**CWMA Monthly Meeting Minutes**

**December 6, 2023**

**Basement Conference Room, Harney County Courthouse**

Present: Randy Wiest, Department of State Lands (DSL); Jim Campbell, Harney County; Travis Miller, Fish and Wildlife Service at Malheur National Wildlife Refuge (MNWR); Ziani Paiz, Oregon State University (OSU); Andrew Donaldson, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS); Kalee Littlefield, High Desert Partnership (HDP); Sam Cisney, Bureau of Land Management (BLM); Bonnie Rasmussen, Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA); Karen Moon, Harney County Watershed Council (HCWC); Jason Kesling and Barbara Pearson, Harney Soil & Water Conservation District (HSWCD)

Jason called the meeting to order at 1:32 pm. Since there was a new meeting participant, introductions were made. There were no additions or changes to the agenda.

Last month’s meeting minutes were amended to include Tyler Goss of CWMA and Barbara Pearson of HSWCD as attendees. Jim moved to approve the meeting minutes as corrected; Karen Moon seconded. No one was opposed and the motion passed.

Jason Kesling presented the Financial Report. The CMWA purchased a new truck. A down payment of $34,642 was paid, and the remaining $20,000 is on a three year loan. Tyler added that seat covers were purchased for the truck and a lift kit and brush guard were installed.

Also in financials, Tyler is charging his time to the Stinkingwater RCPP. Poison Creek, Purple Loosestrife, and Med Sage grants have been submitted for payment. Jason said that when those funds are received the next meeting will include a motion to move those funds into Admin. There were no questions or comments. Karen moved to approve financials; Travis seconded. No one was opposed.

Jason said the CWMA may have access to another vehicle as the BLM could surplus a truck. One with a heavier body will be better suited to tow rangeland drills and the weed trailer when it is picked up in Central Oregon.

Partner updates:

**NRCS**: Andrew Donaldson said the NRCS deadline for program sign up has passed. Stinkingwater RCPP medusahead spraying, road and water improvements. North Steens RCPP, juniper thinning. Interest in north Harney transition communities program, work in Malheur. Hwy 20 spraying for Medusahead available. Overview of other funds available and how they can be implemented (IRA funds). Jason could be spraying and seeding. Asked meeting attendees to advise landowners of available programs.

**DSL**: SOWR 2 approved, some spraying will be done, Randy did not know the acreage. There is a bill to fund juniper removal in Deschutes County, will go. Round Mountain area outside of Beaver Tables. Jim said areas previously treated with Plateau will need to be redone.

**HDP**: Kaylee provided an update. SOWR2 20k ACRES in Drewsey and Riverside. There is a juniper thinning project currently addressing trees near the cell tower in town. There is a Crane seeding project, and a participant asked the reseeding location. Drew said on the Bell A. High School student will be selected to serve as an intern either spring or winter term. Jason said he had been approached for the district to host an intern.

**FWS**: Travis discussed hybrid cattails dominating the refuge. Milfoil and smooth broom are now also present. Previously, the invasive carp had removed milfoil, but since a carp control was implemented milfoil has been noticed. Bonnie said she believed the weed is more invasive than first thought. Funding for weed management on the refuge has been coming from hay and grazing. The grazing fee will increase in the next few years. Questions asked were what type of herbicide will be used for cat tails and the acreage of smooth broom infestation. Travis said up to 100 acres of smooth broom, in a patched pattern and also on the P Ranch. Sam said the BLM has also noticed it on the north side of Steens.

**SWCD**: Jason said there are two big juniper cutting projects in the Drewsey area, funded through the House Bill and SOWR. Both sites also have Medusahead and will require follow up.

**Harney County Weed Program update:** Jim Campbell said SWAT is seeding for the BLM. The African Rue grant is a partnership with the ODA. Treatments for this weed have changed this last year but disc and seeded. The SWAT crew has one full time employee. As partners are asking for more work from the crew additional staff may be needed. The County is approved for drone work. Currently the BLM and Refuge do not have approval for drone work.

**BLM:** Sam said there are currently 74,00 acres being treated for medusahead, with 44,000 additional acres to be treated in the coming year. The agency is running an advertisement campaign for spraying so hunters won’t be exposed to herbicide.

**HCWC:** Karen said the agency currently does not have weed projects.

**ODA** updates (Bonnie) said the Oregon Vegetation Management Association (OVMA) will be held in Seaside in February 2024. The Oregon State Weed Board (OSWB) will also be held that month. OSWC grants are due December 15, 2023.

Weed free gravel has been in high demand in recent years and ODA has finally gotten around create a program to insure weed free gravel pits . ODA shipping point is the only ones that can inspect piles. There is a Webinar tomorrow on Bi-Control at 9am.

**Memorandum of Understanding**

The MOU was brought up on the screen for all meeting participants to view. Jason asked if those present really need this document. Jim and Karen explained the reason for the document: It was first created because the CWMA was going to be its own 501C3 agency, but the agency is not going in that direction anymore. The group went through the document and submitted comments provided months ago to see if there were any outstanding issues to address. One question that came up was do these documents have an expiration date? Tyler will research the bylaws for an answer.

Tyler provided an update on OSWB grants that the Harney CWMA has submitted:

* **Lawen Salt Cedar 2024:** All partners were happy the CWMA will be able to undertake the Salt Cedar areas in Lawen. Jason asked how the agency will treat the plant, and Jim said, “Imazapyr and Syltac.”
* **Med-sage 2024:** Tyler said the submitted grant changed to address the Drewsey dump (site 6). Bonnie supports this grant.
* **Stinkingwater Purple Loosestrife 2024:** Tyler updated the group to grant changes he submitted for refunding in 2024. There is a provision for drone work for surveying and herbicide application. Discussion followed regarding drone work on federal lands. Jim and Travis talked about their attempts to find a drone that can apply herbicide on the refuge due to Federal restrictions. Currently there are no drones approved to apply on Federal land (the drones being manufactured in a foreign country and could be used for spy purposes). There was discussion about Tyler obtaining a license to apply herbicide via drone, and to purchase a drone that can apply herbicide (the grant submitted would be to contract a vendor who has this type of drone).

Meeting adjourned at 3:00 pm.