



## Grant Soil and Water Conservation District

*Kenneth H. Delano Agricultural Service Center*

721 S. Canyon Blvd. - John Day, OR 97845 - Phone (541) 575-0135

### MINUTES OF GRANT SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT'S April 4, 2024 Meeting

#### Attendance

#### Directors Attending:

Roger Ediger – Director  
Phil St. Clair – Telephone

Pat Voigt – Director  
Joann Keerins - Telephone

#### Staff Attending:

Kyle Sullivan – District Manager  
Matt Wenick – Grant Weed Control Coordinator

Pat Holliday – Program Assistant

#### Visitors:

Trea Nance – OR Dept. Environmental Quality  
Jay Burrill  
Mark Webb  
Emma Gabriel – Farm Service Agency  
Didgette McCracken

Mandy Ondrick - OR Dept. Environmental Quality  
Amy Stiner - SFJD Watershed Council  
John Rowell – Grant County Commissioner  
Hannah Latzo - SFJD Watershed Council  
Chase Bloom – Malheur National Forest

#### ADMINISTRATION

1. Call Meeting to Order – Pat Voigt called the meeting to order at 4:00 pm.
2. Approval of Minutes – **Roger moved to approve the March 7th, 2024, meeting minutes. Phil gave the second with the motion passing unanimously.**
3. Introduction of Visitors – Pat welcomed the visitors attending.
4. Public Input – There was no public input.

#### REPORTS

5. NRCS – A representative was unable to attend.
6. FSA – Emma reported the John Day office will have a new employee, Kailey Heiple, beginning April 8<sup>th</sup>. Kailey will be traveling to Burns for training on Monday & Wednesday. Emma will be in the John Day office with Kailey on Tuesday and Thursday. Emma said she expects Kailey will be training for approximately six months. The office is wrapping up 2023 payments for the Livestock Forage Program (LFP) and the Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP). Signups are currently being taken for the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP).
7. South Fork John Day Watershed Council – Amy reported contractors are getting ready to get out in the field. The Council is interviewing for a watershed technician for the summer.

John Day Basin Partnership – Hannah Latzo reported the John Day Partnership will be holding a meeting in May. The Partnership recently submitted an application to the America the Beautiful Challenge. The Bark Culvert proposal will be resubmitted this fall.

Malheur Forest – Chase Bloom stated the 2024 Title II applications are due soon. Staff are continuing to work with

partners to complete agreements to accomplish this summer's work.

8. ODA – A representative was unable to attend.
9. Department of Environmental Quality – Trea gave a Power Point presentation on the John Day TMDLs Review and Updates. The presentation included a review of John Day TMDLs (Total Maximum Daily Loads), DMA Engagement (Designated Management Agency), and updates on the upcoming temperature TMDL revision. DEQ has identified several water quality concerns in the John Day Basin, including high temperature, bacteria levels, low oxygen concentrations and impaired biological conditions.

Trea reported the John Day DMA (Designated Management Agency) Pilot Project will consist of re-engaging DMAs with a collaborative approach in bi-monthly meetings. The goal is to have all DMAs up to date on Implementation Requirements. The DMAs include counties, National Forests, BLM, OR Dept. Agriculture, OR Dept. Forestry, OR Dept. Geology and Minerals, OR Dept. Parks and Recreation, OR Dept. State Lands, OR Dept. Transportation, OR Dept. Fish & Wildlife, utility corridors, and John Day and Prairie City.

The John Day Temperature TMDL is scheduled to be revised in April 2026. The TMDL is based in part on Natural Conditions Criterion. Until a revision is approved by EPS, the current Temperature TMDL will remain active. Bacteria, dissolved oxygen and biological criteria TMDLs are not being revised at this time and will remain active. Currently the TMDL revision is in the pre-development stage. Once the development process starts a Rule Advisory Committee will be formed along with a webpage with updates and a formal public comment period.

#### **DISTRICT PROGRAMS**

10. Grant Weed Control – Matt reported residual spray work is continuing on Grant and Wheeler County roadways. He expects to have the second right of way pickup in operation soon. This will enable Nate to also treat roadways. Grant Weed Control received nine applications for the 25% Cost-Share Grazing Lands Invasive Annual Grass Project. Six landowners signed up for annual grass treatment through NRCS. Matt reported he is working with NRCS regarding the possibility of obtaining a RCPP grant to accomplish annual grass treatments. A contract was recently signed with the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs to treat 1,200 acres on the Pine Creek Conservation Area for annual grasses.
11. District Programs – The Program Status Report was sent out in the Directors meeting packet. Kyle encouraged the Directors to contact him if they had any questions. Kyle reported materials are being gathered to rebuild the fence in the Black Butte Burn area on the Malheur Forest. Tyler has been contacting cities regarding conducting fire risk reduction ¼ mile around city limits. Tereasa is contacting landowners regarding participating in the Annual Grass Treatments this summer. Kyle has been working on the Request for Proposal for the airborne electromagnetic survey. The survey will complete an airborne electromagnetic method survey encompassing 258 square miles from the headwaters of the John Day River downstream. The data collected will produce a three-dimensional hydrogeologic framework model of the associated geology to forecast aquifer characteristics, groundwater flow paths and potential recharged zones, and calculate potential storage capacity. Kyle said the Request for Proposals will be out by next Friday with plans to have the helicopter flying in June. The District will outreach to the public with information regarding the helicopter survey. The range drill has been rented by three landowners recently.

#### **DISTRICT BUSINESS**

12. Regenerative Agriculture – Kyle reported he had been contacted by PollyLaps regarding if the District would be interested in working with their organization on a variety of programs involving regenerative agriculture. Kyle stated he was recently informed the group is focusing on croplands, so the District would not qualify to participate. Pat stated the information he read alarmed him, with Joann and Phil agreeing.
13. Update on John Day River TMDL and other DEQ activities in the Basin – Information on this item was included in Item 9, the Department of Environmental Quality report.

14. Other – Pat asked Jay and Didgette what interested them in potentially serving as a Director on the Grant SWCD Board. Jay replied he has seen the work the District has done in the past and is currently doing to assist landowners. Didgette stated she has been involved in agriculture her whole life and values groups working together to connect resources in the County. She appreciates what the District does for landowners and understands the need to get other people involved. Pat stated in the past the District’s claim to fame was its push-up dam removal program, however that funding is no longer available. The District has embraced a hilltop to hilltop restoration philosophy which provides different opportunities for landowners. He has always appreciated how the Directors can see outside of the box. He believes the District has a good future with its programs to assist landowners. He thanked Jay and Didgette for coming.


15. Other –

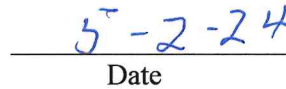
**FINANCIAL BUSINESS**

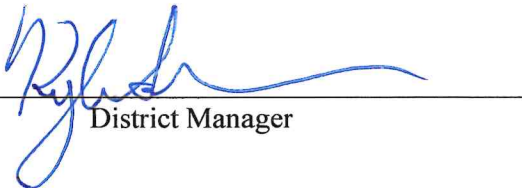
16. Financial Report/Financial Summary – Financial reports for the month of March 2024 were reviewed.

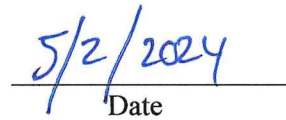
19. Approve Bills – **Roger moved to approve the bills and financial reports for the month of March 2024. Joann gave the second with the motion passing unanimously.**

The meeting was adjourned at 5:30 pm.

  
Board Chair

  
Date

  
District Manager

  
Date