June 15, 2022

HCWMA monthly meeting, Harney County basement conference room

Present: Tyler Goss (CWMA); Bill Dragt (BLM); Jim Campbell (Harney County); Lisa Foster (Forest Service); Andrew (Drew) Donaldson and Zola Ryan (NRCS); Travis Miller (Malheur National Wildlife Refuge); Karen Moon (Harney County Watershed Council); Jason Kesling and Barbara Pearson (HSWCD). Randy Wiest of Oregon Department of State Lands participated remotely.

Jim Campbell began the meeting at 1:38 pm. There was a brief time of introductions.

Agenda #1 Approval of Last Meeting Minutes

There were no additions or corrections. Jason moved to approve the meeting minutes; Zola seconded. All present eligible to vote were in favor and motion passed.

Agenda #2 Approval of Financial Reports.

Jason explained there were two financial reports (for May and June) because at last month’s meeting only three nonvoting members were present and it was canceled. The only spending has been on the senate bill. CWMA is in good shape for year and a half. There was a notation in the June report of Beaver Table monitoring. Jason said he had removed it and remembered it would require monitoring for the next three years. Zola moved to accept May and June financials as presented. Travis seconded. All present eligible to vote were in favor and the motion passed.

Agenda #3 Projects Progress and Update

1. South Eastern Oregon Wildfire Resiliency program (SOWR)—mapping acres was completed today (Tyler presented a map): 15K acres mapped and 13,500 acres can be sprayed. The extra acres are also marked on the map. Randy’s reporting and Tree Top is funded through Pheasants Forever. Tyler was concerned that spraying and juniper cutting may overlap. Tyler will meet with NRCS to make sure cutters will not be present when the areas will be treated. Zola asked about the extra acres—would they be treated if there is additional funding? Tyler said yes, or if there is extra funding the partners aren’t using or extra herbicide because spraying can’t be done over water bodies.

Jim asked if there would there be waste of herbicide if the area is treated for medusahead and then juniper is cut? Tyler said he doesn’t have the overlay. Jason said the Lamb Ranch juniper project should be completed by the end of June. Tyler will coordinate with NRCS. Zola said she thought NRCS only has one small project. Tyler said a site tour will take place on July 20, 2022. Otherwise not much else going on with SOWR.

1. There was a Free Spray Day in May. Six hundred gallons of herbicide was distributed. Those attending seemed to enjoy themselves. This was coordinated with the fire department, even if the weather wasn’t the best. Jim concurred and said the fire department actually left one hour early. CWMA wasn’t able to obtain the weed trailer for the event as it had been spoken for. Some people came with plants they were unsure of. Jim said he uses an app called “Picture This” to identify.
2. Poison Creek: The bid tour was held June 3, 2022. Three contractors showed—Tyler had spoken to people in Jordan Valley and Lake County, which may provide additional contractor names for future projects. The grant amount was small, the two who came from out of town didn’t submit a bid. One bid was submitted and the project was awarded to Jesse Barnes, who came in under. She is able to begin today but may not start until July.
3. Med Sage at Blue Bucket. A patch of the invasive was noticed and reported to CWMA as near a cattle guard. Tyler went to the area and treated it at the cost of CWMA. It was worse than what he first thought and he sprayed half an acre. He spoke to the landowner and for now felt it best to keep in control; he wasn’t sure about a grant next year. Jim suggested tying this project into a grant for Johnson Creek.
4. Update on CWMA container and trailer. The owner of the building that NRCS and the district occupy is planning a remodel in the next year and doesn’t want a container on the property for now. CWMA for now will store herbicide and materials at the top of SWAT shop. The trailer will still go. Jim said CWMA can have a pallet to store things at the shop, but winter may be hard on the items stored.

Agenda Item #4New business

1. Rejuvra test spot: Originally this was to be 100 acres, side by side. Plateau would be on one side and Rejuvra on the other. This would be at Jerry Miller’s property. However, Dustin from OSU wants to do an actual study, and write a paper on the results, which Tyler thought would be good to include CWMA’s name in the document. The test will begin in September. The site has changed to be 180 acres and there will be six 30-acre plots (both chemically treated, grazed and not grazed, and a control). Tyler said this discussion actually needs to be an action item because the plots will need to be enclosed with panels and posts. He priced these items last fall for $3500, but they will probably be more now. He will mark the area tomorrow. The test location will be behind Miller’s pivots. Jim asked what will happen to the panels after study completion? Tyler said the test will run 4 years. Travis said that Dustin will be responsible for the test so he should decide. Jason moved that CWMA purchase the panels and posts for enclosures. Karen seconded. All present who were eligible to vote were in favor.
2. Crane-Buchanan west TACA (medusahead) Project. Tyler spoke with five different landowners adjoining that road, with DSL owning a small piece. He thought about presenting a grant through the state weed board to spray Rejuvra. The treatment would be on the other side of the road where projects have taken place. Jim wondered if there would be a conflict of interest since one property is owned by a state rep. Karen said his business leases the land and doesn’t own it. Tyler pointed out medusahead infestations on map to attendees. Jim said medusahead is a hard sell for weed board. Tyler suggested if state weed board wouldn’t fund to go through OWEB. Jason said the district could look at a restoration grant.
3. Tyler has been approached by a landowner near The Narrows next to the refuge. The landowner claims he is losing cattle due to larkspur. Tyler wasn’t sure if a grant to eradicate the plant could be obtained since the plant is native. Travis said he drives that area to the refuge daily and hasn’t noticed larkspur. He wondered instead if halogene might be the problem. That plant is present in varying levels through the years and in the past killed seven cows from one ranch. There was discussion about how much larkspur it would take to kill cattle and other possible reasons. Tyler said the landowner speaks to him when they run into each other after work. Tyler has suggested the landowner call the office but so far he has not. Jim suggested the landowner take a photo of the larkspur and send to Tyler.
4. Pepperweed Sodhouse grant: Tyler said the refuge located funds amounting to $50K. Travis said the refuge will follow what Tyler and Kerry wrote up with their proposed grant. Jason asked if the refuge would work with same salary? Travis thought so. There was discussion about if the funding would go through HSWCD or High Desert Partnership and the administrative costs, ground and air application. Jim suggested to line up a contractor now as many will be scheduled then. Jason will speak to Brenda from HDP when she comes to the SWCD office tomorrow 2:30 pm. Zola said it would be easier to enact the grant through the district from paperwork stand point.
5. Salt cedar (refuge): Jim said that Jesse Barnes was working with private landowners and discovered salt cedar east of Lawen on Ruh-Red Road, north end of refuge. She said it’s becoming a forest. Jim wasn’t sure how it moves since it needs water, and Travis said wind will shift the lake quite a bit. There was discussion in finding the exact location and how to get there (if the ground is too muddy and should be aerially surveyed or if the area could be reached via boat and hiking), the source of the infestation, and effective controls. Bill said there is a biocontrol that is effective. Travis said the flycatcher likes the salt cedar and it’s an endangered bird. Now is ideal time to treat (when it’s blooming).
6. Title 2: Lisa said the Forest Service has now approved using impazempam (Rejuvra). Applications are now being taken for Title Two. She admitted she doesn’t know the process in applying and approval for Title Two since she just received information two days ago. Grant County receives $50K yearly. If this area doesn’t put in for funding now it may not be available for another 5-6 years. Jim suggested she speak to Matt Wenick for further information. Since CWMA didn’t get OWEB funding for medusahead that maybe it could focus on Title Two funding. There was further discussion about the different projects available (forest fringe conservation implement strategy—CIS, Joint Chiefs) and what those projects entail. Applications for Title Two can be turned in now, deadline will be in November. Jason suggested Lisa follow up with Josh on Joint Chiefs proposal. The consensus of those present was to go with Title Two as well as other funding sources.

Other business:

1. Travis said he and Jim need to discuss refuge treatments re: white top. Jim said it is a year of white top due to the weather. Travis said Russian olive is also appearing on refuge.
2. Jim urged attendees to think about the Harney County fair and the CWMA booth. What do we want to do for a topic/theme? CWMA normally ties into what the fair has for a theme but instead he wondered about medusahead. Tyler said he turned in the application for fair booth last week. Jim said the fair will decrease attendance prices in hopes of bringing people back to fair, and this may provide an opportunity to reach a lot of people.
3. Jason said there will be a multi-group joint meeting in Fields in September. The HSWCD will hold a formal board meeting in an outreach attempt.

Adjourned at 2:43 pm