

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 October 2021.

The meeting was called to order at 1:10 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	Richard Nelson, Director
Scott Hess, Director	MaryLou Welby, USFS Blue Mtn Ranger District	Jim Dovenberg, Landowner		

Quorum was not present because there are currently 8 directors on the board and 4 were represented at this meeting. Electronic Vote will be conducted for Action Items.

1. Agency Reports

- a. MaryLou Welby, Malheur National Forest Service: In late August, she had a tour of the Bark Project area with the National Resources Stream and Aquatic Center. This is 1 of 2 national teams that deals with water and aquatic issues. Present was a Fluvial Geomorphologist, Hydrologist/Engineer. They were looking at solutions for restoration in Bark. Determined that Murderers Ck, SF Murderers, and Deer are 3 separate systems. MaryLou has been puzzled about what was going on in these watersheds, and all this data and input is allowing her to make sense on what is going on. They need to pay attention to entire system, top to bottom. Bark veg treatments may need to skid through RHCAs. In order to do this they needed to have better understanding of the streams. Improving stands along major roads, treating fuels, making ingress and egress routes safer. Council's support has really helped work through all of this, through field work, data collection, and tours. Phil: are all the data collections lining up with same sort of recommendations and insights? MLW: yes, with most recent was able to jump it up in scale. Phil: funding for treatment recommendations? MLW: yes, would expect to work with Council to look for funding sources. The Forest has money in different pools, but can't guarantee how these funds are delegated, no CFLRP in Bark. Need Regional Office support, and they know of funding sources. Phil: going to be using large wood in riparian if available on sight, or can you commercially harvest close to riparian, and if so does that follow 21" rule? MLW: They are attempting commercial harvest in RHCAs in Camp/Lick, but there is a lawsuit. Yes, will use large wood, probably a lot. PACFISH allows for harvest in RHCAs when needs for stream are met, must do that accounting before they can look at commercial harvest. 21" rule, amendment to east side screens. Amendment allows for harvest of greater than 21" trees when they are young and fast growing. Use physical characteristics to sort the trees. Phil: Will River democracy act create any problems? MLW: Not that familiar with what's in the act or how it will be administered. These streams are highly altered. Would hope that improving habitat for ESA fish would be more toward the top value of treatment. Optimistic that they will be able to figure it out. Will produce modules to provide OWEB.

2. Action Items (electronic vote 10/13/2021: Amy Charette motioned to approve all action items, Phil 2nd, no discussion, motion passed)

- a. Staff Reimbursement Request
- b. September Meeting Minutes
- c. September Staff Time

3. Staff Report

- a. Financial Report: Amy reported that the Council currently has approximately \$1.3M in unexpended project funds, with just over 4 years of secured staff funding at 2 Full-Time employees. If we added a 3rd employee, we would have 2.5 years of available funds. Amy's goal is to keep 2 years of staff funding in the pot. These funding levels are prior to the anticipated \$1.1M in Fall grant awards. Amy would like to pursue hiring a 3rd employee over the winter months, with a Spring start date.
- b. Project Updates
 - i. OWEB applications: Caribou Aspen Health, and Ochoco National Forest Sunflower Upland Projects. Richard requested that Hannah send him the proposed group of projects.
 - ii. Mussel Salvage: completed all 6000 PIT tags in Murderers Creek for mussels. Emilie, Michelle, and Hannah will go back in November to see if they can find tags in the stream. Partners included; ODFW, Xerces, SFJDWC, Malheur National Forest, Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs, BLM, and US Fish and Wildlife. A Podcast, and video were produced by ODFW.
 - iii. BLM Good Neighbor Authority Project tour: getting out with BLM specialists and getting game plan for project implementation
 - iv. We will be holding a Landowner/Contractor RCPP tour on October 20th. The goal is to get landowners and contractors on the same page regarding acceptable project specifications, and also get landowners contractor contact information. The tour is open to all landowners in the watershed. RCPP deadline to sign up is, Nov. 19th.
 - v. We toured White Creek with the public land permittee, who requested assistance with a riparian protective fence. MaryLou requested that she be looped in, and would like to look at a little bigger picture. The stream is listed as a perennial Critical Habitat stream. It was dry when we went to look this Fall.
 - vi. Macro Invertebrate Sampling: Hannah will assist the North Fork John Day Watershed Council with macro invertebrate sampling on the South Fork John Day. This will be part of the Middle Fork Intensively Monitored Watershed, the SFJD is used as a control for this IMW.

4. Discussion

- a. Phil and Joanne reported on the ODA meeting with Director Alexis Taylor regarding Strategic Implementation Areas (SIAs). The meeting was hosted by Grant SWCD, with attendance from Monument SWCD, Wheeler SWCD, NFJDWC, SFJDWC (Phil/Joanne), NRCS. They discussed SIAs, how they were started and why they are needed. Attendees expressed how landowners have voluntarily been working to improve the landscape, and how they would like to get this story told, rather than how they are harming the land. Tried to portray that voluntary work is being accomplished, and regulatory/forced restoration will cause backward progress. Did feel that it was a productive discussion, but there were no guarantees that an SIA would not still be implemented, they are still getting external pressure. Willing to have conversation about alternate options to SIAs. Next steps would be to have some field tours and continue the conversation. Would like to see some positive press/education regarding agriculture.
- b. Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs has extra plants available this Fall.

5. Coming Up

- a. 10/13-14: Information Days at the Phillip W. Schneider Wildlife Area
- b. 10/20/2021: RCPP Landowner/Contractor Field Trip
- c. 10/26-27: OWEB Meeting

d. 11/1/2021: OWEB Open Solicitation Deadline

6. **Adjourn**, Next meeting date: Monday, November 8th, 2021.

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