

Fifteenmile Watershed Council

Fifteenmile Creek and Tributaries Eightmile, Fivemile & Ramsey Creek

Wasco County SWCD 2325 River Road Suite 3, The Dalles OR, 97058 Phone: 541-296-6178 x102 Fax: 541-296-7868

Minutes

Tuesday September 10, 2019 at 6:00 pm

Barlow Ranger Station, Dufur OR

Attendees:

Phil Kaser, *Co-Chair*

Abbie Forrest, *Watershed Coordinator*

Rashawn Tama, *USDA*

Jason Keller, *GeoSystems Analysis*

Robyn Cook, *GSI*

Bill Markman, *Member*

Monte Wasson, *Member*

Theresa Debardeleben, *ODA*

Denise Stetson, *SWCD*

Gary Van Orman, *Member*

Amy Kaser, *Producer*

Bill Hammel, *Co-Chair*

Shilah Olson, *District Manager*

Jim Olson, *Member*

Walter Burt, *GSI*

Mike Kelly, *Member*

Kameron Sam, *USFS*

Call to Order

Phil called the meeting to order and led a round of introductions. He asked members if they had a chance to review the minutes and called for a motion to approve.

Mike Kelly moved to approve the minutes as presented, Jim Olson seconded and the motion passed.

2019 Irrigation Season FAST Review & Instream Leasing – Denise Stetson, FAST Coordinator

The September meeting was Denise's first council meeting since she has been back to the SWCD. There was not much to report in terms of FAST for the past irrigation season, because there were no alerts issued. It was a below average flow year, so the irrigators were lucky that no alerts were issued. When most irrigators turned off for haying, is when the flows were nearing the lowest, and that extra water saved an alert from being triggered. Denise reviewed the 2019 FAST compensation rates for Options 1 and 2, as well as the compensation schedule. She shared a graph depicting the average stream flow and rain fall from the 4 different stream gages for the months of June, July and August.

Looking to 2020, the SWCD has applied for continued funding of the FAST program and should have an answer if the application was successful by December. The 2020 FAST plan was updated with a few recommendations and handed out to Council members for review. The plan will not be approved until the December meeting, allowing council members enough time to review the changes and provide feedback. One change included implementing a mandatory 3 day shut off for when an alert is issued. The council discussed current pending applications and future options if the application under the water acquisition grant isn't funded.

Denise discussed with the council changes that will be happening under the instream leasing program and our partner the Freshwater Trust, who will be stepping away from Fifteenmile after 2020. Denise stated the council needs to start talking about what steps we want to take if there is a need to continue split season leasing and shorter-term leases, that the Freshwater Trust is no longer going to fund. Denise asked if the council and SWCD wants to pursue funding for that sort of program or should we modify FAST and build a program that is similar to instream leasing; FAST plus. Discussion ensued. Council members will finalize decisions at the December meeting.

15mile Managed Underground Storage Pilot Project – Walt Burt & Robyn Cook GSI, Jason Keller Geosystems Analysis

Robyn kicked off the pilot project update by providing information on the key uncertainties and the project scope. She also reviewed the current timeline goals starting with site selection for September/October; Identify zoning and land use constraints for Fall 2019; and identify other permitting constraints (e.g., facility in flood way) for Fall 2019. Robyn discussed the source water pilot treatment evaluation. The Pilot test would address uncertainties such as system size and design parameters. The pilot test would also include the construction of a temporary small-scale infiltration facility with underdrain capture system and would be in place for approximately 1-2 months during the recharge season (December – April).

Jason Keller provided information on the schematics and site selection determinations. Site selection boils down to a willing owner, location in the valley, suitable soil conditions, and area (acres needed and proximity to the stream). Jason shared aerial photos of two locations that are a possibility of a potential pilot test, that had infiltrometer testing completed in 2018. GSIs goal is to be able to provide a site recommendation to the Council by the December meeting. GSI and the SWCD will also be bringing funders out to

the selected sites to talk about funding options and possibilities. Discussion ensued regarding locations, cost, and the potential for a ground lease.

8mile SIA Monitoring Group Update – Theresa Debardelaben, ODA

Theresa attended the watershed council meeting to provide an update from the SIA (Strategic Implementation Area) monitoring group, who met earlier this afternoon. Theresa introduced herself and gave the council a quick refresher on ODA's involvement with SIAs. Shilah went into further detail around SIAs and their background. A component of an SIA is to develop a monitoring plan. The monitoring plan is to identify parameters that can measure agriculture influence. Parameters that are being proposed for the 8mile SIA include, *E.coli* sampling, Streamside Visual Assessments (SVA) and temperature monitoring. The goal is to try and detect trends in riparian vegetation and *E.coli* to see if these projects to be implemented have made a positive improvement in the creek.

The SWCD has already been working with landowners that had property that was classified as a potential concern. As long as progress is being made to the properties of concern and the landowners are working with the SWCD, there isn't a timeline to have projects completed. SIA's are typically 4 years long, with a reassessment 2-3 years after implementation. Denise Stetson will be taking the lead for this project and is working on a monitoring proposal to submit to the Monitoring Assessment Group (MAG) which includes state agency partners and OWEB.

SNOTEL Site – Shilah Olson, SWCD & Rashawn Tama, NRCS

Shilah provided the council with an update from NRCS on where the process for the new SNOTEL site is currently and what the future holds. She said the NEPA process has become an issue. Conversations with NRCS, USFS and the SWCD are still happening so this site doesn't lose traction. Scott Oviatt (who presents the snow pack reports in the spring) has stated that many of his staff have moved higher in the agency, and so this portion of NRCS is very understaffed. Rashawn said he is working on an automated snow site. Details have not yet been finalized, but an update may be available for the council meeting in February. Shilah reiterated how important the SNOTEL sites are to the 15mile council with regards to gathering water budgets and forecasting. The Forest Service will continue to work with NRCS to get the analysis completed (NEPA). Shilah suggested working together to get outside funding and additional hired help. It was also suggested to schedule a partner meeting and report back to the council.

Updates and Announcement

15mile Wild and Scenic River Management Plan – Update from USFS

Kameron Sam passed to council members the Mt. Hood Wild and Scenic Rivers Planning Scoping Packet. He stated that in 2017 the USFS was sued by an organization who had concerns with Wild and Scenic Rivers on Mt. Hood. In 2009 15mile Creek was designated as Wild and Scenic and the USFS has had to develop a conservation river plan. The conservation river plan must include management activities for fish, wildlife, hunting, fishing (any recreation), water quality or habitat that has outstanding remarkable values, and how to manage that land around the water. The proposal the USFS is working on is to identify the designated boundaries and what is feasible for managing the recreation, roads, and the values of the creek that make it unique. The USFS will be developing a proposed action so the affected landowners, as well as different groups such as the watershed councils will be able to stay informed and involved in the process and develop a management plan together. Any comments may be sent to the USFS. Partner meetings will be held once the USFS proposed management plan is drafted. Kameron offered to provide a more in-depth update at the December watershed council meeting if there are more questions. He stated this is a very proactive council and the work that the council is doing in defending and protecting the fish that are making their way upstream is very appreciated.

Schedule next meeting

The next meeting is schedule for Tuesday December 3rd, at 6:00pm at the Barlow Ranger Station.

Minutes prepared by Abbie Forrest.