

MidCoast Watersheds Council
December 2, 2010

1. Introductions were made, 20 persons were present
2. Recorder's Report: There was one motion passed at the November meeting. It was to accept a \$3000 contract with The Wetlands Conservancy for work by Wayne Hoffman related to Beaver Creek natural resource assessment and management planning.
3. Treasurer's report- Wayne Hoffman gave the treasurer's report. Financial statement ending November 30, 2010 shows a balance of 46,364 in our account. Total income during the month was \$154,760; total expenditures \$146,399. We have accounts payable of \$1755 and accounts receivable of \$11,643. Full report was made available.
4. MCWC Activity Report – Coordinator Wayne Hoffman provided a written update of his activities and pertinent information. These included a report on the OWEB Biennial Conference which he attended and wherein he headed up a very successful and well-attended Beaver workshop organized by him, Stan Petrowki and Michael Pollock, information update about the Cape Perpetua Marine Reserves Team that he serves on representing watershed councils, information update about Measure 76 passage with 69% of the vote which funds OWEB and Oregon Parks and Rec Department grants through lottery funds. It will change the rules on Capital versus non-Capital grant expenditures which is likely to make it easier to fund technical assistance and education grants. The legislature will need to pass some enabling legislation for it. Work on forming a Beaver Creek group has begun. Wayne also reported attending an OWEB council support grant information session and ODFW's Beaver Working Group Meeting.
5. Education Program- - New Tools for Tidal Wetland Restoration in Oregon by Laura Brophy who is at OSU/College of Oceanic and Atmospheric Sciences and Director of a non profit group call Estuary Technical Group Institute for Applied Ecology, 541-762-7671 or Laura@appliedeco.org.

Laura provided a power point presentation that provided information about how the accurate LIDAR (Light Imaging Detection and Ranging) which provides accurate measure of elevations, show different types of vegetation and the ground can be the used for all aspects of restoration and conservation work -- from large scale landscape level planning to individual restoration and conservation project work.

She reviewed the ecological functions of tidal wetlands: They provide many values: ecological (wildlife habitat), water quality (sequestering heavy metals, helping to regulate water temperature), flood/storm protection (their loss increased damage from hurricane katrina and can be a concern for impacts due to sea level rise here). Oregon has lost 70-80% of tidal marshes and almost all (way over 90%) of its tidal swamps.

Tidal swamps used to be very prominent on the coast but they are almost gone with large implications, she surmises, for salmonids. There were many types of tidal swamps-- from shrub to forested types-- including the willows/spruce on the Columbia, spruce dominated, twinberry shrub dominated etc. Because of the narrow channels tidal elevation escapes in such swamps with a 8' or so tidal influence shown in some areas seasonally. Wood in tidal channels also supports lots of fish use. Historically the Siuslaw had about 4X more tidal swamps than the Yaquina. Swamps in most places were converted to pasture. Siuslaw has had a 97% loss of tidal swamps; Yaquina a 96% loss; Alsea a 100% loss.

LIDAR can be used throughout the diverse steps in the restoration planning process (especially the first 3 steps):

Landscape analysis (setting goals, choosing sites)

Project planning (baseline monitoring, designing the restoration)

Restoration (implementing and monitoring)

Project evaluation (loops of feedback loops)

Site Management

LIDAR imagery has been gathered for the whole central coast. This imagery is a big improvement to the National Elevation Dataset which has been available and useful since 1999, though the resolution was not very good. With LIDAR there are much more detailed images available and close-ups with fine resolution (small pixels) can be viewed.

LIDAR has been used for whole-estuary analysis. She showed examples of the Nestucca “bare earth model” – where tidal range can be illustrated by color. Dikes are visible clearly. Can use these images to assess the landscape, characterize alterations, find the least disturbed sites, locate potential reference areas, model climate change risks, and design individual restoration (channels, grading, woody plantings) and understand the expected vegetation types after restoration. Examples of use of the technology is for the 400 acre Bandon Restoration marsh site, which will double area of marsh in the Coquille basin. The Tamara Keys site used the 2007 LIDAR flown for the Salmon River (one of the earliest). Found out that it was important to ground truth LIDAR (tying it to ground elevation markers) especially in areas of dense reed canary grass-- a 12-18” elevation difference from the true ground level can result. Native slough sedge can also throw LIDAR off.

One product that Laura has worked on is a table of Reference Sites from throughout the region. This reference data can be used for restoration planning and design. Before project implementation when one is identifying appropriate sites for restoration and setting project goals and objectives one can use this information. Looking at salinity and elevation what would be expected? This is a part of building a restoration design (e.g. a blue print which would include planning for creating sinuosity and grading). It will also help evaluate restoration progress and know after implementation if we are getting closer to reference conditions and what we might need to do to manage projects for best results, track system wide changes.

While the ideal would be to find reference sites close by in the estuary you are working on, there is so much loss and alteration that it is often hard to find reference sites in one particular estuary, or sometimes even if there are such sites, one can't get access or conditions change. So this reference conditions database can be a solution and is being built. For different wetland types, database contains information on controlling factors (tides and salinity), structural characteristics (e.g. soils, vegetation, channels), and biology (e.g. vegetation, fish use, bird use). Y28 on the Yaquina just upriver from the Canyon Quarry Boat ramp and one of the MCWC restoration projects) is one of the reference sites. It's a twinberry swamp. This data base is up on the Oregon Wetlands Explorer now and it's a work in progress.

6. Break-- with thanks to Wayne Hoffman for the snacks.
7. Technical Team Report- there was no technical team meeting this month due to the OWEB conference.
8. Siletz Basin Planning Team Report- Don Larsen brought a written report highlighting work with

ODFW to catch wild winter steelhead for the broodstock program; that a meeting with Jackie Fern from DEQ has been set for Dec 15th regarding a new round of 30k grants for public water systems for drinking water protection projects. There is no match required; Reported that this year has more fall Chinook returning. Group meets the 3rd Tuesday of the month at 7 pm, Siletz Library.

7. Yaquina Basin Planning Team-- a written report was provided by Coordinator Lisa Mulcahy, who was unable to be at the meeting. She's working with the Willamette and Pacific Railroad to facilitate the removal of loose, creosoted railroad ties in the Nashville/Blodgett area and planning a community meeting in the near future. She reported that she had attended the Restore America's Estuaries Conference in Texas and obtained some useful information, including information on planning and tracking restoration projects. One person who presented, Gina LaRocco of The Defenders of Wildlife will talk about the Conservation Registry, a free online tool to map and record restoration information, will present at the MCWC's January 6th meeting.
8. Salmon Drift Watershed Council Report-a report was provided by Coordinator Corrina Chase. Her last day is January 14th. 40 applications were received for the position. It is anticipated that the new person will be selected sometime in December. 50 people attended the Pixieland Tour that was held. The Deputy Secretary of Agriculture visited the Tamara Keys project. More work was done on reed canary grass treatment in the Tamara Keys. An excavator turned over the mats of grass and it was covered by plastic and chips. Anna Eymans is trained and prepared to take over water quality work. The Siletz Charitable Trust funding allowed the printing of 250 brochures about improving waterquality in Panther Creek which has very high bacteria readings. Information included maintenance of septic systems. They are finishing up a fish passage barrier surveys-- double checking their short list of projects and getting more detailed habitat descriptions. Most of the road/stream crossings in the ODFW database look ok even for juvenile passage with the problems ones being fixed with a few exceptions. A few in cutthroat habitat need doing. Corrina gave a presentation to the Garden Club about Pixieland. It was a good way to talk about invasives. Their meeting is the 2nd Tuesday of the month.
9. Alsea Watershed Council Report- Elmer Ostling brought a written report from Coordinator Linda Johnson. Their speaker in November was Laura Mattison of DLCD who talked about tide gates and sea level rise and brought maps of where she thinks dikes are, where they have been breached and other information; the group was able to provide input from their knowledge of the estuary. Over 300 logs (about 800,000 board ft of wood) was placed into Canal Creek as a part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funding. Additional work will occur downstream in Canal Creek through the Alsea Stewardship Program. Five Rivers restoration and invasive species grants are being planned. There is no December meeting
11. Administrative Report-- group approved financial statement and accepted the audit report which noted no problems. "Based on my review, I am not aware of any material modifications that should be made to the accompanying financial statements in order for them to be in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles." discussed the hiring of a Boone Ogden to pull together the first meeting of a Beaver Creek group, got a quarterly update from the Alsea Watershed Council and noted good communications both directions and learned that the AWC board is willing to move forward as a partner with the MCWC for the upcoming OWEB application. Learned that the annual report is coming along, with information and reports being written. The report will be ready in February. Our annual MCWC meeting with elections will also be held in February. January meeting will take nominations for public at large and officer positions and ballots will go out.

12. Education Committee Report. Virginia Tardaewether was laid off in November so a report isn't available for this month.
13. Announcements: Saturday December 11th-- tour of Bear Creek large wood projects; December 10-11 Lincoln Soil and Water Conservation District Native Plant Sale..