



Harney County Watershed Council

Monthly Meeting Minutes – May 17, 2022
meeting by Zoom & HCWC office
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, Maria Snodgress - ODA

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 a short update on what is happening in their world.

Maria Snodgrass from ODA was present and gave an update on the Oregon Department of Agriculture Water Quality program. As other agencies are reporting, Maria said that staffing is an issue for ODA this spring. Programmatic changes to the Ag Water Quality program are happening. The next five years will include changes to the strategic implementation schedule. She shared about the Oregon Disaster Assistance Program and shared Grasshopper brochures. These brochures to participate will be available at both the SWCD and WC offices.

Continuing project updates/action items

Community Based Water Planning update:

CBWP Update: Next meeting will be held Thursday, May 28, from 5-7pm at the ESD meeting room on Fairview Heights.

Karen shared an update from Holly Mondo, project manager

HCWC Updates- May 2022

March Full Collaborative Meeting: During the March meeting Collaborative members heard updates about a few strategies that were worked on since the December consensus event; Changes were accepted. The Collaborative then heard an update on CREP and the implementation framework. In populating the implementation framework, project staff found that some issues did not have strategies that could address them. Project staff drafted strategies to fill those gaps, which were shared at the March meeting. The Collaborative agreed that more work needed to be done before adding to the Strategy List.

April Full Collaborative Meeting: During the April meeting, the Collaborative heard a high-level presentation on the Groundwater Study from OWRD. The presentation intended to orient folks on the contents of the study and highlight what has been learned through the study's results. The Collaborative then heard an update on the Voluntary Agreements report being conducted by Environmental Defense Fund (EDF) and Culp & Kelly LLP. Lastly, the Collaborative heard changes made to the strategies shared during the March meeting, the CBWP groundwater plan, and a process schedule. We saw many new faces in the room during this meeting which can likely be attributed to the OWRD/USGS groundwater study roll out.



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May Full Collaborative Meeting: For the May Full Collaborative meeting, two consensus events are planned: 1) on the proposed strategy additions and 2) on the CBWP groundwater plan.

OWRD/USGS Groundwater Study: The long-awaited Groundwater Study was published on April 12, 2022. The Study consists of two reports that are each around 150 pages. USGS is currently working on summary materials that can be circulated to the community. OWRD and USGS are also planning to provide two community presentations at a date TBD. The agencies plan to work closely with the Collaborative to ensure messaging and outreach is done appropriately.

Groundwater Plan: CBWP project staff have worked diligently on the groundwater plan. The plan has gone through 3 rounds of editing and is now in *near final* form. Draft 4 (*near final version*) was circulated to the Collaborative on May 13. Project staff are currently working with OWRD to determine the next steps after consensus is achieved (i.e. whether the groundwater plan will go through an interagency review). Project staff are planning to provide an update to the Commission on June 17 and are working with the County Court to schedule a presentation during one of their upcoming meetings.

Launching Phase 2- Surface Water: We anticipate using the entire month of June to plan and prepare for the surface water phase of planning. We hope to launch this phase at the end of July.

Board membership:

There was more discussion on how to encourage membership from the farther points of the County. Jason Kesling shared that the WC, SWCD and HDP will hold a joint September board meeting for our September meetings at the south end of the County. Most likely in Fields. Details will be coming over the summer.

Strategic Planning

Brenda Smith shared about the upcoming OWEB new Director tour that will take place next week. This is a coordinated effort between the WC, the SWCD and High Desert Partnership. We will be touring sites for all three entities. We will tour a sage grouse project near Drewsey, we will talk about water planning and tour a LESA system along with the AgriMet and Eddy Covariant stations at Owens Hay, we will visit the Research Center and talk about partnership, and on Thursday we will visit Malheur Wildlife Refuge and talk about the Wetlands FIP. Council members are invited to parts or all of the tours.

Review of April Field Tour with HDP

Brenda Smith gave an update on the HCWC/HDP field tour from our April meeting. Chris Colson was present and talked about the Sweek Dam project. A visit to the dam showed how water is being diverted much safer than the old structure. We talked about the fish ladder and how the structure was allowing for bank stabilization and improvement of riparian vegetation.



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New Business

Draft Budget for 22/23

The budget was reviewed, several questions were asked and Karen will work with Janae to update the questions. The final version will be sent out for approval at the June meeting. In reviewing our unrestricted funds, several members thought we should be a bit more conservative with our commitments of those funds.

New projects that are being looked into include developing a water quality program for drinking water, and we are also partners in the second Harney Basin Wetlands second FIP application. Other ideas are always welcome.

OWEB required self-evaluation

Karen will look into details of conducting the self-evaluation for the June meeting.

Request from the Library

The Harney County Library has contacted the WC to ask if we would be interested in participating with the creation of their new Story Walk to be developed outside of the library building. The story walk will talk about nature and our natural resources. We were asked if we wanted to participate and talk about water. Karen will get more information about participating in July. A request to help with funding in the amount of \$300 was discussed. After discussion, Pat Sharp moved to give a donation in the amount of \$300.00. Brenda Smith seconded and the motion passed.

Economic Summit

There was discussion about a request from the Women's Coalition of Eastern Oregon to participate in their summit coming up in June. They would like an update about Place Based Planning. Karen and Holly will discuss details.

Minutes & Financials: minutes and financials will be discussed at the June meeting as at this time we no longer had a quorum at the meeting.

Items for next agenda: budget for 22/23, OWEB self-evaluation

Meeting adjourned at 7:10
Karen Moon, Coordinator