

November 7, 2023

MEMO

To: State Board of Agriculture (BOA)
From: Bill Ryan, Acting Director, Oregon Department of Agriculture
Subject: appointments to the Oregon Agricultural Heritage Commission (OAHC)

Background:

The State Legislature established the Oregon Agricultural Heritage Program (OAHP) in 2017 to help address fragmentation of farmland, conversion of farmland to non-farm uses, complex regulations, and planning for generational transfers. The program provides voluntary incentives to farmers and ranchers to support practices that maintain or enhance both agriculture and natural resources such as fish and wildlife on agricultural lands.

As required by statute ([ORS 541.986](#)) five members of the Oregon Agriculture Heritage Commission shall be recommended by the Board of Agriculture. Specifically:

(2) (a) Four members shall be persons recommended by the State Board of Agriculture who are actively engaged in farming or ranching. The members must represent diverse types of agricultural commodities and be from geographically diverse areas of this state.

(2) (d) One member shall be a person recommended by the State Board of Agriculture who has expertise in agricultural water quality.

Current representatives recommended by the Board of Agriculture serving on the Commission are:

Commissioner	City	Represents	Term Ends
Chad Allen	Tillamook	Farmer/rancher	January 2024
Laura Masterson	Portland	Farmer/rancher	January 2027
Doug Krahmer	St. Paul	Farmer/rancher	January 2026
Woody Wolfe	Wallowa	Farmer/rancher	January 2025
Lois Loop	Salem	Agricultural water quality	January 2025

Commissioner terms are 4 years with the ability to serve no more than two consecutive terms.

The second term for Commissioner Chad Allen will end January 1, 2024. Commissioner Allen is not eligible for re-appointment.

FOR ACTION/DISCUSSION

The Agricultural Heritage Commission conducted an open recruitment period to request applications to fill the farmer/rancher position currently held by Chad Allen. The Commission received one application for your review and recommendation.

The BOA will need to review applications and provide a recommendation to OWEB prior to November 30, 2023.



INTEREST FORM

Oregon Agricultural Heritage Commission



This form is used to obtain general information and qualifications of persons interested in serving on the Oregon Agricultural Heritage Commission. This information will be used by the Oregon boards and commissions that recommend applicants to the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB), and also by the OWEB Board, which will appoint the commissioners. Agencies are required to pay per diem compensation and expenses for "qualified members," defined as members who are (1) not in full-time public service, and (2) have an adjusted gross income for the previous tax year of less than \$50,000, or less than \$100,000 reported on a joint income tax return. The only exception to the requirement is if the qualified member declines compensation. The agency will reimburse board members for travel expenses.

Applicant Information

Name James Robert Collins

Affiliation SWCC, Wheeler Swcd

Occupation

Retired **Rancher**

Mailing address

Town/City Mitchell

State OR

Zip Code 97750

Phone Number

Cell or Alternate #

541-980-0508

Fax Number

Email Tmcc1916@gmail.com

Applicant Signature

By signing above, you certify that:

- All of the information on this form is true;
- You are a legal citizen of Oregon and the United States of America;
- You will accept appointment to the Oregon Agricultural Heritage Commission if selected by the OWEB Board;
- You have an email address and are able and willing to check your email on a near-daily basis and conduct some commission business via email; and
- You will be able to attend scheduled meetings across the state.

Position Sought

Check the box next to each position for which you are currently applying. You may select multiple boxes. This information may be used to contact you for the Rules Advisory Committee or for future vacancies on the commission.

- Farmer or Rancher** (recommended by the State Board of Agriculture)
- Fish and Wildlife Habitat** (recommended by the State Fish and Wildlife Commission)
- Agricultural Water Quality** (recommended by the State Board of Agriculture)
- Conservation Easements and Similar Land Transfers** (recommended by the Land Conservation and Development Commission)
- Indian Tribal Interests** (selected by the OWEB Board)
- Natural Resource Value Interests** (selected by the OWEB Board)

Statement Of Interest

Use the space below to explain why you are interested in being a representative on the Oregon Agricultural Heritage Commission and why you will be a good commissioner.

I believe in the need for conservation easements. I helped lobby to establish the OAHC thru Blue Mountain Land Trust and was one of the individuals who applied early on when they first shopped around the idea and were looking to show case the need in the state. I have been to a conference back in Florida where they showed how much good their state funded conservation easement program was doing several years before OAH was funded and it made me a huge believer in the need for easements but especially the way Oregon is doing this with the major element being Agriculture. I love this fact and fully believe in keeping working landscapes working especially when you can balance in the needs of the ecosystem they are in. It's all about balance of these 2 things in my view. I can also see the absolute need to keep the housing development at bay in the willament valley and without this program I'm afraid that some of our critical farm lands could be lost as our ever growing population expands. And with the NRCS dollars available for match I cannot see how this isn't a fantastic plan and a way to fund this program with federal help. I'd love to be part of the team that helps build the future of Oregon's protected agricultural lands.

Experience/Involvement

Please describe any work experience and/or involvement that has provided you with knowledge, skills, or abilities to successfully represent the interests of the position(s) for which you are applying and to fulfill the duties of a member of the Oregon Agricultural Heritage Commission. Include any previous experience on boards or commissions.

You may attach a résumé and/or work history.

I've been on the Wheeler SWCD board for about 12 years, I think. I've been chair of the board now for a couple years as well. I've been on the SWCC board now for about 3 years. I was also a board member for Partnerscapes (a nonprofit national landowner driven organization that primarily focused on advocating for landowners to work with government agencies and agencies to listen to the needs of working landscapes to find balance between profit and conservation) for 3 years. I've been running my family's cattle ranch since about 2007 it's been in the family since 1873. The importance of long term agriculture defiantly isn't lost on me, it's at my core. I believe families that can have a successful business for multi generations have the ability to tell an oral history that is fairly accurate to their property something that would be lost otherwise. These individuals are also uniquely qualified in knowing the ecosystem they live on.

I've done multiple conservation projects on the ranch including over a mile of stream restoration where I did the majority of the labor and implementation of the engineered plans on the creek. Because of this and other projects I have worked with: NRCS, SWCD, Tribes, NOAA, US fish and wildlife partners program, OWEB, FSA, BPA, Malheur Watershed district, Idaho Power, ODFW, ODF, US forest service, Crook County Watershed district, and maybe a few more that escape me. After years of doing conservation work on my ranch and implement projects for some other people in my region I got my contractors license with my goal being focused on doing stream restoration work. That's how I have worked with some of the additional agencies listed above that are not in my region.

Supplemental Question

Describe what you believe to be the main issues facing the future of Oregon agriculture and the fish and wildlife habitat and other natural resources on Oregon's agricultural lands.

Often I have seen absentee landowners purchasing ranches and let them sit to only hunt them. I'm watching these properties lose the management plans that helped keep the juniper population in check but also the ecosystem of the overall ranch can degrade in multiple places/ways without someone living there and loving on it as a caretaker/owner operator does. Also the community suffers as the lack of work dries up in these types of properties. I've seen my local school suffer to restaurants. The trickle down economics of an agricultural community are very real and when you lay land to fallow it can hurt in many more ways than you can imagine.

References

Please identify three references that may be contacted if you are selected as a top candidate. Individuals or representatives of associations/organizations are acceptable.

Letters of support from relevant staff, associations, or similar groups are encouraged; feel free to attach any such letters to your application.

Reference #1

Name DelRae Ferguson
Affiliation (if any) Friend & work with NRCS
Mailing Address projects
City/Town
State Oregon
Zip Code
Phone Number 971-998-3950
Alternate #
Fax #
Email

Reference #2

Name Sue Greer
Affiliation (if any) Friend & worked with on OWEB
Mailing Address projects
City/Town
State Oregon
Zip Code
Phone Number 541-701-8719
Alternate #
Fax #
Email

Reference #3

Name Dirk Renner
Affiliation (if any) Friend, worked with US fish & wildlife projects
Mailing Address
City/Town
State Oregon
Zip Code
Phone Number 541-969-0162
Alternate #
Fax #
Email

Please send your completed application via email to nicole.bettinardi@oweb.oregon.gov or via mail to:

Oregon Agricultural Heritage Program
ATTN: Nicole Bettinardi
Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board
775 Summer Street NE #360
Salem, Oregon 97301

Applications must be sent via email or post-marked by Oct 20, 2023 in order to be considered for a position.



PROTECTED GROUP STATUS FORM

Committee/Board Member

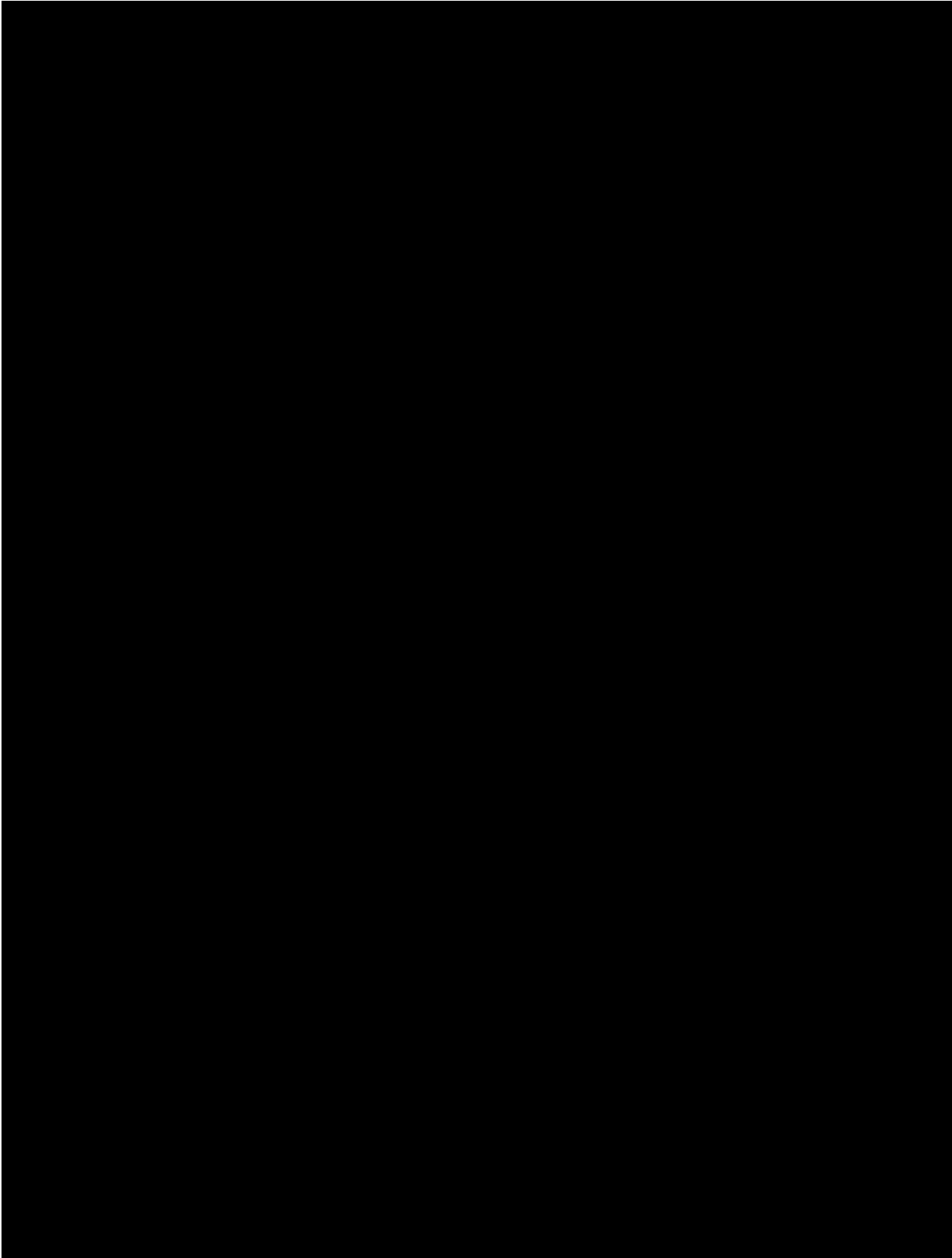
Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board



Name *James Robert Collins*

Date *10/19/2023*

Department/Committee Board Name: **Oregon Agricultural Heritage Commission**



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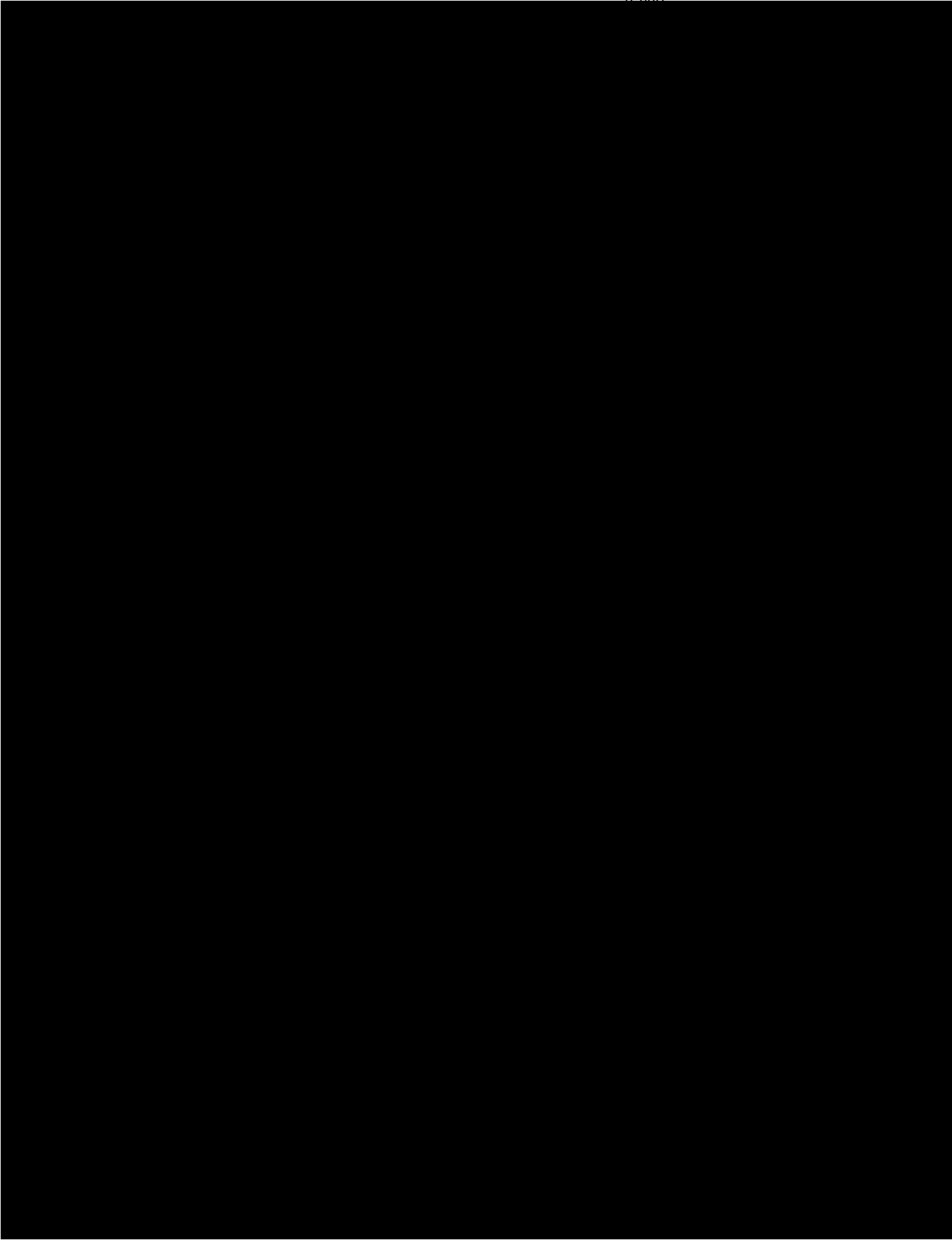
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Oregon Agricultural Heritage Commission Per Diem Stipend Qualification Form

For Tax Filing Year [REDACTED]

Member Name (First and Last): James R Collins
(Print)



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