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**East Multnomah Soil and Water Conservation District
Special Board of Directors *APPROVED* Meeting Minutes**

Monday, August 24, 2022

4:08pm- Call to Order

Guebert called to order the regular meeting of the EMSWCD Board of Directors meeting at 4:08pm on Monday, August 24th, 2022, at EMSWCD's Office.

4:08pm- Introductions, Review Agenda, Introductions, Icebreaker

Guebert conducted introductions for the record. The following persons were present:

Board of Directors: Mike Guebert (Zone 3 Director, Chair), Laura Masterson (Zone 2 Director, Secretary), Jasmine Zimmer-Stucky (At-Large 2 Director, Vice-Chair), Joe Rossi (Zone 1 Director), Jim Carlson (At-Large 1 Director, Treasurer)

Staff: Nancy Hamilton (Executive Director), Dan Mitten (CFO), Julie DiLeone (Rural Lands Coordinator), Kathy Shearin (Urban Lands Coordinator), Asianna Fernandez (Executive Assistant), Sasha Schwenk (Operations Administrative Assistant)

Public: Chris Wallace Caldwell (Catalysis LLC)

4:10pm- Gathering and Goal Setting

Guebert gave an overview of the last strategic planning meeting for the Board on August 3rd and introduced the agenda for today's meeting. The goal of this meeting is to continue the conversation from the last meeting and spend more time discussing what's most important for the Urban Lands, Headwaters, and Grants programs and who benefits from each program.

Hamilton Reiterated Masterson's concerns around resource constraints.

Rossi Suggests that the Board considers what the District should be doing instead of what we're already doing.

Core Mission: We Help People Care for Land and Water.

Guebert is this enough, do we want more?

Rossi & Masterson Let's go with it for now, it could change further into the strategic planning process. doesn't eliminate anything, doesn't constrain us.

Masterson Feels strongly that Climate and Equity is embedded in our work but doesn't need to be in the Mission Statement.

Zimmer-Stucky In terms of narrowing it down, where did we land on vision and value work/priorities?

Caldwell Vision informed the drafts of the Mission statement which brought us to our important objectives. **Hamilton** There's a draft Values document from the previous ED's tenure that never got codified by the past board.

4:18pm- Approach to Discussing Program Areas

What criteria are important in each?

Who will and should be benefitting?

Rural Lands

Masterson Looking out for sunk costs. Reminded the Board that the goal is to give staff some direction with what kinds of programs we're interested in, and not trying to solve the issues ourselves now. What



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resource concerns and constraints are we working with? Who else are doing some of the same projects we're interested in?

Masterson & Zimmer-Stucky Water conservation = water quantity. Do we define them differently/ think about them differently depending on rural vs urban spaces?

Hamilton Are there any priority areas that we're missing besides resource constraints?

Rossi & Guebert What makes good soil health and good water health? Which applies to rural or urban more?

Guebert Soil Health: thinking about it as an organism itself, it's not eroding, not compacting, microbial communities in balance with what's on the surface, flourishing, productive on its own without needing input from people. **Masterson** soil health is defined by the NRCS.

Masterson & Jasmine Progress, not perfection. Not all farm practices look the same so we can't set the same goal posts for all practices.

Rossi views the Board's role as more of a mentoring and partnering role for farmers.

Carlson Not one solution fits all. Interested in the District sharing knowledge and education.

Zimmer-Stucky Reminder that the Board often leans into their rural lands bias/expertise, and would like to challenge the Board to approach soil health in urban areas as well.

Rural Lands Criteria

Masterson Mitigating heat islands is the only irrelevant one. Not sure how to rank the others.

Guebert Human habitat is less important here.

Zimmer-Stucky Very high: economic resiliency for farmers. Low: land access for parks and natural areas.

Guebert Fish and wildlife habitat would be byproduct of other soil and water practices.

Soil Health & Water quantity: Improve carbon content to soil

Hamilton would like to hear from the board more specificity around what matters, instead of thinking about people and how to benefit people. What is the most important aspect of each priority area?

Board Ex: Soil quality, water quantity: reduce compaction, reduce erosion (ex. no tilling), water retention, improve carbon sequestration ability/content.

Zimmer-Stucky This is where our priority lens come in. We want to see programs that improve soil quality that are viewed through the lens of climate mitigation and access/inclusion to people.

Masterson thinks the Board can give more direction than broad lens. How do we keep moving forward towards the practices that will give us the responses we want to see?

Zimmer-Stucky suggests board focuses on prioritizing criteria rather than coming up with examples and trust that staff will come back to us with projects to approve or discuss.

Guebert Land access could fall here but might fall more under Land legacy.

Hamilton Reminder that the Board is talking a lot about Farms, but a lot of the District's rural lands are made up of natural areas that aren't owned by one person or farmed on, and much of the work that rural land staff does is in natural areas as well.

Masterson Many of the priorities we just identified work to describe natural areas as well, but the projects or strategies taken to address those priorities might look different in farm areas and natural areas. Just because the land is out there doesn't mean we're the ones who need to address it/solve the problems around it.

Rossi We deal with human intrusion into land.

Zimmer-Stucky Resource constraints can be used as a priority lens. Is there a gap that needs to be filled?



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Rural Lands Beneficiaries

Board Everybody. Farmers, property owners, Agriculture producers, recipients of food are clear.

Rossi How we interface/ interact with farmers/ landowners. Having conversations instead of imposing ideas on other people. Who benefits from keeping water clean/preserving water? Salmon benefits from water volume.

Zimmer-Stucky Renters and staff (farm workers) would have the most challenging time accessing programs that come out of the criteria we agreed on. programs that come out of this criterion we choose; we want to look towards people who don't have final say on what happens on the land, looking up farm worker demographics for language barriers, build a seat at the table.

[Technical Difficulties]

Hamilton With Voz, we train day laborers to do landscaping/farming sustainable. Maybe we can train farmworkers to be sustainable as well.

Guebert Contractors who do all this work in natural areas; steam care, weed mitigation.

Masterson Farmworkers (primarily Hispanic) don't fit in any of the groups we've identified as beneficiaries, but they make up a huge fraction of our rural workforce.

Rossi We're asking staff what's the best bang for our budget that addresses the rural criteria and beneficiaries we've concluded on today. Doesn't want to give staff too many specificities to constrain them.

Nancy You can give more specificities, this is an integrative process.

Masterson Wants staff to think about long term impact.

Caldwell Something you can define for staff is what does biggest bang for our buck mean?

Rossi What we prioritize produces the most/cleanest water/soil. Expects staff to come back with "here's what we should be doing."

Zimmer-Stucky Thinking in terms of fiscal budget, where are the resource constraints? How can we take the current successful programs we already have and add more substance/funding to them to make them more successful? Less concerned with end of year fiscal outcomes as long as there's a smart strategy behind money uses.

Guebert agrees, this is where our government is unique, we have the ability to try things that create resources/help the ecosystem and not have to worry about dividends or profit.

Masterson Willingness to fail, seeing that possibility as part of the process of innovation. Still interested in gap analysis to be done for each program/project.

Carlson wants to know what staff sees as criteria/beneficiaries in each program area since they're the ones administrating work on the ground every day.

Guebert conducted a vote to see if The Board agrees on the content they gathered today. **Board** agrees.

Zimmer-Stucky would like to discuss rural beneficiaries more. **Board** agrees not to cancel anyone out from the list.

Overview:

Overall Criteria/Lens:

- Think about long term impacts
- Strategies that produce the biggest long-term impact
- How could we increase success where we are successful,
- Willing to be innovative & fail
- Gap analysis.



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Rural Criteria:

- Water Quality, Water Quantity
- Soil Quality (carbon sequestration, reduce compaction & erosion)
- Economic Resiliency
- Resource Constraints (who else is doing this same work/project?)

Rural Beneficiaries:

- How we interface with farmers is critical
- We solve problems of human intrusion into land
- Consider downstream beneficiaries
- Renters & farm staff/workers may have less access to our programs
- Contractors
- Need to consider more/continue to explore/discuss.

[5:28pm- BREAK]

5:35pm- Urban Lands

Urban Lands Criteria

Zimmer-Stucky Heat Islands, is there a specific task besides urban tree canopy that isn't being done?
Requests a gap analysis. But don't want to rule it out due to climate change.

Rossi Water Quality run off, pollution from automobiles. Finding where the gaps are that the City isn't filling/needs help with.

Guebert Where do we work in that process? Before it gets to that point or cleaning up that stuff after?

Zimmer-Stucky Cost share programs for new development in urban areas? How to work with big urban landowners to make spaces more sustainable. Especially in Gresham, Fairview, etc. not getting Portland Clean Energy fund money. Ex. What would convince a Fred Meyer to change their parking lot to permeable?

Masterson Seems like between Cities in our district and Metro, we're a tiny drop in the bucket.

Hamilton Reminder over 90% of infrastructure is already here. What about the existing infrastructure?

Guebert Maybe we're more enticed to work in private lands rather than public.

Rossi What role do we have in someone's backyard garden?

Guebert Is there enough cumulative impact in enough people's backyards to make it meaningful?

Masterson Not obvious how working with individuals' gardens is strategic, wouldn't rule it out, but initiatives like Mount Hood Community College Depave project would create more impact.

Guebert Reminder that Plant Sale is a way that we're creating a large number of small impacts.

Zimmer-Stucky sees projects like that as more of a marketing/getting our name out into the community tactic/ multi-benefit. Believes that focusing on people working in their individual yards isn't the future we should be worrying about.

Guebert Education is missing from criteria. **Rossi** Metro does work in that. **Zimmer-Stucky** Education is a strategy of the criteria.

Guebert How do we feel about soil quality in urban areas? **Masterson** It's compacted. **Hamilton** Convert Lawns into native plants.



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Masterson Should we be working with so many individual homeowners? Industrial areas? Big businesses? What kind of policies/regulations are in place? What kind of incentives yield the biggest impact?

Guebert Access for parks and natural areas? **Zimmer-Stucky** That seems like a Land Legacy issue.

Rossi Biggest opportunity to solve the biggest problem: big surface parking lot areas built before bioswells. Like MHCC DePave project.

Zimmer-Stucky Maybe we consider these projects for Churches, Bowling Allies, other Community Colleges, etc. parking lots instead of just grocery stores. **Rossi** How do we provide strategies for big businesses instead of funding them? Advocacy roles?

Masterson Beneficiaries play a huge role in decision making for projects. For example, if it's between big business and underserved neighborhood, we should choose the project for the underserved neighborhood.

Masterson In terms of soil health, it may not be as obvious where the large impacts could be in urban areas, but thinks they are worth looking into.

Carlson Sees an opportunity in finding where needs aren't being met due to small entities reluctant to begin plans due to long term maintenance.

Zimmer-Stucky Can we put water conservation in criteria to prepare for future possible drought or places that do have drought now?

Rossi Our role beyond funding: how to make current infrastructure more efficient? Calling attention to the city when we see things that need to be done? **Guebert** Education for residents in those areas to spot those things to inform us.

Urban Lands Beneficiaries

Masterson Underserved Neighborhoods, BIPOC Org, Native American Community. Looking through this lens to look at our criteria.

Zimmer-Stucky Commercial Properties. **Rossi** sees water as the beneficiary, those who have the projects on their land don't really benefit. **Guebert** It could benefit those who's land it's on depending on where that land is.

[Break for Technical Difficulties]

Masterson How are we defining success/ defining who is a beneficiary? **Guebert** by looking at: Who could benefit from our work? **Hamilton** Staff sifts and sorts through projects by ensuring all beneficiaries are addressed. **Shearin** It's the difference between who could or should benefit? We're asking who should benefit?

Zimmer-Stucky Urban contractors can be removed, we have big focus on partnerships on the list.

Guebert Food access? Land access for parks and natural areas? **Masterson** That's to be considered at the LLC Meeting.

Carlson BIPOC and underserved communities might be more enticed to work with us on these projects with the right incentives and with someone on staff as an advisory role.

Zimmer-Stucky Keep in mind that for interface with urban farmers: this term is typically used for backyard gardens.



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Urban Criteria:

- Heat Islands (what is our role?)
- Water Quality (runoff)
- Water Conservation (native plants, lawn reduction)
- What needs are not being met? Who is doing what already?
- Soil Quality(?)(what should our role be and with individuals or large properties?)
- Native Plant Sale
- Large impermeable surfaces?)

Urban Beneficiaries:

- Interface with large landowners
- Big focus on partnerships
- Entities or sites with big parking lots/commercial properties
- Working with underserved communities, BIPOC organizations, Native-American communities, Women-owned businesses.

6:18pm- Headwaters Farm (HWF)

Rossi Confused about the difference between Rural Lands and Headwaters.

Hamilton Depending on how you define success, this is sunk cost or the best idea yet. We have to score criteria to decide on what makes it successful.

Zimmer-Stucky Economic Resiliency is the primary criteria/role of HWF. Farmers with good business plans. How to translate the number of farmers at HWF into farmers who own land.

Guebert Is it a farmer training program or a program to provide access to already knowledgeable farmers and to get them the resources they need to grow and progress to their own land? Would like to see the program go back to the roots of helping established farmers launch their farms.

Masterson Why not attract the best and brightest farmers from all over the country?

Hamilton Devil's advocate: as a taxpayer in East Multnomah County, why pay for some farmer from Michigan to come in, farm, and then go back to Michigan?

Masterson and Zimmer-Stucky To bring in a new generation of farmers who farm sustainably, to improve our soil and water health, to bring local food to Portland, etc.

Masterson There aren't as many BIPOC farm owners as we'd like to see, but that won't be solved by Headwaters alone. How do we build a pipeline from HWF to owning your own farmland?

Rossi Needs a gap analysis on this to see where opportunities are. It doesn't directly apply to our mission of soil and water health. Most of the farming done there isn't scalable, where did \$200K Net come from? We're teaching something that isn't transferrable.

Guebert Just because it's not transferrable, doesn't make it wrong.

Masterson It is core to the mission to train the next generation of farmers to do the best farming for soil and water health. HWF isn't reaching its full potential right now, but if we bring experienced farmers in and give them the resources they need (more developed business plan?), this resource has the potential to launch the most successful farmers.



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Zimmer-Stucky A lot of HWF farmers expressed that they're having access issues and navigating leases. The gap is not being able to secure a lease with a landowner. Feels like at this scale, it's not something a lot of people are doing. At a smaller scale, it's something a lot of people are doing. It is a very fundable program.

Carlson Is this where we modify the mission a little? Sees opportunities both ways.

Guebert Resiliency and land access is the most important criteria.

Masterson The more experience someone has coming in, the more they're able to absorb and take out into the world to be more sustainable economically and environmentally.

Rossi How much comes out from Rowan teaching 4 farmers a year vs Rowan visiting 4 farmers a week? What's the best application of \$500k?

Zimmer-Stucky If the farmers who went through HWF, stay in the District, then you don't need to go to so many farms each week. Is the farming education at HWF available to other farmers through the Rural Lands program in the same way they do for teaching soil and water health? In terms of economic resiliency and land access, we want to ensure there's somewhere for them to farm after HWF.

Guebert Agreements instead of easements? No perpetuity?

Zimmer-Stucky Don't see Land Legacy Program doing that right now. Could be a new project.

Masterson The piece that's missing from prioritizing farmers now on their own farms is the next generation of farmers. Feels important to load the pipeline with passionate farmers with new innovative ideas who without HWF would not be able to launch their business. Define success by Soil and Water Health.

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Headwaters Criteria:

- Economic Resiliency (is critical to success and launching farmers)
- Land access
- Want to graduate farmers who can be more successful and better impact the environment, soil and water quality.

Headwaters Beneficiaries:

- Pipeline of beneficiaries
- Training and education available to existing farmers
- Pipeline of BIPOC Farmers

6:54pm- Grants

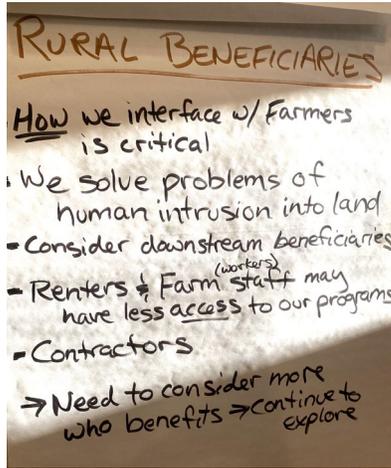
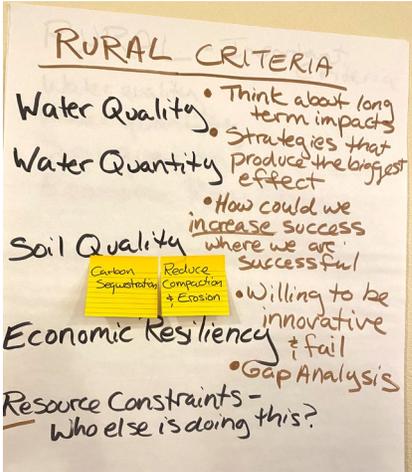
Masterson Grants should be a supporting role once we're clear about our strategy moving forward. Okay to come back to it at the next meeting.

Zimmer-Stucky In a gap analysis if we know somethings important, but we can't do it, give it to grants to fund someone else to do it.

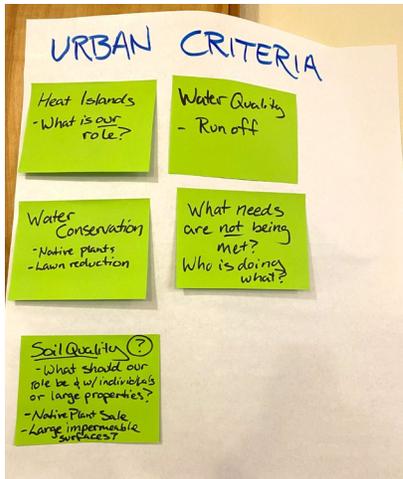
6:58pm- Adjournment: **Guebert** adjourned the meeting at 6:58 pm.

Appendix: Photos of the Notes taken by Caldwell during the meeting attached below.

Rural Criteria & Beneficiaries



Urban Criteria & Beneficiaries



Headwaters Criteria & Beneficiaries

