

January 9, 2013
ENTIAT WATERSHED PLANNING UNIT MEETING MINUTES
Entiat Grange Hall, Entiat, WA

Meeting Attendance: See Attendance List (**Attachment #1**)
See detailed Agenda (**Attachment #2**)
Facilitator / Watershed Coordinator: Mike Rickel / Susan Dretke
Notes: Nada Wentz

Welcome / Introductions

Meeting began at 9:12 a.m.

Mike Rickel welcomed meeting attendees and started the round of introductions.

- **Approve October 2012 EWPU Meeting Minutes**

Mike Rickel: The January 2013 meeting notice and agenda were sent out with a link to the October 2012 minutes and posted on the Cascadia web site for review. Does anyone have any comments or edits for the October 2012 meeting minutes?

Hearing none, the October 2012 meeting minutes are finalized.

- **Review and Accept October Agenda**

Karin Whitehall: We should send Tracy the CD, or a website link, to the Entiat Watershed Planning Unit (EWPU) background and history.

Mike read the Agenda items to the group for possible edits. The Agenda was reviewed and accepted.

Mike R: Dave Holland, with the Department of Ecology (DOE), moved back in as lead on watershed issues – 40% of his time as water rights examiner and 60% of his time as watershed lead.

Entiat Landowner Steering Committee Update

- **Chelan-Douglas Land Trust:**

Mickey Fleming: I thought we would have visual capacity, but we don't so I will bring my presentation back to you in April. Thank you for the opportunity to talk with you.

The salmon recovery efforts toward acres protected and miles treated has resulted in the land trust acquiring about 500 acres. Some of this land is in the Stillwaters area between miles 16 – 26 since it was shown to be the most threatened area in the Entiat for salmon spawning. It has always been our approach to not buy more land than is necessary. Many times, parcels straddle the road with landowners wanting to sell the whole property

whereas we only have interest in the most ecologically valuable areas along the river. We were not always successful in purchasing the areas needed. The question now, is it possible to sell the upland areas that are not needed and put the proceeds back into salmon recovery? We have some clarification on whether selling upland areas can be accomplished but are looking for more. Two parcels currently under consideration for the resale of uplands are the Cascade National Bank and the Troy properties. Both parcels straddle Entiat River Road. Each parcel has the potential for a homesite with power and wells on the upslope side of the road. We are sensitive to the community's concerns regarding removal of land from the tax base.

Mike R: Does the Land Trust pay taxes?

Mickey F: Yes. Of the ten parcels we own, early on, two out of the ten had applied for a reduced rate in an open area. These two parcels received the public benefit rating system of 50%. The other eight parcels have not received a reduced rate because we have not asked for it. We could apply for an extension from the Nature Conservancy, but we want to be good citizens and try to pay taxes at those regular rates. Restrictions lower the property value because you can't build on certain properties.

Even without a big policy change, it is possible to sell un-needed portions and put money back into salmon recovery. The Land Trust would have to pay appraisal costs. The money would be held in escrow until it is sold. We have to go through the Citizens Community, Regional Technical Team (RTT), and the Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB) before selling.

We are interested in trying this. We don't have candidates out there waiting to buy. The market is not the best at the moment, but that can change. It would serve the community's goals to have property available to help with the potential tax base. The potential downsides would be the other landowners viewing it as competition for them when selling their property. The potential danger is in misunderstanding the property sales.

Jon Small: Will there be an exchange for Entiat property?

Susan Dretke: Will you have to go through a subdivision process?

Mickey F: We can do a certificate of exemption to avoid that. Are there other thoughts or concerns? Is there a feeling that this is worth our efforts to move forward on?

Keith Vradenburg: Allowing the land that isn't needed to be available to be purchased and it will help the school.

Mickey F: It does not require a policy change. It is feasible, not easy but feasible. If there is room on the next agenda I will come back and we will look at maps. I appreciate your thoughts on this.

Mike R: Will it increase the tax base if the property is sold for houses?

Mickey F: Yes. If sold, the deed of right will change and increase taxes.

Mike R: There has been concern by the EWPU of loss of property tax funding that helps support the school.

Mickey F: It would be a positive effect to increase taxes. The only parcels taxed as open space are in the Brennigan Creek area.

Mike Kaputa: Tax on undeveloped land is not that great. Anything we can do to help support it, give us a call. We'd like to help.

Mickey F: We view it as a win-win situation. I apologize for not checking ahead of time for the visuals.

Tracy Eisenhard: Will this expand on public land access rights?

Mickey F: Any time money is used for salmon recovery, specific rules apply. Some folks have used Land Trust property for picnics, public access points, canoeing, and habitat restoration projects. I would like signage put up to remind folks. Stormy reserve is a developed public access.

Karin W: Is Stormy Reserve maintained during the winter?

Mickey F: The entryway is plowed, but not the rest of it. It is at your own risk. We have field trips to show salmon spawning and volunteer opportunities – usually in the spring.

Water Resources

- **DOE Certified Water Right Examiner Program:**

Mike R: DOE has created a certified water right examiner program. It doesn't speed things up, but has a new approach for water right applicants to get a certificate.

The following excerpt is from an Ecology News Release, dated November 28, 2012.

The water rights examiners will provide final inspections of water right permit holders' place and purpose of water use, a step currently required of Ecology staff. The program will be administered by Ecology at no additional cost to the public. Water right permit holders will hire and pay their own water right examiners.

"The certified water right examiner program is an important tool in the proof examination portion of the water right permitting process," Sturdevant said. "We continue to work on

ways to make water right processing more efficient and provide quicker access to the water supplies needed for growth and development.”

Increased legal complexities reduced funding levels and growing competition for limited water resources have contributed to an accumulation of pending water right processing work statewide (<https://fortress.wa.gov/ecy/publications/SummaryPages/1211050.html>.) Ecology's Water Resources program is currently operating with 128 total staff with 42.2 FTEs dedicated to writing and processing water right permits. As compared to the 2007-09 biennium, the program budget has been reduced by roughly \$7 million and 35 staff.

Karin W: It is an opportunity but not a requirement.

Susan D: They hire an examiner, but the focus is on the Wenatchee.

Karin W: The examiner is not a DOE employee but is required to pass the DOE test.

Susan D: The examiner has to identify and verify that the work was done right and then sign the permit. That is what this position is for.

Mike K: The examiner is non DOE personnel that can be hired to verify the work. The examiner has to be certified by DOE.

Susan D: Dan Haller will process the application and Dave Holland will verify the work has been done and write the letter.

Mike K: There is not adequate funding for DOE to do this, which opens it up to the private sector.

Jim Small: This is not something handled by the Water Conservancy group?

Mike K: I think the examiner could do the work before it goes to the Conservancy Board.

Karin W: With DOE you pay \$50 and DOE does the work. With the Conservancy Board you pay \$1,000 up front, but hire a private consultant to do the work which can cost between \$5,000 and \$10,000.

Mike R: There is the water right person to do the work, and DOE to grant the permit. In Wenatchee, they are working to take care of the backlog of applications of folks that want to be able to access the reserves. What is the approach the Wenatchee is looking at and what Entiat may need to follow?

Mike K: The Wenatchee Watershed proposed moving forward with a cost reimbursement program two to three years ago. We entered into an interlocal agreement to help support and coordinate this cost reimbursement program. We want to put

together a funding package, set up local control to work with DOE and municipalities. We kicked this process off in January and found that there are 120-150 applications pending. We did the first round of letters to see if all are still viable applications. Twenty five people have expressed interest in having their water rights processed. We will be doing two to three more rounds of outreach to see who is still interested in their applications going through. We have some costs from DOE and have hired Aspect Consulting to find out other costs. Once we know how many want to be processed, we can figure the cost per application. We want to pool funds with grant funding and hope to result in issuing water rights. It may not be as clear as it seems. Some applications are not in the reserve or are covered by the reserve. If you provide mitigation under the rules, we could have that application as well. Entiat is different because of the agriculture specific rules. It is likely the earliest that water rights would be issued is about 15 -18 months from now. Maybe we will be issuing rights in 2014.

Susan D: When I sat in on the interview panel for this new DOE position, they said they had the same timeline. They hope to expand it into other watersheds. They also said it would be 20-24 months to write the permits.

Mike K: The program will have to initiate the process. There is an expense associated with that. Some can be funded by grants, but not for all. It is a great opportunity to move forward. I'm very interested in working with this group and others.

Mike R: One advantage in the Wenatchee is that you have entities (cities) willing to put money in to help to process the back log of pending water right applications in order to access the reserve. I struggle to see how this might work in the Entiat.

Mike K: How many rights are we processing? How many are in the reserve? We could find out the same in the Entiat. It is a big deal to have water rights processed. It is exciting. Maybe we could end up with about 50 applicants wanting to move forward. It is great news!

Mike R: Thank you for that discussion.

Karin W: You have an update on what is going on with the wells?

Mike R: We have hired a consultant to do the verification and pre-work for the change in point of diversion. We have five locations diverting surface water to wells. Many are not far from the wells. We are working on the legal task of working with GeoEngineers to coordinate with DOE. All the wells but one have been drilled and were used last season.

Mike K: If the water rights application is not in line, the application can't be processed.

- **Entiat Water Exchange Web Site:**

Decision Point: Is there any objection to continue the Entiat Water Exchange web site for one year?

Mike R: Is there any objection to continue the Entiat Water Exchange web site for one year? We do have a landowner wanting to use some of the water to irrigate. I'm questioning the need to continue the website at a cost of \$35.00 a year. We have not really used it and there are concerns of widely advertising to outside communities the availabilities to use the water rights.

Jon S: Did I miss a meeting? Has anything happened? I think we should have the website one more year.

Mike R: Is this a tool we want to use? Can we get Entiat landowners to use this tool as needed? There is more work we could do to ensure due diligence on this program. See if anything can be done to get this going. The Irrigation District would be a big player in this. Or have a test run to see if it works the way we envision it.

Jon S: I would like to see follow up on this with the Water Exchange committee.

Mike R: I saw support from Jon and Conard to continue for one more year. I'm hopeful to have an update from the Water Exchange committee at the April meeting.

Mike K: It seems to be a need to address with access to the reserve. How do we set ourselves up to carry this out as we intended it to go? I would like to help with that.

Don Olin: I like the add-on for the committee. When someone is thinking about the Irrigation District, we'd like to know.

Mike R: There is a couple up the river that is interested. Maybe meet later in January or early in February.

Jim S: February is better.

Mike R: Ok, early in February. Is there further discussion on that? Then, we will move to the next agenda item.

Decision Point: Is there any objection to continue the Entiat Water Exchange web site for one year? *There is no objection. The web site will continue for one more year.*

Habitat

- **Box Canyon Log Removal Update:**

Susan D: We had a presentation about a log in Box Canyon blocking bull trout from getting up-stream to spawn. The log that was blocking their passage, flushed out in early fall. There is another smaller log that jammed in the same place, but we will wait to see

if the trout can get past it. It is still a holding pattern to see what the bull trout counts will be.

Jim S: With all the bud kills and fires, it seems like it will be difficult to maintain. There may be a lot of wood in the river one of these days.

Susan D: Yes, that happens, apparently. The river is getting warmer and fish prefer cooler water to spawn.

Mike R: Maybe we can have a follow-up once we get the redd count information for 2012.

Pamela Nelle: We have to be careful that the results show accurate information.

- **Stillwaters Projects and Tour:**

Susan D: We had a tour on November 2 made up of about 40 agency folks, and toured between RM 19-25. There was a lot of feedback and comments. The differing perceptions of what was imagined the final constructed project would look like, versus post construction reality, was interesting. The construction went off without a hitch with the exception of fire level halts. It is heartening to see Fish and Wildlife got pictures of adults using the brand new constructed log structures.

Jim S: Were there any comments from landowners that were on that tour?

Susan D: There were landowners on the Yakama Nation tour. And I took landowners on a tour of Dillwater and the Tyee construction. Robes Parrish had a wonderful explanation of importance of wood in the rivers. It helped landowners understanding a great deal. It may not have changed the landowners' feelings about it, but their understanding was much better. It is exciting to see the whole process and see the end project.

Jim S: I think the landowners are satisfied to know and see what is going on.

Susan D: The excitement of worry has died down. It seems folks are satisfied.

Mickey F: Two of the projects were done on Land Trust property. The revegetation isn't done yet, but we are pleased it worked out with the wood movement by helicopter, causing a lot less mess. It was cost effective. The projects are very different from each other. It was an opportunity to watch the differences in each. The initial response of the log trucks going up and down the valley has changed to what happens to the projects over time. I don't think it would take much to get them upset again if trees are up against someone's bridge. If something unusual happens, be on top of it and ahead of it, acting quickly.

Jim S: It would be helpful to communicate with the community during high water, to explain what is going on with each project and what is happening.

Mike R: All project sponsors are establishing engineering guidelines.

Jim S: That would be a positive influence for landowners.

Conard Petersen: Did folks call and want a tour?

Susan D: When folks couldn't be there on the official, scheduled tour date, I offered to take them out later.

Conard P: Is there any exchange between what we are doing and what the tribes are doing?

Susan D: Yes. We have monthly meetings coordinating resources, processes, working together as a unit to make it as cohesive and comprehensive as possible. We are coordinating with state, federal and county permitting agencies in order to have consistent permit conditions and where we can share information. We have been meeting since February 2012. We are taking a lot of lessons learned from Stillwaters.

Mike K: To add to this, we have a couple of folks with vacation homes across from Dillwater. Three or four we were not able to contact regarding the work. They gave me an earful of the mess across the river, but did get some feedback.

Jim S: Is there anything on liabilities issues?

Mike K: Yes. There should be legislation brought up on civil liability this next session. The review is happening late. It will be extensive because of education problems.

Mike R: A bill has been drawn up, and has approval of trial lawyers. Landowners will not be liable to damage done downstream.

Mickey F: I'm encouraging signage to warn outdoor sports activities of danger during high water.

Mike K: There are rules protecting the county of downstream damage from upstream projects. One thing we are exploring is insurance for projects. Low risk activity, but if something does happen – it can have high impact. That may be something other entities consider. If impacted, insurance takes care of it instead of out of our own pockets.

- **2014 Project Planning:**

Susan D: We have coordinated with project funders and project sponsors are working together on 2014 projects. We should have preliminary designs by April, projects out to bid next spring, and construction starting in 2014. There are a lot of variables for impact.

A discussion with the RTT will happen in February to obtain feedback on design ideas and alternatives.

The October public meeting where we had hoped to roll out the future projects to the community, had agency folks outnumbering the landowners. Maybe it was a bad night for folks, or folks are more accepting of it. We are not giving up on outreach to get the word out to the public about proposed work. The whole goal is to keep folks up to date on what is going on. As we move forward with more information, we will use all venues possible to get the word out. We plan to meet at Coopers for lunch to visit one on one and send emails. Mike Cushman has spent a lot of time with landowners keeping them informed and building a trust relationship. Each project will be heavily researched.

Mike R: The focus is from the hatchery to near the mouth of the river.

Conard P: What about the wood the Keystone diversion snagging and collecting additional wood?

Mike R: Kurt went in with a chain saw to shave off the rough edges and the wood that was collected was washed away over the fall/winter.

Doug England: Doesn't it seem to be overdoing it to add wood to wood structures?

Susan D: That may be a conclusion drawn when more information is available on what is in the river now.

Doug E: It seems silly to add more.

Susan D: We will look at that to see if it makes sense.

Mike R: Often time it accumulates and then moves/dissipates. It is an early consideration at this point. No decisions have been made.

Jon S: Yakama Nation will have maintenance, and make sure that they maintain it.

Mike R: Thank you for bringing that up and I know you have worked on how we accomplish that.

Susan D: I will make sure that gets on the agenda for the next meeting.

Mike R: Are there any more questions or comments on the 2014 planning? Hearing none, we will move to the next item.

Outreach Efforts

- **Draft 2012 Entiat Watershed Annual Report:**

(Attachment 3: Draft 2012 Entiat Watershed Annual Report)

(Attachment 4: Final Draft 2012 Entiat Watershed Annual Report)

Decision Point: Is there any objection to finalizing the Draft Entiat Annual Report, with comments/edits received today and before the end of January and mailing out?

Susan D: This is in response to the desire to have more information in a report. We tied in efforts for salmon recovery within the Entiat River to the upper Columbia River region. The focus is not just on habitat restoration and recovery. We tried to show a bigger picture of what is going on in the Entiat area. We put in information on the hatchery, what exactly we are doing and why. Projects completed this summer were included. On page 10 we put together graphs picturing what monitoring information was shown, what fish numbers are and what they are trending toward in Entiat. The last couple of pages talk about what is going on in the Upper Columbia region. Page 14 compares Entiat to other rivers in the region.

This is a draft, pictures will be added. Please review it and give me feedback as to what information is helpful and what is not valuable. If there is something else you would like to see in the report, please let me know. Feedback is needed by the end of January, written, emailed, or visit me at my office.

Mike K: The water usage graph shows a lot of saved water.

Susan D: I will go back to the source and find out what project that is.

Pamela N: Can you send it out electronically?

Susan D: Yes. I will make it into a PDF form and email it out.

Mike K: The status of salmon recovery in general. The tribes on the west side have brought up deficiencies of current salmon recovery efforts. If you look at the 5 year, NOAA Fisheries painted a gloomy view of what is happening in recovery efforts. If we portray a picture that things are great and another agency portrays things as not good, it shows a disconnection. The message we send is connected with other agencies.

Mickey F: Was it the efforts or the results they were gloomy with?

Mike K: It was the comments specifically on habitat being degraded. Somehow we need to rectify what we say and what others say.

Jim S: Sounds like we need to get on that right away before the negative PR from other groups. Counter it with the truth and have it available.

Mike K: The assessment that NOAA Fisheries is kicking off with a couple of other agencies will be our opportunity to portray what we are doing here.

Susan D: Entiat is not a picture of a larger area. If we are doing it right here, we can only portray what is going on in the basin. If it is an exception to what is going on, be an example as to how to do it right. We should celebrate where we have successes.

Jim S: I don't see where NOAA Fisheries is doing anything to help. If they are naysayers, maybe show what they haven't done themselves.

Mike R: Be aware of that information and context it in the subsequent report. Take that on a little more aggressively.

If you would like to go through it page by page, we can do that. Or, if you want to take it home to digest the information, we can do that.

Tracy E: Maybe emailing it to folks to share with others would be good.

Mike R: We will send it to the entire Planning Unit and encourage that it is forwarded out. We are at the end of the Agenda, is there anything else you want to discuss?

Craig Chisam: Have you heard anything about moving the Roaring Creek diversion down?

Mike R: There are two surface water diversions on Roaring Creek. The lower diversion is efficient and does not pose a concern regarding fish passage. The diversion upstream is terribly inefficient and is not fish friendly. It is about two miles up from the first and has multiple users. We are looking at relocating this diversion. There is a potential impact on the users should the diversion be changed to the Entiat River. This potential location is currently being evaluated to determine the potential impact to the users between the potential new location and the mouth of Roaring Creek. The goal is to maintain current water needs as possible to users during the change.

Meeting Close-out, Evaluation and Adjournment

Mike R: The next EWPU meeting will be April 3, 2013. Please make sure to sign the 'sign-in' sheet before you leave, if you haven't already done so. Evaluation sheets are available for comments and/or improvements. Thank you for your attendance! See you on April 3, if not before.

The meeting adjourned at 11:08 a.m.

List of Attachments

Attachment

Contents

1	Attendance List
2	January 2013 Agenda
3	Draft 2012 Entiat Annual Report
4	Final Draft 2012 Entiat Annual Report