



PROJECT COMMITTEE

Teleconference

December 8, 2016

Joining by phone:			Staff:
Susan Foster	Bill Shake	Guests:	Tim Greseth
Marcia Hartman	Brad Staples	Jeremy Thompson	Pam Simser
Gordon King	Meg Townsend	Chris Rombough	
Tim Norman			

Project Committee meeting was called to order at 11:32.

Jeremy Thompson, ODFW's District Wildlife Biologist, talked about the Beavertail Grassland Restoration project (Proj #16-19) on the River Ranch parcel of the Lower Deschutes Wildlife Area. The goal of this project is to restore upland habitat through a controlled burn in January, aerial herbicide application ("Plateau" is the herbicide they will use) in February/March to suppress invasive grasses, and seeding/shrub planting this spring on approximately 1,000 acres. The Department is seeking volunteers to help with shrub planting.

Chris Rombough, an independent Herpetologist, talked in general about Skeletochronology and more specifically about a project on the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge that the Foundation funded several years ago. From Wikipedia: "**Skeletochronology** is used to determine the chronological age of a species of animal by counting the concentric growth rings found in a cross section of bone."^[1] This technique cannot be used for all species of bony animals.

Amphibians and reptiles are commonly aged using this method because they undergo discrete annual activity cycles (i.e. winter dormancy). Cross-sections can be taken from any long bone, including femurs and phalanges, and sectioned using a microtome. Once stained with hematoxylin and viewed through a microscope, growth rings are apparent.

The Skeletochronology of Columbia spotted frog project provided age information of the frog in a short amount of time. Frogs were captured by hand, and the second flank from the second digit (much smaller and not used for reproduction or balance) was removed for this study. This project allowed them to know the time of year to draw/not draw down the water to support the population of Spotted Frogs. The results of this study were extremely helpful and contributed directly to the management of water on the Refuge.

Although bull frogs are an extremely harmful and abundant invasive species, there is no published life history data on them anywhere to be found. A better understanding of bull frog life history would

greatly assist efforts to control the species. Chris would like to study the age structure of bull frogs in the near future and intends to approach the Foundation for funding support.

MINUTES June 15, 2016 – Note: the September 29th meeting did not take place. An electronic vote was taken of the only grant request “Resource Selection and Space Use of Sierra Nevada red fox in Oregon” (Proj #16-15). This funding request was approved by majority vote.

*Motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes as recorded from the June 15, 2016 meeting.
Motion carried.*

PROJECT FUNDS - \$217,000 are unrestricted for grant making purposes.

OLD BUSINESS – a Strategic Plan was formally adopted by the Board of Directors at their meeting in September. The Project Committee 2017 budget, based on adopted habitat goals is as follows: wetlands \$17,500, oak and prairie \$17,500, Adopt-a-Lek \$7,500, discretionary \$5,000, leaving \$90,000 for small grants in 2017.

The **Sierra Nevada red fox** study was approved via e-vote and is an ongoing project

Brad Staples is pursuing a possible large project in the rebuild and/or relocation of the Clackamette Boat Ramp. The Marine Board is involved with this, but Brad is talking with Todd Alsbury about maintaining/repairing the existing boat ramp by possibly placing boulders to deflect some of the water current. Brad will be following up on this and report back to the committee at our next meeting.

NEW PROJECT FUNDING APPLICATIONS

Project 16-16 Adopt-a-Lek

ODFW is requesting \$7,239 in funding to support the retention of the Adopt-a-Lek Volunteer Coordinator position. Since 2006, the Adopt-a-Lek program has been instrumental in completing greater sage grouse lek attendance surveys in remote areas of southeastern Oregon. Adopt-a-Lek volunteers supplement surveys conducted by federal and state agency biologists, and have been important to fill in “data gaps” particularly in sage grouse strong hold areas located in rugged and isolated areas of our state.

Meets our match requirements, addresses an OCS strategy species, includes letters of support from Kathryn Stangl, Deputy State Director, BLM and Paul Henson, Project Leader, USFWS.

Motion was made and seconded to approve this project as requested. Motion carried

Project 16-17 Pearlshells of Wisdom

Willamette Riverkeeper is requesting \$5,000 in funding to support a new 2-year study of Western Pearlshell mussels near Norwood Island (at the Willamette River confluence with the Long Tom River). According to the USFWS, these mussels can play an “early-warning” role regarding changes in environmental conditions. Willamette Riverkeeper wants to develop an understanding of this local mussel population to serve as an early-detection system for ecosystem changes in the river and enable preventative and protective measures.

Meets our match requirements, project occurs within a Conservation Opportunity Area, includes a letter of support from Thomas Friesen, ODFW Program Manager for Willamette Research, Monitoring, and Evaluation.

Motion was made and seconded to approve this project as requested. Motion carried

Project 16-18 Long Prairie Creek Plant Establishment

The Foundation is the Fiscal Sponsor for this project with ODFW that targets 2.4 miles of riparian habitat on industrial forest land along Long Prairie Creek, a key salmon tributary to the Siletz River on the mid coast. The goals of this project are to revegetate the reach of Long Prairie that we're treating with large woody debris in Summer 2017. We'll treat 7.36 acres of reed canary grass with herbicide to reduce competition and plant a mix of native conifer and hardwood along with an additional 2.4 miles of riparian corridor.

Meets our match requirements, includes indirect cost recovery of \$5,510, contingent on OWEB funding, addresses multiple conservation strategy species

Motion was made and seconded to approve this project as requested. Motion carried
Meg requested to know what herbicide they will be using

Project 16-19 Beavertail Grassland Restoration Project

The Foundation is a partner with ODFW on a project to enhance and restore natural and desirable grasses and forbs within the River Ranch parcel of the Lower Deschutes Wildlife area. This project is designed to improve overall rangeland health within an area of the Deschutes River canyon that has been negatively impacted by fire. The plan for this project is to reduce competition from annual grasses through application of an imazapic herbicide in late winter, with reseeding to follow in spring 2017. In areas of heavier annual grass loads, a late fall burn project will be attempted weather permitting. In addition to seeding of native grasses and forbs, select native shrubs will be planted within suitable areas. Sourced through local nurseries, bare root stock will be planted by volunteers in late spring. Adjacent private lands, identified through the work of the Lower Deschutes Cooperative Weed Management Area will also be treated with herbicide to reduce the overall densities of Scotch Thistle and Rush Skeleton.

This is the first in what is expected to be a series of collaborative projects on the River Ranch parcel to restore and improve habitat for upland wildlife species.

Meets our match requirements, improves upland habitat for bighorn sheep, deer, and elk, and the Foundation has ample funding available in the Deschutes River Fund for this project.

Motion was made and seconded to approve \$10,000 for this project as requested. Motion carried.

OTHER BUSINESS -

2018 Siletz & Yaquina River Watershed Projects

The Foundation is working with Michele Long, OFW Habitat Restoration Biologist, on a series of projects in the Siletz and Yaquina River watersheds. The following projects along with the efforts on Long Prairie Creek (summer 2017 LWD enhancement and winter 2018 revegetation) are pending funding from OWEB with OWF as the fiscal sponsor.

- **Buttermilk Creek Habitat Enhancement**

Tentatively scheduled for summer 2018 and contingent on grant funding, this project will address the lack of in-stream complexity caused by the absence of large wood in Buttermilk creek and limited future

potential for natural recruitment of large wood to the stream. Buttermilk creek was identified in early Mid-Coast Watershed Council Assessments as having high potential for watershed restoration based on its morphological characteristics that benefit the production of primarily coho salmon. A 2007 Limiting Factors Analysis of the upper Yaquina provides treatment priorities for Buttermilk Creek.

Buttermilk Creek is a tributary to the Yaquina River, which enters the Pacific Ocean at Newport, Oregon. The Buttermilk watershed is 12,480 acres in size, with a small lake in the headwaters. It is located in the upper Yaquina River Watershed between Norton and Nashville, Oregon. The stream enters the Yaquina River at river mile (RM) 43. All of Buttermilk creek watershed drains through private industrial timberlands and is managed for timber production. Management of the watershed is comprised of Starker Forest, Inc. and Hancock Forest Management.

This project will place 174 logs in up to 32 individual structures in just over one stream-mile of Buttermilk Creek, plant conifers and hardwoods in the riparian zone, and willows in reed canary grass dominated beaver terraces to provide a future food source to support beaver recolonization. Our treatment addresses the primary limiting factor affecting salmon production within Buttermilk Creek; the lack of in-stream wood. Total cost for this project, including recovery of 10% indirect costs is \$100,432.

Project partners are contributing the following to this project:

Starker Forest, Inc. - \$9,800 in-kind logs for in-stream structures and \$5,200 in-kind labor/equipment for an excavator/loader for mobilization and log placement.

OFW - \$4,600 in-kind for project planning, management, and implementation.

- **Upper Sunshine Creek Habitat Enhancement**

Tentatively scheduled for summer 2018 and contingent on OWEB grant funding, this project addresses limiting factors for juvenile salmonids in the upper reach of Sunshine Creek.

Sunshine creek is a 7th field watershed that flows into the Siletz River at river mile 57.5 near Logsden, Oregon. The Sunshine Creek watershed drains an area of ~10799 acres and provides 15 miles of anadromous fish habitat. Fish species present in the watershed include coastal coho, fall chinook, winter steelhead and cutthroat trout. The entire watershed is owned and managed by industrial timberland. The proposed project area flows through both Weyerhaeuser and Hancock forest lands. The current forest management cycle goes on a 30 year harvest rotation.

The majority of the watershed surrounding Sunshine Creek is young timber and clear-cut. Sunshine creek was identified by ODFW as a priority area for restoration in the Siletz watershed in the ODFW 1994 Guide to Selecting Restoration Projects. It has 4 miles of high potential winter habitat for Coho; which is third highest for length in the Siletz watershed. It also ranked 30th out of 100 7th fields for functioning Coho winter habitat. The Rapid Bio Assessment survey (RBA) of juvenile Coho distribution and abundance conducted by the Mid-Coast Watersheds Council in late '90's early 2000s found that Sunshine Creek had the highest average juvenile Coho densities of other Siletz river tributaries.

The current habitat consists primarily of glides and riffles, with lateral scour pools at bends. The overall habitat complexity and number of pools and pool cover complexity is very low. Previous habitat surveys found a very low volume of wood in the watershed. Between 1998 and 2000 ODFW completed a few projects that added around 185 logs, 36 being key size (10m long by >60cm diameter), and approximately 6.5 miles treated. The ODFW Benchmark is to have at least 320 pieces of wood per mile and at 48 key pieces per mile as a goal. Anything under 160 pieces per mile (16 key pieces) is considered undesirable. The stream is currently far under this level.

Riparian areas are dominated by hardwood trees and shrubs through much of the mainstem. Some conifer planting has been done during previous habitat projects. Overall, there is a significant lack of potential recruitment of conifer of key size dimensions that would be able to create the habitat preferred habitat conditions for salmonids. There is some natural recruitment of LWD where the valley constricts and hillslopes are closer to the stream, but there are stretches in the flat areas with no conifers near enough to the stream to naturally recruit. The conifers which do recruit are from young stands are well below "key" size.

This project will improve winter rearing habitat conditions for juvenile salmonids and increase future availability of conifer to naturally recruit to the stream by placing 25 large woody debris structures (4-8 logs each) in 1.4 miles of the mainstem Sunshine Creek and up to 5 structures in the first 1,700 feet of 4th of July Creek, and plant 3,100 conifers and hardwoods within the riparian area in the target reach. Total cost for this project, including recovery of 10% indirect costs, is \$96,643.

Project partners are contributing the following to this project:

Weyerhaeuser – \$7,000 in-kind, 48 or more key size logs

OFW R&E Grant Program – \$8,000 cash grant for logs and mobilization

OFW – \$4,600 in-kind, project planning, management, and implementation

Meeting concluded at 12:50 pm.

ALL MEETINGS ARE THURSDAY FROM 11:30-1:00 AT THE OREGON WILDLIFE FOUNDATION OFFICE.
COMMITTEE MEMBERS ARE ENCOURAGED TO BRING THEIR OWN LUNCH.

2017 MEETINGS:

- 3/16/2017
- 6/22/2017
- 9/14/2017
- 12/7/2017