



Soil and Water Conservation Commission

Minutes **DRAFT**

DATE	LOCATION	START TIME	END TIME
08.16.22	Upper Willamette Soil and Water Conservation District 3291 West 1 st Avenue Eugene, OR 97402 Phone Conference ID: 370 618 108#	8:30 AM	12:30 PM

CHAIR	COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT	ABSENT
Barbara Boyer	Ken Bailey, Stan Dean, Tim Kerns, Jerry Ward, Al Hrynyshyn	Jim Bob Collins

Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) Staff Present

Marganne Allen, Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD) and Water Quality Program Manager; Eric Nusbaum, SWCD Operations Specialist; Sandi Hiatt SWCD Grant Administrator; Karin Stutzman, SWCD Program Lead.

Advisors Present

Ron Alvarado, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS); Jan Lee, Oregon Association of Conservation Districts (OACD); Courtney Shaff, Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB); Sam Angima, Oregon State University (OSU) Extension Service; Vanessa Green, Network of Oregon Watershed Councils (NOWC); Nate Agalzoff, Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF); Kyle Gorman, Oregon Water Resources Department (WRD); Victoria Fiscella, Oregon Conservation Education and Assistance Network (OCEAN)

Visitors

Olivia Jasper, ODA Regional Water Quality Specialist (RWQS)-South Willamette-Coast; Don Kloft, ODA RWQS - North Willamette - Coast; Amanda Robinson, ODA Strategic Implementation Area (SIA) Specialist.

Call to Order

The regular day 2 quarterly meeting was called to order at 8:30 am by Chair Barbara Boyer

Selection of Chair and Vice Chair

Jerry Ward motioned, and Tim Kerns seconded to re-elect Barbara Boyer as the Chair of the Commission. **All board members were in favor, motion passed.**

Tim Kerns motioned, and Al Hrynyshyn seconded to re-elect Jerry Ward as the Vice Chair of the Commission. **All board members were in favor, motion passed.**

Re-appoint Incumbent SWCC Members

Jim Bob Collins was unable to make it to the meeting and will be re-appointed to the Commission for Region 6 at the November meeting in Newport.

Tim Kerns was re-appointed to Region 7, took the oath of office.

Approval of Minutes

Draft minutes of the May 2022 were presented for approval. A motion was made by Stan Dean to approve the minutes with no changes or corrections. Seconded by Al Hrynshyn. ***All board members were in favor, motion passed.***

Ag Water Quality Program Update

Program updates were provided by Karin Stutzman and included her beginning to travel around the state and attend virtual SWCD board meetings to get to know districts. She also reported on updates the program is working on together including updating the 2016 SWCD Guidebook, elections map, revisions to the Scope of Work (SOW) instructions, meetings with partners, and session topics for the CONNECT conference.

Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB) is funding researchers at Oregon State University and University of Oregon to understand and report back to the OWEB Board about how capacity grants make local entities successful and what challenges they face. Thank you to SWCDs and Watershed Councils that completed the recent survey. This study was initiated in 2018 but slowed by the pandemic. This study is scheduled to be complete by end of biennium. An advisory group of 3-4 SWCDs and WCs (each) work with the researchers. Information will be brought back to the SWCC. NOWC requested feedback as well.

The ODA SWCD team is working on a District Health Dashboard. The goal is to help ODA to be proactive in identifying if and where districts are struggling. A very beta version of a spreadsheet has been developed. The SWCC is interested in engaging with this tool as it is developed.

Sandi Hiatt gave a report on the current director elections cycle. Agreed to send out an email encouraging Directors to file their petitions for nomination as soon as possible.

Karin then reported on the new Ag Water Quality Support Grant offering for 2021-2023. She detailed the goals and types of proposals that would be accepted. The goal is to support the ag WQ program, Area Plans, and SIA initiative through management area wide assessments, monitoring plans, and support Area Plan goals that aren't being achieved, or that conservation partners need more money to achieve. Minimum and maximum grant request: \$20k and \$149k (respectively).

Marganne shared a summary of Natural Resource Program Area (NRPA) Policy Option Packages (POPs) to add capacity in pesticides education and enforcement, a significant expansion to soil health capacity (grant funding, positions, soil health monitoring), and Pesticide Analytical Response Center (PARC) fund shift. She also shared details of Water Quality POP to include 2 x State Specialists (Riparian, Groundwater), and 5 x Regional Water Quality Specialists.

Advisors Reports

NRCS (Alvarado) – Oregon awarded 4 Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) projects. Average is 4 per year, which is top in the country! Harney, Tualatin SWCD (and others). Received \$7m ag land trust funds (working land easements). Hope Inflation Reduction Act will pass, includes \$18 billion in NRCS farm investments for climate change, will need partners to help distribute this, Oregon's share \$80-100 million likely. CSP opportunity for districts to compete for that funding. Training new District Conservationists.

OWEB (Shaff) – Board meeting: Met in July in Enterprise. Awarded 5 new FIPs: Coos Coho, Siuslaw Coho, East Cascades Oak partnerships, Klamath Watershed Partnerships. Adopted second part of biennial spending package, recaptured unspent funds. Added funds to SWCD and watershed council (WC) operating capacity budget. Board adopting DEI statement, standing up rule advisory committee to adopt climate rules into funding. Policy Option Package: to sustain grant capacity with new money, Oregon Heritage Program continuation, climate continuation, address increased workload.

ODF (Agalzoff) – Ryan Gordon is now ODF Planning Branch Director. ODF continuing reorganization of roles. Moving towards a more all-lands approach. Fire season: Mild so far, weather has helped, additional capacity ODF received has helped (aircraft, etc.) improve initial attack. HB 5006 provided new money for seedlings, might see more outreach, proposals to apply for seedlings. Private Forest Accord – Mediated sessions between timber and conservation community over the last 2 years. Goal is a targeted update of the Forest Practices Act (FPA), including developing Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) on both state and private forest lands. Board of Forestry will make a decision next week on FPA changes and HCP. Seedlings: \$5million to increase the supply of seedlings to respond to sudden spikes in demand following disaster response (fire, etc.). Also can go to greenhouses, etc. American Forests conducting needs assessment survey.

OSU (Sam Angima) – Study on impacts of drought and water including affects to agriculture. Outcomes will be publicly available and peer reviewed. Focus on Deschutes and North Irrigation District. Another study in Klamath, direct and indirect losses due to lack of water. Products will include what producers can do in response to changing climate. Chewaucan community has asked for an assessment as well.

OSU decision re no staff on SWCD boards: OSU goal is to provide unbiased, science-based, non-voting opinions. Therefore, they don't want staff to be on boards that may involve controversial issues and ask staff to participate only as a non-voting member. Question: Does it affect OSU employees from being a board member on their private time? Anyone who isn't part of extension providing technical information can act as board members.

WRD (Kyle Gorman) – Drought impacts in central Oregon still severe. Drought Level 4 designation remains across almost all of Crook County. For the Planning, Collaboration, and Investment Program, grants have been evaluated and scored: Tumalo Irrigation \$2m proposal to pipe numerous miles in district; Mill Creek Park Aquifer Recharge (Stayton) (\$3.8m); Klamath Irrigation District applied but didn't succeed (flow monitoring). Accepting comments on proposals thru Sept. 12. WRD has hired over 100 new staff over the last year! Many dry well complaints coming in from Klamath Region (available on website). Water Well Abandonment Replacement Fund, targets low-income families, see information on websites.

OACD (Jan Lee) – Attended OWEB meeting. Have high hopes for Inflation Recovery Act bill to direct money to Oregon. Also want money to train local entities on soil health measurement. Oregon Conservation Partnership: held webinar on

Oregon Heritage Program, applying for ag conservation, see YouTube site. Meeting with legislators, conducted tour of Maupin carbon sequestration site. Soil Quality field tours and guidebook next year. At CONNECT conference, will provide working with legislators' session. Looking forward to joint November meeting with SWCC.

NOWC (Vanessa Green)- Three legislative tours planned in Sept-Oct, no dates finalized. Tours: (1) McKenzie WC – floodplains owned by trust, Pure Water Providers site, fire mitigation (Holiday Farm fire), Drinking Water Supply protection (co-hosted by OACD). (2) Water storage and drought in NE Oregon (N Fork John Day WC – host), meadow water storage and steelhead restoration (3) Coos Bay and tide gates – design of new tide gates funded by legislature; next step is how to implement.

OCEAN (Victoria Fischella) – Looking forward to CONNECT event. Hybrid this year. Working with NRCS, got money to become host of Oregon Certified Planner courses. Still sign up with NRCS for now but will transition over time.

Director Eligibility Recommendations

Stan Dean will bring four ideas to the November joint OACD/SWCC meeting. Will open for input from SWCD's. Stan will present final draft to OACD. Include Jan Lee in this too. Make sure to include background on issue when brought to OACD. Make sure to present points for OACD to debate/discuss. **Members at consensus with this approach.**

DEQ/ODA MOA update

After MOA is shared publicly and individual SWCC members have had time to review, will consider the need to convene a special SWCC meeting to develop comment.

Public Comments

Jan Lee commented that The Oregon Association of Conservation Districts is setting up it's Annual Meeting to include the SWCC in November. Planning a dual board lunch on November 2, 2022. She likes the idea of including director eligibility on the 1st. At the Clackamas SWCD they have 4 At-Large Board members (serving in Zone positions), and 4 associate directors in training. Would like to see a way to get consensus amongst OACD members for options for director eligibility to bring to the November SWCC meeting. OACD doesn't have public meeting law constraints.

SWCC Member Reports

- Ken: Continue to have hot, dry weather. Not as much crop damage as last year.
- Al: Working on Bear Creek SIA, fire recovery work (UWSWCD).
- Tim: Spring rains helped with ability to grow adequate feed. Good growing year has also promoted weed growth, which is taking up spaces where heat created openings last year. No catastrophic fires yet but trees continue to appear in low vigor due to drought stress. Fire danger is increasing, good grass creates more fine fuels.
- Stan: Jackson SWCD updated their strategic plan. Key new lens is climate change, also wildfire. Added commitment to do better on performance metrics, improve on telling their story. Considered pros/cons of strategic focus on environmental priorities and/or where best opportunities for ecological uplift lie. Preparing for DM recruitment, current is retiring (Randy White).
- Jerry: Clackamas SWCD model offers insights into director eligibility issue. Thank you to Barbara for continued SWCC leadership. Appreciated director eligibility discussion, looking forward to working with Stan on this.
- Barbara: Tansy ragwort is exploding in the valley. Cinnabar Moth dispersal in play. Yamhill SWCD held wildfire workshop using county commissioner funding, well attended, partnered with CTGR. Just hired new district

manager. Used Cascade Employers Association, positive experience. Did not use a close date, left it open until filled. Working with ODA with some struggling SWCDs.

Next Meeting Agenda

- In Newport, November 1st and 2nd
- Land Use Update from Jim Johnson
- Mike Badzermowski – Will he know status of grant by November? (Include if he will)
- Partner updates? How will this overlap with OACD? Karin will coordinate with OACD.
- Appoint Jim Bob
- Public comment (leave significant time)
- ODA/DEQ MOA - joint working lunch?

Meeting adjourned at 11:15 am

Digital copies of these meetings are available upon request