

**Lower Sprague-Lower Williamson
Watershed Assessment Meeting
Thursday, April 30, 2009**

Background

- Terry Morton, Executive Director, explained the process where the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board and the US Fish & Wildlife Service funded a series of community-based watershed assessments. The Upper Williamson Assessment and Upper Sprague-Sycan are complete, and tonight we are distributing the Lower Sprague-Lower Williamson. The point is to engage the community in assessing current concerns about the watershed and conditions on the ground, and synthesize the scientific research that has been conducted on the area. This document will be the foundation for an Action Plan created by this group, restoration actions that are considered priorities.
- We will divide the Assessment into chapters, and have scientists present an overview of each one at a series of three community meetings. Scientists will be available for questions and answers, and the group will generate ideas for potential restoration actions on the ground. Each meeting will focus on a few of the chapters, and at the end we'll compile all the proposed actions and prioritize a realistic, practical Action Plan. That plan will form the basis of the types of outreach we do to private landowners, and the kind of grant funding we seek to implement projects.

Chapter 6: Terrestrial Vegetation (Andrea Rabe, Rabe Consulting)

- Ponderosa-Lodge pole-Conifer dominant in watershed
- Williamson River Delta diked for agriculture in 1941
 - Dikes breached, wetlands restored 1990s–2000s

Conservation Status of Species:

<u>Federal</u>	<u>State</u>
Endangered	Endangered
Threatened	Threatened
Species of Concern	Candidate species of concern
Delisted`	

Human Impacts on Vegetation in this Area:

- Fire Suppression
 - Juniper explosion!
- Logging
 - Removing trees/vegetation and dirt roads = erosion of soil into river
- Agriculture
 - Channelizing streams & removing vegetation increased erosion
 - Grazing on streams suppresses vegetation and increases erosion
- Noxious Weeds
 - Noxious = detrimental to native vegetation/agriculture
 - County Weed Control can provide technical advice

Action Planning:

- Endangered plants

- Fence/protect
- Must see Or Dept of Forestry if cutting timber (Forest Practices Act)
- KWP will bring these booklets to next meeting:
 - Noxious Weeds
 - Klamath County Sensitive Status
 - Common Plants
 - Trails
- Juniper Management (especially sagebrush scrub)
- Weed grant program (Oregon Department of Agriculture)
 - Weed Management Area--make this a priority area for funding
- Landowner's own initiative to take care of their own land
 - Don't want any government money or involvement
 - People shouldn't take advantage of government money
 - Some government programs aren't doing the right things & waste \$
- Noxious Weeds
 - Kids workforce (Scout badges)
 - Adopt an area
 - Klamath County OSU Extension technical consultation
 - Weed Tour (OSU Extension) late June
 - Can we identify priority problem areas?
- Juniper management/noxious weeds must be evaluated on site-specific basis

Chapter 8: Wetlands (Heather Ray, US Fish & Wildlife Service)

- **Functions:**
 - Fish & wildlife habitat
 - Water quality: filter water, take up nutrients that would fertilize algae, which takes up oxygen when it dies and stresses or kills fish
 - Water storage: soils hold water in spring and release gradually over summer, when we need it the most
 - Reduce mosquitoes
 - Food web support
 - US has lost 53% of wetlands, and in Klamath 75%

Wetlands Action Planning

- Tour Williamson River Wetlands
- Contact Steve Kirk regarding meth labs and pollutants in the water
- Provide livestock watering sources away from wetlands
- Identify & protect wetlands (fence, etc.)
- Reconnect streamside wetlands to river
- Build artificial/treatment wetlands to treat irrigation return flow
- Beavers?? Good/Bad? – site specific ("Watershed Council Beaver Exchange")
- Wetlands are protected by law
 - Permit required if altering/filling
 - County planning requires delineation of wetland area
 - May be able to mitigate/offset filling with other actions