



Soil and Water Conservation Commission Minutes

DATE	LOCATION	START TIME	END TIME
July 11, 2024	Curry Public Library, 94341 Third St., Gold Beach, OR 97444	8:30 AM	12:00 PM

CHAIR	COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT	ABSENT
Barbara Boyer	Jerry Ward, Tim Kerns, Stan Dean, Al Hrynyshyn, Bob Webb; via Teams: Robin Vora, Jim Bob Collins	

OREGON DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE (ODA) STAFF PRESENT:

Kevin Fenn, Agricultural Water Quality Program Manager; Karin Stutzman, SWCD Program Lead; Eric Nusbaum, SWCD Operations Specialist; Sandi Hiatt, SWCD Grants Administrator; (via Teams) Gilbert Uribe Valdez, Pesticide Program Mgr; Beth Pietrzak, Regional Water Quality Specialist (RWQS); Nina Caldwell, RWQS; Rick Cowlshaw, RWQS; Victoria Binning, Initiatives Coordinator; Jason Eck, Water Quality Program Analyst; Renita McNaughtan, Administrative Specialist

ADVISORS:

Andrea Kreiner, Oregon Association of Conservation Districts (OACD); VIA Teams online - Courtney Shaff, Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB); Steve Mrazik, Department of Environmental Quality

VISITORS:

Liesl Coleman, Curry SWCD; Whitney Rohner, Baker SWCDs; Stan Dean, Jackson SWCD; VIA Teams online - Brian Wolcott, OWEB; Kris Schaedel, Hood River SWCD; Jan Lee, OACD; Cassie Newton, Wheeler SWCD; Rob Galyen; Ken Masten, Marcella Henkels; Stan Dean, Jackson SWCD

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The regular quarterly meeting was called to order at 8:30 AM by Chair Barbara Boyer on Thursday, July 11, 2024.

CHARTER DISCUSSION

Chair Boyer noted Robin Vora pointed out the Commission does not have a charter. She would like Robin Vora, Karin Stutzman, Jim Bob Collins to join her in a work group to put together a charter. Karin indicated it shouldn't take long and should only be four or five pages long and will only need to meet about three or four times. Will consult with Stan Dean for historical information.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Draft minutes of the April 18, 2024, regular quarterly meeting was presented for approval. A motion was made by Al Hrynyshyn to approve the minutes. The motion was seconded by Tim Kerns. Motion passed unanimously.

2024-2025 CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR ELECTION

Chair Boyer requested nominations for the Chair and Vice Chair. Tim Kerns noted the current Chair is Barbara Boyer and Jerry Ward is Vice Chair. Barbara is doing an outstanding job on the Board of Agriculture (BOA) and would like to keep her in that position. Tim Kerns nominated Barbara Boyer to remain as Chair and Jerry Ward as Vice Chair for 2024-2025. The motion was seconded by Jim Bob Collins. Motion passed unanimously. Robin Vora noted that it is important that positions rotate periodically. Chair Boyer agreed and said that will be discussed in the Charter.

SWEAR IN NEW COMMISSION MEMBER

Kevin Fenn administered the Oath of Office to Robert Webb, the newly appointed SWCC member. Robert (Bob) was appointed to fill the position previously held by Stan Dean, which covers Region 3: Coos SWCD, Curry County SWCD, Illinois Valley SWCD, Two Rivers SWCD, Jackson SWCD, Klamath SWCD, Ft. Rock/Silver Lake SWCD's, and Lakeview SWCD. Bob Webb shared some background of his experience.

Chair Boyer mentioned that Stan Dean has been on the commission for eight years and is departing. Stan said that he appreciated the work, the team building, and being part of this group. It has been a wonderful experience but feels it is important to bring in new people and is important for the SWCDs to be in touch with what is happening at the state level.

ADVISORS REPORTS

Approved— October 16, 2024

Steve Mrazik-DEQ – provided an update on the court ordered TMDLs – Powder River TMDL completed May 23rd and Commission adopted; Temperature TMDLs - Sandy and Willamette subbasins – have held rules advisory’s, public comment period, incorporated comments adjusted TMDLs, final packages, and scheduled to go to commission on Aug 6th; Main stem Willamette (Temperature TMDL), third RAC meeting on July 30th, anticipating package for public notice after August 6th EQC mtg. Working on Coquille TMDL, RAC has not been kicked off yet. Availability of staff has been difficult. Umpqua TMDL (Temperature replacement) in partnership with EPA; one public meeting, second is scheduled for July 23rd and is virtual; third will be in fall and will be virtual and in person. Working on Mercury TMDL in Hells Canyon area. Pretty substantial partnership more scheduled for 2025-time frame. John Day and Rogue - are just starting to project plan, preliminary work. Oregon is repackaging the CZARA plan; a team from DLCD and DEQ preparing the plan, systematically updating and targeting Aug 2024 to submit. Working with Forestry, Ag, NOAA, EPA for preliminary reviews; wanting what we submit to get approved. Recruitment and staffing updates - two retirements - program analyst, Alex Liberman; hired Mia Pan, she started about two weeks ago. Other retirement was nonpoint source specialist position, Ivan Camacho, in charge of the 319-program. Reworked that position, and it will focus on bigger picture of nonpoint source plan, annual report, success stories, etc.

Courtney Shaff-OWEB accepted the first round of the technical assistance NRCS farm bill grants through a cooperative agreement; will be doing a second grant offering. Opening a second round of Strategic Implementation Area (SIA) restorative pilot grants in August and closing end of October. OWEB Board meeting in two weeks in Springfield. New executive director, Sara O’Brien, has been meeting with partners and OWEB board members ahead of July board meeting. At OWEB board meeting - balancing spending plan; taking recaptured funds and incorporate into spending plan for second half of biennium. Received a record \$22.5 million for Pacific Coast Salmon Recovery Fund. Previewing agency request budget with OWEB board, doing an Acquisitions 101, and will be awarding second year council capacity funding for two watershed councils only awarded one year of funding last July. OWEB will be adopting small grant rules and drinking water source protection rules. Continuing to work toward implementation of the cultural resource program. Will not be signing our programmatic agreement with NOAA until the end of 2024; after we have done two related webinars. Shane James and I will continue to be offering webinars and resources to districts across the state as we get ready to implement cultural resources review.

Sam Angima-OSU EXT. – Ext Director, Ivory Lyles passed away. Kris Elliott is now the acting director until a new director is named. Josephine County Commissioners voted to defund Extension in their county. OSU Ext. closed offices effective July 1, 2024. Extension hiring new agents across state: two field crop positions for Willamette Valley – Dr. Collins Busingo started June 1 in Marion county and Dr. Hana You starts July 15, will be based in Beaverton. Ag agent in Columbia county – Dr. Janhvi Pandey; ag agent in Clatsop county – Shannon Rauter; Tillamook county – Samikshya Budhathoki; Jackson county – Dr. Nan Xu; Search for replacement for livestock/dairy agent covering Willamette Valley. Gilliam county is Skyler Palmer, replacing retired Jordan Maley; Failed search for Lake county ag agent. Will open position in September. Ongoing search for ag agent in Umatilla county. Four statewide organic positions – Sustainable soils; Tree fruits and nuts; Grains and pulses; Foundational seeds and planting materials – interviewing for positions. Statewide week scientist for field crops – offer has been extended. HB 2010 funding one statewide hydrologist based in Corvallis, and one based in Madras/central Oregon. Completed installation of 15 AgriMet weather stations. College of Ag Sciences Experiment station is currently hiring a researcher to focus on vole research and a social scientist to liaise with industry on current wolves’ research. Many field days, check website: <https://agsci.oregonstate.edu/home/research/field-days>.

Andrea Kreiner-OACD – the annual conference is October 14-16 in conjunction with the SWCC meeting in Hood River. We have our call for presentations out currently for individuals and sessions. The agenda to be driven by districts - what’s going on with them; sharing projects that are going on. Looking for sponsors. Have a nice setup for exhibitors, which get a lot better play. The OACD election process has started. A call for nominations is out for people to self-nominate. We have the south region, and the northwest region representatives that are up. Both are willing to step aside if someone else wants to run but will keep on running if no one else is willing. Contracted the contractors to build the grant hub, and they started working in June. They are looking at platforms and talking to districts, watershed councils, and land trusts for what the needs are. We are also working on our corporate guide and plan to present at the October conference. The webinar on August 13 regarding Train the Trainer and collecting story ideas to hopefully get a story out once a month for the next eight months. Continuing to get out to districts; recently went to the Umpqua board meeting. Restructuring the website and requesting feedback on what would make the website a useful resource. Getting ideas for legislative concepts.

NOWC – Andrea Kreiner mentioned that they will be going out for recruitment for a new executive director shortly.

SPANISH LANGUAGE EXAM PREP CLASS FOR LICENSING AG SPRAYERS

Kris Schaedel and Gilbert Uribe Valdez – **Gilbert** provided a program overview of the ODA pesticide program and how they work with the Hood River SWCD. Regulatory authority comes from EPA and FIFRA through a cooperative agreement. The Pesticide program is broken up into two sections – Toby Primbs is the program manager for enforcement (compliance, monitoring inspections, complaints). Gilbert is the program manager for Pesticide product registration (pesticide registration applications, certification and licensing (registering pesticides in Oregon; certification and licensing of all individuals in the state, manage exams, study materials, accrediting of recertification events, credits required to renew licenses); Pesticide Analytical & Response Center (PARC) (coordinates state

responses to pesticide incidents alleging effects on people, animals, and environment between state agencies); Pesticide Stewardship Partnership (to keep pesticides out of surface waters through education); and Work Protection Standards (WPS) (compliance assistance for employers, protecting agricultural workers).

Kris presented piloting the Hood River Bilingual Pesticide Education Program. Discovered some deep inequities in the testing and licensing system. Very limited if any bilingual (Spanish) education available for the agricultural industry and the workers within it. ODA has supported this work financially through the PSP program and support from OWEB. Utilizing the Washington State Pesticide Education training program. Partnered with ODA, WSDA, OSU Extension, OSU PSEP, Leo Garcia, local trainers, Oregon OSHA, and Columbia Gorge Fruit Growers. Oregon has little opportunity for Spanish language speakers to prepare for the applicator licensing exam in Spanish whether in-person or online training. Access to the exam is problematic. Available only to implementation Spanish language trainings on sprayer calibration, Worker Protection Standards, pesticide handlers, integrated pest management, and pre-license trainings. No current Spanish language exam preparation materials, access, or administration in Oregon. Worked closely with Gilbert, Colton Bond, and OSU Extension to become a state testing center and purchased 20 computers. Allowed us to facility working through the barriers and next steps to passing the exam. Washington has a model that we could use and are willing to share and it works. Started a pilot in Hood River. Working interagency and now working with (team of trainers that are all bilingual. Exam is on-site, on paper with 60 questions, three hours is allotted to take the exam, and is in plain language. We have secured \$1 million for the next 10 years of bilingual pesticide ed workshops and trainings through OWEB, ODA, and other funding sources). Moving forward, we need to prioritize and allocate resources toward the capacity at the State level to ensure a fair testing and licensing system as well as capacity at the State level to offer bilingual pesticide education.

BOARD OF AG RESOLUTIONS

Chair Boyer – Board of Ag is resolution heavy. She felt it was important to the commission to provide comment on resolutions that pertain to conservation districts. She reviewed a few as an example and suggested the commission review the resolutions and determine which ones to comment on.

Stan Dean 2:37:30 – statutory mission of the commission. Part of what the commission is to do.

- Develop a Procedure
- Committee or Workgroup for Reviewing
- Delivery of Message (Written, Verbal)
- Feedback to SWCC
- Next Comment Period – September 10-11, 2024

REVIEW OF AGWQ PROGRAM ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Kevin Fenn provided an update of the Water Quality Program - recently hired for the North Coast/North Willamette regional water quality specialist position and Ryan Beyer filled the Water Quality Compliance Lead. In the process of hiring a John Day Water Quality Specialist. Ready to hire for the Compliance Specialist position and then the Lower Umatilla Basin Groundwater Management Area position, which is a huge focus for the department and the state. Depending on how the budget plays out, that position may have to stay open for a while. We were given 1% of our budget of the current service level, which is not a lot. He shared a map of the Ag WQ program management areas with the new addition in the John Day area. Kevin noted that 561.395(5) “The function of the commission is to advise and develop policy with the department in the administration of its duties and powers...” He shared the purpose and structure of the Ag WQ Program Advisory Committee (AgWQPAC), which mostly is made up farmers, ranchers, environmental advocates, industry groups, etc. The AgWQPAC started in 2004 and has met annually, or every six months depending on the need and discusses current issues. He is trying to now focus just on the Water Quality program. We, the agency, also now call ourselves AGGIES – Approachable; Genuine; Growth-Oriented; Inclusive; Expertise; Sustainability. Kevin then reviewed the role of the Water Quality program and how it came about under the Clean Water Act as well as the working relationship with DEQ and the SWCDs. He discussed the 38 management area rules and area plans and their roles and how we enforce them. Strategic Implementation Areas (SIAs) have been in place for 10 years now and he reviewed some figures regarding the compliancy with the rules. Kevin discussed the recent listening session and asked what we are doing well and what we can improve on. Feedback received was the staff is doing well but we could improve on having the specialized staff we used to, i.e., riparian specialist, agronomist. We can also utilize the key skills and abilities of the staff we have. Kevin provided a quick compliance update in the number of complaints received, type of complaint, and pre-enforcement or enforcement actions taken.

SWCC MEMBERS REPORTS

Tim Kerns – Nothing to report.

Al Hrynshyn – Every district doing annual work plans/exec director evaluations. Linn has South Santiam watershed council- is going to restore Thomas Creek; also still concerned about solar siting on Muddy Creek; Clackamas lost board chair, Jeff Becker, unexpectedly passed away; East Multnomah looking at having a field office at their model farm; Marion set up a zoom mtg for board recruitments and was well done; Upper Willamette brought on a working land specialist and interviewed for a water quality specialist. Trying to determine the best board meeting time. Have six of seven seats are up for elections and have a new board chair, Andy Burk.

Jim Bob Collins – Nothing to report.

Robin Vora – Deschutes is considering a tax base, which he is opposed to it.

Barbara Boyer - had several calls about SB 85 - CAFO bill. A lot of talk about the water 12,000 gallon a day that is not clear if it is per permit or well. Urban renewal districts - Yamhill has nine. One that is coming forward that their county commission denied because of the letter they wrote. It is affecting taxing districts. If you are an urban renewal district, it freezes future earnings for 20 years; they also get the 3%.

CALL FOR UPCOMING MEETING AGENDA ITEMS/NEWSLETTER CONTENT

Agenda

- Learn the process of how they get to a TMDL
- Resolutions

Newsletter

- Spanish Language Exam
- Kevin's Update
- Tour in Curry County
- Stan's leaving
- Bob Webb joining the commission

WRAP UP – next meeting October 16th in Hood River.

ADJOURNMENT - Meeting adjourned at 12:00 PM.