MFWWC General Council Meeting
May 16th, 6:30-8:30, Oakridge High School Library
Minutes

Present: Sean Stewart, Chuck Davis, Eric and Gail Haws, Kelly Reis, Greg Taylor, Eric Ornberg, Pat Burns, Eve Montanaro, Jim Reed, Julie Stewart, Dave Bontrager

6:30 Introductions.

6:35 Approval of March GC meeting minutes. Approved.

6:37 Reviewed and approved meeting agenda.

6:39 Public Comments: Kelly Reis of ODFW shared that they will be stocking ponds at Alton Baker and Cottage Grove for annual fishing events for kids. She also informed the group that there is a new card that identifies bull trout so that anglers do not remove them from water bodies. The new cards will be placed at grocery markets where frequented by anglers and they are available upon request.

6:49 Steering Committee Report: Pat Burns provided the report on behalf of the Steering Committee. She informed the group that the Governor had created a Fund for the Environment and that the MFWWC had received funding together with the Coast Fork Willamette WC to lead a public outreach aimed at floodplain restoration. There is an award ceremony on the 21 and Dan Hurley will accept the award for the council.

6:54 Coordinator Report: Eve Montanaro spoke about the council's to date and upcoming work with local schools to restore native habitats within the watershed. The council will be working with about 400 students in the next few weeks and volunteers are needed for the projects. Contact Eve for more information. Eve also said she would be on vacation from May 17 to June 17 and Chuck Davis will take emergency calls- otherwise she will respond to messages on or after June 18.

7:00 Adult Chinook Outplanting in the North Fork of the Middle Fork Willamette River Greg Taylor, USACE

-100 wild Chinook returning above dams
-Historically largest run is estimated at 5-10,000 fish
-On average, it takes 2 weeks for fish to return to Dexter Dam from Willamette Falls in Oregon City.

Hatchery program started in 1919, and there was a dam in the vicinity of Westfir in 1923. This dam had a fish ladder, but it was not passable by Chinook.

US Army Corps of Engineers built Dexter and Lookout Dams in the 1950's. These dams closed off 124 miles of habitat to Chinook. Remaining habitat below Dexter Dam thought to be sufficient, but in reality the water was too warm for eggs.

Restoration

In 1993, Chinook were brought above dams into the North Fork of the Middle Fork, mainly to restore stream biotic processes, not to restore native runs. However, biologists noticed breeding, but with very high fish to redd ratios. Not very many fish were breeding.

Study was undertaken to determine why. Study involved radio tracking and led to actions such as releasing fish earlier into the river and giving the fish antibiotics.

In 2004, the Chinook were not moving far from the release site and there was high mortality. In 2005, Chinook were moving, but still had high mortality. In 2006, again the fish did not stray far from the release site, but there was virtually no mortality before spawning season. This was true for all parts of the Willamette for 2006. However, biologists have been unable to determine why.

While there has been some success in breeding Chinook above Dexter Dam, there are several obstacles for out migrating juvenile Chinook. These include passage through certain dams, passage over other dams, and time spent in the reservoir pools (slow water). Other issues for spawning below dams include super saturation of the water with oxygen. Oxygen levels, along with stream temperature, need to be right for eggs to survive. Spillways and other types of water outlets in dams can cause oxygen levels to be too high.

7:40 Break

7:55 Fuels Reduction Project for the Oakridge-Westfir Urban Interface
Eric Ornberg, USFS Middle Fork Ranger District

Project Description

The proposed project will thin the interface areas east and north of Oakridge. These areas were determined to be most at risk from wildfires due to stand structure, topography and a history of east wind driven fires near the town of Oakridge. The area consists of 80-120 year old stands that are left over from logging and fires in the early 1900's.

Dense canopies currently exist, and there is declining Ponderosa Pine and Oregon White Oak habitat in the area. The project will also involve the restoration of Old Mule Meadow, which has grown in with conifers and has had damage from off road vehicle use.

The plan for commercial thinning involves the use of helicopter logging and skyline logging, with small amounts of tractor logging possible. There will also be pruning and 300-400 acres of fuel reduction. Prescribed burning and road maintenance will also occur.

Some of the issues/effects of the plan that have been discussed include:

- Air quality
- Aesthetics
- Noise
- Traffic
- Increase in undergrowth
- Effects on wildlife and owl habitat (i.e.-more forage/change in habitat)
- Water quality
- Invasive plants and disturbance

Effects on streams and fish will be minimized by varying the treatments according to steam types and presence of salmonids. Riparian buffers will vary from 60-170 feet. There will also be a stream survey on Flat Creek, which runs through the project area.

Timeline for the project is as follows:

1. June 2007-Public Meetings
2. April 2008-Environmental Assessment
3. June 2008-Public Comments
4. June 2008-Decision
5. Summer and Fall 2008-Implementation

A separate project involving the closing of certain roads in the area, and also further up the Middle Fork has its comment period close June 4th.

8:34: Adjourn

Recorder: Sean Stewart