Willamette River Stakeholder Meeting Notes

Wednesday, Dec. 18
10:00-2:30pm
Trillium Farm Home, Old School Building
Introduction

Pam Wiley, MMT & Peter Kenagy, Willamette landowner & farmer

- Meyer Memorial Trust was established in 1982 from endowment for charitable funding
- Picked the Willamette River because of the significance to the majority of the Oregon populace
- The Willamette Mainstem Cooperative (funded by MMT) began with landowner focus
- Looking to put something into place that would be long-term and centered on native vegetation communities
- It is a partnership project with many players
  - We cannot accomplish much on our own, we must work together to improve and maintain the river for future generations.
1. WHAT ARE 2 WAYS WE CAN USE INFORMATION FROM THIS ASSESSMENT (AND OTHER SOURCES) TO IMPROVE STEWARDSHIP OF VEGETATION RESOURCES ALONG THE WILLAMETTE RIVER?

a. IDENTIFY 3 GAPS IN KNOWLEDGE OR MISSING INFORMATION THAT ARE BARRIERS TO ACHIEVING IMPROVED STEWARDSHIP.
Question one – In what ways can use information from this assessment (and other sources) to improve stewardship of vegetation resources along the Willamette River?

* **How to use the assessment**

  * **Planning**
    * Use maps - ID and rank problem areas and priority species, define scope
    * Analyze to see if there is a pattern of distribution of high quality habitats correlated with topography, soils, etc.
    * Develop and get buy-in for benchmarks
    * Provide focus to efforts/determine priorities, set long-term goals – Education & outreach, control, etc.
    * Marry the assessment with other data
    * Create an action plan
    * Assessment divorced from side channels – need to look at entire system

  * **Control**
    * Phenology and timing to address multiple species at once
    * Ivy as a common denominator weed – ag and ecology
    * Explore Integrated options

  * **Solicit funding** – data strengthens grant proposals
    * Submit joint grant to work on weeds

  * **Communication & Implementation**
    * Share info with landowners, get stakeholder buy-in, share resources
    * Communication with neighbors to coordinate control efforts
    * Coordination among groups
    * Communicate and learn the goals of ownerships first – and seek solutions for all landowners
    * Willingness of landowners to allow access – if property has invasives identified, what will happen to them?
    * Provide incentive for other parties to get involved
    * What is the best approach to education and outreach?
    * Ways to work across boundaries – risk liability
    * Avoid overwhelming landowners – occasional forums and look at big picture and distill
    * Follow-up survey
    * Lessons learned regarding landowner and group participation from other efforts
    * Promote business to customer information on invasives management (ex., weedsotters for businesses)
Question One - Identify gaps in knowledge or missing information that are barriers to achieving improved stewardship.

- **Gaps**
  - **Outreach**
    - How landowners can control invasive species (information, options, assistance)
    - Lack of access
    - Prevention of harm through use of appropriate control methods and timing
  - **Planning**
    - System-wide management plan - How do you know where you are and where you want to be?
      - What is the measure of success?
  - **Partners**
    - Missing players (ODOT, utilities, railroad, recreationists, industrial, etc.)
    - Not understanding the goals and needs of various types of ownerships
    - Who is responsible for what?
  - **Communication**
    - Bridge gaps between conservationists and landowners using case studies/success stories and local knowledge
    - Inadequate communication and transparency at the outset makes it difficult for the public to understand the issues and provide informed feedback.
  - **Funding**
Question One - Identify gaps in knowledge or missing information that are barriers to achieving improved stewardship.

* **Gaps (continued)**

  * **Data**
    * Need data portal to get information to land managers
    * Info on what invasives look like
    * Best management practices are not well established
    * Impacts of climate change on vegetation communities
    * What are expansion rates of weeds – will help in prioritization – need scientific data
    * Accuracy of surveys – some populations may be missed.
    * Location of priority fish species, e.g. OR chub
    * Locations of other priority native spp.
    * Cottonwood recruitment and populations
    * Goals in terms of patch extent, and composition of native habitats. Where is the biggest bang for the buck?
    * Common accessible repository for information (share w/ landowners)
    * How best to support landowner stewardship
    * Combine this assessment with other surveys on the mainstem (Harrisburg to Eugene)
    * Areas that we can shift to (mixed conifer – year-round shade – to shade out invasives like Himalayan blackberry)
2. List 3 ways we can collectively determine priorities for vegetation resource management along the Willamette River.

a. What are 3 factors that may prevent buy-in and consensus from stakeholders?

b. How do we achieve consensus and buy-in across diverse ownerships, i.e., public, private, and industrial?
Question Two – List the ways we can collectively determine priorities for vegetation resource management along the Willamette River.

Ways to determine priorities

* **Data**
  * Overlay with Willamette slices framework ([http://ise.uoregon.edu/slices/main.html](http://ise.uoregon.edu/slices/main.html)); use layers to determine hotspots
  * Leverage off other regional initiatives, such as the Willamette River Initiative ([http://willametteinitiative.org/](http://willametteinitiative.org/))
  * Building on existing information
  * Case studies (lessons learned from all listed in red)
    * Research
    * Restoration efforts
    * Landowner experiences

* **Partners**
  * Bring key stakeholders to table work through Coordinated Weed Management Areas
  * Rotating chair/leadership role
  * Listen to private landowner needs

* **Planning**
  * Create short and long-term goals
  * Developing ecological framework for costs efficiencies – be open to all willing landowners
Question Two - List the ways we can collectively determine priorities for vegetation resource management along the Willamette River.

Ways to determine priorities (cont.)

Planning

- Develop decision tree (criteria to evaluate projects)
- Complete assessment on other Willamette mainstem reaches
- Synthesize data and information on watershed scale
- Consider priority sites to begin groundwork.
- Marketing campaign details (refine messages and create efficiencies – real issue is not lack of $)
  - Share our story and tailor the message to fit the targeted audiences.
- Identify ecological aspects of issues (pros and cons to all groups)
- Appeal to sense of community (we all live downstream)
- “Ask an Expert” - (need an organized group of experts to respond quickly) – OSU, Oregon Invasive Species Council, Invasive Species Hotline, SOLV, etc.
- Clear and effective messaging
- Make use of groups with strong niches
- Understand and communicate what you are trying to achieve
- Create committees (Education & outreach, economic messaging, legislative outreach)
Question Two - What are some factors that may prevent buy-in and consensus from stakeholders?

- **Barriers**
  - Poor outreach
  - Lack of evidence for argument
  - Disagreement on goals and priorities – multiple layers of priorities depending on land use
  - Missing strategy to accomplish goals
  - Regulatory concerns (need to develop a sense of trust & cooperation)
  - Missing stakeholders
Question Two - How do we achieve consensus and buy-in across diverse ownerships, i.e., public, private, and industrial?

Consensus strategy (It’s about PEOPLE!)

* **Resources**
  * Sufficient resources
  * Create list of all missing/present stakeholders along river reach

* **Outreach**
  * Media campaign on river ecology/invasives = sales – key messages – need a lead, request for proposal, etc.
  * Annual invasive species meetings focused on Willamette
  * Social hubs (churches, FSA, schools/scouts)
  * Tours (ID plants, etc.)
  * Change the culture
  * Utilize existing framework for outreach efforts
  * Identify tangible common interests (common ground)- address conflicting goals – identify overlapping values/interests
  * Connect the dots – identify ecological, economic and societal benefits
  * Incentives
  * One size doesn’t fit all
  * Inform stakeholders of benefits – link to recreation quality, H2O quality, fish & wildlife
  * Focus on willing players and non-regulatory approaches
  * Address consequences of inaction
  * Develop personal relationships
  * Follow-up with survey participants
  * Identify ways to bring along non-participants (neighbor to neighbor)
  * Use different outreach for different partners
  * Give all stakeholders draft priorities and solicit feedback
3. NAME 2 APPROACHES WE CAN USE TO COLLECTIVELY ADDRESS PRIORITIES ON THE WILLAMETTE RIVER.

a. WHAT ARE SOME OF THE BARRIERS TO COLLABORATING TO ADDRESS PRIORITIES?

b. WHAT ARE SOME OF THE OPPORTUNITIES TO DEVELOP LONG-TERM CAPACITY TO ENSURE THESE PRIORITIES ARE ADDRESSED?
**Question Three** - Name approaches we can use to collectively address priorities on the Willamette River.

- **Approaches & Opportunities**
  - **Outreach**
    - Share lessons learned up and down the Willamette – more education (interpretive signage)
    - Create venues to share information
      - Float trips
      - Directory of self-identified resources who can provide information
      - Peer to peer networks
    - Well articulated legislative outreach
    - Engage agricultural and industry communities, cities and urban areas (be inclusive)
    - Get marketing people involved
  - **Planning and partnership**
    - Use historical context
    - Utilize and share available resources, i.e. refer to experts
    - Clarify roles and niches (interjurisdictional agreements)
    - Define big picture
    - Team together to get, use, and share resources
    - Set flexible realistic goals that match all stakeholders
    - Credible scientific info
    - Consider regulatory authority
    - Restore public lands using model examples
    - Create a model for the river and share with all reaches
    - Hire a facilitator for the planning process
Barriers

- Competition between organizations
- Lack of resources; funding cycles not matched with landowner needs; resources not in right place to achieve restoration goals; competition for funding conflicts with collaboration
- Access issues
- Glamour of restoring sites overshadows less sexy maintenance projects – MAINTENANCE is important
- Political and service boundaries
- Having to say, “I can’t help you” to a landowner
- Poor outreach, argument (proof)
- Economics (long-term)
- Disagreements on goals/priorities
- Lack of recourse and/or checks and balances
- Strategy to reach goal
- Lack of science to develop priorities/determine ecological processes
- Detachment of people to river
- Not considering all stakeholder goals
Question Three - What are some of the opportunities to develop long-term capacity to ensure these priorities are addressed?

Opportunities

* Funding
  * Tax base – local push – encourages matching funding
    * County weed control district levy
  * Communicate economic costs of inaction/benefits of mgt.
  * Tax incentives/credits
  * Submit grants as a stakeholder group – show funders in it for the long term
  * Track local changing priorities (Corvallis Sustainability)
  * User fees – whoever benefits should be contributing
  * Endowment
  * Willamette River watershed council?

* Bite the elephant in pieces
  * Two phases – establishment/planning phase and long-term operational phase
At some point, do we need to address well-established invasives like blackberry?

EDRR!

Early detection and rapid response for invasive species

We need to prevent introductions of invasives from upstream.

Do we understand the connection between healthy riparian habitat and a healthy river?

Invasives are preventing the establishment of natives.

Useful info – areas that can shift to mixed conifer for year-round shade competition

1850’s GLS – patches of grand fir, perhaps geomorphically stable

It is distressing to see weeds choking out riparian habitat where large trees need to be.

Importing trees for deposition into a river system is an expensive and labor intensive undertaking.

Assessment surveys show most weeds at habitat edges and areas of high disturbance
Does water primrose (*Ludwigia* spp.) have any benefits? A water body would be more open without it, creating more habitat for aquatic species.

* Reduces dissolved O2 in water

Riparian areas are important to fish – the single most important component of fish habitat in large rivers and side channels/floodplains is woody debris.

Significant differences were seen in vegetation near urban areas – more weeds, escaped ornamentals.

Invasive weeds are also affecting native mussel populations.

There are lots of studies nationwide looking at the effects of aquatic invasive species on other species/ecosystems.
Barriers

- Lack of trust – fear of government interference
- Cost
- Competing economic interests
- Turf
- Be inclusive
- Develop a sense of trust and cooperation (regulatory concerns)
- Scale of problem
Group can access hyperlinks to studies on the effects of invasives on the ecosystem.

Benton SWCD will provide the stakeholder survey results by sector.

Next planning meeting in February with Willamette Mainstem Cooperative.
Survey for 4 key invasive species on the Willamette mainstem from Eugene to Harrisburg
  * Chosen based on variety of treatment methods and prolificacy of species
  * Knotweed, ivy, clematis and purple loosestrife

3 priority areas for survey and treatment focus
  * Chosen based on interface between public and private landowners, large acreage parcels, and habitat present.
  * Applied Willamette slices framework ([http://ise.uoregon.edu/slices/main.html](http://ise.uoregon.edu/slices/main.html))

19 landowners, all said yes
Invasive Weed Information

* Dick Brainerd’s presentation on Willamette River Invasive Plant Assessment
* Willamette Mainstem Final Report, abridged
* PowerPoint for Ludwigia (water primrose)
  * http://plants.ifas.ufl.edu/manage/docs/researchreview/2013/NewLudwigia-ColetteJacono.pdf
* WSSA article on water primrose
* Aquatic invasive species, Oregon Sea Grant
  * http://seagrant.oregonstate.edu/invasive-species
* Paper on ivy control in the PNW
  * http://www.invasive.org/gist/moredocs/hedhelo2.pdf
* False Brome Working Group article
  * http://appliedeco.org/invasive-species-resources/FBWG/brsybrochure.pdf