



Grant Soil and Water Conservation District  
721 S. Canyon Blvd. - John Day, OR 97845 - Phone (541) 575-0135

**MINUTES OF GRANT SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT'S  
March 4, 2021 MEETING**

**Attendance**

**Directors Attending:**

Pat Voigt - Director  
Phil St. Clair – Director  
Rick Henslee – Director

Roger Ediger – Director  
Joanne Keerins – Director  
Ted Clausen – Associate Director

**Staff Attending:**

Pat Holliday – Program Assistant  
Matt Wenick – Weed Control Coordinator

Kyle Sullivan – District Manager

**Visitors:**

Aaron Roth – Natural Resources Conservation Service -Via telephone  
Russ Powell – OR Dept. Fish & Wildlife

Emma Gabriel – Farm Service Agency

**ADMINISTRATION**

1. Call Meeting to Order – Pat called the meeting to order at 4:00 pm.
2. Approval of Minutes – **Roger moved to approve the February 4, 2021 meeting minutes. Joanne gave the second with the motion passing unanimously.**
3. Introduction of Visitors – There were no visitors that required an introduction.
4. Public Input – There was no public input.

**REPORTS**

5. NRCS – Aaron stated that due to the latest covid guidance for NRCS all field offices across the nation are closed to visitors. Staff will work with producers via telephone and e-mail. The Soil Conservationist position in the John Day office has been offered to an applicant. Aaron stated he hopes to have the new employee in the office by the first of May. The Grant County Local Work Group meeting was held in February via Zoom with 10 to 20 people attending. The CSP deadline is March 31<sup>st</sup> with the EQIP and RCPP deadline April 16<sup>th</sup>. Aaron is working on an updated Agreement between the District and NRCS. Additional information on this topic will be discussed later in the meeting.

FSA – Emma Gabriel, Harney-Grant Farm Service Agency County Executive Director – Emma reported Shannon Brubaker will be joining the FSA team, March 29<sup>th</sup>, as the Program Technician for the John Day office. Emma said she is not sure what Shannon's training schedule will be due to the current Covid restrictions. Emma said it will be great to have someone full time in the John Day office. The CRP Grassland signup deadline is March 15<sup>th</sup>. CRP Grassland contracts are for a 15-year period on pasture or hay land; with the Harney County rate at \$11.00 an acre and the Grant County rate at \$5.00. The Directors asked Emma why the rate was so different between the two counties. Emma replied the rates are determined by information provided by the National Agricultural Statistics Service.

South Fork Council – Joanne reported the South Fork John Day Watershed Council is working on the South Fork John Day Watershed Restoration RCPP project. Four of the grants the Council submitted to OWEB are scheduled to be funded. Discussion was held on an upcoming project located on Tex Creek.

**DISTRICT PROGRAMS**

6. Grant Weed Control – Matt reported information on the 25% Cost-Share Grazing Lands Invasive Annual Grass Program went out to the public on February 10<sup>th</sup>. Applications will be accepted until March 12<sup>th</sup>. The old metal shed located behind the office building has been moved down to the Weed Control facilities on County Yard Road. A new Old Hickory shed was placed in the parking area on the south side of the building and has been filled with herbicide. Roadway treatments have occurred as weather permits. Plans are to release biological control for Russian knapweed along Bridge Creek in



Wheeler County. Grant Weed Control has sufficient funding within the 2020 Grant County Top 5 Priority Weeds Phase III to accomplish treatment for priority weeds in 2021. Matt attended the OR County Weed Control Association virtual meeting. The meeting focused on funding issues at the state level for weed control programs.

7. District Programs – Kyle reviewed the Project Status Report included in the board packet. An advertisement for the Vegetation Specialist position was submitted electronically to several organizations for distribution through their list servers and was in the Blue Mt. Eagle on February 27<sup>th</sup> and March 3<sup>rd</sup>. The position will close on March 8<sup>th</sup> and the District hopes to have it filled by the end of March with the employee starting the first part of April. Tyler and Kyle met with Sherriff Todd McKinley, Search and Rescue Coordinator Dave Dobler, Emergency Management Coordinator Paul Grey and Irene Jerome to discuss mapping needs for the upcoming year. Kyle attended a meeting to continue discussions regarding the submission of a Joint Chiefs proposal this fall. The Joint Chiefs program provides funding to treat private lands adjacent to federal lands being treated by the Forest Service. The District will write the grant application and provide mapping and GIS services to assist NRCS. It will be an opportunity for significant funding to treat forested areas. Kyle reported on a conversation he had with Don Butcher, DEQ, on ways the District can focus its efforts when developing a voluntary program to address water quality.

#### **DISTRICT BUSINESS**

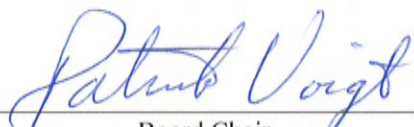
8. Review of Report on 2020 District Activities – Kyle presented a report on the District's 2020 Activities.
9. Presentation of Audit – Kyle stated Grant Soil and Water Conservation District's 2019 -2020 audit has been completed and is available for review at the District office during business hours.
10. Light Review of Upper Mainstem and South Fork JDR Ag. Water Qual. Mgmt. Plan – A Light Biennial Review of the Upper Mainstem and South Fork John Day River Area Plan Implementation will be held March 25<sup>th</sup> from 4:00pm – 6:00pm. The meeting will be held by telephone.
11. ODFW Fish Habitat (fencing) Program – Kyle provided a recap of conversations he has had with BPA and ODFW personnel regarding the status of the ODFW Fish Habitat (Fencing) program. In the last several years, BPA has allocated funding for programs to ODFW and then ODFW decides how to assign the funds. Recently ODFW has prioritized funding staff statewide over the construction of new riparian fence. Kyle stated the District is supporting the habitat program as well as it can and plans to write letters of support and provide assistance with the ISRP Review presentation. It will be difficult to obtain outside funding for the program without a significant contribution from ODFW. Russ stated he is working on the ISRP report for the program review. The ISRP review will have a public comment period and landowner support letters will be beneficial. Discussion was held on the success of the habitat program. Pat V. stated the District supports the program and the benefits it provides to the watershed and will do all it can to help.
12. Other – Kyle stated the District has received an OWEB grant to perform an assessment of aquatic conditions on approximately 23 miles of tributaries of the Middle Fork John Day River. A local retired fish biologist has an exceptional knowledge of fishery conditions of the John Day Basin. The District would like to directly appoint the biologist as a sole source procurement under OR Public Contracting Rules. Kyle communicated with Solutions CPAs, who performs the District's annual audit, to ensure the sole source procurement would be appropriate. Solutions CPAs concurred that the sole source procurement would meet OR Statutes. **Joanne moved to approve the sole source procurement of the consultant to perform the assessment of aquatic conditions of 23 miles of tributaries of the Middle Fork John Day River. Rick provided the second and the motion passed unanimously.**

Other – Kyle provided a review of the past agreements the District has had with NRCS. NRCS would like to condense all the past agreements into one new agreement. Kyle explained the Directors were provided with two copies of Agreements; NRCS #1 and NRCS #2. The NRCS #1 Agreement is supplemental to the NRCS #2 Agreement. Kyle reviewed both Agreements with the Directors. There are several sections in the Agreements that do not apply to the District and Kyle believes there needs to be revisions to the Agreements. NRCS would like to have them signed by the end of the month but recognizes that it may not be possible. Pat V. asked the Directors to review both NRCS Agreements and provide Kyle with their comments prior to the April meeting.

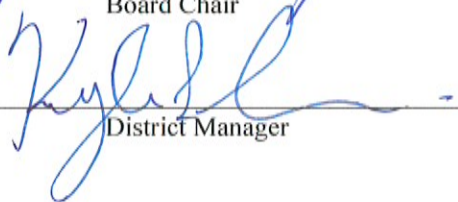
#### **FINANCIAL BUSINESS**

13. Financial Report/Financial Summary – Financial reports for the month of February 2021 were reviewed.
14. Approve Bills – **Joanne moved to approve the bills and financial reports for the month of February 2021. Roger gave the second with the motion passing unanimously.**

The meeting was adjourned at 5:30 pm.



Board Chair



District Manager

4-1-21

Date

4-1-2021

Date