

Upper Grande Ronde River Watershed Partnership
Place-Based Integrated Water Resource Planning
Stakeholder Meeting

Meeting Minutes

December 11, 2019

OSU Ag Extension Office

Island City, OR

ATTENDANCE:

Tim Bailey, Tim Wallender, Matt Insko, Steve Parrett, Leonard Flint, Darrin Walenta, Shad Hattan, Dave Johnson, Adrienne Averett, Jesse Steele, Rodger Huffman, Curt Ricker, Bill Gamble, Tony Malmberg, Cheryl Murchison, Mike Burton, Jim Webster, Brett Rudd, Jed Hassinger, Brett Moore, Donna Beverage, Dana Kurtz, and Anton Chiono via phone.

I. Welcome

a. Introductions included comments about how stakeholders ranked strategies, why some were ranked lower priority, and whether or not voters would be comfortable approving a plan that included the lowest ranked strategy. Explanations included:

- Feasibility of funding and/or project completion
- We may not need to address items that are currently addressed by other programs
- Strategies that are the least beneficial to the group ranked lower
- We don't have the power to change the weather and adverse effects
- Data collection and monitoring doesn't fit with conservation to get more water
- More data is needed to decide, and to understand importance of ranking
- Reasonable accommodations may be needed
- Some see too many changes needed to get to yes and couldn't approve it
- Could get to yes if concerns were addressed
- Significant concerns should be addressed

b. Meeting Purpose: will vote for top 5 strategies and discuss, refine action plans

c. Recap of November 13, 2019 meeting

d. Meeting guidelines

e. Updates from the group

- Mike Burton explained that although the NRCS would like to help with costs related to flood damage, the Emergency Watershed Program doesn't fit in the Grande Ronde Valley, nor has it for 22 years. There is no outside money available until an emergency declaration is made. The value of what's being protected has to be 50% or greater than the fix, and it doesn't include crop damage or loss. Most of what Union County has does not qualify as a dike because of the slopes and lack of material compaction. NRCS can't repair something above pre-disaster conditions.
- Donna said that although Union County looked into the potential of declaring an emergency, it was turned down, even when trying to combine with Umatilla and Wallowa Counties. There was not enough infrastructure damage to qualify.
- Mike encouraged ag producers to look into the Floodway Easement Program; a one-time payment can be disbursed to build dikes that are a significant distance

from the river. There would need to be some coordination so that dikes don't stop at property lines.

- Jesse shared that Grande Ronde Model Watershed received five funding proposals that will be implemented next summer.
- Jim said that the Union Soil and Water Conservation District is working on projects at Catherine Creek (tech assistance), Willow Creek, and is also in the early planning stages with Buffalo Flats.
- Bill reported that the Birdtrack Springs restoration project is almost complete and they have already noticed a beaver colony taking advantage of that restoration.

II. Step 4 Major Strategy Prioritization (see attached table)

a. Vote to prioritize strategies; ranked by group totals (#)

1. Built Storage – Aboveground Off-channel (58)
2. Built Storage – Aboveground On-channel (46)
3. Land Management – Agricultural Land (41)
4. Non-structural Water Storage & Habitat Management (37)
5. Land Management – Public Land (34)

b. Step 4 action plans/discussion and feedback; draft action plan was updated as suggestions were made. Next steps include identifying concerns and address in action plan; review OWRD guidance; contact agencies for first available funding (Brett); create a document repository accessible to group; and focus work on top five priorities.

- Was this ranking method adequate or should another method be considered?
- Should we consider unweighted ranking?
- All 12 categories will be included in the report with identified concerns; this allows a ranking, and the ability to move forward with everything still on the table.

III. Conclusion

a. Next meeting is January 8, 2020 @4pm at the Misener Conference Room

b. Other comments

The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Cinda Johnston
Union County Planning Department Specialist

attachment

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| Name _____ | |
| Major Category | Rank |
| Administrative Actions | |
| Built Storage - Aboveground-Off Channel | |
| Built Storage - Aboveground-On-Channel | |
| Data Collection & Monitoring | |
| Infrastructure/Land Modification | |
| Land Management – Agricultural Land | |
| Land Management – Municipal Land | |
| Land Management – Public Land | |
| Non-Structural Water Storage & Habitat Management | |
| Outreach and Education | |
| Research – review of existing information | |
| Underground Storage | |

Directions

Rank your top 5 priorities 1-5 (1 is the highest priority)

Points will be allocated as follows: 1-5 points, 2 - 4 points, 3 - 3 points, 4 - 2 points, 5 - 1 point