



# Harney County Watershed Council

Meeting Minutes – March 16, 2021

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 –

Silvies – Rachel Beaubien

Silver Creek – **Angie Ketscher**

Drewsey –

Landowner General – **Pat Sharp**

Burns Paiute Tribe – Brandon Haslick

## **Concerned Citizen positions:**

Burns/Hines – Brenda Smith

At Large –

General - Rep. Mark Owens

Sportsman – **Ben Cate**

Education – Dustin Johnson

Environmental – Alexa Martinez

County Court – Kristen Shelman

Harney SWCD – **Susan Doverspike**

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 – Dan Jordan – Steens Mtn. Insurance, Jason Kesling – Harney SWCD

## ***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.*



# Harney County Watershed Council

The meeting was called to order at 5:32pm. Chairman Jamie McCormack welcomed everyone to the meeting, reviewed the agenda and asked each member to share an update from their area.

Dan Jordan from Steens Mountain Insurance was present to inform the council about the insurance that the Council carries, Director and Officers insurance protects board members from litigation. Liability insurance is also carried. All OWEB requirements for insurance are being met.

After the presentation, Chairman Jamie McCormack reviewed the agenda and updates were shared.

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

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

Jeff Mackay gave an update on the Coordinating Committee and the discussions the group has had regarding process for the Collaborative. There was discussion on the small group (sub-basin) discussions that were taking place to fill out the spreadsheet that will contribute to the outline of the plan being written.

Holly Mondo emailed the following update for the period of January – March 2021

- Thirty-five people participated in the January Full Collaborative Zoom meeting. Folks heard a presentation on 2020 CBWP accomplishments and the plans/draft deliverables timeline for 2021. The following goals were set for 2021: 1) complete the groundwater phase by the end of 2021; 2) begin planning for the surface water phase by mid-2021 and; 3) launch the surface water phase by the end of 2021. During the meeting, Collaborative members saw a spreadsheet that was created to compile all the scientific/technical information that the Collaborative has learned to date and began to populate it with information. Many participants shared that the conversation would've been more productive had the spreadsheet been populated prior to the meeting.
- Thirty people participated in the February Full Collaborative Zoom meeting. Aspect Consulting gave a “kickoff presentation” to introduce Collaborative members to the Water Market Feasibility Study and answered questions. Collaborative members then jumped back in to the spreadsheet discussion—this time, the spreadsheet had been populated with information. Still, Collaborative members shared conflicting thoughts and it was recommended that small group discussions be held to populate the spreadsheet and engage folks.



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- Project staff listened to the Collaborative's feedback regarding small group conversations and the spreadsheet. So far, two small group discussions have been held where the spreadsheet was populated with information on the Silver Creek and the Donner und Blitzen sub-areas. Because conversations were productive and insightful, it's been decided to continue holding small group meetings until all sub-areas have been discussed. Project staff are selecting invitees to ensure representation; participant lists are different with each meeting. Information generated during these meetings is shared out to the larger Collaborative within one week and the spreadsheet will be updated after each small group meeting.
- There will not be a March Full Collaborative meeting. Instead, Aspect Consulting will use the time to continue to engage with the Collaborative on the Water Market Feasibility Study. The date of this meeting is Thursday, March 25 from 4-6pm (end time approximate). The Full Collaborative will reconvene on Thursday, April 22. During the month of March, project staff will be working to develop a table of contents for the groundwater portion of the plan, wrapping up Working Group Step 2 and 3 reports, and determining a process for Collaborative review of Steps 2 and 3.
- Several Collaborative members provided testimony on behalf of House Bill 3092, which aims to establish a fund for domestic well users to cost share replacing, repairing, or deepening domestic wells affected by declining groundwater levels.
- Harney County Watershed Council submitted an application to the WaterSMART Cooperative Watershed Management Program Phase 1 Funding Opportunity on January 18. If awarded, this grant would provide the CBWP with approximately \$100,000 over the course of 2 years. Thank you to all those who wrote letters of support!
- The Ecological Working Group met in February and continue to make progress on their Step 2 and 3 drafts for surface water (Phase 2).

Karen Moon gave an update on the OSU Engineering students project. The flowmeters were installed and then removed and returned to the students, we are waiting for their summary of the success of the project.

**2020 Year in Review:** Karen shared a power point presentation with Council members highlighting projects that were completed in 2020 and a review of all projects.

### **Strategic Planning**

Chairman Jamie McCormack reviewed the action plan portions of the Strategic Plan. Elements of the plan were discussed by reviewing the spreadsheets at the end of the Plan. Goals and champions were reviewed and will be included on future agendas for meetings. Budgeting, funding, developing the "elevator speech" and updating the website were noted.

**Small grant program update** Karen gave an update on the small grant program. The SWCD had submitted another application, the team reviewed and approved and a grant agreement



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was developed and forwarded to SWCD for signatures. There was discussion about posting on Facebook and also the benefits of doing direct mailing. We will continue to look for funding for a dedicated “media” person who could help.

**Board membership:** Pat Sharp and Ben Cate gave an update on a plan to approach the rural school boards to see if their facilities might be available to people in their communities to access reliable broadband to participate in watershed council, SWCD or High Desert Partnership meetings as a way to gain more diverse participation in all of our organizations.

### **New Business**

**Budget:** Karen shared a beginning budget for 2021-2022.

**NRCS local workgroup:** Several who had attended the NRCS yearly review of programs gave an update from the recent local work group meeting. One notable item was the fact that NRCS still has money to help irrigators convert from MESA to LESA sprinkler packages. Irrigators are encouraged to submit applications in April for the program.

**Discussion on moving towards in-person meetings:** There was a discussion on how people felt about moving towards meeting more in-person. Several members expressed that they are comfortable meeting together, others are still bound by their employers’ requirements. This discussion will be continued. Karen will check the OHA website to see what requirements are listed and how many are allowed in different sized spaces.

**Range Camp:** Karen had an update from EOARC that due to Federal restrictions still being uncertain that both April and June Range Camps will again be cancelled for this year.

**Minutes:** Minutes for the February meeting were reviewed along with financials, however several members had left the meeting and there was no longer a quorum, so minutes and financials will be approved at the April meeting.

**Items for next agenda on March 16, 2021 include:** Update on results of OSU engineering project. Strategic Action Plan implementation. Board recruitment.

Meeting adjourned at 7:19pm  
Karen Moon, Coordinator