



Soil and Water Conservation Commission Minutes

DATE	LOCATION	START TIME	END TIME
May 11, 2023	Wasco Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD), 2325 River Road, Suite 3, The Dallas, OR 97058 Online Meeting via Microsoft Teams and In-Person	8:30 AM	12:30 PM
CHAIR	COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT	ABSENT	
Barbara Boyer	Stan Dean (via virtual), Al Hrynyshyn, Ken Bailey, Jim Bob Collins	Jerry Ward, Tim Kerns	

OREGON DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE (ODA) STAFF PRESENT:

Isaak Stapleton, Natural Resource Programs Director; Karin Stutzman, SWCD Program Lead; Eric Nusbaum, SWCD Operations Specialist; Sandi Hiatt, SWCD Grants Administrator; Renita McNaughtan, Administrative Specialist; Jenn Ambrose, GIS Specialist; Shiloh Simrell, Regional Water Quality Specialist
Via virtual: Olivia Jasper, Regional Water Quality Specialist; Mike Badzmierowski, Soil Health Specialist; Jim Johnson, Land Use & Water Coordinator; Nina Andrews, Regional Water Quality Specialist; Maria Snodgrass, Regional Water Quality Specialist

ADVISORS:

Jan Lee and Andrea Kreiner, Oregon Association of Conservation Districts (OACD); Gene Foster, Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ); Courtney Shaff, Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB)
Via virtual: Ron Alvarado, Natural Resource Conservation Services (NRCS); Nathan Agalzoff, Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF); Vanessa Green, Network of Oregon Watershed Councils (NOWC); Cynthia Warnock, OCEAN/Wallowa SWCD

VISITORS:

Josh Thompson, Wasco SWCD; Kevin Porter, Polk SWCD; Cassi Newton, Wheeler SWCD; Lynn Barlow, West Multnomah SWCD; Jason Kesling, Harney SWCD; Samantha Fiblin, NRCS; Malysa Legg, Columbia SWCD

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The regular quarterly meeting was called to order at 8:34 AM by Chair Barbara Boyer on May 11, 2023. Chair Boyer called for additional agenda items - term expirations were added. Introductions were made. Chair Boyer then asked that everyone take a quiet moment to remember Marganne Allen.

THANK YOU TO JAN LEE - OACD

Barbara Boyer noted this is Jan Lee's last meeting with the SWCC, but she will still be with OACD through June for Govt Affairs and through August for Special Projects working on grants. Individual commission members thanked Jan for her service to OACD and the Commission. The new director of OACD, Andrea Kreiner, introduced herself and shared her background. Chair Boyer thanked Ken Bailey for the wonderful tour of his Orchard View Farms.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Draft minutes of the February 8 and 9, 2023, meeting was presented for approval. **A motion was made by Al Hrynyshyn to approve the minutes with one correction; the Clackamas SWCD is not co-located with the Farm Bureau but is with the USDA NRCS. The motion was seconded by Ken Bailey. Motion passed unanimously.**

WELCOME TO WASCO SWCD

Josh Thompson, Asst. Manager, shared about the 27 years of Wasco SWCD being in this building and challenges of ownership, like building maintenance and being a landlord, etc.

AG WATER QUALITY PROGRAM AND AGENCY UPDATES

Isaak Stapleton shared about recruitments at ODA; for the agency Director, candidates to be provided to governor by September. With Marganne's position vacant, he is doing double-duty and will be recruiting for an Initiative Coordinator and the North Coast Regional Water Quality Specialist position. Shiloh Simrell, the new Eastern Region Water Quality Specialist located in La Grande. Legislative session – watching several bills. CAFO Bill SB85; will entail significant changes if passed. Budget expected soon and at current service level. LUB GWMA will have an SIA focused on groundwater.

Karin Stutzman shared SWCD program updates; new director trainings were completed in February. It's important that the board is aware of district finances and grant programs to keep a healthy district. ODA publications such as newsletters, agendas, public notices, and some TV ads are now in Spanish and English to broaden audience. Working on GIS data website development to provide a public platform of SWCD accomplishments and area goals for transparency. This GIS development will also be across all ODA programs. If you have new staff, please inform the SWCD program staff at ODA. \$650,000 Ag Water Quality Program Support Grant provides \$20,000-\$149,000 (July 2023-June 2025); received 22 applications with over \$2million in ask. The application period closed May 3rd.

ADVISOR REPORTS

NRCS Ron Alvarado reported on the farm bill and IRA (Inflation Reduction Act) implementation. Oregon received an additional \$12-15 million on top of farm bill funding; it's still the existing programs, CSP, EQIP, ASAP, the easement programs with emphasis around greenhouse gas and sequestering carbon. Field offices are working to get funds into contracts. NRCS invested \$10-11 million in partnerships across the state because we depend on districts, councils, and other state and federal local organizations to help with capacity. Ron is retiring and this is his last meeting with the commission, he thanked everyone for their support, partnership, and collaboration during his time with NRCS.

OWEB Courtney Shaff reported they recently launched the next Focus Investment Partnership grant offering; application deadline is on the website. Also launched online payments; hope by the fall to have most payments online. Group of staff working on streamlining online grant applications; possibly launch late fall or winter. At April board meeting, OWEB spending plan was discussed. Will not be offering the Partnership Technical Assistance Grants next biennium; OWEB does not have staff capacity to run the program. However, will revisit in July of 2024. Council and district funding – OWEB board current recommended spending plan for districts is a 5% COLA increase. Councils will get 10% less than the district award, which will be finalized when the Board adopts the recommended spending plan in July. Getting closer to an agreement with NRCS; should be out in the fall. A new staff member, Brian Wolcott, Water Acquisition Coordinator will be handling the council and district grants program. Hoping to streamline the review process requirements with DOJ for grant agreements over \$100,000.

OSU – Sam Angima submitted a written report.

OACD Jan Lee reported they have 20 bills sitting in Ways and Means. SB530 provides districts with several new opportunities. HB2298 soil health but no funding for ODA for a soil scientist. HB3349 Oregon Solutions is in the center of the hub with four or five categories funding \$300,000 each to work with different entities to allow access to grants. Annual conference October 16-18 at Eagle Crest in Redmond. OCEAN is not having a Connect conference this year. Will have special workshops at annual conference for employees. Exhibits and other features as in the past. Andrea will put together a program for regional meetings like in the past with ODA. Conservation Partnership will have summer tours for community leaders, legislators to talk to them about projects that groups are doing i.e., SW Oregon – wildfires; Hood River dealing with defensible space.

Jim Johnson – LCDC Commission at last meeting, Robert Liberty, a member of the Columbia River Gorge Commission and past director of 1000 Friends of Oregon, gave a presentation related to the cumulative impacts of nonfarm

development as it impacts agricultural operations around the state like energy facility siting, and issues like home occupations. Getting positive reactions to the seven grants issued on the Oregon Ag Heritage Program protecting seven farms. Legislature – CAFO bill has a land use element to it that would allow local govts contrary to right to farm, contrary to some other provisions, to regulate an ag practice.

NOWC - Vanessa Green reported facilitated two webinars; one on how to combine volunteer and regulated conservation restoration work together from two funding sources. The other featured Denise Löffman of CREST, on how to grow your organization and plans for personnel, strategic planning, and HR issues; how to grow from a one- or two-person operation and exponentially double in size. Recordings on the Oregon Conservation Partnership YouTube channel. A new affinity group that is focused on expanding and applying DEI principles across councils, districts, and land trusts. For NOWC, had a webinar for watershed councils on expanding fundraising beyond state agency funds and how to do private fundraising campaigns. In October, the next management camp will be held; first one since COVID. Will be reaching out to agencies to seek sponsorships and presenters.

OCEAN – Cynthia Warnock - RFP is out for Connect 2024 and due at end of month. Also working on newsletter.

ODF – Nathan Agalzoff provided an update on their rulemaking and implementation of the private forest accord package. Staff had identified some modifications for consistency and clarification within the rule and will be provided to Board on June 7th in addition to the other small statutory minor grammar corrections that are not subject to rulemaking process. Most of the new regulations will be effective in January 2024. ODF has had a one-of-a-kind catastrophic fire policy with Lloyds of London since 1973. Due to the market conditions, the recommendation is to not move forward in purchasing that policy for the next year. The fire season should be about average. Preparing for the first in-person management team training since COVID. Forest health front – emerald ash borer – 4,000 trees with 40 positive detections in Forest Grove area with a few in Gales Creek SW. Department monitoring staff continuing work on Willamette Mercury TMDL plan due in August.

DEQ TMDL BRIEF HISTORY OF CHANGE REQUIREMENTS

Gene Foster provided a brief history of change requirements; Litigation on temperature standard – 2012 NWEA vs USEPA, NMFS, USFWS – lawsuit seeking judicial review of the EPA's decision to approve Oregon revised WQ standards. 2019 NWEA vs USEPA lawsuit asserted the EPA unlawfully approved TMDLs that were based on the now disapproved Natural Conditions Criteria. Court issued adjustment requiring replacement of 15 TMDLs. Will be going to nearly every county of the state. Replacement temp TMDLs www.oregon.gov/deq/wq/tmdls/Pages/tmdlreplacement.aspx. TMDL implementation requirements – what's changed? 1) Additional details in the TMDLs WQ Management Plan. 2) Improved source characterization, especially for shade assessment. 3) Data driven measurable objectives, timelines, and milestones. 4) Monitoring expectations. 5) ODA, ODF, BLM, USFS, and other DMAs required to develop TMDL implementation plans with annual reports and five-year reviews of TMDL implementation.

REVIEW SWCC STRATEGIC PLAN 2023-25

Karin Stutzman presented the draft of the strategic plan and was reviewed by the commission.

REVIEW FIVE LEGAL REQUIREMENTS of ORS 568

Eric Nusbaum reviewed the five legal requirements:

- Annual work plan and long-range plan – *for review and comment.*
 - Long-range program means a long-range plan for the conservation and development of the renewable natural resources of a district.
 - Long-range program.
- Annual Meeting – *“landowners” not board members in the district and present annual report and audit. Do not conduct district business.*
 - Notice annual meeting – *two notices at least 15 days prior to the annual meeting.*
 - Due notice – *Putting on the website is adequate for public notice.*
- Annual Report and Audit

CALL FOR UPCOMING MEETING AGENDA ITEMS/NEWSLETTER CONTENT

Newsletter:

- Five legal requirements
- OWEB funding increase
- Key Retirements
- Gene's Presentation
- Note on Marganne Allen

Agenda Items:

- Land Use - Jim Johnson
- OWRD Update
- Groundwater SIA – Harney County

Agenda Item for October Agenda:

- Parking Lot

UPDATE ON SWCD PROBATIONARY STEPS POLICY/CRITERIA FOR CAPACITY GRANTS

Karin Stutzman discussed ongoing revisions to the probationary policy. It is still being worked and then she will be meeting with Stan and Barbara to discuss. SWCD program staff work regularly with Districts and provide ample assistance to them on a regular basis. They also meet with RWQS and perform subjective check-ins with District Managers and attend board meetings. The policy is there to support consistency for actions taken by the program and steps taken to promote vibrant, healthy district business operations, occasionally leading to the need for corrective action steps.

TERMS

Karin Stutzman - Jerry Ward's term expires at end of June and Ken Bailey's term expires in August. Karin will be putting out a notice in the region where each of these commissioners represent.

ADJOURNMENT: Meeting adjourned at 12:23PM.