



Harney County Watershed Council

Meeting Minutes – April 21, 2020
HCWC office 242 Hwy 20 S meeting by Zoom
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 -
Sportsman – **Ben Cate**
Education – Dustin Johnson
Environmental – Alexa Martinez
County Court –
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 – (on the phone) Laurie O'Connor, Representative Mark Owens

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 5:33pm. Introductions were made using the Zoom conference call service. Chairman Brenda Smith asked each member to share a short update on what is new in each person's area that they represent.

Chairman Brenda Smith gave a short update that had been shared by OWEB. The spring cycle deadline has been extended from April to July 27th. Focused Investment Project applications are also on hold, but should still be submitted. All new grant agreements are on hold until the budget forecast is available in May. Lottery dollars have come to a halt with the closing of restaurants and bars for the Covid-19 virus. Hopefully Lottery dollars will return and stabilize for Council Support dollars. Karen has applied for the Disaster Loan Assistance program for the Council.

Others updates included that everyone was following stay at home and teleworking orders as much as possible. Field work is continuing as available with social distancing. All in-person meetings are being changed to Zoom type meetings.

Continuing project updates/action items

Community Based Water Planning update:

Karen shared a printed report from Project Manager Holly Mondo.

- The Collaborative held a meeting on February 24, 2020 where the format was changed to provide ample time for agenda items. These changes included sending out Collaborative updates via email to the list-serve a week in advance of the meeting. No objections were shared for the new format of sending out updates electronically. The Collaborative then developed four strategies aimed at addressing domestic well needs. The Collaborative also heard from a representative of the Domestic Well Users (DWUs) group regarding a work session on Wednesday, February 19th. During the work session, DWUs came up with a list of questions for OWRD (sent to Harmony Burright (OWRD)) and an informal Q&A session was held on March 11th for DWUs with representatives from OWRD.
- The Harney CBWP Summit occurred on Thursday, March 12- Friday, March 13 and was held at the Education Services District. The Collaborative's first Summit, which was held in January 2019, was a huge success in kicking off the group's strategy-building phase. This year, the Summit was two, very focused days of building strategies to help address groundwater issues in the basin. Over 30 people attended the March Summit and 13 strategies were developed!
- During the March 2020 Summit, an idea (from a CBWP member) to convene an 'irrigator group' was shared with the Collaborative. The intent of this group is to go over strategies that are directly related to groundwater irrigators, determine pertinent information to share with other groundwater irrigators in the area, and figure out how to communicate the information coming from the Collaborative to groundwater irrigators. This group has scheduled their first meeting on Monday, April 20 at 6pm.
- In March, the Collaborative heard from Brad Baird, President of Anderson Perry & Associates, regarding results of the alternative water delivery feasibility study.



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- The Nature Conservancy (TNC) is working with Bureau of Reclamation's (BoR) WaterSmart program to receive the funding that has been awarded to the county. TNC heard back from the OWRD regarding their proposal for a Feasibility Study grant program. The Water Market Feasibility Study was recommended for funding, however, we have to wait until the June 2020 Commission meeting for confirmation
- *Three CBWP Collaborative Zoom meetings are scheduled for April 22nd, 2020, that each aim to focus on building strategies in one of the three remaining bins.* The hope is that these meetings be highly-focused and that strategy prioritization occurs with meeting participants during each meeting. CBWP Collaborative members can "attend" one, two, or all three meetings for the entire time allotted (1.5 hours) or a portion thereof.
- The Vegetation Management Working Group has made significant progress on their draft report and are now in editing-mode. Their draft was sent to Josh Giles (USFS) for review. Edits have been received from Josh and the *next meeting is currently being scheduled sometime in the last week of April via Zoom.*
- The Ecological Working Group is continuing to make progress on Step 2 and 3 drafts. *The next EWG meeting is scheduled for April 23 from 9-12pm via Zoom.*

It was noted that the next full Collaborative meeting will be held on April 22 and there will be three Zoom sessions, one at 9:30-11:00am, from 12:30 – 2pm and from 3-4:30pm. There were questions as to why they were all during the day and not at the usual time for Collaborative meetings.

Mark Owens reported on the group looking into defining more of the Anderson Perry feasibility study. He has talked to OWRD to ask if the group can receive a GIS layer with an overlay of the cones of depression to help focus efforts to help with developing alternative for potable water in those areas first. The Department is saying they are backlogged and are not comfortable sharing a layer until after the Groundwater Study is peer reviewed. This puts this project on hold until a copy of the map can be received.

It was also noted that OWRD is very backlogged and short staffed. Those who have been making TA requests are most likely a couple of months out before receiving any replies.

Range Camp: Karen reported that a decision on High School Camp will be made May 1, but will most likely be cancelled.

Board Development -

Board membership – There has been an open position in the Concerned Citizen category since Diane Rapaport passed away in January. The Council has received two letters of interest to fill the position. The two candidates are Representative Mark Owens and Laurie O'Connor. Both have submitted letters. After review and discussion, a motion was made by Pat Sharp to recommend to the County Court to have Representative Owens fill the vacant position. Ben Cate seconded and the vote was 7 for and 1 opposed.

Brenda updated the Council on the process for working on our new Strategic Action Plan for the next three years. One suggestion was to ask our Advisory Members to form a sub-group to make recommendations for filling board positions in the future. Brenda will contact the advisory members to see if they are willing to help with recommendations. Karen will send out the membership list, identifying positions. The Executive Committee will make contact with



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those members who have not been attending to see if they would like to continue with the Council.

Discussion on the Strategic Planning process:

- Need to do more outreach to the Community

- Take meetings on the road around the County

- Perhaps don't need to make a major shift – review and update the plan

Brenda shared that Adrienne would like council members to conduct a survey of stakeholders. The Executive committee will develop a list of questions for members to ask during these interviews. Each member will be asked to conduct one or two interviews. (All members present agreed to conduct the interviews.) A list of stakeholders will be developed with Adrienne's help.

There was some discussion on voting in a vice-chair....the motion was tabled to a future meeting.

Update to County Court – Karen reported that she had given the update to the court by phone on Wednesday, April 8th. She had emailed the flyer and the letter requesting them to fill their position with the Council. The conference call went well.

New Business

Budget – Karen has been working on the budget so that council members will have time to review and approve before the new fiscal year. With the receipt of the OWRD grant agreement yesterday, adjustments need to be made to the budget as funds need to be spent faster than was anticipated. Karen will make the changes and send out to council members for review.

Minutes: Minutes for the March meeting were reviewed. Pat Sharp moved to accept the minutes as presented. Ben Cate seconded and the motion passed.

Items for next agenda include: Budget, CBWP, Strategic Planning

Meeting adjourned at 7:14pm

Karen Moon, Coordinator