**Harney Cooperative Weed Management Area Monthly Meeting**

**Harney County Courthouse Basement Conference room**

**450 N Buena Vista, Burns, OR**

**February 7, 2024**

Present: Jim Campbell (Harney County); Andrew Donaldson (Natural Resources Conservation Service); Kaylee Littlefield (High Desert Partnership); Karen Moon (Harney Basin Watershed); Sam Cisney (Bureau of Land Management); Jason Kesling and Barbara Pearson (Harney Soil and Water Conservation District

Remote: Tyler Goss (HCWMA); Travis Miller (Malheur National Wildlife Refuge); Bonnie Rasmussen (Oregon Department of Agriculture)

Jason began the meeting at 1:31 pm. There were no changes or additions to the agenda.

**Item #1: Approval of December 2023 Meeting Minutes**

This was tabled for the next meeting as the most recent draft was not provided.

**Item #2: Financials**

Jason explained the financial report. He said the biggest event was closing of the Poison Creek, Purple Loosestrife, and Med Sage grants. Poison Creek and Purple Loosestrife were paid and the district is waiting on Med Sage. The BLM is 100% spent out. Charging to Stinkingwater began last quarter. The contractor for the Pepperweed grant has been paid. USFWS salary remains. There is currently $40K available in admin. There were no questions. Karen moved to accept the financial report and Jim seconded. There was no one opposed and this passed.

**Item #3: Funds Transfer**

Jason said as the four grants listed above were closed he asked to keep with tradition to request a vote to approve moving the funds into the admin account.

Jim moved; Karen seconded. There was no one opposed and this passed.

1:37 pm Bonnie Rasmussen joined

**Project progress/updates**

Tyler advised regarding OSWB grants, 2024. He submitted three grants for the 2024 cycle:

1. Med Sage was reapplied with one minor change in location (Frenchglen to the Drewsey dump). Seven hundred acres were surveyed and treated. Medusahead was dropped out from the past year—80 acres were sprayed.
2. A renewal of Stinkingwater Purple Loosestrife. There was a modification to this grant with a drone herbicide applicator to be hired to cover Lamb Ranch to Highway 20. The County and Tyler will treat the BLM. The drone operator will then survey the end of old project to Drewsey to see if additional plants should be treated. Tyler said he hopes to plan a field tour day so the steering committee can see how drone application works.
3. A new OSWB grant for treating salt cedar in the Lawen area. This would be for 3000 acres south of Lawen, following the refuge, east of Ruh Red Road and another section 3-4K, for a total of 10K acres. Personnel at the Refuge and Jess Barnes brought the issue to the attention of CWMA and requested a grant be submitted. There were no questions.

**Bylaws/MOU**

Tyler reviewed the bylaws and copies with comments were available to the meeting participants. Tyler requested the bylaws be amended to include the corrections and change the address on the document. He asked if the line regarding membership remain. He asked if terms of one to three years needed to be in the bylaws. He noted participating agencies usually have one noxious weed person. Jim said he thought it had been decided to change the wording to one person per agency, but no wording on term. Travis asked about rolling a member into a new term once it is completed. His reasoning was some agencies have a lot of change over and he was concerned about continuity and communication. Jim thought it should be up to the agency. Kaylee suggested the CWMA coordinator reach out to inactive and new members.

Jason said the steering committee is voluntary; why would we kick people off who want to serve? Jim agreed, saying there’s no other representative in the County to work with weeds. Jason thought wording on terms needed to be removed. Karen thought there should be wording regarding one person representing an agency. Sam suggested removing the sentence beginning with “Members will serve…” and Karen then suggested also removing the sentence regarding terms being staggered. The consensus was to remove both sentences after MOU.

Travis asked about a time limit for committee leadership. Jim thought one year seems pretty short. Should it be three years? Karen thought at least two years. Jason suggested the person serve the position as long as desired with it being reviewed yearly. Jim and Kaylee agreed, with verbiage something to the effect of “Annually the chair will be considered at the committee’s first meeting.”

Sam asked if it should be appropriate to write in the coordinator is responsible to contact agencies to ensure representatives are included or connections are being made? Kaylee thought it might be good to list in case someone in the steering committee wants to invite an agency. Jason said it may be addressed on the last page for the coordinator to reach out if meetings do not have a quorum. This issue was left since it is addressed for quorum or Karen to leave the bylaws as loose as possible.

Tyler remove a “C” from one of the HCCWMA that he missed.

There were no comments or changes for page two of the document.

For page three, regarding what constitutes a year was discussed. Karen asked if the CWMA will recognize a fiscal year, and Jason said yes; it should follow the state/SWCD Audit. The bylaws will be changed to reflect a year July to June, instead of a calendar year. There was no objection.

Section five of the bylaws was highlighted regarding 2/3’s of a vote. Discussion followed as to what constituted 2/3’s—of members present or all members? The consensus agreed to was there should be five steering committee members attending (either in person or participating remotely). The sentence beginning, “Any partner that has signed…” was removed.

The next point of discussion regarded removal of all MOU in the document. Tyler asked the question “Who could be a voting member?” He cited Bonnie Rasmussen as an example of a nonvoting member. Jim said Bonnie is not a member but an advisor; the steering committee is not a board. Sam was concerned since the steering committee participation is voluntary. “How do we keep that going if there’s no teeth?” Jim said there’s no teeth now.

Jason felt the MOU’s purpose is for everyone just play nice and work together. Jim felt the committee is also informational. Jason also mentioned HSWCD board has oversight (financial and grant agreement, insurance, payroll).

Kaylee then suggested wording in document that the MOU is not currently active but will be if agreements cannot be reached in future relationships.

Bonnie said in the beginning of the CWMA, the MOU was a document that brought everyone to the table and made everyone accountable; it was a vehicle to bring everyone in the room to see what the agencies were doing and if the group could do it together. It was utilized for funding. It’s definitely been a struggle to keep the signature paper to current but important to bring everyone working on noxious weeds to participate.

Questions asked were to revamp and keep the MOU, or go through the process to create? Jason asked if it was necessary this moment to have an MOU and agreed with Bonnie it’s a shame ODOT isn’t involved. Bonnie suggested going up a level to encourage local participation. She said ODOT is in trouble, but if a representative came to the table maybe ODOT would see how the steering committee can assist.

Jason said he thought it might be good for Tyler to keep reaching out, maybe draft a letter to ODOT (Jim suggested highlighting what the committee can do for them). He also mentioned ODFW has not participated in a while. Jim thought putting together information what the CWMA can do might bring them instead of going to the next bureaucratic level—and that an ODOT representative may attend but not participate.

Jason asked Tyler to create a letter to be sent to agencies that aren’t currently participating to reflect this for the next meeting.

Following discussion, Tyler asked if the committee would need the bylaws updated and brought to the next meeting for a vote. Jim said yes; the committee would need a clean version.

In other updates, Tyler went over the syllabus for the Herbicide Recertification, which will be held Thursday, February 15th at the Harney Chamber of Commerce. He has just heard back from the state that four credits will be awarded for the class. There were no questions or comments.

**New Business**

There was no new business.

Jason recapped what needs to be available for committee participants for the next meeting:

* Bylaws
* Letter to outreach to non-participating members
* Minutes for two meeting
* OSWG Grant outcomes

Bonnie said ODA received the largest number of applications for the state weed pool. There were more applications than money ($500K). The determination process has been “Very challenging. Not everyone will be funded, some may not receive full funding.” The determination fell back on ranking criteria. She suggested meeting participants listen in on the state weed board meeting to see the funding criteria, etc. Also the OVMA conference will begin Tuesday, February 20th in Seaside, OR—it’s a great conference and can provide credits. It has a website and you can register there.

Sam said the end of February is National Invasive Species Week—has CWMA participated in the past? It has not, but Sam will send information for Barbara to put on the HCWMA Facebook page and the district website.

No other questions or comments. The meeting adjourned at 2:30 pm