



Harney County Watershed Council

Meeting Minutes – December 15, 2020

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 - **Mark Owens**

Sportsman – **Ben Cate**

Education – **Dustin Johnson**

Environmental – **Alexa Martinez**

County Court – **Kristen Shelman**

Harney SWCD – **Shannon Brubacker**

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 –

Mission of the Harney County Watershed Council

Harney County Watershed Council works to improve watershed health for the benefit of our communities and the environment!

Vision of the Harney County Watershed Council

People in Harney County are working together to ensure health watersheds and thriving communities.



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The meeting was called to order at 5:32pm. Chairman Brenda Smith welcomed everyone to the meeting, reviewed the agenda and asked each member to share what they felt was accomplished by the Watershed Council this past year.

Each member gave a short update. Many members felt that keeping the water planning Collaborative going through a virtual platform was a major accomplishment. While progress was slowed some, progress was made in moving forward to putting together our plan. Karen shared some of the HBWI and other OWEB projects of the Council that were completed this last year. There was also the Strategic Plan that we have been working on. While not being able to have an in-person work session, creative ways to get this completed have hopefully been successful.

Continuing project updates/action items

Community Based Water Planning update:

Coordinating Call update was given by Brandon Haslick. Brandon talked about the work the CC is working on to begin to rank and refine the strategies that have been developed. Two Zoom calls have taken place to discuss ranking criteria and goals for refining and/or prioritizing the strategies.

Update from Holly Mondo was read by Karen Moon

Community-Based Water Planning Updates- November

Thirty-four people participated in the November Full Collaborative meeting during which:

- o A presentation was shared on the Harney Basin Groundwater Budget by Amanda Garcia (USGS). Her presentation highlighted that 1) Overall, the amount of groundwater discharge (460,000 AFY) is greater than the amount of recharge (390,000 AFY) in the basin. (i.e. the groundwater budget is out of balance) and; 2) Most pumpage occurs in lowland areas and is removing groundwater from aquifer storage. The change in groundwater storage is equal to the net pumpage, which is approximately 140,000 AFY.
- o Collaborative members heard from Justin Iverson on a Technical Assistance (TA) request deliverable meant to inform the decline areas in the basin. The deliverable illuminates both the magnitude and rate of declines (i.e how bad the problem is and how fast the problem is worsening). According to all wells included in the TA request, the aquifer has lost 100 or more feet. Justin mentioned that the Department will likely take action in those areas with the highest decline rate—Weaver Springs, North and Central Harney Valley. That said, the Collaborative has opportunities to focus their efforts in other surrounding areas.
- o Ken Bierly (CBWP Technical Consultant) shared slides to help synthesize the



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information presented to the Collaborative over the last several months.

o Collaborative members participated in discussions regarding what they hope to achieve and/or prevent from happening in the basin with the water plan. Responses will inform future (imminent) discussions regarding Collaborative goals/ desired outcomes of the overall water plan.

The next Collaborative meeting is scheduled for Thursday, December 17 from 4:00pm-7:30pm via Zoom.

The Ecological Working Group has completed their Phase 1 (groundwater) Step 2 and 3 drafts. Drafts have been circulated to the Collaborative and will undergo a consensus checkin at the December meeting to determine whether drafts meet PBP Step 2 and 3 requirements.

The Vegetation Management Working Group finalized their Step 2 and 3 draft report and a key takeaways document has been drafted. Both documents will be circulated to the Collaborative for the January meeting where they will also undergo a consensus check-in.

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) has a grant agreement in-hand from the Bureau of Reclamation and OWRD for the feasibility study on water markets for the Harney Basin. A Request for Proposals (RFP) was issued in September with a proposal due date of October 28th. A committee formed to review submitted proposals and selected the best fit entity to carry out the feasibility study: Aspect Consulting. While in the early stages of this feasibility study, Aspect would like to speak with key folks who are willing to provide insight, wisdom, and local expertise on the potential water market in the Harney Basin. Aspect wants to ensure that the feasibility study captures views from community members and that water users feel that they have input in the analysis. Aspect Consulting has shared that they would value any level of engagement folks are willing to provide (talking one-on-one or participating in interactive group sessions). If this interests you or someone you know, please let Holly know (holly@hcwatershedcouncil.com).

In September 2020, Peter Walker (University of Oregon (UO) + CBWP Collaborative Participant) approached Holly regarding a potential mapping project to be conducted by UO cartography students. Since then, Holly and Ken have been working with a group of students on a story map that can help illustrate both groundwater and surface water appropriations over time. The students used OWRD water rights data to build their maps. The final deliverable can be accessed here. This storymap will be uploaded to the new website (Harneywaterfuture.com) as an additional educational/outreach tool. Thank you, UO!

New Website + Outreach Options

o Holly, Brenda, and Ken met with Ryan Gallagher to discuss approaches to get the word out about the new website. The following list are the options that they came up with:

Local media outreach—pitch local newspaper on a series for “Harney’s Water Future” with a lead story from the CBWP that plugs the new website (we will need to draft). Can also be an opportunity to engage other local partners to send in stories for this series.

Partner outreach—develop a list of local organizations to ask to include a plug for the new website in their newsletter (if they have one), website, and social media. Partner orgs like TNC, HCS & OWRD, Network of OR Watershed Councils, etc. should be able to help spread the word (and even contribute relevant resources to further bolster the site).

Online promotion—with a few hundred dollars each month, we can promote the website with targeted online ads via Google and Facebook (likely via



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HCWC's FB page) These can be targeted to just Harney Co., surrounding counties, plus Salem, etc. This is probably more useful in targeting the general population and raising awareness in general, than for targeting specific irrigators.

Other—printed postcards (either mailed, handed-out, or sent digitally), fliers for local bulletin boards and businesses, stickers, branded water bottles, coasters for the local pub, etc.

o More discussion is needed prior to selecting those options that will be employed. If any Collaborative members have preferences or insights related to outreach, please send your thoughts to Holly (holly@hcwatershedcouncil.com)

Strategic Planning -

The Strategic Planning Prep team met by Zoom to work on developing goals for the next three years. Outreach and Funding being the two main topics. Jamie McCormack shared the work that had been done since the last meeting (Karen had a power outage and internet interruption as was not able to share her screen from the office). Brenda asked the group for a “provisional approval” of the plan. The group reviewed the mission and vision and made a few adjustments to the statements. The Strategic plan over the next three years will focus on outreach, fiscal soundness and strengthening partnerships for the Council. There was discussion about the monitoring work and it was felt that review of this project could come back around at the end of the fiscal year. Chairman Brenda Smith asked for help on finishing up parts of the plan and asked for opinions on if our plan is “doable”. Pat Sharp shared that we are planning this as a tentative direction in moving forward. Mark Owens moved to approve the plan as presented with the changes talked about to come. Ben Cate seconded and the motion was approved. Hopefully all work will be completed and the plan can be finally approved at the January 2021 meeting.

New Business

Recognition for the Watershed Council

Karen received a letter/program from the University of Idaho. Our OWEB project - Monitoring ET in the Harney Valley. A professor and his several of his grad students are contributing their expertise to the project and their time is being compensated by the grant. Because the dollar amount of their contribution is over \$25,000.00 the University of Idaho – Moscow is recognizing the Council as a contributor to the university.

Karen received a text message from Sage DesignWorks that a piece of art had been purchased from them by Terry Keim, and she wanted to have the art donated to the Watershed Council. The art was delivered and hung on the wall in the Council office.

Membership terms:

Memberships whose three year terms were up were reviewed. Brenda Smith, Shannon Brubacker, Pat Sharp and Ben Cate will renew for another three year term. John Thelen stated



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he did not want to renew for another term. Karen will contact Rachel Beaubien to see if she wishes to serve another term with the Council.

Vacancies as of this time also include the Drewsey position, Guano and Alvord landowner positions. New positions open include Concerned Citizen-At large and Harney/Malheur Lakes Landowner. Karen will update the website and the group will work with our advisory members to identify people who may want to serve on the Council.

Officer nominations for 2021/22:

Chairman Brenda Smith has stated she needs to step back from the Chairman position at the close of her term, which is this month. Nominations were taken for the slate of officers and voting will take place in January. After discussion, Pat Sharp moved to nominate a slate of officers to include:

Chairman: Jamie McCormack

Vice-Chairman: Brandon Haslick

Secretary/Treasurer: Pat Sharp

Mark Owens seconded the nominations.

Minutes: Minutes for the November meeting were reviewed. Financials for the Council were reviewed. Jamie McCormack moved to approve the November minutes and the financial report, Pat Sharp seconded and the motion passed. Karen was asked to give a mid-year budget assessment at the January meeting.

Items for next agenda on November 17, 2020 include: Approval of the Strategic Plan, Board membership, and Officer elections.

Meeting adjourned at 6:55pm
Karen Moon, Coordinator