



Soil and Water Conservation Commission Minutes

DATE	LOCATION	START TIME	END TIME
August 10, 2023	Chamber of Commerce, 484 N Broadway, Burns, OR 97720	8:31 AM	12:12 PM

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

OREGON DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE (ODA) STAFF PRESENT:

Isaak Stapleton, Natural Resource Programs Director; Karin Stutzman, Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) Program Lead; Sandi Hiatt, SWCD Grants Administrator; Eric Nusbaum, SWCD Operations Specialist; Brittany Mills, Ag Drainage Channel Maintenance Specialist; Renita McNaughtan, Administrative Specialist; *via Teams* - Theresa DeBardelaben, Regional Water Quality Specialist; Rob Hibbs, Water Quality Monitoring Specialist; Olivia Jasper, Regional Water Quality Specialist (RWQS); Beth Pietrzak, RWQS ; Amanda Robinson, SIA Specialist; Mike Badmierowski, Soil Health Specialist; Maria Snodgrass, RWQS; Nina Andrews, RWQS

ADVISORS:

Via Teams - Jan Lee Weinberg, Oregon Association of Conservation Districts (OACD); Courtney Shaff, Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB); Vanessa Green, Network of Watershed Councils (NOWC)

VISITORS:

Jason Kesling, Harney SWCD District Manager; Whitney Rohner, Baker County SWCDs District Manager; *via Teams* - Crystal Grinnell, Water Resources Department Integrated Water Resources Strategy Specialist; Brenda Sanchez, Marion SWCD; Chris Lapp Clackamas SWCD; Lynn Barlow West Multnomah SWCD; Dan Miller, Department of Administrative Services Assistant State CIO; Samantha Fletcher, Klamath SWCD; Brian Wolcott, OWEB; Heather Hendrixson Hood River SWCD

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The regular quarterly meeting was called to order at 8:31 AM by Chair Barbara Boyer on August 10, 2023. There are several additional agenda items and will be added throughout the meeting.

THANK YOU TO KEN BAILEY

Chair Boyer noted that this is Ken Bailey’s last meeting with the Commission. Each of the commission members thanked Ken for his dedicated service and expressed their appreciation of his wisdom, knowledge, and advice. Ken has been on the Commission since 2018, was on the OACD Board from 2003-2020, Oregon Ag Heritage Commission 2018-2023; Orchard View Farms awarded the OACD Conservationist of the Year in 2005, Director on the WASCO SWCD Board, Chair

of the Ag Water Quality Program Advisory Committee, and on the original committee in 1980 that created the I-9 form as well as many other committees and boards throughout his career.

OATH OF OFFICE JERRY WARD

Jerry Ward was sworn in by Isaak Stapleton for another four years as a commission member. Jerry's four-year term will expire on June 30, 2027.

APPROVAL OF MAY 2023 MEETING MINUTES

Draft minutes of the May 10 and 11, 2023, meeting was presented for approval. **A motion was made by Jim Bob Collins to approve the minutes. The motion was seconded by Ken Bailey. Motion passed unanimously.**

JASON KESLING -

Jason indicated that one of his staff, Tyler Goss, put together a summary video by drone of the tour the commission took yesterday. This project was an hour away from the SWCD, which was their closest, and a monitoring project to remove medusa head and juniper.

AG WATER QUALITY PROGRAM AND AGENCY UPDATE

Isaak Stapleton noted that legislative session ended, and the Agency budget held solid from the last biennium budget. Grants on the ground were not reduced. Additional position HB 2010 – ODA in process of integrated water resources strategy – NRS 4 place-based planning, Margaret Matter's position, was cut but they gave us this position, so we didn't gain. Board renewed resolution around the reservations. In terms of hiring, we are currently hiring an Initiatives Coordinator to help tie all the work we do to project management. After that, we will hire for the program manager position. The regional water quality specialist for the north coast and Mike Power's position are still vacant.

Karin Stutzman noted that over the past year the SWCD Program team has been updating new strategic operating procedures; working on five legal requirements for SWCDs; internal policies being updated; keeping on an eye on districts that are struggling; corrective action policies and working on strategic planning. New capacity grants at beginning of new biennium. Districts need to have any late reports due to OWEB in before their capacity grant can begin. Working on new SIAs for 2024 with SIAs for Columbia and Douglas.

ADVISORS REPORTS

OWEB – Courtney Shaff –OWEB has three grant offerings; focused investment partnerships due in October; fall open solicitations; technical assistance, stakeholder engagement, restoration due October 30, and land acquisitions due September 1; all will be awarded at April board meeting. At last board meeting, our spending plan was adopted, and the district capacity grants are moving through the system. The board also took action to reduce the required match to \$1, which has been a barrier to some applicants in the past. Board adopted a climate criterion that will be applied to all grants moving forward. Staff will be out on the road to do training; more information coming. Kicked off rulemaking for small grants program and will convene rule advisory committee. Will be doing rulemaking for small grants program and will be convening an advisory committee for that process. Through the legislative process, we received funding for the source water protection grants and will be doing rulemaking before kicking off that program. We received several positions through the legislative session and will be hiring several positions: source water protection – working on position description. Hiring a position to manage the federal funds from our federal partners, BLM and NRCS Farm Bill funds. Third position is related to compliance with Pacific Coast Salmon Recovery funds related to the National Historic Preservation Act. New requirements coming in July 2024 and NOAA provided funding to hire a position to work with applicants. Working with Amanda and Rob and partnered with ODFW and DEQ to offer restoration funding to existing SIAs. Making progress and communicating with existing SIAs in early September about how they can apply for small amounts of restoration funding (\$15,000). Had a great report presented at last board meeting called Capacity Matters; one of the authors was Dr. Emily Jane Davis. Report is posted on website.

OACD – Jan Weinberg – Webinar on September 13 at 9AM American Farmland Trust AMERICAN FARMLAND TRUST OACD solar leasing guide in the PNW. OACD annual conference October 16-18 at Eagle Crest Resort; the afternoon of 17th the Soil Health and Carbon Workshop will launch the new carbon website and guidebook for soil health and sequestration for districts. HB2527 – sponsored by OACD on behalf of a coalition of districts-revitalizes prior wildlife tax credit for landowners. Watershed health protection grants \$5million grant. Study to develop grant program for aquifer recharge for \$3million. OSU ag water management technical assistance \$3million; place-based water resources planning program received funding for staff support at the local level. Seven eastern Oregon counties received funds for juniper removal. OWEB and ODA were added as partners to the other agencies that were involved earlier and IWRS will be revised every eight years instead of five because it such a major undertaking. Also, climate change challenges will be a part of the IWRS. Water supply development loan program that districts can access will have two fundings a year instead of one. OWRD to report back to the legislature to determine how basin assessments might be provided statewide so there is data and material for the local groups. Funding of the Chewaucan watershed study was approved. Harney Valley groundwater area of concern; there was support for proposal to allow voluntary agreements to move forward to share water. The water resources commission will be meeting Sept 28 and 29 to hear from Rep. Owens on work in that area. HB 3409 – climate omnibus bill -major piece OACD supported - natural climate solutions on natural and working lands; entire pkg was about \$90 million. \$10 million was set aside for projects through OWEB, ODFW, ODA, and ODF related to climate mitigation. Climate bill HB3016 – green infrastructure grant fund (tree bill) covers a lot of other projects and districts should consider applying. More information on OACD website. There will be an OACD tour in Jackson County on fire restoration in September.

NOWC – Vanessa Green – as part of the Oregon Conservation Partnership, three legislative tours - Sept 8th tour at Necanicum Watershed Council in Seaside - urban ecology stream culvert project, which supported their fish passage project; partnered with the Chinook Nation.; Sept 15th tour with Lake County Umbrella Watershed project and Watershed Council tour of Winter Ridge, which overlooks Summer Lake. Looking at fuel accumulations that happened because of insect infestations and risk of regional wildfires and partnering with private and public organizations to do a comprehensive mitigation plan. Visiting with local ranchers to look at history of land management in the past, current management, and into the future. Oct 19th tour hosted by Coos Watershed Association in Coos Bay – looking at tide gate repair and replacement issues and tide gate websites to understand the permitting challenges. Voted in new strategic plan through 2026 and will be on website soon.

OCEAN – Karin Stutzman read OCEAN’s report. They have a couple of new board members. Signed a contract to plan the next Connect for 2024 and will start to reach out to set up a planning committee.

SWCC MEMBER REPORTS

Ken Bailey – nothing to report.

Tim Kerns – Union County - fish passage projects and some irrigation upgrades. Wallowa County – Cynthia said they appreciate getting ODA grant for monitoring. It will be interesting to compare the data with the 90’s data. Whitney had a concern – and he asked her to talk about it. Whitney reviewed an irrigation pivot project started three years ago and in final stages.

Jerry Ward – Thanked commission for another four years. He finds being a commissioner very rewarding.

Stan Dean – Instead of reporting he thought the commission needed to deal with ORS 568 and the parking lot of issues. He feels that OACD is the correct body to develop the parking lot and carry it forward to the legislature.

Al Hrynshyn –Upper Willamette – hired a program grant director; having some personnel issues, but overall positive about direction district is going in.

Jim Bob Collins –Hired a new district/project manager from North Dakota. She is a week behind schedule but will get her up to speed when she gets here.

Barbara Boyer – will be in touch with Lincoln this evening; they are working on weeds – tansy and water iris. Linn did a soil judging contest. Yamhill – turtle wrangling; western pond turtle is about to be listed.

NEW COMMISSION MEMBER INTRODUCED

Robin Vora – new commission member from Bend will join the commission in October. He introduced himself and noted he has a BA and Masters in forestry and worked for the US Forest Service 39 years before retiring.

OWRD – UPDATES TO INTEGRATED WATER RESOURCES PLAN

Crystal Grinnell – Integrated Water Resources Strategy Specialist at Water Resources - presented the Integrated Water Resources Strategy (IWRS). Water Management in Oregon – HB3369 in 2009 defined in statute. ORS 536.220. ORWD leads development and includes state federal agencies, tribes, and stakeholders. A third edition of the IWRS will be coming out in 2023 or early 2024.

UPDATE ON GROUND WATER SIA –Lower Umatilla Basin Ground Water Management Area (LUBGWMA)

Rob Hibbs – Presented on the LUBGWMA. Domestic wells contaminated with nitrate; Up to 38% of wells are contaminated. DEQ, OHA, ODA are meeting with EPA quarterly for updates. Created a ground water Strategic Implementation Area (SIA) with Morrow SWCD; first ground water monitoring SIA. SIA comes with associated grant funding for SWCD to provide technical assistance, conservation planning and project design, assist with other project funding and cost share opportunities, and monitoring water quality and landscape conditions.

UPCOMING MEETING AGENDA ITEMS/NEWSLETTER CONTENT

Newsletter - tour, two presentations from today, Ken leaving, and Jerry being sworn in again. New commission position has been filled and will be sworn in at October meeting. Timing of IWRS public comment period; share with all districts.

Future agenda Items:

- OWEB study
- Parking lot

SELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR

Stan Dean moved, and **Jim Bob Collins** seconded to re-elect **Barbara Boyer** as the Chair and **Jerry Ward** as Vice Chair of the Commission. The motion passed unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No Public Comment

ADJOURNMENT: Meeting adjourned at 12:12PM.