



Klamath  
Soil & Water  
Conservation District

**ORIGINAL**  
*Signed 5/11/22*

541.883.6924 | Fax: 541.882.5409 | 1945 Main Street, Suite 200 | Klamath Falls, Oregon 97601 | www.klamathswcd.org

## **KSWCD BOARD MEETING: April 13<sup>th</sup>, 2022, 12:00pm**

### **In Attendance:**

**Board Members:** Earl Miller, Martin Kerns, David Cone, Denise Kandra, Ken Masten, Grant Knoll, and Todd Kepple

**KSWCD Staff:** Brian Quick, District Manager and Barbara Farnsworth, Volunteer Admin Assistant

**Community Partners:** NRCS April Report, Laura Hall FSA, Julie Jespersen SBC, and Beth Pietrzak ODA (Zoom).

**Meeting called to order at 12:03 pm by Chairman Earl Miller**

**Agenda Changes: None**

### **Motion 1: Move to approve the minutes for March 9<sup>th</sup>, 2022**

**Motion: Grant**

**Second: Martin**

**Discussion: There were no proposed changes to minutes labeled (Draft 2) finalized.**

**Vote: Unanimous, Passed**

### **Motion 2: Move to file the financials for March 2022**

**Motion: David**

**Second: Todd**

**Discussion: David reviewed the financials and had questions regarding the negative balance amount of -152.35 for Umpqua Bank Checking. Brian shared that this is a bookkeeping question. It also can depend on when the checks clear. David also had questions regarding the Reconciliation Detail Report. On the report it appears a Spectrum check has not been cleared from 2020. Brian shared that a new check was issued, and this older check never cleared the bank. Brian will follow up with Michelle or Julie regarding both questions. David shared that he also went over the bank statements and gave his approval. David gave his approval to file the financial reports for March 2022.**

**Vote: Unanimous, Passed**

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**Unfinished Business:** None

**Chairman Report Earl Miller:** None

**Vice-Chair Report Ken Masten:**

Ken shared that OACD didn't have a meeting in March. Brian shared Chris Hall from Jackson County SWCD called him regarding the illegal cannabis grows in Jackson County. Brian shared that Ken has also been sharing information about illegal grows in our area. Chris shared a report with Brian that he complied. Ken shared that this was reported at the Ground Water Action Committee (GWAC) and they also discussed the water shortages. Oregon is not going to allow drought wells to pump this year. Martin asked, "what good is a drought well if you can't use it during a drought?" Ken mentioned that Paul Simmons at Klamath Water Users is looking into this. A couple of lawyers put on a drought meeting at the end of March. Ken shared that this was interesting, and he has the contact number for the lawyers if anyone is interested. On the Water Resource Department books this is completely legal, and Ken believes it is not classified by a drought permit. A drought permit is a ground water permit, and landowners can ask for an emergency transfer. It is basically a point of diversion (POD) transfer. If the county has been classified a drought you can do an emergency POD transfer. The attorneys explained that it's a quick and easy process. You can do a POD transfer from your surface water to your ground water. It's completely legal if the county has been declared a drought. Its short term and good for 12 months. Klamath County has been declared in a drought. It sounds like a better way to do this instead of doing drought permits each year. If you do the POD transfer, you are using your surface water and not using your ground water. Trisha Hill or Paul Simmons at KWUA would be good contacts if assistance is needed.

**FSA TA: Laura Hall**

Programs that are taking place are the CRP Grasslands Grazing and the Water and Livestock program. The ground would go into a conversation plan with rotation plans at \$17.00 an acre, there is no guarantee that a landowner or farm can get into that program. If it's a new farm, small, or socially disadvantaged in some way they would qualify for more points. It helps to benefit conservation and local farms. This program is a long-term commitment of 10-15 years. This is not quite as hefty as the easement programs. You get extra points for doing the 15-year program or taking the lesser rental rate of \$14.00. This would be good for smaller producers that run under a 100 if they get a rotation plan it might not be so hindering. This means less water and less rotations. FSA hasn't had anyone sign up yet. The Water and Livestock program begins April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2022. This grazing season begins in a severe drought. People that have non irrigated ground have already gotten their OWRD letters, for those with normally irrigated ground they can sign up right away. We are encouraging those that are waiting on water allocations to wait until they receive these. We don't want to pay them and then they end up having to buy water or give the money back. They have increased the payments by 50% because of the high cost of feed. The Forage program has given them more money. If you had to haul feed for your animals, we were paying mileage we are now giving the funds retrospectively for 2021 and now for 2022. If you are having to haul water start

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writing the mileage down, submit it, and we will pay you at the end of the year. Todd asked, "when hauling animals is there a limit on how far a person can go?" Laura shared that the press releases were out before they knew all the details. If it's fashioned like the feed to animal, it's approximately 25-1000 miles. According to Ken, hauling cattle has gone up to just shy of \$8.00 a loaded mile.

**NRCS Soil Conservationist: Report Left by Josh Elke**

Josh was unable to attend the meeting today he is out doing fieldwork today. Josh left a report for the Board of Directors. Please see attachment labeled #1.

**ODA: Beth Pietrzak**

Beth gave a brief update on the hiring process for the new Water Quality Specialist for Klamath County. The individual that is hired will be covering Klamath County and living in the area. This will make the work a lot more efficient and doable. When the individual is selected and hired, Beth will bring them to a Board meeting so they can meet everyone they need to. The Upper and Middle Sprague River SIA area letters will be in the mail to the landowners in the next week or so. Beth will be following up with the SIA landowners as well.

**KSWCD District Manager: Brian Quick:**

Brian shared a PowerPoint presentation with the Board. Below are the items that were included in the PowerPoint.

- No-till Drill Program: The drill has been steady. Since January nine landowners have rented the drill and they have planted 535 acres. Landowners have been planting orchard grass, alfalfa, and other crops. Since January of this year with delivery the program has made \$7629. There are another seven landowners signed up that will plant 705 acres. They will be planting clover, rye, and grass crops. The program runs from Jan-June and the projected income could reach up to \$35,000 minus the expenses. This year we have gotten six landowners that haven't rented from us in the past. The program is still picking up new landowners.
  - Keno Small Forestland Project: I signed the grant agreement with ODF this past Friday. I sent it back to ODF and we are waiting to get the signed agreement back. Once we receive it, that will be the effective date and we can begin treatments out in Keno. The contractors are on board and there are a few landowners that still need to make the initial contact with the contractors. I will be meeting with landowners for follow-up and to make sure everyone is ready to start. The programs budget was presented, and the grant total is \$289,244. KSWCD will receive \$26,000 for wages and indirect costs. These funds must be spent by June of next year. This could be a challenge when fire season starts. The contractors will only be able to work until 1pm due to fire restrictions.
- Flynn Water Quality Project: This project will know about the USFW funding within the next few weeks. The projected timeline to begin will be late September or early October. No construction along the banks can take place until then. Once they get started, they will begin with the water crossing and

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sloping back the banks. Once that is completed the fencing and planting will take place. The monitoring will take place once the project is completed. The budget for this project is \$90,000 which will be run through KSWCD. This will cover approximately 1700 feet of the river. Ken asked, "it's going to cost \$90,000 to fence 1700 feet of river area?" Brian explained that this cost is due to a considerable amount of excavation work, rising cost of fence materials, and a three-year monitoring period. There will also be a considerable amount of planting grass seed and willows. The fencing will be three-inch piping instead of traditional t-post and that is an extra expense. It will need to be a stout fence to withstand flooding or ice buildup.

Balin Fence Project: The project has been given the green light from BOR to begin contraction. The District and NRCS will be meeting with Doug C. on Friday to go over the specifics of the project and to make sure all the documents have been signed for NRCS. The funding for this project is through NRCS. KSWCD also applied for an OWEB Small Grant of \$15,000 to cover a portion of the costs and it was approved. Carpenter Fencing stated that the completion of this project could take 2-3 weeks.

Medin Juniper Removal Small Grant Project: KSWCD applied for an OWEB Small Grant for this project, and it was approved. This project has already started, and they are 1/3 of the way done. Before and after photos were shared. Brian shared that there were some legacy trees left and they will provide shade for the cattle. The grass is doing well, and they are cutting up the Juniper for firewood. Once the firewood is extracted, they will burn the smaller brush piles.

USFS Bootleg Fire Fencing Project: This project is in the early paperwork stage. This project is to repair grazing allotment fencing that was damaged during the Bootleg Fire. The USFS sent this financial plan. KSWCD added our budget information regarding the monitoring requests of this project. This is a combined project working with Justin at Lake County SWCD (LCSWCD). Justin will be managing the Lake County side of this project. The total budget for this project is \$1.6 million dollars. That amount being split between LCSWCD and KSWCD would budget approximately \$750,000 for each SWCD. Most of the funding will be going to contractors for fence installation. This would put KSWCD into a different annual audit requirement. The financial management has not been determined as this time. Julie shared that if our portion to manage is kept under \$750,000 that KSWCD would not be required to have the full audit. KSWCD portions of this project would be \$24,709.65. Unfortunately, no administrative costs were included in this grant. Brian estimated the cost of a full audit if needed would be \$25,000 which includes an additional \$4000 for Julies additional time. The focus of KSWCD will be the monitoring time to verify that the contractors has installed the fencing. Brian shared that this would take six trips to verify the work has been completed. This project will take approximately six days. Denise shared that the numbers don't add up and would like better clarification. This would be a wash for KSWCD in hopes that future projects could come from USFS. USFS is still working on the details and budget planning. This is Brian's first time working on a project with USFS and nothing has been signed at this time. Brian will continue to update the Board on the progress of this potential project.

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**Illegal Cannabis Growing:** There is conversation in the community about illegal cannabis grows in Jackson County and Klamath County. Chris Hall from Illinois Valley SWCD (Jackson County) called Brian and Chris shared information on an 82-page report that he compiled on illegal cannabis grows in Illinois Valley. Chris reports that the total number of grows over 12 plants were 946. Out of the 946 locations 82% are unlicensed cannabis grows. The total unauthorized water used for unlicensed grows is 414 million gallons. It takes 410 gallons of water to grow one pound of trimmed cannabis. Brian shared more information and photos that were included with Chris's report. Landowners in the Illinois Valley are concerned because wells are going dry due to drought and unauthorized water use. Landowners are calling Chris and asking questions about dry wells and illegal cannabis grows. This is how Chris at IVSWCD got involved. Brian thought the Board would be interested in seeing Chris's report. Let Brian know if you would like the link to Chris's report.

**New Business:**

**Job Description Review:**

**Discussion:** A Conservation Coordinator job description was sent via email to Board Members. Chairman Miller asked if all members had received and reviewed the job description. Members explained they had received and reviewed the job description. Chairman Miller had no objections to accepting the job Description. Brian gave a brief description as to why the job descriptions name had been changed. It was a recommendation from HR Answers due to the name of position not fitting the requirements of the description. Brian asked if any member has any objections to the changes that were made. Denise shared that she felt the job description was repetitive and asked if, "you only want to leave it open until April 22<sup>nd</sup>?" Brian replied, "we can leave it open longer than that. We could leave it open for a month." Denise recommended it be left open. Brian asked if the wage rate was appropriate. Todd replied, it's marginal at best." Brian explained that KSWCD couldn't afford to go higher. Denise shared concerns about the way the sick leave is written up in the handbook. Denise explained when we are negotiating, we need to know what we are negotiating. Todd shared what they learned when signing final checks for an employee. KSWCD doesn't break down the difference between sick and vacation time. At this time is all considered paid time off (PTO) and accumulates. When the employee leaves KSWCD they get paid for all the time. This leads to writing a check for over \$3000 Todd gave an example of how Klamath County does their sick and vacation time. An employee accumulates both paid and sick leave but is only paid for the vacation time at a capped amount when leaving. Todd suggested we look at this. Martin shared that he believes KSWCD did this years ago. PTO is capped at 240 hours according to the handbook. Brian briefly went over the way KSWCD has lumped it together. Brian also suggested changing the employee handbook to 8 hours of vacation monthly and the state minimum sick leave requirements. It was discussed to revise the handbook and put into policy before the new employee would start. Earl recommended that employees start to accrue vacation time immediately versus the 90-day probationary period wait. After discussion the handbook will need to be changed before the motion is made and a one item special meeting or email vote could be done. Grant inquired how the public would be informed if a

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special meeting was called. Todd thought that it would have to go out in a public notice. The Board approved the changes to the job description and for it to place the advertisement for month or until filled.

**Budget Cycle:**

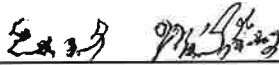

**Discussion:** Denise requested a discussion regarding the budget cycle due to nearing that annual timeframe. Denise would like to see Julie receive the budget document so they can insert the actual figures. This would help to have a budget versus actual report. Earl mentioned that this can be challenging due to not knowing from month to month what grants will be approved or not. Earl also shared that KSWCD will work on projects that come up as emergencies that are routed to KSWCD from various government agencies. Denise shared that KSWCD must have a budget out here. Denise is asking to let Julie enter the actual figures for this year to assist in helping develop budgets for upcoming years. Julie explained how the budget is a mirror of the financials. We can take previous year's budget and compare it to current. This will help to generate a QuickBooks Report of budget versus actual. It will also show the percentages of budget overages or shortages. This helps to create new and upcoming budgets. In the long run it makes the budget process easier. Brian will send the budget to Julie. No further action needed.

**Public Comment: None**

**Meeting adjourned by Chairman Earl Miller at 1:26 pm.**

**Next Meeting: Wednesday, May 11<sup>th</sup>, 2022, at 12:00 pm**

Minutes Approved as Written:

	5-11-22
_____ KSWCD Chair	_____ Date
	5/11/22
_____ KSWCD Secretary/Treasurer	_____ Date

Minutes Approved as Amended:

_____ KSWCD Chair	_____ Date
_____ KSWCD Secretary/Treasurer	_____ Date

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