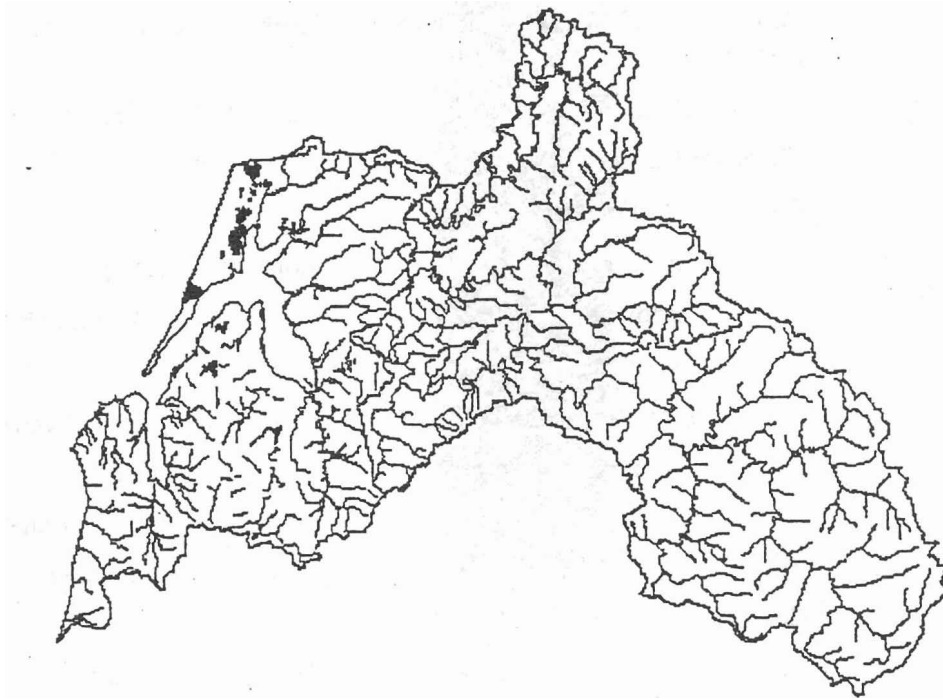


Coos Watershed Association

VISION AND GOALS



FINAL REPORT OF THE BOARD RETREAT

Approved February 7, 2002

*Coos Watershed Association
P.O. Box 5860
Charleston, Oregon 97420
(541) 888-5922
(Fax) 888-6111
E-mail: cooswa@harborside.com*

Executive Council Members

<i>Name</i>	<i>Affiliation</i>	<i>Representing</i>
Tom Hoesly, President*	Menasha Corporation	Industrial Timber Operators
Jim Young, Vice President*	Elliott State Forest	State Land Manager
Mike Graybill, Secretary	Division of State Lands/South Slough Estuarine Reserve	State Land Manager
Dale Reiber, Treasurer*	Northwest Steelheaders	At Large Member
Dan Brelage*	Coos Soil and Water Conservation District	Ranching and Agricultural
John Brands*	Burnell Farms	Ranching and Agricultural
Jim Clarke	Citizen at Large	At Large Member
Bob Laport	Coos County Forestry	Coos County
Robert Mahaffy*	Private Landowner	Non-industrial Timber Operators
Joan Mahaffy*	Private Landowner	Ranching and Agricultural
Don Messerle*	Private Landowner	Non-industrial Timber Operators
Mark Nauman*	Weyerhaeuser Company	Industrial Timber Operators
Ray Nolan, M.D.	Audubon Society	At Large Member
Larry Qualman*	Qualman Oysters	Fisheries and Aquaculture
Elaine Raper*	Bureau of Land Management	Federal Land Manager
Rob Schab*	Coos Bay-North Bend Water Board	At Large Member
Isaiah Ursprung*	Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw Indians	Tribal Government
Sandy Warner	Commercial Fishery	Fisheries and Aquaculture
Don Yost*	International Port of Coos Bay	Port and Waterfront Industry
Participating Staff		
Jon Souder Ph.D.*	Coos Watershed Association	Executive Director
John Colby*	Coos Watershed Association	Project Manager
Crystal Shoji, AICP*	Shoji Planning and Development	Facilitator

* Participated in the October 24, 2001 Board Retreat

*Coos Watershed Association
Purpose and Mission*

To provide a framework to coordinate and implement proven management practices, and test promising new management practices, designed to support environmental integrity and economic stability for communities of the Coos Watershed.

The Coos Watershed consists of all lands and waters that drain into the Pacific through the Coos Estuary.

Articles of Incorporation, filed June 9, 1994

Table of Contents

Introduction	1
Our Changing Organization.....	2
Our Vision for the Future	2
Clarify Our Values and Objectives	
Establish a Framework for Decision-making	4
Inform and Involve the Executive Council.....	5
Utilize Committees and Task Forces.....	7
Promote Public Education of Association Activities	8
Assure Future Funding	8
<i>Appendix</i>	
Board Self-Assessment Survey Results.....	9

INTRODUCTION

During June and July, 2001 seventeen members of the Coos Watershed Association Executive Council completed a survey entitled *Self-Assessment for Nonprofit Governing Boards* provided by the National Center for Nonprofit Boards. Using the Self Assessment Questionnaire, members of the Coos Watershed Association Executive Council responded to a number of questions about their perception of the organization and the role of the Council, and completed a self-evaluation. Participants responded by checking numerical assessments to correspond to their personal satisfaction levels, and by providing their personal comments in regards to how the Council could improve in the following areas:

- Determining the Organization's Mission and Purpose.
- Engaging in Strategic Planning.
- Approving and Monitoring the Organization's Programs and Services.
- Ensuring Adequate Financial Resources.
- Providing Effective Fiscal Oversight.
- Ensuring Sound Risk Management Policies.
- Selecting and Supporting the Chief Executive and Reviewing His or Her Performance.
- Understanding the Relationship between Board and Staff.
- Enhancing the Organization's Public Image.
- Carefully Selecting and Orienting New Board Members.
- Organizing Itself so that the Board Operates Efficiently.
- Utilizing Committees and Task Forces.

To insure the confidentiality of responses, survey responses were returned to Shoji Planning and Development who compiled the responses. Utilizing the information provided by Shoji Planning and Development, Coos Watershed Executive Director, Jon Souder charted the responses to facilitate further understanding.

Responses revealed the need for a strategic vision, the need to track progress and the need for the Council to fully understand the strengths and weaknesses of its major programs. Members identified a desire to enhance the organization's public image, and to orient new Council members to their responsibilities. A majority of the Council members responded that financial support and fund-raising are not a function of the Coos Watershed Association Executive Council.

The Watershed Board addressed a number of these elements in a facilitated strategic planning session held on October 24, 2001 at the Millicoma Fish Hatchery. The background information, vision, goals and priorities outlined within this document are a result of that session.

OUR CHANGING ORGANIZATION

The Executive Council recognizes that the Coos Watershed Association is an organization in transition. Upland landowners initially participated in hopes of improving the watershed, while keeping salmon from being listed as an Endangered Species. Emerging science is identifying the importance of lowlands for salmon restoration and water quality improvement. Thus the Association needs to encourage landowners in the lowlands to participate.

Projects to benefit the watershed in the uplands have primarily been grant driven, with technical expertise and in-kind funding provided by landowners; the evaluation of project success has been through grant compliance. In the past, most projects came out of the needs expressed by members of the Executive Council, and from opportunities for grants that were brought to the Council by staff. As the Association matures and shifts its focus to include more projects in the lowlands, we are challenged to respond to the needs of the watershed in a number of new ways:

- Referrals for projects are now coming from local, state and federal agencies.
- Watershed Association staff are now acting as facilitators and mediators with a number of landowners being involved in each project.
- Landowners in the lowlands are more likely to be small acreage farm or woodlot owners, while in the past, industrial timber and state lands projects dominated.
- Lowland projects are more visible than past upland projects, resulting in more opportunities for projects.
- The expertise of the Association's staff may be sought on a number of projects.
- The involvement of more landowners with an increasing number of smaller projects requires more staff time and energy.

Water quality is now getting more emphasis, while the past emphasis was more directly on fish.

- The Association will succeed by becoming less reactive and more proactive.

OUR VISION FOR THE FUTURE

The Coos Watershed Association Executive Council understands that the key to the organization's future success will be the approach that is taken in coordinating and implementing management practices. In the future, the organization would like to partner with landowners to accomplish those goals which mesh with the purpose and mission of the Association.

The vision of the Executive Council is to accomplish the mission of the organization by helping landowners achieve their own goals for their land. In order to accomplish this, it will be important for the Coos Watershed Association to target their audiences and educate the public so that the public will know that projects can be carried out by the Association to benefit the landowner. In addition, it will be important for staff to be aware of funding that is available for a variety of projects.

The Watershed Council would like to enhance their efforts to accomplish the following:

- Recover coastal coho salmon in the Coos watershed.
- Improve fish habitat.
- Improve water quality.
- Be open to new opportunities.
- Provide innovative approaches.
- Implement new management practices.
- Be involved in fish passage and bacteria assessment.
- Provide a forum for problems and solutions in recovering watershed health.
- Act as problem solvers and facilitators.
- Educate the community about watershed health and the role of the Coos Watershed Association.
- Achieve community involvement.
- Succeed in our mission so that the organization is no longer necessary!

In order to accomplish our Vision for the future, the Watershed Council has identified several areas of focus for the Board. These focus areas which are further defined within this document include:

- Clarify our values and objectives.
- Establish a framework for decision-making.
- Assure that the Council is informed and involved.
- Utilize committees and task forces.
- Promote public education of the Association's activities.
- Assure future funding.

OUR VALUES AND OBJECTIVES

Background

Since its inception, the Coos Watershed Association has carried out activities consistent with the Association's Purpose and Mission (provided on the first page of this document). However, the stated Purpose and Mission are broad, and the Executive Council would like to clarify and further define the organization's objectives.

This can be accomplished by developing a policy framework that assists in defining who we are and how we behave in carrying out our broad Mission. A policy framework that defines our values as well as our objectives will be helpful in assuring that we carry out our mission.

The Activities for Implementation that are identified within this section will assist in developing the overall framework for policies and projects.

Activities for Implementation

Develop a policy to assure that all projects carry out the purpose of the Watershed Association, and mesh the following objectives for the Coos watershed:

- We would like to carry out those projects that support the objectives of the landowner.

- And -

We would like to carry out those projects that support environmental integrity.

- And -

We would like to carry out those projects that promote economic stability for communities of the Coos Watershed.

- Assure that projects are undertaken only when funding is available to carry out the project.

Act in a facilitative role to bring all players together when appropriate, provided that the Watershed Association has an interest in the project that is being proposed.

- Involve staff in technical assistance by providing design work for a variety of projects.

Gain new perspectives on how we could carry out specific activities and projects by investigating how other watershed associations operate relative to:

- Utilizing both state and federal dollars to carry out a specific project.
- Dealing with confidential landowner information.
- Organizing representations on their Council.
- Develop criteria for measuring success of projects.

ESTABLISH A FRAMEWORK FOR DECISION-MAKING

Background

The Coos Watershed Association's Executive Council utilizes consensus as their method of decision making. We reach decisions by discussion and consensus, rather than majority vote, and a decision is final when all members agree, or at least feel they "can live with" the decision. The Council would like to continue this method of decision-making, because we believe that voting is less inclusive than consensus.

This method of reaching decisions, however, also has some drawbacks. In the consensus mode, an individual member may lack strong objection for a project, but this does not always indicate that he/she supports the project. In the past, utilizing the consensus method of decision-making has contributed to at least one decision with implications that concern the Council members.

The Council would like to improve their group decision making by further defining their mission, goals and vision, and by being more proactive. Attempting to address potential conflicts through more defined organizational policy, and increasing Council awareness and understanding of alternatives in relation to issues that are under consideration will be useful.

The Council recognizes that risks are inherent in decision-making. Carrying out the vision, objectives and activities defined within this document will minimize that risk.

Activities for Implementation

We need to understand issues that may be involved prior to making decisions, and attempt to determine possible outcomes from Coos Watershed Association involvement. This can be accomplished through the following activities:

- Be expedient, but do not rush into decisions to carry out projects and activities when there are too many unanswered questions. *(Council)*
- Carry out site visits to understand project implications. *(Staff, Projects Committee, Council and affected parties)*
- Review prior decisions and Executive Council policies that may relate to the project. *(Staff provides information; Council discusses implications)*
- Develop Council conflict of interest procedures. *(Staff presents an example; Council agrees on procedures)*. Then assure that Council member conflicts of interest are addressed at the Executive Council meeting. *(Individual Council members share their concerns based upon policy)*.
- Create a list of potential projects and/or project types, and discuss the implications of carrying out these projects prior to the time that the Council addresses specific opportunities for Watershed Council involvement. *(Projects committee prepares listing; Council develops policy)*
- Create criteria for weighing fish and water quality benefits economic benefit against the social, political and economic consequences of the action. *(Staff, projects committee and special task forces provide input; Council adopts policy)*. Part of the benefit determination should involve understanding the tax implications of our actions. *(Staff brings information to Council; Council discusses implications)*
- Discuss possible negative community perception that may result from our decisions. *(Council discusses implications)*

INFORM AND INVOLVE THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

Background

The 20 member Executive Council broadly represents interests and stakeholders within the Coos watershed. These interests include industrial and non-industrial timber operators, ranching and agriculture, state and federal land managers, city, county and tribal governments, fisheries and aquaculture, and port and waterfront industry; in addition there are four at-large members.

While the Council has benefited from the ongoing involvement of a number of longstanding founding members, many of these members have left, or will be leaving in the near future. There is a need to convey information concerning the Association's history, purpose, and procedures to new members. Doing so will assure that the Council plays a strong role as the focus moves more to the lower elevations of the watershed, and public involvement increases.

As the organization matures, it will be important that newly appointed Council members are oriented to understand their role, and that of the Association, from the outset. A solid recruitment effort, an organized orientation, and ongoing procedures that keep the Board informed and engaged over time will result in a Council that is efficient in its organizational oversight and able to provide positive public outreach. It is the responsibility of the Association to provide such a framework.

Activities for Implementation

We should set up a task force(s) to make suggestions concerning Executive Council expectations such as attendance and oversight, recruitment and involvement.

We should adopt policies and procedures that address expectations for the participation of Executive Council members. On a regular basis we need to communicate with individual Executive Council members who are not fully participating regarding their options, responsibilities and expectations in regards to Council membership and/or Coos Watershed Association involvement:

- Suggest opportunities for past Executive Council members and those who cannot commit to continued Executive Council membership/attendance at monthly Council meetings to be involved on specific issues through participation on committees and/or task forces.
- Offer leave of absence when there are extenuating circumstances.
- Assure that Executive Council slots are filled on a continuing basis to maintain a full Executive Council.
- Develop policies and procedures relative to recruitment of Executive Council members.

We should provide ongoing opportunities for Board members to suggest projects and programs for Watershed Association involvement.

On an ongoing basis we should assure that Executive Council meetings provide education about projects and programs that the Association is undertaking, site tours and presentations that expand understanding.

Executive Council meetings should be held at a time convenient for the majority of the members, and should begin and end as scheduled.

UTILIZE COMMITTEES AND TASK FORCES

Background

The Coos Watershed Association utilizes committees on an ongoing basis to provide in-depth or detailed analysis of information and programs, and make recommendations to the Executive Council. Task forces, which are more ad hoc, have also been utilized for providing recommendations concerning more focused topics (e.g. insurance coverage). Utilizing committees and task forces contributes to the Council's productivity because the group/task force analysis of detailed information frees the Council to focus on the big picture.

Our Finance Committee, for example, assures that financial information is presented to the Executive Council in an understandable format on a regular basis, while our By-laws Committee reviews the by-laws and other policies to provide suggestions relative to amendments. The Projects Committee is responsible for reviewing proposed projects based upon technical merit, potential for funding, and consistency with Executive Council directives.

Committees and task forces can be structured so that individual Council members and members of the community at large work as a team. Committee assignments should reflect the interests, experience and skills of the members involved.

Activities for Implementation

- Assure that all committee and task forces that are formed have a purpose and plan of work that is well understood.
- Expand the role of the Finance Committee to focus on future funding.
- Involve the By-laws Committee in providing policies and procedures for the Executive Council as proposed in the section entitled *Inform and Involve the Executive Council*.
- Expand the use of ad hoc task forces to gather information and develop options.
- Involve past Council members on committees and task forces when appropriate.
- Attempt to build leadership for the future of the Association by involving individuals from the community in committees and task forces, recognizing that these individuals will become familiar with the functions of the Association through their small group work.
- Develop criteria for the Projects Committee to facilitate review of potential projects.
- Review the purposes and assignments of all Committee on an annual basis to assure that committees are functioning and productive.
- Assure feedback mechanisms between committees/task forces and the Executive Council to assure that communication is positive and productive for the Association.

PROMOTE PUBLIC EDUCATION OF ASSOCIATION ACTIVITIES

Background

Since its inception the Coos Watershed Association has completed a number of successful projects with the support of its Executive Council, but it has not promoted these projects to the community at large. The Executive Council would like to provide more public education about their accomplishments in the future because it is important for the community to understand why activities are being done. When the Watershed Association promotes activities that benefit the landowners and the community, the public will gain greater understanding of the importance of the health of the watershed as it relates to economic activity.

Activities for Implementation

Organize a task force to develop our public education strategy.

- Include printed materials with our mission and function.
- Provide speakers' bureau for local organizations and groups
- Provide tours.

Utilize tours of completed projects to provide information about our activities by inviting the public and/or newspaper reporters.

Invite the public to join us when we have speakers.

ASSURE FUTURE FUNDING

Background

In the past, the Coos Watershed Association has been dependent upon grants and in-kind support to fund its operations. The Executive Council would like to continue this funding structure. They would like to be proactive in anticipating opportunities for funding that will become available so that they can identify potential projects in their long term planning for the Association.

Activities for Implementation

- Continue to pursue and utilize grants to fund projects.
- Utilize in-kind from Executive Council members, participating landowners and other organizations within the community to complete projects.