



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
March 6, 2025 Meeting

Attendance

Directors Attending:

Roger Ediger – Director
Pat Voigt - Chairman
Jared Livingston – Associate Director

Phil St. Clair – Director - telephone
Rick Henslee – Director
Dustin Kreger – Associate Director

Staff Attending:

Kyle Sullivan – District Manager
Matt Wenick – Weed Control Coordinator

Pat Holliday – Program Assistant

Visitors:

Didgette McCracken – OSU Extension
Sara Ugalde – Farm Service Agency
Jennifer Bush - Malheur National Forest
John Morris
Hannah Smith – Natural Resources Conservation Service
Brent Smith – OR Dept. Agriculture

Brandon Ferguson – OR Dept. Forestry - telephone
Tom Straughan – OACD Board member
John Rowell – Grant County Commissioner
Trea Nance – OR DEQ -telephone
Chase Blume – Malheur National Forest

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 February 6, 2025, meeting minutes. Rick gave the second. Roger Ediger, Pat Voigt, Rick Henslee and Phil St. Clair voted yes. There were no votes in opposition. The motion passed unanimously.**
3. Introduction of Visitors – Sara Ugalde stated she is the new Harney/Grant County Executive Director for the Farm Service Agency.
4. Public Input – There was no public input.

REPORTS

5. NRCS – Hannah stated EQIP applications were due on February 28, 2025. The staff has completed the ranking of applications, with eleven qualifying for funding.
6. FSA – Sara reported she will be in the John Day office on Thursdays and someone from Baker will be here on Tuesdays. Currently there are two staff members for Grant and Harney County. They are doing their best to assist landowners impacted by the 2024 wildfires. The deadline for acreage reports is March 15, 2025. Currently Farm Service Agency is under a hiring freeze. There has not been an announcement regarding 2025 CREP signups.

7. South Fork John Day Watershed Council – Phil reported the Council is continuing to work on ongoing projects. A Community Assistance Grant application was recently submitted. It will provide assistance to private landowners from Izee to Dayville affected by the 2024 wildfires. The Council is recruiting seasonal assistants for the 2025 summer season.
8. Malheur Forest – Chase Blume reported funding has been received for post wildfire recovery and restoration efforts on areas affected by the Falls Fire. The funding will allow for the removal of hazard trees and rebuilding of fences. The Immigrant Ranger District is working on virtual fencing as an option for fences affected by wildfires. The deadline for submitting Title II applications was February 28th. Annual meetings between the Malheur Forest and permittees are currently being held. Public meetings on the Malheur Forest Plan revisions are currently on pause. Plans are to reschedule the meetings in the spring of 2025. The Malheur Forest is very interested in the public's comments on the plan.
9. ODA – Brent Smith reported a full review of the Upper Mainstem and South Fork John Day River Agricultural Water Quality Management Area Plan will be held April 8th from 10:00 – 12:00 in the District's conference room. He has been working with Kyle on Measurable Objectives to be included in the plan. The 2025-2027 SWCD Capacity Grant application window will be open from April 15th to May 31st. He and Kyle have been in discussion with the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs regarding the possibility of applying for funding to sponsor a riparian fence program.
10. OR State Forestry – Brandon reported OR Dept. of Forestry is currently hiring for seasonal fire protection positions as well as a dispatch and forester position. Staff are collaborating with landowners on post fire recovery.
11. OR Dept. Environmental Quality - Trea Nance reported DEQ is still in a holding pattern regarding the requested time extension for the temperature TMDLs for the John Day River Basin. Public outreach on the issue has been put on hold until additional information is available.

DISTRICT PROGRAMS

12. Grant Weed Control – Matt reported the first round of seeding on 4,385 acres was completed in early January. In February he was contacted by several landowners with an interest in aerial seeding. The helicopter contractor was brought back, and the seed was applied on an additional 1800 acres. Plans are to also seed areas on the Malheur Forest. Matt and Nate attended three conferences in February. Matt made presentations on the annual grass treatments that have occurred in Grant County to landowners and public agencies in Jordan Valley, the Society for Range Management as well as at the OR Vegetation Management Association conference in Seaside. Tyler gave a presentation at OVMA on Grant County's Fire Wise and fire resilience programs. Roadside herbicides have been ordered. Grant Weed Control will again apply pre-emergence treatment on Wheeler County roadsides. Applications will be accepted March 26th at 9:00am for the 25% Cost Share Program for Invasive Annual Grasses. Matt reported Grant Weed Control has entered into a contract with the Umatilla Forest to treat areas affected by the Battle Mt. and Lone Rock fires. He has been working with the Malheur Forest regarding assistance with hiring a seasonal position to conduct monitoring on areas affected by the Rail Ridge Fire. The District will have five pieces of equipment in the Grant County Road Department equipment sale. Matt has been working with Wheeler SWCD on a CWDG grant application for annual grass control and seeding on 57,000 acres.
13. 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. Kyle reported he has been working on a CWDG application to provide funding for annual grass treatment, seeding, precommercial thinning and juniper removal.

DISTRICT BUSINESS

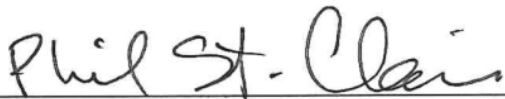
14. Impacts on Programs resulting from 90-day hold with federal funding – Kyle reported he has heard of from our partners of several instances where there has been a pause on federal funding. The District currently has 51 active contracts, including federal and state. He is unsure if the District will experience any issues with its federal agreements. However, if there are any major funding issues, the District has enough reserves to keep going for approximately 6 months.

15. Agricultural Water Quality Program Update – Kyle stated measurable objectives will be a component of the Upper Mainstem and South Fork John Day River Agricultural Water Quality Management Area Plan. The District and landowners in the John Day Basin have been actively doing conservation for many years. It is important for the plan to have measurable objectives that can tell the story of what has been accomplished.
16. Other – Tom Straughn said he is the OACD Board member representing eastern Oregon. It is his goal to keep the District up to date on OACD activities and issues. The Board is tracking bills in Salem that may affect Soil & Water Conservation Districts. The OACD 2025 Conference will be held in Pendleton this year. Andrea Kreiner is doing a great job as the OACD Executive Director. Tom stated OACD requires Districts to pay dues. Currently the dues are 0.3% of a district’s gross revenues from its last audit. Kyle stated Grant SWCD is concerned that the new dues structure will cause a significant increase in Grant SWCD’s annual dues. Tom said it is important for OACD to understand the financial impact dues have on districts. He will get clarification on the dues issue and get back to Kyle.

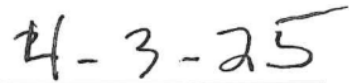
FINANCIAL BUSINESS

17. Financial Report/Financial Summary – Financial reports for the month of February 2025 were reviewed by the Directors.
18. Approve Bills – **Rick moved to approve the bills and financial reports for the month of February 2025. Roger gave the second. Rick Henslee, Phil St. Clair, Roger Ediger and Pat Voigt voted in favor. There were no votes in opposition. The motion passed unanimously.**

The meeting was adjourned at 5:25 pm.



Board Chair



Date



District Manager



Date