

HOOD/WILLAMETTE RESOURCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

P.L. 106-393; SECURE RURAL SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITY SELF-DETERMINATION ACT OF 2000

Day 1 of Meeting 1
June 7, 2021, 10:00 am
Meeting Minutes

Meeting held virtually via zoom

HOOD-WILLAMETTE RAC MEMBERS PRESENT: Hayden Price (Chairman), Ron Adams, Mary Grace Brogdon, Alyssa Brownlee, Patrick Davis, Jeff Jaqua, Melanie Kate-Mason, Jeff Parker, Richard Ragan, Will Tucker, Jon Tullis, Steve Wilent, Neila Whitney

USDA FOREST SERVICE STAFF PRESENT: Christine Meyers (Acting RAC Coordinator), Dave Warnack (Deciding Federal Official), Duane Bishop, Molly Juillerat, Gar Abbas, Jennifer Sorensen, Rachel LaMedica, Wes Worley

Acronyms:

BEAR: Burned Area Emergency Response
BLM: Bureau of Land Management
CSP: Clackamas Stewardship Partners
DFO: Deciding Federal Official
FEMA: Federal Emergency Management Agency
FS: Forest Service
FY: Fiscal Year
MHNF: Mt Hood National Forest
MRRD: McKenzie River Ranger District
NEPA: National Environmental Policy Act
NFS: National Forest System
NHPA: National Historic Preservation Act
NYC: Northwest Youth Corps
ODA: Oregon Department of Agriculture
ODOT: Oregon Department of Transportation
OHV: Off Highway Vehicle
OPRD: Oregon Parks and Recreation Department
OWEB: Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board
RAC: Resource Advisory Council
SHPO: State Historic Preservation Office
SHRD: Sweet Homes Ranger District
SRS: Secure Rural Schools
WNF: Willamette National Forest
Q: Question
A: Answer

OVERVIEW OF AGENDA: Today's purpose is to orient and welcome new RAC members, appoint a new chairperson, discuss proposals received in response to the FY19 and FY20 Title II funds solicitation, and determine a process for vetting proposals prior to the RAC reconvening in July, 2021 to make funding recommendations.

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PUBLIC COMMENTS: None received.

SRS PROGRAM UPDATES:

1. Review the intent of the SRS program and Title II funds.
2. Review purpose of the Hood-Willamette RAC and pertinent operating guidelines.
 - a) RAC Membership: New members have been appointed. Members expiring in August can be extended for an additional 2 years.
 - i) The following members are not interested in being reappointed upon expiration in August 2021: W. Tucker, R. Adams, J. Tullis.
 - ii) ETHICS: RAC member should recuse themselves from voting on a recommendation if there is any real or perceived personal benefit.
 - (1) Discussion on identifying potential conflicts of interest among RAC members. Example discussed where RAC member owns land within in one of the Title II proposal areas. Last year DFO determined this is not a real conflict and should not inhibit participation.
 - (2) All RAC Members will complete the annual ethics certification prior to July meeting.
 - (3) Any subcommittees established among RAC members for purposes of RAC business must not constitute a quorum otherwise meetings must be noticed and documented.
 - b) RAC requests follow up on past recommended/funded projects. RAC to develop some mechanism for tracking and feedback to inform future funding recommendations. There is interest in a 2021 summer field trip to visit one of the funded projects.
 - c) Discussion on ability to return to in person meetings in the future. July 2021 meeting will be held virtually.
 - d) Election of new Hood-Willamette RAC Chairperson
 - i) Nominations: J. Jaqua (declined), S. Wilent (declined), R. Adams (declined), R. Ragan (declined), J. Tullis (declined), H. Price (accepted nomination; R. Ragan second, all in favor).
 - ii) H. Price retains Chairman role for one year.
3. Leaders Intent:
 - a) RAC Chairman, H. Price: RAC members should commit to unbiased review of each proposal. Desire for a consistent scoring system for each committee to use in evaluating proposals.
 - b) DFO, D. Warnack: Comply with all law and policy pertaining to the SRS Act and Title II Funds, as well as operating norms for the Hood-Willamette RAC. RAC recommendations should be comprehensive and reflective of local communities. Prioritize projects that benefit people, communities, that leverage additional work, restoration and are unlikely to be funded in other ways.
 - c) WNF Ranger Representative - M. Juillerat: WNF rangers have worked closely with partners in developing proposals. M. Juillerat is available to answer questions regarding WNF proposals.
 - d) MHNF Representative - R. LaMedica: Encourage RAC members to meet with corresponding MHNF rangers for support in prioritizing funding.

TITLE II PROPOSALS:

1. Overview: 73 project proposals originally received, represented 8 of 11 counties served by Hood-Willamette RAC.
 - a) DFO: focus more on worthwhile projects than NF boundaries. RAC will include brief rationale with recommendation if proposing to shift boundaries in funding a project.

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- b) Q: Does FS anticipate increased revenues following the recent large wildfires? A: Not likely. NFS targets are relatively static. Those targets drive Title II allocations.
- c) Q: Typically, there is roughly a 5% reduction in Title II dollars from year to year. Does FS anticipate any change to this in upcoming years funding? A: No. SRS has not received permanent authorization from congress, so funding is hard to predict in out years. Many states see Title II allocations shrink more than a 5% annually. Given that the Federal legislators struggle to manage competing interests, they may be proud to have held the reduction to only 5%.
- d) Summary of allocations and proposals by county (FY19 and FY20 funding):

County	Requested	Allocated	Difference	# reps	# proposals	Rep Names
Douglas	\$61,146.00	\$61,146.00	\$0.00	0	2	
Lane	\$923,524.99	\$931,301.00	\$7,776.01	4	24	Brownlee, Brogdon, Kate-Mason, Parker
Linn	\$503,715.00	\$475,257.84	-\$28,457.16	1	21	Tucker
Marion	\$121,455.00	\$121,454.75	-\$0.25	1	4	Cameron
County	Requested	Allocated	Difference	# reps	# proposals	Rep Names
Clackamas	\$285,122.00	\$172,656.69	-\$112,465.31	6	6	Wilent
Hood River	\$199,998.00	\$80,467.44	-\$119,530.56	1	6	Ragan
Marion	\$113,855.00	\$58,457.78	-\$55,397.22	1	2	Cameron
Wasco	\$506,495.50	\$164,628.84	-\$341,866.66	1	7	Davis

2. General Q & A

- a) Q: What happens to unspent Title II funds? A: The Hood-Willamette RAC has a history of recommending any unused funds at the end of a funding cycle are invested into deferred trail or road maintenance on the corresponding forest.
- b) Q: Should the Hood-Willamette RAC consider prioritizing storm damaged areas? A: BAER assessments have been done, but a lot of impacted areas have yet to be assessed. This field season will be telling. The public private interface is important, DFO would ask that the RAC consider that interface and its potential benefits to communities when developing recommendations.
- c) Q: In prior years Multnomah County created a project after the fact to utilize prior year funds. Did this work out? A: Yes, it is ongoing. Trail Keepers of Oregon partnered with Northwest Youth Corps to hire a trail ambassador. Due to the pandemic the internship was postponed. They are currently outreaching for this position.
- d) Q: What about conflict of interest? Direct benefit in a material way- yes. If sitting on a board? only if paid position. Otherwise only perceived, therefore own it but acknowledge that its only perceived. Encourage RAC members to complete ethics training and daylight anything that may be problematic.
- e) Q: Request for an updated roster to H. Price for use in drafting committee assignments. A: RAC Coordinator will send an updated roster.

3. Proposal Presentations:

- a) Kris Schaedel, Hood River Soil & Water Conservation District; Hood River Garlic Mustard Abatement Project overview.
 - i) R. RAGAN: Conservation District is very supportive of this project.
 - ii) Q: Does this project engage any youth or outside partners? A: Their office is responsible for hand pulling and surveying, FS staff support survey work and herbicide application, ODA and hired contract crews perform the remainder of the work.

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- iii) Q: Can garlic mustard regrow after hand pulling? A: yes. Pulling early in the growing season helps. Training is provided on proper pulling techniques. Past years of treatment and the subsequent population decline also helps ensure success.
- b) Robert Roth, Clackamas River Basin Council; Clackamas Stewardship Partners Project overview.
 - i) Revisit on June 9th due to connectivity problems.
- c) Samuel Leininger, Clackamas Soil & Water Conservation District; Clackamas Priority Invasive Weed Management project overview.
 - i) Q: How are weeds spreading? A: Several vectors: equipment used on road decommissioning, recreation (surveys are done along trails to monitor). Where people move these weeds spread.
 - ii) Q: Is this project scalable? A: What has been requested is at the low end of what is worthwhile, however they can scale down further if necessary. The \$20,000 ask represents the funding shortfall to address needs within the fire footprint. This ask has been reduced in coordination with other partners who also have proposals. Ultimately will accept anything awarded.
 - iii) Q: Is this part of the Clackamas Stewardship Partnership? A: The Soil & Water Conservation District is a member of that partnership. Operation of the invasive species partnership is a collaborative project.
 - iv) Q: Do you work with the Sandy River Partnership? A: Yes, and the project being submitted by the Sandy River Partnership is also important. This proposal represents work further up the watershed. Q: How can you leverage these partnerships to work together? A. The two already coordinate work on a regular basis.
- d) Alix Danielsen, Hood River Watershed Group; Neal Creek Phase II Instream Habitat Restoration project overview.
 - i) Q: Is this project scalable? A: Yes, in intervals of \$1,160.00, which covers purchase of the actual root wad from Neil Creek forest products, including harvest, transport, storage and loading just before implementation.
 - ii) Q: Other matching funds are not yet awarded- is that a concern? A: Most funds come from the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, which has signed an intent letter. OWEB funding is not guaranteed but OWEB has funded past phases of this project.
 - iii) Q: How does this project benefit NFS lands? The project is located down- stream from county forest lands. FS works in the West Fork. In this basin management is performed at a watershed scale. This project represents a component of the watershed action plan.
 - iv) Q: What species are the root wads? A: Douglas fir.
- e) Ryan Bessette/Andrew Spaeth, Wasco County Soil & Water Conservation District; Wasco County Forest Collaborative project proposal overview.
 - i) Q: IS this associated with the White River project? A: No.
 - ii) Q: Is fuels reduction the focus? A: Yes. There is a small commercial component of each project, but the focus is on creating appropriate conditions so that fire can be reintroduced.
 - iii) Q: How are you gauging the effectiveness of the outreach efforts? A: Number of objections/litigations during NEPA process, attendance at outreach events, public response to prescribed fire events and activities.
 - iv) Q: Is the project taking place on public or private land? A: Proposing 14,000 acres of active management on NFS lands but located along public private interface, some interface with

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state (including wildlife refuge), and other private lands. This is an “all lands all hands” effort. Specifically designed this way because insects, disease, fire, etc. do not respect these boundaries, therefore landowners and managers must work together.

- f) Matthew Sternier, Lane County Youth Services; MLK Youth Forest Work team project overview.
 - i) Q: What metrics are kept on accomplishments? A: FS requires reporting on miles, acres, and structures. Accomplishments depend on the project and are reported quarterly to the FS. The program works directly with the project sponsor so that partner can be very flexible to meet direct needs of the FS. Q: who are the partners? A: Lane Education Service District for teachers, Lane County provides labor force. Entire funding model is approximately \$1.5M/year, county provides roughly 1/3, funding like Title II provide about 1/3, and remaining 1/3 comes from flow through dollars from the state, fee for service work and grants. Q: Are there similar programs in other counties? A: Some but this program is often a model for others.
- g) Ka-Voka, Dov Weinman, Middle Fork Willamette Watershed Council; Cultural Resource Surveys for Large Scale Floodplain Restoration project overview.
 - i) Q: Who is the lead agency for the surveys? A: OPRD. They already employ a state archaeologist who has developed a scope of work and interfaces with tribes, state reps, etc. Reports will be submitted to SHPO, OPRD and Tribes, and any other required agencies. The Watershed Council will oversee the field work; however, they maintain a close working relationship with OPRD.
 - ii) Q: Is this project scalable? A: No, the ask was scaled back prior to developing the proposal.
 - iii) Q: Where is this site in relation to the park? A: The proposed work is inside the park.
 - iv) Q: Why is that site pegged for a cultural survey? A: Previous surveys of the park indicated significant artifacts which were register worthy, but these past surveys are insufficient for meeting requirements of intense ground disturbing activities such as those used in stage zero restoration.
- h) Kelsee Taylor, Northwest Youth Corps; NYC Middle Fork Trail Maintenance project overview.
 - i) Q: Is this work scheduled for summer 2022? A: Yes.
 - ii) Q: Given the pandemic, is NYC struggling to hire participants? A: Yes, particularly regarding recruitment of crew leaders. The job market is very competitive. NYC leadership anticipated this will improve by next year. Nationally corps networks are looking at this problem on a grand scale and how to handle increased federal funding availability paired with a difficulty in filling field leadership positions.
 - iii) Q: Is there a difference between NYC Corps and crews? NYC uses a crew work model. FS staff will confirm the verbiage is correct in the RAC documents.
 - iv) Q: Does NYC engage at risk youth? A: NYC engages any youth interested in participating.
- i) Sarah Altemus-Pope, South Willamette Solutions; Canal Trail Rehab project overview.
 - i) Q: What is status of the Union Pacific land issue? A: it's a non-issue for this proposal, outside this proposed scope.
 - ii) Q: Are youth engaged in this project? A: Yes, Oakridge High School woodshop class will be building the kiosks. An elementary class will be engaged in the history research and advising for kiosk content, doubling as a learning experience for the students.
 - iii) Q: Is all necessary SHPO coordination complete? A: Yes, NEPA was completed by FS. This will occur on city owned property but NEPA was required.

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- iv) Q: What is the “crest” trail? A: It’s a large effort to link the Eugene area to outlying communities through a system of trails.

NEXT STEPS:

1. RAC will convene on 6/9/21 to continue proposal vetting and again on 7/7/2021 to make funding recommendations.
2. Adjourn at 3:01pm.

Day 2 of Meeting 1
June 9, 2021, 10:00 am
Meeting Minutes
Meeting held virtually via Zoom

HOOD-WILLAMETTE RAC MEMBERS PRESENT: Hayden Price (Chairman), Ron Adams, Mary Grace Brogdon, Alyssa Brownlee, Patrick Davis, Jeff Jaqua, Melanie Kate-Mason, Jeff Parker, Richard Ragan, Will Tucker, Jon Tullis, Steve Wilent, Neila Whitney

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OVERVIEW OF AGENDA: Today’s purpose is to discuss proposals received in response to the FY19 and FY20 Title II funds solicitation, hear from project proponent and develop a process for vetting proposals prior to the RAC reconvening in July 2021.

1. Proposal Presentations Cont’d:
 - a) Kris Balliet - Sandy River WSHD Council; Weed Monitoring and Removal on the Sandy River project overview.
 - i) Q: Are the Youth working with the Ant Farm “at risk” youth? A: Yes.
 - ii) Q: How far down along the Sandy River do you work? A: Sandy River including tributaries goes all the way to the Columbia. Sandy River Watershed Council’s focus is on Clackamas Co.
 - iii) Comment- J. TULLIS: Experience working with ant farm at Timberline- tremendous program, well managed, community engagement, etc. Strongly support it.
 - iv) Q: Do noxious weeds prevent water from the Sandy from reaching the Columbia? A: Noxious weeds are pushing out natives and impeding food supply chain for species in the water and streambanks. Himalayan blackberry is a big problem.
 - v) Q: Federal agency funding - Who is that coming from? A: BLM land houses the project, Portland Water Bureau has an easement on the site as well. That funding is secure.
 - vi) Q: Looks like this proposal would fund surveys. What is the status of planning and planting? A: They’ve started, but are laying out a strategy to engage community, fill the budgetary needs to advance and pay youth from Ant Farm, etc. Ultimately replanting is the goal.
 - vii) Q: How may youth are involved? A: 8-15.
 - b) Alyssa Archer - Cascade Volunteers, Santiam Wagon Road project overview

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- i) Q: Will this project address any wayfinding in proximity to the McKenzie River Trail? A: Not in this phase, this is focused on SHRD. Years 3 and 4 are more likely to be on the MRRD. Also aware of OHV conflict on the MRRD portion, may take several years.
- ii) Q: What is the budget for this project? A: \$35k for phase 2 will go to salary for the Education/interpretation coordinator, roughly \$8k for interpretive panels. Match is volunteer and FS labor. Project is scalable by panel. Capacity funding for staff is not scalable because as an embedded friend group they are viewed as quasi government. Other grants are available for panel work.
- iii) Q: Is this road an original road from first nations? A: Yes, believe so, FS archaeologists and tribal representatives have been invited to working group to ensure its appropriately spotlighted. The plan will be revised by this working group, including revisions to older existing panels which lack this perspective.
- c) Robert Roth – Clackamas River Basin Council, Clackamas Stewardship Partners (CSP) project overview
 - i) Q: What is the stockpiling referred to? A: The hazard trees are being used for chips; the trees are stockpiled with root-wads intact for use in future restoration work.
 - ii) Q: Is there a conflict for seeking federal funds for a federal project? A: No, we work together. Running proper volunteer crews costs money. Staffing for that prep work is important. CSP does a lot of outreach support work for the FS. Sometimes FS is not able to apply for funding, but nonprofit partners can apply for funding such that activities can be implemented in partnership on federal lands.
 - iii) Q: Any activity in the Detroit area? A: Clackamas River basin has been impacted by 2 fires. CSP is supportive of activities on the Lionshead fire but must contend with logistical issues like distance, access. Supportive of the Santiam Basin but usually in coordination with the North Santiam Watershed Council.
 - iv) Q: CSP as an organization is involved at a middle level between planning and boots on the ground. The RAC has a desire to see these funds go to implementation projects verses planning, organizing. Can the FS confirm the value of the CSP efforts? A: Part of FS challenge is preparing for 2021 fire season while juggling fire recovery from 2020 fires. Much of the Clackamas basin is still closed. Outreach, planning, and coordination takes a lot of time. FS: Collaborative groups on fire impacted districts are rapidly shifting how they support the agency and their program of work. Some grants that collaboratives secured may now be burned over; it's a challenging time. FS relies heavily on CSP/collaborative groups to convene diverse stakeholders where FS lacks capacity to engage. They also act as a neutral entity which is especially important in fire recovery work. CSP is an important partner of the district. The program of work on MHNF and WNF immediately tripled after 2020 fire season. J. TULLIS: A: Big effects to MHNF, 1/5 of forest closed and lots of popular recreation sites have seen increased visitation. This demand for recreation is even more pronounced post fire which adds a level of complexity for the FS.
 - v) Q: Where geographically does CSP work? A: map available in proposal, including interface with fire impacts.
 - vi) Q: What is the role of concessionaires on the FS? A: A concessionaire is a private company that can be brought in to support certain operations. CSP is not proposing to be a concessionaire, rather they may be working with the existing campground concessionaires.

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- vii) Discussion on funding facilitator support. The preference of this RAC is to fund shovel ready and boots on the ground projects. The agency is challenged at all levels of operation. Originally, collaboratives were engaged around requirements of stewardship projects, however there are fewer stewardship contracts on MHNF, and the one approved stewardship contract which was supported by CSP burned last year. The added capacity collaboratives bring to convene stakeholders is very important to the agency. The agency would not have as robust engagement without collaboratives in place.

NEXT STEPS:

1. Discussion on establishing sub-committees for proposal review:
 - a) H. Price will assign 3-5 people per committee, 4-5 proposals per person to review. Members will be mindful of quorum issues.
 - i) Consider issues from last year, inconsistent representation by county. Lean into local leaders to help as needed.
 - ii) Committees will attend July 7th meeting prepared to provide funding award recommendations and rationale.
2. Adjourn at 1:42 pm