



Soil and Water Conservation Commission Minutes

DATE	LOCATION	START TIME	END TIME
October 18, 2023	Eagle Crest Resort, Conference Center Room C/D, 1522 Cline Falls Road, Redmond, OR 97756	8:30 AM	12:30 PM
CHAIR	COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT	ABSENT	
Barbara Boyer	Jerry Ward, Stan Dean, Tim Kerns, Al Hrynyshyn, Robin Vora and Jim Bob Collins (via Teams online)		

OREGON DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE (ODA) STAFF PRESENT:

Isaak Stapleton, Natural Resource Programs Director; Sandi Hiatt, SWCD Grants Administrator; Eric Nusbaum, SWCD Operations Specialist; Karin Stutzman, SWCD Program Lead; Renita McNaughtan, Administrative Specialist; Victoria Binning, Initiatives Coordinator; Chris Benemann, Plant Protection and Conservation Programs Director; (***via Teams online***) Jenn Ambrose, GIS Specialist; Nina Caldwell, WQ Specialist; Rob Hibbs, Monitoring Specialist; Olivia Jasper, WQ Specialist; Amanda Robinson, SIA Specialist; Wym Matthews, Manager CAFO/Fertilizer; Jim Johnson, Land Use/Water Planning Coordinator; Shiloh Simrell, WQ Specialist; Maria Snodgress, WQ Specialist

ADVISORS:

Andrea Kreiner, Oregon Association of Conservation Districts (OACD); Sam Angima, Oregon State University (OSU) Extension; Cynthia Warnock, Oregon Conservation Education & Assistance Network (OCEAN); (***via Teams online***) Marc DesJardin, Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF); Courtney Shaff, Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB); Steve Mrazik, Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ); Kristen Walz, Network of Watershed Councils (NOWC)

VISITORS:

Whitney Rohner, Dist Mgr, Baker County SWCDs; Tom Straughan, Dir, Umatilla SWCD; Ken Masten, Dir, Klamath SWCD; Mike Guebert, Dir, East Multnomah SWCD; Brian Wolcott, Water Acquisitions/Capacity Coord, OWEB; Jason Kesler, Dist Mgr, Harney SWCD; Jan Lee, Dir, Clackamas SWCD; Ayla Morehouse, Conservation Mgr, Wheeler SWCD; Peggy Hart, Dir, Marion SWCD; (***via Teams online***) Will Natividad, District Mgr, Klamath SWCD; Clara Sroufe, Dir, Clatsop County; Justin Ferrell, Dist Mgr, Lakeview SWCD; Michael Calhoun, Dir, Columbia SWCD, Terri Preeg Riggsby, Dir, West Mult SWCD; Frank Baratta, Dir, Jackson SWCD; Don Guttridge, Dir, Clackamas SWCD; Brenda Sanchez, Dist Mgr, Marion SWCD

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The regular quarterly meeting was called to order at 8:30AM by Chair Barbara Boyer on October 18, 2023.

NEW COMMISSIONER

Isaak Stapleton administered the Oath of Office to Robin Vora, the newly appointed SWCC member. Robin was appointed to fill the position previously held by Ken Bailey, which covers the Deschutes Basin.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No Public Comment

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Draft minutes of the August 10, 2023, regular quarterly meeting were presented for approval. A correction regarding the selection of the chair and vice chair. Both the chair, Barbara Boyer, and the vice chair, Jerry Ward, were re-elected. A motion was made by Stan to approve the minutes with the correction. The motion was seconded by Al Hrynshyn. Motion passed unanimously. Robin Vora abstained.

AG WATER QUALITY PROGRAM, LEGISLATIVE/AGENCY UPDATES

Isaak Stapleton wanted to highlight the presentation Jeanne gave about the Shaniko Wool Carbon Initiative at the OACD Conference and the great work they are doing. Lisa Hanson has been appointed our new agency director starting December 1st. Currently interviewing for the water quality manager position; hoping to have someone in that position by November 1st. Senate Bill 775 changes director eligibility for all districts; directors must live in the zone they represent. The bill also reads “...zone directors in a district...with a population of less than 250,000 must: (A) Own or manage 10 or more acres of land in the zones they represent in the district and be involved in the active management of the land and be registered voters. ...or (B) Indicate an interest in natural resource conservation as demonstrated by serving at least one year as a director or associate director of a district and having a conservation plan that is approved by the district.” Twenty-five directors and 10 districts are impacted by the change to needing to live in the zone they are representing. **Eric Nusbaum** noted that letters have been prepared to go out explaining as of Jan 1, 2024, to represent a zone, they will have to live in that zone. **Wym Matthews** updated the commission on the confined animal feeding operation (CAFO) program. The CAFO inspectors are finding that facilities have a lot of technical needs for service providers such as NRCS and SWCD staff on nutrient management, planning assistance, and other best management planning installation assistance on capital facilities, please let districts know of the need. Rulemaking for CAFO rules; will look at stock water starting with a cap; coordinate with other agencies; large facilities, reach out to districts, etc. CAFO Advisory Committee meeting coming up and will be virtual as well as in person.

ADVISOR REPORTS

OWEB – Courtney Shaff noted that Brian Wolcott has taken over lead on council and district capacity grant coordination on top of his water acquisition duties. She will continue to attend SWCC meetings. The OWEB board meets in Klamath Falls and will be discussing strategic plan, equity statement and resolution on DEI, and a presentation on Part 3 of a partnership learning project. OWEB has an open strategic implementation area pilot restoration grant program for existing SIAs, districts can apply for up to \$15,000 in grant funds per on the ground project in an existing SIA. Application deadline is 1/17. No cap on the number of applications a district can apply for; \$250,000 available. OWEB has money for Farm Bill technical assistance grants from NRCS with \$740,000 to award. Hiring someone to manage that program, December-early-January opening for the grant offering. Eric Hartstein and Jesse Kershner doing online and in-person webinars/trainings on new climate criteria for applicants. OWEB launching a revised and streamlined application, taking out the information only needed from grantees to be funded. She conducted a webinar regarding changes in 2024. OWEB needs to collect information on how grantees are complying with the National Historic Preservation Act project implementation. These are requirements from NOAA as part of the Pacific Coast Salmon Recovery fund grant. OWEB will be hiring a person to help with implementation in early 2024. Will be providing resources to grantees to develop that process.

OSU – Sam Angima reported that Extension received Continuing Service Level (CSL) funding from the legislature for the fiscal year 2024/25 biennium. Good news as vacant positions are now able to be filled. HB 2120 provided the Extension and experiment station funding to provide technical assistance around Oregon in gathering weather station data and disseminating ready to use information to all farmers and ranchers across the state.

This is especially useful for irrigators. Working closely with the Water and Resources Dept. (WRD) to synthesize data with current technologies in place. Together with WRD, buying 30 more AgriMet weather stations to fill gaps around the state to capture more weather data. Funding to collaborate with OpenET and AgriMet to accomplish bill's goals on weather stations. Funding to incentivize farmers to collaborate with the Extension in showcasing weather stations and

data use in farmers' fields. Provided funding to support SWCDs in central Oregon for juniper removal, water monitoring, and reporting. The bill also allocated funding to specific SWCDs.

NOWC – Kristen Walz – board chair of the Network of Watershed Council. The Network is going through a leadership transition as Vanessa Green has resigned; a replacement has not been hired. The NOWC board is reevaluating the current structure of the organization, the needs of members, and how the Network can promote and support watersheds across the state. Anticipate hiring someone within the next 3-6 months. In the meantime, somebody is answering emails and phone. The Board is stepping up to fill in gaps; the Member Services Committee, Business Development Committee, and Gov't Relations Committee remain actively engaged and support the Board during this transition. Kristen highlighted the hard work of the Network's Gov't Relations Committee during 2023. Legislative tours will be a focus for coming years. Working on final draft of the five-year strategic plan and the board will meet this month with hopes of approving it. The plan will be available on the website once approved. A legislative summary covering the 10 bills the Network provided comment on is available upon request.

OACD - Andrea Kreiner - would like feedback to help plan next year's conference. The training on Sept 13th was partnered with American Farmland Trust as part of the Oregon Conservation webinar series; geared toward conservation professionals who are often relied upon to support landowners in evaluating their decisions on solar options making tough decisions. Have another webinar in November with ODFW on the Private Forest Accord on the new grant for habitat funds and will be a multi-year grant program. Legislative tour of recovery project at Jackson SWCD with two legislators in attendance. The Grants Pass Daily posted article on front page and on ABC news in Medford. OACD gearing up to be the manager of the Conservation Partnership grant for the next biennium. There is confusion on how changes to SB 775 Director Eligibility will impact SWCD Directors.

OCEAN Cynthia Warnock – looking at April 2024 CONNECT Sunriver tentatively April 16 or 23. Will also have a strategic planning meeting in November. OCEAN has a grant with NRCS to do deliverables. Will hire a person to do outreach in areas that don't get a lot of attention, like urban areas. Hope to hire someone in the next couple of months. Since we missed this year's CONNECT conference, 2024 will include staff, directors, partners, land trust, etc.

ODF – Marc DesJardin – one of two new staff to work around the state. Landscape Resiliency program SB 762, on round two of program; was decreased from \$20 million to \$10 million; five successful groups - NE, SW, Klamath, Oakridge area, and SE. Small Forest Land grant program for landowners owning less than 160 acres west side of Cascades and 640 acres east of Cascades is currently open; the minimum application is \$10,000, maximum application is \$300,000 and closes on December 3rd. ODF is offering external training on some of the Private Forest Accord rule changes and will be held in-person and in FERNs virtually. The statewide stream network model data is available as of July; completed in collaboration with ODFW. Forest Resources Division is working with State Forest on a stewardship agreement to support their pursuit of a habitat conservation plan. Urban Community Forest received a very large grant out of IRA funds and were able to hire additional staff and Emerald Ash Borer specialists.

DEQ – Steve Mrazik, Water Quality Manager, Watershed Management – thanked the SWCDs around the state for the ability to make the connections and partnerships and getting the projects on the ground. We need to celebrate their tremendous work. Quick updates – in February 2022, the Environmental Quality Commission (EQC) adopted rule amendments for TMDLs. Working on several TMDLs and rules with most recent being the Upper Yaquina Watershed; it was brought to the EQC in September 2023 and adopted. Looking to move forward on implementation. Powder Basin is currently working on response to comments and is scheduled to go to the EQC in January of 2024. Working on Lower Columbia and Sandy Subbasin TMDL and Lower Willamette Subbasin TMDL; TMDL tech support guidance document is being updated and the public notice for both should be going out around January 2024. Coquille River Subbasin. Scheduled to be brought to EQC in February 2024. Several others coming up.

PUBLIC COMMENT – Brian Lightcap is impressed with the new manager, Lynn Barlow, who replaced Jim Cathcart. She worked for DEQ for several years. Jim was his right hand person years ago. Brian would like to be able to reach out and get grants information available to the state. Staff can't do it all, but directors can be armed with information to talk about grants, and he would like to see more information about stock ranches because it affects everyone.

EMERALD ASH BORER (EAB) UPDATE

Chris Benemann, director of the Plant Protection and Conservation programs at ODA presented an update about the EAB, a wood boring insect. Oregon ash is the preferred tree that the EAB habituate. Other EAB hosts are cultivated olives, not Russian olives. White fringe trees are also attractive to EAB. EAB was first found in Michigan in 2002 and spread from there but mostly in eastern United States and spread within 20 years to 36 states. EAB is native to Asia. ODF has been monitoring for several years. Before 2022 detection, ODA had federal funds to begin biocontrol work on EAB. ODA performed two consecutive years surveying nurseries for EAB. (oregoninvasiveshotline.org) There is a EAB Task Force that meets monthly led by ODA and coordinated by OISC. Biocontrol is being done by ODA but not within city limits. If you want to keep informed, sign up for the newsletter, contact Jim Gersbach at jim.gersbach@odf.oregon.gov and ask to be added to his EAB Bulletin. Other websites/contact: Dontmovefirewood.org and EAB@oda.oregon.gov chris.benemann@oda.oregon.gov.

SWCC MEMBER REPORTS

Tim Kerns- visited Morrow County they are working on monitoring, and they appreciate support from ODA and OWEB and things are going well.

Al Hrynshyn – Upper Willamette, due to SB 775, has a vacant zone position. Brought in an associate director who will be eligible January 1st. Program grant manager is working with Tualatin and East Multnomah to understand how grant programs work. Funded a plant nursery and eight local farmers markets. Took an informal survey – “What programs would you like to see us do within our boundaries?” Very similar response as six years ago; so are moving in the right direction. Volunteer staff day – entire staff and board worked at 4J Eugene School District and spent most of the day working in the community.

Jerry Ward – thanked Karin and Isaak for working with a district that needed more attention. Feels we are making progress. Karin suggested to him that a neighboring district maybe willing to offer to help with capacity. A great opportunity to help another district. Has been attending annual meetings when he can get there.

Stan Dean – Karin is doing good job keeping him informed about districts having issues. The new executive director, Jill Smedstad, at the Jackson SWCD is fantastic and wants everyone to get to know her.

Robin Vora – Deschutes SWCD is much improved since he started on the board. They have a new manager and four staff now. The program is widening.

Barbara Boyer – also complimented Karin in keeping her informed. Attended two of the meetings of a district struggling. On the interview panel for the director for ODA and the panel for selection of Ag WQ Manager. Gave the Welcome to the Oregon State Weed Board meeting. Yamhill hosted a COLT (Coalition of Land Trust) on one of their pieces of property. Had five or six legislators show up. Yamhill SWCD's annual dinner coming up.

REVIEW ORS 568 POTENTIAL STATUTE IMPROVEMENTS

Stan Dean talked about the two years the commission took to review the entire ORS 568 and the Parking Lot list that was compiled. He noted that some of the items were minor, and some would require changes that would mean developing legislative concepts and opening the entire statute, which could be risky. There were many issues that Stan mentioned for the commission to think about. There was more discussion. **Barbara suggested Stan, herself, Isaak, and Andrea talk about what ODA may be interested in doing.**

FINAL REVIEW SWCD CORRECTIVE ACTION POLICY

Karin Stutzman reviewed the purpose of the Corrective Action Policy and thanked the SWCC committee for helping her refine it.

CALL FOR UPCOMING MEETING AGENDA/NEWSLETTER CONTENT

Newsletter content: Emerald Ash Borer, Corrective Action Policy, swearing in Robin Vora

Upcoming Meeting Agenda Items: Update from Jim Johnson; Presentation on Retrospective Analysis Report from

OWEB; Watershed Councils and SWCDs – the differences and why February 27-28, 2024 - Tualatin
April 17-18, 2024 – Sunriver (Connect will be taking place) July 10-11 Curry SWCD
October – when and where OACD Annual Meeting is taking place.

WRAP-UP / ADJOURNMENT: Meeting adjourned at 12:15PM.

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Keywords:
Comments:
Creation Date: 9/28/26 11:05:00 AM
Change Number: 2
Last Saved On: 9/28/26 11:05:00 AM
Last Saved By: HAMILTON Alayna * ODA
Total Editing Time: 1 Minute
Last Printed On: 9/28/26 11:05:00 AM
As of Last Complete Printing
Number of Pages: 5
Number of Words: 2,627
Number of Characters: 14,386 (approx.)