



**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**  
**2023 ANNUAL MEETING**  
**April 6, 2023**

**Attendance**

**Directors Attending:**

Rick Henslee – Director

Pat Voigt- Chairman

Phil St. Clair – Director via telephone

**Staff Attending:**

Kyle Sullivan – District Manager – via telephone

Matt Wenick – Weed Control Coordinator

**Visitors:**

Aaron Roth – Natural Resources Conservation Service

Shannon Wenick – Farm Service Agency

Ann Niesen – Malheur Forest

Roger Ediger – Director

Joanne Keerins – Director via telephone

Pat Holliday – Program Assistant

Colleen Malaney – Malheur Forest

Maureen Puffer – Natural Resources Conservation Service

John Morris

**ADMINISTRATION**

1. Call Meeting to Order – Pat Voigt called the meeting to order at 4:00 pm.

2. Approval of Minutes – Joanne moved to approve the March 2, 2023 meeting minutes. Rick gave the second with the motion passing unanimously.

Introduction of Visitors – Maureen Puffer, NRCS Soil Conservationist, Ann Niesen, acting Malheur Forest Supervisor and Colleen Malaney, Partnership Coordinator Malheur Forest all introduced themselves. Colleen stated she is excited about the restoration work the Joint Chiefs funding will provide. The first year the Malheur Forest will focus on the Magone Lake and Laycock Creek area. Proposals for Title II – Northeast RAC funding was due April 3<sup>rd</sup>, with eight project applications for a total of approximately \$600,000 submitted. Ann reported the Malheur Forest is getting close to moving into the Forest plan revision process. It is expected to begin public engagement in the summer of 2023, with a goal of completion in three years.

3. Public Input – There was no public input.

**REPORTS**

4. NRCS – Aaron reported Maureen Puffer started in the John Day office in January and wanted to introduce herself to the Grant SWCD Board. Maureen stated she was born and raised in Minnesota and Wisconsin. She holds a Bachelor of Science Degree in forest ecosystem management and a Master's Degree in range science, with a focus on coal mine reclamation. Maureen stated she has a lot of range monitoring experience. She handed out recent maps of the Oregon Drought Monitor as well as the Oregon SNOTEL map.

Aaron stated applications to participate in the Joint Chiefs restoration program on private lands are due April 7<sup>th</sup>. He is excited about the restoration possibilities the program will provide as well as how the Community Wildfire Grant the District recently received will complement work accomplished. Aaron reported he made a tentative offer to fill the position Lela held. Interviews for the forester position will be held soon. He is hopeful both positions will be filled. The 2nd Annual Natural Resource Fair will be held April 18<sup>th</sup> from 2:30 to 8:00. The event will have many participating partners, informative speakers as well as providing dinner. Aaron and Kyle will be on Coffee Time on April 13<sup>th</sup> to talk about the Fair.

5. FSA – Shannon reported Grant County is currently in a D3 drought classification for 2023. As April 1<sup>st</sup> is the first day of the grazing season, the Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP) program will compensate producers for livestock losses due to weather conditions and predators. Shannon stated producers can contact her for additional information. She stated it is possible the drought designation will trigger additional drought compensation programs. Discussion followed on programs available to assist producers with losses due to wolf activity.

6. South Fork John Day Watershed Council – Joanne reported the Council recently hired a watershed technician, that will be a shared position with Prineville BLM, focusing on water quality and watershed condition monitoring across the entire John Day Basin. In May

the Council will be supervising a Northwest Youth Corp working on BLM Good Neighbor Authority projects. A retired Forest Service engine boss has been hired to supervise the crew. ODFW Passage funding to design four diversions on Widows Creek has been secured. The Council will team up with BOR and Grant SWCD to get the designs completed. Work is continuing on the South Fork John Day Forest partnership and the Council's RCPP project.

**DISTRICT PROGRAMS**

- 7. Grant Weed Control – Matt reported Grant Weed Control recently purchased a new/used 2022 Ford F-550. It has been delivered to a fabricator in Sisters to build the flatbed. A new grant application with BLM was submitted. The application will provide five years of funding. A signed agreement was received from the Umatilla Forest to conduct noxious weed control. Matt has been working with Cole on a Request for Proposal (RFP) to provide helicopter spray services for the next five years through the Community Wildfire Grant. Plans are to advertise the RFP beginning in early April with proposals due the end of the month. When the weather permits, right-of-way spraying has begun on Grant and Wheeler County roads. The Noxious Weed 50% Cost-Share Program will be accepting applications sometime in mid-April. A tour of areas treated for Annual Grasses will be held June 21<sup>st</sup>. Representatives from around the state are expected to attend.
  
- 8. District Programs – Kyle stated the Program Status Report was included in the Board packet. He reviewed the components of the Community Wildfire Defense grant the District was recently awarded. The grant has four main elements; mechanically removing woody vegetation from County Road shoulders serving as evacuation routes for residents; treating with herbicides the road shoulders treated to extend the life of the vegetation removal; conduct conifer thinning on approximately 2,000 acres of priority forest stands on private lands and performing fine fuels treatment on approximately 100,000 private rangeland acres. The District expects to have a signed agreement in June. Kyle stated he hopes to align the thinning component with work being done through the Joint Chiefs program. An agreement with the Malheur Forest is expected soon for an approved Title II project that will extend the forestry assessment through the valley to Dayville. Two Title II applications to implement improvements on grazing allotments were submitted. Also submitted was the BLM Grant County Community Fire Assistance Program (\$619,300) and the OR State Fire Marshal's Office 2023 Grant County Community Wildfire Risk Reduction Program (\$498,070). Kyle stated the District expects to receive the results of the four applications by the end of April.

**DISTRICT BUSINESS**

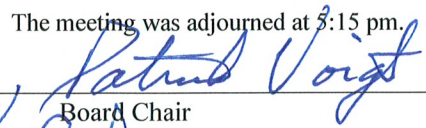
- 9. Annual Report – Kyle gave a report on the District's 2022 activities. A copy is attached to the minutes. Kyle stated the District's 2021-22 audit is available at the office.
  
- 10. Approval to Contract Audit to Solutions CPAs – Joanne moved to approve Grant SWCD entering into a contract with Solutions CPAs to conduct its 2022-23 audit. Phil gave the second with the motion passing unanimously.
  
- 11. Engineering Technician – Kyle reported the Engineering Technician position was offered to Neil Brooks and was accepted. Neil will continue to work with the CREP program while providing limited engineering assistance for the next few months. It is expected he will fully transition to the Engineering Technician position this fall. Phil asked about the future of the CREP position. Kyle stated he plans to meet with NRCS and FSA to make future plans.
  
- 12. Other – Kyle announced that Marganne Allen from ODA was tragically killed in a bicycle accident. He stated he had been looking forward to working with Marganne.
  
- 13. Other – Kyle reported the status of ODOT's recent settlement offer. The latest offer does not address the most important issue, the above ground easement. Discussion followed on the months long settlement process with ODOT. It was the consensus of the Directors to not accept ODOT's last offer.


Kyle provided the Directors the letter the District plans to submit to Ron Wyden and Jeff Merkley with comments on the River Democracy Act. It was the consensus of Directors to submit the letter as written.

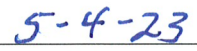
**FINANCIAL BUSINESS**

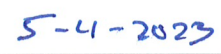
- 14. Financial Report/Financial Summary – Financial reports for the month of March 2023 were reviewed.
  
- 15. Approve Bills – Roger moved to approve the bills and financial reports for the month of March 2023. Rick gave the second with the motion passing unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:15 pm.

  
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Board Chair

  
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District Manager

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

  
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Date