

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

The South Fork John Day River Watershed Council met on the 13th day of July 2020.

The meeting was called to order at 1:00 pm, by Joanne Keerins, at the Izee Schoolhouse.

In attendance for regular session:

Amy Stiner, SFJDWC	Hannah Latz, SFJDWC	Jeff Maben, Director	Russ Powell, Director, ODFW	Pam Powell, Alternate Director, ODFW	Mike Keerins, Alternate Director
Joanne Keerins, Chair	Phil St. Clair, Vice Chair	Aaron Roth, NRCS	Jay Gibbs, NRCS	Kacee Lathrop, NRCS	M.T. Anderson, Director
Amy Charette, Director, CTWSRO	Richard Nelson, Director				

Quorum was present because there are currently 8 directors on the board and 7 were represented at this meeting.

I. Agency Reports

- a. Amy Charette, Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs: They are back to work, and busy catching up on projects.
- b. Russ Powell: They just did the final inspection on the Wind creek fence, completing that riparian fence. Dan's and Orange creek fences will be started within the month. Just about half mile up on both fences. The Directors questioned if those fences were at the request of the permittee, and who was sponsoring these? They were at the request of the permittee, and Russ is working with BPA, OWEB, and Grant SWCD to fund the fences.
- c. NRCS: Aaron let everyone know we are working on getting the agreement put together and waiting on the portal to come online to finalize. Hannah is working on a postcard for outreach to landowners within watershed boundary. We will have to play by ear for outreach events, may need to just do one on one.

We will be working on screening and ranking criteria for different applications. Hoping to get out this fall to look at projects. For Juniper removal will look at leave patches around cuts for wildlife areas. Not leaving as many shade trees. Have wildlife bio come over and see what will work. Phil asked about the old growth juniper rules. We will leave old growth.

The Practices associated with funding include Juniper: brush management, spring developments, weed control in conjunction with other projects, solar wells, cross fencing, and grazing management. We avoided irrigation. M.T.: forest thinning same as offering through EQIP? Yes. M.T. asked if there was opportunity for hardened water crossings? Not with this RCPP. Possibly dove tail with OWEB funding. Phil: sagebrush control? Brush beat or spray? Discouraged due to sage grouse. Mike: controlled burn? No. Range seeding? Yes, look for juniper control sites that need re-seeding.

Jay Gibbs wanted to congratulate the Council on their success. A year ago, we were kicking around ideas, here a year later, with \$1.7M. He suggested that we keep our focus on the key practices that we listed. Nice thing about RCPP this round, is it is renewable. More time with NRCS and SFJDWC, in implementation, think about what is next, and how to renew. Focus on main resource concerns, while also inventorying and planning for possible renewal application. 5-year agreement, year 1 = agreement. Years 2-3-4 implementation, then renewal. Question: If we reapply, need to have 50% match? Yes. COVID throwing applicants with OWEB, NRCS is

understanding of this situation. PCSRF funding for match? No. RCPP on BLM? No, but encourage leveraging OWEB or ODFW for those grounds. M.T.: when can we start? Does it run through SFJDWC or just go into NRCS? In the end NRCS has the final say, and you will sign an agreement with NRCS, but SFJDWC can assist in prepping applications, and provide Technical assistance on applicable projects. SFJDWC can begin touring desired project areas with landowners now. We are planning to have AGI requirements waived, through a Programmatic AGI waiver request. NRCS encouraged interested landowners to work with SFJDWC staff to narrow down practices with landowners, and for landowners to have a good idea of what you want to do and where you want to go. M.T. asked if spring developments could apply that are beyond the life of the equipment and completely non-functioning? Yes, funds can be used to revamp these. This RCPP funding cannot be used toward areas where EQIP or NRCS funding has been used before. We will be looking down river and outreaching to Lower South Fork landowners, trying to spread the wealth across watershed. If each landowner receives a \$50,000 project, with about \$1.4M available for on the groundwork, this equates to about 28 contracts. Multiple applications will be allowed, if we receive no interest in Lower South Fork, we can allocate funding to more projects in the Upper South Fork. We are looking at a Upper South Fork priority area for year 1, then sign up in year 2 for LSF after outreach. M.T.: thanked Jay, for coming out and visiting with us last year, encouraging that we apply for RCPP. Jay, said that the Council really has a neat story, 5-6 years ago our capacity was just building, and we weren't quite ready yet, but with focus and prioritization here we are with \$1.7M.

II. Action Items

- a. June Meeting Minutes: Phil moved to approve, Jeff 2nd, motion passed
- b. June Staff Time: Phil moved to approve, Russ 2nd, motion passed
- c. Staff Reimbursement Request: Phil moved to approve, Jeff 2nd, motion passed.
- d. OWEB Grant Agreements:
 - i. Murderers Creek Ranch, Phil moved to approve, Jeff 2nd, motion passed
 - ii. Tex Creek Restoration: Phil moved to approve, Jeff 2nd, 6 voted in favor, 1 opposed, motion passed
 - iii. Brisbois Aspen: Joanne refrained, Phil moved to approve, Jeff 2nd, motion passed
- e. DEQ 319 Grant Agreement: Phil refrained, Jeff motioned, Russ 2nd, motion passed
- f. Brisbois Aspen Landowner Agreement: M.T. moved to accept as presented, Phil 2nd, motion passed, Joanne refrained

Russ asked in general who's responsible for maintenance for these projects? Maintenance fall on the landowners, that's where landowner agreements come in.

III. Staff Report

- a. Financial Update: In our July 1st to June 30th fiscal year we have brought in \$705,121.04 and spent \$672,786.46, and currently have \$32,334.58 in our general fund. In our salaries line item of all open projects we have enough funding at this point to keep current staff for 2.5 years, and if we add our administrative fees to this we could have just over 3 years of funding available.
- b. Open Projects
 - i. OWEB Update: At the June meeting, the OWEB Board rebalanced its spending plan to adjust for reduced revenues caused by the video lottery shutdown. Using the rebalanced spending plan as a basis, they awarded grants from the fall 2019 open solicitation applications and held some funding for future open solicitation grant cycles.

The Board will make future funding decisions based on quarterly lottery disbursements. While future revenues remain uncertain, it is our hope that we will have sufficient funds for the Board to award one additional open solicitation grant cycle this biennium in March 2021 for the restoration, technical assistance, and stakeholder engagement applications received on July 27.

They plan to review and evaluate the July applications by conducting virtual site visits this summer and virtual regional review team meetings in the fall to be prepared for a March 2021 award date.

At this time, they do not have prospective dates for future solicitations beyond the July 27 due date, but will share timelines with you as soon as we have them

- ii. Rockpile Ranch Enhancements: Grant funds have officially been awarded, we are all set up in the Grant Solutions system, and we are allowed to begin, starting with NEPA and cultural compliance. PFW added on \$5000, making the award total just over \$190K.

- iii. Snow Mountain Ranch Restoration: landowner cost share portion is complete, and we are working on the project completion report.
 - iv. Izee Allotment: complete
 - v. Murderers Ck Springs: 4 of 7 complete
 - vi. LiDAR Acquisition: August flight
 - vii. Bark Surveys: started surveying 2 weeks ago, almost done with all Bark area, just couple sections in lower Deer ck, end of season all of bark area completed. Phil asked if there is a replacement for Rosie? Believe Cody Lund is new fish bio. Phil asked if there was interest in addressing passage barriers. Not that we know at this time.
 - viii. Status Reports: Sheep Creek, Bunton Aspen, Poison Creek Fence, and Elk lot, Pole Canyon, Muddy Horse, and Poison Creek Water Developments
- c. Grant Applications
- i. OWEB – deadline July 27th
 - 1. Smokey Creek Restoration
 - 2. Lewis Creek Watershed Health
 - 3. Rosebud Watershed Health
 - 4. Grouse Creek Restoration
 - 5. Stakeholder Engagement
 - ii. OWEB Small Grants –
 - 1. Sawtooth: Complete
 - 2. Tobin's: almost complete
 - iii. Pending Projects
 - 1. Conner Creek: Latshaw's native plant establishment, Juniper control, industrial garden & watering system
- d. Partnerships/education/outreach/trainings
- i. Sheep Creek Restoration Site Visit: Wednesday the 22nd, meet at Izee Schoolhouse at 10:00. 10-3. Head out to sheep ck, aspen, springs, and juniper cuts, new landowners for restoration in basin, come back for lunch and discussion.

IV. Discussion

- a. Tax Preparation: M.T. moved that the watershed council has taxes handled through Solutions CPA's in John Day, Phil 2nd, motion passed
- b. Phil asked about the Dove project status on the Emigrant Creek Ranger District, and if it would be possible to invite them out to a meeting.

V. Coming Up

- a. 7/22/2020: Sheep Creek Restoration Site Visit
- b. 8/25/2020: John Day Basin Partnership Meeting

I. Joanne adjourned at 2:45, Next meeting date: Monday, August 10th 2020