

Minutes of the meeting for the South Fork John Day River Watershed Council

The South Fork John Day River Watershed Council met on the 12th day of August 2019.

The meeting was called to order at 1:07 pm, by Joanne Keerins at the Izee Schoolhouse in Izee, Oregon.

In attendance for regular session:

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| Phil St. Clair, Vice Chair | Joanne Keerins, Chair | Richard and Vicki Nelson | Scott Hess | M.T. Anderson | Jack Vaughn, ODFW PWSWA |
| Kyle Sullivan, Grant SWCD | Maria Snodgress, ODA | Amy Stiner, SFJDWC | Hannah Latzo, SFJDWC | | |

Quorum was present because there are currently 8 directors on the board and 5 were represented at this meeting.

I. Agency Reports

- a. Maria Snodgress, Oregon Department of Agriculture, Ag Water Quality Program Update. Maria updated the Council on ODA's compliance program. Richard asked what the most common infractions were, Maria listed stream side vegetation issues, and manure entering streams, and the importance of preventing streamside soil erosion. If ODA must issue a notice of non-compliance, the landowner is no longer eligible for grant funding. ODA starts with water quality advisory notice, giving the landowner the opportunity to apply for grant funding. Maria gave a background on the Strategic Implementation Areas, (SIA) which is a compliance program which assesses ag lands. ODA holds an open house, to inform landowners about what they saw during analysis, and to inform every one of the area rules, and compliance rules. There will be 6-9 SIAs per year for this current biennium. OWEB has promised funding for each SIA, \$100,000 to SWCD for technical assistance, and \$25,000 in monitoring. Watershed Councils can work with SWCDs with this funding. The good news about this program is that ODA has data to tell ag's story. As an example, out of 247 tax lots, ODA found 7 areas of interest or areas to make improvements. Learning that not all ag is causing problems. Maria let the Council know that ODA is possibly looking at the Upper Mainstem/South Fork John Day for a possible SIA location in 2022 or 2023. Richard asked if it would possible to see a pre-SIA evaluation, or actions that landowners could begin now, to prepare to be more compliant. Maria advised that landowners make sure streamside veg allowed to grow, actions that are not required, but commonly used are; hardened water crossings, riparian fences, and riparian planting.
- b. Jack Vaughn, ODFW Phillip W. Schneider Wildlife Area: working on filling 2 vacant positions, tech position and supervisor position. The technician should be working by next meeting. Flat Creek project: OWRD asking remove app for historic POD change, must go through different route to move POD.
- c. Kyle Sullivan, Grant SWCD District Manager: in-stream projects on hold, working through permitting issues. RCPP in year 2 of 5, planning OWEB applications this cycle for match. Researcher from WSU to apply computer models to model juniper removal/thinning pine effects on water quantities in stream. Teresa Perkins is working on CREP, and Matt is killing weeds.
 - i. The Council discussed Jason's directorship: based on intermittency, and half-time status, may be better to change to Kyle as Director. Talked about associate director option. The topic was tabled for the next meeting, Amy will discuss with Kyle.

II. Action Items

- a. July Meeting Minutes: Phil moved to approve, Richard 2nd, vote passed
- b. July Staff Time: Phil moved to approve, Richard 2nd, vote passed
- c. Staff Check Requests: Phil moved to approve, M.T. 2nd, vote passed
- d. Contract with Brad Browning for Big Flat Juniper Removal: Joanne Keerins Abstained, M.T. moved to approve, Phil 2nd, all present voted in favor, electronic vote will be requested.
- e. Payment to Ash Creek Forest Management for Reed Canary Treatment: Phil St. Clair and Richard Nelson abstained, M.T. moved to approve, Scott Hess 2nd. All present voted in favor; electronic vote will be requested.

III. Staff Report

a. Open Projects

- i. Bark Data Collection – Hannah is continuing data collection for the Bark project area. There have been 2 field trips to the project area to discuss; fish and wildlife habitat, vegetation, and roads.
- ii. Upper South Fork Riparian Re-vegetation: Ash Creek completed Reed Canary spraying, getting a good kill. We followed up the next week with the Youth Crew to mulch the plants, plant cuttings, and manage BDAs. I have placed an order for additional posts to complete BDAs, Hannah and I will make these adjustments after getting the posts.
- iii. Big Flat Juniper removal – Brad Browning came in the lowest bid at \$210/acre to cut and pile.
- iv. Rosebud Allotment Enhancements – Spring protection with tree felling has been completed by the Forest Service, and Brad Browning will be constructing the buck and pole fence. Spring developed last year did a good job holding cows in the uplands this year.
- v. Izee Allotment, Alder Spring development. Todd Smith will be installing this development this late Summer/Fall. Check on water trough
- vi. Murderers Creek Upland Water – Todd Smith will be installing these developments.
- vii. Tex Creek Design – Tetra Tech has completed the 30% design plans, we will be meeting on August 21st to review BPA comments and plan to quickly move to 60% designs, which will be enough for a Fall OWEB application. M.T. doesn't feel it's degraded and will be a waste of public money. The entire riparian is already fenced, and we should wait and see if fence will fix it. Amy explained that the goal is to extend the period of water to allow smolts to out-migrate. The Council would like to hear from ODFW partners promoting the project. Concern was expressed that until the Forest addresses vegetation issues in the headwaters, it is unlikely we will see more water in Tex ck.
 1. The Council would like to wait for 60% design to decide on go or no-go for a Fall OWEB application. If cost is low, they may be willing to consider it, but if the costs exceeds \$50,000 or 60,000, maybe not. Scott moved that we wait for 60% design and more info from ODFW, Richard 2nd 4 voted in favor, 1 opposed.

b. Grant Applications

- i. Fall OWEB plans:
 1. Izee Ranch – Caribou Aspen, to compliment NRCS EQIP work, Amy will set up a site visit with Izee Ranch
 2. Richard asked that in anticipation of SIAs that we investigate fixing un-hardened water gaps.
 3. Corral Creek Enhancements – Amy will set up a site visit with Izee Ranch
 4. Keerins Aspen enhancements – compliment NRCS EQIP work, Amy will set a site visit
 5. Tex Creek Passage Barrier Improvements – postpone
 6. Murderers Creek Ranch Riparian Enhancements – Directors discussed the inefficiency of hauling juniper in and wondered what is wrong with the creek to warrant costly restoration, and what is the end goal. ODFW and BOR did move the fencing to only incorporate a 35-foot buffer fence. Directors expressed concern over the juniper not staying anchored and ending up piled at the mouth of the creek. The Council expressed that it is paramount to have permittee buy in, most of the Council Directors are also public lands permittees. Amy will follow up with the permittee and request ODFW to provide more information. The Council wants to maintain a partnership with the permittee as well as ODFW. The Council would also like to postpone sponsoring this project until more information is obtained.
- ii. Small Grant Application Plans:
 1. Spring Creek water development
 2. Tobin River Fence
- iii. NRCS Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP): correspondence with Jay Gibbs – released late summer/early fall. Amy will loop in Aaron Roth, new District Conservationist.

c. Partnerships/education/outreach

- i. Submitted the John Day Basin Partnership's FIP Implementation Capacity Grant Application for about \$390,000.
- ii. Amy continues to serve on the JDBP Steering Committee, and Hannah will participate in the JDBP Outreach committee, both being covered with funding.

- iii. ODFW & BLM field trip to look at a Ventanata study with OSU

IV. Discussion

- a. Wild Horse Scoping Letter
 - i. M.T. has drafted a letter of comment, and strongly encouraged others to also submit letters. He shared areas of the scoping package that show inconsistencies around genetic monitoring, protecting steelhead habitat, and restrictions on cattle movement.
- b. Vehicle update: Amy has completed the paperwork to qualify the Council to have the option to purchase State Surplus property and is waiting on a favorable vehicle to come available.
- c. Taxes: The Council's fiscal year ended June 30th, and taxes are due within 6 months. Amy is working through this process.

V. Coming Up

- a. August 19th, Small Grant Team Meeting
- b. August 20th, John Day Basin Partnership Meeting
- c. August 28th, OWEB training, Pendleton
- d. September 2nd, Labor Day, SFJDWC Offices Closed

VI. Joanne adjourned at 3:45, Next meeting date: Monday, September 9th, 2019.

DRAFT