

South Fork John Day Watershed Council  
 Meeting Agenda  
 December 11th, 2023  
 1:00 pm, Izee Schoolhouse

**Called to order at 1:03 p.m. by Joanne Keerins.**

**Attending:**

Amy Stiner, SFJDWC	Hannah Latzo, SFJDWC	Lindsay Bullock, SFJDWC
Phil St. Clair, Vice Chair		Joanne Keerins, Director/Chair
*Jim Dovenburg, Director	*Richard Nelson, Director	Mike Keerins, Alternate Director
*Jim Hamsher, County Commissioner	John Rowell, County Commissioner	MT Anderson, Director
Mary Lou Welby, USFS	*Scott Hess, Director	Nolan Riis, Government Trapper

\*Remote attendee

*A quorum was present with 6 of 7 directors in attendance.*

**1. Public Comment**

- a. No public comment.

**2. Agency Reports**

- a. Mary Lou Welby, USFS: Late January/Early February kicks off the upper Long Creek project; will be continue looking at Bark Project to start aquatic restoration. Wild Horse EA finish line is in sight.
- b. John Rowell, County Commissioner: There will be an NRAC meeting on Thursday at 6 p.m. at the airport. Instream water rights issues from 1990s will be discussed again which will affect current users of water in the basin. The watermaster will be in attendance to line out these effects.
- c. Jim Hamsher, County Commissioner: Currently working with the way DEQ is rating air quality will affect, among others, all the mills. Working with ODOT to keep sanding and maintaining county roads.
- d. Grant County Predator Control, Nolan Riis: As a part-time Grant County government trapper (USDA), the biggest issue is the wolves on the landscape. Nolan can coordinate with local investigations regarding lethal take (allowed under specific circumstances as long as it's on the east side of Hwy 395). There are many nonlethal ways to keep properties clean and deter wolves. Bear stuff has been quiet this year; working on coyotes (their population has maintained, with a slight increase due to the fur market decline – not as many fur trappers are taking them), and lions (whose population has increased since the ban on hunting dogs, but Nolan predicted we will see that number severely disperse due to wolf presence – competition for prey and territory).

Raven control depends on numbers, but GC usually has plenty of ravens. He added that one way to hold ODFW accountable is to communicate any activity with ODFW so they can have a better grasp on the number and presence of wolves – if they don't know about it, they can't add it to the petition to delist them on the other side. (Jim Hamsher, County Commissioner, interjected to discuss the county's push to delist the wolves and clarified the claims process of reimbursement to ranchers means that all losses claimed this year can't be paid out until next year. All the claims are gathered and submitted, and then sent in at once for a grant that reimburses the county to pay the landowners, separately from prevention funds.) Grant County could use two full time trappers, and even the current part time position is in jeopardy. Jim Dovenberg, director, urged the county commissioners to find a way to fund a full-time trapper, instead of ranchers passing the hat and not seeing much, if any, of their taxes go to this position. Half the funding is paid for, but the county should come up with a way to pay for their half. This year, ODA paid just under \$30,000 and the county paid \$35,000, to fund the part-time position. It would take around \$65,000 from the county's portion to pay for a full-time position. How much ODA puts in depends on how many counties put in for the funding. Richard Nelson, director, stated that it's nearly impossible to get a depredation recorded, especially when it's for reduced conception and calf loss on allotments. Hamsher responded that they (anyone who is pushing for a better process) need to push harder on a state level. Joanne Keerins, director, reminded the room that a huge chunk of landowner taxes does not go to the county, but to the state on the county's behalf. The general consensus is that the wolf problem is continuing to worsen, and it is going to get much worse before it gets better, because it has to change at a legislative level and that is a never-ending struggle. There is a Grant Co. Farm Bureau meeting on Friday, Dec. 15 at the Elks Lodge starting at 5:30 p.m. which will have several wolf experts attending, and it's highly encouraged for all to attend.

### **3. Action Items**

- a. Staff Reimbursement Request
  - i. Phil St. Clair moved to approve the request. Jim Dovenberg seconded, no discussion, all approved.
- b. Staff Time
  - i. Phil St. Clair moved to approve the request. MT Anderson seconded, no discussion, all approved.
- c. Meeting Minutes
  - i. MT Anderson moved to approve the November meeting minutes. Phil St. Clair seconded, no discussion, all approved.

### **4. Staff Report**

- a. Year End Recap on Council Activities
  - i. At our January meeting, we will be re-electing some positions (Jeff Maben and MT Anderson) and entertaining nominations for a new director in the open position.
  - ii. Amy is coming up on 10 years with SFJDWC; 6 years for Hannah and 2 for Lindsay.
  - iii. Last year we went through \$526,000. Funding secured in 2023 was \$1,073,937. Funds remaining from all open projects are just over \$2M. We closed out 9 projects and have 32 open: 21 ongoing and 11 on deck.
  - iv. Process of project management: Conceptualization and research (40 hours), grant application (80 weeks), Funding process (20 hours), Pre-implementation (40 hours), implementation (40 hours), post completion (40 hours). Each project on average is about 260 hours.

### **5. Coming Up**

- a. 12/06/2023: CTWS Coordination Meeting

- b. 12/06/2023: OWEB Virtual Review Team for TA grants
  - c. 12/12/2023: John Day Basin Partnership Upland Prioritization Meeting
  - d. 12/13/2023: John Day Basin Partnership Full Group Meeting
  - e. 12/25/2023-01/01/2024: SFJDWC Winter Break, Office Closed
6. Adjourn, 2:49 p.m. Next meeting date: **Monday, January 8<sup>th</sup>, 2024 (Annual Self Assessment, Director and Officer Elections; M.T., Jeff, Vacant, & Employee Evaluations)**