

**North Santiam Watershed Council
Meeting Minutes**

Joint General Member and Steering Committee Meeting

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

Date: January 8, 2009

Time: 7:00 to 9:00 PM

Attendance:

Role Call for Quorum: Present: John Caruso (Marion County Citizen, Chair), Mandy Summer (North Fork Subbasin), Bruce Rogers (City of Salem), Bill Sanderson (Economic), Suzette Boudreaux (Economic 2), Tom Fencil (Middle Subbasin), Jon Tucker (Lower Subbasin) and Larry Trosi (Irrigation District). Quorum confirmed.

General: Darren Cross, Chris Bailey and Bob Lusk.

Contractors: Elizabeth (Liz) Redon and Erika Lang

7:00 PM Steering Committee Meeting Called to Order

Public Comment and Announcements:

- Bill Sanderson announced the first Learn the River Trip is scheduled for the first Saturday in March from Green's Bridge to Buena Vista.

Approval of Minutes: Postponed to Feb.

Decision: Postponed to Feb.

7:15 PM Review: Council Support Grant Work Plan

Liz Redon explained that the OWEB Council Support Grant (i.e. the Council's overhead or operations grant) for the 2009-2011 biennium is due Jan 31. She provided a description of the different parts of the proposal and asked council members to review the work plan portion and provide edits or ask any questions. She explained that the work plan section primarily is a reporting of accomplishments and includes a section for proposed activities in the next biennium. Members reviewed the document and made edits.

Liz Redon highlighted the proposed activity to partner with the Marion County Weed Control District to apply for funding for a watershed wide weed inventory and eradication project. She explained that the Marion County Weed Control District is requesting for the Watershed Council to serve as the applicant because they would like the funding and program to include Linn County to address weeds on both sides of the North Santiam River. Marion County Staff is checking within the County how best to proceed, however, they think it might not be possible for them to work outside their jurisdiction. The County is working on the application, however, the deadline is such that the Council would not have much chance to review. She asked if Council members agreed to serve in this role or had any objections. Members agreed that an important role of the Watershed Council is to bridge limitations caused by jurisdiction boundaries. Members agreed to serving as applicant on the grant proposal.

8:15 PM Discussion: Liability, 501(c)(3) and Fiscal Administration

Liz Redon explained Operations Committee has been discussing fiscal administration services and liability questions. Since the Council is bringing in more funds, Operations has been looking at fiscal administration to understand what services the Council is

receiving and whether this relationship still matches the Council's needs. Liz went through pros and cons of continuing with the fiscal agent and bringing fiscal in-house (see attached). Members discussed the options and determined that the current relationship with the fiscal agent is matches Council needs.

Liz also explained that she has been researching liability issues and options to address any risk. One option is to become a non-profit corporation, which becomes a "legal body" that holds the risk and can prevent risk to individual members. She explained that there is a somewhat limited liability policy provided by the state, a statute that explicitly protects landowners completing restoration activities and she is working with the fiscal agent to secure an umbrella insurance policy for all the councils working with them that each could pay a portion of. Members expressed preference in pursuing the insurance policy and a similar statute that would protect watershed councils. Jon Tucker motioned to move forward in pursuing the statute. Dave Bonebrake seconded.

Decision: Pursue statute that would protect watershed councils like the statute for landowners. Approved by consensus.

8:30 PM Progress Reports-

Treasurer: Liz Redon provided reports from Cascade Pacific RC&D.

Projects: There was no additional reporting since project reports were provided during the council support grant review.

Pending Proposed Projects:

- Upper and Lower Bennet Dams Fish Passage

8:50 PM Other Business –

- **CREP Revolving Fund-** Liz explained that there is funding leftover from a portion of the Hatch project due to the way WHIP funds are managed. Even though the project was completed at a lower price than the amount contracted, WHIP pays the full contract amount since it is based on federal pricing standards. There is about \$15,000 to \$20,000 extra funds. Liz requested that the fiscal agent place those funds in a separate "projects" local match to keep them distinct from other funds until the Council made a decision on how to use them. She explained that this might be a good opportunity to set up the revolving fund that was suggested a few years ago to assist landowners with upfront costs associated with cost share programs. She reminded members that many landowners are interested in these programs but are limited by lack of funding to enroll. Furthermore, with some of the current projects, she and Erika Lang have been able to work out how to change "assignment of payment" with Farm Service Agency and Natural Resource Conservation Service, which enables the Council to upfront costs and receive reimbursements directly. Members agreed to move forward in developing the revolving funds. They requested that Operations and the Coordinator work on policies and agreements that outline a needs based approach and clearly protect the Council in case a project does not go as planned.

9:00 PM Meeting Adjourned