



Jackson Soil & Water Conservation District
89 Alder Street Central Point OR 97502
Telephone: 541-423-6159 Fax 541-727-7471
www.jswcd.org

MINUTES NOT FINAL UNTIL APPROVED

August 18, 2021

Jackson Soil and Water Conservation District
(JSWCD)
Board Meeting

Directors, Associates

Allan Campbell – Director
Stan Dean – Chair
Don Hamann – Director
Ron Hillers – Secretary/Treasurer
Gordon Jones – Director- via ZOOM
Barbara Niedermeyer – Vice Chair
Nicky Webb Smith – Director - via ZOOM
Pam Hillers – Associate Director

Staff & Guests

Randy White – District Manager
Markie Germer
Via ZOOM:
Clint Nichols
Meghan Montgomery
Kora Mousseaux
Paul DeMaggio
Collene Roberts, Jackson County Commissioner
Arrived 4:15pm
Peter Winnick – District Conservationist - Natural
Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) arrived 4:20 pm

Board Chair Dean called the meeting to order at 4:00 pm. followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

FEMA Grant Presentation by Clint Nichols and Meghan Montgomery

Clint and Meghan updated the Board on the work that has been done in Obenchain fire area and what future work is being planned. With a slide show, Clint showed some fire photos and statistics. Right after the fire, the district along with Oregon State University Extension (OSU) and other partners and agencies put together a packet for the 194 private landowners impacted by the fire. 64 landowners responded to the district. The district met with 45 of the 64 responding landowners. The district purchased seed and straw to help with erosion and it was distributed to 17 landowners. The Oregon Department of Forestry's Fuels Reduction Crew helped 11 landowners. Seven landowners received herbicide treatments on Reese Creek and its tributaries. Director Dean asked if Clint thought that the number of landowners who responded was a good number. Clint responded by saying that there are several absentee landowners, some landowners were not impacted to a degree that they would require help, some of the landowners feel that they could take care of damage themselves without agency interference, and the landowners that had their homes destroyed are not thinking about the land at this time. Meghan responded saying that since the district had not done any previous outreach in the burn area, that the response was good. Also, some landowners worked directly with Farm Service Agency (FSA), Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) and OSU. To date, the district distributed 2500 lbs. of dry pasture seed on 56 acres, 3050 lbs. of wildlife recovery seed on 179 acres, and 330 bales of straw on 6 acres. The hazard tree removal covered 109 acres and herbicide treatment in riparian areas covered 30 acres. Through the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB) there is funding for herbicide treatment to be done this fall. Future opportunities not only in the footprint of the fire but the surrounding areas include more outreach and continuation of post-firework efforts and pre-fire fuels reduction efforts. This would cover the Reese Creek area including Big Butte Creek areas. Activities could include shrub management, hazard tree falling, pine beetle issues, ag water quality improvements, and firewise community development, to name a few. Clint reviewed potential

funding opportunities available with agencies like NRCS, OWEB, Bureau of Land Management (BLM), ODF, and FSA to help with these activities. One funding source is the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) through Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). The Obenchain Fire qualifies for this grant. The way this grant works, is that the State is considered the applicant for the FEMA money. The Oregon Office of Emergency Management (OEM) has already applied and received the funding. Clint and Meghan have written and submitted a letter of intent, and it was accepted. But the District is not eligible to be the sub-applicant to the OEM. This means that the district cannot be fiscal agent. Clint and Meghan reached out to the Rogue Basin Partnership (RBP) to see if they would be interested in partnering with the district on this grant. They will meet with the RBP board to explain the details. The funding is almost a million dollars with a 25% match. The way this funding works is that the emphasis is on structure protection (home). Then funds can be used to work outward on the property. First is the *ignition resistant home retrofitting*, second is *defensible space* and third is *fuels reduction* up to two miles from the home. The district will work with ODF and Jackson County Fire District 3 on this project. Each agency would take on a different role on the three points. This is a three year grant and if accepted it would start around 2023. Meghan showed a map of the area for the project and showed private land and industrial timber and other ownerships to help determine where to actually work in order to form a budget for the grant.

Commissioner Roberts Report

Commissioner Roberts reported that her Board did some media taping about water conservation, and she spoke about JSWCD being a source for help with water issues. The water flows so low. The Water Master said that the water table in the Sams Valley area is not unseasonably low, yet Bear Creek is at a trickle. It hasn't been this low in 17 years. She said the Board is supportive of the Klamath Dams remaining.

ADMINISTRATION

Agenda

There were no corrections, additions, or deletions to the agenda.

Minutes

A motion by Director Campbell with a second by Director Hamann to approve the minutes from July 21, 2021, as presented passed unanimously.

Treasurer's Report

A motion by Director Hillers with a second by Director Campbell to accept the July treasurer's reports as presented passed unanimously.

STAFF REPORTS

Paul reported that he has been getting a lot of phone calls from landowners who are in irrigation districts and water associations regarding the water problem. He has received a lot of calls from the Applegate area. Paul has been giving the landowners quick technical assistance and cost estimates for piping, small ditches and other costs associated with the water issue. He is scheduled to give a presentation to the land stewards about water conservation practices and drought concerns. He has been working with the Farmers Conservation Alliance (FCA), Medford Irrigation District (MID), and the Rogue River Valley Irrigation District (RRVID) on the joint system canal pipeline project. This project will pull water out of the North and South Forks of the Little Butte Creek and supply water to MID & RRVID patrons. The water mainly comes from Fish Lake and Four Mile Lake. The proposed project is approximately four miles long and the preliminary budget is for about 16 million dollars for four miles of a 72" diameter pipe. When completed, it will help with water management and essentially create more water storage. Meghan reported that she is working on a new partnership and will be teaching some classes for the Oregon Pasture Network in October and November.

NRCS

Peter Winnick, District Conservationist, reported that they are coming to the end of their fiscal year and wrapping up their conservation financial assistant contracting. In the Green Springs they are expecting 10 landowner contracts which consist of approximately 700 acres of forest thinning to be done over the next

four years. Other landowners have signed up for the Healthy Forest Reserve Program and Conservation Incentive Program (which is a new program and is being piloted). This will cover another 300 acres of private non-industrial forest land for thinning. They are renewing a Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) program for another five years and it includes the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) for another ten years. Pete is continuing to work with the Rogue Forest Partners to lay the groundwork for the West Bear Project. They should start implementation next year. This project will include monitoring.

UPDATES

Personnel Committee

District Manager White sent to the Committee, the drafts of the position descriptions; the District Manager position and the Business Manager, which is a melding of the Administrative Specialist and the District Manager duties. The third one is for Natural Resource Supervisor. Once the positions descriptions have been approved by the Personnel Committee, they will be presented to the Board for approval. The district received eight applications for the Education and Outreach. The Committee reviewed the top five and selected three applicants for interviews. Two candidates responded and they will be interviewed via Zoom on August 31st.

Climate Change Committee

Director Dean reported that the Committee met last week, and they are lining up educational speakers. He said that Marty Main will be speaking to the Board at the November 17th board meeting about forestry and climate change issues. Director Jones confirmed that the speaker for the September 15th board meeting will be Dr. Erica Fleishman, Director for Oregon Climate Change Research Institute (OCCRI). She will speak about the basics in regard to climate change.

Staff was excused at 5:00 pm.

Legislative Update/DEQ Comment Letter

In the board packet is the draft letter to Department of Environmental Quality that Director Dean will submit to DEQ on their climate protection program. There were no objections from the board.

OLD BUSINESS

Two Rivers Soil Water Conservation District (TRSWCD) and JSWCD Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) Update

District Manager White refreshed the board on this topic: due to the health of one of the staff members at TRSWCD, (there are only two staff members at TRSWCD) ODA asked if JSWCD would consider a MOA with TRSWCD to help with some of the administration and technical work. Last month the board asked that District Manager White set up a meeting with the TRSWCD Board. Since then, it was decided that Eric Nusbaum, from ODA, should first ask the TRSWCD Board if in fact, they want help from JSWCD.

NEW BUSINESS

Agriculture sustainability & drought

Director Jones is concerned about the drought in the region and the importance of irrigated agriculture for the economy in the region. There are approximately 35,000 acres of irrigated land in this area. The vast majority of the value of agriculture output and vast majority of agriculture employment is dependent on irrigated agriculture. The Pacific Northwest is experiencing the driest year since 1924. No one can remember when irrigation water was turned off in July. The pear orchards depend on the water, and it relates directly to sales; the amount of water is directly related to the size of pears which determines a good or bad economy. The irrigation infrastructure is not optimized for efficiency and should be addressed. He feels the district is uniquely positioned in terms of being flexible as far as resources are concerned and allocated. Prioritizing the strategic plan with fewer small and more large projects could help with these issues. Irrigation distribution systems need to rise higher on the list. There was some discussion relating to these issues regarding staffing, reworking of the strategic plan and being mindful of the small landowner who also pays taxes. The conversation led to a discussion about forming a group to

review and update the strategic plan. Directors Dean, Jones, and Hamann agreed to participate in the strategic plan committee. At least one staff member should be on the committee. Director Dean will create a six-month outline on how to move forward with the revisions of the strategic plan. Director Webb-Smith would like to be included in the strategic plan committee as much as possible.

REPORTS

OWEB

Director Niedermeyer reported that the Small Grant Team sent OWEB their by-laws and priority areas for the focus area for approval. September 16th through the 30th is the next grant window opportunity.

OACD

Director Dean reported that the OACD Annual Meeting is scheduled for November 9th and 10th, and it will be a virtual meeting due to the spike in the COVID 19 cases.

SWCC

Director Dean reported that the next meeting is next week, and they will be reviewing the 568 ORS and also have their regular business meeting.

Agenda Build

Next month will be the first of the Climate Changes presentations.

The meeting adjourned at 5:46 pm.

Respectfully submitted by: Markie Germer

Markie Germer

Minutes approved as printed:



Date 9-15-21

Approved as amended:

_____ Date _____