

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

The South Fork John Day River Watershed Council met on the 8th day of February 2021.

The meeting was called to order at 1:05 pm, by Joanne Keerins, at the Izee Schoolhouse.

In attendance for regular session:

Amy Stiner, SFJDWC	Hannah Latzo, SFJDWC	Joanne Keerins, Chair	Phil St. Clair, Vice Chair	Jeff Maben, Director	Aaron Roth, NRCS (phone)
Mike Keerins, Keerins Ranch	Scott Hess, Director (Phone)	Micah Wilson, Alternate Director	Jim Dovenberg, Widows Creek Ranch (phone)	Matt Wenick, Grant SWCD Weed Control	Nate Hughes, Grant SWCD Weed Control
MaryLou Welby, Malheur National Forest (phone)					

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

I. Agency Reports

- a. **Aaron Roth, NRCS:** Local Work Group Zoom meetings next week, February 16th – Cropland/Pasture, 17th - Range, & 18th - Forestry. This is NRCS's opportunity to get input from producers and partners and help prioritize where to work in coming years. CSP classic deadline coming up March 25th. EQIP RCPP Deadline April 16th, 2021.
- b. **Matt Wenick, Grant SWCD Weed Control,** Discussion on annual grass control. They have only found small patches Ventanata/medusahead in Izee country. Seed source coming in on Deer/elk. There are new herbicide control options, with a longer work window. Grant SWCD does have a spreader if anyone wants to put down granular Open Range G. They are working with the Phillip W. Schneider Wildlife Area, and a couple of neighboring landowners to treat about 3000 acres of annual grass. They have started testing a new herbicide called Rejuvra, which does have a grazing label, and may provide 3-5 years of control. They have put in test plots on the Wildlife Area with Rejuvra and will monitor different seeding timing and techniques. The Wildlife Area is working hard to treat and control, trying to learn best long-term technique. Matt put out about 3000 acres of Rejuvra last year. They have an opportunity right now for 25% cost share for landowners to treat annual grasses. Matt will visit the sites selected to determine the best treatment plan. Each landowner can sign up for up to \$10,000 in treatment. Matt estimated the cost for treatment to be around \$7000/100 acres. Producers will see their money's worth with the amount gained in forage.

Matt wanted to make sure landowners know he is willing and able to visit their sites, and offer advice, and help with a management plan.

Question: With Annual grass herbicide, what is the season of application? With Rejuvra = end of July. Plateau = September/early fall before rain. Rejuvra stable in soil for up to 2 months.

A lot of products for annual grasses, nobody has end all answer right now, Matt prefers to go look and make recommendation based on experiences.

Question: Has Matt been able to work with the BLM/FS? They do have tougher restrictions, but Matt has been able to work with Jesse Brunson, who is working toward being able to do test plots. Annual grass control is a priority for her.

Matt has another weed treatment opportunity open; 50/50 cost share for any listed noxious weed. 1st come 1st served to treat up to \$5000.

Question: Any New biocontrol Options? New one for Yellowstar they are hoping to be able to release this year. There may be one coming for Houndstongue coming soon.

- c. **MaryLou Welby, Malheur National Forest, Blue Mtn Ranger District Hydrologist:** She appreciates all the work for last few field seasons collecting data. The Fluvial geomorphologist report led her to call Janine Castro, Geomorphologist from Portland State University, and these reports have validated her thinking. She is getting a handle on watershed processes that have given us the issues in watershed. She thinks they will be proposing relatively straightforward strategies for BARK. Would like to put together draft WRAP that would span multiple decades, that the Council can work toward. We are on the downhill pull for Bark data collection, few loose ends/locations, GDE sampling, hoping to get seeps/springs sampled, may need to look at some intermittent springs. Anticipate a Bark decision sometime in 2023.

(make sure Jesse is on listserv)

II. Action Items

- a. Staff Reimbursement Request: Phil moved to approve, Jeff 2nd, motion passed.
- b. January Meeting Minutes: Micah moved to approve, Jeff 2nd, motion passed.
- c. January Staff Time: Phil moved to approve, Jeff 2nd, motion passed.
- d. RCPP Supplemental Agreement Confidentiality Agreement: Phil moved to approve, Jeff 2nd, motion passed.

III. Staff Report

- a. Completed Council Capacity Application for the next biennium (2021-2023), and Extended the deadline for our current capacity to December 31st, 2021. We will have an overlap in our capacity funding, this is due to the Payroll Protection Program funding that we received.
- b. Upcoming OWEB applications
 - i. Mussel Monitoring in Murderers Creek
 - ii. Caribou Aspen Health on Izee Ranch
 - iii. Rosebud riparian health on Rocking 9 Ranch
 - iv. Sunflower Allotment Upland Health on Ochoco National Forest
 - v. BLM fencing after South Fork Fire
- c. Landscape Scale Restoration Kickoff – SFJDWC will be responsible for:
 - i. Education/Outreach/field trips
 - ii. Forest Restoration Action Plan
 - iii. Monitoring
- d. RCPP timeline
 - i. Applications are due April 16th.
 - ii. scoring, ranking, funding decision Mid May
 - iii. Landowner contracts June-July
 - iv. Cultural Resource Clearances
 - v. Landowners must have a signed Contract and Cultural Resource Clearance before any work occurs, if work begins prior to either of these the funding will be withdrawn.

IV. Discussion

- a. We discussed hiring a seasonal employee and subsequent vehicle purchase for the 2021 field season. If the Murderers Creek Ranch in-stream project moves forward this summer, we will need extra help getting all of our other duties complete. If it does not happen this summer, Hannah and Amy should be able to do all that needs to be done. Phil moved to give Amy authority to bring on a seasonal employee, and purchase another vehicle if the need arises, Jeff 2nd, motion passed.
- b. Letter of support for SB 21, requiring the ODFW Phillip W. Schneider Wildlife Area to prioritize treatment of their annual grasses. Phil moved that the Council provide a letter in support of SB 21, Micah 2nd, motion passed.
- c. Phil commended Council staff on the annual report and found it helpful to track the year's efforts.

V. Coming Up

- a. OWEB Spring 2021 Grant Cycle: April 26, 2021
- b. February 16-18th NRCS Grant County Local Work Group Meeting, Virtual listening sessions
- c. February 22nd Part 107 Exam
- d. March 10th OWEB Meeting

- I. **Joanne adjourned at 2:41 pm, Next meeting date: Monday March 8th, 2021.**