



Soil and Water Conservation Commission Minutes

DATE	LOCATION	START TIME	END TIME
February 9, 2023	Clackamas Soil and Water Conservation District 22055 S Beaver Creek Road, Beaver Creek, Oregon	8:30 AM	12:30 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:

Marganne Allen, Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) and Water Quality Manager; Karin Stutzman, SWCD Program Lead; Sandi Hiatt, SWCD Grants Administrator; Renita McNaughtan, Administrative Specialist; Rob Hibbs, Water Quality Monitoring Specialist; Kevin Fenn (online), Compliance Lead; Maria Snodgrass (online), Regional Water Quality Specialist

ADVISORS:

Jan Lee, Executive Director Oregon Association of Conservation Districts (OACD)

Via Teams Online:

Courtney Shaff, Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB); Justin Dillon, Water Resources Department (WRD); Nathan Agalzoff, Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF); Gene Foster, Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ); Vanessa Green, Network of Watershed Councils (NOWC); Cory Owens, Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS)

VISITORS:

Holly Crosson, Benton SWCD; Tyler Clouse, Lincoln SWCD; Rhonda Black, Umpqua SWCD

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The regular quarterly commission meeting was called to order at 8:30AM by Chair Barbara Boyer on February 9, 2023.

APPROVAL OF NOVEMBER 2022 MEETING MINUTES

Draft minutes of the November 2, 2022, meeting was presented for approval. It was noted that the director that commented at the November meeting was speaking for himself and not for the Board. **A motion was made by Jerry Ward with the amendment. Seconded by Al Hrynshyn. Motion passed unanimously.**

AG WATER QUALITY PROGRAM AND LEGISLATIVE UPDATES

Karen Stutzman updated the Commission on current training - Eric Nusbaum began director trainings around the state and online. The five yearly legal requirements will be added into the capacity grant reporting for consistency in collecting and archiving beginning July 2023-25 biennium. (Five statutory requirements: Annual meeting with meeting notice requirements; Annual audit presented at the annual meeting; Annual report presented at annual meeting, which has an annual work plan and long-range plan.) Also discussed a 2023-2025 Ag WQ Support Grant from \$20 to \$149K to support voluntary ag water quality work meeting the goals of the ag water quality management area plans and Strategic Implementation Area (SIA) initiative. Proposed types are watershed assessments, technical assistance outreach and engagement, monitoring, and collaboration.

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Marganne Allen provided an update on the ODA-DEQ Memorandum of Agreement and noted that it has been signed. The MOA includes new TMDLs and has more expectations for implementation, monitoring; ODA-SWCD relationships are key; watch for Yaquina and Burnt/Powder TMDLs, which are in process. Also, WRD Integrated Water Resources Strategy update is on their website at www.oregon.gov/owrd/programs/planning/iwrs/pages/default.aspx. Public feedback will be coming up in fall of 2023. Justin Dillon of WRD indicated that they did receive a dedicated position to champion and coordinate the public engagement for the Water Resources Strategy update. Legislative update – we are tracking SB 775 and reviewing a few additional bills with possible impact to agriculture.

ADVISOR REPORTS

Cory Owens – EQIP will have a second wave of apps by April. New website, check boxes of what information you want to receive. Oregon NRCS, scroll to the bottom Local workgroups are happening now and you can find on the website. Inflation reduction act (IRA), 2023 will be ramp-up year and 2024-25 is when the real money is coming. It also comes with sideboards so it will be kept separate from the Farm Bill.

Courtney Shaff – OWEB board meeting last week of January. Conversations around 23-25 spending plan. Open solicitation funding proposed to be somewhat flat; continuing with COLA increase practice spending plan for councils and districts; OWEB's commitment to help with the state's contingency commitment to Klamath funding - OWEB is covering the states commitment for \$15 million of contingency funding for the Klamath dam removals; OWEB's funds will be used for restoration actions associated with that; around \$11 million of the 23-25 spending plan will be allocated to Klamath. Continuing practice of high-level overviews of both the council capacity program and FIP program. Adopted Division 5 rules, which cover all OWEB grant funds. Changed our match requirement rule - we can wave that rule and will adjust the metric requirements based on the grant requirements. Climate RAC is continuing and will be adding climate rules and stream live. March OR Ag Heritage Commission will be meeting March 16 to review applications and make funding recommendations that go to the board in April. There will be a fifth offering later in 2023 with more information about that coming out soon. OWEB has a soft roll out of accepting online payments with only a small group. So far, no bugs and have processed 20 payments, and will roll out to additional six grantees. Not certain when we will roll out to all. A group of OWEB staff working to simplify OWEB's applications and when they need to submit information to OWEB.

Jan Lee –SWCD board training – talked to Karin and scheduled time for OACD to talk to some people about our services. Met with senator Merkley's office about (ear marks) operational opportunities. Meeting every two weeks with Stan and we are following 42 bills with two that are important SB 530 – carbon sequestration program; would set up a statewide program and fund ODA, OWEB, ODF and others to carry out practices to promote carbon. HB2998 – soil health initiative that bill has \$2 million on grants and includes a partnership with SWCDs, OWEB, OSU, and ODA to carry out the program. Advocacy Committee welcomes anyone who would like to attend. Newsletter went out earlier this week. Water Resources Commission looking at the water integrated resources strategy. Rules will be coming out about groundwater. An audit prepared by the Secretary of State looking at water resources in Oregon. It looked at WRD and some of the coordinating natural resource agencies and water has been neglected for decades. Funding for the agency for work that needs to be done. Hopefully, it will drive the legislature to fund WRD.

Justin Dillon – several new positions, restructuring, and retirements, including Tom Byler (Director). Busy legislative session with about two dozen bills we are working on. New basin coordinator positions in Deschutes and Willamette Basins and have completed about ten months of work as far as stakeholder engagement and understanding and prioritize based on those basin projects and are moving to make recommendations based on three-year project timelines in both basins. Similarly, the department is actively looking to fill community engagement coordinators in North Central and Southwest regions. These positions liaison/engage to understand the water situation working with the public/communities to pursue solutions at the local level. Late last year the department went around the state and held virtual and in-person listening sessions on groundwater to help communicate the direction the department will be taking as well as received the public input. Big investments coming in WRD gauging infrastructure with ARPA funds (American Rescue Plan Act) – investing \$1 million to upgrade about 80 gauging stations across state. Data collection is a big part of

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informing future water availability. Another project with funding from the legislative, we are partnering with USGS on a statewide recharge study thru 2025. The goal is to help develop better groundwater budgets for all the state's basins and help understand the base flow regarding the amount of groundwater that makes up the surface water. The next WRD commission meeting will be hybrid with a virtual opportunity with more in-depth information. The Secretary of State's audit that came out had about 11 recommended actions that were highlighted in the report. With some of the recent funding, initiatives, and data collection, we are already taking steps to address some of the recommendations. Leadership is prioritizing and implementing some of those recommendations and strategies as we move forward.

Vanessa Green – provided an update as part of the Oregon Conservation Partnership – regular series of resources and services offered - affinity groups meet around once a month – estuaries and tide gates, working lands and easements, and pollinators. Also, webinars free and open to the public. A new webinar will feature Eric Hartstein (OWEB) and Grey Wolf (Dept of State Lands) they will be talking about new DSL Mitigation Plans, in late March. When that comes out, it can be found on our website as well as our listserv at ORCP.org (there is a button for joining our email list.) We had our last CONNECT conference last September, OCEAN will determine if they skip a year before holding another conference. Like OACD, we are watching a lot of bills. SB606 which focusing on complimentary funding for nonprofit organizations. Offering a series of webinars for watershed councils. Working on gathering a dataset over a 12-month window that will probably be the 2022 calendar year. So that we can have some good quantifiable data that cuts across the state so if someone asks how many miles of riparian habitat was restored across the state by watershed councils, we will have that number. So, we are working on the right set of questions to ask in the right way and we are going to be working on gather and analyzing and parceling that data. Continuing to improve our template library.

Nathan Azalgoff – noted that Ryan Gordon, who had been the advisor for ODF, moved to another position within ODF. Over the last year, ODF has undergone a reorganization to integrate the private forest program and other forest programs and work units to move to a more all lands approach. The Private Forest Accord was codified with a few bills last session primarily through SB 1501 - direction for the dept to stand up new programs as well as some other supporting bodies of work for tracking functions; in that was significant overhaul to the Oregon Forest Practices Act. The revisions and additions to the administrative rules are probably the biggest change seen to the Act in 50 years. Those revisions and additions are in support of application for habitat and conservation plans. In implementing the rules, the Board of Forestry voted to adopt the rules last October. ODF submitted to HCP in late December to provide regulatory certainty. Received just shy of \$6 million for Disaster relief package and recently executed an award for those funds.

Gene Foster – in the next month or so release of 319 grant proposal. Annual report that is due to EPA each year of the 319 non-point source program; it's a compilation of work that has been done by a variety of agencies not just DEQ. We are doing the internal pulling together of information and it will go out to the respective agencies. In the area of TMDLs, we are continuing to develop TMDLs as rules. The Willamette subbasin temperature TMDL, we are redoing because of a court order, and the Sandy temperature TMDL, also part of the court order, we had a webinar on January 31 about those TMDLs in development. We will be sending out materials that will be discussed to rules advisory committee are scheduled at end of February. Upper Yaquina TMDL will also be adopted as rule, we are planning a third rule advisory committee that has yet to be scheduled; probably early March. Moving forward on the Powder bacteria TMDL, will be conducting similar rules advisory committee for review of those materials. The Coquille dissolved oxygen, pH, temperature, and bacteria TMDL is in development and somewhat behind; will start conducting rules advisory committee in middle to late this year.

ODA AG WATER QUALITY PROGRAM MONITORING LEAD – INTRODUCTION AND ROLE

Rob Hibbs – introduced himself and shared his background. Stream monitoring is nonpoint source – there is no goal or intent to use the data for compliance. We must be honest, open, and transparent. Objectives of stream monitoring are baseline – monitoring status of conditions, effectiveness – monitoring to see change, and source – monitoring to confirm issue is/isn't ag. Monitoring is water column, vegetation assessments, number of livestock access points, number off-channel water access points, number of voluntary ag water irrigation management BMPs implemented, etc. SWCD Scope

of Work – much of it is narrative – can we change this to more fillable form pick list? Landscape/water uplift in Oregon – NRCS, CREP, SOW, SIA, OWRI, etc. - combine this data to help tell our story. The SIA observations need more emphasis on outreach; not fair to put full monitoring plan on SWCDs' back; objective of monitoring doesn't have to be effectiveness; Monitoring and SAP Plans need to be easier; The MAAG review needs to be switched to a collaboration. Rob suggested a new SIA approach with a new timeline, emphasis on uplift, outreach, and telling the ag story.

SWCC MEMBER REPORTS

Al Hrynshyn– Marion hired a new urban conservationist, recruiting a soil crop plans conservation planner, starting a conservation outreach program, and landowner assistance program. Howell-Prairie SIA is going well. East Multnomah – StreamCare program – developing a new long-term grants program and are looking to remodel their office. Clackamas are recruiting a conservation specialist and very impressed with the scope and depth of the WeedWise program. Upper Willamette – starting several grant programs; reinstating farmers market grants, which is very successful. Getting involved in the Makenzie River National Assistance program cleanup program works with people who don't fall within the guidelines of Holiday Fire recovery but will help individual landowners protect water quality going into the Makenzie. A Fuels Reduction Program, and working with private groups and watershed councils, getting tribal input. Recruiting for grant management specialist; looking into hiring a part-time HR person.

Tim Kerns – has no update.

Jerry Ward – thank you Karen, Marganne, Eric for working with the district in his area that was struggling. He has been doing a lot in his district, ten meetings on the strategic plan; and going through budget process.

Ken Bailey – updated on projects in Wasco County - Mosier water project has gone through two phases and is now in third phase with money allocated by the legislature and a grant from WRD. Currently out for bid for well drillers.

Underground storage project – in the middle of construction currently; district will be operator/owner of the system.

Stan Dean – New manager at Klamath, Illinois, and in selection process at Jackson for Randy White's position and he expects to be gone April 1. Randy wanted to still plant seeds by working together cross district boundaries – putting together a roadshow and has been to a couple of board meetings.

Barbara Boyer – asked Karin if she has been on the road lately and Karin relayed that she has some and will be going to the Director Trainings with Eric. Barbara asked if the commission is mentioned at the trainings? Karin said she could add some information to her talk during the lunch break. Barbara met Tyler from Lincoln at the last meeting and enjoyed talking with him. At the last commission meeting, we closed the chapter on ORS review and if anyone would like to start a group to let her know. Apparently, a group had been started, and she requested an update.

Whitney Collins reported that getting rid of the 10-acre requirement for zones. Then the senate bill was dumped in their lap, and they are not responsible for it. Discussion has been about the SB and responding. There is a population threshold. Using census data of the east/west split. Getting rid of zones is in it and no one can support it at all. Senator Fredricks. Just getting together about once a month. Anticipates based on what she has been told by others, she expects a HB also being brought forward. Terri Preeg Riggsby, Whitney Collins, Tom Straughan, Joel, Rick Jackston, Ken Bailey, Dean Moberg

PUBLIC COMMENT

No Public Comments

CALL FOR UPCOMING MEETING AGENDA ITEMS/NEWSLETTER CONTENT

- Rob Hibb's Report
- AgWQ 2023-25 Grant
- Highlight Advisors
- SWCD Probationary Steps

Agenda Items – May

- District Capacity Grant – Courtney - OWEB
- Parking Lot Items
- Strategic Plan
- Finalize Outstanding Reporting
- Probationary Steps
- Tour of Orchard View Farms, The Dalles

CAPACITY GRANTS WORK GROUP

Karin Stutzman – form a group to determine the minimum requirements. Will send out an email to districts and put together a group of seven or so people.

Chair Boyer reminded commission members to complete the forms that are in their folder.

WRAP UP AND ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 11:57AM.