

## **Minutes**

### **Crook County Natural Resource Committee**

**August 14, 2019**

**Committee Members Present:** Steve McGuire, Teresa Rodriguez, Lynne Breese, Mike Lunn, Trent Smith, John Dehler, Frank Porfily, Andy Gallagher

**Members absent:** Ston McDaniel, Tim Deboodt

**Guests present:** Seth Crawford, Jerry Brummer, Mike Kasberger (City), Shane Jeffries (FS), Rachael Davee (Crook County SWCD), Mike Harrington (ODF&W), Bruce Scanlon (OID), Kevin Keown (FS), Ian Courter (Mt. Hood Environmental)

**Public present:** John Breese, Melinda Kestler, Cliff Kiser

Meeting was called to order at 1:00 p.m. by Chair Andy Gallagher @ Crook County COCC Open Campus Conference Room.

#### **Pledge of Allegiance**

**Review of Minutes:** Frank moved to approve, John seconded, Motion passed (Teresa abstained)

#### **Agency Updates:**

Judge Crawford talked about the BLM access to a rock hounding area across HWY 26 from Ochoco Reservoir. Access was changed in 2018 when a landowner built a gate across their driveway. Access is available but limited from the west side. There might be an opportunity for improving access and providing for safer parking (now either on the highway shoulder or Ochoco Boat ramp area). Possible to work with ODOT to access old road right of way.

Forest Service- Black Mtn record of decision is out, currently a public review before it becomes final. Walton Lake campground restoration is moving forward with a NEPA review, scoping letter was sent out August 7, 2019. Comment period is 30 days.

Sunflower Allotment Management Plan is up for 10 year review. FS would like to include additional items in NEPA including a look at road closures. FS plans to meet with Tim prior to Sept NRAC meeting. FS would like to present information about this project at the September meeting seeking groups input prior to scoping letter.

**Fish Habitat issues in the Crooked River** – Mike Harrington, ODF&W Deschutes Regional Fish Manager spoke to the group about fish concerns and conditions in the Crooked River. Fish species present include redband trout, steel head, white fish, chinook, bridgelip suckers, and large scale sucker. With the completion of Opal Springs fish ladder, bull trout will be able to pass and enter the Crooked River.

Factors affecting fish in the river include gas bubble disease. Mike said it is unclear whether or not gas bubble disease has an effect on the fish population, citing that instances of flows over 1500 cfs are not frequent. High flows over the dam and low flow (ice) in the winter produce high levels of total dissolved gas in the river. Recommended ramping up rates in river flow @ Bowman Dam in the HCP are 1 – 1 ½ in/hour. Low flow in the winter is now understood to be the key critical component to healthy fish habitat in the Crooked River below Bowman Dam.

The development of hydropower requires fish passage if there is a benefit to native migratory fish (redband, white fish, suckers and reintroduced). DEQ will have water quality requirement (mitigation for TDG). The passage requirement could be mitigated if NET BENEFIT of the project equals or exceeds the benefit of passage. Net Benefit is calculated looking at all restoration and improved WQ conditions downstream from the project. The calculation is not clear. (Measured how? Miles of habitat restored? Increase number of fish? ). Fish bypass could include generating power in OID's canals, trap and truck or ladder.

Ian with Mt. Hood Environmental has been hired by the City/OID to assess the value of passage for this project. They are attempting to address the value of reduced TDG to redbands vs. access to upper basin habitat. At 1500 cfs, TDG is high and peaks to create 120% TDG. Anything over 110% saturation causes high dissolved gas in the river.

**Committee Discussion** – The group discussed whether or not the NRAC should weigh in on Black Mtn. in opposition to the east side screens (21" rule). Forest plan amendments were halted in the 1990's based on the Snow Mtn. ruling. Crook County did not provide comments during the EA review therefore it would not have standing during the appeal period. Maybe an opportunity through the Blue Mtn Resiliency project to address the Eastside Screens systematically?

Teresa suggested the Court submit a letter during the Walton Lake Scoping period to be included in the public record to establish standing by Sept 7. Teresa moved to resubmit the Court's letter from May. Mike seconded. Motion passed. Andy will ask Tim to resubmit Court letter.

Andy notified the group of OID's stakeholder engagement meeting on Oct 22.

Trent mentioned that he is interested in hydropower. Transfer of water rights from Bowman downstream.

Lynne mentioned that it is fire season and with recent lightning strikes, they lost a pine tree.

Steve and Cliff Kiser from the Ochoco Collaborative talked about the 21" dbh rule and the concerns voiced by the collaborative in the Black Mtn objection. Want to discuss this in a future meeting.

Meeting was adjourned at 3:00 p.m.