

Ecola Creek Watershed Council meeting minutes 9/19/2016

Present at Tolovana Hall were: Scott Rekate, Barb Knop, Jan Siebert-Wahrmund, Lisa Kerr, Bob Lundy, Richard Bertellotti, Mike Manzulli, John Wickersham, Brooke Stanley, Mark Morgans, Charles Dice, Melissa Keyser, Lyra Fontaine, and Troy Laws.

All present introduced ourselves. The ORCA appeal and smoke testing were added to the agenda. The minutes were approved with typos corrected.

On August 24, several of those present at the meeting (plus Scott's daughter) removed around 25 or 30 sections of wire fence from around cedars in the Reserve, leaving many more that presented no danger to their trees. The City later recycled the wire, saying they have plenty more.

GENA will meet tomorrow.

The Friends of Trees held a brief ceremony this afternoon, attended by several of those present at the meeting and several others, to dedicate the Tree City sign by the Fir Street sidewalk just north of the Fir Street Bridge.

Brooke and Mike met with Ryan Cruz of Surfrider and with Jesse Jones to discuss how to alert the public to dangerous levels of bacteria in the creeks because the State does not require warnings in freshwater. Surfrider is taking the lead on this issue and has created an easy link for people to sign up to receive alerts. ECWC asked Brooke to ask the NCWA Board whether they supported ECWC sending out this educational link to its members.

Bob will talk to Public Works about the sign that does not seem to have been put back up at the Chisana Creek outfall. [He did, and Tracy Sund promised to put it back up].

Smoke testing is being conducted in Cannon Beach, as it is being conducted in other coastal communities. No one from the city was present to speak to the smoke testing but Mark Barnes told Brooke there would be someone present at the next meeting to give reports. The contractor, recommended by Surfrider 6 years ago is the one that has been hired by the city.

Comments received on the NCLC maps that John showed and distributed at the last meeting were distributed and discussed, and are attached to these minutes. There is an emphasis on viewshed.

Mark reported that Greenwood Resources is repairing roads in the Icebox Canyon area in preparation for cutting timber. He says the tributaries there are not fish-bearing, and that company employees and contractors are taking care to protect threatened and endangered species; the company is having Doug Ray confirm. He says that when roads are repaired they must be upgraded to meet current

standards. Greenwood lands are open to non-motorized recreation at no charge. Under current law, they are shielded from liability if someone is injured, but a recent suit brings this into question. The legislature may change the law to maintain the protection from liability.

The City Council has tasked Melissa to work with the Chamber of Commerce on an ecotourism plan, to be completed by the end of the fiscal year. Their purpose is to manage, educate, and mitigate the impact of the people who are already coming, rather than to bring more in. Visitors are asking for guidance about where to go and what to see. The committee will hold a public meeting on September 29 from 7:30 to 11:00 at the Chamber.

There was discussion about encouraging and guiding installation of a bridge to replace the ford on the loop trail in the Reserve. There was support for a rustic bridge, but Scott is concerned about encouraging more visitors, and has noted a decrease in elk presence.

Troy says it is time for the fish to be coming back upstream.

Charles reported on a long-dead approximately 23-foot humpback whale that washed up on shore at Falcon Cove. He said it exploded from internal gas, and then washed back out into the water.

The Watershed Association annual party will be this Thursday evening at Buoy Beer in Astoria.

The first of this season's Nature Matters lectures will be presented by author Robin Cody on October 13 at Fort George Brewery. Lectures will be each second Thursday through May.

Brooke has offered to work with Mark Barnes on small grants for the ECFR and with Charles for Arch Cape wetlands.

Comments on NCLC priority maps

- Downscale the importance of slope; it can be retained if they think it independently important, but reduced in its weight in the analysis.
- Add a habitat variable for marbled murrelet or similar.
- Drop “land use” variable or change it; at present it doesn’t add much to the analysis but to show where clearcuts were at the time the data was aggregated, which is not especially informative for long-term conservation; if they are using this to look for mature forests, e.g., use murrelet habitat or find some sort of ‘mature age class forest’ layer instead.
- Possibly add a variable that better represents floodplains, plus associated ephemeral channels and minor wetlands – topofluents from soil layer would work at minimum
- recheck maps for omissions – proximity to public land especially (Ehler property in Arch Cape, e.g.?) but also there are several omitted parcels in both the fish categories too at the lower ends of streams.
- Something is wonky with the rock balds layer. They show long reaches of the North Fork Ecola Creek as vast rocky bald areas but there is nothing of that type/scale in there. (There are arguably more ‘rocky bald’ areas along the channel of the West Fork, where it passes e.g., just east of Double Peak.) There are similar oddities elsewhere (e.g., inland rocky balds at Ecola State Park?).
- Something is wonky with the Highway 101 viewshed analysis; the map shows things not visible, while omitting big things that I constantly see (Double Peak, for example). Someone should take a look at this critically. (Recognize that the views from 101 generate funding opportunities; if that were not the only goal, one might also consider viewshed from Ecola SP or Cannon Beach beachfront, for example).
- Add ‘proximity to UGB’ (though NCLC may not like this, because it could draw emphasis away from high-priority rock balds). -ECAP has, for example, discussed proposed acquisition for the lands between the EC Forest Reserve and the Cannon Beach UGB to put those areas, sure to be annexed, in public hands and scenic/conservation functions.
- Whether all three fish species (coho, chinook, winter steelhead) need to be included as three independent layers in the analysis; in spite of a few differences, they are significantly redundant and result in a largely automatic ‘triple loading’ of the importance of fish habitat in the analysis; if that is the intent, though, that is fine; if NCLC adds the floodplains and murrelet habitat they might not need this redundancy and could stick to, for example, a coho distribution layer or some sort of aggregated ‘anadromous fish’ layer that captures all three. It all depends on how much weight they want this to have in the analysis.
- Arch Cape Water District had water rights on Dichter Creek; it had water rights and intake infrastructure there historically; if it still retains the potential to use water from that creek, it might be considered for addition to the “Drinking Water Sources” layer.