



NETWORK of OREGON
WATERSHED COUNCILS

FALL NEWSLETTER, 2021



Molalla River Watch partners with a local landowner on a strategic planting near Woodcock Creek: Oregon oaks, mock oranges, nootka roses, red-flowering currants and kinnikinnik.

IN THIS ISSUE

- Messages from the Executive Director and President
- Letters from NOWC Committees
- Financial Report
- Council Highlights

Council Updates & News

Happy Fall, Colleagues,

Congratulations on the conclusion of summer field work! It has been amazing to see what we have accomplished, even as we navigate pandemic conditions, wildfire smoke, drought conditions and permitting changes. It has been a pleasure to get to know you better this past year, and to represent us among other conservation/restoration groups, with state agencies and with elected officials.

I have been glad to help establish three NOWC guiding committees, comprised of our colleagues from each NOWC region. We have also established methods for regional and topical networking: consider joining your

region's quarterly NOWC call to stay in the loop, and be sure to participate in one of the four Affinity Groups we offer through the Oregon Conservation Partnership (OrCP):

- Estuaries and Tide Gates;
- Journal Club for Aquatic Habitat Restoration;
- Pollinators;
- Protection of Working Lands and Easements.

Connect with me or NOWC board representatives if you have questions, or feedback about NOWC benefits and services -- it's always nice to hear from you.



warm regards,
Vanessa Green
NOWC Executive Director
ed@oregonwatersheds.org

Note from the NOWC Board

Dear Watershed Council Community,

We are very excited to share this NOWC newsletter! We plan to publish these on a quarterly basis, to keep you apprised of the latest information on training opportunities, legislative issues, regulatory/restoration permitting changes, NOWC activities, and more. You will also find articles on projects from around the State by fellow watershed councils. Please let us know if you can share an article for a future newsletter! We are especially interested in projects that show innovation, advancements in restoration, or lessons learned.

~Best regards, Cindy Thieman, NOWC President

Government Relations Committee (GRC) Update:

The NOWC GRC formed in 2021, with the mission to make policy and legislative recommendations to the NOWC Board, develop and engage in an organized advocacy strategy, and build council capacity for engaging with community, local, state and federal representatives.

This spring, the GRC tracked dozens of bills as they were introduced and made their way through legislative committees. With careful consideration, the GRC recommended NOWC written/oral testimony on three bills, related to funding levels for OWEB, ODA and the OCFR.

The GRC also tracks what is happening in the state and federal agencies. In particular, we follow key departments in Oregon and issues being addressed by their boards. In doing this, we need all the help we can muster, and that means you. You have regular contact with agency folks and sometimes conversations with them can alert us to potential changes that affect our councils. If you learn something that you think other councils could benefit from knowing, please pass it on to one of our Government Relations Committee members, or to our Executive Director, Vanessa Green.

In September, NOWC worked with the Rogue River Watershed Council (RRWC) to conduct a legislative tour of an area along Bear Creek, between Ashland and Phoenix, in Jackson County. RRWC invited Representative Pamela Marsh (Southern Jackson County; Chair of the House Committee on Energy and the Environment, and Vice-Chair of the House Special Committee on Wildfire Recovery) and Senator Jeffrey Golden (Ashland; Chair of the Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Wildfire Recovery, member of the Senate Committee on Housing and Development, and member of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means) -- unfortunately, congress was called back into session for re-districting discussions the day of our tour, but each legislator assigned a key staff member to join us. We were also joined by the Jackson County Commissioner, Dave Dotterer, Renee Davis from OWEB, and several key conservation partners.

The site includes a combination of private, municipal, county and state land, and features a riparian corridor that burned extensively during the 2020 Almeda wildfire. The site offers a side-by-side example of burn severity at an area cleared of blackberry, versus an area that was not cleared. The GRC thought this tour site would be a good platform to build awareness for watershed council work statewide, pertaining to wildfire mitigation and recovery.



Rogue River Watershed Council legislative tour of Bear Creek, September 2021

You'll read below about the formation of a "NOWC Insider" webinar series in development. Brian Barr from RRWC will lead our first on November 11th, to discuss best practices/lessons learned and to share tips on organizing a tour like this in your watershed -- stay tuned for more details!

~Committee Co-Chairs
Haley Lutz (Coos Bay) and Guy Sievert
(Nestucca, Neskowin & Sand Lake)

Business Development Committee (BDC) Update:

Over the past year, the NOWC BDC has appointed Watershed Council members from several NOWC regions, and developed a guiding charter. Our mission is to provide financial and business recommendations to the NOWC Board; establish and engage in a development strategy; and build NOWC's capacity for engaging with corporate sponsors and philanthropic foundations. Recently, the BDC has focused on reviewing and revising the membership dues structure.

Background: NOWC receives most of our funding through an OWEB Technical Assistance grant that we share with Oregon Conservation partners, the Coalition of Oregon Land Trusts (COLT), the Oregon Association of Conservation Districts (OACD), and the Oregon Conservation Education & Assistance Network (OCEAN); it renews every two years. NOWC has served several times as the fiscal authority, the indirect funds have subsidized our organization, allowing us to keep membership dues very low. Moving forward, the partners will rotate the fiscal authority between NOWC, COLT and OACD. For the next biennium (January 2022-December 2023), COLT will serve as the fiscal authority, receiving the indirect funding and taking on the administrative responsibilities that go with that role. This change will free up Vanessa's time, allowing her to dedicate more time to directly supporting watershed councils, but it will also decrease our base level of funding.

After taking a hard look at NOWC's operating expenses, the NOWC Board and the BDC concluded that an increase in membership dues revenue is necessary to sustain base programming and capacity. **Your dues support NOWC's ability to effectively represent councils, and provide valuable services to members.**

About the dues revision process: It has been several years since the dues structure has been reviewed and membership levels have been assessed. The revision process was led by the BDC and guided by the NOWC Board of Directors; we carefully reviewed the revenue/expense information provided by each council.

Considerations included: 1) increase revenue from councils to at least \$22,000 (up from \$13,000 in 2020); 2) establish affiliate member tiers and raise \$5,000 in revenue; 3) develop tiers that are clearly

understood and equitable, recognizing the range in councils' capacities; and 4) ensure transparency and accountability through communication and feedback.

The new tiers were formally adopted by the NOWC Board of Directors on June 24th, 2021.

New Membership Dues Tiers: Tiers are based on councils' self-reported **total annual revenue for the most recently completed fiscal year**. This includes all revenue sources (grants, contracts, unrestricted income, etc.) For councils that are 501(c)3's, this information can be found on your most recent 990 form (Part 1, Line 12). Fiscally sponsored councils will need to estimate.

Dues Assessment Transition Period: For councils that will be seeing an increase of \$200 or more: If needed, NOWC will offer a transitional year to phase in the dues increase. We recognize that councils have budgeted dues at the previous level and we want to be respectful of that. Councils that are impacted significantly **can opt to pay 75% of their new dues amount**. For example, if your council previously paid at the \$200 level and is now assessed at the \$500 level (a \$300 increase), you have the option this year to pay \$375. Next year, all councils will be invoiced at the full tier rate, and your council would pay \$500 at that time.

If possible, we strongly encourage councils to pay the new dues in full in 2021, as we have a tight budget forecast for the upcoming fiscal year.

~Committee Co-Chairs
Melaney Dunne (Coquille)
Cheryl McGinnis (Clackamas River Basin)

Total Annual Revenue	NOWC Annual Membership Due
\$0 - \$250,000	\$200
\$250,000 - \$750,000	\$500
\$750,000+	\$800

Affiliate Member Tiers -- Affiliate Members can include individuals, organizations, and businesses. Affiliate members will receive membership benefits and advertising perks. Affiliate members may serve on the NOWC Board of Directors.

Tier Name	NOWC Annual Membership Due
Headwaters	\$100 - \$500
Tributary	\$500 - \$1,000
Mainstem	\$1,000+

Member Services Committee (MSC) update:

Greetings Colleagues,

The NOWC MSC, comprised of watershed council staff and board members, reviews the benefits and services that NOWC provides its member organizations. The committee has worked to determine what benefits and services members find most valuable; identify gaps and opportunities for improvement; and recommend strategic planning and projects to the NOWC Board.

This year, we worked with a team of graduate students from the Master of Nonprofit Management program at the University of Oregon. The student team conducted a survey to gather member feedback. More than 20 watershed councils responded to the survey and the student team produced a report, a slide deck, and a recorded presentation based on their analysis of the results. We invite you to review their findings in depth. Their recommendations include:

- Maintain the NOWC advocacy program (GRC) at the legislative level;
- Continue offering conferences and networking activities that allow watershed councils to connect people and resources;
- Continue offering events and webinars focused on nonprofit management;
- Offer discounted consultations with experts, as well as informal events focused on nonprofit management, fundraising, and legal issues;
- Continually update and communicate information about NOWC member benefits;
- Update NOWC's "Membership" and "Member Resources" website pages.

The MSC will recommend a strategic plan to the Board to focus on targeted improvements based on these recommendations over the following year, starting with:

- **A "NOWC Insider" webinar series, to more effectively share best practices/lessons learned about effectively managing a watershed council;**
- **An updated "New Coordinator Handbook" that will help to onboard our newest colleagues;**
- **Targeted improvements to the NOWC website.**

Your organization's membership dues support these activities and we want to make sure you are able to take full advantage of all member resources:

- Statewide voice and representation with agencies and state legislators;
- Legislative tracking and reporting;
- News, updates and analysis about events, policy changes, new opportunities;
- Regular training webinars, offered as part of NOWC's participation in the Oregon Conservation Partnership (OrCP);
- NOWC Management Camp and the OrCP CONNECT conference;
- The ability to build networks through the OrCP Affinity Groups;
- The ability to gather networked information and advice through the Watershed Google Group;
- The ability to access communications expertise and assistance through Gard Communications;
- The ability to post jobs on the Oregon Conservation Partnership website;
- Access to the members-only portion of the NOWC website, which includes a document template library and other resources;
- Free survey capabilities through the NOWC Survey Monkey subscription;
- Discounts of 10-60% on major brands through Expert Voice.

~Committee Chair
Karen Moon (Harney County)

Updates on the Oregon Conservation and Recreation Fund!

The Oregon Conservation and Recreation Advisory Committee is funding conservation and recreation projects in the 2021-2023 biennium. An opportunity for small grants opened August 30th and closes October 22nd (approximately \$300,000 available), as well as an opportunity for larger projects, to be determined during the Committee's meetings throughout the rest of 2021. Also, remember that at the donor's request, any OCRF donation greater than or equal to \$10,000 that is restricted to a specific OCRF Project may be matched by the Advisory Committee with 30% of the donation amount using the OCRF's state General Fund appropriation. Think about this as you build projects. If a funder puts the money through OCRF, you can increase the pot and the impact! The Committee will begin accepting applications for projects with a maximum request of \$20,000.

The Committee's expenditure framework, criteria for the selection process, application form, and examples of successful project applications are all available on the Committee's website.

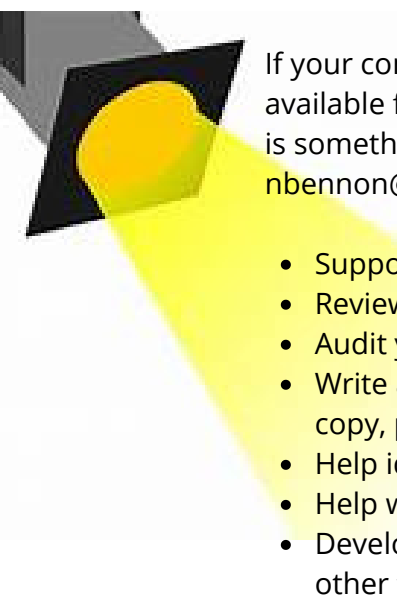
~ Kelly Timchak, Coordinator for the Lower Rogue Watershed Council, serving on the OCRF Advisory Committee.

The timeline is as follows:

- August 30 – Applications open
- **October 22 - Deadline for submission**
- October through December - ODFW staff and Advisory Committee member review period/project recommendations determined (Dec)
- January 2022 - ODFW Commission considers recommendations:
- February 2022 - Grant agreements with selected recipients and project work commences



Spotlight on Member Benefit: Gard Communications



If your communications team needs support, Natalie Bennon, of Gard Communications, is available for consultation and assistance through the Oregon Conservation Partnership. If there is something communications related that you need help with, contact her at nbennon@gardcommunications.com

- Support the development of new project-based and annual communications plans;
- Review existing project-based and annual communications plans;
- Audit your communications programs, make recommendations;
- Write and edit communications materials including but not limited to case statements, web copy, press releases, and fact sheets;
- Help identify newsworthy stories and pitch them to news media;
- Help write and place opinion pieces, including letters to the editor and op-eds;
- Develop graphics for your organization or projects (Natalie does not do graphic work, but other team members at Gard do);
- Advise on paid social media strategies.

NOWC Financial Overview



Profit and Loss - FY2021 (July '20 - June '21)

Income

• Grant Income	189,757.22
• Board Donations	400.00
• Membership Dues	18,450.00
• Interest	.30
TOTAL INCOME	208,607.52

Expense

ORCP Partner Payments

• Partner Salary Support	78,833.57
• Partnership Capacity Building	29,591.44
• Office Rental & Moving	3,787.50
• Equipment & Software	1,626.70
• Travel	50.79

OrCP Total Payments 113,890.00

NOWC Program Expenses

• Salary & Wages	52,969.50
• IRA Employer Match	5,989.27
• Health Insurance	4,800.00
• Worker's Compensation	103.50
• Employment Taxes	3,403.78

NOWC Program Total 67,266.05

NOWC Administration Expenses

• Accounting Fees	19,900.00
• Liability D&O Insurance	1,252.66
• Subscriptions & Software	2,489.93
• Telephone & Internet	2,578.27
• Licenses & Fees	550.00
• Payroll Processing Fees	284.00
• Office Supplies	341.41
• Meeting Expenses	300.00
• Postage	112.60
• Bank Fees	66.10

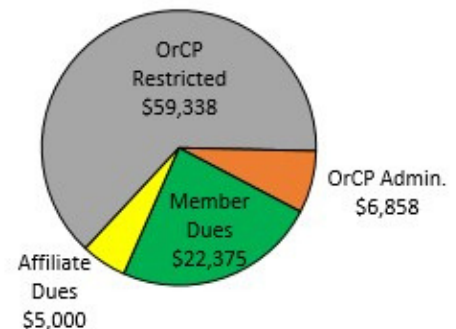
NOWC Administration Total: 27,874.97

TOTAL EXPENSE 209,031.02
NET INCOME -423.50

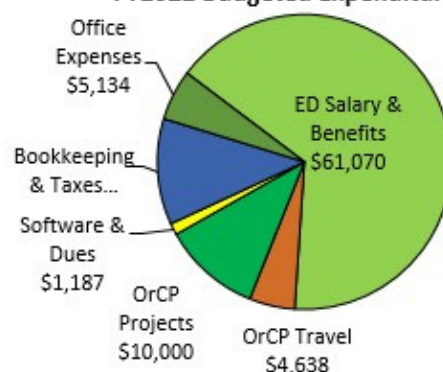
This last fiscal year was a financial challenge for NOWC, as it has been for many watershed councils. With the anticipated decrease in Lottery funding due to Covid-19 closures, OWEB reduced the second tranche of funding for the OrCP grant, our principal funding source. NOWC responded by closing our Salem office, laying off our Operations Director, contracting for bookkeeping services, and applying for and receiving a Federal PPP forgivable loan. One outcome of these changes is that NOWC agreed to a *de minimus* 10% overhead on the grant for the second installment; OWEB applied that rate to the entire grant resulting in a loss of \$13,000 in administrative funding that had already been spent. NOWC will be rotating fiscal management of the OrCP grant to the Coalition of Oregon Land Trusts (COLT) with the new grant agreement. We are reconfiguring our financial management to account for this shift, and the elimination of the overhead we previously received. These changes are reflected in the current year NOWC budget, and we believe they will improve our fiscal management.

~Treasurer Jon Souder (Oregon State University)

FY2022 Budgeted Revenues \$93,571



FY2022 Budgeted Expenditures \$92,829



FY 2022 Budgeted Net Income: \$742

Lower Coquille Estuary Restoration Effectiveness Monitoring

Melaney Dunne, Coquille Watershed Association Executive Director

Conversion of tidal floodplains to pasture has substantially decreased the amount and quality of floodplain habitat in the Coquille Estuary, and state and federal recovery plans have identified the loss of tidally influenced floodplain habitat as the primary limiting factor for coho recovery. The Coquille Watershed Association and several partners (TNC, ODFW, Coos SWCD, Coquille Indian Tribe USFWS, NMFS, private landowners) have implemented several projects in the Coquille Estuary to improve fish passage and habitat. Combined, three project sites include three new tide gates, 11.5 miles of tidal channels, over 50 acres of riparian planting, and 1.5 miles of livestock exclusion fencing on working ranches. These projects were designed to be compatible with continued agricultural production.

Robust effectiveness monitoring and research is a noteworthy component of this project, which is expanding our current understanding of coho movement in floodplains and the effectiveness of new tide gate technology. Implemented in partnership with ODFW, this three-year program is investigating juvenile coho response to three

recent tide gate replacements and working lands restoration projects. Researchers have installed antenna arrays at each site, which are within seven river miles of each other. Juvenile coho sampling and PIT tagging are underway, allowing partners to track tagged fish as they pass through the arrays. Results will provide data on project effectiveness and advance tide gate design and management to maximize use by over-wintering juvenile coho.



New Tidegate installed in the Coquille Estuary

Initial coho monitoring data is encouraging. At one project site, a total of 570 coho were captured over six sampling events between December 2020 and May 2021. (Capturing over 100 coho in the first sample on December 24th was the best Christmas gift we could have asked for!) After tagging, juvenile coho resided at the project site for an average of 18 days. Additionally, coho movement was detected between the three project sites, with over 20 individuals being detected at multiple sites during the spring. These are exciting preliminary results that showcase the need to restore multiple sites, and indicate coho use of these habitats across the estuary. In April, we also started detecting juvenile Chinook. Since the Coquille's Chinook population has also been in a perilous decline, this is a positive sign and provides further evidence that tide gate upgrades and upstream enhancement is a worthwhile multi-species recovery strategy.



Coho sampling

We are in the first of three years of the study, which was funded with \$650,000 from OWEB, the USFWS, WRCA, and NOAA, as well as in-kind labor from ODFW. Once complete, we intend to submit the results to peer-reviewed publications and present findings at regional conferences. For more information, contact Julie Huff, Monitoring Program Coordinator (jhuff@coquillewatershed.org)



The Confluence of Streamflow and Habitat Restoration on the East Fork Hood River

Cindy Thieman, Watershed Coordinator, Hood River Watershed Group

The Hood River Watershed has one of the most diverse assemblages of anadromous and resident fish in Oregon, including spring and fall Chinook salmon, summer and winter steelhead, coho, Pacific lamprey, bull trout, cutthroat trout, and rainbow trout. Many of these species were listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act in the early 2000's, which galvanized a strong local partnership aimed at helping to restore these populations while also supporting the local economy and agriculture.

Low summer stream flows, insufficient amounts of large instream wood, and loss of floodplain connectivity have diminished fish habitat quality across the watershed. In the East Fork Hood River below the East Fork Irrigation District's (EFID) diversion, all these limiting factors are at play. A 2014 instream flow/habitat study found that the amount of suitable spring Chinook spawning habitat on the east Fork was well below optimal levels due to low summer streamflows. But the study also found that current flows were optimal for juvenile salmon, which need lower velocities. Fortunately, there is potential to increase summer flows through agriculture water conservation and improve juvenile refuge from higher flows through habitat restoration, as shown by the following two projects.



CTWS monitors summer streamflow below EFID's diversion

EFID has 18 miles of open irrigation canals, which return approximately 16 cfs of unused irrigation water far downstream of the original diversion point. EFID is in the process of piping these canals and ultimately leaving this water instream. To date, the Hood River Watershed Group has helped EFID secure almost \$9 million for their Eastside Lateral pipeline project from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Oregon Water Resources Department, and OWEB. The Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs (CTWS) has also provided \$1 million towards the project. At the same time, farmers are working to upgrade on-farm irrigation systems across the watershed with help from the Hood River SWCD and NRCS, which is projected to leave an additional 23 cfs instream.



A large wood structure on the East Fork Hood River

As EFID and farmers work on water conservation, other partners are restoring instream habitat. In 2019, CTWS implemented a \$500,000 fish habitat restoration project on the East Fork Hood River below EFID's diversion. The project created scour pools and increased flow to side channels by installing eleven large wood structures along the main channel. Increasing side channel connectivity is especially important for juvenile salmon and steelhead to provide refuge from higher flows.

Watershed partners aim to conserve 16 cfs of streamflow and restore up to eight miles of stream habitat on the East Fork Hood River over the next 10 to 15 years. Questions on these projects can be directed to Cindy Thieman, Watershed Coordinator, (cindy@hoodriverwatershed.org).



Hood River
WATERSHED GROUP