**CWMA Monthly meeting,**

**upstairs conference room at the Harney County Courthouse**

**March 16, 2023**

Present: Jim Campbell, Harney County; Travis Miller, USFWS; Andrew Donaldson, NRCS; Sam Cisney, BLM; Lisa Foster, FS; Tyler Goss, HCWMA; Jason Kesling and Barbara Pearson, HSWCD. ODA’s Bonnie Rasmussen attended remote

Jim called the meeting called to order at 1:31 pm.

Minutes: Travis noted an error on the first page of the January 2023 meeting minutes; The US Fish and Wildlife funds reported were in the amount of $50K, not $15K. Jason then said he had neglected to list these funds in the financials but also said the account has had no activity. Jason moved and Travis seconded approval of meeting minutes with the noted corrections. All in favor who were eligible to vote and the measure passed.

Financials:

Jason noted the omission, $50K should have been included. The majority of salary was put toward the SOWR project. The report also reflects the recent drone purchase (posted in the admin). Things are going well. The BLM agreement funds should be coming in soon. The RCPP is being negotiated but Jason doesn’t anticipate it will be in place until July and implementation starting in spring 2024. The North Steens RCPP can be used for weed treatments, application due April 7th. Allottees using State land/Federal can also apply. Drew anticipated cost $77 per acre cost.

Travis asked where the anticipated $10k funds from refuge to the CWMA would be represented in the financial reports. Jason and Tyler said funds would be reflected in Admin. Travis moved and Kaylee seconded approval of the financial report. All present who were eligible to vote were in favor. Jim said he liked the new financial report format.

Old Business:

1. CWMA recertification class: Tyler provided a recap. Two who are present at this meeting attended the class. He asked if there were any changes needed. He said there was a schedule conflict SRM . Tyler will check schedules next year to avoid another overlap/conflict. The next one may be held the week following Jordan Valley’s 2024 certification--he will contact Eric. Sam asked about the calibration component. The lesson was not hands on, just verbal instruction. Jim said it used to be done in the past. The speaker said if meeting participants had any questions to contact local authorities. Jim said they (the county) have done many calibrations in the spring.

Tyler asked about topics be addressed in next year’s herbicide class. Jason said NRCS is working with annual grass strategy in Oregon, coalescing all the information to do large scale treatments. Damon from NRCS advised him about this. He said it would be good for all in the meeting to look into. Jim said at the recent county weed board meeting he gave praise to Tyler for what he was able to do with the class on a limited budget.

1. Title 2 funding: Lisa said the full amount requested was received ($243K). Grant County received slightly more. The funding is flexible (without specific language in the agreement), so funds could be adapted where it can be best spent for annual grass work across boundaries. Money can be used for projects addressing wildlife or livestock movement crossing into the forest. More funds could be possible and would add over the next 5 years, applying toward fund projects already in place. Tyler said it will be for 1500 acres medusahead/annual grass at 75% cost share., 500 acres of any noxious weeds at 50/50 cost share. The focus will be to spray the Riley area private land north of Hwy 20 that has medusahead. It will have to be tied to national forest. Jim and he will go to the Suntex school to meet with locals regarding a treatment this year or next. Jim anticipated difficulty with the ranchers because when the weed program county/federal proposal originally went to them, they “oversold” and told them Plateau would answer their problems.

Tyler said no landowners/ranchers in that area have responded to his phone invitations to come to the office to discuss this further. Jim said it may need to be done on a more personal level (i.e., landowner kitchens). Bonnie concurred the landowners tend to not travel, especially during calving season. There is one land owned by a company in Portland that could prove difficult to work with. Bonnie offered to give them a phone number of that company as a contact.

Jason said the 25% is a self-imposed limit; it could be changed to 90% in later years (pending board approval) if landowner involvement is limited. Tyler asked if any other weeds are identified north of Hwy 20 to contact him—treatment may be combined with other grants. Jim suggested Tyler check with Jesse Barnes. Some noxious weeds noted are Pepperweed, knapweed, spotted knapweed, med sage, diffused knapweed, pheasant eye are in the area. Bonnie described the area of spread. Tyler said contacting landowners will be done in the next weeks. It should be a one-page landowner agreement. Payment method to be determined based on program success(per Jason).

1. Grants submitted: three were submitted, and all three were approved. Poison Creek (four landowners). Med sage- Countywide--six different locations, requiring surveying. Purple loosestrife--ODA gave to CWMA to address. Jason asked which ones will be contracted, and was advised only Poison Creek. The others will be done by Tyler and Jim. Med Sage will come with buying a 30-gallon holding tank. When not in use it will be stored at the county SWAT shop with the chemical. This year the chemical will be provided by the contractor as part of the bid submitted.

Jim said if CWMA stores too much chemical it may need to be stored in such a way where county employees don’t use it accidentally (holding pallet).

Sam asked if they use Garlon3A? Yes. Are there any other chemicals we should use? No, but R11 is added for aquatic use. Sam said she didn’t think R11 could be used on BLM land. Jason asked if the BLM NEPA ready? Sam said yes--BLM has a contact with ODA and will then subcontract with the county. ODA won’t have the budget for staffing for state positions so it makes sense to have a locally lead. The timing would be best around July. Bonnie will look at her records. The plant does need to be blooming but sometimes due to drought it had been grazed, which makes finding plants very difficult. Bogs present at the Lamb Ranch also prove to be challenging for treatment.

Tyler said Pepperweed will be treated this year and monitoring will take place at Beavertable. He will continue to work on test plot for Rejuvra. The landowner (Bloomquist) is on board with this. Jason said the Department of Interior does not want a partnering organization drone to be used on its land because it was manufactured in China. Travis said they are looking into purchasing a drone for the refuge. Tyler is now licensed and offered to operate the drone when/if the refuge purchased one of its own. This is same with Department of Forestry.

Bonnie said she didn’t believe the county weed grant pool of funding was included in the governor’s budget. It may be lost, especially for use of capital equipment purchases. Tyler said he was told the ODA would like to conduct its fall meeting in Burns. He thought it be better if it was scheduled for next year to show the benefits of SOWR project. There would be about 25-50 people coming to Harney County. Some speakers from OSU could be involved.

New business:

1. MOU (Memorandum of Understanding): Jim said the document is loosely written and not legal. Its purpose is to make sure all agencies understand what is being done and provides an outline for the partners to give funding. The current MOU is over a decade old. Some signors can be local representatives of the agencies; others need to be signed by regional representatives and will need to be mailed out. There was an appendix added for agencies indicating what they would provide to the CWMA and what they expected from the CWMA.

Travis asked if CWMA has an annual operating plan since it is mentioned in the MOU. Jim there is one. He also said it will take a while to review since every agency will have its own changes. Jim asked the MOU be given to agency representative responsible for signing to be reviewed. Sam asked if there was a timeline, and Tyler suggested it be reviewed by next meeting and returned with comments. He will send out the document in Google Doc form, and then email a reminder. Travis suggested using Google Slide for reviewing the different edits and comments. Various methods of review and what is to be revised were discussed.

1. Drone: Tyler obtained his operator’s license at the beginning of the month. He has been issued a temporary license until he receives the official one. He will be able to fly the drone for agencies that request; his license is good for 2 years. The purpose of the purchase was to better showcase project work for grants. He provided a demonstrative video he made of the HSWCD office.
2. Exhibit Farm—Jason said this would be posterboard information to public as a teaching tool, to be built and developed specifically for agencies. It could have interactive demonstrations for the public events as to what an agency wants to communicate (what we do, important projects).
3. Kahoots is an online quiz game adaptable for any group. It could be used for outreach by the CWMA. He is considering purchasing to improve CWMA’s public engagement. Jason asked if the subscription could be intermittent. Travis suggested using it for FFA high school classes. Kaylee suggested Tyler check with schools to see if it could be obtained for free.

Sam suggested sponsoring awards for engagement, like for a bill board contest. The cost for creation and installing a bill board in this area is high. Tyler discussed creating a poster per project.

Travis had two items for discussion:

1. Weed treatment/polygons—is the county using a tablet? He will meet with Jim separately to discuss.
2. Advised of section 7 for monarch butterflies. There is a high likelihood the insect will be listed as endangered in the coming years. Harney County has a presence of western monarch habitat. There is some milkweed on the refuge. Listing the monarch could affect herbicide or insecticide (for grasshoppers) treatments if nectaring plants are in an area. Monarchs feed on some plants that are noxious and invasive in our area and this could become problematic. Monarchs are in the area May-September, which are optimal treatment times for invasives and grasshoppers Jason said milkweed (a monarch food source) is located in the Drewsey area. Travis showed the group a website: [www.Westernmonarchmilkweedmapper](http://www.Westernmonarchmilkweedmapper), which shows sightings of plants, larvae and fully formed monarchs.

New business: Jim is wanting to step down as board chair. If anyone is interested to speak up. There is no vice chair to assume this role.

We may need to find new date or location for the future meetings due to rearranging of the county offices and conference rooms. The consensus was to try the second Thursday of every month, beginning in April.

The meeting adjourned at 3:10 pm