



Soil and Water Conservation Commission Minutes

DATE	LOCATION	START TIME	END TIME
02/16/2022	Online Via Teams Meeting	8:30AM	12:26PM

CHAIR	COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT	ABSENT
Barbara Boyer	Ken Bailey, Jim Bob Collins, Stan Dean, Tim Kerns, Jerry Ward	Al Hrynyshyn

Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) Staff Present

Isaak Stapleton, Director Natural Resource Programs; Marganne Allen, Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD)/Ag Water Quality Program Manager; Eric Nusbaum, SWCD Operations Specialist; Sandi Hiatt, SWCD Grant Administrator; Brittany Mills, Ag Drainage Channel Maintenance Specialist; Brenda Sanchez, Natural Resources Policy Specialist; Mike Badzmierowski, Soil Health Specialist; Wym Matthews, CAFO/Fertilizer Program Manager; Patrick Reinhart, Program Assistant

Advisors Present

Kyle Gorman, OWRD; Ron Alvarado, NRCS; Jan Lee, OACD; Courtney Shaff, OWEB; Cynthia Warnock, OCEAN/Wallowa SWCD; Vanessa Green, NOWC; Sam Angima, OSU; Gene Foster, DEQ

Visitors

Les Ruark; Gary Faw, Malheur SWCD; Lacey Townsend, Tualatin SWCD; Nicole Ruggiero, Tualatin SWCD; Cassi Newton, Wheeler SWCD; Shannon Joseph, Lincoln SWCD; Karin Stutzman, Polk SWCD

Call to order

The regular quarterly meeting was called to order at 8:30 AM by Chair Barbara Boyer on February 16, 2022.

Approval of Minutes

The draft minutes of the November 2021 SWCC meeting were presented for approval. **A motion was made by Ken Bailey to approve the minutes with no changes or corrections. Seconded by Jim Bob Collins. The motion passed with five in favor. Barbara abstained.**

Ag Water Quality Program Introduction and Updates: Isaak Stapleton / Marganne Allen

Isaak: Short legislative session has been unusually busy for ODA. Normally, there are nine fiscals; this session there are 23. ODA is doing a lot of hiring and onboarding, which is consuming bandwidth. Hope to be fully staffed soon.

Marganne: Updates on hiring, rulemaking, SIA five-year schedule, and other priority work. Hiring - currently hiring for a SWCD program specialist (will add capacity to SWCDs and SWCC) is in the second round of interviews next week. The SIA specialist recruitment closed (will provide program capacity, help administer funds from legislature) and will be scheduling interviews. Open recruitment for three water quality specialist positions (one in Klamath Falls, and two in Willamette Valley and Coast regions), closes on February 27th. Next recruitment will be to replace Ellen Hammond

(retiring) as a monitoring specialist (with emphasis on assessment and reporting). WQ Program Rulemaking - held a hearing February 15th by Brittany Mills. Phased statewide rollout of the Ag Channel Program. Proposing four regions to help target outreach, education, and adaptive management. Comment period will close on the 22nd; written comments to go to Brittany Mills. Chair Boyer requested to see the comments after closing.

Stan: ODFW rulemaking on time channel of Ag Channel rollout (to adopt rules on February 18th).

Marganne clarified that authority was given for ODFW to set up time periods to protect vulnerable life stages of fish. They have a commission meeting coming up next week for closing. The area rule cleanup (DIV 90 & 95) is to clean up inconsistencies between statutes and rules. Some definitions refer to other statutes or rules that have been renumbered or are no longer valid. No schedule for cleanup at this time and will share info with commission when available. SIA five-year schedule kickoff - currently operating a five-year plan (2019-2023) to help prioritize work in small watersheds for the SIA. In 2022, Lost River, Southern Willamette, Tualatin River, Hood River, Sandy Subbasin, Malheur, Powder-Brownlee, and Greater Harney Basin were prioritized. Need to look ahead to 2024-2028 five-year plan. Want to have locations announced in advance for partners (to help align work priorities and leverage funding/resources). This will be a two-year process starting in 2022. Five-year SIA plan prioritization flow: 38 Management Areas, ag water quality concerns, amount of agriculture, ODFW native fish habitat priorities. At the local level, for subbasins/watersheds, source water area for drinking water is taken into consideration. Brenda Sanchez, ODA SIA Program Lead, SWCD, and partner outreach will start this spring. The new SIA specialist will support this outreach.

Courtney: Originally, the SIA funding could be spent over 10 years; \$25,000 given to SIAs was not the most realistic approach.

Marganne: This was a five-year plan to kick off the individual SIAs per year; not the duration of the plan. There is no information yet on what the outreach will look like. Other priority work - will continue implementation plan development and rollout of Willamette Mercury TMDL. Rolling out across area plans through the Willamette basin; integrating into the area plan review process in measures that are trackable. Merging that with work the SWCDs have already done and reporting information to DEQ. Over the calendar year of 2022, will update the ODA-DEQ Memorandum. Including a public comment period.

Barbara: Who are the leads?

Marganne: Ellen Hammond and Cheryl Hummon have been the leads. They are passing on the knowledge to prepare for their retirements.

Barbara: The county is our lead (hired contractor); concerned there will be agency overlap with doing more work than necessary.

Marganne: ODA is willing to have discussions with counties to merge work. Because ODA is the lead only for agricultural practices, we avoid most overlap with counties leading the urban areas.

Advisor Reports

DEQ – Gene Foster: Updates on non-point source and TMDLs. Every five years, EPA requires the state (DEQ) to develop a non-point source management plan (identifies programs/ activities among state/federal agencies to address non-point sources). Updated state non-point area plan and is out for public comment (extended through March 14th). That link for the document is available on DEQ website and will be given to Sandi. The 319 non-point source grant program and request for proposals is getting close to release within the next month. Notifications will be sent via email. TMDLs are currently being worked on within the Upper Yaquina for dissolved oxygen and bacteria; Powder/Burnt for bacteria; and the Coquille dissolved oxygen, temperature, pH, and bacteria. Additionally, there is progress in the court ordered temperature TMDL replacement project, focusing on the Willamette, but most of the work is being done in the upper parts of the upper, middle, and lower Willamette regions (non-main stem areas). These are currently on schedule for deadlines. There was a settlement agreement between DEQ and the Nez Perce Tribe and some other entities on the Snake River/Hells Canyon complex mercury TMDL. Coordinating with USGS, Idaho Power, and others who have collected data on mercury in that area (for development of mercury TMDL). There is work proceeding, along with an EPA contractor, on the Snake River/ Hells Canyon temperature TMDL (part of TMDL replacement project). Two weeks ago,

the Environmental Quality Commission adopted rule changes for TMDLs in OAR 340-042 to be consistent with Oregon state statute 468b.110 (in addition to DEQ issuing TMDLs as orders. DEQ can adopt TMDL's as Rules) and a few definition changes to match Federal definitions (part of EPA requirements).

OSU Extension – Sam Angima – Report submitted prior to meeting - As of October 1, 2021, new director of Extension, Dr. Ivory Lyles, spent the first three months visiting the state and listening to stakeholders-legislators, county commissioners, farmers, and ranchers-as many Oregonians as possible. OSU Extension 4-H program and Family and Community Health Program have new program leaders. Allison Myers (FCH) and Cathy Haas (4-H). OSU implemented federal vaccine mandate by January 4th. The five-year Oregon Ag Food and Fiber Economic Report (sponsored by ODA and OSU) posted online; https://agsci.oregonstate.edu/sites/agscid7/files/main/about/oragecon_report_2021.pdf. The report shows about 16 million acres dedicated to agriculture; 95% of farms being family farms, and \$42 Billion total value of Oregon ag food and fiber industry, etc. Dean of College of Ag Sciences launched statewide cattle plan focus on aligning OSU strengths addressing states' huge economic contributions made by cattle industry and associated industries. Aligning existing faculty expertise and programs to priority needs; identifying gaps for future hiring. Streamlined the OSU program at EOJ to focus on range and cattle and combining with Corvallis programs. Started the renovation of the dairy processing plant. Secured State funding for upgrading Clark Meat Lab on campus to an inspected facility; helped guide the development of State's meat inspection system. Funding allocated to Burns to run fiber line to station to accommodate growth in data needs. Hired extension agent for Lake County (Tammy Barnes from Kentucky) to cover livestock and forage needs of that community; hiring a new Ag Extension agent for Union and Baker counties; hiring a Malheur agronomist to cover agricultural crop production in the county.

Discussion:

Jim Bob: When doing research on a drought, are cloud bursts taken into consideration? They can augment drought in a region (throw off data when they happen near weather stations, affecting funding).

Sam: New way of funding. We are wanting the researchers to do a good job and to change the way work is done. Will pass information along at meeting next week.

Jim Bob: There is a lack of weather stations. Gilliam, Wheeler, Grant counties are working together to put in new weather stations. We have grant money, and they are \$1,200 a year to maintain. Would like more information on the best way to maintain them.

Barbara: Regarding partnership with FSA and NRCS, is OSU dealing with just drought paperwork or other FSA programs?

Sam: I talked about disaster specifically. But the infrastructure will help provide for other economic issues (including disease outbreaks). We want to know what happens down the chain after these issues. Which will help change policies.

OWRD – Kyle Gorman

Water conditions: End of December/first part of January, Oregon had abundant moisture and snow. A week into January it stopped with little precipitation. Snowpack readings were above average, over a five-week period, water basins are now well below average (70%-80%). The median snowpack is building in January/February while the water content is not. The percentage of water content in snowpack has decreased over the past month. Reasons include sun-melt, sublimation (changing from solid to gas), and other means. The central part of the state is in exceptional drought. If there isn't a very wet next few months, water conditions on the east side of the mountains will be devastating. Reservoirs are low in most places. Ground water systems are well below average. This year might be worse than last year. The last legislation and short legislation sessions, the department has had an abundance of resources allocated to it. Currently in the process of hiring about 80 positions in the agency (pushing the agency from 160 to over 240 full-time equivalent positions; including many assistant water masters, focused in southwest and western Oregon to assist in cannabis). There will be more hydrogeologists, geologists, support staff, planning/collaboration/investment program (water development fund). Workload is increasing exponentially.

Discussion:

Jim: Is Grant County losing its water master?

Kyle: Can't confirm and haven't heard that to be the case.

Barbara: Are assistant water masters full time or seasonal?

Kyle: Full time.

Barbara: Will assistant water masters still be asking for funds from the local county commissioners?

Kyle: Yes. The new assistant water masters will be focused on cannabis (but can handle all water distribution issues).

Cynthia: Received two inches of snow this morning.

NRCS – Ron Alvarado

Added capacity across the state (30-40 FTE's) from farm bill investments. Thinking about new foresters in Eastern Oregon. The House just passed an extension through March 11, 2022; we are waiting to see what this year's appropriations will be. Infrastructure bill that was passed, Public Law 566 (to fund watershed planning efforts in central Oregon to modernize irrigation infrastructure). We have been in process of doing this the last few years. This will be implemented across the state (West Linn/Umatilla, Baker (North Powder), Owyhee (Ontario County), Klamath irrigation district, KDD, Rogue, Santiam, Tualatin). Please encourage them to continue this effort. Some of these are in planning phases. Receiving \$500M in funding over five years across the country. Build back better is still being debated for funding (see an increase in farm bill funding (EQIP program, Conservation Stewardship program, Ag Easement Land program, and more). <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/or/newsroom/releases/?cid=NRCSEPRD1884425>. This was a release from our farm production conservation missionary (NRCS, FSA, RMA). An announcement for \$1B in climate smart commodities. Expanding markets and strengthening rural America. That will allow communities to implement climate smart practices, activities, and systems on working lands. Measure, quantify, monitor, and verify, carbon and greenhouse gas benefits associated with those practices. Develop markets and promote those climate smart commodities. Will be managed from the department in DC (not at the state level). Broad in terms of food qualifies (counties, cities, districts, state governments, small businesses, tribes, NGO's and more). It will fit well in Oregon, and we should take advantage.

Discussion:

Barbara: What's an example of an irrigation district project that's being funded?

Ron: Tolo, Swale, Central Oregon, Smith Rock, King Way, East Fork, Ochoco, Lower Columbia, Lone Pine. Projects coming up are North Unit, Klamath, Hermiston, Owyhee, Rogue Valley, Medford, Santiam, Powder Valley, Modoc Point, and a request from Tualatin SWCD. Entails a watershed plan, to develop an EA, watershed level scale, NEPA. Once the plan is approved, it will go through scoping, public comment, consult with regulatory agencies, and the irrigation districts will serve as sponsors; 75%-25% ratio (irrigation district responsible for 25%). NRCS has historically written the plans, Oregon has partnered with the Farm Conservation Alliance. Irrigation districts are now taking money and going out for bid to entities who can write the plans. Once the plan is approved, DC will authorize (by the chief). Then request construction/engineering and design money. Money is just for watershed plans and construction.

Jim: Will there be anybody local to consult with?

Ron: The local offices won't know much. If you have questions, Cory Owens can help. Rural development, questions can go to Margi Hoffmann, or Jill Reese.

OWEB – Courtney Shaff

OWEB received funding to implement a drought relief grant program from the December 2021 Legislative special session. OWEB will be hiring three positions to assist with implementation of the Drought Grant Program. One is organizational and policy related; one is a project manager on grants and grantees for project implementation; and one is administrative working in grant review, applications. OWEB board has been working on adopting a climate resolution (first adopted). Outlines the boards intent and approach related to how we operate grant programs for climate change. Going to be doing outreach over the next 8-12 weeks to get feedback from OWEB grantees, partners, and people that we don't normally engage with (to help OWEB prepare for future rulemaking specifically to restoration grants, including climate criteria). In April or July, we will ask the board to authorize rulemaking; then will begin a rules advisory

committee. Will have more information soon and will provide the information to Sandi to distribute. Beginning rulemaking regarding OWEB general rules (Division 5 Grant Rules). We are running grant programs for others including NRCS, BLM. This will support helping other programs. Flexibility on mask requirements (depending on funding source). Focus investment partnership is in the process of application reviews of 11 applications; review teams will be over the next few months. Funding decisions will be July 2022. Adjusted the board committee structure -now three OWEB board committees; DEI, Environmental Justice Grants, and Water and Climate. They will be public with Zoom links. Information will be posted on our website soon.

OACD – Jan Lee

Major work identifying programs for carbon sequestration on natural and working lands. From districts' perspective, it is identifying tools to accomplish work with landowners. In short session, SB 1534 is a major bill OACD supports (sequestration on natural and working lands) to begin that work. In addition to verbal testimony at hearing last week, several districts submitted written testimony in support. Also working with a coalition on this bill. Bill passed out of Senate Committee heading to Ways and Means from fiscal impact from Institute of Natural Resources at OSU developing some studies for the Global Warming Commission. A lot of support from farmers, ranchers, and forest landowners (legislative committee's record of testimony). Bill needs to move forward to get a program in place and start the work. Four hundred and twenty-six farmers took part when the OGWC proposal was being developed and was basis for the legislation. Received funding from NRCS to create a hub for resiliency for soil work and carbon sequestration. Will be on a public website; to include tools, demo projects, equipment, computer resources, programs other states are using, information on marketing carbon on ag lands, and various other items. Our work includes specialists from carbon sequestration technology. Anticipate hub opening this summer and hope to secure input from the industries as well.

Discussion:

Stan: Please mention the upcoming webinars.

Jan: In March we will have three webinars. March 29, 2022, Water Resources Department staff will address water rights programs that provide flexibility in drought that districts can share with their landowners as tools. Followed by webinar to update OACD's position statements, the basis for legislative and regulatory work. Development of the hub; will engage in some field workshops and additional webinars.

Barbara: What states are taking the lead on carbon sequestration?

Jan: Midwest states. Land O' Lakes (a co-op) had agreement with the Nature Conservancy to fund carbon sequestration projects. Land O' Lakes looking to Northwest for more opportunities. A company in Norway has funded a major sequestration project in northeastern Oregon. Details on hub soon.

OCEAN – Cynthia Warnock

The date for Connect Plus 2022 is September 6-8 at Seaside and will be a hybrid meeting. An email will be going out to district members and partners from our contractor looking for volunteers for the planning committee. A draft budget was sent to OCEAN board members and partners for review. Working with NRCS to increase communication and efficiency on multiple fronts that affect districts. Developing systems to coordinate planner certification job approval authority, link-path use, federal contract practice systems, and training. Confident that a system will be created that makes certification and communication easier between districts and NRCS. Hired a contractor to assist with this, but she put in her notice at the beginning of the month. We will put out a notice for another contractor for assistance. Contacting districts to update contact information on the OCEAN website. Developing a new website and logo, and the website is almost completed. It will be user friendly and provide good information.

Discussion:

Barbara: Why is it called Connect Plus?

Cynthia: It includes partners as well. They are included every other year. "Connect Plus" includes partners. "Connect" is district employees only.

NOWC – Vanessa Green

Have a grant that was secured through the Meyer Memorial Trust to provide diversity/equity/inclusion (DEI) training that is starting to take place now. Sixty people will be trained and receive 20 hours of DEI training (four hours per day for five days). There is one vacancy in the March 14-18 cohort (\$200 registration fee). Want to open that up to somebody from the National Resource Management community. Please email Vanessa if you know of anybody. Hoping the training will trickle into by-laws, strategic plans, and mission statements. The OWEB partnership will host a listening session webinar that will be open to anybody and will take place sometime between March 10th and 18th. Established a YouTube channel (mentioned in previous meeting) that has all the previously archived webinars providing technical information and professional development training. The next webinar, in addition to the listening session, will be coming in March. Hoping to host six to seven in the coming year. The four affinity groups are still ongoing, topics include Estuaries and Tide Gates, Working Lands and Easements, Pollinators, and Journal Club for Aquatic Habitat Restoration. To join, email the coordinator for the group, and find more information on the Oregon Conservation Partnership website.

Discussion:

Barbara: Who did you contract with for DEI training?

Vanessa: Center for Diversity in the Environment. Ran by Queta González.

SWCC Appointments – Review and Comment on Procedures – Marganne Allen

The purpose is to have consistency, transparency in SWCC appointments. These procedures have been used in most boards associated with ODA. Key changes include recruitment messaging (adding declaration of incumbent candidates), candidate review criteria (removed ODA agency values, and kept qualifications and experience vs SWCC purpose), and ODA director review materials (keeping opportunity for SWCC advice on candidates). The next steps include commission's final input for director's consideration moving to application to the next SWCC reappointment/vacancy.

Discussion:

Stan: Does not want to move towards hard term limits. It's important to have the knowledge and experience past four years, but also need new people with fresh ideas. Would like to see guidance for multiple terms balanced with new people. Would like to see three criteria listed (including balance of term limits, knowledge/skills/abilities, and personal commitment). Who gets to decide the recommendation when there are multiple candidates (possibly an informal interview including ODA and SWCC)?

Marganne: Any role that the Ag WQ manager has, is to ensure that notice was given for recruitment and putting an informational packet together for the ODA director.

Jerry: Would suggest the SWCC chair have input given to the director rather than ODA staff. Taking ODA's biased viewpoint out of the equation.

Marganne: WQ program managers role is (section 3): Ensuring submitted expressions of interest for candidates serving as directors, putting together a candidate memo (appendix 1.2), listing who is currently serving and expiration dates (reappointments), and compiling things to share. ODA is not looking for similar viewpoints of the agency. The candidates must fulfil the criteria stated.

Stan: Term limits in criteria are important for the "where we were, and where we are going." If they are all new, that knowledge is lost. The balancing of old knowledge and new knowledge should influence the selection process.

Jim: Would possibly like to see a blind consensus from SWCC on selection.

Ken: Commission (not just chair) should be informed of the candidates, packets, and allow the entire commission make comments to the ODA director.

Barbara: Board should avoid giving the director too many comments from multiple people. The board should gather comments and send them together.

Stan: The boards comments should be gathered, sent to the WQ manager, and then forwarded to the ODA director.

Marganne summarizes the comments: In addition to what's already written, the board would like all commission members to have the opportunity to submit advise/recommendations to the ODA director. Noting that all written submissions are subject to public record.

ODA Climate Change Exec Order Implementation. Update: Soil Health Staff Introduction – Wym Matthews

Introduction of Soil Health Specialist (Mike Badzmirowski). A brand-new program at ODA and a statewide position that will help with policy review and development, implementation, and outreach; will coordinate with a multitude of partners regarding soil health. Wym will be at a future meeting to discuss nutrient management planning. Mike received his bachelors at the University of Rhode Island, PhD at Virginia Tech. Focused a lot of time in the last six years on carbon in the soils, nitrogen, and organic amendments. Currently reviewing the Carbon Reduction Potential Evaluation tool (CRPE), which uses the framework of the NRCS tool “COMET planner.” It focuses on greenhouse gas emissions and how different practices affect it and how to calculate greenhouse emissions. Currently has reviewed half of the roughly 600-page document (some is not applicable to current work). Also has been reviewing SB 1534 (Oregon’s working and natural lands) It should be on the floor and passed this week (dealing with carbon sequestration). Has been sitting in on meetings including the Oregon Global Warming Commission and SWCC. Has been reaching out to different organizations and meeting people on an individual basis.

Discussion:

Jim: Have you looked at soil types in Eastern Oregon with their higher alkaline and clay content?

Mike: Familiar with them. Water is important for carbon production. Looking at a grant (may/may not be funded) that NRCS is looking to get more soil samples for a better baseline of soil conditions and carbon capabilities.

Stan: Who is funding the position, and is it long-term?

Wym: Position is two-year limited duration with a cooperative agreement with NRCS (Oregon State). Developing the budget for 2023-2025 and have a POP in place to make it full time/permanent. The Director’s office will be looking for support from the SWCC.

Strategic Implementation Area Professional Services Funds: Summary and Outreach Plan – Marganne Allen

The purpose is to hear thoughts and feedback on the specific use of technical assistance funds. Normally funding comes through OWEB. Background: (see handout). The funds are intended to be used for water quality work and small watersheds. Brought up land condition assessments for compliance with Ag Water Quality Rules. The quantity is \$650,000 for the biennium. Contracting with local partners like SWCD or Watershed Councils to provide technical support to landowners. The focus was to implement a regional “SIA Technician” (who would provide technical assistance and add capacity). Founded on the concept of a CREP technician. Encouraging voluntary ecological uplift actions (not regulatory). Scope of work would include partnership with other local entities, being a shared regional technical assistance resource, covering four regions across the state. Option 1 would be to focus 100% of the funds to this. Option 2 would be (using a portion of the funds) for an adaptive review of technical assistance delivery. Concept of a CIG (Conservation Innovation Grant). ODA could contract out expertise (university, marketing, or third party). Exploring improvements to technical assistance delivery to landowners. Either a one-off or periodic expenditure. Integrating learnings into subsequent TA work (Option 1). Not immediately going into landowner technical assistance.

Discussion:

Jim: How much would Option 2 impede on timeframe of Option 1?

Marganne: Depends on the funding based on quotes received. They could be simultaneous.

The third Option is to include SIA technical monitoring capacity for local partners and districts. Concept is like Option 1. A regional SIA monitoring technician (like CREP position). Monitoring technical assistance to partners. The scope of work would be partnering with local partners, shared regional monitoring assistance, and covering four regions across the state. ODA will be restarting SIA-SWCD meetings, granting SWCDs an input opportunity. Quarterly, having the first scheduled for March 8, 2-4pm. Topics will include the SIA funding. ODA’s recommendation is a combination of all three options. If enough funding, have multiple regional specialists, but could be one statewide for the time being. Use some funds on an adaptive management review on effective messaging and tools for technical assistance to landowners/ monitoring assistance.

Discussion:

Stan: Based on the original SIA concept, there were clear lines. ODA was to be the enforcement role. While SWCDs were non-regulatory. If landowners work with SWCD's, ODA wouldn't get involved. With these options, the lines between regulatory and non-regulatory, it will come across that ODA is masking a regulatory role with technical assistance. This is a major change in the SIA vision.

Marganne: This is offering funds to local technical assistance. Or Option 2 is funding a contractor to be more effective for landowner technical assistance. There is no compliance in these options.

Stan: Under the impression that this would be an ODA position, and not an SWCD staff position.

Marganne: It can go either way. Either districts could hire staff, or contract out at SWCD discretion. One district could invest in a resource, that would be available to multiple districts.

Jerry: There are concerns regarding the monitoring process. There was a letter offered by a few districts that I would like to see in the public comment or ongoing resolutions.

Jim: Is Option 1 ODA working directly with landowners? If SIA identifies a problem area, then would ODA assist SWCD? Option 3 sounds like it would give SWCD staff more connections and more support.

Marganne: Option 1 is ODA taking more funds from OWEB and funding source would be ODA. Funds would be either contract or grant, that would be directed to local district who would oversee the assistance work. A shared resource of ODA and SWCDs. Essentially what district staff is currently doing but adding capacity. Option 1 is a local partner-housed position, with funding from ODA (adding capacity). Option 3 is the same but more focused internally to partners on monitoring. Overall, it's more funding to local districts.

Ken: All the money is being offered as a grant to the districts. Monitoring has been left behind and it's hard to find funding for it.

Marganne: Option 2 is a variation where ODA would use a portion of the funds for an adaptive review. Learning the most effective way to reach landowners. Taking that information and putting back into Option 1. Only temporarily not having funds for local partners. The \$650,000 must be spent before the end of the biennium.

Jim: Option 2 would be great to see periodically, but don't want that money to be robbed from groundwork. Prefer to lean away from Option 2 and towards Option 3. Option 2 doesn't show a long-term picture, and there isn't enough time to capture the effectiveness of the options.

Marganne: Option 2 can be funded at one time, but review can be spread out over a longer period.

Jim: If it can be done in phases, and doesn't take away from groundwork funding, Option 2 is valuable.

Stan: How would it work with one SWCD reaching out and aiding other SWCD's in region? Would other SWCD's be welcoming or resistant to another SWCD.

Barbara: We have a shared CREP tech housed in Clackamas. There have been no issues when sharing the resource.

Stan: It will be slightly different than a CREP tech based on district views of SIA.

Tim: We ran into problems when there were too many supervisors that the tech was trying to cover (had been working with NRCS and FSA also). Also, can run into unemployment and liability issues. When the funding runs out, it's on the district to find a place for them or hope they can receive unemployment.

Stan: Is there an option other than a regional position; have a pot of money all districts can supplement SIA budget?

Marganne: Possible, but how can that be phased in with the biennium? Logistically, it could be challenging.

Courtney: If we add money to existing agreements, ODA will have to transfer money to OWEB (have the grant agreements) and would add more pieces to the puzzle.

Barbara: Funding would only go to SIAs in 2022-2023?

Marganne: Money can go to any district in any phase of SIA. The only restriction is the funds must go to SIA work. We acknowledge pushback on SIA and funds can go towards outreach in those situations. ODA will reach out to districts asking where time should be focused.

Barbara: If the funds are split up to each district/area, there wouldn't be much money left for each district/area to work with.

Public Comment

Karin Stutzman, Polk SWCD: Could the initial funding be used to get landowners direct prospective of problems. Other than townhall meetings/pre-meetings, could the funding be used for education on water quality rules and try to reach landowners who won't attend meetings? Mailings? The LAC meeting in Yamhill, noticed that a lot of farmers don't understand the Ag Water Quality Rules and don't know how to access them.

Marganne: Yes, the funds can be used for outreach. But Ag WQ Rules falls on ODA and not the SIA funds. SWCD's can direct ODA to address those issues.

Nicole Ruggiero, Tualatin SWCD: Referring to the letter some districts sent to Marganne - the comments in the letter are outside of the funding topic. Hoping that ODA and OWEB will look at the SIA monitoring program in general. The monitoring process is very rigorous, and they fall out of the expertise of the districts; hiring that expertise out is very expensive. \$25,000 does not go very far. We're all developing plans independently and constantly reinventing the wheel. A statewide framework would eliminate costs and confusion; TA and outreach aren't what we need due to lack of projects.

Public Comment closed.

Strategic Implementation Area Professional Services Funds: Summary and Outreach Plan (continued)

Marganne: A 4th potential option is an adaptive review on SIA monitoring. Temporarily holding money from districts and partners. Focusing on improving SIA monitoring. Creating statewide structure that districts can connect with. Each district would then be able to contribute. Involving a larger conversation and support involving OWEB, DEQ, and ODFW.

Ken: The statewide framework would be like the Ag WQ format that was consolidated. Would make the whole program easier to understand and work with.

Marganne: The timeline is July 1, 2021-June 30, 2023.

Ken: Put together a package with what's available and what can be done and propose that.

Stan: How many districts would be willing to take on responsibility of a person to represent a region of districts?

Marganne: Budget report language states: "will be used to contract with local partners like SWCDs or watershed councils." Allows other partners (not just SWCDs) at a different scale to take the responsibility. March 8th will allow input on the subject. The goal is put together a plan that is useful to the SWCC and SWCDs. The budget language leaves flexibility on where specifically the funding can go. Gathers that SWCC is not in opposition to the ideas. Will send meeting link to commissioners.

Call for Upcoming Meeting Agenda and Newsletter Items – Barbara Boyer

- Agenda
 - SWCC led bigger vision planning
 - Water Democracy Act update (information/presentation) from a neutral party
 - Jim Johnson updates on land use
 - Legislative Concepts
 - Updates from Mike Badzmierowski, ODA Soil Health Specialist
- Newsletter
 - Welcoming Mike Badzmierowski
 - Heads up on \$650,000 and March 8th meeting update
 - SIA five-year rollout plan
- SWCC Member Reports and Wrap Up

SWCC Member Reports and Wrap Up -

Member Reports -

Ken Bailey - No updates

Tim Kerns – Very dry conditions. Feeling worse this year than this time last year. Reservoirs are low. Forests are in bad condition after last year’s weather conditions. Having concerns over the SIA.

Stan Dean – This afternoon at the meeting at 4pm in Jackson, having the fourth of four lectures on climate. Tonight’s is on sequestration in agricultural operations. Link is on the website. This region is dealing with the cannabis issue.

Jim Bob Collins – The water democracy act has been on the radar. Spearheading in Wheeler district (spilling over into nearby districts), how to tackle the lack of weather information in the area. Trying to put weather stations out, and open to other districts who want to be involved. Reach out to Wheeler SWCD. Looking for long-term funding (helps with federal drought relief). The company we are partnered with has 160,000 hits a day on their website. There isn’t very accurate data due to a lack of weather stations. Maintenance would be about \$1,200 annually (includes breakdowns, software/hardware failure). Installation is around \$7,500 each. Program was recognized by NRCS, FSA, and others. Wanted to find weather stations that meet as many needs for different purposes as possible. Possible Farm bill?

Barbara Boyer – Just had native plant sale, and 60,000 plants were sold. District just closed on a 350-acre ownership through WWMP, another 164 in March, and another 300 towards the end of the year. Putting the total holdings close to 3,000 acres in Yamhill County.

Jerry – Likes to see input from districts to the commission. Emphasizes, on commissioner appointment process, that continuity and length of service are very important for the overall vision of the SWCC.

Wrap up – Barbara received a letter from a PhD from OSU student looking for a letter of a support from the commission in Mercury cycling in freshwater systems. Commission feels that although it falls within the reach of SWCC it’s out of the scope (supporting outside efforts) of SWCC. Need to review the legal authorities to do so. It may send a precedent for others to ask for letters of support if it remotely involves SWCC work. Barbara will make the final decision on issuance.

Future 2022 meeting dates –

May (Virtual)

- Work session May 17th pm
- Commission Meeting May 18th am

August (Virtual/In-Person TBD)

- Work session August 17th pm
- Commission Meeting August 18th am

November (In conjunction with OACD)

- Commission meeting November 2nd

Adjourn

Chair Boyer adjourned the meeting at 12:26 pm.