

Metro Waterways Study Public Workshops Summary

The third phase of citizen involvement for the Metro Waterways Study included two public workshops held on February 27 and 28, 2008. The purpose of the two workshops was to present the draft waterway enhancement alternatives that are being considered under the study to the public and to answer questions and receive feedback. The first workshop focused on the Amazon Creek planning area and the second workshop focused on the Cedar Creek planning area.

The workshops were advertised using the following methods:

- A total of 1,800 post cards were mailed out to the interested parties list and to property owners in the vicinity of the proposed project areas on both Cedar Creek and Amazon Creek.
- A display ad ran in the Register Guard on Thursday, February 21, 2008
- A short write-up about the workshops appeared in the City/Region section of the Register Guard on Monday, February 25, 2008.
- Workshop information went out via e-mail to interest groups on the interested parties list.
- A press release went out to the local television, radio, and newspapers on Monday, February 25, 2008.

Amazon Creek Planning Area Workshop (February 27, 2008)

Location: Eugene Public Library

Attendance: Approximately 40

Format: The workshop started with a 45 minute overview presentation and a 20 minute general question and answer session. The remainder of the workshop (55 minutes) was dedicated to review and comment on reach specific enhancement alternatives. The comments recorded during the workshop, either on flip charts or comment forms, are listed below as written with some additions for clarification purposes:

General Questions and Comments (Prior to break out)

- Summarize the general water quality issues on Amazon Creek (Tim Bingham from LCOG gave an overview of the general types of pollutants associated with the Amazon planning area).
- Permitting fill/removal – Would it be on project basis or overall? This will be determined on a case by case basis. Individual fill and removal permits would be required for projects that have an earth moving component over 50 cubic yards.
- Would flow be maintained at our current levels? A key guiding principle for the study is to maintain or improve current flood conveyance. Initial hydrologic assessment confirms this would be the case.
- Explain the Amazon Creek diversion at Meadowlark Prairie (2/3 of the flow is diverted to Fern Ridge Reservoir, 1/3 of the flow remains in the main channel)
- Could more channel widening happen outside UGB? Yes, where proposed with property owner cooperation.
- How far is the multi-use path going (past Fir Butte Road?) – Current transportation plans show the path extending to Fir Butte – they are not specific on which side of the Diversion Channel they would be located on.
- How will projects be prioritized?
- If the two headwater areas proposed for acquisition are purchased, could improvements be made to the waterways on those properties under the study? Yes, improvements such as grade control and erosion repair are specified for the headwaters area where needed (areas would be refined on a site specific basis)
- Does flow have to be maintained into Fern Ridge vs. percolate and recharge groundwater?
- Is the Amazon Creek diversion related to water rights for downstream irrigators? Yes.

- Does the \$90 million cost estimate for enhancements include the local match? Yes, but not potential acquisition costs. Local sponsors would have to contribute approximately \$30 million in local funds for all reaches (can count the value of land when acquired toward the match).
- How would a paved path effect wildlife/bird nesting (especially concerned about lights)
- Bird habitat – currently significant – in the section along Levy past Royal.

Reach Specific Comments

Reach 3 (Amazon Creek – 24th to Jefferson):

- If it were possible to create some pools within the third reach, there are floating techniques which successfully mimic natural riparian filtration processes – floating islands of aquatic vegetation that can also provide some nesting habitat. The pools provide fish habitat. The island also helps cool the stream.
- What about raising the bottom to create the notch area instead of cutting it out? The lost volume could be made up by slight widening (8-12 inches) when the sides are replaced.
- Rather than using trees for shade, why not a more artificial (Netting) means?
- I like the idea of incentives for shading vegetation. However, in the highly utilized concrete channel the most solar access to the channel is in the summer unless the tree/vegetation canopy goes over the entire channel, there's little/no protection and could negatively impact another properties solar access (including sun for gardens).

Reach 4 (Amazon Creek – Jefferson to Chambers):

- Please reconsider incorporation of the ash swale between the fairgrounds and Polk within the floodway. I know it will require recreating the berm to protect the weighing? back yards but, it will add ecological value and reduce homeless camping problems in the area!
- Van Buren to Polk Street – move levee (and city sewer pipe) to south side of swamp to include swamp area in creeks flood plain.

Reach 5 (Chambers to Bailey Hill):

- Knock some sense into LTD on Amazon alignment for EMX? Who are they kidding?
- What about LTD corridor planning for West Eugene EMX? Better yet, why not just say No! to LTD.
- Westmorland Housing – units adjacent to Creek are private condos and associations will need to be consulted – (might be willing to donate easements for tax credits)

Reach 7 (Lower Willow Creek):

- Ridgeline Trail plans suggest building trails for mountains bikes, so trail in prairie will need to support mountain biking.
- Great habitat restoration potential!

Reach 10 (Amazon Diversion Channel/Amazon Creek):

- The proposed paved path between Greenhill Road and Fir Butte Road would cause importable damage to bird nesting habitat in this entire area. Of course the greater and noisier the traffic volume the greater the damage. Lighting such as along the paths at Meadowlark Prairie would probably eliminate all nesting along both sides of the channel. Currently many types of birds from ducks to song birds utilize this area for nesting habitat.
- The area is also used by mammals, mostly small mammals but, it is also used as a passage by Columbian Whitetail Deer.
- Glad it's moving forward finally, probably worth doing and is easy!

Reach 12 (Amazon Headwaters):

- Excellent priorities
- Look for expanded day-lighting opportunities with city acquisitions pending at Beverly and Green properties
- Look for match contributors in terms of city acquisitions in prioritized areas.
- Look to improve main stem road crossing of Martin at West Amazon bridge.

Reach 13 (Videra Creek):

- Coordinate with City Development of Videra Park

Other General Comments

- Good Presentation
- Idea: Don't let culverts flow directly into the channel, but rather direct it out to the newly created floodplain where it can be filtered by wetlands before seeping back into the channel thus improving channel water quality.
- Consider inoculating the banks of Amazon Creek with mushrooms as a way to help remove pollutants (try on an experimental basis).
- Where channel is close to infrastructure, direct culvert under the channel and up into the new floodplain on the other side where there is room to widen the flood plain.
- Great Ideas!
- Good Luck.

Cedar Creek Planning Area Workshop (February 28, 2008)

Location: Springfield City Hall (Library Meeting Room)

Attendance: Approximately 45

Format: The workshop started with a 45 minute overview presentation and a 25 minute general question and answer session. The remainder of the workshop (50 minutes) was dedicated to review and comment on reach specific enhancement alternatives. The comments recorded during the workshop, either on flip charts or comment forms are listed below with some modification for clarification purposes:

Reach 1 (Cedar Creek Intake)

- Is there an effort underway to secure the long-term water rights on Cedar Creek? Yes, this is in process.
- Groups looking at water rights at the intake include SUB, Irrigation District, ODFW, City, EWEB, Oregon Department of Water Resources.
- Prevent property damage from flooding or river movement
- How fast is the head-cut occurring? The full extent is not known. The hope is that the floodplain Mapping could help answer that better.

Reach 2 (Urban Waterways)

- Beaver Dams on South Cedar Creek should be monitored to ensure they don't totally shut down flow. They are quite active near Ruff Park.
- The 75th Street Channel diversion and enhancement is a good concept, but you need to work closely with the adjacent properties to make it work well for them – avoid flooding.
- Making the diversion of flow into South Cedar Creek permanent is long overdue. Property owner is open to idea and could provide access easement for maintenance.
- Someone has been trapping the beavers on South Cedar Creek.
- Prevent Property Damage.

- Consider diverting Gray Creek flow in a new channel along the edge of Thurston Elementary School (in addition to 75th Street Channel). The school is being re-built and this could be included as part of that effort.

Reach 3 (Bluewater Ponds):

- There is a sheen on the ponds at times.
- Would be a good park sometime in the future.

Reach 4 (McKenzie/Cedar Floodplain):

Note: Reach 4 was discussed at the workshop, but an enhancement alternative is not currently being included in this phase of the study. This will be addressed once the floodplain mapping update is completed and additional funding is identified to adequately map and assess the system of revetments in the area.

- Energy of River is being displaced up & down from the Oxbow area. The river meander is starting at the headgate. New Intake proposal is in area of deepening bed so care should be taken to ensure solid geology at the point of intake.
- Need more modeling for making revetment and intake decisions.
- River will continue to shift over time and we need to plan for it.
- I've had a chance to review the September 2007 Draft "Cedar Creek Planning Area – Enhancement Alternatives" document. We appreciate the efforts that are being made to better manage the floodplain in this area, but I must draw your attention to the following. Wildish Land Co. is the owner of Tax Lots 1402, 1801 & 2800 Map 17-02-05, Tax Lot 200 Map 17-02-36-1, and Tax Lot 100 Map 17-02-36-2. On the maps labeled Alternative 4A and 4B, this property is located between the Hart and Burnum revetments. Between these two revetments, the maps show two other revetments: one adjacent to the McKenzie River is labeled "Potential Revetment Removal/Abandonment"; the other one to the south is labeled "Potential New Revetment". Between all of these revetments, the word "Thurston" is written on the map, which is encircled by a dashed green line indicating "Potential Floodplain Restoration/Acquisition Area". Upon close inspection, you will notice a pond of water located in the eastern portion of this area. Please note that this is an *active sand and gravel pit* – permitted by Lane County and the Department of Geology and Mineral Industries. Removal of the revetment located between the pit and the river could result in "pit capture", i.e., the river channel diverting through the pit – a serious consequence of such an action. Proposed removal of this revetment needs to be reconsidered – and eliminated as a proposal. Perhaps this revetment, rather than the one to the south, should be considered for replacement or reinforcement. Furthermore, this company is not presently interested in selling any portion of the property, or providing a conservation easement across it. Therefore, please remove the "restoration/acquisition" designation. [Submitted via e-mail by Randall S. Hledik, Director, General Services, Wildish Land Co.]

General Questions/Comments

- There is a major tree die-off along both Cedar Creek and the McKenzie River. This is due to the recent movement of the McKenzie River channel and subsequent down-cutting which has lowered the ground water table. The tree die off along Cedar Creek could also be due to the lack of adequate summer diversion from the river in 2006 and 2007.
- Good effort.