



Wasco County Soil and Water Conservation District
Board Meeting Minutes – July 10, 2024

Directors: Bill Hammel Phil Kaser Larry Powell

Directors via Teleconference: Ken Bailey Bob Krein

Directors Absent: Shawn Sorensen Stan Shephard

Staff: Josh Thompson Jennifer Sampson Abbie Forrest

Guests:

NRCS: Emily Huth, District Conservationist

Wasco SWCD: Pat Davis, Director Emeritus

DS Consulting: Emily Stranz, Facilitator

Guests via Teleconference:

Mosier WC: Mary Bushman, Co-Chair

1:00 PM Call to Order

Bill called the meeting to order and asked if there were any additions to the agenda. None were made.

Minutes: Bill asked if there were any additions or corrections to the June regular board meeting minutes. None were made. *Ken moved to approve the June regular board meeting minutes as presented; Bob seconded. Motion carried.*

Treasurer’s Report: Josh reviewed the June Treasurer’s Reports, noting income, expenses, account and fund balances. Jennifer noted the 2024 FAST payments were paid out, as were the Wasco County poster contest awards. She noted the final expense for the 2024 Tree Sale was paid as well. *Larry moved to receive the June Treasurer’s Report; Bob seconded. Motion carried.*

Public Comment (5 Min. limit/person) – None at this time.

Action Items

a. District Cost Share Requests – Abbie presented 11 cost share applications:

Conroy – Kevin Conroy has a haul road project in Bakeoven. Scott has reviewed and approved the site. The haul road comes off of Bakeoven Road and goes into his property about a half mile. He is requesting the maximum of \$3,000.

Stern – This application is for a rain water harvesting project. The District has a potential urban conservation program in development, so this project has been tabled until the new program is up and running.

T.Neal – This application is for Phase 3 of a haul road project which will be roughly half a mile. They are requesting the maximum of \$3,000.

Wilson – Rory Wilson has two separate haul road projects, for a total distance of .5 miles, so Abbie combined them into one application. One road is .3 miles and one road is .2 miles. Abbie visited the sites and confirmed the roads are very eroded. He is requesting the maximum of \$3,000.

OK Cattle/Bob Krein – This project is to replace a failed generator for livestock water with a solar panel system. This project has the potential for OWEB funding through the Bakeoven Restoration grant. If OWEB approves the project, the District Cost Share will only be used for out of pocket expenses after any OWEB payments. He is requesting the maximum of \$7,500.

Richman – This is not a complete application as it does not have maps or pictures. Josh and Abbie have reached out to the landowner without any further response. This project is for boundary fencing around his alfalfa field as elk and deer are damaging his crop. Josh suggested he reach out to ODFW. Richman has already started this project and is requesting funding for what he has already spent. Abbie has told him that the SWCD Board does not fund boundary fence, nor expenses accrued before project approval. Discussion ensued. Board consensus is that this project is ineligible for funding as it goes against board policy.

Carver Livestock – They are planning to install a new irrigation pipeline from an upper pond to a lower pond that they irrigate out of. When this project was originally engineered, it required a 3in pipe, which does not keep up with irrigation needs. They plan to replace it with a 6in pipe. They are requesting the maximum of \$7,500.

Myers – This is a Haul Road project. Scott has been working with the landowner and approves the project. Abbie apologized to the board as the map did not make it into the board meeting packet, but she does have one for this application. Abbie noted Myers had an old application template, so she corrected it to request the maximum of \$3,000 instead of \$2,500.

Casady – This project is to replace an existing livestock water trough. The initial project was installed by ODFW with their program for livestock water. The overall system seems functional, but they need to replace the solar pump, controller, and water trough. All work will be done by the landowner. They are requesting \$1,705.

Rahr – This project is to install Beaver Dam Analogs in tributaries to the Deschutes River. He has been working with the tribes and other partners. Discussion ensued on the budget. Abbie included a budget explanation on page four of the application packet. It was suggested that the District provide funding on the physical structures, but have Rahr seek funding elsewhere for the management activities. They are requesting \$7,500.

R.Neal – This is for a Haul Road project. This is a separate road from Tyler Neal’s haul road and is the second phase of this project. The road is estimated at approximately a quarter of a mile. He is requesting the maximum of \$3,000.

Ken moved to approve cost share applications for Conroy, T.Neal, Wilson, Carver Livestock, Myers, Casady, Rahr, and R.Neal; Phil seconded. Motion carried.

Ken moved to approve the cost share application for OK Cattle/Bob Krein; Larry seconded. Bob abstained due to a conflict of interest. Motion carried.

Ken moved to reject the cost share application for Richman; Phil seconded. Motion carried.

Stern was tabled pending dedicated urban conservation funding.

b. FY 2024-25 Annual Plan of Work – Josh reported the 2024-25 Annual Plan of Work was tabled at the June board meeting and presented it today. He asked the board if they had any feedback. *Phil moved to approve the 2024-25 Annual Plan of Work as presented; Bob seconded. Motion carried.*

c. Extending GSI Contracts for 15Mile MUS & Mosier Support – Josh requested the board extend the dates of the contract with GSI to align with GSI’s timeline for the work through Oregon State University on the 15MUS project. There would be no added funding, just a longer deadline. The support for Mosier was previously approved, and now they are requesting to add \$15,000 for Mosier specifically. *Ken moved to approve extending the contract with GSI and adding \$15,000 to the contract budget for Mosier Million 2; Larry seconded. Motion carried.*

d. RFP For Helicopter Services for 15Mile LWD Project w/ USFS – Josh reported this project is pass through income from USFS. He posted the RFP on Oregon Buys for helicopter services. They do not currently have any proposals, but he knows Columbia Helicopters is interested. The deadline to submit RFPs is Monday. As the board will not meet next until September, Josh is requesting the board delegate SWCD staff to approve and sign the contract for helicopter services on the 15Mile LWD project once the proposals have been reviewed and scored. *Phil moved to approve delegating Josh or Shilah to sign the contract for helicopter services; Ken seconded. Motion carried.*

e. MOU/Contribution Agreement with Wy’East – Josh reported that Shilah updated the District’s Cooperative Agreement with Wy’East for the 2024-25 fiscal year. Robert has already signed it, and now it just needs board approval. Shilah did not want to sign the agreement herself since she is on the Wy’East board and felt it would be a conflict of interest. She hopes to get off the Wy’East board soon to remove herself from future conflicts. *Ken moved to approve the Cooperative Agreement for 2024-25 with Wy’East; Phil seconded. Motion carried.*

f. Discussion on Regular Meeting Dates – 1st Wednesday vs 2nd Wednesday of the Month – Josh led a continuing discussion from the June board meeting, on whether the regular board meeting day should be changed from the first Wednesday to the second Wednesday of the month. Brief discussion ensued. *Phil moved to change the Wasco County SWCD Board’s regular meeting date to the second Wednesday of each month; Larry seconded. Motion carried.*

Wasco County Fair & 4-H Introduction

Abbie reported last year, Addie and Eva Underhill attended the July District board meeting and brought cookies for the board, but they were unable to attend this year. Addie and Eva wanted to invite the SWCD board to the Wasco County Fair and Youth Livestock Auction. Shilah attended the auction last year on behalf of the board. Jennifer noted in 2023, the board voted to donate \$1,000 to the Wasco County Youth Livestock Auction donation pool. *Phil moved to donate \$1,000 to the Wasco County Youth Livestock Auction donation pool; Larry seconded. Motion carried.*

Kickoff Succession Planning with SWCD Board

Emily Stranz introduced herself and shared she was going to work with the board on succession planning. This is a requirement of our NACD grant.. Emily distributed an outline and explained this would be a three-phase approach. In the first phase, she will meet with each board member individually to learn more about them and their roles on the board. In the second phase, she will meet with the board as a group in 1-2 hour sessions. In the third phase, she will put together a draft succession plan for the board to review and provide input on. Lastly, she will provide a final plan the board can implement moving forward. Discussion ensued. Board consensus was that Emily could meet with the board before board meetings for one or two hours, the board will have a working lunch, and then the board meetings will commence as usual.

Updates

- a. Next Meeting** – The next regular meeting is scheduled for September 11, 2024, at 1:00 PM, at the USDA Service Center and via Zoom.
- b. East Cascade Oaks Partnership Fiscal Sponsorship for Cultural Surveys** – Abbie reported Hilary suggested the SWCD act as the fiscal sponsor for a FIP grant for ECOP. This was a grant SWCD staff helped put together with NRCS, ODF, USFS, and other partners. The person who was lead on this grant passed away suddenly, so the SWCD was asked to step in at the last minute. This grant will be for cultural surveys in the forest service area and will be ran similar to the 15Mile large wood project. Staff were able to submit the grant to OWEB by the deadline.
- c. Pesticide Stewardship Partnership Program Update** – Josh reported ODA has been administering funds for the PSP program. However, the grant provides very low levels of funding with high expectations. Staff question whether PSP sampling is still worth doing. It used to be a good program, but there have been staffing and programmatic changes at ODA in the past few years that have led to significant frustration for District staff. Discussion ensued. Consensus was to continue PSP sampling through the remainder of the summer, and then re-evaluate and maybe look for a different funding source. The board agrees it is an important program, but it can be very frustrating when ODA disagrees with our local implementation strategy.
- d. 15Mile Managed Underground Storage (MUS)** – Josh reported he is working on the 2nd round of revisions on the OWRD final report. He plans to extend that grant agreement and is continuing to coordinate with OSU and GSI under the new OWEB grant.
- e. Highline Ditch Elimination** – Josh reported there has been no action in the last month. He still needs to get a fish screen in place and then the grant can be closed out.

f. 2020 White River Fire & 2022 Miller Road Fire – Josh reported the White River fire still has one active grant and they are planning to do some aerial seeding this fall on ODFW land. The Miller Road Fire ECP was completed for a total of \$2.9 million worth of fencing on 13,000 acres. Next, he anticipates ECP for the Larch Creek Fire. The District is also acting as the fiscal agent for a community fire protection grant in Juniper Flat and Tygh Valley. The grant was for \$1.2 million, and they were offered an extra \$350,000 for a total a little over \$1.5 million for defensible space. The SWCD should receive \$160,000 over the next five years for staff time for contracting.

g. Mosier Million #2 – Josh reported they will probably start next week on the first three wells, and will work to contract the next three wells. The grant requires the District to have all \$900,000 contracted by the end of the year. They still have two qualified drillers in the driller pool.

h. Lower Deschutes Cooperative Weed Management Area – Josh reported the District is now the lead entity on this program and have advertised for a CWMA Coordinator. Applications were due July 8th and they received six applications. Four were very solid applicants. One of those four has already done weed work in the area and would be a great candidate. Josh proposed they interview all four top applicants. That employee is 90% funded right now and they should have no problem getting the rest funded.

i. SDAO Best Practices Checklist – Public Meetings – Josh reported Shilah has worked on the checklist and the District is currently at 6% out of the 10% premium discount. The only requirements remaining are the new public meeting law training for board members and updating District policies. The training is not yet available but the deadline is not until November.

j. Direct Elections Reminder – Josh led a discussion on director elections. Bill shared that he is planning to run for re-election. Bob will run for re-election and requested Jennifer send him a copy of the director election materials. Ken reminded the board he will not run for re-election. Larry shared he was still undecided. The board encouraged Larry to run for the Zone 1 position so as to leave the At-Large 1 position open to have more flexibility for a new board member. Directors can submit their declaration of candidacy from July 18th-August 27th. Discussion ensued on how to recruit new board members.

Agency Reports

a. NRCS – NRCS updates were tabled due to time constraints.

b. FSA – FSA updates were tabled due to time constraints.

c. OSU Extension – Jacob was unable to attend the meeting and OSU Extension updates were tabled due to time constraints.

d. Wy'East RC&D – Robert was unable to attend the meeting and Wy'East RC&D updates were tabled due to time constraints.

Committee Reports

a. Audit Committee – No comments at this time.

b. Facilities Committee – Josh reported the committee did not have a meeting in the last month. They have an architect reviewing plans for a shop building, and they will outline a phased approach on that expansion, including needs for electric vehicles. Samantha has repaired the storage shed, including removal of old insulation and cleaning the mouse debris. The shed now has new insulation, new sheeting, and new paint. This will be a much healthier environment in the future.

c. Watershed Council Updates – To be covered in the coordinating board meeting immediately following.

District Manager Report

a. Work Plan Progress & Grant Status – Abbie reported on the grant tracking report that is included in the board meeting packets. The District currently has eight pending grant applications. The instream leasing grant was recommended for funding, and staff will be submitting another grant for the FAST program to DEQ. The ECOP grant was also submitted on time.

b. Activity Reports and Schedules – No activity reports were presented; however, they are available for review upon request. The schedule was distributed with the agenda.

Adjourned: 2:11pm

Jennifer Sampson