



Harney County Watershed Council

STRATEGIC PLAN
2020-2023

January 2021

Facilitated by Adrienne Graham



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I. Executive Summary

Watersheds. Where ever you are, you are standing/sitting in one. A watershed is the area drained by a distinct stream system and separated from other similar systems by ridge top boundaries. Watersheds catch and store precipitation, releasing the stored water to stream channels.

Watershed Councils are local, volunteer groups established to improve the conditions of watersheds in their area. The Oregon legislature authorized the creation of non-regulatory watershed councils. They offer local residents the opportunity to independently evaluate watershed conditions and identify opportunities for coordination and cooperation. Through the councils, partnerships can be developed between residents, local state, and federal agency staff and other groups. Through these partnerships and the resulting integration of local efforts, the state's watersheds can be protected and enhanced.

The *Harney County Watershed Council ('HCWC')* is a 501-c-3 non-profit organization located in Burns, Oregon. **The mission of the Harney County Watershed Council is to “work to improve watershed health for the benefit of the community and the environment.”** HCWC provides a framework for 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 and activities based on scientific assessment and enhancement projects.

Planning got underway prior to the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. An alternative approach to the traditional strategic planning activities was devised and approved by the Board to provide a smaller sub-group, the 'Prep Team,' to engage in planning activities and to inform and engage the Board in the outcome of those activities. Over spring and summer months, the 'Prep Team' held several meetings with the facilitator via Zoom culminating in a ¾ day in-person, facilitated planning retreat on September 30, 2020. Planning participants also completed activities prior to and following the retreat, including:

- Take stock of the organization's history and major accomplishments.
- Review and update the mission and establish the vision.
- Gather information on trends and demographics as it relates to the services, programs and future direction of Harney County Watershed Council.
- Gather information and provide summary reports on internal input from staff and Board members and external community stakeholders to help identify and prioritize strategic issues for the organization.
- Develop goals and strategies to address the strategic issues and action plans to accomplish the priority goals in the first year+ of the plan.
- Review current programs and services to identify issues and strategies to strengthen the programs and to determine the future growth strategy for each program relative to the environment in which it operates.
- Develop staffing projections and a 'summary budget' to provide a summary of estimated revenues and expenditures to support the plan.

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Executive Summary, cont.

Plan details focus on a period of three fiscal years spanning 2020-23. Sections II and III, the Organizational and Strategic Plan Overviews, provide a snapshot of Harney County Watershed Council and its goals and strategies. Section IV identifies issues and strategies for each program and service area, and provides a breakdown of program activity (persons served) and staffing needs for each of the current and future program years of this report.

Section V provides a summary of financial projections and the funding needed to support the strategic plan. Section VI, the Appendix, includes additional details of the planning retreat and supporting information.

A final section, Section VII, is dedicated to the Action Plans that provide the details to be completed to accomplish the goals identified in the strategic planning process. Action Plans have been developed to address prioritized strategic issues and as progress is made and these issues are addressed, Action Plans will be developed for the remaining issues.

In December 2020, the full plan was presented to the Board of Directors for final review and approval.

This plan is a living document. It is to be implemented and managed by the organization's Board and Coordinator. By implementing the actions and strategies in this plan and achieving the identified goals while making adjustments to the plan as 'reality' changes the world in which the organization operates, Harney County Watershed Council will be more effective in accomplishing its mission to ***“work to improve watershed health for the benefit of the community and the environment.”***

II. Organizational Overview

Mission

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

Vision

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

Overarching Direction

Background The Overarching Direction articulates the organization’s future direction. It communicates *how* and *where* the organization will *focus its resources* in the future and provides an eye on what’s important to pay attention to in the next few years given the current environment. The Prep Team noted the themes that showed up across the contextual planning information (mission; vision; input from internal and external stakeholders; trends and data; prior strategic plan), and identified three themes:

- ❖ **Outreach/Public Relations** Communicate with the community about who we are and what we do. Educate and engage the community to build understanding of what makes us unique from other organizations, agencies, etc. and our distinct role relative to those working in natural resources.
- ❖ **Fiscally Sound** Build and diversify our funding sources and strategies to be more fiscally healthy, resilient and sound.
- ❖ **Strengthen Partnerships** The work of the HCWC is tied closely to its relationships, partnerships and collaborations with other agencies, organizations and more. Ensure clarity on roles and responsibilities of partnering organizations and work together in a way that maximizes the synergy created by shared efforts.

Harney County Watershed Council History & Background

Watershed Councils Established in Oregon In 1995 the Oregon Legislature passed House Bill 3441 allowing for Watershed Councils be established in Oregon when recognized by a local government. These community-based, voluntary, non-regulatory groups provide a balanced representation of interests in the basin they makeup. Through these Councils, partnerships are developed between residents, local, state and federal agency staff and other groups. These partnerships and the resulting integration of local efforts, play an important part in protecting and enhancing Oregon's watersheds.

Two principles guide the work of Watershed Councils: that they be comprised of local volunteers and that Council members represent a balance of interested and affected persons within the watershed. According to the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB), approximately 90 Watershed Councils exist today.

Harney County Watershed Council is Formed In February of 1997, the official first steps were taken to establish the Harney County Watershed Council. Interested community members requested that the Harney County Court approve the submission of a grant to the Governor's Watershed Enhancement Board by the Harney Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD). This grant, once secured, would provide the start-up funds needed to support the creation of a local Watershed Council.

The Harney County Watershed Council obtained its business license from the State of Oregon on August 25, 1998. The Council obtained its status as a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt charitable organization on April 15, 2004.

The founding board was comprised of twenty-five members, representing a diverse mix of interests from across Harney County including landowners, environmental and educational organizations, USFS, Burns Paiute Tribe, Bureau of Land Management (BLM), sportsmen, concerned citizens, Harney County Court, Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife (ODFW), Advisory members from Farm Services Agency (FSA) Advisory,

Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS) Advisory, and US Fish & Wildlife Service – Malheur Refuge, Advisory. This diverse mix of interests came to together to do the foundational work to establish the Watershed Council.

The founding Board developed a mission statement and some guiding principles for the organization. Members agreed that in maintaining a cooperative attitude and long-range perspective, everyone benefits. The Council also asserted that all subjects pertaining to water issues are acceptable to discuss. Initial goals were set to include determining watershed health using science-based methods; retaining the health of high quality watersheds; and restoring and enhancing watersheds where improvement is possible.

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History, continued

Staffing The Council has employed five Coordinators since 1998. It is currently staffed by a full-time Coordinator that has been with the HCWC since 2006—or more than 14 years. The Council also engages contractual labor as well as volunteers to ensure of the work of the Council is accomplished.

Watershed Sub-Basins The Council works in seven sub-basins:

- Alvord Lakes Sub-basin (Assessment 2006)
- Donner und Blitzen Sub-basin (Assessment 2003)
- Guano Sub-basin (Assessment 2010)
- Harney/Malheur Lakes Sub-basin (Assessment 2001)
- Silver Creek Sub-basin (Assessment 2000)
- Silvies Sub-basin (Assessment 2000)
- Thousand Virgin Sub-basin (Assessment 2010)

These seven sub-basins cover a significant area in the region—6.3 million acres, or 11,395 square miles. The Council’s first project was to conduct assessments of each of the seven sub-basins. These watershed assessments were conducted on a much larger, general scale than the OWEB manual was developed for, simply due to the enormous size of the watersheds.

Council Projects

Juniper Management Projects Early projects of the Council focused on uplands with a number of small and large juniper management projects. The Council was successful with several very large projects within the North Steen’s area, partnering with BLM to address this issue at a landscape scale to make more of an impact. The Council administered a grant, partnering with both the local BLM and the Eastern Oregon Ag Research Center to produce an educational video on how juniper has expanded its range over the past 100 years, and the work being done to reduce the effects of juniper encroachment on the landscape.

Groundwater Projects Starting in 2006 the Council shifted its focus to the groundwater situation within the basin. Council members were concerned with the large number of water right applications being submitted to the State with the increase of alfalfa hay production within the community. Several grants moved through hiring a consultant and a geologist to begin looking through well logs to create a picture of the basin’s geology. This continued on through to 2015/16 when the Water Resources Department stopped additional permits being processed to begin an extensive groundwater study and declared an “Area of Concern” due to declining groundwater levels. Also in 2016 the Council was awarded a ‘Place Based Planning Pilot’ project grant to form a collaborative to create a water plan for the future of both ground and surface water for the community.

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History, continued

Partnering with Harney Basin Wetlands Initiative In 2011 the Council joined with other interested parties to form the Harney Basin Wetlands Initiative (HBWI). This group formed after participating in a new planning approach shared by the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge, one that allowed partners to help develop the new 15-year Comprehensive Conservation Plan for the Refuge. Since that time the Council has acted as fiscal agent for a number of HBWI grants that are helping to improve and protect flood irrigation within the valley, and to help restore Malheur Lake back to a healthy state.

Education through Range Camps In keeping with an educational focus, the Council has partnered with the Eastern Oregon Agricultural Research Center in its development of two Range Camps. Starting in 2011, the group has developed curriculum for both high school and college age students to learn about high desert ecosystems and how they work. High School Camp started in 2011, with College Camp starting a few years later. Treasure Valley Community College, the Pacific Northwest Section of the Society for Range Management and professors from the University of Nevada, Reno, worked to offer a camp for Natural Resource majors at colleges throughout the west. These camps also present future opportunities for students as they move forward into the workforce.

Throughout the Watershed Council's history, its work has focused on partnering to benefit Harney County's natural resources. Members of the Board and staff over the years have been committed to conserving and sustaining the natural resources on which the rural economy depends. Additionally, the Council remains committed to providing educational opportunities. There will always be plenty of work to do and the Watershed Council exists because community members believe Harney County is a special place in the world that deserves our attention.

III. Strategic Plan Overview

STRATEGIC ISSUES & GOALS

A Strategic Issue is a fundamental policy choice or change challenge or opportunity affecting an organization's *mission, products, programs, or service level and mix, clients or users, costs, financing, structure, processes, or management.*

The Prep Team looked for patterns around issues and opportunities for HCWC based on the contextual information they had been reviewing (mission; vision; input from internal and external stakeholders; trends and data; prior strategic plan). The Prep Team determined that there were **five Strategic Issues** that showed up repeatedly across the contextual information:

- **Build Board Capacity**
- **Outreach/Public Relations/Communicating with the community**
- **Partnerships & Collaborations**
- **Funding**
- **Build Our 'People Capacity'**

The Strategic Issues were prioritized with an eye on up to 2-3 Strategic Issues to work on in the first year of the strategic plan (it would not be feasible to work on all of the Issues at once based on people, time and other resources available). As the initial prioritized issues are addressed, HCWC will move on to working on the remaining issues over the next 2-3 years of the strategic plan. The Team decided to focus on the following **two Strategic Issues** and identified the Goal(s) to address the issues:

2020 – 2021 YEAR ONE PRIORITY STRATEGIC ISSUES & GOALS

STRATEGIC ISSUE 1: Funding

GOAL 1: By the end of year one, identify and pursue opportunities to supplement and diversify our funding stream.

STRATEGIC ISSUE 2: Community Awareness

GOAL 2: By the end of year one, develop an outreach/PR plan to increase the awareness and understanding of the HCWC within the community.

IV. Programs and Services

A Program Review Team reviewed current programs and services to identify current issues for each program area and potential strategies to address those issues.

A **Future Growth Strategy** was identified for each program based on its relevance to the organization's mission and for its ability to meet community needs, provide results, maintain a competitive position, and for its potential for increased efficiency. One of four **Future Growth Strategies** was recommended:

- ***Increase***
- ***Maintain***
- ***Decrease***
- ***Eliminate or Discontinue***

Staffing plans for each of the fiscal years of the plan reflect the recommended level of staffing needed for projected programs and services. A summary of projected staffing needs can be found on page 19, '*Total Projected Staffing Needs.*'

COMMUNITY BASED WATER PLANNING

PURPOSE HCWC supports the Community Based Water Planning Collaborative in its efforts to plan for the future of Harney County’s water resources to reduce groundwater declines within the basin, and to maintain a valuable resource into the future.

<input type="checkbox"/> Addressed	Issues	Strategies/Actions/Opportunities	Who	By When
<input type="checkbox"/> 1	funding			
<input type="checkbox"/> 2	Partnering with college groups			
<input type="checkbox"/> 3				

PROJECTED SERVICE NUMBERS

(SERVICE UNIT: Water users of Harney County)

FY2019-2020	FY2020-2021	FY2021-2022	FY2022-2023
Base Year Completed	Current Year (projected to 6/30/21)	Projected Annually	
Number Served annually includes all water users in Harney County			

PROJECTED STAFFING NEEDS

Full Time Equivalents (1.0 = full-time; .5 = half-time, etc)

Job Title	Base Year Completed	Current Year (projected to 6/30/21)	Projected annually	
	FY2019-2020	FY2020-2021	FY2021-2022	FY2022-2023
HCWC coordinator	.2	.2	.2	.2
CBWP Project Coordinator	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
CBWP Plan Writer	.5	.5	.5	.5
CBWP Facilitator	.2	.2	.2	.2
Copy editor			.1	.1
TOTAL FTEs	1.9	1.9	2.0	2.0

➡ Future Growth Strategy: Maintain – To maintain current staff levels through the completion of phase 1 regarding groundwater and to work through Phase 2 regarding surface water.

Why this strategy? This is a commitment that was made at the beginning of the Place Based Planning grant, and should be seen to completion of a plan.

OWEB SMALL GRANTS PROGRAM

PURPOSE This program provides small grants for habitat projects totaling \$15,000 or less. HCWC provides a manager to oversee a local review team to review projects such as irrigation efficiency, juniper management, and stream and habitat restoration in order to benefit the environment.

<input type="checkbox"/> Addressed	Issues	Strategies/Actions/Opportunities	Who	By When
<input type="checkbox"/> 1	Team management		Karen	
<input type="checkbox"/> 2	Grant writing			
<input type="checkbox"/> 3				

PROJECTED SERVICE NUMBERS (SERVICE UNIT: Harney County Landowners)

FY2019-2020	FY2020-2021	FY2021-2022	FY2022-2023
Base Year Completed	Current Year (projected to 6/30/21)	Projected Annually	
6 landowners	0-2 projects	2-4 projects	2-4 projects

PROJECTED STAFFING NEEDS

Full Time Equivalents (1.0 = full-time; .5 = half-time, etc)				
Job Title	Base Year Completed	Current Year (projected to 6/30/21)	Projected annually	
	FY2019-2020	FY2020-2021	FY2021-2022	FY2022-2023
Coordinator	.2	.2	TBD	TBD
TOTAL FTEs	.2	.2	TBD	TBD

➤ **Future Growth Strategy:** Increase To work on outreach to promote the program and to implement approximately half of the funding that is available to this area. To submit 4-6 projects as funding allows.

Why this strategy? This funding helps landowners who have smaller projects to implement. The process is local and has a faster turn-around for approval of the projects, therefore implementation can begin sooner than the Open Solicitation process.

EDUCATION PROGRAM: HIGH DESERT YOUTH RANGE CAMP (HYDRC) (High School)

PURPOSE HDYRC provides opportunities for high school students to interact with scientists in the field to learn about habitat needs, restoration, and to explore future employment opportunities in the Natural Resources field.

<input type="checkbox"/> Addressed	Issues	Strategies/Actions/Opportunities	Who	By When
<input type="checkbox"/> 1	fundraising			
<input type="checkbox"/> 2	Fiscal services			
<input type="checkbox"/> 3				

PROJECTED SERVICE NUMBERS

(SERVICE UNIT: # up to 25 students)

FY2019-2020	FY2020-2021	FY2021-2022	FY2022-2023
Base Year Completed	Current Year (projected to 6/30/21)	Projected Annually	
12	25	25	25

HOW MANY STUDENTS EACH YEAR?

PROJECTED STAFFING NEEDS

Full Time Equivalents (1.0 = full-time; .5 = half-time, etc)				
Job Title	Base Year Completed	Current Year (projected to 6/30/21)	Projected annually	
	FY2019-2020	FY2020-2021	FY2021-2022	FY2022-2023
Coordinator	.1	.1	.1	.1
TOTAL FTEs	.1	.1	.1	.1

➡ **Future Growth Strategy:** Maintain – Continue to support and manage finances for the school, to promote the program and to help with fundraising.

Why this strategy? This project helps to fulfill the Council’s desire to help educate young people in learning how to understand habitats that surround us daily, and to offer insight to possible careers for their future.

EDUCATION PROGRAM: SCIENCE IN THE SAGEBRUSH STEPPE (College Students)

PURPOSE Open to Natural Resource clubs from numerous colleges around the western states to give students an opportunity to interact with scientists in the field to learn about habitat needs, restoration, and to explore future employment opportunities in the field.

<input type="checkbox"/> Addressed	Issues	Strategies/Actions/Opportunities	Who	By When
<input type="checkbox"/> 1	fundraising			
<input type="checkbox"/> 2	Fiscal services			
<input type="checkbox"/> 3				

PROJECTED SERVICE NUMBERS (SERVICE UNIT: College Students)

FY2019-2020	FY2020-2021	FY2021-2022	FY2022-2023
Base Year Completed	Current Year (projected to 6/30/21)	Projected Annually	
60	45	45	45

PROJECTED STAFFING NEEDS

Full Time Equivalents (1.0 = full-time; .5 = half-time, etc)				
Job Title	Base Year Completed	Current Year (projected to 6/30/21)	Projected annually	
	FY2019-2020	FY2020-2021	FY2021-2022	FY2022-2023
Coordinator	.1	.1	.1	.1
TOTAL FTEs	.1	.1	.1	.1

➡ **Future Growth Strategy:** Maintain – Continue to support and manage finances for the school, to promote the program and to help with fundraising.

Why this strategy? This project helps to fulfill the Council’s desire to help educate young people in learning how to understand habitats that surround us daily, and to offer insight to possible careers for their future.

EDUCATION PROGRAM: FAIR IN THE FIELD (Middle School)

PURPOSE Fair in the Field gives local middle school students an opportunity to learn about the work of the partners of Harney Basin Wetlands Initiative (HBWI) in the local community.

<input type="checkbox"/> Addressed	Issues	Strategies/Actions/Opportunities	Who	By When
<input type="checkbox"/> 1				
<input type="checkbox"/> 2				
<input type="checkbox"/> 3				

PROJECTED SERVICE NUMBERS

(SERVICE UNIT: Middle School Students)

FY2019-2020	FY2020-2021	FY2021-2022	FY2022-2023
Base Year Completed	Current Year (projected to 6/30/21)	Projected Annually	
80	0	45	45

PROJECTED STAFFING NEEDS

Full Time Equivalents (1.0 = full-time; .5 = half-time, etc)

Job Title	Base Year Completed	Current Year (projected to 6/30/21)	Projected annually	
	FY2019-2020	FY2020-2021	FY2021-2022	FY2022-2023
	Coordinator	.01	0	.01
TOTAL FTEs	.01	0	.01	.01

➡ **Future Growth Strategy:** Maintain – To continue to partner with HBWI and improve opportunities for youth to learn about our watersheds.

Why this strategy? This project helps give youth an opportunity to learn about habitat restoration that is taking place in their community.

WELL MONITORING PROGRAM

PURPOSE This project provided a local person to monitor static water levels three to four times per year to track levels.

<input type="checkbox"/> Addressed	Issues	Strategies/Actions/Opportunities	Who	By When
<input type="checkbox"/> 1	OWEB grant ended in summer 2020. HCWC board to decide if funding should be sought.		HCWC board	
<input type="checkbox"/> 2				

PROJECTED SERVICE NUMBERS

(SERVICE UNIT: individuals in the Greater Harney Valley Area of Concern)

FY2019-2020	FY2020-2021	FY2021-2022	FY2022-2023
Base Year Completed	Current Year (projected to 6/30/21)	Projected Annually	
50	50	TBD	TBD

PROJECTED STAFFING NEEDS

Full Time Equivalents (1.0 = full-time; .5 = half-time, etc)

Job Title	Base Year Completed	Current Year (projected to 6/30/21)	Projected annually	
	FY2019-2020	FY2020-2021	FY2021-2022	FY2022-2023
	Coordinator	.01	.01	0
TOTAL FTEs	.01	.01	0	0

➡ **Future Growth Strategy:** Discontinue – This project may not be continued, due to the groundwater study by USGS/OWRD completing their project.

Why this strategy? This project was to add additional wells to the OWRD/USGS groundwater study project, to include a wider area of wells by engaging those people who were uncomfortable with State personnel entering their properties, and to offer a way to “double check” several wells that the department was also monitoring. The USGS & OWRD have completed their four-year groundwater study and are submitting their report to the Oregon Water Resources Commission. At this time it is not recommended to continue monitoring until the Basin Rules are changed.

OWEB OPEN SOLICITATION GRANTS

PURPOSE This program provides opportunities for a range of projects through OWEB's programs. Currently the only open project we have is the Evapo-Transpiration Monitoring to know how much water crops are using and transpiring in to the atmosphere. This information can help irrigators to know how much water to apply to meet crop needs, but still conserve groundwater by not overwatering.

<input type="checkbox"/> Addressed	Issues	Strategies/Actions/Opportunities	Who	By When
<input type="checkbox"/> 1	Development of projects			
<input type="checkbox"/> 2	Continued dam replacement with HBWI			

PROJECTED SERVICE NUMBERS

(SERVICE UNIT: Local Agricultural Users/landowners/land managers)

FY2019-2020	FY2020-2021	FY2021-2022	FY2022-2023
Base Year Completed	Current Year (projected to 6/30/21)	Projected Annually	
50	50	50	50

PROJECTED STAFFING NEEDS

Full Time Equivalents (1.0 = full-time; .5 = half-time, etc)

Job Title	Base Year Completed	Current Year (projected to 6/30/21)	Projected annually	
	FY2019-2020	FY2020-2021	FY2021-2022	FY2022-2023
Coordinator	.2	.2	.2	.2
TOTAL FTEs	.2	.2	.2	.2

➡ **Future Growth Strategy:** Increase -To submit one to two open solicitation grants per grant cycle.

Why this strategy? This area has been one of the main sources of funding for projects for the Council and should continue into the future. Projects within this category are the purpose of our Mission and Vision.

HARNEY BASIN WETLANDS INITIATIVE FOCUSED INVESTMENT PROJECT

PURPOSE This project has been working to restore Malheur Lake to a healthy ecosystem and to protect and enhance wet meadow habitat in the Harney Basin. The project also benefits local surface water irrigators by improving infrastructure.

<input type="checkbox"/> Addressed	Issues	Strategies/Actions/Opportunities	Who	By When
<input type="checkbox"/> 1	Submission of application for second FIP			
<input type="checkbox"/> 2	Continue partnership			

PROJECTED SERVICE NUMBERS

(SERVICE UNIT: Number of structures designed and implemented)

FY2019-2020	FY2020-2021	FY2021-2022	FY2022-2023
Base Year Completed	Current Year (projected to 6/30/21)	Projected Annually	
2	1-2	TBD	TBD

PROJECTED STAFFING NEEDS

Full Time Equivalents (1.0 = full-time; .5 = half-time, etc)

Job Title	Base Year Completed	Current Year (projected to 6/30/21)	Projected annually	
	FY2019-2020	FY2020-2021	FY2021-2022	FY2022-2023
Coordinator	.2	.2	.2	.2
TOTAL FTEs	.2	.2	.2	.2

➡ **Future Growth Strategy:** Maintain – The Partnership within this effort benefits both the Council and the community we serve and is consistent with the Mission and Vision of the Watershed Council. The Council will strive to continue to be an asset to the Collaborative. The collaborative will be working to submit a second Focused Investment Application, if not successful, projects will be folded into OWEB open solicitation.

Why this strategy? The community we serve and local landowners benefit from improving outdated infrastructure and this also benefits the wildlife of our community.

TOTAL PROJECTED STAFFING NEEDS

Full Time Equivalents (1.0 = full-time; .5 = half-time, etc.)				
Job Title	Base Year Completed	Current Year (projected to 6/30/21)	Projected annually	
	FY2019-2020	FY2020-2021	FY2021-2022	FY2022-2023
Coordinator	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2
CBWP project coordinator	1	1	1	1
CBWP Plan writer	.5	.5	.5	.5
CBWP facilitation	.2	.2	.2	.2
Copy Editor			.1	.1
Total FTE	2.9	2.9	3.0	3.0
<i>Volunteers*</i>				

**Volunteer time is not included in the Total FTE*

BACKGROUND

V. Fiscal Projections

Financial Projections to Support the Strategic Plan Below is a summary of actual income and expenses for the most recently completed fiscal year, FY20 and projected income and expenses for the current year, FY21, and estimated expenses and income to support FY22 and FY23.

INCOME SUMMARY: RECENT YEAR COMPLETED AND PROJECTED FUNDING SOURCES

Income	FY2019-2020 completed	FY2020-2021 Current FY (projected to 6/30/21)	FY2021-2022 projected	FY2022-2023 projected
Carryover	54,532	174,531	139,892	144,715
Grants- Gov't	1,121,925	1,001,050	293,450.00	136,500
Grants - Foundations	20,000	6,500		
Indiv Business Contrib – Range Management	6,000	4,700	6,000	6,000
Total Income (includes Carryover)	1,202,457	1,186,781	439,342	287,215

BACKGROUND

THE YEAR COMPLETED AND CURRENT YEAR SHOW FULL PARTICIPATION WITH THE HARNEY BASIN WETLANDS INITIATIVE FOCUSED INVESTMENT PARTNERSHIP AND CURRENT PROJECTS THAT HAVE ENDED THIS YEAR. PROJECTED FOR 20/22 WE WILL BE COMPLETING THE OWRD FUNDING AND HAVE NRCS FUNDING TO SUPPORT THE COLLABORATIVE. AN APPLICATION TO BUREAU OF REC-WATERSMART WAS SUBMITTED FOR \$99,000 SO SUPPORT CBWP FOR TWO YEARS. COUNCIL SUPPORT IS EXPECTED TO BE AT THE SAME LEVEL AS THE 19-21 BIENNIUM. IF SO, THIS SUPPORTS THE COORDINATOR'S SALARY AND A SMALL SHORTFALL FOR MAINTAINING THE OFFICE.

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EXPENSE SUMMARY: RECENT YEAR COMPLETED AND PROJECTED EXPENSES

Expenses	FY2019-2020 completed	FY2020-2021 Current FY (projected to 6/30/21)	FY2021-2022 projected	FY2022-2023 projected
Salaries and benefits costs (Payroll Expense)	47,234	52,922	52,922	52,922
Operations	95,558	105,930	15,345	15,345
Materials & Supplies	2,300	5,275	2,000	2,000
Contract Services	875,534	877,762	218,110	218,110
Travel	1,300	500	250	250
Range Management	6,000	4,500	6,000	6,000
Total Expenses	1,027,926	1,046,889	294,627	294,627
Revenue [Shortfall]/Overage	174,531	139,892	144,715	-7,412

Explanation

- PROJECTIONS DO NOT TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE SUBMITTED APPLICATION TO BUREAU OF REC-WATERSMART FUNDING.
- HBWI FUNDING FOR THE FOCUSED INVESTMENT ENDS JUNE 30, 2021. IF AN ADDITIONAL FIP IS NOT ATTAINED FOR HBWI ANY ONGOING STRUCTURE REPLACEMENTS WILL NEED TO GO THROUGH THE OWEB OPEN SOLICITATION PROCESS.
- COUNCIL SUPPORT FUNDING IS EXPECTED TO BE AT THE SAME LEVEL AS THE 19-21 BIENNIUM LEVEL WHICH LEAVES A SHORTFALL FOR OFFICE SUPPORT.
- IF CBWP CONTINUES ON IN FULL FORCE THROUGH 2023 ADDITIONAL FUNDING WILL NEED TO BE SOUGHT.

VI. Appendix

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APPENDIX A: CONTEXT: external and internal contextual analysis

HCWC - Trends & Demographics and Implications for Strategic Planning

Trends & Data accessed from: 2019 Harney County Entrepreneurial Ecosystem Assessment; Regional Economist Chris Rich Presentation 2017 to water collaborative; HBWI Strategic Action Plan; OSU Domestic Water Survey 2019; 2019 Community Needs Assessment Harney Early Childhood Program

HARNEY COUNTY DEMOGRAPHICS

- County population is approximately 7,300 for a county that is 10,000 square miles. Harney County is one of the largest area and least densely populated counties with 0.7 people / sq. mile. Approx. 60% of residents live in Burns/ Hines. Over the last 27 years Harney County has fluctuated by 645 people (Early Childhood 2019 Community Needs Assessment).
- Portland State University's population research center projects a slow steady decrease in Harney's overall population over the coming years. Over the past couple of years, the population has increased slightly. However, the extended forecast still calls for population decline (Chris Rich, regional economist, presentation2018)
- Median age, 46.2 years, about 20% higher than OR. Likely that the growing number of baby boomers immigration is from retirees seeking to supplement retirement by selling a higher priced home and moving into a lower priced home (Chris Rich)
- Burns Paiute Tribe has 402 enrolled members. 3.2% of the populations identify as Native American, more than double Oregon state average.

Implications & Impacts

- Our rural county is underserved and has limited capacity to take on projects but the need is great in some areas. WC is a local connector and understands local natural resource needs to enhance our natural resource based economy.

-continued

EDUCATION

- 89% of residents have high school diploma (EE Assessment)
- 19 % have a bachelor's degree
- Treasure Valley Community College and Eastern Or University offer satellite course but no higher education is based in Harney.
- In 2017-2018 Harney County SD #3 enrolled 866 students.
- There are 8 rural schools k-8, primarily one room schools and one public boarding High School in the community of Crane and a public charter school – Silvies River Charter School.

Implications and Impacts

- Watershed Council supports natural resource education and has field based education programs. We are the only like organization that has education in our mission and with the multiple rural schools and our partnerships with agencies we have the opportunity to expand field-based education programs across k-12 and college.

ECONOMIC

- Median household income is \$39, 504 – 2/3rds of Oregon State median.
- In Harney County jobs in private sector and government (including schools) is split is roughly 50/50. For Oregon overall the split roughly 83% private employment and 17% government employment. (Chris Rich)
- While the number of jobs in Oregon has grown more than 74% in the last 40 years, it has fallen in Harney County— there are 10% fewer living-wage jobs in the region now than in 1976 (Oregon Office of Economic Analysis, 1976-2016)
- Agriculture in Harney County employs approx. 1400 people approximately 19% of all employment in the county. 532 farms operate in the county. Alfalfa hay 35% of farm receipts, cattle 63% (Chris Rich)
- Public lands drive local tourism.
- Broadband internet availability is lower. Only 70% of HC households have access (U.S. Census Quickfacts 2018)

Implications and Impacts

- Supporting agriculture and ranching in a balanced ecosystem approach will enhance our rural economy.
- Entrepreneurial pursuits and employment opportunities could be tied to watershed improvement projects

-continued

- Many ranching businesses are reliant on the ecological health of flood irrigated wet meadows as a critical part of their operation for the low cost forage that they provide.
- In addition, the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge and other sites within the Harney Basin are critical for seasonal recreation which also feeds Harney County's economy each year (HBWI SAP)

LAND & NATURAL RESOURCES

- For more than ten thousand years, people have inhabited the Harney Basin and lived off its wetlands. The Wadatika people (Wada eaters) have used the lake and surrounding areas for food, medicine, shelter and spiritual centering for their people. The Burns Paiute Tribal Council recognized "the spiritual and cultural importance of Malheur Lake and its current and historic shoreline to the Burns Paiute Tribe, and that these locations hold invaluable, irreplaceable, and endangered aspects of our cultural heritage" in Resolution 2016-01. (HBWI SAP 2020)
- Over 75% of the land base is public lands.
- Large farms (over 1000 acres) account for 95% of private ownership.
- Declining groundwater resources. Since early 2016, the Oregon Water Resources Department (Department) and the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) have been working cooperatively to better understand the groundwater system in the Harney Basin
- On average, the total groundwater use (total = human + natural groundwater use) is 140 - 170% of what is recharging the basin each year. On average, the groundwater use is 50 - 60% of what is recharging the basin each year (human water use = 130,000 acre feet, recharge = 220,000-250,000 acre feet).
- Areas of obvious groundwater level declines ranging from 10s to greater than 100 feet over the past 30 years.
 - Decline rate in Weaver Springs = ~7 to greater than 12 feet per year
 - Sunset Valley-Dog Mountain = ~1 to greater than 3 feet per year
 - North of Hwy 20 between Rattlesnake & Cow Creeks = less than 2.5 feet per year to greater than 5 feet per year
 - North of Crane to Windy Point = ~0.5 to nearly 2 feet per year
 - Central Harney Valley = ~1 to nearly 4 feet per year
- Some of these areas where groundwater levels are declining the fastest (such as Weaver Springs) are where groundwater pumping wells are surrounded by lower permeability rocks and/or sediments that slow water flow to the wells and slows how quickly surrounding water can replenish the pumping area or zone where water is being removed.

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- In the Silver Creek and Virginia Valley areas, the declines are spread out over a larger area due to the more permeable geology, which allows the pumping influence to capture and more easily draw groundwater from a larger area.
 - Decline rates in Silver Creek = ~0.5 feet per year
 - Decline rates in Virginia Valley = ~1 feet per year
- An estimated 70 percent of migratory birds—including over 6 million waterbirds—annually pass through the Southern Oregon Northeast California (SONEC) region, which includes the Harney Basin wetlands (HBWI SAP 2020)
- This region is recognized internationally for its important migratory bird habitat. Oregon’s closed lakes basin wetlands are a significant portion of the greater SONEC complex of wetlands that are critical to the millions of birds traveling along the Pacific Flyway each year. The Intermountain West Joint Venture recognizes the SONEC region as one of two top priority areas in the Intermountain West for wetland-dependent birds.
- 61% of snowpack driven wetlands occur on privately owned agricultural lands, and of all irrigated lands only 7% provide this critical wetland value (Donnelly et al. 2020). The flood-irrigated wet meadows of the Harney Basin are part of this 7% irrigated agriculture footprint. The large percentage of that footprint that falls under private ownership is part of what makes conservation efforts of wet meadow habitats so complex from a socioeconomic standpoint.

Implications and Impacts

- Opportunities to work with Burns Paiute Tribe.
- Loss and degradation of wetland habitats due to dilapidated infrastructure and inability to efficiently flood irrigate.
- Altered ecological processes and function of Malheur Lake and associated wetland habitats that have resulted in a conversion from a clear water stable-state to a highly turbid stable-state due to the proliferation of invasive common carp, wind resuspension of sediments in the water column, and altered nutrient dynamics that significantly reduces vegetation otherwise available as a food source for birds and other wildlife.
- Invasive plant and macroinvertebrate species, which can reduce food production for native bird species.
- Landowner engagement is important to have impacts and get projects on the ground.

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STAKEHOLDER DATA TRENDS

- Culture of collaboration – Watershed Council has been convening a community based water planning collaborative since 2017. But multiple successful collaborative efforts have been going on and are still going on in Harney County.
- Approximately 1250 rural domestic wells in the basin.
- In a recent domestic well survey over the last 10 years, 29% of respondents reported their primary residential well experienced a decline in yield or rate. Respondents who experienced a decline, 54% reported the decline as seasonal (example: during summer or fall), 32% as constant (example: steady decline over time), and about 4% reported the decline to be both seasonal and constant (In addition, of those wells that have experienced a decline, 70% are in the Harney-Malheur sub-basin, 27% are in Silvies, 27% in Silver Creek and 1% in Donner and Blitzen sub-basins)

Implications and Impacts

- Declining ground water has concerns for adequate potable water supply in rural Harney County.
- New natural resource economy - opportunities for restoration and land stewardship. HC watershed council can be a leader in this area.
- We have built the local trust, relationships and have a deep understanding of local needs.

**Pre-Planning Questionnaire - *Board of Directors* –
Summary of Responses**

JUNE 2020 HARNEY COUNTY WATERSHED COUNCIL

SUMMARY: PRE-PLANNING QUESTIONNAIRE (7 RESPONDENTS + COORD'S)

1. *What do you believe have been the **most significant successes** that HCWC has accomplished?*
 - **Community Based Water Planning (5)**
 - The successful implementation and support to the Community Based Water Planning effort. It is obviously a work in progress & likely will continue to evolve over time as this will be a long-standing issue in Harney County. Finding the resources and staff necessary to successfully implement and support such a large undertaking is a success in itself.
 - **Bringing together diverse interests (3)**
 - Broadened diverse interest involvement and the need for a local driven groundwater study and planning effort.
 - Water collaborative support and coordination
 - **Watershed Enhancement Projects (2)**
 - Organization and implementation of watershed enhancement projects
 - Watershed assessments
 - **Educational and Information Sharing (2)**
 - I feel that the educational and information sharing accomplishments (Range Camps being big) are a great accomplishment, along with the ability to help secure grants to get work done on the ground.
 - The **field trip meetings in the summer** were awesome! A good reminder of why we do this.
 - The **Board retreat** was a good reminder of our responsibilities.

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2. *What are the 2-3 major issues facing HCWC in the next year?*

- **Board (4)**

- Increased Board member participation &/or replace non-participating Board members.
- Active, engaged Board that is well educated on wc mission and vision.

- **Outreach / Awareness / Education (4)**

- Increase general community awareness of HCWC
- Maintaining relevancy in the community

- **Limitations of Data, Studies and Information (4)**

- Dealing with reports, information and groundwater water level data and models that assume that the basin is one big bath tub without differentiation of specific aquifers and groundwater recharge. After data is summarized, models are finalized and conclusions are drawn by authors or experts, it will be more difficult to successfully make changes that reflect the deficiencies and strengths of the studies and needs of the community.
- Groundwater rule and Water Plan processes that fail to adequately consider site-specific conditions, fail to have necessary flexibility in implementation, fail to have adequate time frames for successful implementation, and fail to consider solutions such as groundwater recharge and other things that are not supported by governmental agencies.
- It will be a major challenge to actively work on major problem areas that have rapidly declining water levels but do not have clear cut boundaries. A phased implementation with different time frames and different management boundaries based on data will be very difficult to achieve because the natural inclination of people is rigidity.
- Another very major issue is the outcome of the OWRD Groundwater Study. Hopefully the study will be released to the community after peer review in the fall. How the work of the HCCBWPC enhances our community's ability to implement any number of ground water conserving initiatives is still an unknown. The credibility of the HCWC will be impacted by how the community views the outcomes of the Collaborative.

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- **Funding (3)**

- OWEB's funding crash and also the impact of lack of public funding for water resources agency, this will limit how they can engage.
- The biggest issue to face the Council in the next few years will be funding. The economic downturn in the state as a result of the pandemic has already affected grant funding opportunities because of the decline in state revenues.
- A huge hurdle that will be coming up, and really is always something on the radar, is funding. I think with some of the chaos going on right now the source of some of our funds could be something we will need to watch closely.

- **Sustainability of water Supply**

- We have been talking for five years and unable to do anything except expand extraction of water from the ground. The first thing that needs to happen is advocate for reasonable and just water laws. Our laws are 100 years out of date and were written for surface water. We have several 'serious cones of depression draining the surrounding areas and continue to pump more. This is not sustainable, nor is pumping more than the recharge.

- **Focus**

- Keeping focused on the mission

- **Water Management Planning Priorities**

- Determining significant water management planning priorities and the issues affecting successful implementation. Everybody believes their water issue is more important than everyone else's issues, so how do you successfully blend objective and subjective perspectives with other social and economic considerations.

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3. *What are the **2-3 major issues** facing HCWC in the next 2-3+ years?*

- **Funding & Resources (5)**

- Finding alternative funding
- Funding and groundwater issues will be the major factors influencing HCWC for at least the next 4-5 years.
- Continued funding for capacity support for CBWP effort
- Locating resources to implement any strategies coming from the CBWP effort
- Capacity and time will always be huge issues.

- **Planning following newly imposed water right regulation (3)**

- Planning for “worst-case scenario” of OWRD recommendations after new rules/regulations addressing the groundwater shortage are rolled out – How can HCWC support recovery / avoid local economic fallout resulting from newly imposed water right regulation.
- Water issues in general and planning processes will become more rigid and less innovative and site specific as agency functions and actions are concluded.
- It will be difficult to emphasize and encourage specific watershed enhancement projects until Rule and Plan processes are finalized.

- **Staff (2)**

- Coordinator succession planning
- Adding staff

- **Stay Relevant, Keep Community Informed (2)**

- Maintaining relevancy in the community, people should know what we DO do and what we DON'T do.

- **Community Awareness & Buy-In**

- Gaining local landowner buy-in for on-the-ground restoration projects. (increase awareness around services available through HCWC)

- **Board**

- Membership, getting new members, keeping members engaged

- **Sustainability of water supply**

- We have been talking for five years and unable to do anything except expand extraction of water from the ground. Need to advocate for reasonable and just water laws. Laws are 100 years out of date and were written for surface water. We have several 'serious cones of depression draining the surrounding areas and continue to pump more. This is not sustainable, nor is pumping more than the recharge.

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4. *Please share your recommendations about what HCWC should focus on in the next few years to strengthen the services and activities you currently provide to better accomplish your mission.*

- **Community Engagement & Awareness (3)**
 - Better social media presence (to attract more support, awareness, & participation in programs of HCWC)
 - Work on “marketing”-- I am still not sure the average Harney County resident knows what we do vs. SWCD, Harney County Court NRAC, HDP, and other natural resourced based entities. Beyond the County Fair booth, not sure how else we really engage in marketing. How do we go from being just one more group that deals with some aspects of water to being a relevant and valued part of the community at large? Telling people, bragging (as hard as that can be), marketing! We would need some advice so that it doesn’t become a burdensome exercise on just one or a few people.
 - Engage private people to bring ideas forward that would increase the innovative and creative ground and surface water projects, conservation, and management.
- **Community Based Water Planning (2)**
 - Continue support for the Community Based Water Planning effort (funding a coordinator position)
 - Completing water planning effort - that will help on the fundraising
- **Fundraising plan (2)**
 - Completing water planning effort - that will help on the fundraising
- **Education Programming (2)**
 - Ramping up education programming and how that can be funded.
 - Continued/additional focus on educational activities (such as range camps, field days, outreach, etc).
- **Board recruitment & engagement**
- **Site-specific projects** could provide an opportunity to demonstrate what works and what is important and the HCWC should find out-of-the-box projects that could help facilitate common sense solutions to identified problems. Micro water management, conservation, recharge and monitoring projects that are ongoing could become the center piece of water planning functions.

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5. Please share any concerns you would like to explore with other members during the planning process.

- Board participation & recruitment (2)
- Find ways to project a short term planning process (3-7 years) forward to a long term community need of 10, 20, and 30 years.
- Avoid having water issues move to a rigid governmental process that does not adapt and change as conditions change. A good example is the BLM's national effort to help protect sage grouse habitat (RMP Sage Grouse Amendments) has shut down all prescribed burning in Oregon, even in areas that are not sage grouse habitat. Until this Amendment is changed many watersheds will decline as juniper dominates sagebrush habitats increasing bare ground and erosion with a corresponding sage grouse habitat decline. Managers inside and outside BLM advocating for prescribed burning for watershed enhancement, reduction of wildfire risk and better sage grouse habitat in site specific areas have rigidly had the most important management tool removed from their use. Let us not do this with water issues before us.
- How to formalize WC as a partner in other collaboratives
- [Meeting management tools] would be fantastic.
- I have concerns with the capacity and commitment of our volunteer Board members, our staff capacity and ability to organize everything that needs to be accomplished and will need to be added if focuses expand.

Anything Else?

- COVID -19 - this could be a major impact to WC. All the more important to do this plan.
- Water-based planning has dominated our discussions and efforts and I wonder if some of the folks, that are not involved in it, are becoming disinterested with the Council.

Harney County Watershed Council

STAKEHOLDER SUMMARY REPORT

August 2020 (based on 14 Stakeholders Interviewed)

Background To help gather information from stakeholders about their view of the current, as well as the possible future state of HCWC, Board members and staff interviewed fourteen stakeholders. Frequency of response is noted in the parenthesis following the respective response as well as a sampling of the responses. The questions asked and summary of responses are listed below.

1a. On a scale of 1-4 (4 = highest), how familiar are you with HCWC and its mission or purpose?

Rating (lowest to highest)	'1'	'2'	'3'	'4'
# of respondents	2	4	8	2

1b. How you describe HCWC to a friend? (sampling of comments)

'1' - (2)

- Don't really know about the Watershed Council, how do you work with NRCS and how is funding applied in the county?

'2' - (4)

- The WC itself is a tough one—gets confused with all the other water issues. Is it the coordinated local group that brings forward water issues?
- An organization that works with landowners and managers to develop land management actions to sustain productivity of the land. Acts as a coordination piece for the gap between planning and implementation. If someone needs a good place to go talk about watershed issues, HCWC is a place to do that.

'3' - (8)

- The Watershed Council is charged with monitoring the health of the watershed and how it is managed and maintained.
- They do a lot of different things so it's tough to describe. It's an organization that looks at the whole watershed & identifies issues / problems & looks to seek solutions to those problems by working with other organizations / landowners, seeking funding, etc.
- Some familiarity with the work of the WC through my association with High School Range Camp--helped with this in the past. Also received some funding from the WC for field trips for my high school science classes.

'4' - (2)

- A resource for landowners and land managers in Harney Co to help implement conservation and restoration activities. Actions include irrigation water management, ground water resource management, rangeland health, livestock management, wet meadow preservation and conservation, and invasive species management. HCWC is also active in natural resource monitoring, stakeholder engagement, and technical assistance activities in Harney County.

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2. **Which (if any) of our recent projects are you familiar with? *Note: This shows only the number of 'yes' responses—some respondents said 'no' and others seemed to list only the projects they were familiar with, likely indicating a 'no' response by default, for those they were not familiar with.***

- **Community-based Water Planning - Yes, (7)**
 - informed & involved; fully familiar
- **Range Camps - Yes, (6)**
 - Loosely involved before all this blew up – Karen was asking me to come & present @ it – don't know a ton about it, but know of it & that they host it.
 - BLM has, does, and can offer staff up to help with range camp(s).
- **Small Grant Programs - Yes (5)**
 - Small grant program, mechanism to reengage BLM into those projects, such as juniper treatment or invasive species management (ie. invasive annual grass).
 - From the OWEB perspective – I know that locally it goes through the Watershed council, & that it's reviewed by the local Board.
- **HCWC's partnering with Harney Basin Wetlands Initiative projects - Yes (6)**
 - Yes, working to implement diversion dams, irrigation, etc...
 - Wetland Initiative I am very up to date & involved with that.
- **Any others?**
 - Fair in the Field – participated in this. Local liaison to OWEB – @ a local level.
 - Council capacity, monitoring, and technical assistance.
 - Various County Commissioners mentioned knowing about WC through our newsletter, know about Range Camp, and most all know that we are involved in Community-based water planning. Commissioners were not aware of small grants projects, WC partnering with HBWI.
 - All PBP
 - Watersmart grant to do groundwater work.
 - Not feeling as connected as in the past, seemed like there was a stronger direct connection to OWEB (and associated projects) in the past. Used to run a lot of projects through other organizations (e.g. RMEF). Wildfire Collaborative (HDP) could engage more or could engage the HCWC more, not sure how responsibilities fall out on that. Restoration collaborations seems like agency energy has shifted to those efforts perhaps away from participating in the HCWC. HBWI, BLM is partner agency working with neighboring landowners alongside the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge. This is also tied to the HCWC indirectly since they work with the Refuge and private landowners. May be opportunities to reengage there.
 - juniper treatment projects

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3. Do you have any recommendations about how HCWC can better meet current needs and future needs in the community?

- **Continue current efforts around Community Based Water Planning (4)**
 - With the Water Planning Coordination I think they're doing everything they can. What more could you expect? – that's a huge effort to coordinate.
 - In the past I think there was a lack of clarity & focus about what we're going to fix – but that's a moot point now with the water planning effort underway. That's the issue you're addressing now.
- **Community Outreach/Convenor Role (4)**
 - Also would continue outreach on water quantity issues.
 - More education to the community marketing effort --how does it help the community just not the Rancher and farmer
 - County Commissioners asked how we are reaching the ag community?
 - NRCS, can we get more involved in coordinating between public and private landowners, could HCWC help with that effort? Just anything that helps connect private and public land management would be good. Working on strategies to do more and better than “random acts of management”, can we create something on a larger watershed or regional-like scale. Can the HCWC create forum to discuss such land management and watershed challenges? Something to identify the issues, and the sub issues. I.e. issue is sage-grouse, sub issue is invasive annual grass. How do we connect these pieces, how might HCWC fit into this discussion?
- **Staffing/Increase Capacity to Meet Community Needs (3)**
 - When funding is again available I suggest increasing staff from the current 1 FTE to 2 or 3 FTE's. This would increase the Council's reach, capacity, and service to the Harney County community.
 - Helpful might be to have another full time staff? Even part time help could help with all that the Council is involved with.
 - We could institutionalize the (community water) plan but we would need capacity. This would need to be built into the organization. We need someone with a lot of hustle to connect dots. Achieving sustainable groundwater is going to be a huge lift. Need to position the WC as trusted voice on these issues. Need to bolster the reputation of WC by demonstrating what we can accomplish and have accomplished. Attracting talent to the basin might change this. How to attract natural resource professionals?
- **Education/Involvement of Students (2)**
 - I would suggest making lessons for teachers specific to our Harney County Area.
 - HCWC could interact with students in our county school districts. Helps introduce students to environmental issues early, especially local issues with relevance to students' own experiences.

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- **Staying Nimble While Helping Meet Community Needs/Empowering Community (1)**
 - I see that WC is critical to carrying out projects of community significance that other organizations or agencies might not be in their mission, with water planning there are a lot of government agencies that cannot pull off projects that WC could. There are other organizations with more specific missions and WC can be more nimble and filling in gaps. Lots of things people want to see happen but they can't do. Tangible example – ET data gap – as an agency we weren't willing to put forward the resources and pursued funding to fill that gap. Government is more cautious actors. And this project would not be happening without WC and what is really great about it there is more ownership from the community and more power to the community with WC as a partner and also OWRD is taking this project more seriously.
- **Better Coordination (with other organizations and agencies) (1)**
 - Harney County is a tough place to work. Seems like there are 3 organizations here that sort of do similar things – could be competing with each other potentially (HDP, HCWC, SWCD) Could be a little better coordination between organizations about divvying up resources or finding resources together.

4. About the organization:

a. What do you think we do well as an organization?

- **Collaborative Work (5)**
 - Doing “collaborative” work is difficult and the WC is commended for its ability to do this work. “Community based work is very important.”
 - Getting everyone involved – getting a lot of folks involved, a big Board that is aiming to encompass all areas in Harney County. I see a great willingness in the watershed council and as an organization that is not afraid to take action. I see you as a group of people who are willing to try things and go after things in a strategic way.
 - Good partners, and work collaboratively and cooperatively. Do a good job at engaging. Landowners are engaged and can have a lot of varying perspectives and work to find common ground.
 - Placed Based Planning for ground water issues, especially listening to the larger community including private and public entities and tackling complex issues.
- **Engaging Youth (2)**
 - The work done around engaging youth is important to big picture and building awareness in community and bringing people in the community together about what it means to live and work in Harney County.
 - Range camp, a good program for outreach.
- **Responsive and Supportive Staff (2)**
 - Karen will do everything she can to complete reports & maintain communication w/ OWEB grants, exemplary in grant administration. Goes above & beyond to help out partners.

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- Karen is very responsive on grant admin and she is understanding and generous. As a partner I feel well cared for at the Watershed Council.
- **Reliable, Consistent Presence (1)**
 - This council has been present and consistent for many years, is known, and that is the strength of the organization. Coordination, acting as fiscal agent for project implementation, stakeholder engagement, and community engagement are strong points of the Council.
- **Communication and Accessibility (1)**
 - You seem to communicate well. You make information available through the website. Your office is also very accessible right on HWY 20 in Hines. Knowledgeable people involved with the group.
- **The small grant program (1)**
- **Good Use of Technology (1)**

b. How could we improve the quality of our services/activities?

- **More Outreach--Get the Word Out (4)**
 - Get the word out to the public about the good work we were engaged in.
 - Communicate what is going on other than Placed Based Planning. Other things seem to have disappeared or shrunk into the groundwater issue. Communicate that Placed Based planning is a priority and the focus now when compared to work that was the priority in the past.
 - Doesn't seem like the opportunities about the small grant program is well known. Maybe more outreach. Seems like there's a lot of the same folks getting funding over & over.
- **Staffing (2)**
 - Again, I think increasing staff is necessary. Staffing positions for Administration and Business Operations, Project Management, and perhaps Monitoring would be good general job positions at the Council.
 - Capacity – 1 staff doing it all right now. Bring in some more help. It would depend what you're looking to improve on, as to who you would add / recruit.
- **Prepare for Growth (2)**
 - Challenges you have are monumental and WC is not set up in any way to tackle the issues ahead of us. There is a lot at play and stake here. No one is going to shower you with money and there is the need for the hustle, finding funding, communicating success. I say this in the nicest possible way WC is like a nice Mom & Pop organization and we need to figure out how to grow – we need more people. Finding someone to take it and go with it. Where things were a couple years ago, where we are now, and where things need to be. No one is actually showing up to help.

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- Take some things out of the planning to aggressively move forward to bring in more funding and more people. We can use the attention that is currently focused on Harney Basin because of the groundwater issues and we can use it to boost our capacity, it won't last forever. We do have things other basins don't have right now. Hard to capitalize on crisis. In Harney County our community narrative that says "we got this" but that story doesn't bring resources to the community. Need to figure out what do we say to others to stay in game.
- **Engage Youth (2)**
 - Work to engage students, especially middle school age, especially through involving them in the field.
 - Agency/scientists working in the field may use YouTube as a teaching tool to engage students in field work being done locally.
- **Be a Neutral Presence (1)**
 - Stay out of the community drama so it doesn't come back to the organization. Might have a reputation of supporting the irrigators. Might be a perception that if you are about watershed health you shouldn't serve the irrigators. Get back to the core of being a balanced entity to serve the community. Laurie O'Connor being denied (out voted to join the Board), the message is sent reverberate to the broader community. These things will distract and how to minimize the drama.

c. Where should we grow?

- **Staffing (5)**
 - Capacity – Identify where & how / what are you trying to accomplish by growing & that would dictate who you need to hire. Maybe thinking of it like this: if we weren't doing the water planning effort – what would we do, what would we be able to pick up that other organizations aren't already addressing. Others like SWCD & HDP – there's not a lot of effort towards fisheries in Harney County. Might ask what is most limiting to fisheries in this basin & address those things... An additional thing could be a similar model to Carlton's position that partners w/ SWCD.
 - Does the mission/objective match the staffing? Consider capacity, building capacity (address in strategic plan). Does the HCWC need to grow or maintain the current structure?
 - Another year round staff, keep the office.
- **Education (2)**
 - An area of growth again would be offering services to educators, e.g. a local water resources field trip, or field work done in collaboration with the WC would be an opportunity to engage students.
 - Internships through the WC. *(Noted that Amy is hoping that this year a local internship program for high school students will get off the ground. WC could play a role.)*

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- **Outreach (2)**

- Grow in public relations / communication. Possibly articles in the newspaper, pamphlets, update to website. Shift from passive to active. Figure out how best to publicize work amidst a shift to online/electronic formats.
- The office is good community awareness and helps to promote the Council

d. What do we need to let go of? (3 different ideas were shared)

- Not knowing the full extent of your plate I couldn't possibly see of letting go of anything. Can't pull out of water planning, can't pull out of the FIP, must maintain connection to OWEB. I think you've got to keep doing what you're doing.
- The work load that cannot be accomplished efficiently and effectively with current staffing.
- Don't know enough to completely answer this, let go of Board structure in unpopulated areas (ie. Guano)? Tragedy of a system with volunteer Boards comprised of areas with few people to volunteer.

e. Please share any ideas about how we can get the word out about HCWC.

- **Social Media/Website (4)**

- Posting pictures of field work on Instagram with links to our WC Website.
- Social media, unknown - try it? Multi-faceted approach to reach a larger crowd. Responsive based on media - type, put an article in the paper is one thing, maybe done once a month. Website, update monthly. Social media update weekly or responsive constantly. Set the expectation of information being put out there, just listening vs. active engagement/feedback expected. Maybe a good communication conduit for those who can't move quickly.
- Social media is the ticket. FS has had experience with this. Newspaper is good, email is good. FS may have an example, depends on the Public Affairs Officer as to what the process is. Find someone who likes social media to post content. It can help people to get the real scoop, and see what the trolls are on about.
- Keep working to get the word out, webpage is good – perhaps look into tracking more on webpage interaction.

- **Community Events and Via Projects (3)**

- Already go to fair & some other things to get the word out.
- I guess showcasing any successful projects – show what it meant for the landowners & also how it helped out the HCWC organization to have those projects happen.
- Connections with youth through Range Camp, when kids get involved the parents.

- **Word of Mouth/Via Individuals/Newsletter/Maintain a Positive Reputation (3)**

- Individual meetings and newsletters
- General education to the public – more information on small grants

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- **Partners/Align with Other Agencies, etc. (3)**
 - Finding allies and organizations that are at the bigger scale and asking them to help you understand their communications channels to help get our word out. How do they work, who do they talk to and how to talk with the decision makers, who do you email and listserves and each agency has a communication system but find the allies within. Finding out how to engage with all the partners, and putting our work on others radars.
 - Not really – But there might be opportunities partnering with the High Desert Partnership to showcase the partnership with what the HCWC is doing. Highlight complementary efforts – like SWCD & stuff too. Keeping the Website updated is pretty critical.
 - Continue to utilize partnerships with HDP, SWCD, DU, and others.
- **“Packaged” Presentation (group)**
 - The 3 County Commissioners *would like to have a 5-minute presentation type outreach for them to use when they talk about the county or are in places where they are asked about the watershed council they can help with our outreach. They would like to be able to speak in an informed way about WC.*

Additional Comments from County Commissioners that were interviewed:

- Overall commissioners don’t know a tremendous amount of our work, we have a new commissioner assigned to the council and she has been attending meetings but they offered a few items below.
- Commissioners wanted to know about how WC intersected with land use planning? (I really don’t know)
- They think our role in leading the water discussions is quite important and appreciate us taking the lead in this important issue. They feel it is important that Harney County have that our residents feel they own the water plan and is truly our vision.
- The economic concerns are particularly elevated now and if WC can help bridge the water planning work with the economic issues we are facing that would be good.

5. External impacts: What trends external to HCWC might positively or negatively impact our ability to achieve our mission (e.g. political, economic, social, technological, demographic, legal or other trends)? What ideas do you have about how to deal with these trends?

- **Politics (9)**
 - The politicization of science both in our national conversation and in schools, noting that science is [often] perceived as liberal. Sometimes hard to get people to accept the science. It works both ways. See a lot of push for a political stance (ie. climate change). That’s not our role. Our job is to teach the science! We need to keep politics out of it!”
 - Water rights – land use – the current water issues. Positive – the ongoing education of the GW study

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- State government is not actually set up to involve the public. Any chance you can comment on how the bigger slice is not serving us. We pay a lot of lip service to communities and power structure is not oriented to organizations like WC.
- Build a structure to have support quickly. Always public comment opportunities, they are short & sheer quantities of comments & issues appropriate for WC.
- What are safe issues that won't polarize your constituency. You have 10 different natural resource agencies that have specific missions.
- Connect allies and organizations – please keep us apprised of xyz.
- It's grant funded organization so you're relying on state or government funding. State funding, Politics could influence it.
- Political trends aren't very easily influenced.
- Urban development? Water needs? Housing developments pushing boundaries out towards public lands.
- **Funding (Sources, Diversification) (5)**
 - The uncertainty of our partners' budgets, and the sustainability of our funds, and you seem to be limited on who can fund you. Writing ourselves smartly into grant to make sure we are adding value.
 - Having a strategic plan to keep staff positions funded. Looking for long term funding, plus short term funding. Continuing to look for longer term funding (FIP, watersmart, etc...) other than the annual OWEB funding.
 - Diversifying funding is always a good idea & a big one. Internally, I think that Watershed Council needs to prepare for the water planning effort to not go well.
- **Planning (these comments often overlap with Politics) (4)**
 - Board needs to decide where to place energy and identify the endpoint and what the endpoint is for the partners. Focus is good however, too broad might run into problems with mission creep. Strategic plan should focus on being proactive vs. reactive. Coordination to work with neighbors to reduce overlap or duplication of work. Complimentary or synergistic is good vs. duplication.
 - Political, economic, social, most impact each other. Helping to understand more about how watersheds work and providing monitoring tools. Demographics, there is a shift from a higher median age to lower median age it seems, people may have a different generation, ideals, and acceptance of technology.
 - Urban development? Water needs? Housing developments pushing boundaries out towards public lands.
 - Have a plan about how to save face with the community in the event that it goes south. The East Side of Oregon is getting more & more like the West Side of Oregon where there are so many organizations doing similar things that they start competing with each other. Clearly Identifying who does what role's (in regard to resource concerns – Establish their niche to work within – ultimately it's a capacity thing) Establish themselves in some role (differing from SWCD & HDP) Maybe it's in-stream / fisheries related – doesn't seem to be anyone focusing on that issue in the basin really.

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- **Coronavirus (4)**
 - At the current time stay lean, save available funds, and do your best to wait out the COVID-19 pandemic.
 - Pandemic
- **Social (2)** - Social – how are elders ranched and farm and how our children and grandchildren are learning from them, yet moving into the future with regard to technology and improvements.
- **Ag is still the dominating force** here and working to improve habitats (1)

6. Anything else?

- Improved relations with the SWCD are positive
- Diversity of funding – What we're finding within DU is that the programs that had a lot of federal funding, are doing just fine. The ones that rely on State / local money are in much more dire situations. From a Covid standpoint & diversity – seeking Federal funding would be a good idea. DU has lots of NAWCA funding – when NAWCA takes a hit, DU takes a hit.
- Don't think there's much federal funding flowing through HWCW right now.
- County Commissioners would like to reconsider their co-convenor role in the water planning and perhaps appoint a commissioner to be co-convenor.
- HCWC is an important partner to BLM. Can be/has/is a conduit for private and public land management information exchange. BLM is committed to maintaining this relationship.
- Perused the website before interview, something that might be nice is an interactive map of Harney County and its watersheds. Could put the projects that have happened/happening on the map. It would be interactive that you could see where the projects are and check on a specific area and get details.
- A good add to the website would be a Table of Contents bar on the left side, rather than scrolling through the whole site. Would direct people more directly to the content they are after. Make it smart phone and/or tablet friendly. A lot of people have ditched computers for tablets.
- Joshua is interested in seeing the Strategic Plan when it is finished.
- We ended our conversation with Amy offering kudos to the Council for the work we do!

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Stakeholders Interviewed

STAKEHOLDER	ROLE
Chris Colson	Partner
Coby Mentor	Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board
Connie Robbins	Biology teacher
County Commissioners (3)	
Denise Rose	Harney County Economic Development
Harmony Burrignt	Oregon Water Resources Department
Amy Smith	Biology teacher
Shannon Kris	Superintendent, Harney County ESD
Jason Kesling	Small grant recipient
Maria Snodgrass	Oregon Department of Agriculture

APPENDIX B MONITORING and COMMUNICATING THE PLAN

Implementing and Monitoring the Plan

The Board can incorporate several actions to implement and monitor the plan:

- ✦ Make time on each month's Board agenda to check in on the plan—this might be to review overall progress on the plan or to review progress on specific goals and strategies.
- ✦ Let the 'Champs' for each Goal know when they will be responsible to provide an update on the Goal. Hold them to it.
- ✦ Set time for a plan check-in: set regular on-going check-in dates and a **full plan review and update annually**. Review progress on the plan; review and prioritize the strategies of the plan; complete the remaining Action Plan details; and determine the projected budgets for the remaining two fiscal years of the strategic plan.
- ✦ Use the Action Plans to check in on the activities that have been accomplished to ensure they are on track.
 - ◆ Assign one person to be the primary person responsible for the overall strategic plan.
 - ◆ Whenever possible, assign a Goal and its respective Action Plan to a team (at least two members!) so that team members check in with one another and help to keep one another on task.
 - ◆ If adjustments are needed, be sure to find out why.
 - ◆ Consider both positive and negative implications for making adjustments.

Communicating the Plan

Various stakeholders and other interested parties to share the plan with include:

- volunteers
- staff – existing and new
- A link to your plan on your website
- have copies available at HCWC office and events
- existing, new and prospective Board of Directors
- funders
- other community stakeholders

APPENDIX C PLANNING PARTICIPANTS

BOARD OF DIRECTORS
*indicates Prep Team member
Brenda Smith, Board Chair*, Concerned Citizen – Burns/Hines
Pat Sharp, Secretary/Treasurer*, Landowner - General
Jamie McCormack, Board Chair 2021*, Burns BLM
Brandon Haslick, Vice-Chair 2021, Burns Paiute Tribe
Rachel Beaubien, Landowner- Silvies
Angie Ketscher, Landowner – Silver Creek
Dustin Johnson, Education
Mark Owens, Landowner - General
Alexa Martinez, Environmental
Ben Cate, Sportsman
Shannon Brubacker, Harney SWCD
Kristen Shelman, Commissioner
Jeff Mackay, Malheur National Wildlife Refuge
Dave Banks, ODF & W
Chad Boyd – Eastern Oregon Ag Research Station
STAFF
Karen Moon, Coordinator*
OTHER

VII. Action Plans for Goals

Goal 1: By the end of year one, identify and pursue opportunities to supplement and diversify our funding stream.

Champ	Strategies	Year 1: 2021-2022 Actions or Steps				Resources	Notes for Year 2 & 3
		Qtr: 1 st (Jan, Feb, Mar)	Qtr: 2 nd (Apr, May, June)	Qtr: 3 rd (July, Aug, Sept)	Qtr: 4 th (Oct, Nov, Dec)	Resources: time & \$\$ (for each Action or Step)	
Karen	1. Effective budgeting; ensure realistic budgets.	a. Effective budgeting, setting realistic budget					
Brenda	2. Find potential financial forecasting assistance, current and long-term	a. Find help with financial forecasting (current year)	b. Find help with for financial forecasting (longer term)			Financial forecasting (\$2,000) for help	↑
TBA	3. Identify funding for water planning through 2023	a. Water Planning, visit with previous funders about funding further into 2022 and 2023 (ie. Foundations) (Champ TBA)				Water planning funding through 2023, cost for travel to legislature, looking for funding at per year \$120,000 for a total of \$220,000	Continuation of action steps from previous quarters
Karen, Rachel, Mark, Dustin, Brenda	4. Develop a list of potential funders; provide outreach and funding requests to selected sources	a. Identify a person to help with a list of funders, make the list (Karen, Brenda has a contact), Agency funding (Rachel)		b. Reaching out to other watershed councils to see about partnering (Karen) c. Personal outreach to funders that were identified (Mark, Dustin)	d. Submit application(s) for a new funding source(s) (Brenda)	Cost for person to help with potential funders (\$2,500) list and purpose and application help (writing?) and potentially help craft talking points	↓

CHAMP	STRATEGIES	GOAL 1: Funding, <i>continued</i> Actions or Steps				RESOURCES Resources: time & \$\$ (for each Action or Step)	NOTES FOR YEAR 2 & 3
		Qtr: 2 nd (Oct, Nov, Dec)	Qtr: 3 rd (Jan, Feb, Mar)	Qtr: 4 th (Apr, May, June)	Qtr: 1 st (July, Aug, Sept)		
Ben (Mark)	5. Develop talking points for funding, ID message and why		e. Elevator speech (talking points) for funders (Ben with Mark's help)				↑
Jamie (Pat)	6. Update website to be effective for funders to be able to find us		a. Update website for funders to find us (Jamie with help from Pat)				Continuation of action steps from previous quarters ↓

Goal 2 By the end of year one, develop an outreach/pr plan to increase the awareness and understanding of the wc within the community.

CHAMP	STRATEGIES	YEAR 1: 2020-2021 ACTIONS OR STEPS				RESOURCES	NOTES FOR YEAR 2 & 3
		Qtr: 2 nd (Oct, Nov, Dec)	Qtr: 3 rd (Jan, Feb, Mar)	Qtr: 4 th (Apr, May, June)	Qtr: 1 st (July, Aug, Sept)	Resources: time & \$\$ (for each Action or Step)	
Brenda Karen, Brenda	1. Identifying someone to help us with a plan 2. Secure funding for a plan	a. Identify who will help with plan and help implement the plan- contract with someone for this effort b. scope of work c. bids (Brenda)	Funding for the plan (Karen)			Plan development - \$3000	Most outreach is a continuous effort and will need yearly updates, Is a film option for WC outreach? \$7,500-\$10,000
Alexa	3. Find a social media wizard (volunteer or contracted?)	a. Identify who will help with social media- maybe contract with someone for this effort? b. scope of work c. bids		c. Social media going by 3 rd qtr. (Alexa)	Continuing the regular updates that we have started	Plan implementation to include elevator speech, accomplishments, web update, social media -\$5000	
Jamie, Brandon	4. Update the website	a. Begin Website revisions/ updates (Jamie, Brandon)	Link projects with pictures (Jamie)				
GOAL 2: Outreach/PR Plan, continued						RESOURCES	NOTES FOR YEAR 2 & 3

CHAMP	STRATEGIES	Actions or Steps				Resources	
		Qtr: 2 nd (Oct, Nov, Dec)	Qtr: 3 rd (Jan, Feb, Mar)	Qtr: 4 th (Apr, May, June)	Qtr: 1 st (July, Aug, Sept)		
Chad Boyd & Dustin	5. BTH newspaper/radio interviews –each monthly to keep wc at the forefront of the community			a. Start monthly newspaper articles/ radio interviews		Articles – \$1,500	Most outreach is a continuous effort and will need yearly updates, Is a film option for WC outreach? \$7,500- \$10,000
Ben, Karen	6. Provide board members with a narrative – elevator speech – we all speak the same language	a. Develop elevator speech (Ben) / List of accomplishments	b. Pair up & practice elevator speech at board mtg	c. Share at board meetings from those that got to use the elevator speech!	d. Continuing the regular updates that we have started		
Angie	7. Outreach at the fair			a. Outreach at the fair (Angie)			
Rachel, Brandon	8. Attend others’ meetings to talk about wc	a. Sign Up sheet for potential groups to present to (how many each quarter & who?)	c. Identify a list of landowners who have been recipients of grants and see if they would talk about their experiences (Rachel)	d. Outreach & present to other’s meetings (Brandon)		Other meeting outreach – possible travel costs \$1500	
	9. Develop relationships with other watershed councils-- is there a way we can help each other and on outreach/ PR in general.						