

MEMO TO BOARD: Agenda Commentary for Draft Agenda January 3, 2024

Wheatland Insurance Renewal Update + Board Q&A – We will start the meeting with an update on our insurances from John Anderson with Wheatland Insurance. He'll also take time to answer questions.

Action Items

- a. **Officer Elections** – Our current slate of officers is Chairman- Bill Hammel; Vice-Chair- Bob Krein; and Secretary/Treasurer- Shawn Sorensen.
- b. **Budget Committee Appointments** – We have 2 budget committee terms expiring, for Brian Tuck and Robert Wallace. Both have expressed willingness to serve an additional 3-year term.
- c. **Associate Director Appointments** – Conservation districts can expand conservation district capabilities by appointing associate directors and director emeritus. Associate directors and director emeritus do not vote on board decisions. However, they can augment the board's knowledge and experience level and assist with conservation district programs and activities.

An associate director serves at the discretion of the board of directors. District boards should have a policy outlining the method of selection and terms of office of the associate directors (ours was adopted in November of 1993). The conservation district should record in its minutes when a person is appointed to be an associate director. An associate director does not vote when the board makes an official decision. To become a director an associate director may be appointed to a vacant position or elected to a position. The associate director must meet the statutory requirements for director eligibility. Documentation of the associate director appointment is required if an associate director wishes to qualify as a zone director.

Director emeritus is an appointed position with a conservation district. The position is reserved for a person who previously served as a conservation district director in the United States or its territories where conservation districts exist. A director emeritus does not vote when the board makes an official decision.

Conservation district boards are encouraged to do a self-assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of their boards. If there appears to be an area of expertise that is needed but is missing among the board of directors, the conservation district board could recruit an associate with that expertise.

We currently have Pat Davis serving as Director Emeritus. Bryce Molesworth is our only current appointee as Associate Director, and he has stepped down from all his other voluntary positions on the watershed council and budget committee to lead a life of "retirement". I'd like the board to review our Associate Director policy to see if needs updating, and to think about whether we need to recruit any new Associate Directors to provide input at meetings.

- d. **Cost Share Requests:** Abbie will present cost share requests for consideration.
- e. **Bereavement Leave Policy:** Our current bereavement leave policy grants 3 days of paid leave following a covered loss. I would like the board to consider increasing this to 5 days and making that update effective for the current fiscal year (this will effectively extend an extra 2 days of bereavement leave to one staff member who is currently facing a covered loss). Our policy was last updated in April of 2022, and the board requested a definition of covered family member to

complete that policy. I've reached out to other districts to compare the language in their policies, and also the definition under the Oregon Family Leave Act. I suggest the following for an updated bereavement leave policy:

Upon the death of a family member, employees shall receive up to five days paid bereavement leave. "Family member" includes wife, husband, domestic partner, son, daughter, mother, father, brother, sister, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, mother-in-law, father-in-law, aunt, uncle, niece, nephew, stepparent, stepchild, children of a domestic partner, or any individual related by blood or affinity whose close association with a covered individual is the equivalent of a family relationship. An employee may request more than five days of bereavement leave, in writing, from the District Manager. If additional time off is approved, the employee may use his or her personal holiday, wellness leave, or annual leave, or a combination of all three. If the employee has already used his or her personal holiday or has no wellness or annual leave available, the employee may request leave without pay.

- f. **FY 2023-24 Audit Services:** As mentioned in the last meeting, our auditors with RTO have opted to cancel our contract because they don't have the professional staff available to conduct the work. Jennifer and I have been seeking out contacts for audit firms and would like board guidance as we proceed in looking for a new auditor.

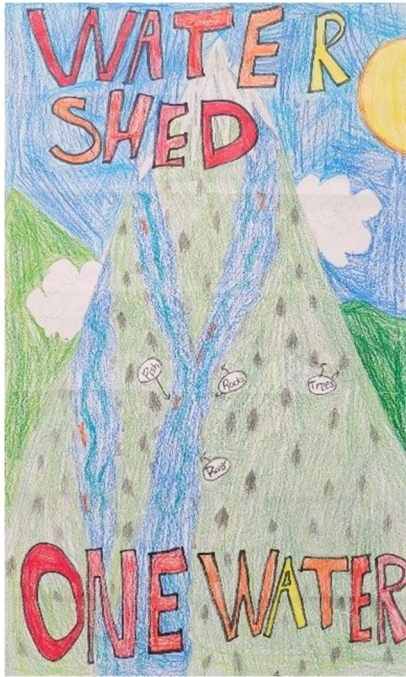
Updates

- a. **Next Regular Mtg, February 7, 2024, 1:00 PM USDA Service Center**
- b. **SDAO Annual Conference – Feb 8-11, 2024 – Seaside** – Let me or Jennifer know if you are interested in attending. There is information here: <https://www.sdao.com/annual-conference> Save the date for future conferences! February 6-9, 2025 at the Riverhouse on the Deschutes, Bend, and February 5-8, 2026 at the Seaside Civic & Convention Center, Seaside.
- c. **Pesticide Stewardship Partnership (PSP) Strategic Planning** – Staff worked with our consultant, John Runyon, to finish the PSP Strategic Plan, which has been submitted to ODA for final review. Meanwhile, Our PSP lead at ODA recently shared the attached letter with us, which was sent in November from Oregonians for Food and Shelter (OFS) to the WQPMT, EPA, ODA and DEQ Directors, and others. ODA and DEQ are drafting a response that addresses the concerns raised and what, if any, actions will be taken in response. I'll be sitting in on a PSP update with ODA on January 9th, but I would like to bring this to the board's attention and allow some time for discussion at our meeting next week. I'm also including a Capital Press article for reference.
- d. **Neighborhood Meetings** - I'd like some input on bringing back Neighborhood Meetings. Staff have suggested having 2 key meetings split between the north & south parts of the county. We're open to suggestions.
- e. **15mile MUS** – Staff have completed final reports to OWEB & OWRD and have been coordinating with OSU and GSI on additional testing that is funded under the new TA grant.
- f. **Highline Ditch**– Josh will provide an update.
- g. **2020 White River Fire & 2022 Miller Road Fire** – Josh will provide an update.
- h. **Mosier Million #2** – Staff and our consultants with GSI are working on well schematics and landowner agreements.
- i. **Poster Contest Update** – We had 3 local students win at the state level. Their posters are going on to the National competition in February. Please see the next page for details!

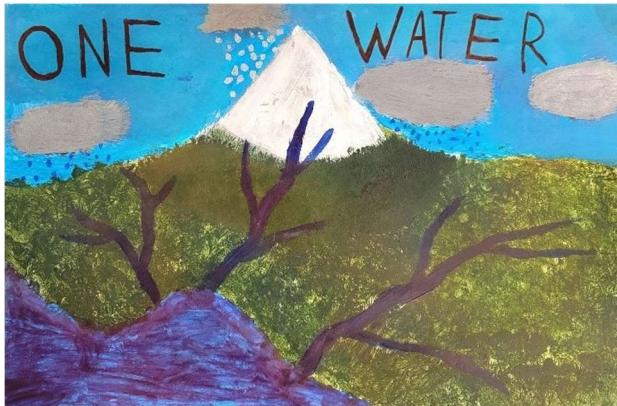
Routine Reports: Committees, Agencies, Manager

Shelah Olson

Grades 2-3 State Winner: Eva Underhill of Wasco County



Grades 4-6 State Winner: Keegan Gast of Wasco County



Grades 7-9 State Winner: Alma Campo of Wasco County

