

**South Fork John Day Watershed Council
Meeting Agenda
October 10th, 2023
1:00 pm, Izee Schoolhouse**

Called to order at 1:04 p.m. by Joanne Keerins.

Attending:

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| Amy Stiner, SFJDWC | Hannah Latzo, SFJDWC | Lindsay Bullock, SFJDWC |
| Phil St. Clair, Vice Chair | Jeff Maben, Director | *Jim Dovenburg, Director |
| Aaron Roth, NRCS | Richard Nelson, Director | Mary Lou Welby, BMRD-USFS |
| Jim Hamsher, County Commissioner | Joanne Keerins, Director/Chair | Mike Keerins, Alternate Director |
| *John Rowell, County Commissioner | *Cody Lund, BMRD-USFS | *Elena Burlet, BLM |
| *Alex Makic, Ochoco-USFS | Kelly Howard, landowner | |

*Remote attendee

Quorum was present with 5 of 7 directors in attendance.

1. Public Comment

- a. No public comment.

2. Agency Reports

- a. *Aaron Roth, NRCS*: Aaron is taking a position with the Oregon state office, still with NRCS but moving to the natural resource inventory team. No official start date yet, but within the next couple months. Will be looking for his replacement soon. Stephanie Rice is transferring to a different office. They hired a new soil conservationist, and he hopes to bring her out soon, and will be advertising for more positions this month. Equip deadlines for 2024 are on 11/17. Funding pools (joint chief are) have 30+ applications; annual grass will have some funding for 2024; no applications for RCPP; Equip IRA funding deadlines are also 11/17 for 3-year contracts; funding pools by land use and applications will be competing with 8-9 other counties in the basin. (We are in the John Day/Umatilla Snake River Basin). The majority of 2024 funding will be in range/forest. EQIP's list is 1200 pages long but climate practices – brush mgt, weed control, forest thinning, etc. will be part of the list. Open to anybody in the county. New statewide workload prioritization tool means screening happens at the state level instead of local level.
- b. *Mary Lou Welby, BMRD-USFS*: Jason and Lindsay and Colleen met with us last month. Primary timber project moved to Long Creek; Bark, Rosebud, and Scotty Creek projects moved to future; informal update on the horse EA is the planners are working on comments; they hired a hydro tech out of Utah State.
- c. *Elena Burlet, BLM*: Conducted interviews for fish biologists; had some good candidates so very hopeful. Elena went out last month to look at the Battle Creek allotment and feels we are good to go but will follow up with Amy. Elbow deep in responses to Murderers Creek Horse EA. Hoping for a finalized version in November, but that's a tentative schedule. Big Baldy and Big Flats moving forward, and Franks Creek thinning has started, along with thinning on the north side of the Falls that will help the City of Dayville's water source.

3. Action Items

- a. Staff Reimbursement Request
 - i. Phil St. Clair motioned to approve; Richard Nelson seconded the motion; no discussion; motion carried.
- b. September Staff Time
 - i. Phil St. Clair motioned to approve; Richard Nelson seconded the motion; no discussion; motion carried.
- c. Increase Line of Credit
 - i. A lot of our grants are on a reimbursement basis, meaning we have to show proof of purchase or payment before we can receive money for it. In order to purchase a larger item or pay an invoice, we request to increase our line of credit at BEO from \$15,000 to \$25,000.
 - 1. Phil St. Clair motioned to approved; Jeff Maben seconded the motion; no discussion; motion carried.

4. Staff Report

- a. Project Updates
 - i. Grant Applications

1. Fall Grant Cycle

- a. Battle Creek Upland Improvements – BLM and private landowner, plus SWCD for weeds and grass treatment. Second time trying this submission.
- b. SFJD Uplands – Designed to match a lot of the RCPP work that is being done in the Flat Creek/Brisbois area. Aspen protection and juniper removal.
- c. Murderers Creek Assessment – Partnering with FS and SWCD to work on 4 culvert designs (technical assistance grant). Tex Creek, Sugar Creek, Buck Creek, and Dan’s Creek. (3 in MC drainage and 1 in Deer Creek drainage).
- d. Widows Creek Diversion Design – Technical assistance (making up the difference on an ODFW screening passage grant).
- e. Bark AOP Designs
- f. USPFW: Grouse Creek Riparian Fence, High Izee BDAs
- g. CTWS – Amy and Hannah met with the Tribes to discuss funding regarding a Partnership Capacity, our own general capacity, and OWEB’s new requirement for a cultural survey on every project. They also discussed blanket funding on juniper removal. Talks are ongoing.

5. Discussion

- a. Health Insurance
 - i. Most of our contemporaries (watershed councils, SWCDs) seem to use a stipend method for health insurance offerings. We would like to investigate this and see if it is more beneficial than the current reimbursement method the Council offers. Will bring the findings to a future meeting.

6. Coming Up

- a. 10/11 Dayville School Field Trip
- b. 10/30: OWEB deadline

7. Adjourn, 2:30. Next meeting date: **Monday, November 13th, 2023**