



# Hood River Watershed Group

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

## MAY 28, 2019 MEETING MINUTES

### Watershed Group Members Present

Chuck Gehling	Jim Wells	Craig DeHart	Greg Short	John Buckley
Sam Doak	Katie Craft	Alexander Ross	Blayne Eineichner	Holly Cocolli
Brian Nakamura	Ann Lameka	Ed Salminen	Bernard Yoo	David Pilz
Cindy Thieman	Heather Hendrixson	Alix Danielsen		

### Welcome and Introductions

At 6:00pm, Chuck Gehling welcomed everyone to the May meeting. He thanked everyone for coming and invited everyone to introduce themselves. There were 18 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 April minutes. No changes were noted and the group approved the minutes.

### Monthly Informational Presentation

Chuck introduced David Pilz from AMP Insights, whose presentation was *Hood River Water Bank Feasibility Study: Final Recommendations*. David gave an overview of the study, the key results of the landowner survey, summary of water bank supply and demand, operation and funding, economic impacts and benefits, and the study conclusions and next steps.

The primary goal of a water bank would be to provide instream benefits and the secondary goal to provide water to perennial crop growers during droughts. The feasibility study generally looked at the different ways to organize a bank. The study included a GIS/acresage analysis of the basin for supply data, and a landowner interest survey. The survey was sent to 200 people who appeared, based on aerial photo and crop data analyses, to have at least 10 acres of pasture/hay. AMP received responses from 36 landowners (18%), which was a decent return. When asked if they would consider participating in a volunteer, paid crop fallowing, 50% of respondents said maybe, 21% said yes, and 29% said no. Key determinants were the amount of payment and protection of water rights.

David discussed operational aspects of a water bank, including where it would be housed (i.e. working with an existing entity like HRWG), governance and policies, and capacity. Water bank funding opportunities include the Columbia Basin Water Transactions Program, OWEB, and OWRD. OWEB and OWRD would likely be the most feasible funding source for the Hood River Basin.

The study revealed that a Hood River water bank is feasible if it started small and grew gradually. Funding would need to be secured, a formal design would be needed, pilot transactions would be wise, and partner engagement would be critical. A draft of the feasibility study will be available to key stakeholders in early June.

### Old Business

Cindy reviewed the details about an OWEB restoration grant application for an instream habitat enhancement project on the Upper West Fork near Red Hill Creek. This project would be implemented in 2020 on land owned by Ecotrust Forest Management (EFM). The project would complement several instream habitat/large wood placement projects up and downstream of the site on Forest Service land. Project partners include HRWG, CTWS, USFS, and EFM. \$87,000 was requested as part of the overall \$250,000 project cost. The group provided

second consensus approval for grant application for the West Fork at Red Hill Large Wood Project that was submitted on April 29th.

### **New Business**

Cindy provided details on the Hood River Basin Partnership Memorandum of Understanding. As part of the funding received for the strategic action plan, OWEB has an expectation that partnerships will develop an agreement. The MOU is different than the double consensus model, which is specific to the Watershed Group as a watershed council. This agreement will inform the implementation of the action plan (how decisions will be made, etc.). Cindy walked the group through the development of the MOU, and highlighted key points in each section of the MOU. It is important to note that not everything that happens in the Basin will come under the purview of this agreement. For example, individual partners may pursue their own projects without consulting the Partnership. Cindy will resend the MOU to the core partners for review before next month's meeting. The group provided first consensus approval to move forward with the Hood River Basin Partnership MOU.

### **Reports and Announcements**

Coordinator Report: Cindy briefly overviewed the pending request to OWEB for development of a financial plan in conjunction with the FIP strategic action plan. OWEB has set aside money (up to \$15,000) for partnerships to hire contractors to help develop these financial plans. At the last strategic action plan meeting, the partnership reviewed this opportunity and decided it was worth pursuing, with the support of the HRWG. Cindy submitting the request earlier in the day.

Cindy noted that she and Alix attended the Watershed Management Camp earlier in the month, which was a successful gathering of other watershed council employees in the state. Cindy had a large part in coordinating the event, which seemed to be very well received by those that attended.

Project Manager Report: Alix reported that the Pacific Power Blue Sky Habitat Fund application for the Neal Creek Instream Habitat Restoration Design was submitted on the 31<sup>st</sup>. The total request was for \$26,000, to support the larger funding request submitted to OWEB. Alix also noted that she began the MFID monitoring program for 2019, installing temperature loggers at the monitoring sites within the District earlier in the month. She also gave a brief review of the Watershed 2040 event on May 9<sup>th</sup>, which had a good turnout and resulted in some productive conversations with key community stakeholders. She also gave an overview of the Conservation Innovation Grant that was submitted for a pilot pollinator project on FID pipeline.

Craig DeHart reported that Laurance Reservoir is full and spilling, and everything is looking good.

John Buckley reported that the East Fork Lateral engineering study is going well, with a current focus on the possible shortening of the pipeline route.

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

#### Items that Received First Consensus:

- HRWG approval to move forward with the Hood River Basin Partnership MOU.

#### Items that Received Second Consensus:

- HRWG approval of grant application for the West Fork at Red Hill Large Wood Project.

The next Hood River Watershed Group meeting will be held on Tuesday, June 25th, 2019.

### **Adjournment**

Chuck thanked the group for attending and adjourned the meeting at 8:20 pm.

Reported by: Alix Danielsen