



# Harney County Watershed Council

Meeting Minutes – March 17, 2020

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 -

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 – (on the phone) *Laurie O'Connor*

## ***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.***



## Harney County Watershed Council

The meeting was called to order at 5:30pm. Introductions were made around the room and on the phone. Chairmen Brenda Smith asked each member to share a short update on what is new in each person's area that they represent. Members and guests on the phone include Mark Owens, Pat Sharp, John Thelen, Angie Ketscher and Laurie O'Connor.

Ben Cate talked some about the Harney Basin Wetlands Technical Review Meeting that took place earlier today. He shared about the projects that were presented for approval and review and commented on the Watershed Council helping to fund the Survey and Design for one of the future dam replacement projects. This is a much needed project to help with overall match for the FIP. He also shared how the collaborative is working to submit a proposal for a second FIP grant in June.

### ***Continuing project updates/action items***

**Sponsor Policy:** The draft policy that was written by Pat Sharp was reviewed. Karen Moon read the policy as drafted. After discussion Angie Ketscher moved to accept the policy and form for applicants to fill out. Rachel Beaubien seconded and the motion to put the policy in place was accepted.

### **Community Based Water Planning update:**

Karen Moon gave an update on the meetings that were held last week. The Vegetation Management and Ecological work groups met on Wednesday, March 11<sup>th</sup> and both made good progress on their step 2 & 3 documents.

There was a meeting for the Groundwater Study members and others to meet with OWRD Thursday morning. This meeting was to talk about availability of a draft outline of cones of depression delineation, the general rates of decline in the Weaver Springs area, the general amount of use in the Weaver Springs area, and a general discussion on when information may be available for the other areas that are showing decline within the Area of Concern. This meeting was well attended by study members, irrigators and other interested parties.

Chairman Brenda Smith asked everyone how they felt the Summit went. All felt that good progress was made in moving through strategies.

There was discussion about the Anderson Perry presentation regarding the feasibility study and what was presented at the summit. There was a request to have a small group go through the presentation/report and ask for further clarification regarding solutions to potable water for domestic users. Rep. Mark Owens, Karen Moon, Calla Hagle, Ken Bierly, Angie Ketscher and Laurie O'Connor agreed to meet sometime in the next week to review the documents and make a request of Anderson Perry. Karen will send out a doodle poll to schedule the meeting. Several requested to see if this could include searching for funds to help deepen wells and/or install reverse osmosis systems for those experiencing water quality problems.



## Harney County Watershed Council

The coordinating committee held their bi-monthly conference call this morning. There is discussion on whether to hold the April 15 meeting in person or as a virtual meeting. Karen is working to get a Zoom account for the Council.

**Range Camp:** Karen reported she hadn't heard yet, but Rachel Beaubien said she had heard that Science in the Sagebrush Steppe (college camp) had been cancelled by the Research Center. Karen will check with Petrina, but all agreed it was most likely cancelled. There have been several questions about High School Camp in June, and we will wait until closer to June to see how things are with the virus before making a final decision.

Rachel Beaubien also let everyone know that the Migratory Bird Festival had been cancelled.

**Board Development** - Items included in this category include the bylaw changes that were first sent out in January. These changes to the bylaws are necessary to comply with changes to current state law. Council members have had two months to review the bylaws and Karen read through the proposed changes. After review Jamie McCormack moved to make the changes to the bylaws as presented. Pat Sharp seconded and the motion passed.

Vice-Chairman – the Council is still in need of a vice-chair. Several nominations have been made, but declined. The Council decided to continue to talk to members that weren't present and to vote at the April meeting.

**ET Monitoring** – Karen shared the handout from last month's meeting where the ET monitoring team had shared their project. Rep. Mark Owens reported that for the coming season that a smart meter will be placed on that pivot to help with gathering data and determining ET in real time for the field. Team members are eager to share about the project and how the information and tools being developed can help with irrigation efficiency and scheduling.

### ***New Business***

**Strategic Plan update:** A proposal by Adrienne Graham to help the Council work through updating our Strategic Action Plan was reviewed. Brenda informed council members that if we accept this proposal, it involves a questionnaire that council members will be asked to share with constituents in their regions and bring the answers back to the retreat that we will hold to update the plan. This update will be a 3-year plan for the council. One suggestion, especially with social distancing and more meetings having to be virtual it was suggested to push the closing date for the plan out to December from October. After discussion a motion was made by Pat Sharp and seconded by Rachel Beaubien to accept the proposal by Adrienne Graham and Leapfrog consulting.

**Update to County Court** – Karen shared a flyer she had prepared to give to the County Court for the required yearly check-in. Karen is planning to attend court on March 26<sup>th</sup>. Karen will also be making a formal request of the Court to officially update their council member as Representative Owens will no longer be representing the Court. Council members generally



## Harney County Watershed Council

liked the flyer, a suggestion was made to add dollar amounts contributed to the community to the flyer.

**Outdoor School** – Karen and Brenda have met again with the Kids Club and also the Tribe to work on the outdoor school grant that ends June 30, 2020. Activities are being planned by both to have these funds expended.

**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.

**Connect conference** – word was received today that the Connect Conference scheduled for the middle of April in Sun River has been cancelled.

**Minutes:** Minutes for the January and February meetings were reviewed, after discussion a motion was made by Jamie McCormack to accept both the January and February minutes as presented. Ben Cate seconded and the motion passed.

**Board membership-** Laurie O'Connor attended the meeting by phone this evening and is interested in the Concerned Citizen position that is currently vacant. There have been several people express interest in the position. The Council will review letters at the April meeting and make a recommendation to the County Court for appointment.

**Items for next agenda include:** Karen will research either a Zoom account or Go To Meeting for future virtual meetings.

Meeting adjourned at 6:50pm  
Karen Moon, Coordinator