

Joint General Member and Steering Committee Meeting

Location: Stayton Community Center; 400 Virginia Ave; Stayton, OR

Date: February 11, 2009

Time: 7:00 to 9:00 PM

Attendance:

Role Call for Quorum: Suzette Boudreaux (Economic), Mike Kroon (Natural Resources), Tom Fencil (Middle Sub-Basin), Bill Sanderson (Economic), Bruce Rogers (City of Salem), Mandy Summer (North Fork), Brent Stevenson, Jon Tucker (lower sub-basin), David Embleton

General: Dani Aleshire (NRCS)

Contractors: Elizabeth (Liz) Redon, Erika Lang, and Pamela Archer

7:00 PM Steering Committee Meeting Called to Order

Meeting Call to Order—Review Mission

Roll Call for Quorum: Quorum established

Public Comment and Announcements:

- Liz: community meeting announcements
- Liz: region meeting next month hosted by NWSC, Kendra Smith will be speaking on the Meyer Memorial Trust Model Watershed
- Liz: Department of Environmental Quality director came to visit project sites to talk about stream restoration project challenges and strategies
- Erika: planting event on February 27th
- Erika: fundraiser on June 11th at Calapooia Brewery in Albany for North Santiam, South Santiam and Calapooia Watershed Councils collaboration
- Bill: learn the river trips scheduled by North Santiam River Guides Association. Please RSVP Bill Sanderson (desk 503-897-3301, cell 503-949-1549)
 - March 6—Greens Bridge to Buena Vista
 - April 3—Stayton to Greens Bridge
 - May 1—Mehama to Stayton
 - June 1—Fishermen's Bend to Mehama
 - June 26—Packsaddle to Fishermen's Bend
- Suzette: North Fork Weed and Clean, May 8

Approval of Minutes: Members reviewed minutes for January 2010. Bruce Rogers motioned, Mike Kroon seconded.

Decision: Minutes for January 2010 approved.

7:15 PM Discussion/Decision: CREP Revolving Fund Agreement

Handout: Cooperative watershed restoration project agreement for CREP: Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program. The Council agreed to revisit the idea of up-fronting costs for CREP using a revolving fund of grant dollars, what that would look like, and what kind of agreement would need to be in place with the landowner to protect the Council.

CREP is a NRCS program that pays agricultural landowners for fencing, plants and other activities with the intent to restore streamside vegetation. Landowners are usually interested in CREP but lack funds to upfront costs as required. The Council has been talking about the potential to work as the go-between, providing a portion of the money in order to get the project started. Erika has been

working with the Farm Service Agency to create a draft document that would serve as a contract between the Council and the landowner to ensure the landowner would pay the Council back. The Council is interested because CREP projects encourage stewardship, and this program is anticipated to lead to more CREP projects on ground, more restoration done, more CREP projects can be used as match for future grant applications.

A brief recap of CREP:

- USDA program
- Tool to do restoration and restore streamside buffers on agricultural lands
- Cost-shares available
- Incentives available; rental payment per acre per year

CREP process: Once the plans are written and practices completed, the landowners receive cost-shares for the restoration. They receive the first two payments when the practice is completed. The last payment comes after all practices are completed:

- 50% from FSA
- 25% from the state (OWEB)
- 40% from FSA as “performance enhancement payment”

Landowner is reimbursed a total of 115%

On top of this, they get a sign-up incentive payment of about \$100/acre, which helps defer cost of the first practice.

Assignment of payment is how Council can upfront cost of restoration and can retain landowners. This is the agreement that NSWC would go into with the landowner. Council can incorporate fee because landowner gets reimbursed 115% percent, should justify giving our services.

Challenges:

- If they stay within cost share amount as listed in their contract, won't be out of pocket.
- At any one time, landowner is out for 25% or 40%, is a time lag between reimbursement
- Upfront costs to start restoration practice are often pricey. While they get the Sign-up Incentive Payment dollars, oftentimes it isn't enough especially as they keep rolling along doing the practices. Unless, they spend much less than the cost-share amounts.

Solution:

- Assignment of payment allows the Council to upfront some of the costs to start restoration and therefore more likely retain landowner's interest and satisfaction in program
- Agreement between landowner and Council not only protects project but protects the Council in case the landowner pulls out of the program and helps give evidence to the funders that their dollars are being used over and over again as a revolving fund

How does it work?

- Landowner gets bid for work he would like to contract out
- Landowner uses bid information and looks at budget to see what is affordable, what the cost-shares will pay for and when they will come in, and what would be out of pocket and for how long (Council can help with this process but it is good for the landowner to go through as it fosters project ownership)
- Landowner decides whether or not they need Council's assistance

- Landowner and Council meet to decide what amount needs to be up fronted and how this will be routed. Will landowner just pay Council back? Or will the 50% come to the Council from the feds?
 - o Council looks at budget for what cost share allows and what they will pay for
 - o Look when cost share payments come in
 - o How much landowner pay out of pocket
 - o How long landowner will wait to get reimbursed
 - o CREP budget will help determine if landowner will qualify for revolving fund
 - o Council can decide what amount will be fronted. Erika recommended bring landowner to meeting to have council approve whether the council grants payment.

Benefits to looking at the budget rather than taking everyone in:

- By looking at the budget and deciding what landowner needs, it minimizes Council's investment to a reasonable amount
- Fosters landowner ownership in program
- By looking at the budget, landowner is asked to legitimize the need for financial assistance

Agreement

- Reviewed by Dan at Farm Service Agency. Need to keep language simple and straightforward
- May need to address if the Council will "not to exceed" allowing certain cost
- Determine which components or practices will be included

Jon Tucker motioned to continue developing revolving fund with the Council assessing a 5% service charge and revisiting the program in a year. Bruce Rogers seconded.

Decision: Council will continue to develop the Revolving fund, with the Council assessing a 5% service charge and revisiting the program in one year.

7:45 PM Discussion/Decision: Wetland Partnership MOU

The Wetland Partnership MOU describes a strategy to restore and manage wetland habitats in the Willamette valley. Partners include the USDA, NRCS, and CPRC&D. The goal of the MOU is to improve wetland restoration efforts to restore hydrology and vegetation without causing negative effects to other landowners.

The NSWC has been requested to review and participate in the MOU, which articulates partnership and provides guidance for working together strategically for wetlands. CPRC&D will take leadership on this. For NSWC, the MOU will apply to the Linn County portion of the watershed (not Marion County, as NRCS has different districts).

Liz—this agreement helps people like Karen Strohmeyer (CPRC&D) bring in funding for a region that a watershed council can tap into, will help when projects progress toward the valley floor.

Jon Tucker motions for the NSWC to sign the Wetland Partnership MOU. Bruce Rogers seconds.

Decision: The NSWC will sign the Wetland Partnership MOU.

8:30 PM Progress Reports-

Treasurer:

- Handout: Budget. Given the point we are at in the biennium, we should have spent about 25% of the budget. We have spent about 17%, so we are slightly under-spending.

Operations:

- Talked about wetland MOU and if it was at a point to bring to Council. Went through progress reports for contractors, are all on target so far. Also reviewed budget and discussed future programs (see below).

MMT Model Watershed:

- Regional meeting will be hosted by NSWC next month. Special topics requested by NSWC include: bringing regional map, discuss results of other community meetings, and discuss a strategy or decision paradigm to address potential number of projects as part of the model watershed.

Projects:

- **Landowner Recruitment:** The program is going well with Sarah and Erika performing a lot of outreach. The granted money should be spent by 2011. There will be a few plantings this spring in the North Santiam. Sarah and Erika have started site visits with folks in model watershed tributaries and will host community meetings. We currently have lists of interested folks in tributaries. Think will have 21 projects for grant deliverables, may be behind because of seasons. CREP is going well, needed 15 and have 11 and 12 so far. Have made some inroads in Valentine Creek area, asking neighbors to come to a meeting. The upcoming community meeting is on March 9.
- **Snake Deford Creek:** River Design Group has completed assessment. There will be a community meeting in Mill City to go over the results
- **Stout Creek:** NSWC has submitted an OWEB grant for lower 2 miles for large wood, planting, and vegetated soil lifts. Was recommended for funding.
- **Hatch Side Channel/Greenwoods:** Jon Tucker picked up plans Monday, permit in process. Once permit is approved and weather allows, the bridge will be installed Spring 2010 and large wood summer 2010. MMT will pay for future maintenance on plantings.
- **Mad creek/ODOT Culvert Replacement:** Biological opinion done! Allows ODOT to move forward. The Council will review draft agreement.
- **Heritage Seedling/Jefferson Oaks Savanna:** Last planting will take place March 2.
- **Weed inventory and control:** Marion Soil and Water Conservation District is coming in April to provide results on noxious weed inventory from Detroit to Stayton. Watershed scale weed treatment will start this summer with partners.
- **Water Supply Planning:** The City of Salem is trying to assess momentum for watershed scale water supply planning along with Oregon Consensus. The objective is to create a basin-wide supply plan.
- **Cold Creek Culvert Replacement:** NSWC is applying for grant at present.
- **Upper Bennett Dam:** Still looking for funding.

8:47 PM Other Business –

8:53 PM Meeting Adjourned