



Hood River
WATERSHED GROUP

Hood River Watershed Group

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

SEPTEMBER 28, 2021 MEETING MINUTES

Watershed Group Members Present

Chuck Gehling	Cindy Thieman	Alix Danielsen	Rick Larson	Smita Mehta
Megan Saunders	Richard Iverson	Sam Doak	Ryan Gerstenberger	Brian Nakamura
Kate Conley	Steve Pappas	Jim Wells	Jennifer Euwer	Niklas Christensen
Greg Short	Patrick Hayden	Les Perkins	Dan Ball	Ben Saur
Ann Gray	Jason Keller	Raija Bushnell	Stephen Hunt	Yesenia Sanchez Oates
Kari Greer	Holly Coccoli	Rick Ragan	Heidi Hartman	Jeremy Trombley
Andrew Spaeth	Darcy Saiget	Heather Hendrixson		

** This meeting was conducted virtually via Zoom.

Welcome and Introductions

At 6:00pm, Chuck Gehling welcomed everyone to the September meeting and stated the mission of the Watershed Group. There were 33 people in attendance. Cindy introduced Niklas Christensen, the presenter.

Monthly Informational Presentation

Niklas Christensen, an engineer with Watershed Professionals Network, presented on *Irrigation Pipeline Projects in the Hood River Watershed*.

Niklas gave an overview of the five Hood River Watershed irrigation districts – Middle Fork, East Fork, Mt. Hood, Farmers, and Dee Irrigation Districts. Niklas showed several graphs that outlined the average monthly irrigation use and the average monthly diversion for each district, highlighting size and hydropower.

Niklas began with the Dee Irrigation District Distribution Project, which eliminated 10 water boxes, all overflows, and ~25 pumps, replaced the old distribution system pipe with ~25,000 ft of HDPE, installed two new pump stations, and installed new turnouts with flow meters to 65 patrons. With the new system, 2/3rds of the district receives pressured water by way of the two new pump stations, and a third of the district, which is the farthest north at the base of the slope, is gravity-fed.

Farmers Irrigation District upgrades include the replacement of the Kingsley Reservoir 1936 outlet pipe in 2017, and over the past two years, raising the height of the dam at the reservoir. One of the biggest risks with any dam is internal erosion along the outlet pipe, so it was important to replace the old outlet pipe prior to raising the dam height. The upper zone of the district does not have access to the main FID diversion because of its elevation, so the Kingsley Reservoir provides supply for the upper zone. With the expansion, the storage capacity increased from 715 acre feet to 1,400 acre feet. Niklas walked the group through the expansion process, from the design to the detailed construction, and the wetland mitigation sites.

Dick Iverson asked about the geological origin of the material that was sourced from near the project, and how it was possible to get such good material from so close. Niklas noted that the sand was sourced from Lyle, but fortunately the rest of the materials found nearby were quite suitable for the project. Cindy asked why the sand that is associated with the irrigation diversions wasn't suitable. Niklas mentioned it would not be fine enough to stop any internal erosion.

Niklas walked the group through the Middle Fork Irrigation District upgrades, including the upgrade of the pipeline between the Coe Diversion and the sediment pond, and the Laurance Lake improvements. The Coe pipeline was replaced with 24" HDPE pipe, increasing operational flexibility for the district. It was completed in August of 2021.

A question was asked about how the sediment from the settling pond is managed. Niklas explained that the sediment is removed from the pond and stored nearby for use in upgrade projects and other district needs.

The Laurance Lake project included spillway remediation in 2017. This dam has considerable leakage, including under the secondary spillway that caused displacement and destabilization. The concrete slabs of the spillway were replaced to address this issue.

Laurance Lake and the dam are on Forest Service land and operate under a Special Use Permit. This permit is up for renewal, which has brought forward a host of issues that need to be addressed with the dam. This includes drilling and installation of new monitoring tools, and based on the findings of the Adaptive Management Group, may include structural upgrades with seepage mitigation, a new single spillway with increased capacity, a 2' tall adjustable Obermeyer weir at the spillway crest, a warm water intake structure that discharges to the pipeline, a cold water siphon that discharges to the creek, a fish trap for upstream passage, and a descending weir/fish chute. This work is planned for 2020 – 2025.

The East Fork Irrigation District upgrades include the first phase of Eastside Lateral piping (2020-2021), the piping of the Lariza Line and two Eastside sublaterals (2021-2022), phase 2 of the Eastside Lateral piping (2022-2023), the piping of the Whiskey Creek lateral (2022-2023), and a sediment control study (2022-2023). Cindy noted that funding for these projects have come from the Tribes, Oregon Water Resources Department, Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board, and federal funding from PL566 dollars. Farmers Conservation Alliance developed the watershed environmental assessment, which has provided an excellent jumping point for funding.

Questions:

Dick Iverson asked whether the state and federal regulations make any distinction between natural wetlands and those created from dam seepage. Heidi Hartman from DSL noted that, generally, there are certain manmade wetlands that DSL would take jurisdiction over and some they would not. Manmade wetlands that they would not take jurisdiction over include those that are created in upland areas and less than 1 acre in size. If they are created in or next to any waters of the state, or if they are greater than 1 acre in size, they would be under DSL jurisdiction.

Greg Short asked if East Fork Irrigation District has done any research on water storage. Niklas noted that the Hood River Basin Study did identify two possible sites in the headwaters of Neal Creek, and the district itself has identified a possible site. None of the sites are ideal at the moment.

** This presentation was recorded and can be found on the Hood River Watershed Group website under the 'News' tab.

Review and Approval of Last Meeting Minutes

Chuck asked if there were any corrections to the June minutes. The group approved the minutes.

New Business

East Fork Hood River Habitat Restoration – OWEB Technical Assistance Design Grant

Cindy explained that the Watershed Group is working with the Tribes to develop a restoration project on the Lower East Fork, near the 2019 East Fork Mills project. Landowner communication is underway, and the exact project reach is still to be determined. The Watershed Group would like to pursue an OWEB grant for \$75,000 in support of the design for this project.

Holly asked if this project is related to the Eastside Lateral grant. Cindy noted that it is not related, but habitat restoration along the Lower East Fork is a high priority in the Action Plan and would complement the irrigation upgrades in the district.

The group provided first consensus to pursue an OWEB technical assistance grant application for Lower East Fork habitat restoration design.

Old Business

Facilitated meetings to discuss 501c3 development

Cindy noted that HRWG and SWCD staff and some SWCD board members and HRWG operations committee members have been having productive discussions with the help of Donna Silverberg, the facilitator. The Operations Committee is meeting next week to discuss the process in detail, and Watershed Group members will have an opportunity to further discuss details at the October Watershed Group meeting.

Reports

Watershed Coordinator updates – Cindy noted that two large instream restoration projects were completed in August. Both projects were very successful. The West Fork Red Hill project still has some road repair happening, which will provide better access for future field trips and monitoring. The Neal Creek project included two project sites and will be featured in a Watershed Group presentation in October. The Action Plan has been released, and Cindy and Alix will be working on a 20-page version for public outreach.

Announcements

Les Perkins noted that the bulk of the Kingsley Reservoir work is complete, with a few finishing touches taking place over the next month. FID is preparing for shutdown in October.

Heather Hendrixson noted that the pipeline pollinator project is progressing well. Next week the Farmers Conservation Alliance videographer will join Alix at the site to capture some footage of the project. Seeding and planting will take place this fall.

Darcy Saiget noted that the Forest Service has been doing intensive monitoring on bull trout passage and spawning, as well as temperatures at and surrounding Laurance Lake. They are seeing some spawning, which is positive, and ODFW installed a video weir for additional data collection on spawning timing and identification.

Ryan Gerstenberger noted that because of short staffing, the Tribes have not completed as much monitoring as they normally do. They were able to get some brood stock when fish arrived late, but fishing closures were put into place.

Brian Nakamura noted that EFID is going forward with part of the Whiskey Creek pipeline upgrade in December or January. The district is preparing for shutdown and a salvage will take place in early November. Ryan noted that the Tribes will be leading the salvage in November.

Kate Conroy noted planting work parties at Whiskey Creek on October 30th and at River Mile 1 on November 10th. Construction on the trail behind the Sieverkropp neighborhood will start in October, implemented by Parks and Rec.

Summary of Consensus Items and Establishment of Next Meeting

Items that Received First Consensus:

Approval to submit an OWEB technical assistance grant for Lower East Fork habitat restoration design.

Items that Received Second Consensus:

None.

The next meeting will be on October 26th from 6-8pm.

Adjournment

Chuck thanked the group for attending and adjourned the meeting at 8:00 pm.

Reported by Alix Danielsen.