

The Hawk Creek Source Water Protection Pathway

History: The Neskowin Regional Water District has been investigating the advantages of owning and/or controlling the Source Water Area (SWA) for over fifteen years. That interest has intensified in the last five years because of increased industrial timber activity in the watershed, concerns about water supply impacts of climate change on the coastal systems and advisories from Oregon's Department of Environmental Quality

Why is it necessary for the District to take action to protect our SWA?

- The Oregon Forest Practices Act offers little protection for drinking water from Hawk Creek, allowing logging activities, including spraying close to and even over the stream and its' tributaries.
- The predicted impacts of climate change on the Oregon coast include longer, dryer summers and more intense storms during the winter months. "Flashy" winter storms mean more intense run off, increased turbidity in the creek, leading to potential increased treatment costs to protect the water supply.
- A DEQ draft report details the potential problems for coastal water districts with very small, steep watersheds that are heavily logged. These problems include the use of herbicides, excess runoff after clearcuts, runoff from roads, and less ability for the land to slowly absorb & store water .

How can the District protect its SWA?

- The District can purchase the industrial timber land in the SWA (~1150 acres) and manage it for source water protection as the primary objective.
- The District can negotiate increased riparian buffers through the use of purchased easements with Hancock Forest Mgmt.

Where would the money come from?

- Potential DEQ loan funds.
- Commercial loans
- Private investors
- Gifts and grants
- Income from sale of timber from lands owned by NRWD
- Bond paid for by local property taxes
- Water rates
- Combinations of the above

Does the District know how to manage timber lands?

- Not yet but many other water systems do. Some use internal staff & many use consulting foresters.
- The District board has met with timber land managers to discuss what is possible and how a change in operations will help protect drinking water. Both companies currently manage lands in Oregon for conservation outcomes including water supply protection. Logging can continue, but would not negatively impact Hawk Creek and the water supply. Timber sale revenue can be used to pay for land management and provide funds for the district.

Are other water districts doing this?














- Corvallis, Cannon Beach, Astoria and McMinnville are four examples of systems owning watershed lands. There are 50 small to medium districts with similar issues on the Oregon coast and many of those are considering a similar plan to Neskowin's. Others have interest but not the local leadership or citizen interest in doing so.

When can all this happen?

- First step is voter support to pursue this action.
- Second is land availability (for sale). As of now the biggest block is not. The land is managed by Hancock but "owned" by a Real Estate Investment Trust. These trusts typically run their course every 7-10 years. This particular trust was created in 2008. The District is working with Ecotrust Forests LLC to approach Hancock. Ecotrust knows the business, knows Hancock and has other deals which this could be a part of. Also Ecotrust has a possible incentive as land manager for the District.
- Third step is creating an optimum mix of funds to purchase. Using all the sources listed above, using the services of bond counsel and Special District advisors.

Hawk Creek Watershed

Hawk Creek Ownership

-  HAWK CREEK LAND LLC
 -  HAWK CREEK R LLC
 -  KNOTT, HERBERT F J C & DIANTHA L
 -  KOWALSKI, LANA BETH &
 -  MIKE & LANA LLC
 -  NESTUCCA FORESTS LLC
 -  PETERS, GARY L & EVA SHARLENE
 -  RILEY, DAVID F & SUSAN O
 -  SCHLICHTING, MARGARET ANN TRUSTEE
 -  SOUTHWORTH, LEO M & ROSE MARY
 -  U S A
 -  WATER DISTRICT,
-  Water Treatment Plant

