

South Santiam Watershed Council
Meeting Minutes
October 17, 2017

Present: Eric Andersen, Kevin Bladon, Nancy MacHugh, Katie Kohl, Diane Kaldahl, Norm Kaldahl, Scott Marlega, Ken Crouse, Lee Peterman, Shirley Jolliff, Kim Dowe, Tyler Pedersen, Nancy Gilmore

Meeting started at 3 pm with welcome and introductions.

Our speaker was Kevin Bladon, assistant professor in the Department of Forest Engineering at Oregon State University. He spoke about the effects of wildfire and source water quantity and quality. Oregon is a unique place to study hydrology because of the diverse gradients in rainfall throughout the state. Oregon tree cover is about 48%. Trees require approximately 20 inches of rain per year to thrive. Forested watersheds provide water for municipalities throughout the world. In Oregon wildfires have gotten larger and more destructive within recent decades due to drought, forest management actions and other factors. These large fires can pose problems for downstream water users. Burned areas can see an increase in water yield, but the quality of the water can be reduced. The three most important factors affecting post fire water yield are post fire climate, burn severity and the area burned. Because predicating the post fire climate is difficult it is challenging to fully anticipate post firewater yields. Western Oregon has high post fire erosion rates, especially in south west part of the state. Increased erosion after a wildfire can affect the quality of the water. In a study of basin which had burned on the east side of the Rocky Mountains, mercury levels were extraordinarily high. Mercury that had been deposited due to coal burning power plants was mobilized and made it's way into stream water. For example, increased sediment leads to high turbidity. Increased turbidity can make treatment for drinking water expensive. Increase in sedimentation can lead to increase in phosphorus entering the stream. Phosphorous is a key nutrient for plant growth. In aquatic ecosystems a small amount of phosphorous can have a big impact, such as promoting abundant growth of algae and influencing the macroinvertebrate community. Biomass of stream fish can increase at or near the mouth of burned basins, but the persistence of the increase in biomass can be short lived. Treating drinking water for human consumption or other uses can be expensive. If water conditions change rapidly, it can be challenge for operators treating the water. One study indicated that 80% of the turbidity was produced from 14% of the basin illustrating that a small area can have a large impact on water quality. A changing climate coupled with land management activities has a large influence on wildfires.

There was a short break after questions with the speaker.

The June minutes were approved.

The first quarter financials were approved.

Tyler Pedersen gave a short presentation outlining recent summer projects. Highlights include: Crabtree Creek Ph 1 & 2 (OWEB 215-3021 & 216-3003): Hafner (10 acre)& Doerfler Oxbow (22 acre) site prep included mow and spray. Planting will occur in Jan/Feb of 2018. Thomas Creek (OWEB 217-3013): Hendricks side channel LWP & CREP planting buffer site preparation. Over 50 pieces of wood were installed in the side channel. Follow up with invasive control and planting. This site involves CREP as well as OWEB funding.

Hamilton Creek (OWEB 217-3024, CREP/OWEB SIP & OWEB SIP/MMT/DEQ): Scott Creek large wood placement occurred on Weyerhaeuser property. Invasive plant treatment and planting of conifer are next steps. Soltau low water cattle crossing boat ramp plank was installed. Springbank site preparation weed treatment occurred. Planting in some areas of Springbank farm will occur. Currently CREP paperwork needs to be completed which will help define the Council role with the project. One Horse Slough (Fall 2017 OWEB grant planned for submission): Dragonfly Ranch drone aerial flights occurred pre-project (Nelson's paid for this, council arranged). USFWS mowed blackberry with skid steer as part of the partners Program. ODFW drained one of the ponds and removed invasive fish. Oregon chub will be introduced in 2018. A portion of the oak woodland was thinned as part of the NRCS EQIP program. Council request funds via OWEB grant to augment EQIP funds.

The SSWC will host an OWEB board tour and reception Oct 24. The OWEB board has quarterly meetings throughout the state and they will be meeting in Lebanon this fall. As is customary the local watershed council hosts a projects tour and reception.

Eric and Angie attended a diversity, equity and inclusion training at Silver Falls lodge as part of the model watershed program. The training was part one of a 2 part session to occur in spring 2018. The training was intended to give participants the tools to understand the unique backgrounds of members of the community that the Council works with or intends to work with.

The meeting adjourned at 5 pm.