

Oregon Soil and Water Conservation Commission Meeting
Regular Quarterly Meeting
Tuesday, July 23, 2019
ODF&W Conference Room
4034 Fairview Industrial Drive SE, Salem, OR 97306

Soil and Water Conservation Commission (SWCC) Members Present

Chair, Barbara Boyer, Ken Bailey, Jim Bob Collins, Jerry Ward, Gary Jensen, Tim Kerns

Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) Staff Present

Stephanie Page, Natural Resources Program Area Director, John Byers, Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) Program Manager, Eric Nusbaum, SWCD Operations Specialist, Sandi Hiatt, SWCD Grant Administrator,

Advisors Present

Courtney Schaff, Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB), Jan Lee, Oregon Association of Conservation Districts (OACD), Jeremy Baker, Oregon Conservation Employees Association Network (OCEAN), Jay Gibbs, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA NRCS), Ryan Gordon, Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF), Karlene McCabe, Network of Oregon Watershed Councils (NOWC) Gene Foster, Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), Sam Angima, Oregon State University Extension (OSUExt)

Visitors

Kelly Noack, OSUExt, Jim Liskey, OSUExt, Shannon Brubaker, Oregon Department of Agriculture (Harney Soil & Water Conservation District), Whitney Collins, Baker Soil and Water Conservation Districts

Reappointment of SWCC members

Jerry Ward has agreed to serve another term on the Commission. John Byers presented Jerry with a reappointment letter and thanked him for being willing to serve another term.

Public Comment

Shannon Brubaker has worked at ODA for 18 years in various roles, several of which has involved working with SWCDs and Commission members. She will be moving to Seneca, Oregon and is taking a new role as the Manager at Harney SWCD.

Approval of April 2019 minutes

Ken Bailey moved and Jerry Ward seconded approval of the minutes. The motion passed unanimously.

SWCC Strategic Plan

The Commission adopted its last plan approximately 10 years ago and began work this year on updating its plan. During the last 2 meetings, the Commission has developed a new draft plan with goals and objectives that Commissioners believe are more attainable.

Eric Nusbaum relayed some suggested edits from Stan Dean and Commission members discussed the intent of some of the items in the draft plan related to zoned representation on the Commission.

Jerry Ward commented that the updated plan is streamlined, focused, and doable. **Jerry moved to approve the 2019-2021 strategic plan and Jim Bob Collins seconded. The motion passed unanimously.**

Junior Master Gardeners program

Kelly Noack, OSU and Jim Liskey, Marion County Master Gardener

The Junior Master Gardener program started about 4 years ago in Marion County. Jim Liskey explained that many are youth interested in gardening could not participate in the Master Gardener program due to the minimum age requirement. Jim attended a workshop about a junior program in Texas and became certified as a junior Master Gardener leader.

The junior program is a nationwide program created by Texas A & M. Benefits of the program include:

- Increased fruit and vegetable consumption - the program allows kids to try fruits and vegetables prepared in different ways,
- Increased leadership and personal responsibility,
- Improved academic achievement,
- Increased parent and mentor involvement with youth in schools,
- Exposure to career exploration paths,
- Engagement in community service/service learning projects.

The program includes 10 weeks of curriculum with topics such as plant growth, soils, ecology and environmental horticulture, entomology, nutrition, and fresh produce. Marion SWCD has provided soil test kits, which have been greatly appreciated.

The program has been successful because it is hands-on and project-based. In Marion County, approximately 470 youth from grades K-10 have completed a Junior Master Gardener certificate over the last three years.

Kelly Noack provided an overview of the 4H program, its priorities, and role in youth development. She described the steps to set up a 4H club in Marion County; these steps may vary depending on the location in the state. She also described the application and screening process to become a 4H leader, and some of the considerations involved in starting a 4H club or partnership.

Kelly displayed some examples of some of the books and lessons that are part of the Master Gardener curriculum. More information is available about the national program at jmgkids.us/

Advisor Reports

OACD – Jan Lee reported that they have been working with SWCDs who received a grant for a database and monitoring program. Received \$300K for SageCon approved by OWEB. There will be a SageCon workshop in Burns on October 3-4 and will be on the OACD web site. There will be a one-year extension on RCPP. We're tracking about 40 bills in 2019 Oregon legislative session; will do some legislative tours in the fall beginning in September with the Clackamas Community Forest project. OACD is updating its work book for SWCDs interested in pursuing a tax base. OACD is moving to Marion SWCD on August 29. OACD conference will be November 5 & 6 this year at Eagle Crest.

NOWC - Karlene McCabe introduced herself; she is the interim director of NOWC. She has served in a variety of interim roles for organizations and assisted them with transitions over the last 10 years; prior to that she was the Executive Director of the Greenbelt Land Trust. NOWC is hoping to have a

permanent director in place by the end of the year. Network carried out watershed management camp for watershed councils and attended Connect.

OCEAN – Jeremy Baker noted that a total of 301 people attended Connect. 38 people volunteered to put on the conference, including 16-20 people on the planning committee and others who helped with logistics and staffing at the conference. Had 92 presenters at the conference; 4 field trips with 70 registered participants. Several organizations held their annual meetings or staff meetings at Connect as well; it has provided a great venue for partners to come together. Would like to build upon our sponsors in the future; had 6 sponsors this year. Starting to work on Connect 2020; will be April 14-16 and will be going back to Sunriver. A RFP for a conference planner and will be going out later today.

OWEB – Courtney Shaff – noted that OWEB will be reviewing its water acquisition rules and will establish a rules advisory committee; also working on rules related to monitoring grants. Awarded SWCD and Council capacity grants and is working with Sandi to complete those for the biennium. At the last Commission meeting in April, we talked about the new process for SWCD capacity grants. Courtney would like to compliment Sandi immensely for her work and support in getting the new process in place together with OWEB. Did 2 webinars and had great attendance; communicated with many people that payments won't be held up if folks do not do the new process correctly. That will all be up and running and folks will be using the grants management system shortly. Have a new regional program representative in Region 5; Karen Leindecker has retired and Coby Menton (who was with the Grande Ronde Model Watershed) has been hired to fill this role. In the middle of hiring a new Focused Investment Partnership staff person. Have 11 FIPs around the state so this person will help with the management of those FIPs. New grant offering just went out yesterday; it is called the Partnership Technical Assistance grant. The grant supports strategic action plan development or updating, as well as partnership capacity to implement action plans. OWEB staff sent out a survey to grantees to gather diversity, equity and inclusion information about our grantees and who they are serving. Had about a 29% response rate. Will support diversity, equity and inclusion efforts in OWEB strategic plan. OWEB adopted a spending plan with a total of \$111 million for this biennium. Barbara Boyer and Jerry Ward thanked OWEB for the trainings and for the flexibility in working with SWCDs as they learn the new capacity grant process. Ken Bailey expressed appreciation for support for technical assistance capacity.

ODF - Ryan Gordon said that fire season has been better than expected so far this year. Continuing working agreement with NRCS; seeing a lot more engagement on the ground especially with the Environmental Quality Incentives Program. This has been great news, but has caused capacity shortages and has led to ODF investing in capacity to support the growing program on nonindustrial private forest lands. Also expanding our agreement with American Forest Foundation on landowner outreach and engagement activities. Have had some productive discussions about landscape-scale planning. Lots of discussion occurring as part of Governor's Wildfire Council. One of the subcommittees is looking at mitigation. State will sign a MOU with the US Forest Service next month related to shared stewardship. States are having more of a voice related to focus and priorities on federal forest lands and this has fostered more collaboration among state and federal natural resource agencies. Cultural resource surveys have been a challenge and staffing to conduct those surveys has held up a variety of EQIP projects. Ryan also mentioned the Emergency Forest Restoration program; signups are open until August 1st in Jackson and Josephine counties and also in Douglas and Wasco Counties. Also exploring making the program available for storm damage and drought in Lane, Lincoln, and other surrounding counties.

OSUExt – Sam Angima noted the 4H program has been going through a transition and conducted a needs assessment across the state. The program will provide staffing in every county that provides support to the program. OSU received about \$2 million for the biennium to conduct water-related assessments in the state; plan to use those dollars to hire a specialist to coordinate some research in the Klamath region, Harney County, Malheur County, Umatilla County, and Central Oregon. Research will be done and the data will be widely shared. In addition, on the Extension side, we will

be hiring an irrigation specialist - it's the first time we have had one in 20 years. Another area of focus will be nitrate leaching. OSU also received funding for statewide organic Extension work; we have not kept pace with the needs of the industry with the resources that we've had in the past. The College of Forestry received funding to work with communities across the state on fire resilience. OSU received Current Service level funding for the 19-21 biennium.

USDA NRCS – Jay Gibbs said the Farm Bill implementation continues; 2018 Farm Bill rules are coming into focus. Oregon NRCS has been very involved to help ensure that new Farm Bill policies will support the way Oregon does business. It has been helpful to have Ron Alvarado on the detail to DC to support this work. The funding for RCPP and ability to extend programs for 5 years has been very positive. It provides significant funding for the landscape scale. Also very pleased to have the funding for landscape-scale irrigation modernization and the ability to support large-scale piping projects. RCPP will also support more landscape scale forestry work to help with wildfire prevention. Farm Bill is also very focused on water, from source water protection to addressing nonpoint source pollution. Exciting possibilities related to merging of SIAs, RCCP and other work that implements regional priorities. Have been able to fill vacancies including state-level positions. Operating under a staffing cap; have a number of agreements in place with ODF, ODFW, intermountain joint venture and others. These agreements allow us to collaboratively put a lot of boots on the ground.

DEQ – Gene Foster said the Klamath temperature Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) was out for public comment which just closed a few days ago; working to address the public comments that were submitted. DEQ has court-ordered deadlines to meet related to several TMDLs and hopes to have the Klamath TMDL adopted in early September. Also talking with California about a variance to meet their water quality standard since the Klamath River crosses the state line. Lost River TMDL will also be difficult in that flows are very low at certain times of year. We have very little data for this watershed and to attain the temperature standard, have to identify flow targets. Response to comments will be a public document available on DEQ's web site. Willamette Basin Mercury TMDL is out for public comment currently. We had an advisory committee process and that TMDL went out for public comment on July 3; comment period will close the day after Labor Day. Must have an approved TMDL by the end of November which gives us a short time frame to respond to comments. As part of that TMDL, we have allocated mercury as a % reduction from current measured levels in the basin; have given some % reductions to air because air is one of the main sources of mercury to the basin. As a surrogate for meeting mercury loads instream, have a surrogate for total suspended solids (TSS); have done the analysis to show the relationship between total mercury and TSS. Court ordered DEQ to work with Northwest Environmental Advocates to develop time frames to complete a schedule to redo several other TMDLs. We will likely start in the Willamette Basin. Working on Yaquina and Coquille TMDLs as well. Temperature TMDL work will probably divert about half of our staff into redoing TMDLs. Continue to develop water quality status and trends reports for ag water quality plan biennial review process. As we have been working on this and talking with ODA staff, went through the process of expanding those to cover other Designated Management Agencies and not just agriculture. As we start producing these again, will look at water quality and the relationship with other lands (forest lands, urban lands) in addition to agriculture. For some status & trend reports, in addition to water quality data, we will have data for shade.

ODA – SWCD and Water Quality Update

John Byers and Stephanie Page provided an update on the recruitment process for several existing and upcoming vacancies, including John's position. We are exploring whether we can add another manager to the Natural Resources management team and provide a more sustainable learning curve for the person hired to replace John.

John also explained that he has adjusted the Regional Water Quality Specialist position territories slightly to allow Beth Pietrzak to spend more time in Klamath County and follow up on significant water quality improvement opportunities in the area.

Harney County SWCD has a vacancy on the board; the board tied in the voting for two possible candidates. ODA will be communicating with the County Commissioners regarding next steps.

ODA is re-doing our prioritization of small watersheds for Strategic Implementation Areas. This work will support development of long-term schedules for SIAs and help us discuss priorities with our partners.

Jason Eck has been promoted to a position in the Ag Water Quality Program and will continue to provide part-time support to the Field Burning Program.

ODA, Ag Land Use Update

Jim Johnson reported that Oregon is experiencing severe drought conditions in the NW corner of the state. In the rest of the state, conditions are better than they were last year, but we are seeing reservoir levels going down in several areas.

Jim provided a summary of the 2019 legislative session. Much of the land use discussions this session centered around affordable housing. Many of the UGB expansions that we have seen in recent years related to affordable housing. We will be monitoring implementation of both HB 2001 and HB 2003, which were aimed at increasing affordable housing.

Commission members discussed ag and conservation organizations' support for funding for the Ag Heritage Program and possible reasons why the program did not receive funding through the Legislative budgeting process for the 19-21 biennium.

SB 2 allows eastern Oregon counties to add up to 50 acres of commercial industrial zoned lands provided they conduct an analysis to show that it is needed. HB 2329 would remove the jurisdiction of the Energy Facility Siting Council for reviewing of large-scale solar energy projects and ODA has heard several concerns from stakeholders about it. HB 2469 allows an additional dwelling if it can be justified to support forest management. Another bill reduced the income required to meet dwelling requirements on cranberry farms.

A bill that would have allowed a second house on rural residential parcels did not pass in the Legislature. SB 287, which allows breweries on farmland similar to what is already allowed on wineries, passed. A bill to allow farm cafes did not pass.

HB 2436 would allow DSL to collaborate with other agencies to deal with federal regulations passed - it has not yet been signed by the Governor. Another bill increased insurance requirements for mass gatherings; another allows counties to use the conditional use approval process on mass gatherings.

HB 2322 would have amended Goal 13 (energy goal in Oregon's statewide planning goals) but did not pass. Cidery bill did not pass, nor did bill that would have allowed re-zoning of 200 acres for residential use on the east side.

Lake County Planning Commission recently denied two large-scale solar developments. The county determined that the loss of irrigated hayland would not be acceptable.

Jim provided an update on Oregon's hemp acreage; he is receiving lots of calls about hemp and land use issues as well as general inquiries related to hemp. He is also receiving calls about a recent CAFO permit application received by ODA. He has also been asked to think about things that

agriculture could do to be better prepared for wildfire, such as planting greenbelts in exchange for compensation.

ODA Administrative & Legislative Updates

Stephanie Page provided an update regarding ODA's budget and other legislation that will affect ODA that was introduced or passed during the 2019 Oregon Legislative Session. She also summarized the plans to recruit for upcoming manager vacancies within the Natural Resources & Pesticides Program Area.

SWCC Business

Jerry Ward was reappointed to serve a term of 4 years on the SWCC board. **Tim Kerns proposed Barbara Boyer serve as the Chairperson and Jerry Ward as the Vice Chair for this next year it was seconded and the board had a unanimous vote to confirm.**

Commission Member Reports

Ken Bailey - Ken recently attended a meeting of a toxics reduction group in the Columbia Basin.

Gary Jensen - East Lane SWCD is considering pursuing a tax base in the next election. They have been working with ODA and partner agencies on a SIA.

Barbara Boyer - Will be pulling together work group regarding SWCD Director qualifications; hope to have something together to report at the next meeting. East Multnomah SWCD Manager has left. Yamhill SWCD wrote a CIG grant to develop a carbon farming toolkit for the state of Oregon.

Selection of Chair and Vice Chair

Tim Kerns commented that Barbara is doing an outstanding job on the Board of Agriculture and recommended keeping her as the chair, with Jerry Ward as the Vice Chair. Jim Bob Collins seconded the motion. Jerry Ward commented that he agrees Barbara has done an outstanding job on the Board of Ag and OWEB and said he would be honored to serve as Vice Chair. **The motion passed unanimously.** Barbara thanked Tim Kerns for serving as Vice Chair for so many years.

The next Commission meeting will be Monday, November 4 in the afternoon at Eagle Crest. The following meeting will be January 14-15, 2020 in Salem. The April meeting will take place prior to Connect on April 13-14 at Sunriver, and the July meeting will be the 21-22 in Salem.

Newsletter Topics

Commission members identified the new strategic plan, work group on Director eligibility, Master Gardener program, legislative update, and hemp numbers as topics for the next newsletter.