**CWMA Meeting Minutes**

**April 3, 2025**

**USDA Service Center**

Present: Karen Moon, Harney County Watershed Council; Dayne Galash and Jessi Brunson, US Forest Service; Dustin Johnson, OSU; Aaron Johnston, High Desert Partnership; Rob Frank, Harney County Court; Tyler Goss HCWMA; Jason Kesling and Barbara Peason, HSWCD

Guest: Ron Whiting, landowner

Present, remote: Jim Campbell, Harney County

Jason Kesling called the meeting to order at approximately 1:30 pm. A time of introductions followed on Ron Whiting’s behalf.

**Item #1: Meeting Minutes**

Barbara had emailed the minutes out to HCWMA members after last month’s meeting. BLM’s Sam Cisney emailed her back with some corrections, which Barbara said she incorporated and remailed to meeting participants earlier today. Karen moved the meeting minutes as updated be approved; Aaron seconded. No one was opposed and the motion passed.

**Item #2: March Financial Report**

The financial report had been emailed to meeting participants earlier in the day and there were also copies available. Jason said a new ATV was purchased and billed to admin. Forest Service funds were deposited. Tyler’s salary is being billed through Title II and RCP. Stinkingwater maybe completed early. Karen asked if a line item could be moved and Jason said it’s not a large enough amount. He has been advised to charge more to that program; he’s unsure about comingling funds. The CWMA may be the first to receive an RCPP renewal. There were no further questions. Dayne moved and Ron Whiting seconded approving the financial report. No one was opposed.

Jim Campbell joined meeting remotely at 1:33 pm

**Item #3: Progress and Updates**

1. Tyler confirmed purchase of the new ATV, which will be used for CWMA projects. The previous ATVs were “hand me downs” from when the agency was acquired by the HSWCD. An armor kit will be installed by Alan’s Repair. The ATV is currently parked at the USDA center’s carport.
2. Combined BLM/Forest Service map of post fire projects. Jessi projected a map on the conference room’s big screen. She asked Jim Campbell what stye of map he and his team would prefer. Discussion followed as to what would be best in the field, and for now planned to continue with the S1 map and add Forest Service information. Jessi said she plans to have a draft map for infield use mid-April and have the final map for the next meeting. Jim thought that would be good. A BLM data set could also be used and the layers switched.

1:40 pm County commission Frank arrived.

Jessi explained to Ron the fire response map, polygons and colors used. Disaster relief project has been approved but funding will not come in until May. The map showed seeding areas, herbicide treatment areas and levels of priority, with the goal being continuity between the agencies. The herbicide will target annual grasses

Jason asked what priority on the map meant and Jessi said it was areas to be surveyed first. Dayne said it was based on vegetation type and to attempt to work on these areas first. Dustin asked what is surveyed? Jessi said weeds, survey and treat. She is hopeful that seeds will be aerially applied, and hopes to contract. There may be more opportunities in the fall. Jason asked Ron about identifying what areas he believes should be focused on. Ron answered during the fire he was focused on Lone Pine; he doesn’t know much about the other areas. Dozer lines, wood land, scab lands and priorities were discussed.

Aaron asked Jason if there was any synergy between grants. Jason said some; some information is not to be shared (CCAA?)

Dayne asked the general timing on survey. Tyler said whenever we can get out there, especially during active growing times. June, depending on where the plants are in growth time. Jason said June would be the soonest to get up there. Jim said the plant has to grow to be able to see.

Jessi said the map will be continually refined. Dayne discussed confusion in the Forest Service about what roads are closed. Methods of herbicide treatment were discussed; Jessi said that not all the land within a polygon will be treated but treatment will be within a polygon—Aaron said the map polygon is “essentially a project boundary.”

Reseeding was discussed. Dayne said most of the cat lines will have or will be reseeded; 80% was completed last year. Dustin asked about weed patches prior to the fires. “If you know of them, add to the map.” Ron asked if a preemergent herbicide will be used; Jessi said it depends on what is encountered in the field, but yes most will be preemergent. Jason said there may also be people pulling plants.

Tyler asked Jim to review the map for accuracy; Jessi said this is a path toward creating a BLM/Forest Service combined map.

Ron discussed a noxious weed he has been seeing on his property in abundance. After further discussion and description it was thought to be Scotch thistle. Jessi suggested Ron contact her if he sees other weed locations. Jason also said that Tyler can visit and attempt to identify. Tyler also said that the BLM will hold a weed identification class in May and will forward the information to Ron.

Another noxious weed discussed was Japan brome. Jessi said the BLM can aerially apply herbicide and the Forest Service cannot; the Forest Service can use Rejuvra and the BLM cannot.

The SWCD is working with BLM/Forest Service regarding border fencing (contracts coming out in May), then pasture allotments and internal fencing. The total fencing would involve about 30 miles. Other projects were discussed.

**Item #4: New Business**

1. Tyler asked the group if there were any ideas for outreach events—anything we can help with? He said he will be cooking at the OSU Range Camp. He asked Dustin if he could help with Professional Camp? Dustin said it would be good to have him there. He will follow up with Tyler. Range Camp will be held April 24-27; Professional Camp May 7 and 8. Dustin explained to Robb Frank that Professional Camp is aimed at natural resource professionals. Tyler added many colleges and universities do not have field trips; most education is online on in class. Jason said the Professional Camp actually draws some people from the east coast—not familiar with this ecosystem. It’s also good for people who have been in the office for a while. Dustin said the focus of this years’ camp will be on postfire treatment. The camps are becoming popular. One year had 65 students which has caused OSU to limit numbers. OSU also has a one day classes for OSU-Cascades and Evergreen College.
2. Plans for next month: Jason said the OWEB proposal will be out. This will be an agenda item for next month. Karen said she hopes to have it done next week. Jason explained OWEB is allotting $50K per fire for agencies to create a plan for fire restoration. The projects are to be in 2026-2028. The SWCD created list of landowners who wanted to work with the agency postfire. Karen said once the maps are uploaded she will send it out for review. Ron asked what type of restoration projects and discussion followed including planting willow and sagebrush, reseeding (applied by range drill or aerial), water development, fencing, weed treatment; currently there are no restrictions. Ron asked about fencing and repair vs. replacement discussed. Jason said the budget may be $500K to $1M in order to be competitive. Funding variables were discussed.
3. No public comment

The meeting adjourned at 2:46 pm. Some attendees remained to see drone footage of the district’s jackpot burning project on state land. Trees were cut June 2024 and piled and the piles were burned recently (1700 acres total).