



Harney County Watershed Council

Meeting Minutes – November 19, 2019
HCWC office 242 Hwy 20 S
Hines, Oregon

Membership & Attendance:
(those in attendance will be highlighted)

Landowner positions:

Alvord –
Donner und Blitzen – Fred Otley
Guano –
Harney/Malheur Lakes – Joe Witzel
Silvies – Rachel Beaubien
Silver Creek – **Angie Ketscher**
Drewsey – **Tyler Harris**
Landowner General – **Pat Sharp**
Burns Paiute Tribe – **Brandon Haslick**

Concerned Citizen positions:

Burns/Hines – **Brenda Smith**
At Large – **John Thelen**
General - **Diane Rapaport**
Sportsman – Ben Cate
Education – **Dustin Johnson**
Environmental – **Alexa Martinez**
County Court – Mark Owens
Harney SWCD – Scott Franklin
BLM – **Jamie McCormack**

Advisory Positions

ODF & W – Dave Banks
Malheur National Wildlife – **Jeff Mackay**
NRCS – Zola Ryan
EOARC – Chad Boyd
OWRD – JR Johnson
USFS -

Staff

Coordinator – Karen Moon

Guests – Maria Snodress - ODA

Mission of the Harney County Watershed Council

Local economic and ecological prosperity depends on watershed health and the availability and quality of ground and surface water.

Therefore, the Harney County Watershed Council provides a framework of outreach, coordination and cooperation between private landowners and all interested parties to promote watershed conditions that benefit people and the environment. The Council works to improve watershed health through education, action plans based on scientific assessments and enhancement projects.



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The meeting was called to order at 5:32pm. Chairman Brenda Smith asked for someone to act as a “time-keeper” for the evening to keep us on track. Jamie McCormack volunteered for the position. The agenda was reviewed noting new changes to the order of business. With introductions each member was asked to give a short update on what was going on in their area.

Open Issues:

Community Based Water Planning update:

An update from Project Manager Rianne BeCraft was shared.

- Survey results are coming from OSU regarding the domestic well survey. Everyone is impressed with a 40% response rate. The report with results of the survey should be ready to share sometime December/January.
- Grants: The County is receiving a grant for \$50,000. From Bureau of Reclamation. TNC is also contributing funds to the project to look into the beginnings of forming a water market for the basin. TNC also recently submitted a grant application to OWRD for a feasibility study.
- Update on hiring the next Project Manager for CBWP. The Team interviews of the four top candidates will be on Monday, November 25, 2019. The Interview team is big and includes Brenda, Mark, Karen, Brandon, Ken, Jack and Rianne. The plan is to have the new project manager start in early January. Rianne will stay on to help on-board and transition the new person, and will continue to help in a reduced role through the beginning of 2020 if needed.
- The collaborative’s strategy building has completed the first of four bins (categories) which centered around Reducing Agricultural groundwater. The next bin to be tackled is the “Governance” bin.
- Upcoming meetings were shared. The Veg mgmt. group will meet December 10. The Ecological group will meet the morning of Wednesday, December 11th, with the Collaborative meeting from 3-8pm that same day. The Groundwater Study team meets Thursday and Friday that same week.

OWRD & USGS Groundwater Study:

At the previous meeting the USGS team presented graphics and figures that will be included in the groundwater study report that is being prepared. A basic understanding of the groundwater budget has been being shared although no written information will be shared until after the USGS peer review process. The Friday meeting was with OWRD staff to start discussing next steps and how the report will inform the policy changes that will need to be developed when the report is presented to the Water Resources Commission. Staff began to explain the process of forming a new Rules Advisory Committee to give input to the Commission as well as what the process will entail if a Critical Groundwater Designation is



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warranted. The December 12 & 13 meeting of the Groundwater Study Advisory Committee will be the last formal meeting of this group until a new Rules Advisory Committee is formed.

HBWI- TRT meeting update:

The Technical Review Team for the Harney Basin Wetlands Focused Investment met earlier today to review one grant for HDP to continue to manage the Focused Investment grant. A field trip to the Sweek and Tyler dams was offered after the meeting. Council members were reminded that the Council acts as fiscal agent for these two dam projects. There was also a short update about the Carp Threshold project that was able to be completed this summer out in Double O on the Refuge. The full partners meeting for HBWI will take place tomorrow at the Harney ESD meeting room.

Governors 100 year water vision:

OWEB director Meta Loftsgarden and team has been holding seven meetings around the state looking for input on the Governor's new 100 water vision effort that is getting under way. Several members of the council are planning to attend the meeting in Ontario on Thursday this week. Karen will forward the announcement to council members by email.

New Business

ODA Ag Water Quality Update:

Maria Snodgrass from ODA was present to update the Council on Ag Water quality issues. She talked about the Special Implementation Areas (SIA's) the department has been implementing. There are 8 new SIA's around the state each year on average. Seven new areas this year and nine are scheduled for 2020. There were questions about how SIA's were selected.

Maria informed the group that ODA is changing the biennial review process for the Ag Water Quality Plans. Targets will be included in the plans. The groups meet every two years and updates will be done every four years. The Harney LAC is scheduled to meet in January 2020. Council members asked about the local SIA in the Drewsey area. Maria noted that work in the SIA is currently on hold due to the change in personnel at the SWCD. As the new crew gets up to speed they will resume restoration work in the area.

Maria also informed the group that the State program manager is retiring at the end of December. The Department hopes to have a replacement hired and on board before then.

Range Camp:

Planning for 2020 camps will begin by a planning meeting to be held on December 10th. Jamie McCormack is working with Gabby Johnson to make arrangements for the Top Camper from last summer to attend the Society For Range Management Conference. We will update the Council again next month.



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Board Development:

The spreadsheet that Adrienne Graham has shared at our retreat was reviewed. Council members would like to review the Council's bylaws and board member handbook further at the December meeting. Karen will email out the bylaws with the meeting notice so that members can review before the meeting.

Items that members felt needed attention included

- developing an orientation for new members
- a recruitment policy for new members
- a process to review and approve grants/projects
- updating the strategic plan and developing goals
- setting annual goals for council members

Executive Committee members felt it would be helpful to start meeting 30 minutes before the regular council meeting to discuss any matters that need attention.

Chairman Brenda Smith and Karen had worked on an updated position description and evaluation criteria for the coordinator's position. The current materials being used were last updated a number of years ago and an update was definitely needed. Karen also shared a survey that the Network of Oregon Watershed Councils had completed regarding Coordinator salary and benefits. With review of the survey and the last coordinator performance review the Brenda Smith recommended a raise in salary for the Coordinator.

A motion was made by Pat Sharp to raise the salary to the proposed amount beginning January 1, 2020. Angie Ketscher seconded. Discussion took place, Pat Sharp commented that the position description update and evaluation format were good and should be implemented. Diane Rapaport agreed and stated that the Council should work to look for additional funding to increase capacity of the council as the coordinator's position and workload and increased greatly over the past few years. After discussion all voted on the motion and it passed unanimously. The Executive Committee will work to complete a performance review before the end of December.

Office Inquiry:

Karen had been presented with two possible options of other office space opening up if the Council was interested in moving the office. After review Council members noted they are satisfied with the current location and level of rent and utilities being paid.

Minutes:

Council members reviewed the minutes from the September and October meetings. John Thelen moved to accept the minutes as presented. Alexa Martinez seconded and the motion passed.

Meeting adjourned at 7:30pm
Karen Moon, Coordinator