



Tualatin River Watershed Council
Meeting Minutes
April 7, 2021

Stakeholders Present

Bob Baumgartner	Services Districts (Sewerage) Primary Representative, Clean Water Services
Stephen Cruise	Washington County, Primary Representative
Ashley Short	Environmental Organizations Primary Representative, Tualatin Riverkeepers
Kristel Griffith	Drinking Water Provider Primary Representative (shared position), City of Hillsboro Water Department
Rich Van Buskirk	Education Primary Representative, Pacific University
Briita Pajunas	Soil and Water Conservation District Secondary Representative, Tualatin SWCD
Jon Pampush	Fisheries, Trout Unlimited
Erin Poor	Citizen-at-large

Staff Present

Scott McEwen	TRWC Executive Director
Samantha Sharka	TRWC Project Manager

Guests Present

Dave Stewart	Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife
Ron Garst	City of Silverton
Tom VanderPlaat	Clean Water Services
Shannon Huggins	Clean Water Services
Brian Creutzburg	Oregon Department of Environmental Quality
Kellyn Baez	Clean Water Services
Grace Stone	BLM Tillamook Hydrologist

Welcome and Introductions

Bob Baumgartner, Chair, opened the meeting at 7:02 pm. Bob shared that this meeting will be recorded via Zoom. Scott and Bob shared the agenda. Stakeholders, staff, and guests introduced themselves. The meeting was held remotely via Zoom.

Public Comment

No public comment.

Approval of February meeting minutes. Stephen Cruise moved to approve the minutes as presented. Seconded by Ashley Short. Passed unanimously.

Treasurer's Report – 2nd Quarter

Rich Van Buskirk shared 2nd Quarter Financials Report highlighting Balance Sheet as of December 31, 2020. PPP is considered a liability until the loan balance is forgiven. Rich also reviewed the TRWC Revenue Expenditures October through December 2020. Many small grant projects are winding down as these projects end.

Presentation: Tualatin Joint Project Update – Tom VanderPlaat, Clean Water Services & Shannon Huggins, Clean Water Services

- Project Status
 - Conceptual options for this project include (Modify Dam, Raise existing dam, Build a downstream dam)
 - Due to high estimated costs CWS is now reassessing the project and exploring other water resources project funding avenues
 - CWS is currently meeting environmental obligations through several strategies including expanded reuse, riparian shading, optimizing instream water and exploring additional water storage
 - CWS and BOR consider regional needs and how this DOF investment will apply to ESA, Hydroelectric power, climate resiliency, wildfires, recreation and flood control
 - CWS now reviewing project plan alternatives (safety of dams only, broader scoped water resources feasibility study, Tualatin Joint Project)
 - BOR is moving ahead with Safety of Dams only project approach, their main obstacle is funding
 - CWS is exploring additional sources of funding including loans for water infrastructure projects
- Feasibility Research
 - CWS is pursuing a larger scope feasibility study which expands considerations and benefits of this project beyond the initial water quality goal. Additional regional benefits included in a future feasibility study include: ESA, Hydroelectric power, climate resiliency, wildfires, recreation and flood control
- Timeline
 - Project began in 2004-05
 - Early 2019 determined that cost estimates from BOR much higher than anticipated (by 50% higher)
 - CWS completed review of funding and financing and economics
 - Water resources feasibility study including NEPA (2-3 years)
 - Identify SOD program funding and financing options = 6-8 years
 - Construction not likely to start before 2028
 - Construction duration = 6-8 years
- Upcoming Board Action

- Board of County Commissioners and CWS signed a Contributed Funds Act agreement which better defines roles and responsibility for BOR and CWS and also created framework for future work funding agreements
- Policy & legislative actions
 - Oregon delegation in key positions to make progress with this type of project
 - CWS has been lobbying Oregon legislature for additional support for this project (looking at acquiring federal grant money, appropriations for feasibility study and Safety of Dams)

Scott asked Kristel Griffith what the Joint Water Commission has been working on related to water conservation goals. Drinking Water 10-yr Water Management and Conservation Plan coming out in May 2021. JWC has seen per capita water use has dropped over the past 20 yrs due to changing land use, building codes and behavior. All JWC partners pay into a Regional Water Providers Consortium fund for student education, emergency responses and improved water conservation practices. When the Water Management and Conservation Plan is ready, Kristel will share a copy with Scott.

Rich asked Tom about how project cost estimates change so quickly for different project alternatives. Tom explained that BOR is funded by Congress and their estimates are by nature very conservative. After funding allocation, returning to Congress to ask additional funds for adaptive management is not an option. So higher cost estimates are expected in order for the project to have enough up front for full completion. Building a dam to meet the requirements of a subduction zone earthquake of a 9.2 for over 3.2 seconds is challenging and leads to cost estimate escalation. To build a dam to this seismic upgrade requirement has not been done before.

Restoration Committee Report – Scott McEwen, Executive Director

Balm Grove Dam Removal

- New Project Timeline
 - CWS has decoupled the dam removal from any mitigation opportunities, to simplify the dam removal project and accelerate the project funding
 - Instream work window of summer 2022, concrete structure will be removed
 - Replanting and restoration will begin including large wood and additional instream work will take place beginning in 2023
- Report on Site visit
 - Scott, Sam, CWS representatives and Confederated Tribes of the Grande Ronde representatives visited the dam site together during the week of March 29th

Developing the Watershed Council Role

- Grant writing - Facilitate relationship with OWEB
 - TRWC will lead grant writing in partnership with tribal community members. Scott, Sam, CWS staff are putting an OWEB grant proposal together to assist in funding of this project

- Develop New Partnership with Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde
 - Natural Resource Program reps from the CTGR are forming a relationship with the TRWC around this project scope. Lamprey monitoring, lamprey translocation and writing a letter of support for the project will be an important role for CTGR. Members from Warm Springs tribe may also be involved with early project planning and grant creation input.
- Effectiveness monitoring approaches
 - Habitat complexity, snorkel surveys, lamprey monitoring with CTGR support will all be included as part of effectiveness monitoring for this project

Review of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice (DEIJ) Committee - Ashley Short, Council Member

Intertwine Alliance Cohort trainings begin in mid-April (Ashley, Scott and Sam are attending)

Kellyn will continue to research comprehensive board training proposals. A decision on proposals will be made at May meeting. Scott mentioned that Meyer Memorial Trust funding will be pursued to help pay for TRWC board training. Meyer solicitation is due April 17th.

In March Scott and Sam received important input from the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde on Land Acknowledgement draft that the TRWC had previously agreed upon.

CTGR (Michael Karnosh, Tori and other members) reviewed Land Acknowledgement and provided comments and recommendations. They already have a land acknowledgment that is specific to Washington County and has asked that organizations adopt this statement.

Adoption of Land Acknowledgement

Ashley shared the Land Acknowledgement Statement provided by the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde enrolled tribal members.

Kristel Griffith moved to adopt the Land Acknowledgement statement recommended by the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde. Seconded by Stephen Cruise. Passed unanimously.

Discussion followed:

Kellyn Baez observed that land acknowledgement is an important first step and will require further action to build respectful relationships with tribal members of the Willamette Valley in the future.

Stephen Cruise asked how this land acknowledgement will now be used moving forward. Scott shared that this statement would be considered in the future at meetings and site visits. The DEIJ Committee will work to consider how this land acknowledgement will be implemented by the TRWC board members.

Developing a Tualatin Basin Beaver Collaborative – Sam Sharka, Project Manager

Background:

After several information gathering meetings with Tualatin Basin partner environmental organizations and City and County members, the idea of a larger basin wide strategy was formulated. The Watershed Council is well positioned to assist in meeting this real need among the program partners.

The creation of the Tualatin Basin Beaver Collaborative stems from work underway by TWEC partners in the Tualatin Basin and complimentary initiatives that are already underway. A Watershed Navigator role is under development in order to create a committed point of contact to engage and interface with the urban community within the Cedar Mill and North Johnson subbasins. An educational website currently referred to as the "Urban Living Handbook" will include a section focused on urban wildlife including beaver.

A Program Outline has been drafted listing the mission and goals of the Tualatin Basin Beaver Strategy.

Goals include:

1. Streamline response protocols
2. Technical assistance and maintenance
3. Education and outreach
4. Proactive basin-wide beaver restoration strategy

Timeline

1. FY 20-21 - research, plan, convene, kickstart work
2. FY 21-22 - training , develop program, begin response
3. FY 22-23 - Monitor and evaluate, and assess

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:04 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Briita Pajunas, Co-Secretary