



Harney County Watershed Council

Meeting Minutes – May 18, 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 –

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 – 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 healthy watersheds and thriving communities.



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The meeting was called to order at 5:35pm. Chairman Jamie McCormack welcomed everyone to the meeting, reviewed the agenda and asked each member to share who they are and what position they represent on the Council for our student guests.

Presentation by Andrew Walker and Laura Whittaker, OSU Engineering students who conducted a project to design a way to measure stock water use throughout the county using an ultrasonic flow meter sensor that he has been developing for use with the US Forest Service. The link to the Forest Service project is here:

<https://github.com/OPEnSLab-OSU/OPEnS-Lab-Home/wiki/FloDar>

The students also conducted an online survey to gain information from landowners with regards to their groundwater use. Laura Whittaker shared the results of each question with council members.

Continuing project updates/action items

Community Based Water Planning update:

Brandon Haslick shared an update from the coordinating committee. He reported that there had been one coordinating committee call since the last Council meeting. The focus on that meeting was the agenda for the next full collaborative meeting to be held on May 20, from 5:00 to 8:00pm. The format for the meeting will change due to feedback at the last meeting. The time has been shortened to 3 hours and more in the evening than at the end of the work day. The next full Collaborative meeting is this Thursday, May 20 from 5pm to 8:00pm. There will be a consensus decision on moving forward with the CREP proposal to OWEB and FSA.

Community-Based Water Planning Updates: May 2021 from Holly

- The next Full Collaborative meeting is scheduled for Thursday, May 20 from 5:00-8:00pm via Zoom. Based on feedback from Collaborative members, there will be no intro circle or updates and the closing circle will be optional. If there is a new person participating in the meeting, they will have an opportunity to briefly introduce themselves before the group dives into the agenda. Updates will be sent out bi-weekly via email. If folks are comfortable with/interested in meeting in person (as long as all COVID-related guidelines are considered), they can contact Kristen Shelman as she is coordinating a space where community members can Zoom in to the meeting together. Project staff are considering transitioning back to in-person meetings come June. The Coordinating Committee has discussed and supports offering an in-person option so long as the meeting space is outdoors or, if indoors, has good ventilation.
- At the April Full Collaborative meeting, the group gave their support on the notion that the information in DRAFT Step 2/3 Reports & Key Takeaways Documents for Groundwater Dependent Ecosystems was explored to the best extent possible using the



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best available science at the time. The Collaborative will revisit DRAFT Step 2/3 Reports for Groundwater Agricultural Use + Domestic Well/ Municipal during the May meeting. Once reviewed and supported, the Collaborative will move on to updating the Critical Groundwater Issues List and wrap up PBP Step 4 (developing solutions).

- Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB) requests the Collaborative provide a consensus deliberation on the support for the State to pursue a Harney Valley Groundwater Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) proposal. A consensus event will be held during the May 20 meeting.
- A Table of Contents (TOC) has been developed for the Groundwater Portion of Integrated Plan. Coordinating Committee has provided some input and will continue to discuss the TOC in future meetings.
- Eight small group meetings have been held to populate the spreadsheet based on sub-areas. Sub-areas discussed include: Silver Creek, Donner und Blitzen, Virginia Valley + Windy Point North, Central Harney Valley, Crane, Northeast Harney Valley, Northwest Harney Valley, and Weaver Springs/Dog Mountain. Information from such meetings has been compiled in the spreadsheet and is available to view by visiting the [CBWP Document Clearinghouse](#) page on [hcwatershedcouncil.com](#). Conversations during the small group meetings have been insightful, candid, and productive. We will discuss findings and how such information will be weaved into the groundwater plan with the Full Collaborative at a future meeting.
- DEQ's Groundwater Quality Report for Harney County has been published and can be accessed by clicking [here](#) or visiting the [CBWP Document Clearinghouse](#) webpage on [hcwatershedcouncil.com](#). A key takeaways document will be drafted and circulated soon.
- As a way to increase outreach, a blog has been started on [harneyswaterfuture.com](#). If any Collaborative/Council member is interested in writing up a short message (500 words or less?) that they'd be comfortable sharing with the broader community, please contact Holly at holly@hcwatershedcouncil.com at your earliest convenience. The scope of the blog should be focused on groundwater in the Harney Basin, but topics can vary. A blog will be posted every month and suggestions on topics are welcome!
- The Aspect Team continues to make progress on the Groundwater Market Feasibility Study. They have been focused on stakeholder engagement and are now shifting to content development.

Karen Moon gave a short update from the CREP technical team meeting that was held on April 28th to review the final draft of the document.



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Strategic Planning

Chairman Jamie McCormack reviewed the action plan portions of the Strategic Plan. Ben Cate was not present this evening but it was reported that work on the “elevator speech” was being passed on to Mark Owens. Jamie McCormack and Dustin Johnson committed to discussing the possibility of a radio interview. Jamie McCormack and Pat Sharp committed to working on a newspaper article regarding the council and will try to have a start for the June meeting.

Brenda Smith has done some research into a contractor to help with a communications plan, so far everyone she has found has been very expensive.

Dustin Johnson asked if OWEB is funding updates to watershed assessments. Karen Moon will research to see if there is a grant that could fit for this much needed project.

Board membership: With Ben Cate moving on to ODF & W there are several openings available for the Council. Last month Ben had stated he would think of one or two recommendations to replace his position. After discussion, Karen will work on doing more advertising for council members to fill the vacant positions.

21-22 Budget: Karen shared the draft budget with the Council. Karen will be checking with Oster’s Professional group to make sure that numbers are as correct as possible and will send out prior to the June meeting.

New Business

DEQ Water Quality Report: The DEQ water quality report was published and shared last month just after our monthly meeting. Karen shared the Executive Summary with council members. A link to the report will be emailed to council members and listed on the HCWC website.

Minutes: Minutes for the April meeting were reviewed. After discussion Pat Sharp moved to accept the minutes as presented. Brenda Smith seconded and the motion passed.

There was again discussion on moving to a more hybrid meeting with some people meeting in person starting at the June meeting. Brenda Smith reported that she had borrowed the Owl to see how it worked and HDP will be ordering one soon. Discussion centered around use of the Owl, perhaps at the Community Center, or if people feel comfortable at the HCWC office for the June meeting. We will wait to see if there are any new recommendations from the CDC before moving to in person meetings.

Items for next agenda on May 18, 2021 include: Strategic Action Plan implementation. Board recruitment. Budget for the 20/21 fiscal year. Discussion on recruiting new projects.

Meeting adjourned at 7:06pm
Karen Moon, Coordinator