



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
November 2nd, 2023 Meeting

Attendance

Directors Attending:

Roger Ediger – Director
Pat Voigt - Chairman
Rick Henslee – Director

Phil St. Clair – Director
Joanne Keerins – Director
Ted Clausen – Associate Director

Staff Attending:

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

Pat Holliday – Program Assistant
Cole Winegar – District Engineer

Visitors:

Aaron Roth – Natural Resources Conservation Service

ADMINISTRATION

1. Call Meeting to Order – Pat Voigt called the meeting to order at 4:00 pm.
2. Approval of Minutes – **Roger moved to approve the October 5th, 2023 meeting minutes. Rick gave the second with the motion passing unanimously.**
3. Introduction of Visitors – There were no visitors that needed introduction.
4. Public Input – There was no public input.

REPORTS

5. NRCS – Aaron provided staffing updates for the John Day Field Office. Aaron will be the District Conservationist until the first part of December. Hannah Smith will assume the John Day District Conservationist position, but Aaron stated an exact date has not been set for that to occur. Maureen Puffer has accepted a position with the Agriculture Research Service in Burns. November 17th is the EQIP deadline for several forest and rangeland programs.

The Southern Blues Forestry tour was held on October 17th with 50 participants including agency personnel, contactors, and landowners. Aaron said he hopes it will be an annual event. Discussion followed on forest health issues.

The lease NRCS has with the District for space in the building expires in May 2024. Aaron and Kyle are working together to start the renewal process early. NRCS would like to stay in the building with the District and Farm Service Agency. Aaron stated he is confident they can come up with a renewal package that will work for all.

6. FSA – A representative was unable to attend.
7. South Fork John Day Watershed Council – A report was not available. Joanne and Phil stated the staff is busy with grant applications and project reports.

8. Malheur Forest – A representative was unable to attend.
9. ODA – A representative was unable to attend.

DISTRICT PROGRAMS

10. Grant Weed Control – Matt reported the staff is wrapping things up for the year. Pat has begun the billing process for the annual grass treatment. Matt has met with several new landowners to provide assistance with a noxious weed treatment program for their property. Right-of-way treatments have taken place on areas of concern on several county roads. Matt noted Tereasa passed both required tests and now has her Public Pesticide Applicator license.

Kyle reported the District has been contacted by a Long Creek residence regarding the aerial application of herbicide that occurred in the area. Matt provided information on the notifications required for herbicide application on private land.

11. 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.

DISTRICT BUSINESS

12. Cole Winegar: District Engineering Program Presentation – Cole provided an update on the Henslee Fox Creek Habitat Project. Cole stated the project was first approved for a Bureau of Reclamation Task Order in 2016. Since that time the project has gone through numerous design changes, all of which were instigated/influenced by several funding agencies, mainly Bonneville Power Administration and NOAA Fisheries. Engineering costs to date are approximately \$89,000 with the Engineer's Estimate for construction at \$450,000. Each stage of design review takes 4 – 6 months to be completed. Discussion followed on the difficult permitting process and the level of ignorance agencies often have of on the ground issues.

Cole expressed concern that agencies are supporting the installation of structures that in his engineering experience will most likely fail. He stated that in order to keep projects moving forward the District will probably have to deal with the situation. He is considering ways to limit his and the District's liability. Kyle stated Cole does an excellent job of managing these complicated and difficult permitting issues.

13. Legislative Changes to SWCD Statutes – Kyle provided information received from OR Department of Agriculture on SB775 which changed the eligibility for zone directors in all of Oregon's Soil and Water Conservation Districts. In the past a zone director could reside anywhere within the District if they owned or managed 10-acres or more within the zone they represented. As a result of SB775, all zone directors must now live in the zone that they represent. SB775 also changed the director ownership or management criteria for Districts in counties with a population over 250,000, currently Multnomah, Washington, Clackamas, Lane, and Marion. In these counties, zone directors no longer are required to meet the 10-acre land ownership or management criteria. Kyle stated he intends to follow more closely future changes that affect SWCD's.
14. Other – Kyle reported he is working on an agreement between Blue Mt. Forest Partners and the District. The purpose of the agreement will be to assist the local Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) in its efforts to build local capacity and partnerships to implement forest and rangeland conservation activities on private land. The agreement will provide funding to the District, through Blue Mt. Forest Partners, to retain a new position that will coordinate NRCS programs with private landowners.
15. Other – Kyle stated Mark Croghan will be retiring from the Bureau of Reclamation the end of 2023. He proposed the District to host a dinner in Mark's honor for Directors and staff after the January 4th, 2024 Board meeting. The Directors were very supportive of the idea.
16. Other –

FINANCIAL BUSINESS

17. Financial Report/Financial Summary – Financial reports for the month of October 2023 were reviewed.
18. Approve Bills– **Phil moved to approve the bills and financial reports for the month of October 2023. Joanne gave the second with the motion passing unanimously.**

The meeting was adjourned at 5:33 pm.



Board Chair

12-2-23

Date



District Manager

12-2-2023

Date