



Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife
Salmon & Trout Enhancement Program Advisory Committee
 Meeting Minutes



Date: 03/21/2024

Location: Virtual and ODFW Headquarters – Salem, Oregon

Current Salmon & Trout Enhancement Program Advisory Committee Members (STAC)

Committee Members

Michael Calhoun – North Coast	Morgan Parks – North Willamette
Roger Lindquist – South Coast	Rachel Ellison – South Willamette
Jessica Eubank – Southern Mid Coast/Lower Umpqua	Mindie Wilson – Tenmile, Coos & Coquille (absent)
David Grosjacques – Umpqua	Steven Janego – Central Eastern
Carl Cole – Upper Rogue	

ODFW Staff

Marty Olson – R&E/STEP Program Coordinator	Rick Boatner – Invasive Species Coordinator
Sara Hart – R&E/STEP Program Assistant	Mike Harrington – Fish Division Administrator
Martyne Reesman – STEP Biologist, Springfield Office	Don Robinson – Program Analyst
Amanda Boyles – Angler Education Coordinator	Emily Bondelie – Business Process Analyst
	Kendra Helton – Project Manager

Guests

Tom VanderPlaat –Restoration and Enhancement Board Member	Bob Elliot – Oregon Council Fly Fishers International, Mini-Grant Applicant
Fred Cholick – Restoration and Enhancement Board Member	Larry Wannebo – Umpqua Recreational Fisherman

Call to Order & Agenda Approval

Chair S. Janego called the March 21st, 2024, Salmon and Trout Enhancement Program Advisory Committee (STAC) meeting to order at 8:30 AM.

Introductions of new members: Sara Hart, ODFW STEP Program Assistant & Michael Calhoun, North Coast STEP District Representative. New member M. Wilson is not present, she had a planned vacation prior to getting her appointment. M. Parks is on the call virtually.

We did introductions of other committee members, ODFW staff, and guests.

Motion: R. Lindquist made a motion to approve the meeting agenda. Motion seconded by S. Janego. Passed unanimously.

Approval of Previous Meetings Minutes

The Committee reviewed the October 2023 STAC meeting minutes.

Discussion: Minutes from previous meeting was very thorough and people liked that.

R. Lindquist: Wanted to discuss an action item from previous meeting about salmon runs down in the Rouge River. Cole Rivers has been releasing Chinook in the estuary of the Rogue River, wondering what the return number are from that.

M. Olson: Received an email from Dan Van Dyke who said he would reach out to R. Lindquist about fish numbers.

D. Grosjacques: Noted that meeting minutes are very important for knowing what to discuss at the next. Action items highlighted are very important.

S. Janego: Would like names to be listed so people are accountable for what is said and what they may have volunteered for.

Motion: C. Cole made a motion to approve the minutes from the previous meeting. Motion seconded by D. Grosjacques. Passed unanimously.

Questions Prep for Mike Harrington's Presentation:

D. Grosjacques: Action item that mentions there is a \$1 million project to look at hatcheries in Oregon.

S. Janego: It is all over media about 'save the salmon' and it seems like there is lots of money to spend to do so.

D. Grosjacques: What does the future of funding from federal government look like? How stable is that source? It funds a lot of ODFW projects.

M. Gauvin: SFR fund is paid for by boat fuel and fishing license sale. Funds STEP, a portion of the hatchery system, large number of other programs. Fairly stable but dependent on license sales. The recent STEP biologist vacancies helped to bridge that funding shortfall last year.

Fish Division Updates

Mike Harrington, Fish Division Administrator.

Mike has worked in this role for about 3 years. Most of his career was spent working in areas of Eastern Oregon where there was a heavy volunteer presence. He has recently been working very closely with the Coquille STEP program for the last couple years and with their stream side incubator studies.

The \$1 million hatchery resilience study to answer questions about hatchery issues, mostly pertaining to issues with rising water temperatures. Solutions for rising water temperatures are expensive and the agency need to try to figure out how to allow hatchery to survive, and which ones are more likely than others to do so.

Actions being taken:

- Just starting to do assessments of hatcheries (cost, solutions, climate change issues).
- The contracts are out to the private companies who are tasked with these assessments.
- Agency is working hard to engage the tribes (their own hatcheries and well as how they can help overall).
- They are holding public meetings to get input about hatcheries.
- Rock Creek Hatchery burned down in 2020, has been a big hit to ODFW staff and volunteers. We still do not know if we will rebuild at that location – there are several options that are still being looked at, and they are all expensive. Cow Creek Tribe has been helping at that location.

A license fee increase hasn't happened in 6 years for fishing licenses or for commercial fees – possible it could be coming soon. Years ago, ODFW was in a very bad budget situation and Curt Melcher, ODFW's current Director, did a lot to help with getting the agency out of that bad situation. We now have a couple months' worth of money in reserve if it is needed. However, legal fees have gone up significantly, and litigation has been on a huge increase in recent years. Hatcheries are especially under attack from litigation, which has made it increasingly hard to supply fish for residents.

ODFW will stay involved in the discussion around marine wind power and decreases in bag limits for marine fish species.

Discussion and Questions:

D. Grosjacques: There was \$1 million given to evaluate the cost and benefits of hatcheries. Do we have results of that yet?

M. Harrington: That project was just signed into contracts, so we don't have results yet. The project will look at the

resilience of the hatcheries and how they benefit the state.

M. Olson: Scott Patterson is joining the R&E meeting tomorrow and may have more information on that that we can distribute out to the STAC members who are not present tomorrow.

R. Lindquist: The commission just listed southern orca as endangered. Because of that, hatchery output should be increased to help feed orcas. Is there a plan to update the hatchery plans? Are they going to produce more fish? What will be the costs of that?

M. Harrington: ODFW has not been mandated to release more fish, we already release quite a few. Over the next year ODFW will have to develop a full-blown management plan for southern Orca. May include how to maintain and pick up production.

R. Lindquist: This group is the voice of the public; how can we help with the Orca situation?

M. Gauvin: We do not know yet - over the next year that should become more apparent.

S. Janego: How can we get STAC more involved in the hatchery process? We usually end up reading about things that are happening after the fact. We would like to be more involved and be able to have the groups input listened to.

M. Harrington: Some other groups are already getting quite involved, south coast recreational fishing groups and tribes already speaking up about hatchery practices.

> **ACTION ITEM:** STAC to follow up with M. Gauvin to allowing STAC to get more involved in the decision-making process of the hatcheries.

S. Janego: STAC is building a lot of volunteer hours into the force that helps hatchery and ODFW as an agency function. Haven't seemed to get to the point where volunteers are seen as valuable. One STEP biologist can recruit so many volunteers, which then continues to build and help ODFW. Need a STEP biologist in more areas, like Eastern Oregon (La Grande) to build that volunteer base in that area.

M. Harrington: SFR Fund is where STEP biologist money comes from. It is not a stable enough funding source to add more permanent positions. Federal grants funding programs are not easy to rely on because the costs of things continue to go up, but the funding sources stays flat. Where the success of STEP comes from is the engagement of the community – making sure local groups are motivated and speak to their communities.

A. Boyles: ODFW had calculated that general volunteers are worth about \$42/hour, trained volunteers are worth even more.

M. Reesman: A. Boyles is out there promoting angling in these areas that may not be covered by STEP biologists. Can act like a “substitute STEP biologist”.

D. Grosjacques: SFR Funding, small amount from state legislature, other federal money, and license sales – How stable are these different funding sources?

M. Harrington: License funds are somewhat stable, they went up quite a bit during the pandemic, but now has started to level out back to pre-pandemic numbers. Federal funding is a flat fund. BPA is a flat fund. State's general fund is the most fragile one that we do not like to rely on.

D. Grosjacques: STAC and R&E used to present in person to the Commission, and they did away with that a few years ago. During those presentations they were able to really stress how important the programs they fund are, as well as how important volunteers are to ODFW. Adding up all the volunteer hours equals about 53 full time employees.

S. Janego: Agrees with D. Grosjacques. We still do the annual report, but we do not get a chance to talk to the Commission about it. If we can build those volunteer hours into the budget, there would be accountability to see how important our volunteers are.

R. Lindquist: Agrees that Commission should be aware and should be voicing appreciation for volunteers. Putting something out in the media may help with volunteer recruitment and retention.

B. Elliot (guest): If raising license fees is something that is going to happen, ODFW might consider opening trout season earlier in the year to allow people to fish for longer in the year. Lots of states have earlier opening fishing seasons. This may allow people to get more for their money if licenses are only being bought for trout fishing.

The board thanked M. Harrington for coming and answering questions.

Board Member Updates

R. Ellison: Reed Fischer, STEP Biologist out of the Corvallis office, wanted everyone to know they really appreciate the eggs-to-fry program, for both salmon and trout. College students have been volunteering and helping with projects in

the area. Ten new angler education instructors in recent months. Have seen a big increase in volunteers recently. They have started collecting specimens for classroom dissection.

M. Reesman: STEP Biologist out of Springfield office, have been working on removing fish from show pond at Leaburg hatchery – it is to be dewatered this spring. Sturgeon, up to 8' released the rivers. McKenzie River Discovery Center (MRDC) has been restoring their property and are keeping a few of the sturgeon. These fish are an important piece of the community and means a lot. Also moving trout over to the large pond at MRDC. WALTERVILLE canal to be dewatered this year as well and those fish will remain isolated from the McKenzie fish populations. There are some Row River fishing events scheduled. Eggs-to-fry program is wrapping up. High Lakes stocking with backpacks is the largest volunteer event of the year, over 100 people, over 50 lakes stocked, huge variety of people – very successful event.

J. Eubank: Christine Clapp, STEP Biologist out of Newport office – steelhead returns have been good on the Alsea River this year. Conditions in the main river are not as good for fisherman, but hatchery is still running well. Trout stocking is starting up for local lakes. There have been some local efforts to plant willows. Florence STEP program has been spawning this month and processed over a thousand steelhead in through the trap, compared to about four hundred last year. They have started tagging fish and releasing them downstream to give fisherman another chance to catch them. We still do not have numbers on recapture or catch rates of those fish yet.

Been recently working very hard, doing three rounds of eggs-to-fry with Chinook and steelhead eggs, and have done several field trips this month. The fish trap in Lincoln City has a pedestrian bridge that was taken out by a landslide 2-years ago, this makes it difficult for the public to see what is happening at the trap and creates a loss of public involvement.

S. Janego: Why do we think steelhead numbers are up this year?

J. Eubank: Better ocean conditions the last couple of years.

C. Cole: Not currently a STEP biologist working in the upper Rogue area, Monica Magdaleno will start April 1st, everyone is really looking forward to working with her. Have only been able to do a couple volunteer projects recently: some tree planting along a creek, and a carcass toss. Acclimation for fish starts in April – going to get 30-35 steelhead to spawn. Cole Rivers hatchery scheduled to get a federal grant to pay for a new filtration system and a new hatch house. Steelhead runs have picked up this year and are looking good so far.

D. Grosjacques: Levi Simmons, STEP biologist for Roseburg - The Umpqua fishing group has been collecting broodstock at Canyonville. Had the steelhead derby recently, last year they only caught 30 steelhead, and this year they caught over 300 steelhead with the same amount of effort. STEP group in Reedsport, only do fall chinook, lost some smolts to a salamander accident. Have about 25 schools doing the eggs-to-fry program, have had a lot of great interactions with the kids through that program. Collected broodstock for steelhead and coho – some go to the local food bank some are returned to the river for stream enrichment. Winchester dam repairs have been all over the news. They dewatered the small reservoir for much longer than expected and about 500k lamprey died. ODFW is suing the contractor and the local landowners for the loss of fish. ODFW Commission got a tour of Rock Creek Hatchery last week. Steelhead numbers have been so low on the North Umpqua that ODFW has had to close fishing in previous years.

M. Calhoun: Currently no STEP biologist working in the North Coast, Kyle Wilson is hopefully to be hired soon.

Trout stocking has started happening and Whiskey Creek fin clipping event coming up. Upper Nehalem watershed council is working on big annual salmon event. Claudia, the giant walk through salmon exhibit will be present at the event. This structure can move around to events if needed. M. Olson: Who houses Claudia, the giant salmon? M.

Calhoun: The local watershed council has ownership.

R. Lindquist: Chetco River has had a slow catch rate due to water being high and muddy, but there are lots of steelhead in the river. Chetco used fisherman to catch steelhead broodstock, so they are having a hard time collecting for Elk River Hatchery broodstock. Indian Creek Hatchery is having issues - there has been 17x normal flow in the creek, caused lots of problems with wood and debris on bridge. Lots of effort to clear out that debris to save water lines that supply the hatchery and are used for raising fish. There was a project started on steelhead kelts, putting on satellite tracking tags that will go out to the ocean. The tags will pop off after 6 months and send tracking data so we can see where steelhead are going in the ocean. Starting to see spring Chinook in the Rogue River, it is still early and should start picking up soon. Have had some problems with expensive hatchery equipment, including some O2 sensors in the raceways. 29 pairs returned to hatchery, have lots of eggs. This hatchery only releases fall chinook, released in August. There is not a big

eggs-to-fry program in the area. At the last STAC meeting we delivered fish eggs to fry to a boy's prison, the classroom responded so well to getting to see the fish eggs. It was an amazingly rewarding experience.

M. Reesman: Thinks that focusing on places where more under privileged people are represented could have a huge benefit for the future.

M. Parks: Winter rainbow trout eggs-to-fry program had a record year; volunteers did a great job getting all that done.

A. Boyles: Lots of inquiries about family fishing events in this area. Is coordinating with staff in the Clackamas area to do events and can help with volunteer coordination.

(M. Parks shared in online chat): *Forgot to mention I just hosted a teacher workshop on Monday. Here are some Facebook pics from my new crop of Fish Eggs to Fry teachers in North Clackamas School District creating some Sweet Salmon Habitat dioramas:*

<https://www.facebook.com/NWFOregon/posts/pfbid0B2sRyUkyZy2JTmZ7MBFUxyMo2zhHJzqac3ZmnNoWbze3yJipPqdJyucFJzEEGpUt/>

S. Janego: The eggs-to-fry program has been great in this area as well. The program produces kids who really care about fish, and their environments. There has been lots of volunteer activity in the area from that, the Central Oregon Flyfishers helped with eggs-to-fry as well. Redband trout redd surveys and kokanee carnival events are being planned currently. Salmon reintroduction to the Deschutes basin is showing progress. Chinook in the Metolius river hatch boxes, showing up to 50% survival rate which is good. These hatch boxes auto release fry into the river when they are big enough and ready. Education instructors have been out there doing their thing. Invasive species have been a continuing issue. A recent fishing event involved releasing big rainbow trout in Crane Prairie reservoir and allowing people fish for them out of season, they looked at the stomach contents of those fish to look for spotted frogs (an endangered species) to see if Rainbow trout are a primary predator of the frog. No results from that yet. Attended OR AFS conference earlier this month – it was a great experience and liked seeing so many young, smart people collaborating and talking about fish and their environments. Jen Luke, STEP biologist out of Bend - has been working multiple jobs and just returning to STEP duties recently.

M. Wilson: not present.

Discussion:

R. Lindquist: Would like to see a mentor program for STEP biologist.

M. Olson: Within the department, depending on where you work, there is quite a bit of opportunity for cross training and to jump in and help on projects that are not necessarily in your job description. Knows that Monica Magdaleno was able to work with Christine Clapp a bit in the Newport area and get some cross training there.

Invasive Species in Oregon

Rick Boatner presentation. Invasive Species wildlife integrity supervisor (retired).

Goals: To protect Oregon water bodies and to educate!

Zebra & Quagga mussels – Where introduced into the Great Lakes in the 1980s, then quite quickly spread around the country. Goal was to keep them out of the west, for many years. Efforts fail when they are found in California, Nevada and Idaho. They have huge impacts on salmon and steelhead recovery. Density of the muscles clogs up fish ladders and covers river rock, becomes very abrasive. The muscles filter out phytoplankton, which other species rely on for survival. This will also change the water chemistry – causing concentration of toxins, more blue-green algae outbreaks, and bird die offs due to botulism. Cost of maintenance for structures will be huge – docks, irrigation pipes, dams, diversion structures, etc. Recreational cost – degrade beaches, boats and boating equipment fouled, docks and buoys damaged, drop in tourism and recreational fisheries. They are extremely costly to manage. Found in Idaho in 2023. They used chemical treatments – killed all the fish species except a couple non-native species (i.e. Bass). Area was originally stocked with fish species, so those populations can be re-built. Next few years of monitoring will be critical to see muscles species were able to get downstream into Oregon waterways.

The 2024 watercraft inspection stations – 6 stations, plus a roving team. There are only about 20 employees in the program, most of which are seasonal. They have recently moved the stations to the state borders. Decontamination process: Cleaning the boats with hot water, it only takes about 5 minutes if nothing is found. Boaters will get asked a

series of questions about when and where they have been with their craft. Inspections are specifically looking for muscles but will find other things as well. They will flush any standing water in the craft with hot water (no chemicals are used). If muscles are found the craft will go through a more intense process - scraping, hot water, flush engine, and a second inspection – until no more muscles are found. Stations have found about 170 muscles since 2010.

Early Detection Monitoring – Oregon has delegated that early detection monitoring of waterways to many other agencies. PSU Center for Lakes and Reservoirs, Idaho Power, USGS, BOR, NOAA, WDFG, and UW are all partners in monitoring out waterways. It is a very intense and difficult process, like finding a needle in a haystack to find these tiny muscles in a large water body.

Crayfish Introductions – Signal crayfish are the only native species in Oregon (easy to ID by smooth shell and white patch on claws). Introduced species: Rusty crayfish – They eat anything and everything, bully natives, very aggressive. Found in the John Day basin, took three years and 3 treatments to get rid of them. Red swamp crayfish – Most invasive species worldwide, like to borrow into embankments causing destabilization. Ring crayfish - Discovered in Umpqua and Rowe basins. Northern crayfish – Found in Talent, Oregon area and Rogue River, aggressively invasive species.

Fish and other species introductions – Northern Pike – Nearest population is in Washington, this species would devastate salmonid species. American bullfrog – Will eat anything, very aggressive eaters. They carry fungus that they are resistant to and transmit it to native amphibians.

Important: Report all sightings! Take a sample, write down information on where, what, how many, date, collector, etc. Taking good pictures is very important, use multiple angles and make sure pictures are in focus.

Questions/Discussion:

R. Lindquist: Pertaining to inspection stations: who should stop, what if they are coming from inside Oregon?

R. Boatner/M. Reesman: All watercraft should stop. “If it floats, it’s a boat.” All should stop, even if coming from inside Oregon.

S. Janego: What needs to happen to keep this program going?

R. Boatner: Funding needs to increase; we need more employees. We also need a legislator that is on our side and cares about preventing these kinds of catastrophic invasions.

S. Janego: Native species spreading to non-native areas? Anything happening to prevent that.

R. Boatner: Should be looked at, should be prevented.

Ran out of time for questions.

> **ACTION ITEM:** If you have more questions and concerns, please send them to R. Boatner or M. Reesman.

STAC Mini-Grant Budget Update

Marty Olson.

Currently have six mini-grant requests, totaling \$9860.46. All of them meet the requirements for mini-grant allocation. In Cycle 1, STAC approved \$5,068 in mini grants, still have \$44932 remaining in the fund. Requests for Cycle 2 add up to \$9860, that would leave \$35,071 for rest of biennium.

When STAC is out with volunteers, organizations, and STEP biologists, should always be promoting the mini-grant program. We have information flyers to hand out if you need some.

Remembers that grants approved in March 2025 only have until June 2025 to spend their money. Money much be spent by the end of the biennium.

Mini-Grant Reviews

Cascade Family Flyfishers – Restoration Tools

MG 23-10

Moved this application to the top of the list so that M. Reesman could answer questions before she has to leave.

Description:

Extensive restoration projects continuing at McKenzie Discovery Center ponds and Row River Nature Park. Have removed a lot of invasive species, but still a lot of work to be done. Hand removal of invasive species is very hard on volunteers and purchasing new tools will make the work a little easier and safer. These sites hold ODFW family fishing

events in the spring and are stocked with rainbow and cutthroat trout.

Discussion:

D. Grosjacques: There is more than one location for this project?

M. Reesman: There are two sites, both sites hold family fishing events and youth education program events.

S. Janego: Putting tools in the hands of volunteer, obviously really helping with angle access to the ponds. Thank you for including a great line-item list of tools needed. Makes it easy to see where the money is being spent.

A. Boyles: Using the tools to reduce invasive species is important work.

Motion: D. Grosjacques makes a motion to approve the grant proposal 23-10 for the full amount. S. Janego seconded the motion. Passed unanimously among members present (M. Parks absent).

Oregon Council Fly Fishers International – Fly Fishing Simulator **MG 23-07**

Description: Funds to purchase a fly-fishing simulator for a fly-fishing show. The simulator gives users the feel of catching a real fish, which for youth attendees to the show, can be very exciting and valuable. The item will be in high demand and so we want to have two available to reduce lines and wait time.

Discussion:

D. Grosjacques: Want to clarify that this is for the 2024 event, application description says 2023.

M. Olson: Yes, it is for a 2024 event which happened last weekend. The money has already been spent; they are asking for a reimbursement.

S. Janego: Seems like a good way to reach young people.

D. Grosjacques: So many fishermen gathered in one place, lots of people show up to this show, very popular.

B. Elliot (applicant): The simulator at the show was very fun. Purchased one through a different grant program. This grant was to purchase a second simulator is covered through donations and this grant. Simulator was a huge hit and can give you same feeling as catching a real fish and even gives you a score.

R. Lindquist: Was the other donation given already labeled in “other funds” listed in the application, or is that amount coming out of this grant?

B. Elliot: That donation was needed on top of the full amount requested for this grant. Between the two is still did not quite cover the full cost.

D. Grosjacques: Where will it be stored? Will you be allowing other to borrow it?

B. Elliot: Unit stored in Albany. The equipment is very technical, so others borrowing would be hard. They have a guy that helps set them up and runs tech support, but he may not be able to travel to others to help set up and run the unit.

Motion: R. Lindquist makes a motion to approve grant 23-07 for the full amount. D. Grosjacques seconded the motion. Passed unanimously.

ODFW La Grande Fish District – Hwy 203 Pond Port-a-Potty **MG 23-08**

Description:

Goal is to provide a restroom facility at a popular fishing location that is owned by ODFW. It is an easy to access location and is stocked annually with trout. The rented porta-potty is to provide a restroom at this location during the spring and early summer months when it is anticipated to have the heaviest use by the public. Restrooms are badly needed at this location and lack of one decreases the quality of angling opportunities available and may deter use.

There are plans for a permanent facility at this location. Will be asking for money from the R&E board for permanent structures later.

Discussion:

M. Olson: Has already talked to Mike Lance, the applicant, and told him this needs to be a single time ask. STAC doesn't approve continuing expenses.

D. Grosjacques: If we approve this one, how many more requests like this will we get?

S. Janego: We have approved temporary toilets before. This one has a plan for something more permanent and applicants have been open about this.

D. Grosjacques: What if an application like this happens again?

R. Lindquist: Where are they in the process for the permanent toilet?

M. Olson: Will be applying for R&E money in the future, but it is just a concept right now, nothing has been formally

planned.

R. Lindquist: This is a popular area and could be more popular if a bathroom is provided. Gives opportunity to people to be out there and not leaving messes everywhere.

R. Ellison: This improves access and shows support for the eastern Oregon area.

D. Grosjacques: Worried that this could open flood gates for other applications like this.

S. Janego: This one has a clear vision on the future. Currently there are angler education program events scheduled at this location, if they do not have a restroom those might have to be cancelled.

Motion: R. Ellison makes a motion to approve grant 23-08 for the full amount. C. Cole seconded the motion. Passed unanimously.

Rogue Valley Council of Governments – Cloth Fish for Salmon Watch MG 23-09

Description:

Salmon Watch programs teach students about watershed health, water quality, and other factors as they relate to native salmon species. Funding for the program comes from local communities as part of the Clean Water Act programs. To elevate our salmon biology station kit, we are pursuing funding to create cloth salmon, with anatomy, as an alternative activity to fish dissections. Recently dissections have led to bee stings, so this would be a safer option for those with allergic reactions. Proposed to make 10-12 cloth fish.

Discussion:

C. Cole: These tools are great for education.

R. Ellison: Can we get the pattern for it?

M. Olson: A previously made order have already completed the fish construction. We are just waiting for the bags that they go in to be printed.

R. Lindquist: Who is making them?

C. Cole: All local volunteers.

D. Grosjacques: Who is storing them?

M. Olson: Amy at Rogue Valley council will store them; they may be able to be loaned out upon request.

T. VanderPlaat (R&E Board): They are very complicated to put together. Previous makers are happy to share their plans with whoever wants them but are not willing to make any more of them.

D. Grosjacques: Using real fish is not always an option. It can be messy and accessibility for those with tactile or smell issues can be a barrier to education.

Motion: D. Grosjacques makes a motion to approve the grant proposal 23-09 for full amount. R. Ellison seconded the motion. Passed unanimously.

Turner Elementary – Restoring Mill Creek

MG 23-011

Description:

Last spring STAC funded phase 1 of the invasive species removal and native planting part of this project. These funds are asking for phase 2 money for stream restoration, more planting to increase shade of creek, and continued invasive species removal.

Discussion:

R. Lindquist: How much did we fund last time?

R. Ellison: Not exactly sure on amount, we did give a reduced amount to not cover snacks for volunteers. Applicant made it clear that if other programs wanted to get involved, she would reach out. Reed Fischer is also helping.

D. Grosjacques: This is an outdoor classroom very near their school. Great access to students.

Motion: D. Grosjacques makes a motion to approve the grant proposal 23-11 for full amount. S. Janego seconded the motion. Passed unanimously.

Mary's River Watershed Council – Watershed Education & Outreach MG 23-12

Description:

Asking for fund to purchase microscopes and an Enviroscape interactive watershed model. It is a neat tool that provides hands-on interactive demonstration of watershed dynamics to youth. Both microscopes and model will supplement the watershed councils on-going classroom, community outreach and field programs.

Discussion:

S. Janego: Where will the model be stored?

R. Ellison: Will be stored with the watershed council. Can be used by local STEP programs and others in area. Has the pricing and set up. The website is very informative on how it works and everything that it can do.

S. Janego: Would like to see these being used and promoted in more programs.

Motion: R. Lindquist makes a motion to approve the grant proposal 23-12 for full amount. R. Ellison seconded the motion. Passed unanimously.

Break for Lunch

Volunteer Event Management Update/Demo

Don Robison, Emily Bondelie & Kendra Helton.

D. Robison, Statewide Volunteer program director, presenting – has been with ODFW for about 10 months. Worked previously with Oregon State Lottery, non-profits with hundreds of volunteers, and private businesses. Excited to be working with ODFW on a volunteer focused program. ODFW relies on 3-5,000 volunteers statewide.

Volunteer & Event Management (VEM) system – Starting with Angler Education, Hunter Education and RV Hosting Programs – currently functioning as a test platform for these programs.

Goals: Reduce data management, makes it easier to process volunteers with just one system. Volunteers can sign up for an account and then explore programs and everything that ODFW has to offer for volunteer opportunities. They will be able to apply for opportunities that are open, fill out applications, review policies, and take trainings - all through the same account. Program will notify you when trainings or policy changes are due or have changed. Easy to sign up for events and work parties. Some of these require strict background checks on volunteers depending on the job. When applying for multiple positions, the program will recognize what you automatically qualify for and can easily search for open opportunities that you may like. It is easy to log in and report hours worked. Has robust report writing capabilities. Don Robinson extended gratitude toward M. Olson, Jon Nott, Morgan Parks, and others who have greatly helped with writing memorandum on who does what inside the program.

Watched video presentations and demos on VEM program. Demonstrated how to navigate the VEM website and how to apply for opportunities.

E. Bondelie: These videos will be made available for sharing and home viewing soon. Rollout will happening ongoing slowly with ODFW programs only a few at a time. Angler Education will roll out later this summer. ODFW staff can go through D. Robinson to get volunteers registered. Current volunteers can go to myodfw.com/volunteers online. Remote locations who may have issues access can still do the paper forms for volunteers. Only thing that will change once this system is live is how ODFW reports those volunteer hours.

D. Grosjacques: Is this the same system that was presented before the pandemic and then went away?

E. Bondelie: It didn't go away, has just taken a long time to build. There was no existing system to build this from, it is brand new. Has been a bigger effort than first thought.

D. Grosjacques: Fishing clubs involved that have older members may not want to go through this system.

E. Bondelie: Older people or kid's profiles can be created by other people. They still need to do the trainings and check those off. Can still offer the existing paper process for those that want to use it.

R. Lindquist: What is all the process? Can current volunteers that do not want to take trainings still volunteer?

D. Robison: They just need to read the policies that are required for the job and maybe take a small number of quick (2 hours or less total) trainings. Policy and training are mandated by the governor, ODFW does not have a choice on what trainings volunteers must do.

E. Bondelie: Transitions are hard, and this will be a process, but these processes are important for communication and safety between volunteers and ODFW. Will be a great process for recruiting new volunteers.

R. Lindquist: Is someone going into the system and write all these positions? Opportunity lists are going to grow exponentially if each job required an event on the website, i.e. feeding fish, pulling debris, etc.

K. Helton: That system is already worked out and ODFW will continue to work with program coordinators.

E. Bondelie: It will be easy to set up events in the system. Coordinators will have same system as the public and can invite other and get lists of volunteers, but being on the online list is not a requirement. As a coordinator you can have a broad description on an event.

Larry Wannebo (online comment) – *“Hearing that there are too many old guys in fishery enhancement begs the question for efforts to recruit more. It sounds like the system designers should have included a focus group of us old fisherman at the start of the development.”*

T. VanderPlaat (R&E Member) – Need to understand how much of an investment people are willing to make. Can we attach this to the licensing system, where people are already putting all their information? Coordinators have a good connection with the volunteers in their area, this process could put a damper on that relationship. Customize programs can be a challenge and maintaining it can be very difficult.

E. Bondelie: ELS integration would be very difficult but may be able to do in the future. For most volunteers this onboarding process will be very easy. They are open to concerns and want to help as much as possible to work through the difficulties.

Continued discussion after presenters left:

R. Lindquist: We have seen these volunteer system changes coming for a long time. Went through the process back in the day and agrees that this system is great for the BIG volunteer paperwork management. But the smaller volunteers may have a harder time.

M. Olson: We heard M. Harrington speak on legal fees this morning. The volunteer requirements play into that. If volunteers do not sign the required paperwork and something happens, we may be left in a sticky legal situation. Some of the process will fall to our STEP biologist or other ODFW staff.

> **ACTION ITEM:** Put together your thoughts and concerns about the VEM system and we can get those to the VEM team.

STAC Volunteer Focus for 2024

S. Janego: Wants STAC to be in the forefront of the new systems and processes. Would like the primary focus of STAC for the 2024 year to be volunteers. We need a recruitment of the next generation of volunteers, younger people, and more diversity. Lots of other organizations are working hard, advertising and scooping up volunteers, that could leave us without.

D. Grosjacques: If volunteers do not do all their trainings does it matter?

R. Lindquist: It is for the safety of the volunteer and for the liability of the department. It’s just a couple more things to have to read to be able to do their jobs. Should not be a hard process.

M. Olson: The online system makes it easy to see what trainings you have done, so that you don’t have to do them repeatedly for each volunteer event that is done.

R. Lindquist: At least 75% of my volunteers that I work with will not be willing to use the online system.

S. Janego: Brainstorm ideas on how to get these people together and have them do all the paperwork or online signups together. Possible we might lose some volunteers due to new mandated trainings or online system. Would like to put together a sub-group to focus on volunteer recruitment. Who is talking to the next generation of volunteers? How do we go about doing that? Talk to clubs, schools, etc.

J. Eubank: Do we need the ODFW system to come along a little further before we try to promote the system? There are a lot of issues that need to be addressed before its open to the public. Lots of bugs to work out in the system.

M. Reesman: Right now, paper forms are still acceptable, and they are still doing that on the ground. There is still a lot of bugs that need to be ironed out. She has concerns about Driving Record Checks for all volunteers.

M. Calhoun: Didn’t Oregon just pass a law that says you are not required to divulge that information because it prevents inmates from re-entering society? Seems like an invasion of privacy.

S. Janego: Volunteer recruitment does not necessarily mean we need to champion this new VEM system, but a lot of our volunteers are aging out and we need to find younger generations to take their place. Would like to see the ODFW

volunteer program help the older age volunteers and carry them through without losing them.

J. Eubank: We need to have a working group of people that we test this system out on and get real life examples of the roadblocks that people may run into.

S. Janego: Our success metric can be how many people did we lose by making people move into the new system.

M. Reesman: Notes to make sure you get a conformation email after registering through VEM, before you continue in the process. If you do it once, you don't have to do it again. But maybe the expectations are too high for volunteers.

S. Janego: Wants to create a sub-team to further discuss volunteers. R. Lindquist would like to be on this sub-team.

Larry Wannebo (online comment): *"Does the official plan call for a 3–5-year phase- in of the new system to achieve 90% usage?"*

> **ACTION ITEM:** STAC agrees to form a sub-team to discuss volunteer recruitment and retention. If you have interest in joining sub-team, please contact S. Janego or M. Olson.

STAC Initiatives

STAC Operating Guidelines

M. Olson: Has gone over the STAC operating guidelines. Reminds the board that they have the power to change these guidelines if they so choose. Decisions were made at the previous meeting; however, those changes have not yet been approved. Changes that were discussed previously: 1. Kept the language taking about term limits (2 -4-year terms). 2. Struck the 30 – 60-day grant process from the document as requested. 3. Matched the types of projects for mini grants to the website, adding categories. Those updates have already been made to the website. Also updated the list of things that are not covered by mini grants.

Should the board be able to make modifications to a mini-grant proposal?

R. Ellison: That would fall under tabling the project to a later date. The board can give recommendations on how the project should be modified to get approved but will not make direct modifications and then approve.

R. Lindquist: There are some formatting issues with the document, he will give his notes to M. Olson to get those changes made.

S. Janego: Would really like the new members to go over the operating guidelines and come back with questions and suggestions. It is always a working document that can be changed as needed.

> **ACTION ITEM:** Make draft changes to the operating guidelines. Including: Add mini-grant ineligible projects: eggs-to-fry tanks, projects that need engineering approval. Formatting changes from R. Lindquist. Vote on changes at the next meeting.

Mini-Grant Process Update

M. Olson: Sub-committee went over the mini-grant application process and went through a list of eligible vs ineligible projects. Updated language on how to apply for mini grants. Updated the contact list for STEP biologists and the STAC members. Should we have the evaluation form for mini grants be available online to applicants?

S. Janego: Could just have evaluation form in the operating guidelines and not posted online.

J. Eubank: It is a useful tool for the board, but not important for public to see.

R. Ellison: Evaluation form will become more critical for the board to look at when we are closer to our budget max.

M. Olson: Is it alright for applicants to spend their money before approval and then ask for a reimbursement?

R. Lindquist: Thinks it is important to allow this. If we are only having two meetings a year and sometimes purchasing deadlines do not line up with meetings.

J. Eubank: As long as the applicants know they are assuming the risk that their project may not be approved.

M. Olson: Is everyone alright with allowing email signature approval from board members or STEP biologists? Consensus is yes, e-signatures are OK.

Administration Discussion

STAC Recruitment Update

M. Olson: Mindie Wilson was just appointed as the new representative for the Coos, Coquille, Tenmile area. Appointed at the beginning of the March and already have a vacation booked during the meeting and was not able to attend. Micheal Calhoun is the new North Coast representative; this is his first meeting.

S. Janego: Requests that members in their last year of service on the board, it should be your responsibility to look around your area and look for potential recruitments for board members.

M. Olson: Remember that these vacancies are open solicitations to the public, we cannot pick and choose who we want on the board. It is fine to talk to people about recruitment, but they will still have to apply and go through the process. Sometimes the recruitment process takes a long time and can be tough to get someone approved in a timely manner.

M. Gauvin: Because of the interface with the governs office it takes a long time to get someone appointed. We should recruit about 6 months ahead of time for these positions. Need to make sure that people who apply are from the right area and qualify for the position. Other groups within the agency that have similar boards, this can broaden opportunities for future and current members.

R. Lindquist: How early can we start recruiting for a position?

M. Gauvin: We can do it as early as we want, but 6 months is a good time gap. Need to specify in the recruitment letter when the position starts. Can invite new recruits to the meetings to just listen without being a voting member (R. Ellison did this).

2026 is the 45th anniversary of STAC, there is stuff we could do to promote the program.

> **ACTION ITEM:** Update list on the website with Mindie Wilson's contact information.

STEP Bio Recruitment Update

Monica Magdalena is the new hire out of the Central Point office. She will start working on April 1st.

Kyle Wilson is still going through the hiring process but should be announced soon as the new hire for the Tillamook office.

Calendar and Next Meeting

Usually fall meeting is held the third weekend of October.

There has been discussion about going to Southern Oregon, we have not been there in quite a few year. Would like to visit a place where we could do a tour – need to have a good reason to go to the location.

M. Olson: We should also be mindful of costs and facilities available in the area.

J. Ellison: Suggests Newport area.

C. Cole: Southern Oregon, we could help with netting broodstock at the hatchery.

S. Janego: Would like to consider North Coast or Columbia River area. We do not have STEP biologist in Clackamas area currently and there is no STEP position in The Dalles office.

M. Olson: Martyne has some great projects going on in the Eugene/McKenzie River area. Would really like to have a meeting to invite all the STEP biologists into the meeting this fall, so a more centralized location might be nice for that.

M. Reesman: This should be a good timeline for STEP biologists to be present because they will be gearing up for eggs-to-fry program and summer field work will be gearing down.

R. Lindquist: How do we get them to show up?

M. Gauvin: Need to let them know ahead of time, 6 months is best.

Group consensus is Newport, Oregon for the next meeting location.

Timeframe:

October 3-4: Everyone is available this week.

Marine program building might be available for meeting location, or the Hatfield library.

> **ACTION ITEM**: ODFW staff will reach out to STEP biologists to check their availability.

Invite more people from Commission, invite more people from inside and outside of ODFW.

Possible Topics: John Seaborne wants to be there to talk about the SFR Fund.

R. Lindquist: Would like a discussion on offshore wind power.

D. Grosjacques: Scott Patterson could come to talk about the hatchery resilience project.

S. Janego: The Volunteer sub-group with report.

M. Gauvin: Propagation permits for STEP hatcheries - many are ready for re-approval, discuss which ones need to be done still and which ones are already done.

A. Boyles: Would like to give an introduction of the Angler Education program.

> **ACTION ITEM**: Recruit a speaker on offshore wind power for next meeting.

> **ACTION ITEM**: Ask STEP Biologist's: What do you need from us (STAC)?

OPEN DISCUSSION:

S. Janego: Has been asking himself: What is our purpose? What does everyone bring to the table? What are our different roles and how do we have benefit?

Program has three prongs: STEP Program = Bread & Butter, R&D = New Stuff, and Legislation

Should we be focusing on more of the legislative side of the prongs?

Are we losing our Bread and Butter?

J. Eubank: These are very big questions. We all have projects and problems in our own areas that we are so focused on and take so much time, it is harder to think about the big picture and give even more of our time.

R. Lindquist: We are not doing our core mission to be the voice of the volunteers to the ODFW Commission. There was a time when we could come to STAC with an issue and come up with a board position on an issue, and then present that position to the Commission.

D. Grosjacques: Read the statute outload to the group. Are we doing that? Our focus is on the STEP program. If it doesn't involve the STEP program, then should we be talking about it?

M. Gauvin: We have gone to the legislature and commission before with positions on issues. When issues have a direct STEP impact it will be more in line with the goals of STAC.

S. Janego: When you think about STAC, do these three prongs come to mind? Not that we need to do more work, just that we need to stay focused. Asks the member of the board to think on this.

F. Cholick: What kind of impact do you want to make as a committee? Where would you like that impact felt? Should you invite your local legislators to the next meeting to show them what we are all about? Volunteer recruitment and work with the STEP biologists is most critical.

R. Lindquist: Motions to adjourn the meeting. Motion is seconded by D. Grosjacques.

Meeting adjourned at 4:05pm.