



**APPROVED**

**Oregon Soil and Water Conservation Commission  
February 24 - 25, 2015 Regular Quarterly Meeting  
Willow Lake Water Pollution Control Facility  
5915 Windsor Island Road N, Keizer, OR 97303**

**Tuesday, February 24, 2015**

**Soil and Water Conservation Commission (SWCC) Members Present**

Chair Barbara Boyer; Vice Chair Tim Kerns; Gary Jensen; Mel Omeg; Marilyn Rice; Jerry Ward

**Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) Staff Present**

Ray Jaindl, Natural Resources Program Area Director; John Byers, Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD) and Ag Water Quality Management (Ag WQ) Programs Manager; Manette Simpson, SWCD Program Lead; Eric Nusbaum, SWCD Operations Specialist; Sandi Hiatt, SWCD Grants Administrative Officer; Anne Friend, SWCD Program Support

**Advisors Present**

Ron Alvarado, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) State Conservationist; Tom Watson, NRCS Assistant State Conservationist for Operations; Meta Loftsgaarden, Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB) Executive Director; Courtney Shaff, OWEB Grant Program Coordinator; Jim Cathcart, Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) Cooperative Forestry Manager; Mark Saelens, Oregon Association of Conservation Districts (OACD) President; Jerry Nicolescu, OACD Executive Director; Mike Borman, Oregon State University (OSU) Extension Agriculture and Natural Resources Interim Program Lead; Ryan Gordon, Network of Watershed Councils (NOWC) Executive Director; Pat Fitzgerald, OACD Second Vice President

**Visitors Present**

Brian Thomas, U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health (APHIS) Wildlife Disease Biologist; Jane Keppinger, Marion SWCD; Dee Moore, Marion SWCD

**Call to Order**

Chair Barbara Boyer called the regular quarterly meeting to order at 12:00 p.m. on Tuesday, February 24, 2015, welcomed everyone, and asked for introductions.

**USDA APHIS Feral Swine Presentation**

USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service Wildlife Disease Biologist Brian Thomas gave a presentation on the Feral Swine Program in Oregon; a majority of feral swine travel north from California and are located in central Oregon; habitat conditions require the pigs travel for their food; they can easily move 15 miles in two days; it is estimated in fiscal year 2013 there was damage to 4,950 acres, costing approximately \$3,431,113; USDA has been trapping and eradicating as funding has allowed; USDA uses helicopters to spot and track the pigs because vegetation is too tall and sometimes too thick to see the pigs on the ground. USDA received about \$265,000 for the Feral Swine Program in 2014-2015; USDA is trying to connect with partners around the state that could help with the eradication process; funding sources include BLM matching funds, ODA invasive species grants, Predatory Animal Funding, and the Wildlife Disease Fund.

### **Approval of Meeting Minutes**

The SWCC reviewed the minutes from the November 12, 2014, regular quarterly meeting held in Redmond, Oregon.

**Tim Kerns moved and Marilyn Rice seconded the motion to approve the minutes from the November 12, 2014, SWCC regular quarterly meeting. The motion carried unanimously.**

### **Advisor Reports**

#### **Oregon Conservation Education and Assistance Network (OCEAN)**

Jason Faucera was not able to attend but did submit a written report.

#### **Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB)**

Meta Loftsgaarden introduced Courtney Shaff as the alternate OWEB representative for future meetings. Courtney introduced herself and gave the SWCC a brief background of her education and experience; she has been working on watershed council improvement for four years. Meta gave a brief update on the transition within the Governor's office; the Legislature is in town and the OWEB budget is up for review and legislative hearings next week; OWEB is working with partners on the Clean Water Partnership; there are several legislative bills that will help provide funding. In April, OWEB staff will present the agency spending plan details for their budget to the OWEB Board, including SWCD capacity funding.

#### **Oregon State University Extension Service (OSU Extension)**

Mike Borman presented the SWCC with a written report detailing activities around the state. The Clackamas County SWCD, OSU, and Clackamas County are developing a pesticide stewardship program; the Dairy Ag Risk Management (MPP Dairy), Agricultural Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC) tools have been released; OSU has been collaborating with the Farm Service Agency to help with training. The College of Ag Science and Extension would like an increase in 2015-2017 budget funds to decrease the gap between the reduced current service level and past service level; the Agricultural Experiment Station, which is critical to the College of Ag Sciences, and Extension are included in the Statewide Public Services line item. Mike reminded the SWCC he has been the interim program leader; Sam Angima has been named as the new program leader and he will be moving back to the range specialist position that he previously filled; Mike thanked the SWCC for the opportunity to represent OSU's Natural Resources Extension Program.

#### **Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)**

Ron Alvarado stated that in Oregon accomplishments with partnerships and collaborating is remarkable; an example is the Two Chiefs Projects partnered by the US Forest Service and NRCS Chiefs, project for forest health; this partnership, with NRCS, US Forest Service, and Oregon Department of Forestry, received funding above the normal allocation and was a successful project; Ron supports continuing to strengthen partnerships with organizations such as OACD and the Network of Watershed Councils and working with ODA on water quality priorities.

Tom Watson reported on the 2015 budget; NRCS will be investing \$9,000,000 into Sage grouse through the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP); the Contracting Officer is working to finalize Oregon's six RCPP agreements and is about 50% done; the timeline is tight and they are still waiting for the exact allocations to come through; there is scrutiny on Oregon sage grouse funding, and NRCS funding partners as Oregon is a leader in the sage grouse issue. The Conservation Easement Program rule is moving forward; NRCS will be updating the Cooperative

Working Agreements with individual SWCDs; the agreements will be similar but will be with each district instead of in groups like previously; the agreements will be detailing spending and will identify who pays for what and what costs districts will need to absorb; the goal is to reduce NRCS's agency footprint per USDA new leasing requirements, without closing an office, but still provide the work on the ground; Ron needs the districts' help as pertains to space and the cost to NRCS as he is trying to prioritize limited resources for "Boots on the Ground" rather than office space, which can be challenging. NRCS is very close to filling the Partnership Liaison position; the goal is to have someone in place in the next month. Discussion about office leasing, funding, staffing, etc. followed; the SWCC pointed out that the districts need time to plan for financial impacts and that they appreciate the communication effort from NRCS. The Oregon Technical Advisory Committee (OTAC) meeting will be March 24 in Wilsonville. Large landscape innovative projects are ongoing; NRCS is reviewing project effects.

### **Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF)**

Jim Cathcart reported ODF has successfully completed the 2014 Statewide Technical Assistance Cooperative Agreement with NRCS; it was a very successful partnership and the first time that assistance went statewide; the success led to ODF and NRCS setting up a five year statewide agreement for providing technical assistance to non-industrial private forestland owners so these landowners can successfully access Farm Bill conservation programs. The Healthy Forest Reserve Program had the last landowner signed up at the beginning of the year; the program concentrates on conserving the spotted owl; there is cost share money to help implement the projects throughout the state. Jim commented that partnerships in Oregon are working well and he stressed the importance of continuing communication and working together. ODF is a sponsor of Connect 2015 and will be hosting three sessions: Forest Practices 101, Forest Invasive Species, and the Oregon Department of Forestry – The New Normal. Upcoming trainings for CREP will be in March.

### **Oregon Association of Conservation Districts (OACD)**

Mark Saelens introduced Pat Fitzgerald as the second vice president for the OACD Executive Board. Sage grouse continues to be a hot topic and OACD is still a leader in the process. The OACD office has moved to 1130 Liberty Street SE, Suite 3, Salem, Oregon, 97302. The 2015 Annual Conference will be held in conjunction with NOWC again and will be November 2-4, 2015, in Eugene. Mark reported John McDonald has been appointed as the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) Secretary/Treasurer; the NACD Fly-In meeting will be held in July in Spokane, Washington; Mark noted Oregon was reassigned to the NACD Legislative Committee selected as the Pacific Region representative for the new NACD Farm Bill Task Force working on the next Farm Bill; Oregon was selected as the alternate for a new NACD RCPP Task Force. OACD will be moving to a July 1 to June 30 fiscal year instead of an annual year; Jerry Ward has been elected Treasurer; they have more administrative assistance for Jerry. Connect 2015 will be April 22-24, in Welches, OR.

### **Network of Watershed Councils (NOWC)**

Ryan Gordon gave an update on the strategic planning process; the result was diversifying the Board's representation across the state with two positions from each OWEB Region and eight at-large positions; last week NOWC launched a membership and dues structure to help support NOWC as an organization that supports watershed councils statewide. Ryan noted the new office space is working well, it improves workflow, gives NOWC and OACD the space each needs, but with space to grow; now both organizations can work toward building shared capacity. Ryan reported Connect 2015 planning was moving forward; both districts and watershed staff will

participate again as that worked well last year. The partnership with OACD is continuing to move forward and includes working with the Coalition of Oregon Land Trusts (COLT).

### **Legislative Update**

Jerry Nicolescu reported that the House Bill 2401, wild birdseed tax bill, is intended to go towards the sage grouse; House Bill 2648 and Senate Bill 439 establish outdoor schools; he is also tracking Senate Bill 194, an education bill, and Senate Bill 544, damages for restoration projects; there continues to be discussion about Measure 91; ODFW has a 30 million dollar shortfall and the western stream program is slated to be eliminated; there are several bills introduced regarding pesticides and appropriate use; there are also bills to protect pollinators statewide; OSU is pushing for statewide funding for the extension and outreach offices; OACD will testify in support of ODA's budget and policy option package on Thursday.

### **Natural Resources Program Area Update**

Ray Jaindl reported the ODA budget is currently being heard this week by the Legislature; Measure 91, pesticides, water quality program and the need for work to be done in Strategic Implementation Areas (SIAs) and Focus Areas are all things being discussed. He reported a Confined Animal Feeding Operation (CAFO) court ruling in January involving a Washington state dairy is likely to have implications for all states; the court ruling finds under the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) that manure is a solid waste if not applied at agronomic rates, which then allows waste to enter the soil and groundwater; in another court case, the city of Des Moines, Iowa, is suing landowners with drain tiles that discharge into the river upstream of the city's drinking water intake; the case is yet to be determined but could have implications for Oregon. The Coastal Zone Act Reauthorization Amendments (CZARA) update summarized the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) decision to not approve Oregon's Coastal Zone Management Plan; EPA and NOAA's decision was based on their evaluation of the State's forest practices, septic systems, and other parameters that needed to be met before it could be approved; Oregon could lose federal grant money if an agreement cannot be reached with EPA and NOAA. A program option package was contained in the governor's budget for water quality; it includes three positions and one million dollars for technical assistance and project implementation to help landowners achieve state agriculture water quality goals.

### **SWCD and Ag Water Quality Management Programs Update**

John Byers gave a brief update on the programs; he praised the director trainings and how successful they were; Eric has training modules available for directors that couldn't attend. The ODA GIS program is continuing to work jointly with Department of Land Conservation and Development's GIS program to coordinate hardware and software resources that will help both agencies; testing continues on new GIS software which will help districts work in their Focus Areas; discussion followed about showing improvement in water quality to the public and other interested parties.

### **SWCD Staff Update**

Manette Simpson thanked OWEB and NRCS for encouraging their staff to attend director trainings throughout the state; agency participation was appreciated by district directors and staff; directors and staff also appreciated the SWCC members and OACD's participation; overall, the trainings were well received and ODA got good feedback for the 2017 trainings. ODA and OWEB are preparing for the 2015-2017 biennium and Support Grant funding; the due date for completed

applications submitted to ODA will be June 30. Idaho's SWCC will be hosting a tri-state Voluntary Conservation Summit and Tour the week of July 20-24; Barbara, John, and Manette will be attending to represent Oregon. Courtney and Manette are invited to the All Counties Sage Grouse CCAA April meeting to talk about landowner privacy and funding.

Eric Nusbaum submitted a written staff report for director trainings and his last year's activities; he briefly summarized the director training evaluations received; he will follow-up with districts not in attendance to provide director training information. Eric presented a brief summary on his progress for assisting districts complete their long-range plans; there are three or four districts that could have problems meeting the June 30 deadline for completed plans; all other districts are on schedule.

### **2015-2017 Biennium Funding Recommendation**

Manette stated ODA is preparing Support Grant application materials for the new 2015-2017 biennium; ODA is requesting the SWCC recommend Support Grant funding distribution for districts; OWEB is expecting to allocate the same funding level as the 2013-2015 biennium, \$6.1 million; ODA proposes following the same distribution formula as in past biennia, which has been to distribute funding equally to all districts, except the four Baker County districts; ODA's proposal includes continuing the 75/25 percent funding for scope of work tasks, with 75 percent of total Scope of Work funding going toward district-wide tasks and 25 percent toward Focus Area tasks; additionally, ODA is proposing offering districts that conduct Strategic Implementation Area (SIA) activities have the option, with ODA approval, of reallocating the 25 percent Focus Area Scope of Work funds towards SIA tasks; discussion followed about district funding and the pros and cons of funds distribution; the SWCC agreed that it was important to continue dedicating 25 percent of total funds for Focus Area funding and not use Focus Area funding to fund SIAs at this time.

**Marilyn Rice moved and Jerry Ward seconded the motion to recommend the Department distribute the anticipated \$6.1 million for the 2015-2017 biennium Support Grant funds as follows: each district will receive \$100,000 for Scope of Work tasks and \$41,860 for District Operations, except the Baker Valley, Eagle Valley, Keating, and Burnt River SWCDs will receive \$200,000 for Scope of Work tasks and \$83,720 for District Operations, to be divided equally, and continuing the 75/25 percent Scope of Work as distributed in the 2013-2015 biennium. The motion carried unanimously.**

### **SWCC Member Reports**

**Mel Omeg** reported that Courtney at OWEB has been very helpful with his district trying to get grant funding; he complimented Courtney for working with a district and watershed council to get grant funding; Manette and Mel visited a district to encourage their participation in applying for a grant; John and Mel visited another district to help them build a better relationship with ODA; Mel mentioned that he feels a lot of board chairs have no idea how to move meetings along and encourages continued training.

**Tim Kerns** reported the director training in Ontario was well attended by the Malheur district and he is looking forward to Eric doing another training in the northeastern section of the state; Donita Clair is now working for the Powder Basin Watershed Council and people are looking forward to a potentially good partnership; everything is dry, there is no snow pack; he anticipates a worse water year than in previous years and he is anticipating water rationing.

**Gary Jensen** reported Linn SWCD is testing for nitrates in groundwater; Eugene Water and Electric Board (EWEB) is trying to protect water for the city of Eugene; they have maps with riparian zones identified; the local watershed council is getting creative with fundraising; the director trainings were great and having one in Corvallis was a great location; he is participating with Jim Cathcart on a forestry committee and it has been a great learning opportunity.

**Marilyn Rice** reported that good partnerships are a priority in her SWCC region; the Klamath area is researching different ways to grow crops and possibly store water with the continuing shortage that is in that area; there is a restoration in Jackson County for the Monarch Butterfly; Lake county is using hoops for seed production; outreach is important for putting Oregon on the map and encouraging conservation throughout the country not just in Oregon; director trainings were great and well worth it; the Resources and People Camp is being organized for June; contact Marilyn for more information.

**Jerry Ward** extended complements to staff for helpful director trainings and how great it was that partners were able to attend the sessions as well; the Tualatin SWCD continues to work closely with Clean Water Services to increase shade along the Tualatin River; the SWCD has increased staff and is major partner in CWS's tree planting goal of planting one million trees which ties in with ECREP; Washington County has asked the SWCD to explore water storage options.

**Barbara Boyer** reported that the Yamhill SWCD partnered with Marion and Polk SWCDs to hold a Pesticide Stewardship Program (PSP) chemical collection day; it was so successful that they had to turn people away; the districts worked with the PSP to set up the collection day and recommends that other districts look into doing this as well; she showed a birdhouse that the district has for sale and explained that during the Outdoor School that is held at Miller Woods, students make birdhouses to either take home or leave to be hung in the woods.

### **Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

Chair Boyer adjourned the meeting at 4:32 p.m. to reconvene Wednesday morning at 8:30 a.m.

## **Wednesday, February 25, 2015**

### **Soil and Water Conservation Commission (SWCC) Members Present**

Chair Barbara Boyer; Vice Chair Tim Kerns; Mel Omeg; Marilyn Rice, Gary Jensen

### **Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) Staff Present**

John Byers, Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD) and Ag Water Quality Management (Ag WQ) Programs Manager; Manette Simpson, SWCD Program Lead; Eric Nusbaum, SWCD Operations Specialist; Sandi Hiatt, SWCD Grants Administrative Officer; Anne Friend, SWCD Program Support; Mike Powers, Ag WQ Policy Specialist Lead

### **Advisors Present**

Ron Alvarado, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) State Conservationist; Jim Cathcart, Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) Cooperative Forestry Manager; Mike Borman, Oregon State University (OSU) Extension Agriculture and Natural Resources Interim Program Lead

### **Visitors Present**

Gene Foster, DEQ; Karin Nembach, Polk SWCD; Jane Keppinger, Marion SWCD

### **Call to Order**

Chair Boyer called the meeting to order at 8:33 a.m. on Wednesday, February 25, 2015.

### **Local SWCD Presentation: Polk SWCD**

Karin Nembach, Polk SWCD District Manager gave a presentation to the SWCC on her district activities, including the change in management, staff, and the challenges that have come with it; Karin manages young, often just out of college staff; their age group is commonly referred to as millennials or generation Y; they are part of the up and coming generation of conservationists; she shared some of the communication challenges and successes that she has experienced; Karin mentioned that she has a great relationship with her board of directors and they are very supportive of her; she updated the SWCC on the district's restoration projects, native plant sale, partnering with the Yamhill SWCD and NRCS on the North Willamette Valley Upland Oak Restoration RCPP over the next five years, and the CREP focus area with OWEB for one year.

### **Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) Update**

Gene Foster gave an update on the ruling for CZARA; he briefly outlined what was approved and denied by the ruling from EPA and NOAA that Oregon satisfied the conditions related to new development and onsite sewage disposal systems (OSDS), but the additional management measures for forestry were not approved; there are ongoing discussions between agencies about how to proceed from this point; the Clean Water Act, Section 319 Nonpoint Source Management Program gets an allotment of federal grant funds to implement nonpoint source plans; 319 grant funds have been declining over the last several years; additional forestry management measures from the Department of Forestry (ODF) could be problematic; DEQ is still working with ODF on the Forest Practices Act when needed, along with temperature testing and other projects; discussion about CZARA and the implementation of it followed; Jim Cathcart explained what the Board of Forestry is currently working on how to implement the CZARA decision and what rules, if any, need to be adopted. DEQ has a project in the southern Willamette valley where they are trying to link up conservation actions, dollars spent and on what, riparian restoration measures, the water quality response, what works and does not work; this project will help in determining how to proceed into the future to ensure that conservation is happening like it needs to address water quality; there are initial results and they expect to have a report by May or early June this year. Discussion about working with EPA and California followed; using local management data has been helpful in moving forward to ensure the programs are on track in making progress and showing what the progress is; nationally there is tension between the nonpoint source approach and the point source permitting program approach; trying to determine what is working and how to move forward is an ongoing issue; by using these pilots DEQ is hoping to show the progress being made.

### **ODA Board of Agriculture Update**

John Byers and Gene updated the SWCC regarding their update to the Board of Ag last week; they talked about the cooperation between the agencies and working towards future goals.

### **Strategic Implementation Area (SIA) Update**

John gave an update on the progress of the SIAs that are being conducted in two areas as test projects; the post evaluation is showing improvement in the last 18 months; he outlined the

statewide prioritizing occurring, and where the districts and the agency are headed into the future; one of the challenges is the capacity of the districts and the ability to get work done; push back from districts has been nonexistent and landowners have been cooperative; ODA's goal is to do up to twelve SIAs in the next two years; discussion about how to meet the goals and continue forward followed. Ron mentioned that it is possible NRCS may have already completed work in areas that ODA is looking at; he mentioned NRCS could potentially help ODA get work done as well; NRCS investments are three to five years long.

### **Reducing SWCD Board Director Process**

Eric Nusbaum presented the SWCC with the legal process to reduce the number of board member positions; discussion followed about the challenges of getting people interested in being district board members; challenges include distance to the meetings, age, zones are in mostly federal land, and the ten acre requirement.

### **Special Presentation: Large Fire Tool Kit**

Jim Cathcart gave a presentation on After the Wildfire and the Department of Forestry's role in coordinating technical and financial assistance for reforestation and habitat restoration following large wildfires; the 2012 Barry Point fire prompted ODF to create the Large Fire Tool Kit; the total area burned covered over 90 thousand acres; the fire started on federal lands and moved to private lands within 24 hours; a review committee was formed, as an external group, to reflect on lessons learned from the fire season and provide recommendations to further improve Oregon's fire protection system; a specific focus involved communication and coordination with landowners; under the Forest Practices Act; if a landowner tries to clean up or salvage any part of the land, then they are responsible for complying with the forest practices act; seedlings for landowners can be difficult to find since ODF lost their state nursery; there are few incentive programs to help landowners reforest their land; there are several tools that ODF is looking at to increase program availability to further help the landowners in their efforts to restore their land; ODF created a checklist for the stewardship forester to be able quickly and effectively assess what the needs are and then determine the next process; ODF is continuing to do outreach to teach as many people as possible what they should do after a fire and what their responsibility is towards the land and the restoration efforts.

### **Biennial Review Update and Priorities**

Mike Powers explained what the Biennial Review process is, the purpose, and proposed changes. The Area Plans have a new chapter format; the format was changed to have a consistent program message among the 38 plans across the state, accommodate the varied interests and a wider audience, different issues in the state, yet and maintain local applicability and review. Chapter 1 covers the program history and program description and is written by ODA. Chapter 2 has the local background and description of water quality issues, and is carried over from the previous version of the plan. Chapter 3 contains the previously written goals for the area as well as the new measurable objectives. ODA is working with LACs across the state to use measurable objectives. Chapter 4 is fairly new; the Local Advisory Committee (LAC) is being asked to review the progress from the previous two years and any changes needed, what's working, and what the goals are for the next two years. He briefly explained what the measurable objectives are and gave an example. As the biennial reviews are occurring, changes will be worked into the plans. Measurable objectives are being added to the plans to help tell the story of water quality progress. Some advisory committees have been more resistant to the changes than others, requiring additional meetings. One suggestion

was to define the roles and responsibilities of the LAC members before trying to recruit for the LAC; discussion about concerns, issues, progress, and solutions followed.

### **Follow Up Assignments**

- ODA will create a list of options for being a district director.
- ODA will develop roles and responsibilities for the LACs for the April meeting.

### **Upcoming Meetings**

- April 7 from 8:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.; Salem ODA Building and GoToMeeting
- August 3-4; McMinnville area and Miller Woods (July meeting was moved to August)
- November TBA; with OACD/NOWC Conference

Chair Boyer adjourned the meeting at 11:58 a.m.