

Grant County Local Work Group Meeting Minutes

February 18th, 2025

Meeting Start Time: 1:00 PM

Meeting End Time: 3:09 PM

Meeting Minutes:

- Welcome and introductions

Soils update:

- Back in October Grant County soil survey was published. Can now use web soil survey.
- Published grant county, crook county and wheeler county at the same time, it has never been done or published before.
- Look at several new soil survey area options.
- All units are hyper linked with information as well as interpretations

Small farms and organic programs:

- High tunnel initiative program
 - There is no size limit, same deadline as EQIP program
 - Only on crop Eligible land use
 - Water rights are required
- Extend growing season, improve plant quality and soil quality, Reduce plant nutrient and pesticide transportation

2024 - ten have been contracted, 9 have been certified

For 2025, hoping contract 10

For Organic:

* Certification, must be maintained for the life of the EQIP contract

- Are exempt if they make less than \$5,000/year, work and develop and Organic system plan
- Transitioning working towards transitioning to organic

FSA

- Kailey Heiple is on maternity leave,
- Others coming in on Tuesday and Thursday

ODF John Day Forest Resources

Two subunits out of fossil and monument for resource protection. Have an interest to conservation service forester. There was a discussion on who to contract and when.

Discussion of changes in personal, and personal changes

- Look to building resilient landscapes, continue the work through NRCS and other incentive programs.
- Work across fences with other partners
- To maximize resource values into the future working with resilience.
- In October working with post fire restoration team, out of Northeast Oregon
- Working with FSA, and NRCS with Emergency Forest restoration program deadline is April 4th.
- Letter has gone out to landowners directly affected by fires which addresses which forester to reach out to for help.

OSU Extension

- * On going webinar series currently Thursday evening till end of March 6-730
- * Tree school east in June at Baker Middle School. One day, classes provided.
- * Liability fund for prescribed fire
- * Scientific paper published about old trees, old growth dying without management
- * Outreach on treated and untreated forests.
- * Keep up work on the southern blues partner programs

Grant SWCD

- Discussion about 3 new associate board members added this year.
- Do a lot of work with irrigation work, as well as diversion, irrigation diversion projects
- Fire wise program, education outreach for communities that want that status
- Culver replacements
- Instream projects
- Riparian fencing
- Fencing for forest service
- Stock water, engineering on forest and private ground
- Juniper removal (5,000 acres)

- RCPP (6,000+)
- Conifer thinning,
- Spring, for 2,000 acres for conifer thinning around may this year
- Noxious weed control, next few weeks, put herbicide around county roads.
- Project for helicopter, till 2032 to get herbicide throughout the county
- Annual grass control, 48,727 acres in 2024- in 2020 noticed success in rejuvra
- Private forestlands and range assessments, to treat cross boundary on both sides
- Developed rapid assement to meet with landowners to know the conditions of the stands, a base proposal
- Aerial Electromagnetic (AEM) survey, looking for ground water sources, the flights done this fall, taking results to use the information for aquifers, look at aquifer storage and restoration projects. * This march... explaining the work will be April explaining the work and importance.
- Range seeding and 6,162 acres in 2025, in the land 4 weeks. Using to treat fire lines and skid lines which is why the side-by-side has tracks.
- Another 20,000 acres in the middle part following the john day valley
- Working with the road department to pull some of the brush for safer emergency traveling in the case of a fire.
- GIS specialists provide that the assessment for the aerial imagery and topography to alienate the individual stands. As well as field crews to be on the ground examine the stands.

Confederated tribes of warm springs updates

- Year long work for adaptive management around the Oxbow, proposed to go in this year for landowners, due to staff increasing to 15-40,000 plants for needs, to get them out some get contracted.
- If we have extras and Brandon the nursery lead, go for no cost.

South Fork John Day

- RCPP 2020-2025 has been expended to renew the project
- Practices:
 - Juniper removal
 - Water development
 - Forest health
 - Pasture fencing

- Noxious weed control

John Day Basin Partnership program

- 2014, 30 total partners
- OWEB FIP: native fish habitat initiative
High priority recovery areas within partnership coordination implementation and monitoring capacity to measurably improve aquatic habitat for:
 - ESA-listed Mid-C summer steelhead
 - Esa listed bull trout
 - Chinook salmon
 - Pacific lamprey

2025 Drought Status

- ODA
- Will apply in April, with SWC, DEQ for an extension 18-month extension, EPA, replace 14 monitoring temperature tendel process
- Primary to provide graspy funds
- Restoration actions, fencing, planting, fences, and water quality

Ritter land management team:

- Completed juniper reduction
- NFWSH council partnering aquatic restoration on 6-mile creek, 8 mile next year
- Put a pause on monkey fire
- Resume instream structure, improved the hydrology within the area
- Appreciative to use this structure for soil health.
- New grant proposed for fire restoration

Drought status

- We are not currently in a drought
- Our snowpack February 1st, 144% of normal

NRCS Programs:

- 1) Invasive species: including juniper, annual grasses, and herbaceous weeds
- 2) Forest health: including aspen restoration
- 3) Grazing management: stock water, cross fencing for private lands
- 4) Water Quality/Quantity: Irrigation efficiency improvements, stock water

5) easements: to keep land to not allow to subdivision

Fire:

- Equip money towards fire recovery
- Joint chiefs is still at play
- Asking for more money for county priorities

Last year funding summary:

CSP-5 renewals

Classic-7 CSP

EQIP-25,

- Invasive 5, ritter 3, stock water 1, JC 11, IRA 7, Fire 6

4.2 million spent within grant county

CREP

- 3 expired and 2 re-enrolled
- 39 active contracts

2025-2026

- All money is going to fire the deadline is November 29, 2024
_ invasive, ritter, Stock water, State initiatives, IRA don't know where we are sitting

2026

Normal in 2025 November,

CSP contracts, expiring in 2025,

CSP deadline February 28th for new ones

South fork RCPP- is unknown at the time Deadline

Annual grass control:

- Looking at areas that will recover and meet the needs, seeding money within in those areas available.

Drought Watering Strategy CIS

- Livestock water and springs

Joint Chiefs

1.3 million in 2025,

Juniper removal, reseeding, protecting water

Funding timeline:

- Last year in joint chiefs funding...EQIP for fire recovery
- Next year all same CIS's, still don't know on IRA
- 2027 looking at possibly renewing annual grasses and new CIS

Community resources concerns:

Rangeland: annual grass, livestock water, predator control, long-creek juniper removal, benefits for juniper control, virtual fence, broad leaf weeds, riparian restoration, mt. Vernon, turkey thinning, targeted grazing to reduce fuels.

Forest: Pre-commercial thinning and piling, fuel breaks, renew ritter cis, top road cis, cross boundary work-federal/state by private, lzze forest land, cross-boundary piling and broad burning program, seed orchard and seedbank creation high and low sight for eastern Oregon species and stock, nursery startups for tree stock, and stocking studies for tree stock introduction, burnt timber removal/ replanting, noxious weed native replanting prescribed burning and stream restoration projects.

Other: renewable energy projects. In-channel habitat/sediment retention, irrigation efficacy, culvert replacement, emergency water availability (catchment and holding sites, repair restoration, programs for maintenance for juniper, removal.

Range land:

- 1) Annual grass
- 2) Livestock / long creek

Forestry:

- 1) Pre-commercial thinning
- 2) Post fire removal and replanting
- 3) Cross boundary work
- 4) Prescribed burning

Other ideas:

- 1) Juniper and forestry maintenance
- 2) Riparian aquatic restoration (votes are spread off but important)