



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 3, 2022 MEETING

Attendance

Directors Attending:

Rick Henslee – Director via telephone
Pat Voigt- Chairman

Roger Ediger – Director via telephone
Joanne Keerins – Director via telephone

Staff Attending:

Kyle Sullivan – District Manager
Matt Wenick – Weed Control Coordinator

Pat Holliday – Program Assistant
Neil Brooks – CREP Technician

Visitors:

Aaron Roth – Natural Resources Conservation Service
Debbie Arntz – Farm Service Agency
John Rizza – OR State University

Jay Gibbs - Natural Resources Conservation Service
Maria Snodgrass – OR Dept. Agriculture

ADMINISTRATION

1. Call Meeting to Order – Pat called the meeting to order at 4:00 pm.
2. Approval of Minutes – **Roger moved to approve the October 5th, 2022 meeting minutes. Joanne gave the second with the motion passing unanimously.**
3. Introduction of Visitors – Pat introduced John Rizza and Debbie Arntz.
4. Public Input – There was no public input.

REPORTS

5. NRCS – Aaron provided a staffing update; Maureen Puffer will start soon in the Soil Conservationist position. Recently NRCS flew a job posting to replace Lela's position and hope to have applicants soon. There is a possibility a forestry position will be housed in the John Day Field office in the future. The EQIP deadline is November 18th. The staff is working on CSP applications and payments. Stephanie will be out on vacation for several weeks so it will be Aaron and Tereasa in the office.

Jay Gibbs, NRCS Basin Team Leader for the John Day/Umatilla & Snake River Basins – Jay reported the Inflation Reduction Act included a large amount of funding for programs to assist landowners with voluntary conservation on private lands. In 2023 planning will occur for funding that will be allocated for years 2024- 2026. Jay stated Rejuvra application is now a cost-share practice with NRCS.

FSA – Debbie Arntz, Harney/Grant Farm Service Agency County Executive Director- Debbie stated she was happy to be attending the meeting in person. She has twenty years' experience with FSA as a Program Technician in the Harney County office. After leaving FSA she became an accountant and worked for Oster Professional Group in Burns and for the Burns Paiute Tribe. She returned to FSA and has worked in the Malheur County office for the last fifteen months prior to taking the job in Harney County. She has a son who has an engineering business, High Desert Engineering, and a daughter who is a pharmacist and lives in La Grande. The deadline to apply for NAP insurance is November 30th. Staff are working on payments for the 2022 Livestock Forage Program and waiting for information on the next phase of Emergency Relief Payments. There have been quite a few new and renewal CREP contracts.

South Fork John Day Watershed Council – No report was available.

OR Dept. Agriculture – Maria stated ODA has been working diligently to provide new hires in several positions. They are excited and pleased with the new additions. In 2021 ODA received \$650,000 in funding, the Ag WQ Support Grant, to support water quality work in small watersheds. The first round of grants were awarded on October 1, 2022. ODA anticipates offering the Ag WQ Support grant funds again in the 2023-25 biennium, pending the final budget.

DISTRICT PROGRAMS

6. Grant Weed Control – Matt reported they are finishing up broadleaf treatments for BLM, Malheur Forest, OR Dept. Agriculture and private landowners. Matt has provided several new landowners information on annual grass treatment. Matt and Nate have completed several new Rejuvra test plots. Matt and Nate met with Justin Hossfeld, from Envu (formerly Bayer) to look at several past treatment sites that still had annual grass present. Evidence is showing that drought conditions did not allow for full Rejuvra incorporation and activation into the soil. Deposition agents are showing to be a strong indication of success. Matt will be making a presentation on the annual grass treatments implemented through the Upper John Day Resiliency Project at the OR Interagency Noxious Weed Symposium to be held in Corvallis in early December. Matt and Kyle will be attending the Title II Resource Advisory Council meeting to be held in Baker City on November 18th.
7. District Programs – Kyle stated the Program Status Report was included in the board packet. A job announcement for an Engineering Technician, Jason's position, will be posted tomorrow in several sites. Jason's last day with the District will be December 31, 2022. Currently two fences are under construction, one located on the Umatilla Forest and one on private land. Tyler and Neil are continuing the Rapid Assessment on private lands for the Upper John Day Resiliency Project. The District submitted an application to OWEB for the Belshaw Creek project. A Community Wildfire Defense Grant application was also submitted. The application was submitted in conjunction with the Grant County Road Department and will provide funding to remove brush along roads for evacuation corridors and fire escape, annual grass treatment, and pre-commercial thinning. The District's range drill has been rented by several landowners treating 750 acres in 2022.

DISTRICT BUSINESS

8. OSU Forestry Extension Presentation of Rapid Assessment – John Rizza, OR State University Forestry Extension Regional Fire Specialist, provided a presentation on the Grant County SWCD Landscape Resiliency Project. The project has three objectives.
 - Objective 1 – Relative Risk Assessment – Conduct a relative risk assessment that will allow the partners to identify focused treatment areas.
 - Objective 2 – Map and Inventory – Conduct an inventory and rapid stand-level assessment of vegetation on private lands to inform future treatments.
 - Objective 3 – Story Map – Create an interactive ArcGIS Storymap telling of accomplishments and plans for the Partnership, as well as the results and products of the relative risk assessment and landscape map/inventory.

John provided a map showing the status of the Rapid Assessment in the Upper John Day Valley. The map provided information on the number of acres of conifers, junipers, dry and wet meadows, riparian areas, shrub steppe, non-vegetated and irrigated agriculture. A map was also shown depicting the overstory density in the Upper John Day Valley. Landowners will be provided information specific to their property. Pat V. stated he believes this is a successful project and the information provided to landowners will be essential and important.

9. Other – Kyle stated he has been contacted by Marganne Allen, of ODA, regarding holding a telephone call to discuss the District's concerns with the ODA and DEQ updated Memorandum of Agreement. The date suggested was November 7th at 2:00 pm.. Marganne stated ODA would prefer to hold the telephone call with a subset of the Board. Kyle asked the Directors if they would prefer holding the telephone call with a subset of the board or have the entire Board present. Rick stated he would not want to exclude any Board members or members of the public. Joanne agreed. It was the consensus of the Directors to have the entire Board present. The staff will announce the District will hold a Work Session on November 7th at 2:00pm. Kyle said Mark Webb and Mark Owens will also participate in the telephone call.

Kyle felt it would be helpful to review the topics the District would like to discuss during the telephone call. He provided these topic points; the working relationship with ODA and DEQ has changed, a minimization of LACs and ODA's involvement, including a section on enforcement, ODA to conduct TMDL Implementation Plans and site inspections with 'joint jurisdiction'. Rick stated the points are spot on. Roger expressed frustration at the amount of time and effort LAC members put into the ag water program only to be told that it did not matter. Kyle asked what is the goal of the meeting? Rick said, is there still a purpose for LACs with local control and input? Has the whole ag water quality process been a ruse? Joanne stated there needs to be continued local input in the ag water quality process and wants the authority to stay with ODA and not go to DEQ.

10. Other –

11. Other –

FINANCIAL BUSINESS

12. Financial Report/Financial Summary – Financial reports for the month of October 2022 were reviewed.
13. Approve Bills – Joanne moved to approve the bills and financial reports for the month of October 2022. Rick gave the second with the motion passing unanimously.

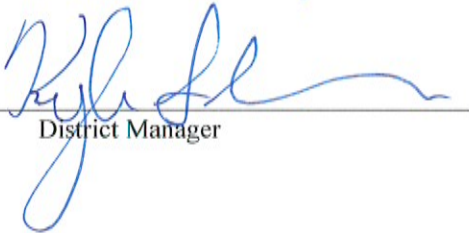
The meeting was adjourned at 5:30pm.



Board Chair

12-1-22

Date



District Manager

12-5-2022

Date