August 18, 2021

HCCWMA Monthly meeting, Harney County Courthouse Basement conference room

Present: Sam Cisney and Linda Watts of BLM; Jim Campbell of Harney County; Zola Ryan of NRCS; Jason Kesling, Tyler Goss, and Barbara Pearson of HSWCD. Karen Moon from Harney County Watershed and Bonnie Rasmussen, Oregon Department of Agriculture participated remotely. Bonnie was unable to attend the full meeting but was able to return prior to its end.

A draft of the agenda, previous meeting minutes, financial records and a prototype of the CWMA hat were distributed to meeting attendees.

The meeting was called to order at 1:30 pm. Jim Campbell led the meeting.

Sam Cisney is new to the area and everyone introduced themselves and welcomed her.

Meeting minutes: corrected first page, third paragraph on suggested seeding as 1 lb. of Koshia. Jason moved and Zola seconded approval of the minutes as corrected. All present were in favor.

Jason described the new financial format. He said Beaver Tables would be billed quarterly. Jim asked how much in funding would be needed to cover Tyler’s position and was advised about $70K. Jason offered to provide exact numbers for next month’s meeting. He feels good about the funding. Zola asked if the only current item is wrapping up Beaver Tables, with money from BLM and the Forest Service and was told yes. State contracting will come to HCWMA eventually and landowners will contract with NRCS. Those funds would be put into the Admin budget. Admin also reflects refuge funding.

Zola asked is that money accounted for on the financial report in admin and was told yes. Is DSL money in admin? We haven’t received yet, so it is not reflected within your fiscal year budget. The amount is pending based on admin costs. Zola asked if the current budget column is money in hand, plus what’s been spent (allocated funds), and Jason replied it is real money in the bank, aside from Beaver Tables.

Jim appreciated the new format for finances. Zola said would be nice to include a comment regarding additional sources and funds the HCMWA is waiting on. Jason agreed to add that for next meeting

Zola moved and Linda seconded approval of the Financials as presented: All present and voting were in favor.

Project progress and updates:

Beaver Tables grant: Tyler reported the bid advertisement is public. There will be Bid tour on September 2nd. The estimated cost is between 1200 and 1600 acres, but can be expanded. Seeding is required to be sometime between December 2021 to March 1, 2022, depending on weather and pilot availability.

Tyler asked about Crane-Buchanan area: are there enough potential private contracts in weed eradication to pursue a large grant? Zola presented a map and proposal of Medusa Head infestation and treatment (see attached); there are two plots of land with significant infestation. Landowner discussion has taken place but nothing firm yet. Her agency had one contract approved. Landowners are hesitant to participate because BLM land wasn’t addressed at the same time. She would be a huge proponent for the HSWCD writing a grant to address.

Jim said Medusahead treatments need to quit using Plateau. If we write a grant indicate the HCWMA should list not using it. Linda said the BLM is locked into it. Zola said NRCS still contracting 3 years using Amazepic but another option is provided in treatment plans and the differences between the two are discussed. CCAA participants are also tied into Amazepic.

Sam asked if treatments are one year control with Amazepic. Jim replied all landowner treatments are 2-3 years, with seeding. He recently spoke to Nic Schott, who is a commercial aerial ag sprayer who told him 3 consecutive years with Amazepic does seem to work but we don’t know what happens beyond.

Sam asked if this was year two of treatment with Crane Buchanan—is there still opportunity to do this? Zola explained the NRCS contract process and how fulfillment is completed. There is a short window of time with contracting for most efficient use of funds for an area. There won’t be treatment for this fall as there wasn’t a contract for the area this year.

Zola suggested the different agencies have a tour and describe the different treatments and level of success as a learning opportunity. Tyler asked if this should just be for HCWMA or include landowners? Zola said there wouldn’t be a reason to exclude landowners, but not necessarily a reason to promote landowner participation. We would need permission from landowners.

Jim suggested Otis Valley would be place to go as it would show efforts in recent years.

Jason said that OWEB has open solicitation. Grants due November 1st. Tyler and he spoke about Crane-Buchanan and wondered if it wouldn’t be under ODA or OWEB funding? Jim said it is to not with ODA—they shoot us down each time. The grant application should use the new herbicide Indaziflam.

Jim said Kenny (former weed coordinator) would contact Tyler when he returns home for photos.

Jim described a plot test on a ranch that had a great deal of medusahead (Jerry Miller).

Zola discussed RCCP and funding and history. 2022 is the last year for the RCCP. HCWMA and HSWCD would need to submit reports. Available funds would have to go into an EQIP program. There was discussion involving use of new chemical Indaziflam, applying the herbicides on private land adjoining public land, or applying herbicides by one agency on another agency’s land. Zola said these factors would determine if it would be best to apply for a large grant. Also included was how payments would be dispersed to landowners (over a period of time vs. paying right away). Tyler offered to contact landowners for the potential project.

Jim asked what area is planned this year for NRCS is 11K acres for now (Tyler). Zola said most are in Drewsey, mainly south of the highway, and that Tyler has shapefiles. NRCS is asking for BLM cooperation, specifically Crane-Buchanan area. There was further discussion about how to coordinate projects within the agencies so they would all be working together in an area. Should the funds be spent for that area to spray on BLM to encourage landowners and finish it off or put projects on hold until collaborative decides what to do. Toward the end of discussion, it was determined that the HSWCD would not apply for a large grant for Crane-Buchanan area at this time but would apply for an OWEB demonstration project with the new chemical Indaziflam.

Next item discussed was the weed trailer at the Harney County Fair: Tyler has purchased swag to hand out: little squeezy footballs, Frisbees, lanyards. He has been organizing the weed trailer and some previous items may need to be disposed (literature with telephone numbers no longer current; pens that don’t work. He is working on PowerPoint on aerial seeding and application (using planes vs. helicopters). He located a weed board light up game and will update it, has weed id books to distribute, but he is open to ideas. He also has Play-Clean-Go presentations. He is seeking volunteers Friday, Saturday and Sunday. He will pick up the trailer the last week of August.

Tyler then directed the board to the photograph of a hat with the HCWMA logo and asked if the board had objections to purchase to hand out to ranchers (it would be a selective handout). The hats are $21.60 each and would be about $670 for 30 hats. Jim said he liked it. It would utilize the rest of the BLM funds. He used that fund for the other items, and it would be underneath the amount allocated. Jim said he is still attempting to get the same spot at the fairgrounds as used in the past. The HCWMA didn’t participate in the fair last year and lost the space.

Weed treatment for the Drewsey Ditch would involve a large grant; construction would be separate. Jason asked for guidance from the board. Jim provided background to new board member: The ditch has been sloughing away in recent years so there would need to be construction and since the ditch is at the head of the system treating the weeds from the top down would be the best strategy for control. Three Landowners will be contacted for the Drewsey and Johnson ditches construction and weed issues.

Regarding Med sage, Jim asked if ODA on board and Bonnie said yes, this will be the third season. Jim said it would only the second since he only touched up this year. The hillside, road, reservoir are full of weeds. Bonnie asked about the second application and Jim said yes, minimal control. Bonnie it’s a priority and applications would be due in the middle of December. There was discussion if this would be through OWEB or the Weed Board and it would fit under the Weed Board funding. Bonnie said Tristan will advise her and she will let Jason know.

New business:

Carey Goss from the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge requested adding refugee permitees adjacent to the refuge be eligible for weed treatment with the refuge assisting in payment. She has contacted landowners, who want to proceed. Jason asked if this would be a new grant application? Jim, yes through the Oregon state weed board He told Tyler there is a previous copy of a grant application in the Diamond area that former weed coordinator Steph Bonson wrote but private landowners didn’t want to participate and it wasn’t funded. Pepper weed is priority but needs to be coordinated between agencies and landowners. Jim thought this project should be explored but said the board would need to be careful to make sure landowners followed through on their commitments.

Bonnie said there is no money cap on the grant but it needs to be detailed as to why and how and the involvement of everyone involved. Carey Goss will provide a list of landowners to Tyler. Jim also suggested Tyler have Bonnie review any grants to be submitted. She agreed, but also said the state has a priority level.

Anything else? There was nothing further added to the meeting., other than the next one will be September 15, 2021 at 1:30 pm and that Tyler to send out to the board members a schedule to sign up for the weed trailer at the fair. The meeting adjourned 3:05 pm.