



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
October 5, 2022 MEETING

Attendance

Directors Attending:

Rick Henslee – via telephone
Pat Voigt

Roger Ediger
Joanne Keerins

Staff Attending:

Kyle Sullivan – District Manager
Matt Wenick – Weed Control Coordinator

Pat Holliday – Program Assistant

Visitors:

Aaron Roth – Natural Resources Conservation Service
Mark Webb – Blue Mt. Forest Partners
Mark Owens – OR Representative

Shannon Wenick – Farm Service Agency
Debbie Arntz – Farm Service Agency - telephone

ADMINISTRATION

1. Call Meeting to Order – Pat called the meeting to order at 1:00 pm.
2. Approval of Minutes – **Joanne moved to approve the September 1, 2022 meeting minutes with the corrections. Pat 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 interviews were held last week for a Soil Conservationist position in the John Day office. The candidate has tentatively accepted the position and Aaron hopes to have them in the office this fall. The deadline for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) is November 18th. Aaron stated NRCS is expecting a small increase in EQIP funding for 2023 with a substantial increase for years 2024 – 2026.

FSA – Debbie Arntz, Harney/Grant Farm Service Agency County Executive Director, stated the Grant and Harney offices have been busy adjusting to Emma transferring to the District Director Position for District #3 and herself taking the CED position. FSA has several programs to assist producers with losses due to drought conditions. The Livestock Forage Program (LFP) is based on non-irrigated pasture loss; producers need to provide cattle numbers. Livestock sold due to drought conditions can be included in those numbers. The Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honey Bees, and Farm-raised Fish (ELAP) provides assistance for above normal costs for transportation for feed, livestock, and water hauling. Signups are being taken for the 2023 Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP). Shannon stated producers participating in the 2022 NAP program need to turn in their production records. Also, acreage reports for fall planting are due December 15th.

South Fork John Day Watershed Council – Joanne reported the Council has a tour of the Utley Roadless Area scheduled. The staff is working on RCPP signups.

DISTRICT PROGRAMS

6. Grant Weed Control – Matt reported Rejuvra treatments on approximately 27,000 acres have been completed. The staff is still doing some additional treatment in areas the helicopter was not able to treat, as well as applying Rejuvra on several sites on the Malheur Forest. Staff has been assisting Monument SWCD with Leafy Spurge treatments. Pepperweed treatments have been accomplished with funding from the ODA Grant County Top 5 Priority Weed Grant. Weed identification and technical assistance was provided to four new landowners. The staff has begun noxious weed treatment at the Black Butte fire location including spot treatments on 150 miles of fire lines and access roads.

7. District Programs – Kyle stated Neil and Tyler are continuing the inventory and assessment on private forest and range lands. Cole has been putting together future BOR Task Orders. Jason is working on the Belshaw Creek project. Plans are to submit an application to OWEB for Phase I of the project. The District will be submitting an application to the Community Wildfire Defense Grant program. The application includes equipment to accomplish brushing of County roads as well as herbicide application to maintain roads as evacuation routes.

DISTRICT BUSINESS

8. Legislative Request – Malheur National Forest Aquatics Monitoring – Kyle stated the District has been contacted by Mark Webb regarding two requests he is interested in submitting to the Oregon Legislature. The first is for funding to assist Permittees grazing on the Malheur National Forest. The proposal will retain up to three positions to assist the Forest with their aquatics monitoring which is currently been assigned to the Forest Range staff. If funded, the positions will take on these responsibilities which will allow the Range staff to focus on their main responsibilities and give better service to the permittees. Mark felt perhaps the positions could be District employees or contractors. Mark Owens asked the Directors if this was something the community would want; increasing Malheur Forest employees. He stated the District will need to commit personnel to develop and support the request. Rick thanked Mark Webb for bringing this issue to the District.

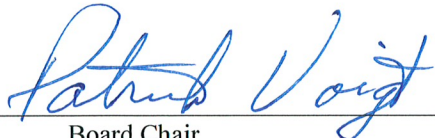
The second legislative request is to undertake an independent 3rd party scientific review of the data, methodologies and analyses the relevant state and federal agencies (such as ODFW and NOAA, respectively) rely on to plan, implement and evaluate riparian and fish restoration efforts in the John Day River Basin. And (2), utilize this review to inform and propose more effective efforts in the future if warranted. Mark Webb stated he was requesting the District to serve as the Fiscal Agent. Mark Owens said the process for the next two months would be to develop the legislative concept prior to it becoming a bill. Kyle stated he believed it would be beneficial to the District and our partners. Rick stated he felt it was time to assure science was guiding restoration projects in the future. Pat V. stated he felt both requests were important. It was the consensus of the Director to proceed with both requests.

9. 2022 ODA/OR DEQ Proposed Memorandum of Agreement – Kyle stated he believes the ODA-DEQ Draft 2022 Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) seems to be transferring ODA’s responsibility to DEQ. The letter the District sent to ODA explains these concerns. Mark Owens stated he wanted to attend today’s meeting because of the ongoing conversations he has had with the District on this issue. Rick asked Mark if it would be worth the District’s effort to proceed. Mark stated the District needs to see if ODA has already passed jurisdictional change to DEQ. Kyle said the Upper John Day Local Advisory Committee has five members that have been involved since the beginning of Oregon’s water quality program and questions how ODA can substantiate moving away from the original intention in the late 1990s. Mark suggested legislative groups that could assist in verifying if the original intention had changed. He encouraged the District to re-engage with ODA and stay active in the issue.
12. Other – Kyle stated Jason Kehrberg submitted his resignation effective Dec. 31, 2022. The Directors expressed the desire to have a dinner to honor his 22 years of service.
13. Other – The Resource Advisory Committee (RAC) will hold a meeting Thursday, October 13th in Baker City.

FINANCIAL BUSINESS

13. Financial Report/Financial Summary – Financial reports for the month of September 2022 were reviewed.
14. Approve Bills – Joanne moved to approve the bills and financial reports for the month of September 2022. Roger gave the second with the motion passing unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:00pm.



Board Chair

11-3-22

Date



District Manager

11-3-2022

Date