

Hood River Watershed Group



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

NOVEMBER 26, 2019 MEETING MINUTES

Watershed Group Members Present

Chuck Gehling	John Buckley	Shane Keep	Sam Doak	Les Perkins
Cindy Thieman	Heather Hendrixson	Megan Saunders	David Lindley	Kate Conley
Jeannette Burkhardt	Jim Wells	Greg Short	Alix Danielsen	Kathryn Arendt
Mike Oates	Steve Warila	Matthew Baumann	Dan Ball	Doug Thiesies
Brian Nakamura	Brady Allen	David Michalek	Beth Flake	Richard Iverson
Diana Burman	Lauretta Burman	John Moody	Maura Moody	Holly Coccoli
Cecilia Goodnight				

Welcome and Introductions

At 6:00pm, Chuck Gehling welcomed everyone to the November meeting and started a round of introductions. There were 31 people in attendance.

Review and Approval of Last Meeting Minutes

Chuck asked if there were any corrections to the October minutes. No changes were noted and the group approved the minutes.

Monthly Informational Presentation

Jeanette Burkhardt and David Lindley from Yakama Nation Fisheries presented on the *White Salmon River Confluence: Navigation Restoration and Habitat Enhancement*. The tribal village of Namnit at the confluence of the White Salmon and Columbia Rivers has been an active place of fishing and tribal commerce for well over a thousand years. Currently the site is referred to as Underwood, one of the first Treaty In-Lieu Fishing Access sites established by the US Army Corps of Engineers and managed by the Bureau of Indian Affairs to mitigate for Federal hydrosystem impacts. The 2011 breach of Condit Dam resulted in deposition of sediments at the Underwood site that made the boat launch inoperable. 2.4 million cubic yards were released with the breach; at 15 week post-breach, approximately 2/3rds had made its way down to the Columbia, with about 375,000 cubic yards deposited at the mouth/in-lieu site. Prior to the breach, river depth was 30 ft. Post breach it was 2-3 ft.

In 2018, the Yakama Nation worked to dredge sediments and restore navigational boat access to the culturally important site. Yakama was the lead on the restoration project and Interfluve was the design firm. Funding was from the Condit Dam hydroelectric settlement (\$600,000), the Pacific Coast Salmon Recovery Fund, and Bureau of Indian Affairs. Interfluve surveyed Wells Island as an analog to inform project. The dredged materials (15,400 cubic yards) were utilized to create a 5.3-acre riparian island complex to the north of the navigation channel. Constructed islands support diverse native riparian vegetation.

David and Jeanette explained project goals (restore navigation between Underwood site and Columbia River for Tribal treaty fisheries and reduce future inundation of the navigation channel by sediments, restore native plant communities, and add habitat diversity) and gave an overview of the historical site context, the Condit Dam breach, project design, and implementation. Throughout Columbia River history, an estimated 25% of side channel habitat has been lost. Jeanette detailed post construction monitoring (photo, water level, invasive species, plant survival) and adaptive management strategies (replanting, irrigation, invasive plant control). David wrapped up the presentation by detailing potential for similar applications at other Columbia tributary deltas affected by BPA's hydroelectric system. EPA identified Cold Water Refugia along the Columbia Reach in 2015, including White Salmon, Klickitat, and Hood River. David discussed Klickitat variations, and a study done to confirm how the mouth of the Klickitat is affected by the Bonneville Pool – particularly temperature and water depth. In 2018-2019, fish were tagged and released at RM 10 to determine survival rates at different reaches (by way of receivers), particularly in reference to warmer temperatures at the mouth from Bonneville. David thinks it's important to start collecting data at these deltas to document current conditions.

Old Business

Draft Hood River Watershed Group Website

Alix noted that the goal today is to share progress of the website development and solicit feedback that can be feasibly incorporated into the website while it is still in draft form. Alix provided an update on the website progress to date. Alix and Cindy worked together to develop a layout and content document that was provided to the developer. Based on follow up conversations, the developer put together a “wire frame”/draft layout of the website. The wire frame was reviewed by Cindy, Alix, and Chuck, and feedback was returned to the developer. At this point the developer populated the website and a draft of the site was received several weeks ago.

Alix has been working with the developer, Cindy, and Sam Doak on edits. The website is scheduled to be finalized in late December. Alix also explained that the website blends HRWG input with feedback and expertise from the developer, specifically in terms of user experience data that informs how people tend to interact with websites.

Alix walked the group through the website, and Cindy recorded edits provided by Watershed Group members to be incorporated into the website.

Alix will be in touch with the Communications Committee to review website content and asked if there was anyone else who would be interested in reviewing content.

HRWG Communications & Outreach Plan Update

The group decided to delay this conversation until January due to time constraints.

New Business

HRWG Annual Budget Actuals

The group decided to delay this conversation until January due to time constraints.

Reports and Announcements

Coordinator Report:

Cindy reported that she attended the Oregon 100 Year Water Vision workshop. Progress is being made on the Eastside Lateral Project archeological review, and the implementation grant was submitted to OWEB. The OWEB Review Team call took place on November 25th for both the Eastside Lateral grant and the Neal Creek TA grant. A lot is happening with the Strategic Action Plan – the science contractors were hired for mapping and a variety of tasks. Many of the core partners met with the financial plan consultants to discuss funding needs, capacity, and ideas.

Project Manager Report:

Alix gave a brief update on current projects, including kicking off the Financial Plan process with Fresh Take, surveying progress for the Neal Creek Instream Habitat Restoration design, the progress of the DID Distribution Pipeline Project, kicking off the CIG Pollinator Pipeline project, carcass tossing, and planning for the West Fork at Red Hill project.

Greg asked about the results from the EFID fish salvage: 420 sculpin, 5 lamprey, 4 Chinook, 362 steelhead, and 23 adult hatchery steelhead.

Member Announcements:

Megan noted that DEQ has a new list of proposed 303D waterways which would include all reaches in the watershed. Using HUC-12 watershed codes is a drastic change in previous reports and assessments, and will create issues for daily usage and other watershed management areas. Comments are due January 6th. Megan is developing draft comments for FID. Cindy has reached out to Smitha Mehta at DEQ for dialogue.

The group provided first consensus approval for Cindy to write a letter to DEQ to request an extension to the comment period so that the Watershed Group can conduct a full review of the materials and decide on comments.

Heather reported that there was a meeting regarding the groundwater monitoring that has been underway for 10+ years. The group discussed how to use remaining County funding – develop a report on monitoring progress, or keep contract open for additional monitoring? Cindy noted that there isn't much data on groundwater, and Dick Iverson noted that there is no data on deep groundwater. The group will be submitting a proposal to the County.

Summary of Consensus Items and Establishment of Next Meeting

Items that Received First Consensus: Approval for Cindy to write a letter to DEQ to request an extension to the comment period.

Items that Received Second Consensus: None.

The next Hood River Watershed Group meeting will be January 28th, 2020.

Adjournment

Chuck thanked the group for attending and adjourned the meeting at 8:34 pm.

Reported by Alix Danielsen.