have tried to use Clackamas or Sandy stock. Greg Short asked if there was an inherent assumption about where the fish were going in the ocean that might affect survival rate, but it seems numbers are tracking together. Maura Moody asked why there was a drop in '09 and '10 rates, which Ryan said was an unknown.

### **Old Business**

Rerunning the Hood River Groundwater Model is currently in the conceptual stage. OWRD and HRWG have been collecting groundwater data for about six years at 55 sites, which is 4 times as many sites as OWRD had monitored in the past. The Bureau of Reclamation is initiating a new activity under their Basin Study Program called Water Management Options Pilots. The program will provide funding for pilot studies to further analyze or

develop water management options identified in completed Basin Studies, including refining models. Reclamation has requested letters of interest by April 15th. The County has set aside some money to conduct additional research, which could be used as match. Heather Hendrixson asked what it would cost to rerun the model. The cost was unknown by those at the meeting. *The group provided second consensus approval for a letter of interest for the Water Management Options Pilot with the Bureau of Reclamation, a potential upcoming grant opportunity to update the Hood River Groundwater Model.*

HRWG received a request from Regional Solutions for a letter of support for the Regional Infrastructure Fund. The Joint Ways and Means Committee is considering funding levels for the 2019-2021 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. *The group provided second consensus approval for a letter of support on behalf of the Regional Infrastructure Plan.*

### **New Business**

Alix provided details on the status of the Neal Creek project. The conceptual design was completed in September, 2018. Based on landowner willingness and intrinsic potential, two of the proposed sub-reaches in the conceptual design will be targeted for the next phase. Cindy and Alix are planning to apply for technical assistance grants to bring these two project sites to full design and permitting, including possible wetland delineations. The Pacific Power Blue Sky Habitat Fund (application due May 31<sup>st</sup>) provides between \$30,000 – \$35,000 for project design, engineering, permitting, supplies and materials, implementation, monitoring and outreach. Projects must be in or near a Pacific Power service area, provide direct and immediate improvements to salmon and/or steelhead habitat, and provide at least a 1:1 match. This current open solicitation round of OWEB Technical Assistance grant applications are due April 29<sup>th</sup>. Greg Short asked if the sites being targeted are below the EFID overflow ditch, which they are. *The group provided first consensus approval to develop grant applications for the Neal Creek Instream Habitat Project Design, specifically the OWEB Technical Assistance grant due on April 29<sup>th</sup>, and the Pacific Power Blue Sky Habitat Restoration grant, due May 31<sup>st</sup>.*

Alix explained that OWEB emphasizes the need for a partnership financial plan to be incorporated into FIP strategic action plans. They recognize the significant work required to develop detailed cost estimates and funding plans/strategies, and as a result, put aside money (up to \$15,000) for partnerships to hire contractors to help develop a financial plan. At the last strategic action plan meeting, the partnership reviewed this opportunity and decided it was worth pursuing, with the support of the HRWG. The partnership needs to let OWEB know of their interest, and then apply for funding by June 30<sup>th</sup>. Kate Conley asked if \$15,000 would be enough funding for a consultant. Chuck explained that Cindy is reaching out to a possible consultant to assess feasibility, and is also looking into whether some of the money in the current grant contract could be used for this purpose. *The group provided first consensus approval to explore additional OWEB funds available to develop a financial plan as part of the FIP Strategic Action Plan.*

### **Reports and Announcements**

Alix presented her monthly Project Manager report. She is working on the Neal Creek project, exploring grants to build out full design and permitting, and has met with two landowners to secure letters of support for the project. She attended the Strategic Action Plan meeting, where the group worked on MOU development, planning for the special invite meeting (“Watershed 2040”), financial plan funding, and beginning the Progress Monitoring Framework (outputs and outcomes). The Watershed 2040 meeting is scheduled for May 9<sup>th</sup> from 4-6pm at The Ruins (save the date!). The basic agenda will include an overview of the state of the watershed, background on the strategic action plan, presentations from partners, and opportunities to engage with the Watershed Group. There will also be several stations that go into further detail about each component of the event. The website contractor has provided a basic design draft. Cindy and Alix will be reviewing the draft and providing feedback over the next few weeks.

Alix also noted, on behalf of Cindy, that the two RFPs that previously received consensus have gone out: the West Fork at Jones Creek instream habitat project (ranked first) to support the Tribes and Forest Service on the project with excavator placement of large wood, and the Eastside Lateral Pipeline Project (ranked second) for the

cultural resources assessment and pipeline design. Blayne Eineichner noted that the contractor meeting for the West Fork at Jones Creek project had just happened, and there was good interest by those that received the RFP.

Heather reported that the Plant Sale is happening on April 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>, and put out a call for volunteers to help with tagging and sorting.

Kate reported that the HRWG and CLT will be having a joint Earth Day event on April 20<sup>th</sup> from 9-12pm (meet at the Park and Ride). The event will involve placing mulch around trees and shrubs at the mouth of Whiskey Creek. Let Kate know if you are interested in volunteering. Kate also reported that CLT has acquired a 40-acre section of the Sieverkropp property behind Rosauers adjacent to the Powerdale property. CLT will be focusing on recreation, and partnering with Parks and Rec on trail access.

Greg reminded the group that the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation banquet is on April 27<sup>th</sup>. See their website for tickets.

Brian reported that contractors (WPN) have started on the Eastside Lateral pipeline design, specifically working on the stormwater plan. He also noted that the EFID is behind on cleaning canals due to the snow, but the water should be turned on the first week of April.

Paty Fernandez reported that she is a PhD Public Policy student at OSU, focusing on irrigation modernization in the Hood River Basin. She has been talking to farmers and districts to better understand the process and drivers of modernization from a policy standpoint.

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

#### *Items that Received First Consensus:*

- HRWG approval to develop grant applications for the Neal Creek Instream Habitat Project Design.
- HRWG approval to explore additional OWEB funds available to develop a financial plan as part of the FIP Strategic Action Plan.

#### *Items that Received Second Consensus:*

- HRWG approval for a letter of interest for the Water Management Options Pilot with the Bureau of Reclamation to update the Hood River Groundwater Model.
- HRWG approval for a letter of support on behalf of the Regional Infrastructure Fund.

The next Hood River Watershed Group meeting will be held on Tuesday, April 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2019.

### **Adjournment**

Chuck thanked the group for attending and adjourned the meeting at 7:55pm.

Reported by: Alix Danielsen