



# Minutes

DATE	LOCATION	START TIME	END TIME
11/5/2020	Virtual meeting	9 AM	12:30 PM

## Attendees:

Kirk Cook	Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA)
Rose Kachadoorian	Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA)
Brenda Sanchez	Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA)
Ted Bunch	Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA)
Paul Measeles	Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA)
Kevin Masterson	Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (ODEQ)
Aaron Borisenko	Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (ODEQ)
Colin Donald	Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (ODEQ)
Todd Hudson	Oregon Health Authority (OHA)
Thomas Whittington	Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF)

## Introductions

WQPMT members introduced themselves, and a brief update was provided by each agency members on the effect of the COVID-19 was having on the respective agencies. To preface the meeting the members were made aware of meeting the previous week between ODA and ODEQ to discuss the Pesticide Stewardship Partnership and the potential for proposed budget cuts to eliminate the program. This meeting forms the basis of a majority of discussion for today's WQPMT meeting.

## Proposed Budget Cuts to Pesticide Stewardship Partnership

As part of the Governor's request for agencies to supply a proposed 10% reduction in General Funds for the upcoming biennium, the Oregon Department of Agriculture has proposed the elimination of the Pesticide Stewardship Partnership. This proposed action has been forwarded to the Governor's Office for consideration. At this time, it is unclear whether these cuts will be accepted. However, in anticipation of this action both ODA and DEQ have asked the WQPMT for recommendations for continued operations (at a reduced level) or the effects of ceasing all operations beginning on July 1, 2021.

## Discussion

Members of the WQPMT voiced unanimous support for the program and felt that there was a possibility that the Governor's Office would approve funding at some level. Members from ODA indicated that currently the request is for the elimination of the program and that this would have to be supported by ODA representatives. The ODA members also indicated that there were few options left for the agency in regards to General Funding since the agency does not receive that much funding from this pot.

The discussion then focused on a "what if" scenario, the what if being that the program would receive some degree of funding for the upcoming biennium. During this discussion, OHA representative indicated that there was a lot of interest in this program from the standpoint of informing the public as to pesticide occurrences and that the data from the program has been very important in helping to build trust and public confidence in protection of water resources from pesticidal activities. In short, the program help to create a "peace of mind" for the public.

Currently the program funds are allocated to four major areas:

- Water Quality Monitoring
- Administrative Support
- Grants to Partners

- Waste Pesticide Collection

After discussion, there was agreement that water quality monitoring was the backbone of the program and that should be continued at some level. If that were to be the case, the WQPMT would need to prioritize which watersheds or sub-watersheds would continue to be monitored during the 2021-23 biennium.

Additionally, it was felt the efforts to develop Strategic Action Plans in the PSP watershed should be continued at some level since this represents the clearest mechanism to accomplish the goals established in the PSP Strategic Plan recently approved by the Stakeholder Advisory Group.

Kirk Cook presented a draft fiscal analysis of what the effects would be if the program was reduced at four differing levels. This provide the basis for further conversation regarding which specific activities would be reduced or eliminated as a result of each reduction level. This was followed by discussion regarding impacts to individual watersheds and activities specified in each of the four major funding areas for the PSP.

At the conclusion of this discussion it was agreed that additional information would be gathered from the DEQ laboratory as to the impacts proposed cuts would have on the labs ability to process samples and maintain staffing to support PSP activities. After that information is received a recommendation would be developed and sent to ODA/DEQ for consideration and development of an action plan based on funding or the lack of for next biennium.

The main items that the WQPMT felt needed to be considered for the future of the program was:

- Continued continuity (at some level) for pesticide monitoring in water
  - Look at use of critical area focus
  - Special areas of concern outside of designated PSP areas
- Continued support of strategic planning to meet the goals of the program strategic plan
- Strengthen links between PSP and AG Water Quality Program
- Expand use of other data source to supplement WQ sampling lost or curtailed due to budget

Additional discussion was held regarding the support from stakeholders which some felt lead to the decision to offer the program up for elimination. Members express some degree of frustration with the continued notion that the program is operating in a vacuum and that it is not responsive to needs or input from the regulatory community. The lack of “partnerships” between some sectors and the program was cited as obstacles to the program and that the need for better exchange of information between stakeholders and the program was needed and that this is likely the reason for continued criticism of the program. It would appear that establishment of the SAG has not fully addressed those concerns and need further work.

### **Publication of Reports**

It was reported to members that the 2017-19 Biennial Report has been finalized and has been posted on both the ODA and DEQ website. The WQPMT is currently assisting member agency communication shops to develop a “press release” highlighting the keys points for the report.

A one-page summary sheet for the 2017-19 report has be finalized and has been posted on the ODA website.

The South Umpqua Pilot Report has been finalized and posted on the ODA website. This report summarizes the findings of five years of water quality monitoring conducted in the South Umpqua watershed. Recommendations for future actions are included in the report.

### **Impacts of Budget Cuts to EPA Cooperative Agreement**

Reductions of elimination of the PSP program will have some impacts to the ODA/EPA cooperative agreement since many of the activities contained in the agreement are currently being funding through the PSP program. Areas that may be impacted are:

- Development of WQ workplan and End of Year Report
- Assessment of Statewide Pesticides of Concern
- Modifications of EPA approved Statewide Water Quality and Pesticide Plan

The WQPMT decided to hold off on discussing these issues further given the ODA centric nature of the issues.

## Follow Up

The WQPMT agreed to meet again in a week to further discuss options for elimination or reduction of the PSP program activities. A virtual meeting will be scheduled by Kirk Cook.

Meeting was adjourned