



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
June 3, 2021 MEETING**

Attendance

Directors Attending:

Phil St. Clair – Director
Rick Henslee – Director – Via telephone
Joanne Keerins – 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
Emma Gabriel – Harney/Grant County Farm Service Agency
Shannon Bruebaker - Harney/Grant County Farm Service Agency
Cassi Newton – Wheeler SWCD

Amy Stiner – South Fork Watershed Council
Steven Mitchell – Blue Mt. Eagle
Hanna Lusco – South Fork Watershed Council
Kathleen Cathy-Senator Ron Wyden's Field Representative

ADMINISTRATION

1. Call Meeting to Order – Pat called the meeting to order at 4:00pm.
2. Approval of Minutes – Pat Voigt stated he felt a sentence in the minutes should be removed. **Phil moved to approve the May 6, 2021 meeting minutes, with the change noted. Roger 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 provided an update on NRCS Coronavirus protocols. Staff are now able to meet with producers by appointment only. If the producers have been vaccinated then no mask is required, if not it is suggested masks be worn. The John Day office Quality Assurance Review was held last month. The results were successful with the staff receiving several positive comments and some suggestions for improvement. However, no major issues were noted. The staff is busy working on EQIP contracts and CSP rankings. Next year the EQIP RCCP rankings will be done in the fall. Aaron provided handouts of the Oregon drought monitor map and hay stocks in Idaho, Oregon and Washington.

FSA – Emma Gabriel, Harney/Grant Farm Service Agency County Executive Director – Emma stated Grant County has been in a D2 drought designation for five consecutive weeks. If the county stays in D2 for three additional weeks it will qualify for the Livestock Forage Program. If the county moves to a D3 designation producers will qualify for a 3-month payment. Producers will be mailed a Livestock inventory form as well as a list of the items needed for participation in the Livestock Forage Disaster Program. Emma stated producers will need to provide updated acreage reports by July 15, 2021.

South Fork Council – Amy reported the South Fork John Day Watershed Council is busy planning for the summer's projects. The Council will be accepting RCPP applications from landowners in the Lower South Fork area throughout the summer.

Wheeler SWCD – Cassie reported a new District Manager has been hired.

DISTRICT PROGRAMS

6. Grant Weed Control – Matt reported things are picking up quickly with the Weed Department. Matt and Nate spent three days applying noxious weed treatments along the John Day River for the BLM. Treatments will continue next week with a

four-day float trip down the river. Matt stated in 2020 the number of acres treated for noxious weeds on the Malheur Forest was higher than any other forest in Region 6. Matt provided an example of Rush Skeleton weed. Recently eight plants were found in a fourteen-acre area. Matt is working with Bayer on annual grass treatment and is continuing to look for additional test sites. Matt hosted a tour with Bayer and ARS to visit potential test site areas and look at Rejuvra 2020 treatment sites. They are looking for test sites located on a working ranch that is currently being grazed. In some areas rare species are being found after Rejuvra treatment. Neil will be working with landowners who have applied for Rejuvra treatment in 2021. Matt expects to accomplish the treatments the end of July. Bayer contributed 20 gallons of Rejuvra to the 2021 treatment. The contribution of Rejuvra by Bayer will enable additional acres to be treated in July.

7. District Programs – Kyle reviewed the Project Status Report included in the board packet. The District received verbal approval from BPA for the McGirr Habitat Project. The bid tour will be held June 4th. The District will be designing, contracting, and providing construction oversight on a project on Summit Creek for the Malheur Forest and installing several water developments along Scotty Creek.

DISTRICT BUSINESS

8. River Democracy Act – Kathleen Cathy reported Ron Wyden’s office recently introduced the Cattle Market Transparency Act of 2021. The legislation would restore transparency and accountability in the cattle market by establishing regional cash minimums and equipping producers with more market information. Senator Wyden has also been involved in establishing an Oregon state meat inspection program. Both of these items affect the ranching industry.

Kathleen stated the River Democracy Act of 2021 proposes to modify the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. It was a process started several years ago with approximately 2,200 people providing suggestions on river segments they wanted protected. Each river segment will have a management plan that will be put together by local communities with an opportunity for the public to comment on the impacts of the segments included. Kathleen said she wants to make sure people in eastern Oregon have input. There is no private property included in the bill. She said the bill attempts to protect grazing rights within river segments and is not aware of any fencing requirement. Their office is concerned about rural economies and protection of permittees on federal land. There is still a lot of opportunity for input into the segments included. Pat V. questioned why the bill was needed. Kathleen said the bill would allow additional riparian work to be accomplished. The Directors questioned why the projects couldn’t be done now. Amy Stiner stated the Council has not been able to implement projects dealing with fence construction and juniper removal with the current Wild and Scenic Act. Concerns were expressed that state and federal agencies have the ability to make management plans fit their agenda. The Directors had several questions and expressed concerns regarding the act. Kathleen stated she would find the answers to the Directors questions. She suggested communicating to Senator Wyden’s office and stating what you don’t want in the plan and how it will affect you and your business. Kyle will forward additional questions to Kathleen and she will follow up with answers. Kathleen stated she would like to attend a meeting in person to discuss the issue.

9. ODA SIAs – Kyle stated the District received a copy of the letter written by Wheeler SWCD to the Natural Resources Division of the OR Department of Agriculture regarding their recent experience with ODA and SIAs. Kyle contacted Cassie Newton, acting Wheeler SWCD manager, regarding the information presented in the letter. Cassie stated Marganne Allen contacted Wheeler SWCD after receiving the letter to introduce herself and to acknowledge their concerns. ODA may choose to use the next biennium to plan how to proceed with SIAs and Focus Areas while putting the SIA process on hold until after 2023. Wheeler SWCD is concerned about the use of the word enforcement with SIAs and the potential negative affect on landowner relationships. The Board of Agriculture will hold a meeting in September and it is expected SIAs will be on the agenda. The Directors thanked Cassie and Wheeler SWCD for the work they are doing. Kyle stated as soon as the legislative session is done, he believes the District should proceed with the meeting with Director Taylor. Roger suggested having representatives from neighboring SWCD’s at the meeting.

At 5:40 Pat Voigt stated the meeting would take a five-minute break.

Executive Session – At 5:45 Pat Voigt stated the meeting would go into Executive Session under ORS 192.660(2)(a): To consider the employment of a public officer, employee, staff member or individual agent. Action may be taken after the Executive Session.

11. Other – At 6:25 Pat Voigt stated the meeting would be back in open session.

Phil moved to engage Brian Best of Olsen Barton LLC to represent the District with the ODOT Condemnation issue. Roger gave the second and the motion passed unanimously.

12. Other –

FINANCIAL BUSINESS

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

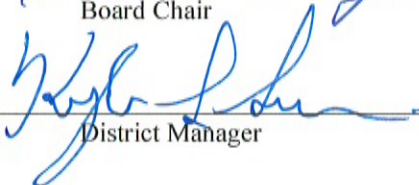
The meeting was adjourned at 6:35pm.



Board Chair

7-1-21

Date



District Manager

7/14/2021

Date