



# The Dalles Watershed Council

*Fostering stewardship of Threemile, Mill and Chenowith Creek Watersheds*

Wasco County SWCD 2325 River Road Suite 3, The Dalles OR, 97058

Phone: 541-296-6178 x102 Fax: 541-296-7868

---

December 9, 2020

5:00 pm via GoToMeeting

## **Attendees:**

Martha Blair, *Member*

Ken Bailey, *Co-Chair*

Mark Popoff, *Member*

Shilah Olson, *SWCD*

Abbie Forrest, *Coordinator*

Ryan Bessette, *SWCD*

Steve Beyers, *Co-Chair*

Drake Gilbert, *SWCD*

Lindsay Cornelius, *ECOP*

John Willer, *Guest*

## **Introductions**

Steve called the meeting to order and Drake asked if John Willer, a new watershed council attendee, would like to give a brief introduction. John explained that he had been a resident of The Dalles for many years and was looking at retiring in the near future. He explained that he wanted to gain a knowledge and understanding of water resources issues and practices stateside before retiring because he is interested in helping develop water resources in developing countries.

## **Agenda review and minute approval from the last two meetings**

Steve gave a quick overview of the agenda, and Drake mentioned that two sets of minutes would need to be approved due to last meeting not having a quorum present.

*Ken moved to approve the last two meetings minutes as presented, Martha seconded, motion passed.*

## **Mill Creek E. coli SAP – Drake Gilbert, SWCD**

Drake mentioned that the Sampling and Analysis Plan (SAP) for Mill Creek E.coli had been presented at the last watershed council meeting, but that a quorum was not present to approve the SAP. He explained that not much had changed about the SAP from the previous one, and that the purpose of updating the SAP was to reflect minor changes in sampling site locations and procedures.

Steve mentioned a line within the SAP about tracking down possible sources of E. coli contamination from Skyline Tributary and said that the sewage system connects to a few houses on Mt. Hood street, but that all other houses behind them run on septic systems. Drake responded that it was valuable information, and that the next topic regarding the Mill Creek E. coli final report would expand upon the discussion further. Council members concluded that the report looked satisfactory and would be ready to send off to the Department of Environmental Quality.

*Ken moved to approve the E. coli SAP, Steve seconded, motion passed.*

## **Mill Creek E. coli final report – Drake Gilbert, SWCD**

Drake explained that preliminary results of the 2020 Mill Creek E. coli sampling seasons were presented last meeting, but that the Mill Creek E. coli final report that contained all of the data collected during the season was complete. He mentioned that he wanted to give everybody a chance to look it over and provide feedback before ultimately sending it in to the Oregon Department of Agriculture. The results of the preliminary presentation held throughout the remainder of the year, identifying the third Mill Creek Rd bridge and Skyline tributary as problem locations for E. coli concentrations. He mentioned that they had identified a potential contamination issue at the third Mill Creek Rd bridge location that they hoped to resolve next spring, but that high concentrations in Skyline Tributary were still a mystery. E. coli concentrations within Skyline tributary showed a high degree of variation for the year and increased as the year went on.

Discussion ensued about a potential abandoned house with livestock near the tributary up Skyline Road.

Members mentioned that the house seemed to be abandoned, and that they occasionally saw livestock in pastures at the house near the creek. Ken also mentioned that the creek seemed to be piped for a large portion of it, and that he and other members had asked around with landowners in the area to see where the tributary ran and what portions of it were piped. Ken also indicated that there may be a need to further investigate high sources of E. coli concentrations within Skyline Tributary through further testing of the water. Drake agreed, and said that it may be worthwhile to continue forward with plans to test for chemical agents in common household items like shampoos and soaps.

### **Annual tree sale date**

Drake explained that he had spoke to Scott earlier in the day regarding pinning down a possible date for the annual tree sale, to which Scott responded that he didn't have anything concrete yet, but it was looking like mid-March would be the rough time estimate for the event. Discussion ensued about how to best go about planning a date, to which Ken mentioned that it might be best to just have Scott decide on a date and let them know, and then plan for having a watershed council meeting a week or two before the tree sale so that they could decide on the logistics of the event. Other council members agreed with Ken, and decided that the plan described would work well. There was also discussion regarding being able to host the event, given the current restrictions surrounding the Covid-19 pandemic. **East Cascades Oak Partnership (ECOP) – Lindsay Cornelius, Columbia Land Trust** Lindsay started by providing the history on how the East Cascades Oak partnership (ECOP) was started. The Columbia Land Trust noticed that there was a lack of a group focusing on the conservation of Oregon White Oak habitat, as well as a lack of resources on best management practices for these types of ecosystems. They came together and received funding through OWEB to help complete a strategic plan that would allow them to launch a formal partnership. ECOPs mission is to improve the ecosystem resilience and restore ecosystem function so that oak systems can recover.

Lindsay then began explaining the structure of ECOP, stating that the fiscal sponsor of ECOP was the Columbia Land Trust, and a steering committee was developed to help direct the work plan and funding strategy. Core partners are agencies, businesses, organizations, and other entities that have accepted the declaration of cooperation and are involved in the decision-making process of ECOP. There are also members, which are individuals, businesses, or agencies who participate in ECOP meetings and events but are not decision-making members.

Next, Lindsay explained that the core essence of ECOP was to find a shared base of understanding between the many stakeholders present within oak systems. One of the key elements of ECOP is the collaboration between stakeholders to promote oak conservation. Oak systems are present in many different ways, from oak woodlands, to oak savannas, to small shrubby oak systems. One of the main foundational goals of ECOP was to identify how stakeholders engage with each of these different types of oak systems (both positive and negative) to direct their conservation. From there, they looked at how they could improve interactions between people and oak systems for each ecosystem type. Ultimately, the goal of ECOP is that any person that interacts with oak systems should be able to find themselves within the ECOP strategic plan.

She then began to explain that not a lot of data exists for oak systems east of the Cascades because they don't hold a lot of commercial value. She explained that a major part of the strategic planning process was to map and model East Cascade Oak habitats, as well as identify their system types. From there, they were able to identify areas with high system diversity, patch size, differing grazing pressure, endangered and rare species presence, and systems that are resistant to climate change. The goal of this was to identify anchor habitats that could be used to preserve already functioning oak systems, and identify areas to increase connectivity and areas that could be opportunistically utilized/repaired as they became available. Lindsay also explained that they wanted to build more funding for landowners to implement their mission work, as well as increase the contractor capacity for restoration work.

ECOP hopes that partners can bring their input and expertise to the table, provide connections between partners and other stakeholders, provide support which looks good to funders, and actively participate in restoration and fundraising. ECOP can also offer letters of support to partners, and help facilitate connections and networking between partners. Lindsay explained that the declaration simply means that

you're interested in Oak conservation and are interested in collaboration, and is not a financial or even a time commitment. Finally, she concluded by asking if anybody had any questions for her.

Mark popoff asked how to attend meetings, and said he would be interested in attending meetings as he owns acreage of oak habitat. Lindsay responded by saying that most meetings are held at the Hood River fire station, but meetings have been held in various locations over the years. Lindsay also mentioned that she could add anybody to the email distribution list if they were interested in any more information and meeting notices.

Steve Beyers asked if this was different than work done by Kate up on Mill Creek, and Lindsay responded that that work was for the natural area, and the two entities are separate although they do similar work and Columbia land trust is the fiscal partner.

Ken moved to accept declaration of cooperation, Steve seconded, motion passed

### **Council Reappointments – Martha Blair**

Abbie mentioned that Martha's term was expiring, and she was up for reappointment.

*Ken moved to recommend Martha be reappointed, Steve seconded, motion passed*

Ken asked if there were vacancies on the council, and Abbie said that there were two vacancies. Ken mentioned that maybe John Willer would want to join the council, and John indicated that he would be interested. Abbie explained that there was a bit of paperwork involved, and that she would send it over to him after getting ahold of his email address.

### **Schedule Next Meeting**

Martha asked if anything was going on with Chenowith Creek restoration with the Port. Drake responded that he had attended a meeting with Scott and the Port some months back regarding restoration, and that some of what the Port was interested in doing wasn't really in our wheelhouse. He did mention an erosion project on Chenowith Creek that we could help out with, and had heard Scott mention something about it recently meaning it must still be active.

Steve mentioned that the next meeting date had already been discussed during the tree sale topic, and that it was dependent on when the tree sale date was decided upon. Drake will inform the council when a new meeting date is confirmed.

Meeting was adjourned at 6:10 PM.

Minutes prepared by Drake Gilbert.