



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
May 6, 2021 MEETING**

Attendance

Directors Attending:

Phil St. Clair – Director
Rick Henslee – Director – Via telephone

Roger Ediger - Director
Pat Voigt - Director

Staff Attending:

Pat Holliday – Program Assistant
Matt Wenick – Weed Control Coordinator

Kyle Sullivan – District Manager

Visitors:

Aaron Roth – Natural Resources Conservation Service
Hanna Latzo – South Fork Watershed Council
Shannon Bruebaker - Harney/Grant County Farm Service Agency

Amy Stiner – South Fork Watershed Council
Emma Gabriel – Harney/Grant County Farm Service Agency

ADMINISTRATION

1. Call Meeting to Order – Pat called the meeting to order at 4:00pm.
2. Approval of Minutes – **Rick moved to approve the April 1, 2021 meeting minutes. Phil 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 Lela Culpepper has joined the John Day Field office as the third Soil Conservationist. The staff has been working through the EQIP and RCPP applications. CSP Classic signups have closed. The John Day office's Quality Assurance Review will be held on May 17th. Aaron stated he, Kyle, and Irene Jerome met with the County Court to inform them of efforts being undertaken to prepare a Joint Chiefs application to perform conifer thinning and juniper removal on private lands adjacent to proposed or pending treatment sites located on the Malheur Forest.

FSA – Emma Gabriel, Harney/Grant Farm Service Agency County Executive Director – Emma reported notice was received last week to suspend approvals for CRP applications. This is being done in anticipation of an increase in rental rates for the program. Emma stated she expects Harney and Grant counties to qualify for the Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP) program due to drought conditions. The program provides compensation for grazing losses for covered livestock due to drought on privately owned or leased land. Grant County is currently in a D2 drought. FSA also has a program to assist with hauling water due to drought conditions. Contact the FSA office in John Day or Burns for more information.

South Fork Council – Amy reported the South Fork John Day Watershed Council is busy planning for this summer's projects. The first round of signups for the RCPP program has been completed. The first round focused on the Upper South Fork with the second round focusing on the Lower South Fork. The Council recently received a drone and are looking forward to using it in multiple ways.

DISTRICT PROGRAMS

6. Grant Weed Control – Matt reported the Wheeler County ROW treatments have all been completed with 85% of Grant County ROW and rock pits done. Plans are to begin work on the 50% Cost-Share applications soon. BLM has expanded several sites to be treated. Grant Weed Control hosted a tour with Bayer to look at some of the Rejuvra test sites and to work with landowners on new sites for a range study to evaluate forage after post-treatment. The tour was very interesting

and showed great results. Bayer will be working with two test plots that will have Rejuvra applied aeri ally in a pattern. The sites will be monitored for three to five years to check the germination of forbs resulting from the treatment. The plots will be located in real life situations on working ranches. Matt stated he expects to have a site in Dayville and Long Creek.

7. District Programs – Kyle reviewed the Project Status Report included in the board packet. The District submitted four proposals to OWEB. The Upper John Day Private Forest Lands Assessment will retain OR State University to inventory forest conditions in order to prepare for a Joint Chiefs proposal. The Upper John Day River Aquifer Management Feasibility Study seeks funding to cost share with moneys secured through an OR Water Resources Dept. grant to conduct assess, prioritize, and locate groundwater recharge and recovery projects. The Seneca 96 Ranch Enhancements Project Phase I requests funding to conduct reseeding, construct pasture management fences and develop stockwater. The Zweggardt Irrigation Efficiency Project will purchase gated pipe to be installed in two flood irrigation ditches to assist the landowner with better management of their irrigation.

DISTRICT BUSINESS

8. ODOT Hwy 395 Sidewalk Project – Kyle reported ODOT offered the District \$6,400 as compensation for the loss of property associated with four separate easements resulting from the sidewalk project and associated drainage. The District will lose thirteen parking spaces. The ODOT offer gives the District 40 days to respond with no response being a rejection. Kyle stated he would like to discuss the situation with an attorney. The Directors agreed by consensus that the District should seek legal counsel regarding the compensation issue.
9. ODA SIAs – The Directors reviewed the OR Dept. Agriculture 2020 Compliance Program Report.
10. River Democracy Act of 2021 - The River Democracy Act of 2021 was introduced by Ron Wyden and Jeff Merkley. The Act amends the existing Scenic Rivers Act, and will designate 615 miles of streams in and around Grant County as either scenic, wild or recreational. Kyle stated he was not able find a map of the rivers that would be affected so he put one together with a list of the streams and designations. The Act calls for a “comprehensive management plan” to be written for lands up to one half mile on either side of the stream; calling this distance as “interim”. With this boundary, the designation of 615 miles will affect about 417,000 acres. The new designations appear to be only affecting streams on public lands. The Directors stated they felt negative towards adding any additional streams to the Scenic Rivers Act. Kyle stated he would like to talk to a representative of Wyden’s office to obtain additional information. The Directors agreed that would be a good next step.
11. Other – Kyle shared a letter written to OR Dept. of Agriculture by Wheeler SWCD regarding an incident involving a Strategic Implementation Area within their District boundaries. Discussion followed about the importance of the Grant SWCD staying in contact with other SWCDs in the state regarding the SIA issue.
12. Other – Roger stated he would like the District to address the Conservation Easement issue in the future.

FINANCIAL BUSINESS

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

The meeting was adjourned at 5:25 pm.



Board Chair

6-3-21

Date



District Manager

6-3-2021

Date