

MCKENZIE RIVER FOCUS WATERSHED COORDINATION

Fiscal Year 1998



DOE/BP-34723-1



This report was funded by the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA), U.S. Department of Energy, as part of BPA's program to protect, mitigate, and enhance fish and wildlife affected by the development and operation of hydroelectric facilities on the Columbia River and its tributaries. The views of this report are the author's and do not necessarily represent the views of BPA.

This document should be cited as follows:

Runyon, John; R. Davis-Born, McKenzie Watershed Council, McKenzie River Focus Watershed Coordination, Fiscal Year 1998 to Bonneville Power Administration, Portland, OR, Contract 97AP34723, Project 96-070, 9 electronic pages (BPA Report DOE/BP-34723-1)

This report and other BPA Fish and Wildlife Publications are available on the Internet at:

<http://www.efw.bpa.gov/cgi-bin/efw/FW/publications.cgi>

For other information on electronic documents or other printed media, contact or write to:

Bonneville Power Administration
Environment, Fish and Wildlife Division
P.O. Box 3621
905 N.E. 11th Avenue
Portland, OR 97208-3621

Please include title, author, and DOE/BP number in the request.

MCKENZIE RIVER FOCUS
WATERSHED COORDINATION

Fiscal Year 1988

Prepared by:

John Runyon
Renee Davis-Born

McKenzie Watershed Council

Prepared for:

U.S. Department of Energy
Bonneville Power Administration
Environment, Fish and Wildlife
PO Box 3621
Portland, Oregon 97208

Project No. 96-070
Contract No. 97AP34723

Abstract

This report summarizes accomplishments made by the McKenzie River Focus Watershed Council in the areas of coordination and administration during Fiscal Year 1998. Coordination and administration consists of tasks associated with Focus Watershed Council staffing, project management, and public outreach. Key accomplishments in the area of staffing include planning, facilitation, and minutes recording for monthly Council, executive committee, and coordination team meetings; forming and staffing committees to guide implementation of water quality monitoring, and education and stewardship projects; and hiring an Education Coordinator to manage the Council's student education and landowner stewardship activities. In the area of project management, staff developed the FY98 Scope of Work and budget for approval by the Council and BPA; provided quarterly budget and work program progress reports to the Council; and secured additional funding from Council partner organizations and foundations. The Focus Watershed Council also planned and sponsored a Water Quality and Watershed Health forum, and coordinated planning and implementation for multiple assessment, monitoring, and acquisition projects. Project planning and implementation was completed in cooperation with the Spring Chinook Working Group and the Habitat Conservation and Acquisition Working Group. Finally, the coordination staff expanded the Council's public outreach strategy to include newsletters, brochures, media coverage, and videos. Coordination of these activities by the Watershed Council will improve resource stewardship and protect fish and wildlife habitat through increased collaboration among federal, state, and local government agencies, and landowners, and affected behavior and attitudes arising from expanded knowledge generated by watershed education and outreach activities. The Council completed all tasks outlined in the FY98 Scope of Work with limited staff: Watershed Coordinator (1.0 FTE) and Coordination Assistant (.75 FTE).

Summary of Coordination Activities

Staffing

Funding from the Bonneville Power Administration allowed for continued administration of the McKenzie Focus Watershed Council. Monthly meetings of the Council, and its Executive Committee and Coordination Team were planned and staffed, and record keeping was completed. Coordination staff also composed comments to Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission regarding McKenzie Spring Chinook Plan, and a letter endorsing federal funding for temperature control devices at two Army Corps of Engineers controlled reservoirs to improve fish habitat in the watershed on behalf of the Council. Comments and letters of support from the Council address how actions by agencies and organizations align with the mission of the McKenzie Watershed Council and further its goals of maintaining and/or improving water quality and fish and wildlife habitat.

Staff worked with the Council to improve its structural framework and address representation gaps. Coordination staff scoped and convened committees to guide implementation activities in the following areas: Monitoring, and Education and Stewardship. These committees oversee implementation in aforementioned areas by the McKenzie Watershed Council, its staff and partner organizations, and associated groups. The committees also provide technical and management assistance. Staff recommended a shift from utilizing Resource Assistance for Rural Environments (RARE) volunteers for public outreach activities to a part-time Education Coordinator to manage Council's education and stewardship activities. Yearly turnover in RARE volunteers disrupted relationships and projects, and thus staff recommended that increased continuity would likely facilitate implementation of projects related to education and stewardship. The contractor selected to fill the Education Coordinator position was hired

in September, and within the first month had staffed a Council booth at a local community festival and begun working with educators to scope needs and resources in schools within the McKenzie Watershed. Volunteer involvement in stewardship, citizen water quality monitoring and coordination of watershed education programs in four school districts will remain the focus of this position. Finally, staff worked to replace the vacated environmental seat on the Council with a representative from Audubon Society of Lane County.

The McKenzie Watershed Council is providing a model for the formation of new watershed councils in the Willamette Basin. Its longevity and success, along with lessons learned during Council formation and planning, serve as a valuable case study for those watershed councils at earlier stages of development. Information generated by the McKenzie Focus Watershed Council is shared with other watershed councils by participation in periodic watershed coordinator forums sponsored by Cascade Pacific Resource Conservation and Development, conferences and workshops sponsored by the Governor's Watershed Enhancement Board and BPA, and other sources such as the web sites of the EPA and For the Sake of the Salmon. Through these activities the Council is developing synergistic relationships with other Willamette Basin watershed councils, state and federal agencies, and landowners.

Project Management

Coordination staff completed all tasks outlined in the FY98 BPA contract. A scope of work and budget was developed, and served as a basis for quarterly updates to the McKenzie Focus Watershed Council regarding work plan progress and fiscal expenditures. Staff also coordinated, and in some cases authored grant proposals, contracts, fiscal agreements, and Memoranda of Understanding (MOU). In addition to receiving ongoing coordination funding in FY99 from BPA, the McKenzie Focus Watershed Council and its partner organizations secured grants from the National Park Service, Padi Foundation, Diack Ecology Education Fund, the Oregon Parks Foundation, Springfield Education Foundation, and increased the level of funding from three partner organizations: U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, and Eugene Water and Electric Board. The watershed coordinator developed a MOU with the University of Oregon's Infographics Lab to maintain a GIS database for tracking project implementation in the basin. Finally, coordination staff worked with Cascade Pacific Resource Conservation and Development to develop fiscal management plan for the Council.

Coordination funding from BPA has furthered the Council's success at directing a coordinated approach to deal with watershed issues through communication and collaboration on projects with member organizations and others. Staff has been working with several committees to facilitate implementation of planning, monitoring, restoration, and acquisition projects in the McKenzie Watershed. The watershed coordinator is chair of the Spring Chinook Working Group for the Upper Willamette Basin. This group is charged with such tasks as developing a comprehensive watershed assessment, prioritizing fish and wildlife habitat protection and restoration projects, and coordinating a spring chinook life history-habitat research project with the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife. The watershed coordinator also staffs the Habitat Conservation and Acquisition Working Group (AWG). Based on scientific information provided by the Spring Chinook Working Group, the AWG plans and implements high priority enhancement and land acquisition projects in the McKenzie Watershed.

Council staff, with assistance from its partner organizations, planned and sponsored a public forum on water quality and watershed health, at which academic and agency experts explained critical problems affecting aquatic health in the McKenzie Watershed. The forum was well received, with over 100 interested individuals in attendance, and added support to the Council's priority actions of protecting and enhancing habitat and educating residents on watershed health concerns rapidly urbanizing portions of the McKenzie Watershed. Several speakers made recommendations for future action by the Council, two of which focus on monitoring water quality during high-flow events and instituting long-

term monitoring the biological integrity of the watershed.

The Council has continued implementation of its three-tiered water quality monitoring program. Intended as the first phase of an extensive monitoring program, *Tier I* was designed to cost-effectively track ambient water quality trends throughout the watershed by collecting information on key water quality indicators at fixed intervals at fixed locations. The Council now is developing the next tiers of the monitoring program. Council staff, in cooperation with the Storm-Event Monitoring Group, have developed and refined a monitoring plan for high-flow events in the watershed. The Council has identified portions of the watershed as problem areas through the *Tier I* process. Staff are developing greater data resolution in monitoring water quality in two areas: Cedar Creek, with bacteria and turbidity being the primary concerns, and the Mohawk River with temperature. Pilot monitoring programs were tested during FY98 for these two areas of the McKenzie Watershed, and being refined currently. Finally, staff have developed and implemented pilot citizen monitoring program for macroinvertebrates to gauge biological indicators of water quality.

Multi-agency water-quality task groups that were staffed by McKenzie Focus Watershed Council staff include:

- Ambient (Tier I) Water Quality Task Group
- Storm-event Monitoring Group
- Cedar Creek Water Quality Group
- Macroinvertebrate Monitoring Team

Public Outreach

Coordination staff, in addition to the newly hired Education Coordinator, continued implementation of the McKenzie Focus Watershed Council's watershed education/outreach program for residents and local schools for improvement of fish and wildlife habitat and water quality. In the area of adult education and stewardship, staff made significant progress in increasing the number of individuals reached with the Council's message. Staff produced three newsletters and distributed each newsletter to approximately 5,000 watershed residents. An edited video of highlights from Water Quality Forum was created and distributed for use by public officials and opinion leaders. Council staff planned and sponsored two riverside clean-up events on the McKenzie River to involve local residents in efforts to improve biological and aesthetic conditions in the watershed. Staff also distributed information about the McKenzie Watershed, the Watershed Council, and stewardship opportunities at community events in Eugene, Springfield, Marcola, and Walterville. A riparian brochure entitled *Caring for Streamside Areas in the McKenzie Watershed: A Landowner's Guide* was produced for distribution through such venues as local planning department and realtors. Council staff also worked with partner organizations to distribute public outreach materials regarding water- and fish-friendly practices in the home. The Council's web site was updated by staff to provide information on current issues and Council activities, including copies of newsletters, technical reports, and action plans. Finally, coordination staff assisted a partnership of agencies that manage recreation sites along the McKenzie River with development and implementation of interpretive signage plan.

Council staff continued to provide watershed education assistance to local schools. A watershed education database was created, which will eventually be accessible through the Council's web site. The database includes information of interest to educators such as curricula and program resources, topics covered by such materials, and volunteers willing to assist with watershed education in the classroom and field. In addition, a resource library for local educators has been compiled. Finally, staff have planned and implemented an educational macroinvertebrate monitoring program for local students, which will be evaluated and refined prior to expansion.

Coordination for the Future

The McKenzie Watershed has regional resource significance. It provides habitat for viable populations of anadromous spring chinook salmon (proposed for listing under the Federal Endangered Species Act and resident bull trout (listed as “threatened” under the ESA). Because it is one of the few strongholds for these species, the McKenzie is integral to the success of fish recovery planning in the Willamette Basin. In addition, riparian and upland habitat in the McKenzie Watershed is used by such at-risk species as the harlequin duck, Northern spotted owl, and Western pond turtle. The McKenzie River also produces the highest water quality of any river in the Willamette Basin and is the sole source of drinking water to over 200,000 residents of Lane County.

Based on the McKenzie Watershed’s importance in species recovery projects, continued funding has been secured from BPA for McKenzie Focus Watershed Council coordination in Fiscal Year 1999. Scope of work for the coming year will expand upon those objectives and tasks already completed to focus more specifically on coordination of protection and restoration activities. Work areas include: project prioritization and planning; ongoing implementation of watershed assessment, research, acquisition, restoration, and monitoring projects; procurement of other funding for long-term support of the Council; and ongoing watershed education/outreach program for residents and local schools. Fulfillment of these objectives will result in a collaborative approach to watershed management in the McKenzie Watershed. Expected products include: 1) a report describing a coordinated habitat restoration and acquisition process; 2) funding proposals (to BPA and other organizations) describing habitat acquisition and restoration projects; 3) successful leveraging of funds and organizational resources for projects to protect fish and wildlife habitat; 4) reports describing monitoring activities; and 5) educational and public outreach materials. Continuing coordination of the McKenzie Focus Watershed Council complements a number of fish and wildlife habitat projects in the Willamette Basin, including federal agency actions taken under the aquatic conservation strategy of the Northwest Forest Plan. These coordinated programs provide a framework for protecting and restoring fish and wildlife throughout the McKenzie Watershed and lay the foundation for the development of recovery plans for species that may be federally listed as threatened or endangered.