



**Grant Soil and Water Conservation District**  
**Kenneth H. Delano Agricultural Service Center**  
721 S. Canyon Blvd. - John Day, OR 97845 - Phone (541) 575-0135

**MINUTES OF GRANT SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT'S**  
**2024 Annual Meeting**  
**March 7, 2024**

**Attendance**

**Directors Attending:**

Roger Ediger – Director  
Joanne Keerins – Director  
Rick Henslee – Director

Phil St. Clair – Director  
Pat Voigt - Director

**Staff Attending:**

Kyle Sullivan – District Manager  
Matt Wenick – Grant Weed Control Coordinator

Pat Holliday – Program Assistant

**Visitors:**

Amy Stiner – South Fork Watershed Council  
Hannah Smith – NRCS District Conservationist  
Francis Preston  
Chase Bloom – Malheur Forest

John Morris  
Emma Immoos - NRCS  
Jared Livingston  
Trea Nance—OR Dept. Environmental Quality-Telephone

**ADMINISTRATION**

1. Call Meeting to Order – Pat Voigt called the meeting to order at 4:00 pm.
2. Approval of Minutes – Pat stated he had a correction to the February 1, 2024 minutes, Roger made the motion to approve the January 4<sup>th</sup> minutes not himself. **Rick moved to approve the February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024, meeting minutes with the correction noted. Joann gave the second with the motion passing unanimously.**
3. Introduction of Visitors – There were no visitors to introduce.
4. Public Input – There was no public input.

**REPORTS**

5. NRCS – Hannah the office is in the process of getting new contracts completed. Emma will be the acting District Conservationist when she is on maternity leave.
6. FSA – A representative was unable to attend.
7. South Fork John Day Watershed Council – Amy stated there were not a lot of new items to report since last month. At the next South Fork Watershed Council meeting a range rider will be making a presentation on the offer to provide non-lethal wolf preventative techniques to landowners.
8. Malheur Forest – Chase stated staff are working on getting grants and agreements in place for work to be accomplished this year.
9. ODA – A representative was unable to attend.

10. Department of Environmental Quality – Trea reported EPA is requiring the revision of TMDLs. As a result, DEQ is re-engaging with those who have been involved in the process. The John Day Basin is scheduled for a revision to the temperature TMDL in 2026. Trea stated she will make a presentation at the April meeting to provide more information. She wants to keep all updated on any changes to TMDLs.

#### **DISTRICT PROGRAMS**

11. Grant Weed Control – Matt reported he submitted a proposal to the BLM Vale District for a five-year partnership to accomplish noxious weed control within the Black Butte Fire area. This is a cost-share partnership; Grant Weed Control will provide the equipment and travel to the project area with BLM providing the herbicide, personnel cost and a truck mounted spray unit. At the end of the five-year period Grant Weed Control will retain ownership of the spray unit. Nate, Tereasa, Tyler, and Matt attended the annual OVMA conference held in Seaside on February 20 -22<sup>nd</sup>. Tyler gave a presentation on the Firewise Program and did an excellent job. Matt sat on a Question-and-Answer Panel. Grant Weed Control received approval for the ODA 2024 Grant County Priority Weed Project grant. Matt and Tereasa went to Spray to participate in the presentation on annual grass control Jason Hoffeld, of envu made. Wheeler SWCD is considering applying for a RCPP grant for juniper control and annual grass treatment. Grant Weed Control will be applying annual grass treatment on the CTWSR Pine Creek Conservation Area. The 25% Cost-share program will be advertised in the next few weeks in the Blue Mt. Eagle. Applications for the cost-share program will be accepted on a first come first served basis beginning on March 20<sup>th</sup> at 9:00am. Tereasa is working on the maps for the 2024 Community Wildfire Defense Grant annual grass treatment. Matt stated he expects to treat approximately 70,000 acres. He also expects to treat approximately 4,000 acres in Crook County with an additional 4,000 acres in Grant County funded through NRCS.
12. District Programs – The Program Status Report was sent out in the Directors meeting packet. Kyle encouraged the Directors to contact him if they had any questions. Tereasa and Tyler are soliciting quotes for materials for the Black Butte fence. When that is completed, they will begin the process of bidding out the fence construction. Cole and Neil are working on the Belshaw project. Plans are to have Phase I completed this year. Kyle stated he has been in touch with OR Water Resources regarding the Upper John Day Aquifer Storage and Recovery Feasibility Study. He will be finalizing the study area and expects to have the project bid out in March with the survey to be completed in June. Plans are to have the analysis complete with information available by the end of 2024.

#### **DISTRICT BUSINESS**

13. Presentation of the Audit – Kyle stated the District’s 2022-23 Audit is available for the public to view during office hours.
14. Annual Report – Kyle handed out the 2023 Annual report. The report includes Agreements signed, proposals submitted, projects completed, and the number of acres treated for noxious weeds.
15. Other – Pat Voigt provided an update on the Board Work Session held on February 13<sup>th</sup>. He stated he appreciated each of the Directors attending and the input they provided. Kyle said he contacted each of the potential Associate Directors regarding today’s meeting. All expressed an interest in serving as an Associate Director. Jared Livingston stated several years ago he worked with the District on a grant his grandmother applied for. He appreciated hearing the Director’s comments at the Work Session. He has moved back to the area and would like to be involved. Phil stated Grant SWCD has a great reputation within Oregon. The Directors expressed appreciation to Jared for attending.
16. Other – Kyle reported Soil and Water Districts are required by OR Department of Agriculture to submit a 5-Year Business Plan. He presented Grant Soil & Water Conservation District’s 2024-2028 5-Year Business Plan for the Director’s review. **Phil moved to approve the Plan. Joann gave the second and the motion passed unanimously.**
16. Other – Kyle stated he attended a meeting Tori Stinnett of Greater Eastern Oregon Development Corporation (GEODC) put together for city, county, federal agency and local industry representatives to discuss John Day/ Grant County potentially being designated as a “nonattainment” area for air quality. Staff from DEQ presented information collected from an air quality station located on Dayton Street in John Day. Data from this station

indicates the annual daily average of particulate matter 2.5 microns in size (PM2.5) was 9.9 micrograms for calendar years 2021 through 2023. The threshold for PM2.5 was recently dropped from 12 to 9 micrograms; the station in John Day reflects this parameter was exceeded. The information will be provided to the EPA in 2025; however, based on this exceedance, the county would not be in compliance with the standard. PM2.5 is associated with smoke; the data collected in John Day reflects a discernable pattern of high levels in winter evenings dropping off during the night. Based on DEQ's experience, this pattern is indicative of wood burning heat generated from homes. DEQ stated that, typically, when the threshold has been exceeded, EPA will look at whether community drive efforts have been put into place to address the exceedance. These efforts have been implemented in other parts of Eastern Oregon and include educational efforts regarding inversions and when it is less hazardous to run a wood burning stove, publicly announcing weather conditions such as inversions when smoke will be confined to the valley floor, the importance of burning seasoned firewood, etc. Funding is available to support programs such as replacing old wood stoves with new, efficient models and establishing a "wood bank" where green firewood is dropped off and seasoned wood is taken for that year. Additionally, they also look at whether or not a local committee has been formed to oversee these efforts and programs. DEQ feels that if these efforts are in place, EPA will not immediately seek to designate the area as "nonattainment".

Consequences of the designation would create an impediment for local mills and new businesses to secure air quality permits for their operations. Once listed as a "nonattainment" area, it will take decades to remove the designation. Klamath Falls was listed over 25 years ago and has yet to get the designation removed. Other small and large communities that predominantly rely on wood burning stoves for heat are in the same situation. Once EPA receives the data from DEQ in 2025, they will likely replace the existing air quality monitoring station with a "Federal Referenced Monitor" (FRM); we can't be designated as "nonattainment" until the new station is in place and running, so we have time to form a committee and implement some outreach/programs to attempt to achieve compliance. The group attending the meeting all agreed to proceed with formalizing their status to address these issues as well as meet again in two months. DEQ will provide more detailed information on the data and other aspects of the situation at the next meeting.

The Directors agreed by consensus for the District to proceed with current planned projects and to stay engaged in the process.

#### FINANCIAL BUSINESS

18. Financial Report/Financial Summary – Financial reports for the month of February 2024 were reviewed.
19. Approve Bills – **Phil moved to approve the bills and financial reports for the month of February 2024. Joann gave the second with the motion passing unanimously.**

The meeting was adjourned at 5:15 pm.

  
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Board Chair

4-4-24

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Date

  
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District Manager

4-4-2024

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Date