Mid-Coast Water Planning Partnership Early Implementation Work Group Meeting

Date: Tuesday, April 9, 2024, 9:00 am – 10:30 am
Location: Virtual (Zoom)
Conveners: Adam Denlinger (Seal Rock Water District)
Facilitators: Suzanne de Szoeke and Mikaela Clarke (GSI Water Solutions, Inc.)

Participants:
Alyssa Mucken – Oregon Water Resources Department (OWRD)
Andrea Formo – Georgia Pacific—Toledo
Andrea Sumerau – Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians (CTSI)
Billie Jo Smith – Lincoln County Water Systems Alliance (LCWSA)
Bill Montgomery – MidCoast Watersheds Council Board Member
Cynthia George -
David Rupp – Oregon State University (OSU)
David Waltz – Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ)
Evan Hayduk – Mid-Coast Watersheds Council (MCWC)
Fran Recht – Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission
Janna Stevens – Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW)
Jennifer Beathe—Starker Forests
Joyce Mauceri -
Kayleen Davis – Makers Acres
Lodynne Mackaravitz -
Mark River – Weyerhaeuser
Mikaela Clarke – GSI Water Solutions, Inc.
Olivia Jasper – Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA)
Pamela Herndon – Resident on Siletz River
Paul Engelmeyer – MidCoast Watersheds Council Board Member
Rieghly Sitton – Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF)
Steve Parrett – Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ)
Suzanne de Szoeke – GSI Water Solutions, Inc.
Tatyana Isupov – Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ)
Tyler Clouse – Lincoln County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD)

Questions/Comments To Address	**Decisions**
• Andrea Sumerau will contact Stan Van de Wetering about water quality and quantity monitoring • ODFW will provide instream flows information • David Waltz will send links to the websites he showed during his talk.	•

• David Waltz will also send maps showing different impairments and other layers, and analysis information developed for the original Siletz workgroups to the group (per Paul's request).	
GSI Action Items • Look into Smartsheet's ability to track changes/version control • Work on organization of Smartsheet database • Send form about access to Smartsheet • Send Implementation Gaps spreadsheet	**Partnership Action Items** •

Next month: Full Partnership meeting on May 29 at 5 pm (and tour in Siletz watershed)

Next Work Group meeting: June 11 at 9 am

Smartsheet discussion:

Smartsheet overview (Suzanne):

- GSI has been finding out from stakeholders what kinds of projects they have been implementing and what actions they fall under in the Water Action Plan. This information has been compiled into a spreadsheet and now into a Smartsheet. The purpose of the Smartsheet is to have a living spreadsheet that shows what projects are being implemented, who's leading them, what actions they are implementing, the priority of those actions, the timeline, funding information, and support needed.
- Smartsheet helps summarize information, for example, query all the work done under a certain action number.
- A difficulty has been that there are a few projects that fall within multiple actions. In that case, we were thinking we could list those projects multiple times so that if you want to look up an action number or priority group, that project will come up. GSI is working through the issue of there being redundancy, but it's tricky. GSI is open to feedback.
- There is also a form on Smartsheet that people can fill out with project information, and that information will automatically populate the spreadsheet. Forms could be more user-friendly. More forms could be made.
- Interfacing:
    - Access can be provided in different ways. Entities can get access as editors if they will be working in the spreadsheet a lot so that they can make edits.
    - Entities can also be viewers, and they could either enter information into a form or send information to GSI to put in the Smartsheet.
- Everyone can have a chance to view it and provide feedback on what modifications they'd like to make.
- GSI will send out a Google Form where people can indicate their preferences for access to the Smartsheet – editing or viewing. Then those permissions can be granted.
- Questions/comments:
    - David Rupp: is there version control?
        - Suzanne: GSI will look into that and find out if there's a way to do that.
    - Billie Jo: There should be a column that has the date of editing so we can track when and who last updated it. Add more ways to track status – not just estimated start date, but progress column too so updates can be tracked. Actions should have a description column. It should be flexible enough that we can arrange the spreadsheet by action.
    - Paul: We've realized that past projects (for example, on Ten-Mile Sanctuary and Beaver Creek) lacked diversity in the plant species we used, which limits their effectiveness in climate storage and biodiversity. To address this, we plan to revisit these projects and incorporate 10-15 different plant species. This will also improve carbon storage, as multi-species planting is more effective. We could call these new projects Beaver Creek 2.0 & Upper Beaver Creek 2.0. We should figure out the details of how we'll do this.
        - Suzanne: those could be considered Phase 1, Phase 2, etc. of those projects.

- Fran: I don't have a link to this, can we look through it for comments?
    - Suzanne: I will send out a form requesting what kind of access people would like and then you can provide feedback.

Implementation gaps discussion:

Outreach & Implementation Gaps overview (Mikaela):

- GSI has been reaching out to partners that were identified as leads or participants in the Action Plan. We've been reaching out about priority A actions and if the partners are implementing those actions.
- The Implementation Gaps spreadsheet shows 2 types of gaps: 1. Gaps in what actions are being implemented (e.g., Actions 5 and 10 are not being implemented to our knowledge), and 2. Gaps in which entities are implementing actions (for example, Oregon Coast Aquarium was identified as a lead for Actions 1b and 1f, but they are not implementing projects related to those actions).
- The spreadsheet shows yes, no, and maybe for if projects are being implemented for each action. The 'maybe' is for actions that we have not received complete information about related projects.
- The group can provide feedback and information about any of these priority actions and projects they know about.
- The text colored red shows entities that are not identified as a lead or participant for an action (or they are not a lead at all) but are implementing that action.
- We heard from certain entities that the actions they were listed for do not align with their priorities. For example, some state agencies take more of a participant/support role rather than a lead. For example, ODA supports the SWCD's on-the-ground work.
- Comments/questions:
    - Fran: A lot of communities are working on emergency planning. There is a new Lincoln County emergency coordinator at the County working with the cities too-- she could probably answer question 10 ... (Samantha Buckley)
    - Bill: Are we in regular contact with OHA? It seems they should be a key agency involved.
    - Rieghly: OFRI has lots of outreach/education https://oregonforests.org/about-ofri
    - Paul: In terms of folks within our mid-coast landscape, the group North of Lincoln City on the Salmon River, they have a watersheds program. That's an example of how far do you reach out to these communities about education? The other question would be have you run this by Stan at the Tribe? He has done water quality and quantity monitoring in the past. If you haven't reached out, you definitely should.
        - Andrea Sumerau: I will be touching base with Stan about this.
    - Tyler: Can you differentiate water quality monitoring and testing? The District is taking water quality samples from three basins and testing for a number of parameters.
        - Mikaela: sort of hard to tell exactly what the action means. What the SWCD is doing could qualify.
    - Paul: Establishing minimum instream flows is an ODFW effort I believe. I'm not sure if ODFW has made progress on this, but they have a workplan to do so. With climate change, flows will get lower and floods will happen more. It should be a priority for us. Maybe somebody on the call knows more about that.

        - Janna: ODFW has flows identified. I think Kara DiFrancesco has compared where instream flows are not being met. We can work with you to get the information; I think she did a lot of work identifying where those needs are. We also do IFIM studies that are reach/species-specific. We use those to apply for minimum flows and instream water rights. We definitely could do those in this region. We don't have any plan to, but if the group identifies a specific reach where they would like that to be done, we can make that a priority in the future.
- The next step after finding the gaps using this spreadsheet is to look at the bundles that Leah created. For actions that aren't being implemented but are in bundles, we can look at partners addressing other actions in bundles and see if they could implement the action that has a gap.
    - Bundles could also be used to develop work plans or another work group that focuses on implementing actions within bundles. For actions not in a bundle that aren't being implemented, we could do the same thing (develop work plans or get a group to focus on these).

David Waltz (DEQ) Presentation:

- Background:
    - I was asked to discuss TMDL (total maximum daily load) development in mid-coast area (we look at it as everything but the Siuslaw).
    - 303(d) list (lists what waterbodies are impaired) is supposed to be updated every two years (doesn't always make it as a priority). Out of 303(d) list comes requirements to develop TMDLs, related to regulations under the Clean Water Act. There's also a non-point source pollution control program and a coastal control program. The non-point source programs have voluntary path options.
    - DEQ views place-based planning as fitting in well with the voluntary pathway. It's multidisciplinary and covers a lot of issues.
    - I will summarize what TMDLs are looking like in the region without going too in depth on the technical aspects.
        - Comment from Fran: I'm most interested in progress at meeting the 303(d) criteria and where progress is being made in terms of setting limits and enforcement.
- Oregon 2022 Integrated Report GIS website
    - You can turn the layers on and off. Pink/green are watershed units, lines are stream assessment units (reaches, or stream segments).
    - If you click on a line, you can view Impaired Parameters and export summaries for each assessment unit. Can view impaired parameters on Siletz Rock Creek to Roy Creek for example. There is also a geodatabase for GIS use.
    - Attaining Parameters means samples have been taken and decisions have been made about attainment. These include what the impairments are. Insufficient Parameters are usually a longer list (lack of information and gaps).
- TMDLs in the region:
    - We had a number of TMDL projects in progress in the mid-coast as far back as 2005 for temp, bacteria, and basic parameters. It moved into dissolved oxygen (DO) assessments from 2008-2018.

- In Sept 2023 a TMDL for DO and bacteria was issued for the Upper Yaquina, incl. Little Elk Creek. It was the first in the state to be issued through a rule-making process rather than through an order.
- The context for moving forward with these in other impaired water bodies that we started work on but have been unable to complete is a series of court-ordered deadlines on the temperature replacement projects.
- EPA was sued over DEQ's issuance and EPA approval of temperature TMDLs across the state in mid-2000s. EPA was ordered by a federal court to redo those temperature TMDLs.
- DEQ was very active with stakeholder groups on TMDL development up until 2019, but had to pause most of the work because of lawsuits, etc.
- In the integrated report, you can view the TMDL submission schedule (most recent 2020-22). They submit the schedule with report.
- The Mid-Coast now only has 2 impairments & assessment unit combinations on the schedule – Schooner Creek and Upper/Middle Siletz Watershed. These are the drinking water areas for municipalities. The new deadline is 2030.
- Question from Fran: how did temperature drop off the mid-coast?
    - David: In terms of the court-ordered deadline, those were only to address temp TMDLs that had already been issued. The litigation concluded that EPA improperly approved them. So EPA/DEQ has to redo all temperature TMDLs done prior to litigation. There weren't any in MidCoast prior to that. That's probably good because it will take everything to get those done by the court-ordered deadline. If there were any more, there would be lots of new analysis and public process etc.
    - At least when we get back to the temp TMDL for the MidCoast it will be past the legal litigation stuff.
    - Late 2028 is when the temp replacement projects are projected to be finished on the court-ordered deadlines (not all of the projects on the list).
- This is not the only litigation. There is an effort to complete a mercury TMDL on Snake River, etc. independent of this litigation.

- Questions:
    - Paul: At some point, someone can put together a visual of the Siletz and the MidCoast where it's really clear how much is impaired and what the parameters are. Not just a big picture map, but zooming in to the basins and showing all of those impairments. It would be helpful to know how much is impaired as we do outreach.
        - David: This is a pretty straightforward GIS exercise that we do every 2 years, we make static maps of different impairments. DEQ can generate that for this group. We are trending towards interactive maps so that people can zoom in and out. We do have the geodatabase on the website so a GIS person could use that as a layer. We'd need a specific list of what layers you're interested in, not just impairments.
        - In 2012-14 all the temp data by station was mapped along each rivers that we did temp projects for. You can see where the departures from the criterion are. The modeling has been done (principal analysis for working groups) but DEQ had to remove it from the website. I can provide that information upon request.
        - David will note those two things (mapping and original modeling data) and make sure they're available to folks.

    - Paul: Related to cold water refugia: we've hired bio surveys and they've snorkeled 400-500 miles in streams and identify where those cold water... (Paul's audio cut out here)
    - David: DEQ is re-evaluating which of the bacteria TMDLs it makes sense to move forward with, because a lot of the analysis was before 2015. We're trying to figure out the time and effort it would take and if it makes sense to just issue bacteria TMDLs (probably). That would be easier to get out the door compared to temp and dissolved oxygen.
- Siletz River watershed modeling:
    - In 2019, Ryan Shojinaga (no longer with DEQ) gave a presentation on the Siletz River watershed modeling in 2019 to one of the workgroups. The objective was to update folks on the technical work.
    - Ryan did a watershed model and linked it to an instream water quality model for the temp and dissolved oxygen analysis. It was at the calibration stage, meaning he had a model he could run scenarios with.
    - The model showed the watershed condition and what's happening in the water column. Various processes (biological, chemical processes, etc.) affect dissolved oxygen concentrations and pH.
    - I never saw a final report, but Ryan had a calibrated model from water up in the gorge down to tidal water in the Siletz.
    - The project is in good shape for when we get a modeler to pick it back up.
    - Take-home messages:
        - It's a combination of factors. In some areas, dissolved oxygen conditions in the Siletz do not meet criteria – typically low flow conditions or high temp conditions. There are some nutrient conditions to do with sediment and phosphorous during the wet season as well. Ryan identified these conditions and when exceedance is most likely to occur.
        - Need more shade on smaller and larger tributaries.
        - Anything we can do to retain flows.
        - Reduce nutrient loads, particularly phosphorous, but perhaps sub-surface nitrogen.
    - We can discuss where the opportunities are to do those things, and who's willing to pursue projects within our CS or on other private lands to improve landscape conditions, reduce sediment runoff, etc. Waiting for the TMDL is important but it's not the only thing we can do to make improvements. We have a good sense of what the three primary improvements are.
    - I want to acknowledge the work the Lincoln SWCD has been doing on the Siletz to improve conditions on private lands, assessment work, outreach, etc. They have maps on their website with opportunities that might be helpful for restoration opportunities.
- Comments:
    - Tyler: You all might find the Upper Yaquina TMDL page useful. The Water Quality Management Plan in particular is helpful in providing a synthesis of the analysis of reaches along with timeline for reduction. https://www.oregon.gov/deq/wq/tmdls/pages/upperyaquina.aspx
    - Kayleen: They're logging throughout the Siletz watershed. How is rehabilitation going to help when activities like logging and use of plastic sheets, burning, and spraying, will continue? The Save our Siletz page has recent reports of bladder cancer. As you're doing TMDLs what tributaries are you looking for? How are you factoring in what's happening now?

- David: The TMDL process is intended to reduce contaminant load, it is not necessarily a health assessment. There's a disconnect between several activities you described and what a TMDL can do to help. We factor in land conditions and known chemical usages, but these factors stack the complexity and uncertainty of the model even higher. The best route would be to work in parallel with those organizations that have direct authority over those activities. The TMDL is a piece that can set criteria to protect or improve water quality, but it can't dictate everything that happens in the landscape. That's a larger issue divided up between agencies.