



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  
February 4, 2021 MEETING**

**Attendance**

**Directors Attending:**

Pat Voigt - Director  
Phil St. Clair - Director  
Rick Henslee - Director

Roger Ediger - Director  
Joanne Keerins - Director - Via telephone  
Nick Stiner - Associate Director - Via Telephone

**Staff Attending:**

Pat Holliday - Program Assistant  
Matt Wenick - Weed Control Coordinator

Kyle Sullivan - District Manager

**Visitors:**

Aaron Roth - Via telephone  
John Morris

Emma Gabriel - Farm Service Agency  
Amy Stiner - South Fork Watershed Council - Via telephone

**ADMINISTRATION**

1. Call Meeting to Order - Pat called the meeting to order at 4:00 pm.
2. Approval of Minutes - Phil moved to approve the January 7<sup>th</sup> meeting minutes. Rick gave the second with the motion passing unanimously.
3. Introduction of Visitors - Emma Gabriel, Farm Service Agency County Executive Director Harney and Grant Counties, introduced herself. Emma reported she is working on hiring a Program Technician to work full time in the John Day office. The job posting closed on January 28<sup>th</sup> and interviews will be scheduled in the next few weeks. At this time the plan is to have the newly hired Program Technician train with Emma at the John Day office on Tuesdays and at the Harney County office the remainder of the week for the first six months of employment. Signups for the Livestock Forage Program ended on January 31, 2021. Between the two counties, over 400 applications were received. The LFP program is more complicated and requires more staff time than the CFAP program was. Emma stated if there is a producer who is wondering about the status of their LFP payment please have them contact her. She has heard unofficially there may be a CFAP 3 program, but at this time FSA has not released any details. Emma suggested signing up to receive monthly updates via e-mail on FSA programs. Acreage reports will be due April 15<sup>th</sup>, if you have NAP coverage, and by July 15<sup>th</sup> for everyone else. Two programs producers may be interested in are; the Conservation Reserve Grasslands Program (CRP Grasslands) and the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP). Under the CRP Grasslands program landowners can hay or graze enrolled land according to a conservation plan written by NRCS with payment rates at \$11 acre for Harney County and \$5 for Grant County. The CREP program is a continuous signup and provides a payment for acres within a riparian buffer.
4. Public Input - There was no public input.

**REPORTS**

5. NRCS - Aaron provided an update on the Covid protocols for the John Day field office. As a result of the number of Covid cases increasing in Grant County, the office staff will not be conducting face to face meetings with landowners. The 2021 Local Work Group will be conducted via Zoom on February 16, 17 and 18<sup>th</sup>. The CSP Classic renewal deadline is March 26<sup>th</sup>, with the EQIP RCCP deadline being April 16<sup>th</sup>.

FSA - Emma Gabriel, Harney-Grant Farm Service Agency County Executive Director - Emma provided her report under Item 3 above.

South Fork Council - Amy stated the South Fork John Day Watershed Council has recently made available its 2020 Annual Report. The report highlights completed projects as well as future projects to be implemented. In 2020 the Council contracted with 16 different companies to implement restoration activities on 15 different land ownerships, spending over \$480,000, with an additional 3.2 million dollars to be implemented in the future.



## DISTRICT PROGRAMS

6. Grant Weed Control – Matt reported he and Nate have completed the maintenance on all the spray equipment and are ready for the upcoming spray season. Right-of-way treatment has been started on Grant County roads with rock pit treatments to begin soon. An upgrade of overhead led lights in the NRCS, FSA, conference room, halls and the break room has been completed. Plans are to finish the SWCD section of the building this winter. Matt ordered the storage shed approved at the January meeting and expects delivery in the next several weeks. Pat, Jason, Nate and Matt attended the Wilbur-Ellis Pesticide Applicator training to receive accreditation for pesticide licenses. All attendees considered it an excellent course. Matt stated the 2021 25% cost-share program will be changing from a focus on high priority noxious weeds to treatment of annual grasses. The program will have a \$10,000 treatment limit per landowner, including a \$2,500 landowner contribution. Matt believes there will be an increase in perennial grasses and with a corresponding increase in forage for participating landowners. Kyle and Matt are scheduled to talk to Logan Bagett, KJDY, on Friday the 5<sup>th</sup>, to provide information on the District's annual grass program and explain treatment options landowners may have. Matt attended the South Ford Watershed Council meeting on Monday the 8<sup>th</sup>. He provided information on the research and test plots conducted on the treatment of annual grasses and methods to educate landowners of options for treatment.
7. District Programs – Kyle reported Tyler has been contacting landowners regarding interest in participating in pre-commercial thinning and juniper removal with OWEB funding, partnering with the RCPP program. To date, one contract has been signed, with a completion date of December 31, 2023. The District recently signed the 2021 CTWSR contract; including funding to cost-share implementation of the McGirr Habitat project, noxious weed treatment, a cultural resource survey for a future OWEB grant and program support. Kyle stated he contacted the District's BOR representative and was told there was no indication of any problems with the submitted contract renewal, however to not expect a new contract until April. Cole is working on individual, project specific, BOR task orders and plans to submit them to BOR next week. Kyle has completed the updated CREP technician job description and will contact OWEB for permission to change the conditions of the CREP grant. A virtual light review of the Upper Mainstem and South Fork Ag Water Quality Plan is planned for 2021. ODA is asking for input on the Focus Area program and Kyle has provided the District's evaluation of the program.

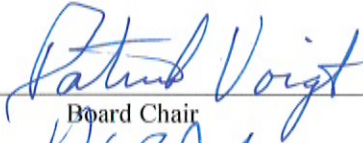
## DISTRICT BUSINESS

8. NRCS Partner Civil Rights and 1619 Agreement (privacy) Review – Aaron presented the Partner Civil Rights Review and the 1619 Agreement. The Civil Rights Review is to provide information on programs with equal treatment for all participants and to ensure all NRCS and District programs comply with all federal requirements; including non-discrimination on all communication, provide outreach to a diverse audience and to ensure accessibility to all. Aaron asked the Directors to provide him with any suggestions they may have on ways to improve communication with all landowners. The 1619 Agreement focuses on NRCS's policy of not sharing producer information. Aaron stated he is working on updating the Memorandum of Agreement with the District.
9. ODA Director Taylor Meeting Update - Kyle stated he made the decision to postpone the meeting with Director Taylor as he felt it would not be effective with limited participation from the Directors, due to Covid meeting restrictions. He stated there were just too many things stacking up against conducting a successful meeting, including our legislators not being able to attend. He hopes to reschedule it this fall when the Directors and our partners can gather in a fashion to hold a productive meeting. The Directors expressed support for postponing the meeting. Discussion was held on their frustration with the communication with ODA and wondering if the District should take a different direction. But what would that be? The Directors expressed confidence that the producers in the County were doing what needed to be done and that the challenge is finding just what the water quality problems are in the county. The Directors all felt the issue is too important to put aside.
10. Conservation Easement Program – Due to the lateness of the hour, Pat suggested postponing discussion on this item to next month's meeting.
11. Other – Phil moved to pass a Resolution setting Grant SWCD's 2021 annual meeting on March 4<sup>th</sup> at 4:00 pm. Rick gave the second and the motion passed unanimously.
12. Other - Kyle stated he would like to do something permanent to honor Ken Delano's service to the District and the County. He asked the Directors what they thought of naming the building after Ken? Kyle stated his preliminary thinking on the subject is to hold a ceremony where a plaque with Ken's name is put on the building. Aaron is checking to see if it will be an issue with our federal partners. The Directors were all very supportive of the idea.

## FINANCIAL BUSINESS

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

The meeting was adjourned at 6:00 pm.



Board Chair



District Manager

3-4-21

Date

3-8-2021

Date