

**Partnership for Coastal Watersheds:
COOS ESTUARY INVENTORY PROJECT SUBCOMMITTEE**



MEETING NOTES

Date: January 29, 2014

Time: 2:00 PM

Location: Coos Bay Fire Station- Community Meeting Room

Present:

Jon Barton- citizen at large

Chris Hood- citizen at large

Don Ivy- Coquille Indian Tribe (retired), citizen at large

Matt Spangler- Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development

Jill Rolfe- Coos County Planning Department

Debbie Erler- City of Coos Bay Planning Department

Craig Cornu - South Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve

Jenni Schmitt - South Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve

Erik Larson - South Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve

Colleen Burch Johnson- South Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve

Jon Souder - Coos Watershed Association

Alexa Carleton - Coos Watershed Association

Introductions and agenda review

Don Ivy, subcommittee chair, began the meeting by inviting participants to introduce themselves, then summarized the meeting agenda.

Geographic scope of the project (environmental and socioeconomic).

Jenni presented the project's revised geographic scope showing socio-economic boundaries overlaid with environmental boundaries.

- Jon Souder said his socio-economic map boundaries looked slightly different, but that this map was fine.

Decision: There were no more comments on map changes that should be made, so the final project boundaries presented at the meeting will be used for the environmental and socio-economic summaries.

Environmental conditions.

Jenni reviewed the document outline and the table of contents for the environmental conditions. She pointed out 3 chapters that are in draft form and will be soon up for technical review and those that will be focused on next. She then went over the structure of each chapter including: Chapter Summary, Climate Change Summary and Data Summaries.

For the Chapter Summary, Jenni asked opinions on the switch to micromaps.

- Jill Rolfe expressed her appreciation for this new format.
- Jon Barton asked if we planned to fill in the data gaps described in the Chapter Summary section
- Craig said that Jenni has done extensive data gathering for data that is already available and part of the purpose for the inventory is to point out where research is needed
- Don Ivy asked if we have run into the problem of not being able to obtain proprietary data.
- The EPA eelgrass data was an example of data that several present have been unable to obtain.
- Jenni stated that although the chapters drafted thus far have not had that problem, she has run into that with some of the data acquisition for other chapters.

Jenni continued by explaining the Climate Change Summary part of each chapter and asked if the background boxes worked.

- There was general agreement that this section was good.

Jenni finished by detailing the format for the Data Summaries part of each chapter.

- Jenni asked if the variety of illustrations was a good combination or if people wanted more maps.
- The committee as a whole liked the variety of visuals.
- Don Ivy commented that he especially liked the discussion on fish distribution in the estuary.
- Jenni asked if the “Why is it Happening” sections of each data summary got at the committees previous concern of adding any available interpretation as to the cause of status and trends
- Don Ivy commented that it is good to have narrative of things changing but don’t need reasons why
- Craig noted that the goal is objective, not subjective, narrative.
- Jon Souder commented that the Coho summary indicates declining population but that isn’t what he sees or what the table seems to show. He also questioned the interpretation of the OASIS data
- Craig reminded everyone that technical reviews by those who developed original data are still to come
- Don Ivy gave anecdotal evidence of changing California Halibut landings over the past 5 years and asked if data could be found and this could be included in the fish chapter.

- Jenni asked how much information to add to each chapter and gave the example that the salmonids data summary is primarily focused on adults, but juveniles could be added.
- Jill Rolfe said that she would like the information on juveniles to be added.
- Jon Barton asked if we could include information on predation, from cormorants for example.
- Craig commented that we need to decide where to draw the line.
- Don Ivy said we should include it if we can without becoming bogged down and suggested a separate chapter solely on predation.
- Craig asked if that would include upland predators like cougars.
- Don Ivy said no, just focusing on water predators like mammals and birds.
- Craig pointed out that raccoons also prey on fish, so should they be included?
- Jon Souder pointed out that if predation information is not included, the document will likely be criticized. He suggested rewriting the data summaries so that less emphasis was placed on where the fish species were found, using a map for that purpose, and focusing more on life history information and predation information.
- Jon Barton asked if non-native fish were included, including hatchery fish
- Jenni pointed out that there is a separate chapter on non-native species, and added that information on hatcheries was included in the salmonids chapter.
- Jenni asked for additional comments on format etc.
- Don Ivy had several grammatical errors he wanted to point out after the meeting

Socioeconomic conditions.

Jon Souder handed out an outline of potential topics for the socio-economic assessment and went over several topics he was considering. The first topic was land owner fragmentation, including small parcels along the estuary and rivers. Comments included:

- Small and older parcels outside city sewage systems are more likely to have septic systems that leak.
- DEQ requires new standards for septic systems installed after 1980's so systems before that were more at risk for contaminating streams.
- Jill Rolfe mentioned that some risks still exist even for newer systems.

The second topic for discussion was submerged land ownership. Coos estuary has private ownership of many submerged lands – some were sold into private ownership and are now leased by oyster growers. Jon used the North Point section of the bay as an example.

- Jon asked committee if studying submerged lands was worth pursuing as an assessment topic.
- The committee generally approved with continuing this assessment.

The third topic Jon discussed was zombie parcelization. He gave the example of marsh land subdivided into plats for housing developments, which are often bought by an absentee buyer who later discovers the land cannot be accessed or built upon. Jon also briefly discussed measures 37 and 49.

The fourth topic Jon brought up was wetland mitigation sites. He said there are currently no maps showing wetland mitigation sites, which would be useful for planning future sites.

Jon then gave examples of demographic assessments, including income levels and age structure. He skipped over some of the demographic topics to save time. He continued with jobs/employment data for Coos County and asked the committee which of the approximately 20 employment categories he should do a detailed assessment on.

- Jon Barton commented that Jon Souder should look at the manufacturing sector and clarify import vs export.

Jon Souder also discussed demographic changes to the community (e.g. fewer children, which may affect local schools).

- Don Ivy asked if Jon could get data from 1990 or earlier.
- Jon replied that some of the data was at the county level and that data was available from 1990, but data at a scale smaller than that would be hard to find.

Jon finished by giving the committee the status of the STAR communities analysis that Emily Wright is working on. He handed out a sheet showing the completion status of each sustainability metric. He also mentioned that the methods used for rating some of those metrics had changed since the October meeting, but he still thought it feasible for Emily to finish with that analysis by the August 31 goal.

Review of project schedule.

Craig reviewed the timeline, showing completed tasks and dates for future deadlines, including:

Environmental Assessment:

- 1) January - May: On-going review of Inventory Chapters by technical advisors
- 2) March 1, 2014: Submit no-cost grant extension with progress report
- 3) June 2014: turn in full draft to Inventory subcommittee and full PCW steering committee
- 4) August 31, 2014: Final Inventory Complete (in the event no grant extension approved)
- 5) August 31, 2015: Final Inventory Complete (in the event grant extension approved).

Socio-Economic Assessment:

- 1) March 2014: 1st draft of Socio-Economic Assessment completed; continue STAR community assessment of community indicators
- 2) June 2014: Draft Socio-Economic profile and draft STAR community assessment to subcommittee and full committee
- 3) September 2014: Final Socio-Economic profile and STAR community assessment reports completed

Next steps: We will meet again end of March, early April to give a progress report.