



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
September 7, 2023 Meeting

Attendance

Directors Attending:

Roger Ediger – Director
Pat Voigt- Chairman
Joanne Keerins - Director

Phil St. Clair – Director
Rick Henslee – Director

Staff Attending:

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

Pat Holliday – Program Assistant

Visitors:

John Rowell – Grant County Commissioner
Aaron Roth – Natural Resources Conservation Service

Maria Snodgrass – OR Dept. Agriculture – via telephone
Jason Brandt – Deputy Forest Supervisor, Malheur Forest

ADMINISTRATION

1. Call Meeting to Order – Pat Voigt called the meeting to order at 4:00 pm.
2. Approval of Minutes – **Phil moved to approve the July 6th, 2023 meeting minutes. Roger gave the second with the motion passing unanimously.**
3. Introduction of Visitors – Pat introduced Jason Brandt, Deputy Forest Supervisor Malheur Forest.
4. Public Input – There was no public input.

REPORTS

5. NRCS – Aaron stated Natalie Wright will be joining the John Day Field office, starting on Sept. 25th. The staff is finalizing Joint Chiefs and RCPP applications. A contractor/landowner tour will be held on Oct 17th. The tour will provide information to landowners and contractors on NRCS's specifications and will include a site visit to recently treated forest stands. Aaron stated he believes a visual example of treated sites will be very beneficial to contractors and landowners. A recent Oregon Drought Monitor map was handed out. As of Sept. 5th, there were no areas in Oregon with D3 Extreme Drought conditions.
6. FSA – A representative was unable to attend.
7. South Fork John Day Watershed Council – Joanne reported the Murderers Creek Restoration Project was wrapping up. The Council will be putting out a call for volunteers to help with plantings on the project in October. Plans are moving forward with the design of the Widows Creek diversions. Discussion was held on the difficulty of obtaining permits for restoration projects.
8. Malheur Forest – Jason Brandt reported he comes to the Malheur from the Boise National Forest. The Malheur is in the process of holding public meetings for the assessment of the Blue Mts. Forest Plan. Currently the Forest is in a low fire danger rating in the northern part of the Forest and moderate in the southern part.
9. ODA – Maria provided a staffing update for ODA including the Ag Water Quality Program. She stated ODA will soon have funding available for on the ground implementation for projects within a SIA area. Bill Ryan, former Deputy Director of the Dept. of State Lands has been appointed OR Dept. Agriculture Acting Director.

DISTRICT PROGRAMS

10. Grant Weed Control – Matt reported broadleaf treatments are continuing on Bureau of Land Management, Ochoco and Malheur Forest, as well as for private landowners. The CWDG grant was signed in early August. Tyler and Tereasa did the majority of the landowner outreach for the Title II aerial annual grass treatments as well as for the 2023 CWDG applications. Plans are for Leading

Edge Aviation to begin aerial treatments on Sept. 5th. Matt stated there will be approximately 35,000 acres treated; including Title II, ODFW, Crook County and CWDG. Approximately 1,000 acres will have Telar included to treat Med sage and Yellow star thistle. Matt said he has noticed the moisture our area received in August led to early germination of some annual grasses. As a result, he has decided to include Plateau in the aerial applications. Plateau will treat the annual grasses that have already germinated. All the herbicide needed for the annual grass treatments has been delivered. Discussion followed on the annual grass treatment program. Matt reported Tereasa started working for the District on July 1st and it is great to have her back.

11. District Programs – Kyle stated the Program Status Report was included in the Board packet. The District recently received the ORWA Grant County Community Fire Assistance Program from the Bureau of Land Management. The grant will provide \$100,000 to support Firewise efforts in the county. Kyle will make a presentation to Grant County’s Natural Resource Advisory Committee on the District’s programs and provide information regarding the upcoming contactor and landowner tour NRCS is sponsoring. The District is working with ODFW to contract a fence in the Murderers Creek area. Layla Wenick has been hired through Grant Union’s Work Study Program, to transfer information from old floppy drives and non-digital photos for the District’s historical files.

DISTRICT BUSINESS

12. Annual Budget – Pat Holliday presented the District’s 2023-24 Annual Budget. She explained the various components of the budget.
13. ODA Tour – Kyle reported the District is working with Maria to host a Grant County tour for members of OR Department of Agriculture’s Natural Resource/Agricultural Water Quality Department and Dept. of Environmental Quality staff. They will visit Phil St. Clair’s property to show long term efforts to establish riparian vegetation in the South Fork area. The next day presentations will be made in John Day along with a site visit to the McGirr project plantings, followed by a visit to Monument SWCD. Kyle invited any Board members that wished to attend. Maria stated she would like to have dinner with any of the Directors or staff that would be interested.
14. Associate Board Member Recruitment – Kyle explained he would like the District to hold an Open House to introduce community members to the District in order to increase our Associate Director membership. It would be an opportunity to provide information on the District’s history and future plans as well as have current Board members speak on why they have chosen to serve as Directors. He suggested inviting two candidates from each of the three District zones. Pat V. stated he thought it was a great idea and the other Directors agreed. Several names were suggested to invite.
15. OACD Membership Dues – Kyle explained changes in how the OR Association of Conservation Districts (OACD) calculates its membership dues has resulted in the District paying a significant higher amount in dues. Discussion was held on the issue. Pat V. stated he felt the staff should make the decision on how best to deal with the issue.
16. ODA SIA Schedule – Kyle reported he has been asked by Maria if the District will be ready to provide support to agricultural landowners for an ODA Strategic Implementation Area (SIA) beginning in 2028. Pat V. stated he is frustrated with ODA and the SIA process and personally is not interested in participating in the SIA program. Roger stated he agrees 100% with Pat and expressed frustration with ODA. Rick said he feels the SIA process is being driven by DEQ. The District thought ODA would support agriculture, but has not, in fact they give the perception it is bad. Joanne agreed with Pat and Rick; however, she recalls that Focus Areas and SIAs were supposed to be an opportunity to show that agricultural land was not a problem. Phil said he has been involved in restoration and improving water quality on his agricultural land for years; serving as an original member of the Upper Mainstem and South Fork John Day River Local Advisory Committee. He feels the biological conditions in the water that passes thru his property have not changed in spite of the work he has done. He is tired of having agriculture be the cause of all water quality issues. Phil said he is still interested in staying in the process. Pat V. asked Maria for her input. Maria replied she heard that Grant SWCD does not want to participate in the SIA process. She stated several agencies support SIAs and they are not going to go away. SIAs have been shown to be successful in many areas and recently additional funding has been designated to implement restoration projects within the areas. She encouraged the Directors to participate in the October tour. The Directors and Maria agreed to continue the discussion.
17. Other –

FINANCIAL BUSINESS

18. Financial Report/Financial Summary – Financial reports for the month of July and August 2023 were reviewed.
19. Approve Bills – **Roger moved to approve the bills and financial reports for the months of July and August 2023. Phil gave the second with the motion passing unanimously.**

The meeting was adjourned a 5:45 pm.

Patrick Voigt

Board Chair

9-7-23

Date

[Signature]

District Manager

9-7-2023

Date