

**Harney County
Watershed Council**

450 N Buena Vista #4
Burns, OR 97720

Phone: 541-573-8199
Fax: 541-573-8370

Hcwatershed.com

Karen.Moon@oregonstate.edu



December 22, 2015

Place Based Planning
Oregon Water Resources Department
725 Summer Street NE, Suite A
Salem, OR 97301

Place Based Planning Review Team

Please accept the attached Letters of Support to go along with our Letter of Interest that was submitted for the Place Based Planning Pilot funding. Letters are from our partners and include the Harney County Court, High Desert Partnership, Harney Soil and Water Conservation District, the Eastern Oregon Agricultural Research Center, Harney County Farm Bureau, Oregon Farm Bureau, Natural Resources Conservation Service Hines Field Office, Burns District BLM and the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge.

These partners, and others are willing to give of their time and effort to start a productive collaboration to address the needs of Harney County, and the Harney Basin's current and future water needs.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Karen Moon,
Coordinator

Mission and Purpose of the Harney County Watershed Council:

The Council recognizes that local ecological and economic prosperity is dependent upon the current and future availability and quality of water, therefore the Harney County Watershed Council is committed to this three-part goal:

- A. Determine the health of individual watersheds or watershed segments
- B. Retain the health of high quality watersheds and,
- C. Restore and enhance those watersheds, or portions thereof that can be improved.

The Harney County Watershed Council is a 501 (C) (3) non-profit corporation.



HARNEY COUNTY COURT

Office of Commissioner Dan Nichols

450 North Buena Vista #5, Burns, Oregon 97720

Phone: 541-493-2440 Fax: 541-493-2440

E-mail: dannichols@wildblue.net

Websites: www.co.harney.or.us ♦ www.harneycounty.org

December 7, 2015

Oregon Water Resources Department
725 Summer Street NE, Suite A
Salem, Oregon 97301

RE: Place Based Planning Grant

To whom it may concern:

The Harney County Watershed Council, irrigators, residents, supporting agencies and a broad spectrum of conservation organizations have had the desire to assess the groundwater situation within the basin for a number of years. With the groundwater study being initiated by the OWRD and with the support of the local community, it is an opportune time to leverage as many partners as possible to not only determine the water resources available but to also start developing a plan for those resources into the future.

Harney County has a long and successful history of working collaboratively to assure the health and sustainability of the landscapes and watersheds of our community. Some of those efforts have been described in the application as well as the long term partners that have been involved in a variety of resource and management projects over the years. Funding from the Place Based Planning Grant would help assure that those efforts from the diverse base of interests that have been engaged in those projects could continue in a productive and beneficial manner into the future.

Please accept this as a letter of support for the Place Based Planning Grant application that was submitted by the Harney County Watershed Council and thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Dan Nichols
Harney County Commissioner

DN;sj



P.O. Box 252 Burns, Or 97720 541 573-7820

December 15, 2015

Oregon Water Resources Department
Attention: Place-Based Planning Grants
725 Summer Street Ne, Suite A
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Place-Based Planning Review Committee,

The High Desert Partnership is an organization based in Burns, OR that supports the collaborative decision making process. Our mission is to enhance the ecological sustainability, economic well-being and social vitality of our communities by using a collaborative decision-making process with all interested stakeholders to solve challenging issues. As an organization, we have been successful with several initiatives that impact our community including the Harney County Restoration Collaborative and the Harney Basin Wetlands Initiative.

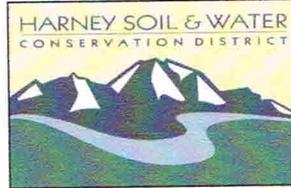
We have engaged in conversations with the Harney County Watershed Council and support their proposal for Place-based Groundwater planning. We believe this Place-based Planning framework offers a pathway consistent with High Desert Partnership collaboration in the development of viable solutions for groundwater resources. While the groundwater issue is pressing we want to support the Council in accomplishing a successful collaborative and we recognize this will be a time consuming process if community member's voices are to be heard.

We view Harney County as an excellent area to conduct a pilot project in placed-based planning. Our community members have been a part of and have experienced the positive outcomes of effective collaboration. We believe the Council will be successful in achieving their objectives outlined in their framework and the High Desert Partnership supports their efforts.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Brenda Smith for Gary Marshall'.

Gary Marshall, Chair High Desert Partnership



Harney Soil & Water Conservation District
PO Box 848
530 Hwy 20 South, Hines OR 97738
Phones: 541-573-5010 hswcd1@gmail.com

December 08, 2015

Oregon Water Resources Department
Tom Byler, Executive Director
725 Summer Street NE #A
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Mr. Byler,

On behalf of the Harney Soil & Water Conservation District, I would like to encourage OWRD to place strong consideration for advancing the ***Placed Based Planning proposal*** submitted by Harney County Watershed Council. Harney SWCD has a long history of working cooperatively on 'high level' conservation concerns through local collective collaboration in Harney County. One example of the success of local collaborative efforts is the "*Oregon Model to Protect Sage-grouse*". This effort that was part of the larger Oregon model to demonstrate to the US Fish & Wildlife Service, than an Endangered Species Act (ESA) listing of Sage-grouse was not warranted. Our effort influenced the decision across the west for the USFWS to reach a not-warranted listing decision.

We know that in order to maintain a healthy community, functioning ecosystems, and protect the beneficial uses of Oregonians, that local collaboration is a strong opportunity to achieve a balanced outcome. Our county is critically important for migratory waterfowl and valuable livestock forage. Conservation of these working lands is consistent with the goals and objectives of our SWCD. This project is innovative because it targets a community that is interested in local decision making processes based on sound science. The High Desert Partnership is the appropriate leader to facilitate the process. They continue to demonstrate that through collective/facilitated dialogue with stakeholders ranging from the most radical environmental groups to industry, forest health projects on the Malheur Forest can be solved locally versus through litigation.

This proposal leverages a diverse group of funding sources from landowner, federal, state, and non-profit partners. To demonstrate our support, Harney SWCD is committing \$10,000.00 in technical assistance funding to assist with producer outreach, program delivery, and monitoring.

Thank you for providing this opportunity to partners with OWRD on critical groundwater issues. We look forward to strengthening our relationships through this innovative program.

Sincerely,

Marty Suter-Goold

Marty Suter-Goold, District manager



United States Department of Agriculture

Research, Education, and Economics
Agricultural Research Service

TO: Oregon Water Resources Department

FROM: Dr. Tony Svejcar
Research Leader
USDA-Agricultural Research Service

SUBJECT: Harney County Watershed Council (HCWC) application to Place Based Planning program

I am writing in support of the HCWC application to the OWRC Place Based Planning program. This seems like an ideal time to develop a proactive planning effort in this region given the controversy surrounding ground water management. The HCWC has been active on this subject, and orchestrated the groundwater study completed several years ago. The initial focus of the HCWC was riparian and wetland issues, but the organization has been involved in the topic of groundwater for about a dozen years. They are well positioned to play a major role in groundwater management and planning.

Our research group has provided support to HCWC (they meet at our facility) and we will assist in the Place Based Planning effort should the council be successful in securing funding.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tony Svejcar". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dr. Tony Svejcar,
Research Leader
USDA-ARS

Eastern Oregon Agricultural Research Center
67826A Hwy 205, Burns, OR, 97720
Voice 541.573.8901 Fax 541.573.3042 E-mail tony.svejcar@ars.usda.gov
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HARNEY COUNTY FARM BUREAU
PO Box 833
Burns, OR 97720

Date: December 7, 2015

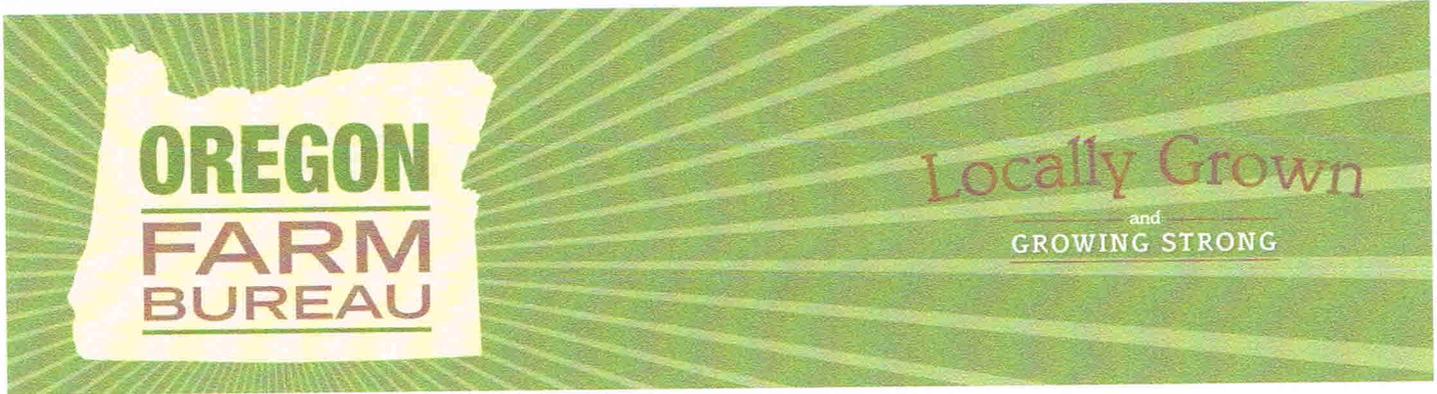
To: Harney County Watershed Council,

Harney County Farm Bureau fully supports your effort to obtain a grant from the Oregon Water Resource Department Place Base Planning pilot program. The Agriculture industry in Harney County is the number one economic driver in the county. With the resent moratorium on the drilling of irrigation wells in the basin it is imperative that the county become fully engaged in the developing of a water resource plan in the county, to insure that the financial stability of the agriculture industry is protected.

Sincerely,

//Thurston D. Inglis

Thurston (Rusty) D. Inglis
Harney County Farm Bureau President



December 11, 2015

Oregon Water Resources Department
Attention: Place-Based Planning Grants
725 Summer Street NE, Suite A
Salem, Oregon 97301
placedbasedplanning@wrp.state.or.us

Re: Letter of Support – Harney County Watershed Council Place Based Planning Grant Application

Dear Ms. Burright,

I am writing on behalf of the Oregon Farm Bureau (OFB) to support the Harney County Watershed Council’s application for place-based planning grant funds to support groundwater planning work in Harney County with the end goal of developing an local water resources plan for the basin.

Oregon Farm Bureau has been a member of the rules advisory committee charged with developing rules to address groundwater development in the Harney County Basin while the ongoing groundwater study is completed over the next three to five years. Throughout this process, Oregon Farm Bureau has heard strong support for a collaborative, locally driven planning process. Oregon Farm Bureau joins in this support and urges you to fund this grant application.

Harney County is an area that has had great success addressing some of their most difficult issues using locally driven, collaborative processes. Our membership in Harney County has overwhelmingly expressed a desire to participate in local, placed-based planning around water resources, and the concept has significant community support. We believe that a local planning process would empower the community to develop their own solutions for addressing their complex and difficult water issues. These locally driven solutions are going to be better for the community and the state than a state-driven regulatory process, and will help ensure that Harney County farmers and ranchers can continue to operate and be the backbone of the local economy. We look forward to supporting our local Farm Bureau’s engagement in this process, and hope it can serve as a model for local planning around the state.

Thank you again for the opportunity to submit this letter in support of the Harney County Watershed Council's Placed-Based Planning Grant Application. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Mary Anne Nash
Public Policy Counsel
Oregon Farm Bureau Federation
maryanne@oregonfb.org
Phone: (541) 740-4062



1320 Capitol Street NE
Salem, Oregon 97301
www.oregonfb.org



United States Department of Agriculture

December 11, 2015

Natural Resources
Conservation
Service

Hines Field Office

P.O. Box 848
Hines, OR 97738

Voice 541-573-6446
Fax 855-651-8903

Oregon Water Resources Department
725 Summer Street NE, Suite A
Salem, OR 97301

Dear OWRD,

I am writing in support of the Harney County Watershed Council's Place Based Planning proposal. Ground water depletion has been a concern in the Harney Basin for over a decade. In response to this concern, NRCS invested nearly \$2 million in Harney County to improve irrigation system efficiency between 2004 and 2009.

In 2010, NRCS completed a Natural Resources Long Range Strategy for Harney County based on the input of the Harney County Local Work Group. At that time, ground water availability was identified as one of the top 5 priority resource problems to be addressed over the next 5 years (2011-2015). However, NRCS determined that it would be prudent to hold off on providing additional financial assistance for irrigation system improvements until more data were available to define the scope and severity of the issue. In addition, we were concerned that continued ground water development in the area may offset any water conservation achieved through our projects. Therefore, NRCS addressed this priority primarily by supporting the Harney County Watershed Council in their efforts to conduct a ground water assessment for the Harney Basin.

In 2015, NRCS convened the Local Work Group to provide input into development of a new 5 year Long Range Strategy. Partners and landowners alike made it abundantly clear that at this point in time ground water availability in the Harney Basin is a higher priority than ever. Within weeks of that meeting, your Department announced a 5 year moratorium on new irrigation wells in the Harney Basin and plans for a ground water study. The Harney County Watershed Council's ground water assessment indicates that significant reductions in ground water levels have likely already occurred in several areas of the basin. Clearly, the time is right for an "all hands on deck" approach to addressing this issue.

I believe the collaborative process proposed by the Harney County Watershed Council is the best approach to identifying the issues and identifying management solutions. The Watershed Council is the appropriate convener for this Place Based Planning effort because they have already established a foundation of trust in the local community, specifically as it relates to ground water issues. As the District Conservationist for NRCS in Harney County, I am excited to have an opportunity to participate in this collaborative process. I know that the task before us will be challenging, but it must be addressed, and my experiences in addressing other contentious natural resource issues has convinced me that community involvement is key to developing workable solutions that get implemented.

While I am not able to commit with certainty at this point that NRCS financial

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assistance funds will be available, I can say that we are committed to participating in the process, and that it is extremely likely that we would invest Farm Bill program funds to assist in the implementation of solutions generated by this group.

I ask you to give this proposal serious consideration for funding.

Respectfully,



Zola Ryan
District Conservationist



United States Department of the Interior



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Burns District Office
28910 Hwy 20 West
Hines, Oregon 97738
<http://www.blm.gov/or/districts/burns>

In Reply Refer To:
7220 (ORB000)

DEC 11 2015

To whom it may concern:

The Burns District of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is writing this letter in support of the Harney County Watershed Council (HCWC) in their effort to receive funding for the Place Based Planning pilot grant program. This collaborative effort will bring together many of the interested and affected parties to solve problems that are identified in this process.

The Burns District has been a member of the HCWC Board and has actively participated in various council programs over the years. As explained in the application, Harney County has had many collaborative efforts over the years and the BLM has been part of many of those activities from the Trout Creek Mountain Working Group and the Steens Mountain Advisory Council (SMAC) to participation in the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge Comprehensive Conservation Plan. The BLM worked on the Candidate Conservation Agreement with Assurances (CCAA) for Greater Sage-Grouse for private lands since we were working on a similar program for public land grazing allotments. Our participation helped ensure that the processes and monitoring would be the same so a private land owner who is also a public lands grazing permittee would understand the data collected whether on private or public lands.

As stated in the application, because 74% of lands in Harney County are under Federal administration, the BLM will be involved in this process through our participation in the HWCW and because many of the private land owners who may participate in this process are also grazing permittees. Therefore, please accept this letter of support for HCWC's application for the Place Based Funding pilot grant program.

Sincerely,


Brendan Cain
Burns District Manager



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
MALHEUR NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE
36391 Sodhouse Lane
Princeton, OR 97721-9523
541-493-2612; Fax – 541-493-2405



12/15/15

Oregon Water Resources Department
Place-Based Planning

The Harney County Watershed Council is submitting a grant request for Place-Based Integrated Water Resources Planning. Through different mechanisms such as the High Desert Partnership and Oregon Consensus the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge has engaged diverse stakeholders in the development of collaborative solutions. These collaborative processes were open to all stakeholders to jointly develop solutions that all parties could support moving forward. This has resulted in innovative solutions to complex problems where stakeholders continue to assist the Refuge in implementation.

Malheur National Wildlife Refuge supports the Harney County Watershed Council's efforts for Place-Based Water Resources Planning through a collaborative process.

Sincerely,

Chad Karges
Project Leader
Malheur National Wildlife Refuge