**CWMA Monthly Meeting**

**August 7, 2024**

**Harney County Courthouse Basement Conference Room**

Present: Aaron Johnston, High Desert Partnership (HDP); Dustin Johnson, Oregon State University (OSU); Jim Campbell, Harney County; Karen Moon, Harney County Watershed Council (HCWC); Tyler Goss, County Weed Management Agency (CWMA); Jason Kesling and Barbara Pearson, Harney Soil & Water Conservation District (HSWCD)

Present/remote: Bonnie Rasmussen, Oregon Department of Agriculture

Note: Harney County has experienced a series of wildfires that began the middle of July 2024 and their impact on agency projects is referenced here.

Jason began the meeting at 3;02 pm

**Item #1: Last Meeting Minutes**

A copy of the last meeting minutes had been provided to meeting attendees by email prior to today’s meeting. Karen moved the meeting minutes be approved as presented; Aaron seconded. There was no opposition and the motion passed.

**Item #2: Financial Report**

A copy of the financial report was sent to meeting attendees earlier in the day by email. Jason said the agency is now in a new fiscal year. There is still plenty of money allocated. Tyler’s salary has been through admin because federal monies have not come in yet even if work has been completed, including through the Department of Fish and Wildlife. Jason and Barbara’s salaries have been charged to SOWR II funds.

Regarding other projects, there will be a purple loosestrife tour tomorrow. Tyler will attempt to recruit landowners for Title II. He hopes this project will be completed in the fall for annual grass treatment, but he has also sprayed.

Tyler’s time has been divided between three accounts: Admin, Title II, and Stinkingwater RCPP. There were no questions. Jim moved to accept the financial report; Dustin seconded. There was no opposition.

**Item #3: Updates**

1. The Goat Head Pull: Tyler held an outreach and weigh in. Only one participant (Bill Pearson) signed up and he brought in about 7 lbs. of the weed. In the future Tyler hopes to tie the goat head pull in with another event, such as a bicycle race or BBQ. The event can’t stand on its own—in two years of holding the event only one person signed up. Jim said Bend and Boise goat head pulls have their events tied in with a bike race. Tyler said he is open to ideas and asked meeting participants to let him know. He wondered about a dunk tank or obstacle course and have the entry fee be a bag of goat heads. Aaron suggested partnering with the Pine Room or Palace. He asked if there had been radio ads and was told yes. Dustin suggested free spray day and goat head be combined but was told it would be too late for herbicide application and too early for goat heads. Jason suggested contacting the Park and Recreation Department and possibly allow one week of swimming pool admission for a child participating with a day of goat head pulling. The subject will be recurring as the CWMA seeks ideas, but the subject was tabled for now.
2. Salt Cedar: Tyler planned to survey the Lawen area but smoke from the fires made that impossible. By the time he was able to take a drone to the area the plant was no longer purple and viewable. He hopes to do the survey next year. He will apply for a grant, probably about through the ODA. Jim said it’s difficult to obtain a grant, citing the budget part of the application and competition for funds. The application to be submitted will need to be reworded.
3. Purple loosestrife: A drone herbicide application will take place tomorrow, departing the HSWCD temporary office at 7:50 am and participants can expect to return around noon. The applicator (Dave Bunker from Branch Enterprises in Ontario) conducted a drone survey and created a 3D model. Bunker has a 4 RAM speed computer and then manually enters in loosestrife locations. He will then surgically spray the herbicide on the loosestrife. The project area will be about four to five acres. Tyler said he couldn’t get out to the Hwy 20 location due to the fires. He is unsure how the grant sponsors will respond to him being unable to spray. The project will be pushed back to another year. Jim suggested to request an extension and apply for a half grant.

Bunker wants to work more on this side of the state. Tyler plans to utilize Bunker’s efforts through combining different projects. One or two plants of loosestrife have been noticed off of Market Road, which will be treated next year. BLM and Hwy 20 to Market Road has not been treated due to the fire. Jim said plants are 6 feet high in that area, which is too deep for a drone to work. There were no questions regarding this.

1. SOWR II: A map was provided with the meeting materials, and Aaron and Tyler went to that area earlier in the day. If five days of optimal weather occur in the green area of the map it can be treated. There was a fire two days ago—Jim suggested overlaying the fire area with the SOWR project with BLM for funding. The pink area of map shows Department of State Land. Some of the map area had been reseeded and Tyler is hopeful it lasted through the fire. Sam Cisney from the BLM told Tyler the BLM will apply for emergency funding for reseeding Telephone and Falls fires. Jason asked what kind of weeds should the CWMA be concerned about and was told Medusahead. Jim said there was always a small amount there—it may blow up after the fire.

There is a flight restriction in the fire zones, and Nic Schott had to get special permission to fly into the area. Someone asked what could be expected with areas treated with Rejuvra that experiences fire? It is unknown. The landowner in that area has not treated property with that herbicide, but it did receive three years of back-to-back Plateau treatment. There was discussion about causes of fire, and if a landowner had been lax in treating for noxious weeds is he or she could be held responsible for intensification. There was also discussion on the ratio of cost to spraying, disappointment in Rejuvra’s performance, and possible treatment modification for another round. Dustin said he spoke to another state’s weed expert and was told it is best to time applications when rainy. Another suggestion was moving cattle to a treated area to break up the duff, particularly in the spring. Tyler provided photos to show streaking in an application area.

1. Tyler hopes to spray 3K acres in Drewsey next week. Nic and Mike looking to pick up spraying for Miles.
2. Fair booth: Tyler said it’s the 100th celebration of the Harney County Fair—does the CWMA want to have a theme tied to it? He asked for ideas. The CWMA will have a trailer there (Tyler will travel to Bend to pick up the trailer the beginning of September) and he hopes to have it in the optimal space the agency enjoyed until recently. Once again volunteers to man the trailer will be needed and Tyler will send out a schedule. He will be unavailable for Saturday and someone will be needed to open it up and be there until 10 am. The HCWC will partner with the CWMA. Focusing on annual grasses, invasives, juniper, and their role in fire were discussed as possible themes.
3. Bonnie said the ODA is providing new grant opportunities through the Oregon Invasive Species Council. New position has been funded. Jim asked Bonnie if Jonesboro will be treated for skeleton weed and if the SWAT crew would be needed. Bonnie said yes, her agency will be doing a lot of things this fall since like everyone else is shut down. Jim said a new med sage spot was sighted and the SWAT/CWMA crew treated and handpicked.

The meeting ended at 4:20 pm