



Wheeler Soil and Water Conservation District

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Board of Directors
Meeting Minutes
May 30, 2024

Directors

Anna Thomas
Zach Bruce
Brent Johnson
Ross Ryno
Dave Hunt

Employees

Cassandra Newton
Ayla Morehouse
Brooke Moore
Kristen Neuburger
Maria Rey

Others Present

DelRae Ferguson, NRCS
Dan Son, ODA
Brandon Ferguson, ODF
Don Sietz

The board meeting was called to order by Vice Chair Thomas at 3:09 p.m. by the clock on the wall.

1. Staff and 3 directors attended the Grant SWCD Weed Control's Annual Grass Tour prior to the board meeting.

2. Yamhill & Curry SWCD Presentations

District managers from Yamhill and Curry counties presented on their experience with their respective SWCDs starting, administering and participating in non-profit organizations.

3. Agency Reports

a. Brandon, ODF

Brandon advised that his staff have been assisting with the Thirtymile forestry project. He stated that there is still approximately \$12k in landowner assistance funding available for Wheeler County. Brandon provided a staffing update for the Fossil office.

b. Dan Son, ODA

Dan advised of changes to the Oregon State Weed List. He also advised that there is an education and outreach grant opportunity available in August through the ODA Noxious Weed Program.

c. DelRae Ferguson, NRCS

DelRae advised that all livestock water and woven wire contracts have been obligated but waiting on cultural surveys, fence contracts have the notice to proceed, and she is currently focused on ranking the 22 CSP applications by June 7th. She advised that there were 3 forestry applications funded, but she has received funding to obligate 3-4 additional applications.

4. District Reports

a. District Manager, Cassi Newton

Cassi stated the only update not in her report is the cancellation of the second and third phases of the Butte Creek Riverscape project. She advised that the landowner chose not to proceed with additional designed phases, but monitoring will still occur for phase one.

b. Conservation Manager, Ayla Morehouse

Ayla stated that she attended a lot of trainings during the month and has prepared some site visits for potential grants. She advised that she is currently working on an OWRD irrigation grant due in July.

c. Conservation Technician II, Brooke Moore

Meeting Location: Fire Hall in Spray, Oregon

To Join from a computer or smartphone:

<https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/954414701> (Contact the office for meeting password)

To dial in using a phone:

(571) 317-3122 (Access Code: 954-414-701)

Brooke advised that she was out of the office due to childcare and family emergency. She stated that she spent a lot of time on BPA reporting and statement of work for the renewal that has 22 contracts currently. Brooke provided an update on the difficulties surrounding the CR process for CREP.

d. Conservation Technician I, Kristen Neuburger

Kristen advised that she will be doing various test plots with different herbicide treatments on Scotch thistle and Whitetop, as well as up to 4-acre Rejuvra plots per landowner. She stated that she spent the majority of the month in the field again conducting noxious weed treatments BLM, 3WP, and ODA, as well as independent treatments.

e. Office Assistant, Maria Rey

Maria stated that she has continued digitizing archived financial documents. She advised that she assisted Brooke with flagging juniper.

5. Monthly Business

a. Review and approve minutes

i. April 25, 2024 regular minutes

‡Motion made by Director Johnson to approve the board meeting minutes from April 25, 2024, Director Ryno seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

b. Review and approve financial reports

i. May

‡Motion made by Director Hunt to approve the financial report for May, Director Johnson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

c. Review and approve Accounts Payable

i. May 22, 2024

ii. May 30, 2024

‡Motion made by Director Hunt to approve the check registers from May 22, 2024 and May 30, 2024 as presented, Director Bruce seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

6. Upcoming Meetings & Events

a. Staff Meeting, every Monday

b. May

i. 15th JD Basin Partnership Meeting, 9am

ii. 27th Memorial Day – OFFICE CLOSED

iii. 30th Wheeler SWCD Board Meeting, 6pm

c. June

i. 5th JDB Coordination Meeting, 9am

ii. 27th Wheeler SWCD Board Meeting, 6pm

d. July

i. 11th Wheeler SWCD Forestry Tour, 8am

ii. NO SWCD BOARD MEETING

7. Upcoming Deadlines

a. May

i. 21st WaterSMART Planning/Design Application

b. June

i. 30th Annual Budget

ii. 30th Annual Work Plan

c. July

i. 2nd RCPP Applications

ii. 9th WaterSMART Water Efficiency App.

iii. 10th OWRD Irrigation Applications

8. District Management

a. Annual Budget

Cassi presented the 2024-2025 budget.

‡**Motion** made by Director Johnson to adopt the 2024-2025 Annual Budget as presented, Director Ryno seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

b. District Vehicles

Cassi advised that staff have endured difficulties with scheduling meetings, field work, and District business in the recent months since conducting weed treatment applications. She explained that this is the first field season of having a licensed applicator on staff and funding available to conduct treatments with District equipment, which has proven to have a learning curve.

Cassi stated that staff are having to use their personal vehicles often and she recommended the Board consider the purchase of a vehicle to be dedicated to the Weed Program. She explained that Kristen continues to receive interest from landowners needing applications and the Weed Program is anticipated to continue to grow at the same pace for the foreseeable future, which signifies that a vehicle would have a quick return on investment. The Board agreed and asked Cassi to look into state bid and surplus options, as well as private.

c. Property

i. WIG Status

Cassi advised of the following updates pertaining to the Wood Innovation Grant and property/facility:

- 100% Construction Design Packet
- Forest to Facility Story Map and Carbon Science grant submitted
- Sen. Merkley Townhall / CDS funding update
- ODOT Permit update
- Material sourcing and mill specifications meeting
- Property maintenance

9. Legislation

a. none

10. Projects/Programs

a. NRCS/SNW – RCPP

b. NRCS/Grant RCPP

Cassi advised that there were some significant changes to the application over the past month and it was decided to separate the forestry and annual grass treatments. She stated that the District will take the lead as the applicant on the forestry application for Waterman, but the annual grass treatments will be a separate application with Grant SWCD taking the lead as applicant. Cassi explained that the annual grass treatment will

include both Grant and Wheeler counties as the project area with priority areas mapped for both herbicide treatments and seeding.

c. USFS Mitchell Springs

Cassi stated that she has handed this project off to Ayla to take the lead. She advised that she will still be involved from the standpoint of LJDWG partnerships, but Ayla will proceed with project planning and coordination. Cassi stated the only update at this time is a site visit schedule in June.

d. HB2010 Juniper Removal

Cassi stated that there is no update at this time for the HB2010 funding due to still waiting on specifications from Mercer Mass Timber.

e. BLM – Priest Hole Restoration

Cassi stated the final design is due June 10th and she will proceed with a bid solicitation following receipt of the stamped design. She advised that BLM is working on allocating additional construction and restoration funding to the project due to the increased design cost.

11. Partners

a. none

12. Business Not Listed

a. none

Next Meeting June 27, 2024

The board meeting was adjourned by Vice Chair Thomas at 4:04 p.m. by the clock on the wall.

Respectfully submitted by Cassandra Newton



Anna Thomas, Vice Chair



Cassandra Newton, District Manager