Network of Oregon Watershed Councils
Fall 2012 Council Survey – Final Report

Compiled by Ryan Gordon

January 13, 2013

Part 1: Overview & Conclusions

Overview

In the fall of 2012, the Network of Oregon Watershed Councils (the Network) conducted a statewide survey of watershed councils. The survey included an online questionnaire that was hosted by SurveyMonkey and follow-up interviews with council coordinators conducted at regional meetings around the state. Overall, 62 separate councils responded to the questionnaire, which was targeted at council coordinators and directors. After adjusting for umbrella councils and those councils that currently have no staff and little or no active board structure, approximately 80% of councils surveyed provided a response. Roughly the same percentage of councils participated in the regional meetings. The online questionnaire was used to collect baseline information about councils for use in Network communications, and to receive feedback for improving and focusing products and services offered by the Network. The regional meetings provided an opportunity for personal conversations with councils to build relationships, garner additional feedback, and discuss current events, such as changes to OWEB council support.

The following summary includes an overview of key council characteristics, as well as important themes related to Network products and services that emerged from the questionnaire and statewide meetings. This report does not include any detailed comparisons or analysis of relationships between different measures in the questionnaire. With improvements in design, subsequent iterations of the questionnaire could allow for such comparisons, as well as analysis of longitudinal trends. Complete results from the questionnaire, as well as more detailed findings from the meetings, can be found in the sections that follow this summary or online at www.oregonwatersheds.org.

Council Characteristics

The questionnaire included a number of demographic questions designed to collect basic information about councils. Over 80% of councils were founded between 1990 and 1999. About 75% are a 501(c)(3) non-profit; of those that are *not* a non-profit (25%), 50% rely on an SWCD to serve as their fiscal agent. The majority (about 60%) of councils have an operating budget of $100,000 or less, and a total annual budget (including all projects and expenditures) of $500,000 or less. Most (90%) coordinators are funded at 0.75 FTE or greater. About 50% of coordinators report serving in that capacity for four or more years, while 23% say they started the job in the last year. Around 30% of councils report having 4 or more different coordinators in the past 10 years.

Councils reported spending on average about 50% of their staff time on restoration, 30% on outreach, education, and media production, and 10% each on development/fundraising, and administration/finances. About 70% of councils report employing two or fewer full-time equivalent staff. On average, councils reported engaging 136 volunteers in the past year (median: 50); statewide, a total of 7,731 volunteers were reported over the past year. Board representation is broad, with at least 50% of councils reporting (1) private landowners, (2) regional boards, commissions,

districts, or agencies, (3) academic, scientific, or professional communities, (4) industry, (5) state and federal agencies, and (6) public interest groups represented on their boards. Nearly all of the councils surveyed receive funding from OWEB, 45% receive federal funds, and 24% foundation support.

Challenges and a Role for the Network

Despite differences in characteristics, survey results and personal conversations with council members reveal they share many concerns and challenges. Identifying and securing adequate funding was identified as a major concern and the biggest challenge to councils achieving their objectives. Maintaining board engagement was also regularly cited as an obstacle in conversations with councils. Councils increasingly recognize the need to work more closely with one another so that they can use resources more efficiently. Councils also desire continued representation in Salem – suggesting it is advantageous for watershed councils to have a statewide identity and equally important to receive regular updates from the capitol. Finally, councils indicated clear support for workshops and other resources that help staff acquire new skills to get work done on the ground. The Network is primarily viewed as a source of relevant information and resources targeted at councils, as well as a facilitator of exchanges among councils.

Funding

Currently, councils fund their operations primarily through OWEB grants and to a much lesser extend through federal grants and foundation support. Some councils have expressed concerns about uneven distribution of funding across the state, with some regions receiving more than others – an arrangement that could result in segmentation of councils statewide. To address these challenges, some have suggested building collaborative relationships among councils at the regional level, both to share resources and to jointly seek funds from private foundations.

Many see a role for the Network in supporting existing council-funder relationships and helping to build new opportunities. For example, the Network could help facilitate collaboration among councils, connect councils with potential foundations or other funders, and serve as a primary link to OWEB. Several councils spoke highly of the small project tour grants the Network has awarded to councils in the past, with at least one council indicating that support helped secure a significantly larger project grant.

Networking and Capacity-building Among Councils

The desire for stronger relationships among councils was apparent in both the questionnaire responses and personal conversations. Councils value opportunities for statewide networking and peer learning. Past Network events like the Fall Gathering or Watershed Management Camp received a lot of positive feedback and are viewed as good opportunities to exchange ideas and experiences (many suggestions for improving these events, as well as the content offered, were provided and can be found in subsequent sections of this report). In addition to hosting statewide events, councils have suggested smaller, informal gatherings with a more regional focus would allow them to network with

councils that face similar challenges. Many suggested some variation of a "coordinator exchange," which would pair experienced coordinators with new coordinators – a potentially valuable idea given that 23% of coordinators report starting in the last year.

In addition to hosting events to facilitate exchanges about successes and challenges, councils also expressed interest in an online, topic-centered, searchable forum that can be used to facilitate timely statewide discussions among councils about relevant issues. Respondents also underscored the importance of maintaining a current archive of support documents, templates, and other resources on the Network's Website.

<u>Building a Statewide Identity & Linking Councils to Resources</u>

In addition to building and strengthening networks among councils, survey participants also expressed interest in the Network strengthening and building relationships with outside partners, primarily legislative representatives, funders, and agencies or technical experts. More often than not, this was couched in the notion of a statewide "brand identity" for watershed councils – a uniform, recognizable presence and narrative about councils and the work they do. Councils feel the Network is well positioned to act as a bridge to Salem – building this identity and serving as a source of information on a variety of topics, ranging from funding opportunities, to important legislative changes, and technical resource training. Despite low ratings of the Network's current Website, councils would like to see many of these resources delivered online, or in another easily digested format that is delivered on a regular basis.

Conclusions

Overall, survey response highlights some clear roles for the Network; however, the wide range of suggestions received and lack of familiarity with some Network products also suggests ambiguity about the Network's mission. This sense is perhaps best captured by one respondent's final comments to the questionnaire:

> *"I think NOWC might need to pin its mission down pretty specifically and not try to be all things to all partners…Figure out what you do best and what only you do, and focus on doing that well…"*

Network staff has recently begun monthly publication of the *Network Update*, which is designed to provide timely information to councils in an electronic format. Additionally, the Network plans to offer a Spring Watershed Management Camp and Fall Gathering in 2013. Staff will take advantage of the feedback provided by this survey to help design content for these events. While the survey garnered a number of excellent suggestions for additional products and services the Network could consider offering (see subsequent sections), there is a clear need for the Network to invest in Web resources, which are perhaps the most resource-efficient means of reaching councils statewide.

Finally, the Network should continue updating and administering this questionnaire each year – repeating measures to track longitudinal progress and creating new measures that support a more detailed analysis. Results can be used to focus the Network's mission, improve program offerings, and track program impact in support of grant applications.

Part 2: Quantitative Summary

The original survey questions have been reproduced here, along with responses, which have been collapsed in some cases to simplify presentation. Respondents were not required to answer every question; percentages reported reflect the percent of response to each question. Responses to open-ended questions (qualitative) can be found in Part 3 of this report.

Questions 1-3. These questions collect identifying and other contact information from the respondents.

***Question 4**. When was your council founded?* (58 responses)
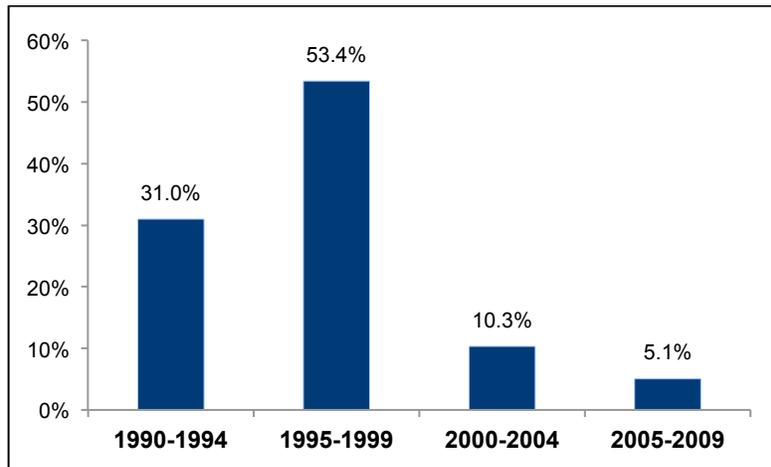
***Question 5.** Is your council officially designated or recognized by a local government?* (59 responses)

Response	%
Yes	96.6%
No	3.4%

Questions 6 & 7: *Is your council a designated 501(c)(3) non-profit organization?* (62 responses)

Three quarters of councils (74.2%) are a designated 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Of those that are not (26.8%), half indicated an SWCD serves as the fiscal agent, 6.3% indicated a local government entity, and 43.8% indicated they had an 'Other' fiscal agent (see chart).
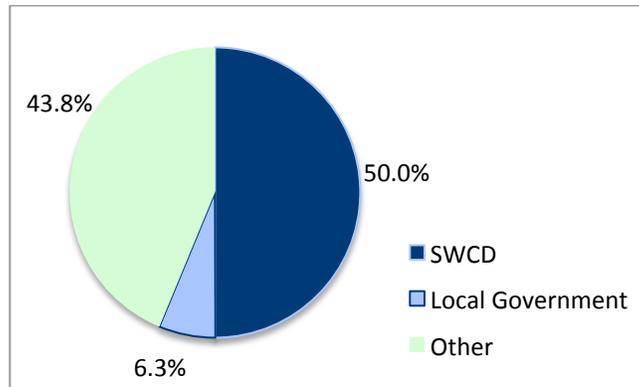
Question 8. *What is your council's annual operating budget?* (58 responses)
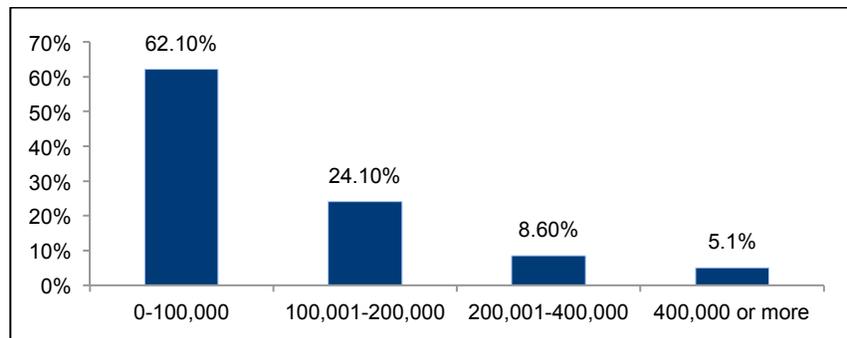
Question 9. *What is your council's total annual budget, including all projects and expenditures?* (60 responses)

Question 10. *Is the current council coordinator a hired employee, a contractor, or a volunteer?* (Please select one.) (61 responses)
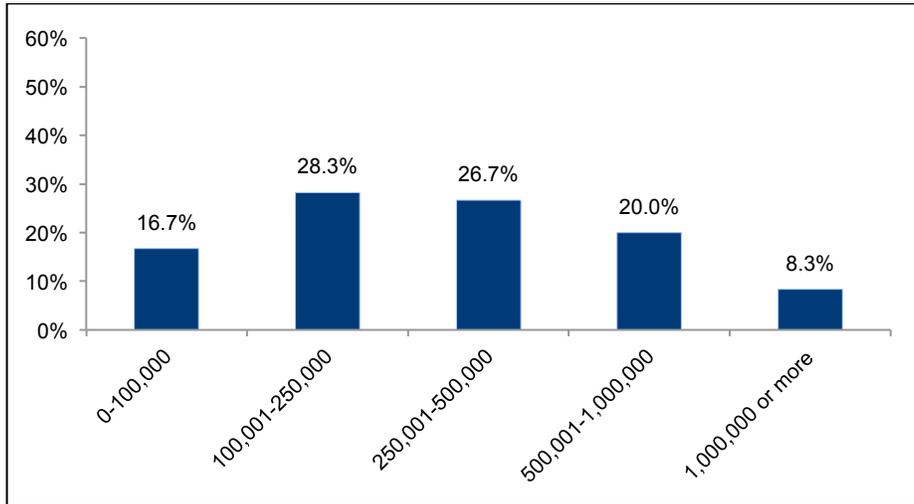
Council Coordinator	%
Hired employee	75.4%
Contractor	23.0%
Volunteer	1.6%

Question 11. *How many FTE (full time equivalent) is your current coordinator?* (60 responses)

FTE current coordinator	%
less than 0.25	5.0%
0.25 - 0.50	5.0%
0.51 - 0.75	23.3%
0.76 - 1.00	66.7%

Question 12. *Approximately how long has the current council coordinator served in that position?* (61 responses)

Coordinator time served	%
Less than a year	23.0%
1-2 years	13.1%
2-4 years	13.1%
4-6 years	14.8%
More than 6 years	36.1%

Question 13. *About how many different coordinators has the council employed over the past TEN years?* (59 responses)

Different coordinators in the past 10 years	%
1	23.7%
2	28.8%
3	15.3%
4	11.9%
5	8.5%
6	8.5%
7 or more	3.4%

Question 14. How many total FTE (full time equivalent) staff and contract employees currently work for your council? (57 responses)

How many total FTE staff currently work for your council?	%
less than 1	38.6%
1	14.0%
2	17.5%
3	12.3%
4	3.5%
5	12.3%
6 or more	1.8%

Question 15. Approximately what percent of your council's total staff time is dedicated to the following program areas? (57 responses)

On average, councils report spending about:

- 50% of their staff time on restoration;
- 30% on outreach, education, and media production;
- 10% on development and fundraising; and
- 10% on administration and finances.

Question 16. Which of the following funding sources play the most critical role in supporting your council's operations? (Check all that apply.) (62 responses)

Important funding sources	%
OWEB grants	96.8%
Federal grants	45.2%
Foundation support	24.2%
Major donors	4.8%
General membership	6.5%
Other	27.4%

Question 17. *Approximately how many non-board volunteers have you engaged over the past year?* (57 responses)

> Mean: 136 volunteers
> Median: 50 volunteers
> Statewide - Total Number of Volunteers: 7731

Question 18. *How many members serve on your board?* (62 responses)

Number of board members	%
5 or less	9.7%
6-10	37.2%
11-14	20.9%
15 or more	30.6%

Question 19. *We would like to know about the different interests represented by your council's board members. Please select all of the following that are represented on your board:* (61 responses)

Interests represented on the board	%
Private landowners	98.4%
Local and regional boards, commissions, districts, or agencies	75.4%
Academic, scientific, or professional communities	67.2%
Industry	65.6%
State and federal agencies	65.6%
Public interest groups	50.8%
Federally recognized Indian tribes	27.9%
Other (please specify) – *See Qualitative Summary*	36.1%

Question 20. What are the greatest challenges your council faces in accomplishing its programmatic objectives? Please select the top THREE greatest challenges from the following list: (62 responses)

Challenges	%
Funding	**77.4%**
Capacity to secure grants	**50.0%**
Capacity for community engagement	**45.2%**
Volunteer availability	24.2%
Capacity for administration	22.6%
Access to technical experts	19.4%
Lack of a strategic plan	9.7%
Lack of political support (national, state, or local level)	8.1%
Lack of consensus - opposing political attitudes or negative perceptions	8.1%
Other (please specify) – *See Qualitative Summary*	19.4%

Question 21. *The Network has provided different services and resources in the past, and we would like to know how valuable they have been to your council. Please rate their usefulness. If you have not accessed a resource, or have no experience with a service, select the "No experience" option. (62 responses)*

Network-provided Service	Average Rating	No Experience
Issue-specific workshops	**3.33**	**35%**
Local project tour grants	**3.13**	**47%**
Annual gatherings	**3.10**	**18%**
The New Coordinator Handbook	**3.07**	**32%**
NOWC Website	2.85	13%
Watershed management camps	2.70	67%
The biennial Atlas of Accomplishments	2.68	19%
Direct assistance with capacity issues or transitions	2.58	69%
Facilitation/mediation of local disagreements	2.27	75%
Youth watershed summit	2.25	73%

Note: Rating scale ranged from Not Useful (1) to Very Useful (4). The least useful are difficult to determine because those items with the lowest ratings also tended to receive high "No Experience" ratings.

Question 21 asks how valuable respondents have found past Network program offerings. This implies—to a certain extent—a value judgment about how well those programs were designed and delivered. Question 22 is forward-looking, asking councils to prioritize future program offerings. Response to this question is suggestive of where the Network might consider concentrating it's resources in the future.

Question 22. *Please rate the priority your council would place on the following Network-provided services and resources: (61 responses)*

Network-provided Service	Average Rating
Regular updates about funding opportunities, important policy changes, etc.	**3.48**
Legislative & administrative advocacy	**3.47**
Issue-specific workshops	**3.38**
Biennial gatherings	3.15
Online resources (via NOWC's Website)	3.10
Direct assistance with capacity issues or transitions	2.95
Youth engagement	2.69
Watershed management camp	2.58
Facilitation/mediation of local disagreements	2.21

Note: Rating scale ranged from Not a Priority (1) to High Priority (4). The least important items are also those that received some of the highest "No Experience" ratings in Question 22.

Question 23. *Are there any additional services or resources your council feels the Network should provide? (See Qualitative Summary)*

Question 24. *The Network will begin providing regular updates with timely information of use to councils. Please rate the usefulness of receiving updates on the following topics: (62 Responses)*

Topic	Average Rating
Opportunities for funding or assistance	3.56
Workgroups and stakeholder processes, as well as opportunities to provide feedback to OWEB and other state agencies	3.40
Legislative updates on issues relevant to watershed restoration	3.40
New services/resources offered by the Network	3.37
Agency rulemaking processes related to watershed restoration	3.35
Technical resources/training for non-profits	3.25
New services/resources offered by partner agencies	3.07
Relevant news stories	2.73
Other (please specify) – *See Qualitative Summary*	

Note: Rating scale ranged from Not Useful (1) to Very Useful (4). All items were highly rated, with a majority of respondents selecting Useful or Very Useful for all items.

Question 25. *On average, how often do you and your staff access NOWC's Website? (61 Responses)*

Response	%
At least once each day	0.0%
A few times each week	0.0%
A few times each month	34.4%
Rarely	62.3%
Never	3.3%

Question 26. *We are actively working to update and improve the content available on NOWC's Website. Please rate the usefulness of having access to the following: (61 Responses)*

Web Resource	Average Rating	Don't know
Council resources (templates, policy guidelines, case studies, etc.)	**3.62**	**8%**
Education/training materials	**3.51**	**8%**
Contact information for watershed councils	**3.34**	**3%**
Event announcements	3.04	7%
Online forum for council discussions	3.00	11%
Services marketplace	2.92	17%
News	2.83	8%
Job opportunities	2.79	8%

Note: Rating scale ranged from Not Useful (1) to Very Useful (4).

Question 27. *Are there any additional services or resources your council would like to see made available on the Website? (See Qualitative Summary)*

Question 28. *How has the New Coordinator Handbook been used by your council? (Check all that apply.) (61 responses)*

Response	%
It has been reviewed by the council coordinator	47.5%
It's made available to every employee	14.8%
It's rarely used	27.9%
It's never used	11.5%
Didn't know it was available	18.0%

Question 29. *Please rate the usefulness of each section/topic covered in the Handbook. If you are not familiar with the Handbook, rate the usefulness of having documentation about each of the listed topics. (54 Responses)*

Topic	Average Rating
Budgets and financial management	3.13
Project and risk management	3.11
Grants	3.09
General council organization and management	3.07
Permitting	3.04
Board development and leadership	2.89
Organizing and managing council meetings	2.85
Outreach and engagement	2.85
Fundraising	2.73
Volunteer management	2.63

Note: Rating scale ranged from Not Useful (1) to Very Useful (4). Each of the items listed were rated positively (useful or very useful) by a majority of respondents.

Question 30. *Are there any other topics or valuable sources of information that should be included in the Handbook? Do you have any suggestions for improving the Handbook's usefulness? (See Qualitative Summary)*

Question 31. *Which format would be most useful for the Handbook? (59 Responses)*

Response	%
Bound paper copy	6.8%
Electronic copy	27.1%
Both	66.1%

Question 32. *What can the Network office do to make the collection of data needed for our biennial Atlas of Accomplishments easier and less time intensive for councils? (See Qualitative Summary)*

Question 33. Do you have any additional comments or suggestions that you would like to share with the Network? (See Qualitative Summary)

Part 3: Qualitative Summary

This section highlights key themes and representative responses from the questionnaire's open-ended questions.

Question 19: Interests represented on Board – Other Category:

Response Themes:

Extractive Industries and Groups (Industry)
> ➤ Timber, Ag, Fishing, etc., as well as professional associations related to these groups

Citizens at Large (Private Landowners)

Special Interests (Public Interest Groups)
> ➤ Recreationists, Conservation groups, Trout Unlimited, etc.

Municipalities & Government Agencies (State and Federal Agencies)
> ➤ Cities, SWCD's, Utilities, Water Districts, etc.

Question 20: Challenges to accomplishing objectives – Other Category:

Response Themes:

- Maintaining Board Engagement

- Permitting

- Funding Issues - Ability to Fund Full-time Staff Person, Ability to Fund Monitoring, Outreach, etc.

Questions 23 & 24: Additional services the Network could provide:

- *"Set up something that would allow one council coordinator to "shadow" another so that we can learn from each other's methods. Maybe it would be a travel fund to allow a coordinator to visit another council for a few days to attend their council meetings and interview the other coordinator about topics such as project management, board structure, or whatever is of interest."*

- *"Raise watershed council profile broadly throughout Oregon with media cultivation, outreach, etc."* Help develop a brand identity for watershed councils statewide.

- Develop potential funding resources outside of OWEB – help connect councils with these resources to diversify their portfolios

- *"If the Network could develop staff and protocol to 'audit' councils (privately of course) and provide insight into what other organizations are doing that is successful, this could significantly enhance the capacity of all our organizations. Plus, the service would be valuable such that it could be a 'fee-for-service' activity. I'd suggest 1.5 FTE to coordinate."*

- Continue to develop mechanisms that address training new coordinators, as turn-over rate tends to be high.

- *"Group insurance policies for all councils, group-share legal services, vehicle (and other equipment) acquisition via state and federal surplus programs…"*

- Serve as a primary link between councils and OWEB – facilitate discussion around OWEB initiatives

- *"[In my opinion] the future well-being of WCs will depend on collaborations involving multiple WCs and other partners. NOWC could be very helpful in assisting in assembly of such groups…"*

- *"…I think it would be good if the NOWC had a Quickbooks Training CD set that could be checked out to watershed councils."*

Question 27: Additional Web resources the Network could provide:

- Document templates, policies, etc. are highly valued and loss of these resources on the current Website has been lamented by many

- Many suggest the new Website isn't all that user-friendly – the requirement to login to the member section is not overly popular and seems to discourage use

- *"A compilation of relevant watershed science publications and data that are commonly referenced and would be useful to project managers and coordinators to make new scientific information more easily accessible."*

- A complete calendar with council meetings, key OWEB meetings and dates, important grant deadlines, etc.

Question 30: Additional comments about the New Coordinator's Handbook:

- Most respondents note it should be updated on a regular basis because the information changes so frequently

- More information about contracting and permitting

- Offer workshops and Webinars to supplement the content

- Strategic planning and program/project prioritization

- Grant tracking, especially for OWEB (include more about match funding)

Question 32: Comments regarding collection of data for the Atlas:

- Obtain as much information as possible from OWEB

- Provide a template to councils so they know exactly what is needed

- Simplify and shorten the document, with regional overviews

- Offer online submission options

Question 33: Final Comments:

- Most comments relate to the survey instrument itself or convey other more personal messages.

- *"I think NOWC might need to pin its mission down pretty specifically and not try to be all things to all partners. A lot of areas can be passed on to other partners...Figure out what you do best and what only you do, and focus on doing that well with much less second guessing."*

- *"Once again, we are in a state of transition and once again, we have a new staff with different ideas about who our constituency is, what our mission is, and who we need to be engaged with in order to be successful. Not a lot we can do about the high rate of turnover, but we do need to pin down some goals and objectives that can survive transition."*

- There is some concern that NOWC is out of touch with what's happening in the field, and that too much emphasis is placed on west side councils at the expense of eastside councils.

- Councils emphasize the importance of a useful Website and concise communications, as in a regular newsletter.

Part 4: Statewide Council Meeting Themes

This section highlights key themes and representative responses from the statewide council meetings.

Overarching Needs, Concerns, or Ideas

- Coordinators/directors need opportunities to communicate and network with each other – "The job is fundamentally lonely"

- Councils are becoming more segmented on a statewide scale – regionally, some areas receive more funding than others (focused investments from OWEB or private foundations) or funding is disproportionate to resource needs (overall size of council, stream miles, ecological need, population, etc.)

- Councils are concerned about adequate and stable funding sources – many are looking for ways to reduce costs and diversify their funding portfolios. In some cases, these means looking for ways to share resources at a regional level and collaborate to jointly seek funds from private foundations. Some feel the Network could play a vital role in this transition.

- Councils have great concern about all of the proposed changes (i.e., council support) and feel they have inadequate resources to participate in the discussion - The Network is viewed as being uniquely situated to provide information and encourage communication and discussion – "to help connect the dots"

- While statewide networking and peer learning opportunities are highly valued, councils seek training and other resources that address concerns of local or regional importance; they also value opportunities to exchange ideas with other coordinators in their immediate area who face similar challenges

- Some councils reported declining Board and community involvement – What can they do to encourage Board member participation? Many councils have suggested the Network could create materials or a program geared specifically toward building board capacity.

- Councils express a desire for important news from Salem, and for advocacy on their behalf, as well as "marketing" of the watershed council brand identity through multiple channels – "The Network can be our voice in Salem"
    - o At the same time, some councils question whether there is a clearly unified voice and if the Network can uniformly speak for councils statewide

Event or Product-specific Suggestions

Website

- Communications Forum (see new initiatives)
- Update and improve access to templates, sample documents, etc.
- Develop a searchable "clearinghouse" of what works and what doesn't so councils don't have to "reinvent the wheel"
- Introduce more video content, including training modules or Webinars
- Funding resources, or a "donor database" to match councils with potential donors
- Resource List – contacts for "go-to" resource management professionals around the state who have expertise in relevant areas
- Restoration Resources
- Native plant resources and nurseries
- Contractors - statewide

Atlas of Accomplishments

- Most councils feel two paper copies are sufficient, so long as additional copies can be ordered and an electronic version is available online

- Councils universally like the idea of a streamlined process for collecting data and submissions, but not all are accepting of the idea that only a few stories will be used to represent each region – important political representatives see work from councils in their district. (Local, council-specific inserts could be created to help address this concern.)

New Coordinator Handbook

- Create more of a "quick start guide" to help get new coordinators up and running

- Consider broadening the scope and re-casting as a "new employee handbook"

- Include more information about working with Boards – What is the coordinator's role? Likewise, what is the Board's role? How should the Board and coordinator communicate with each other?

- Supplement with web-based video content that includes interviews and real experiences "from the field"

Events - General

- Plan tiered sessions that offer something for councils with varying levels of capacity

- Offer sponsorship to offset travel and registration costs for councils with limited resources, or in cases where board members and other volunteers may benefit from participation, but council OWEB funds can't be used to pay expenses

- "Standard" non-profit trainings and workshops are often valuable, but don't address the nuances faced by many WSC's – the Network can help tailor trainings specifically toward council needs; council management is often very different depending on whether a WSC is a 501(c)(3) or has an outside fiscal manager

- (Peer Learning) Invite council staff to talk about successful projects, lessons learned, etc. – "The only people who get it are other coordinators" – Discuss how a project got started, what does and does not work, and how it's been managed.

- Focus on topics that cover a broad array of interests – don't allow too much overlap between topics/tracts/sessions

- Don't overschedule – leverage breaks, lunch, and evening activities as opportunities for networking and informal information-sharing

- Schedule with ample travel time on both ends of program offerings

- Consider analogous events offered by OACD or OCEAN, and how the Network can partner with these groups to have joint sessions – look at scheduling efficiencies so people can participate in both without extra time away from work or added travel expenses

- Consider offering the WMC and Gathering in alternate years to reduce costs and workloads

Watershed Management Camp (WMC)

- The WMC is widely viewed as a technical skills event, but many higher capacity councils felt it offered little for them – suggest broadening the offerings

- Develop potential topic areas and send out to councils for a quick vote, along with solicitation for other ideas

- Restructure registration so that councils can participate – or send individual staff members – for a single day, rather than for the entire 3-day period; this will reduce costs and make it easier for some (busy) people to participate.

- Social events, including "campfire time" highly valued

Fall Gathering

- This event is primarily viewed as a council-council networking opportunity, as well as an opportunity to network with outside agency and organization partners – though it is organized around specific content offerings

- Suggest including a research or science tract in the program offerings

Potential Topics for WMC and Fall Gathering:

- o Overview of new or proposed OWEB changes to council support, long-term investment strategy, or more basic procedures, rules, etc. – help with transitioning to the change
  o Pertinent political and regulatory changes, and how these impact councils
  o Legal experiences and resources related to challenges of WSC projects
  o Permitting – in-stream - especially impact of new FEMA requirements (?)
  o Board engagement, management, capacity, etc. (this could potentially be a tract targeted just a new or struggling council boards) – "training coordinators how to train boards"
  o Volunteer engagement and management
  o Online tools, including databases to manage council operations
  o Project management, including software packages
  o On-the-ground field training: stream restoration, riparian restoration, juniper removal assessments, habitat restoration, upland restoration, etc.
  o Risk Management / Insurance
  o Forest Collaborative Program
  o Ecosystem Services – Marketplace Trading / Carbon Markets
  o Climate change adaptation strategies (water storage/impoundment)
  o Water rights issues
  o Fundraising
  o Fiscal management, including tax law, Quickbooks, match funding
  o Youth program development
  o Water quality monitoring (using volunteers)
  o Community-based collaboration and planning
  o ODOT mitigation funds
  o To become a 501(c)(3) or not?

Youth Watershed Summit (YWS)

- New offering – lots of enthusiasm for continued development – many councils have very active youth engagement programs

- Social networking is the best way to connect with youth

- Some concern about timing of event (late August), which conflicts with some school schedules; also desire for information and registration earlier in the year

- Some councils would like to see the YWS offered at a different venue each year to spread the travel burden around the state and allow participants to experience different ecosystems

- To avoid direct competition with councils, Network should restrict youth programming (and grant apps) to this single, statewide event and focus on building capacity for council-level youth programs

- Looking statewide, Network should provide guidance to help councils build programs consistent with Oregon's environmental literacy program, which is a gateway to federal funding for youth programs

New Initiatives/Roles for NOWC

- Key questions: What is the Network uniquely capable of doing? Are there broad needs among all councils the Network can serve? Are there very specialized needs among a few councils for which the Network might provide services (for a fee)?

- Create regional opportunities for communication and conversation; focus on common needs or concerns; the Network can be an organizer, but doesn't need to be a direct participant
    o Rather than focusing on annual events (or in addition to these events), the Network could sponsor regional 1-day events that focus on topics of local interest or concern – Webinars?

- Create an online, topic-centric, searchable forum that can be used to facilitate statewide discussion around relevant issues; from time-to-time, focus on specific issues and invite guest "experts" to join conversations; allow to grow into a "knowledgebase," much the way many tech support Websites function

- Develop an internship placement program – solicit applications from institutions around the state, create a database that councils can query, and facilitate placement of interns with councils

- Develop a shadow or mentoring program that would pair experienced coordinators with new coordinators; perhaps Network could help cover basic costs

- Develop one-day workshops for new or struggling councils, with an emphasis on building board capacity – Network could organize with involvement of local, trusted individuals, and potentially OSU Extension

- Develop an apolitical 3-fold brochure targeted at the general public that gives the whole picture of what councils do – "not just the fish story" – Locate venues where the Network can help tell the watershed council story through displays or other sponsored programs – i.e. the Oregon Zoo, the Oregon Coast Aquarium, etc.

- Previous services related to mediation and facilitation have been viewed as both necessary and helpful, and many feel these services should continue to be available.

- As it becomes more and more difficult to secure funding, councils are recognizing a need to work together, communicate with a single voice, and be strategic about the way they approach potential funders – could the Network play a role in facilitating these efforts? Can the Network help match councils with funders?

- Could the Network look at group medical and insurance plans that would be accessible to all councils?

- Could the Network take responsibility for printing and delivering key documents (grant apps) to OWEB so councils aren't rushing and then using resources to send documents with an overnight courier?

- NOWC should consider representing Oregon's watershed councils at relevant national conferences and other gatherings

- In the past, the Network has sponsored a Watershed Council Education Day at the Capitol – coordinators come to Salem and are connected with their representatives.

- In the past, the Network has offered some organizational audits for councils – while slow, these were viewed very positively – and focused on policies/procedures, governance issues, and administration