



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
July 7th, 2022 MEETING

Attendance

Directors Attending:

Roger Ediger
Pat Voigt

Rick Henslee - telephone
Phil St. Clair - telephone

Staff Attending:

Pat Holliday – Program Assistant
Matt Wenick – Weed Control Coordinator

Kyle Sullivan – District Manager
Neal Brooks – CREP Technician

Visitors:

Aaron Roth – Natural Resources Conservation Service
Shannon Wenick – Farm Service Agency
Don Butcher – Dept. Environmental Quality

Emma Gabriel – Farm Service Agency
Amy Stiner – South Fork JD Watershed Council

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 May 5th, 2022 meeting minutes. Rick 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 – Aaron reported there have been several staffing changes in the John Day office. Hannah left to become the District Conservationist in the Baker NRCS office and Lela will be transferring to an NRCS office in Texas. Aaron stated he hopes to fill both positions soon. An announcement came out this week that NRCS will be hiring an additional six or seven foresters. These positions will be located at OR Dept. Forestry offices but will be working with NRCS programs. The office is finishing CSP contracts and working to complete the Joint Chiefs application. Aaron shared the current Oregon Drought Monitor map.

FSA – Emma Gabriel, Harney/Grant Farm Service Agency County Executive Director – Emma said acreage reports are due July 15th. The Emergency Assistance for Livestock Program (ELAP) has funding available for producers who had to haul water to livestock due to drought conditions. The Livestock Forage Program (LFP) livestock number worksheet was sent to producers last week. Emma stated she will be assuming the District Director Position for District #3, which includes Baker, Grant, Harney, Klamath, Lake, Malheur Counties as well as Central Oregon. The position had been previously held by Kelly Franks. Emma said she hopes her current position will be filled soon as FSA is currently backfilling positions fairly quickly. A Program Technician in the Harney County office is also in the process of being filled.

South Fork John Day Watershed Council – Amy reported it has been business as usual for the Council. The staff is applying for funding for new projects and taking signups for RCPP projects to accomplish juniper removal, pre-commercial thinning, and install water developments.

DEQ – Don Butcher – Don provided his report under District Business, Item 9.

DISTRICT PROGRAMS

6. Grant Weed Control – Matt reported the roadside residual work for Grant and Wheeler Counties is complete. Broadleaf treatments on Bureau of Land Management and Malheur National Forest lands have begun as well as treatments under the Grant County Priority Weeds ODA grant. He has been working on shape files for the aerial application on the Title II 25% Annual Grass Cost-

CONSERVATION - DEVELOPMENT - SELF GOVERNMENT

Share Program. Aerial treatment for annual grasses, accomplished through the OR Dept. Forestry Landscape Resiliency Project, is scheduled to begin July 25th. Matt stated the treatment will apply 1,000 gallons of Rejuvra and 1,700 gallons of Efficax, a soil retention and drift reduction agent on over 23,000 acres. Squarrose knapweed treatment accomplished through the OR Dept. Agriculture Grant County Top Five Priority Weeds grant has begun and will be continuing through fall. The Polaris Ranger has arrived and the intelli-spray unit has been installed. Matt reported they have been having mechanical issues with one of the Polaris atvs. The motor will need to be rebuilt at a cost of \$5,400 and will take approximately two to four weeks. He would like to trade in the 2014 Polaris for a 2022 Polaris 850 at a cost of \$9,500. **Rick moved to approve the purchase of a 2022 Polaris 850, including a trade-in of the 2014 Polaris. Roger gave the second with the motion passing unanimously.**

Matt said representatives from Bayer will be coming to Grant County on July 20th to visit several of the Rejuvra 2021 treatment sites. These sites have seen a lot of annual grasses come in post-treatment. Bayer has stated they will stand behind the treatment. Matt said this year the Weed Department has had multiple people call with requests for weed treatment that he has just not had the time to do. Matt said he is toying with the idea of doing spray work on his own on the weekends. He is bringing it to the Directors attention as an informational item at this time. He is not interested in doing a lot of work but just wants to provide assistance to landowners who can't get applicators. He does not want it to reflect badly on the District. Pat expressed concern for Matt's well-being. Phil stated the Weed Department has had more employees in the past. Matt said he has had a difficult time training and retaining seasonal employees. Rick said there seems to be an opportunity for a spray applicator business to get started. Roger stated he is okay with it as long as the job the District hired him for is being accomplished and is confident Matt will do the right thing. Matt wanted to introduce the subject but is not going to be doing any work in 2022, but perhaps in 2023. Matt stated the number one thing to him is his job at the District. Kyle said he is 100% supportive of Matt. Pat said the Directors will revisit the issue in the future. Matt said he will be reapplying for Title II 25% and 50% Noxious Weed Cost-Share funding.

7. District Programs – Kyle reviewed the Project Status Report included in the board packet. Tyler and Neal are surveying potential annual grass treatment sites and meeting with landowners around the Prairie City area. They are confident there will be 23,000 acres to be treated for annual grasses through the OR Dept. Forestry John Day Valley Landscape Resiliency Project. The second component of the Project is a private forest and rangeland assessment. OR State University staff have completed developing the protocols and have performed two site visits to test their data collection methods. The assessment will provide information that will assist landowners in obtaining funding in the future. Pat said he spent an afternoon with the OSU team on several of his treated and untreated forest stands. The information they will provide will be a valuable tool for landowners in the county. Kyle said the OSU team will be training Neal and Tyler to continue the assessment work through this fall. Bayer's media group will be making a Story Map, using drone footage and photos taken before and after the Rejuvra treatments. The film crew is planning on being in Grant County in mid-August to conduct the interviews. It will be used in Bayer's media outreach effort. Jason is continuing to work on the Belshaw project. The District will be looking at submitting a second round of projects to BOR.

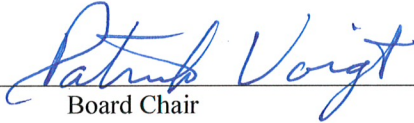
DISTRICT BUSINESS


8. Neil Brooks, CREP Renewals and Signature – Neil stated he had three CREP contracts for a 15-year renewal. The Directors agreed by consensus to have the District Manager sign the CREP contracts. Pat stated the Directors appreciate the informational updates on the CREP program.
9. Don Butcher – OR Dept. of Environmental Quality Update – Don said he was pleased to be able to provide an update on the Department of Environmental Quality's (DEQ) programs including Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs). A Total Maximum Daily Load is the highest amount of pollutants surface water body can receive without exceeding water quality standards. The John Day Basin's TMDLs were established in 2010 and include bacteria levels, low oxygen concentrations and fine-grained sediment. Originally DEQ hoped to update them every five years, but have not been able to. OR Dept. of Agriculture (ODA) is the Designated Management Agency to implement TMDLs. Don is the DEQ John Day Basin Coordinator and also has multiple responsibilities in four other basins. A Memorandum of Understanding between DEQ and ODA gives ODA the authority for water quality on agriculture lands. Rick stated he has always respected Don, but is concerned there have been no updates to the JD Basin TMDLs since 2010. He feels DEQ puts pressure on ODA who then puts pressure on landowners. He wonders when the TMDLs are updated will they be used against landowners? Don said there is current litigation regarding temperature standards for TMDLs that is not expected to be resolved until at least 2027. Updated information is showing increased water quality issues. Rick said he feels agriculture is being held accountable for issues that others are contributing to. Phil said ODA is continuing to apply pressure to landowners and who are often told it is because of pressure from DEQ. Don said the Environmental Protection Agency asks DEQ if they are monitoring water quality and then they ask ODA. Strategic Implementation Areas are an attempt by ODA to measure water quality improvement in smaller areas. Rick said there has been an amazing amount of work done to improve water quality on private lands in the last twenty to thirty years but it seems that none of that work has mattered and landowners have not been given any credit for it and instead are constantly being told they are not doing enough.
10. Solutions CPAs Questionnaire - Kyle stated that at Solutions CPAs request each Director, as part of the District's audit, had been mailed a governing body questionnaire. The questionnaire was to be completed and mailed back directly to Solutions. The Directors acknowledged they had received the questionnaire.
12. Other –

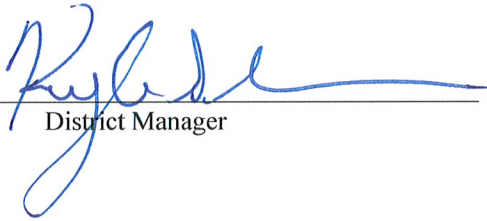
FINANCIAL BUSINESS

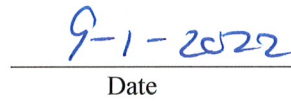
- 13. Financial Report/Financial Summary – Financial reports for the month of May and June 2022 were reviewed.
- 14. Approve Bills – Phil moved to approve the bills and financial reports for the months of May and June 2022. Rick gave the second with the motion passing unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:00 pm.


Board Chair


Date


District Manager


Date