

Bakeoven / Buck Hollow & White River Watershed Council Meeting

October 1, 2015
6:00 – 7:30 PM
Imperial River Co.
304 Bakeoven Rd. Maupin, OR

MINUTES

Attendees: Agency

Abbie Forrest, <i>Coordinator</i>	Chris Rossel, <i>USFS</i>	Garrett Duyck, <i>NRCS</i>
Beau Sorenson, <i>NRCS</i>	Shilah Olson, <i>SWCD</i>	Josh Thompson, <i>SWCD</i>
Karen Lamson, <i>SWCD</i>	Clinton Whitten, <i>NRCS</i>	

Council Members:

Bob Krein, <i>Chair</i>	Randy Warnock	Blaine Carver
Dan Carver	Larry Ashley	Vicki Ashley
Pat Davis, <i>Co-Chair</i>	Dan VanVactor	Herb Snodgrass

Call to Order and Introductions

Pat called the meeting to order and led introductions.

Dan VanVactor had a few questions regarding the White River watershed council minutes and asked for the RCPP update. Josh said that not everything that was requested in the application was funded, including the conservation easement and the on farm efficiency projects. Josh explained the next time funding is available, those that were cut out will be looked at again.

Herb moved to approve the minutes from the last meeting as distributed, Dan VanVactor seconded and the motion passed.

Dan Carver commented that the minutes distributed at this meeting were not the most recent, and that there had been a Bakeoven/Buck Hollow watershed council meeting after the Neighborhood Meeting last spring.

Randy moved to approve the minutes as distributed, Bob seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Note: Abbie looked back into watershed council folders and Anna's files. There was not a Bakeoven Buck Hollow watershed council meeting after the Neighborhood Meeting in February, so the minutes distributed at this meeting were the most recent.

Discussion SWCD Staffing Structure *Karen Lamson (Bakeoven/Buck Hollow's technical contact) Josh Thompson (White River's technical contact).*

Shilah provided the councils with background information regarding this new staffing structure. It was brought to the Districts attention after the departure of Anna Buckley that there needed to be a change. Watershed Coordinators at the district have experienced burnout and workload issues. Ron and Shilah decided that the best action would be to have Abbie who has been working with the councils and doing the administrative work for the last two years take over the position as watershed coordinator and assign one conservation planner/technician to each watershed council for additional support.

There was pushback from two members of The Dalles Watershed Council who did not feel the District was being collaborative. So far, Shilah has received unanimous support from all of the watershed councils that have met and discussed the issue since the last Coordinating Board meeting.

Pat provided additional information as to why a Coordinating Board was formed through OWEB's new guidelines. He explained that the Coordinating Board is made up of 2 representatives from each watershed council, usually the Co-chairs. Ryan Gordon with the Network of Oregon Watershed Councils was asked to facilitate the last Coordinating meeting back in July to help with the discussion. It was decided that each council would meet before the next Coordinating board meeting and provide the coordinating board with a decision whether each council was in favor of the new structure or not. Pat has attended each of the individual watershed council meetings and has seen great support for this new structure.

Dan VanVactor said he is happy to have Josh as White River's technical contact, and Pat added that Bakeoven will be happy to have Karen as she has done a lot of work in the area, like creating the Bakeoven/Buck Hollow watershed assessments, and from personal experience working with her on other projects.

Randy asked if there has been any repercussion because of the issues from the two members of The Dalles Watershed Council. Shilah said no, OWEB has been complimentary to the District. She said that the District and watershed councils are back in good graces and that The Dalles members misunderstood their roles on the Coordinating Board.

Dan VanVactor moved on behalf of the White River and Bakeoven Buck Hollow watershed councils to approve the current staff structure decision. Bob seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) Update

Josh Thompson told the councils that the RCPP is officially underway. Back on September 8th there was limited funding in the account which allowed them to only write one contract (Lindell dam removal and irrigation efficiency upgrade) for fiscal year 2015. The remaining projects will have contracts written for fiscal year 2016. He explained that the RCPP is a new program and it is taking them a long time to get all of the details figured out. The 3rd week in January is scheduled to start the Threemile joint diversion and fish screen, along with the Thompson diversion and ditch elimination, these projects will start work in 2016. Josh said things are looking good, just delayed because of the end of the fiscal year and many critical programs were shut down.

Dan VanVactor asked, how the irrigation districts could get the Badger Ditch Piping project on the schedule list for funding. Josh said that until fiscal year 2018, there will not likely be any more EQIP funds, awarded to the White River watershed until this project finishes up. Beau explained the process of receiving EQIP dollars for clarification. Dan also asked if there is any resources that would potentially fund piping the 2 miles out of the wilderness for the Badger Ditch Piping project. The answer was yes, OWEB and OWRD are both resources that could potentially fund the project. Dan also asked Chris if the Forest Service had any money to contribute. Chris said he would look into any opportunities and follow up with Dan later. Chris asked if this project would allow water to be stored longer. Pat said that last year was the first time Rock Creek didn't completely dry up.

Potential EQIP

Beau wanted on this meeting's agenda because there has been a lot of interest in rangeland improvements with potential EQIP dollars. He said that the NRCS money available for drought was not funded in Wasco County and a lot of folks are in need of range improvement practices. There are not any EQIP dollars

available this year, but there will be in the future. By talking about the potential now and doing range assessments, we will be prepared when the money does become available.

Abbie reviewed a list of resource concerns that were put together from the last Bakeoven/Buck Hollow watershed council meeting. The list was compiled from potential projects/concerns that each landowner said they would like to accomplish or address.

Beau said that there are not many creeks that are in CREP. He also went through some of the options that landowners have. He said there is potential that cross fencing could help, with change of management, wells and spring developments to help keep cows out of the creek; treat invasives like medusa and cheat grass through range seeding. There are new developments that are being tested for treating medusa head, cheat grass and others. Beau also said that NRCS needs to know what the problems are so they will know how much money is going to be needed so they can go after those dollars when they become available. Beau wants to know what could be done in 5 years and a reasonable outcome to write a conservation implementation strategy.

Shilah explained that the SWCD is looking at applying for a technical assistance grant. Young Life successfully completed a grant that would be similar to what this council would like to do. The council would need to come up with a comprehensive strategic plan to go after funds, along with whatever NRCS can come up with.

Beau added that he will have Garrett and Clinton start contacting as many landowners as possible to meet with them and get a conservation plan put together. Once they have the plans completed, they will take each piece and combine the plans to show the big picture. Things such as grazing management, soil and water quality will all be combined to paint the big picture and how it ties to benefiting fish habitat and watershed health.

Dan VanVactor asked if irrigation projects will be competing for the same dollars as range improvements. Beau said yes. They have not spent one dollar of the EQIP funds in the Bakeoven and Buck Hollow watershed. The money goes to resource concerns and the things we are talking about now will evolve into an RCPP. Beau and Josh agreed to look into piping projects for Dan and the Badger Irrigation District.

Wasco County Forest Collaborative Group Update

Pat provided the councils with some background information on the forest collaborative along with a brief update. He said the Forest Service approached folks from the White River watershed council and said that they wanted to do a restoration effort from the result of the Rocky Burn area, and get input from the community. It expanded through the county to make a forest collaborative. Pat said the group is making excellent headway. The fire season put a little bit of a stop to progress because many of the folks participating are on fire crews. Pat said this month they should start receiving some data that will help put together a concept of how to move forward with the project. Pat also said that a lot of folks in White River have dealings with ODFW and were looking to formalize something to be able to provide input on how they use the land. Pat said he will be able to provide more information at the next meeting once an ODFW representative is at the table.

County Appointments

Abbie told the council that John McElheran has stepped away from ranching and the White River watershed council. He was a co-chair on the White River watershed council and his vacant seat needs to be filled with a replacement. Herb Snodgrass volunteered to take the position as co-chair and those duties, along with a seat on the Coordinating Board. Dan nominated Herb as co-chair, Herb accepted.

Updates and Announcements

OWEB Lower Deschutes Small Grant Program 2015-2017

Abbie provided the council with information on the Small Grant program. We have received the agreement for the 2015-2017 biennium and is accepting project ideas and applications. OWEB has allocated \$66,667 in funding to the Wasco County Lower Deschutes small grant program. The funding is split for the Lower Deschutes region, with Sherman County being allocated \$33,333. There is a \$10,000 maximum award amount per project. If the project budget is under \$5,000, there is a 75% cost share rate, and if the project falls between \$5,000 and \$10,000 there is a 50% cost share rate. Larry and Vicki Ashley asked about the potential for funding for developing off-stream water systems, Abbie will follow up.

Oak Woodlands FIP – Mosier WC Acorn Challenge

Shilah provided the councils with an update on the Oak Woodlands FIP. She said the SWCD is working on a capacity funds grant application that is due November 6th.

Mike Igo, a member of the Mosier Watershed Council has challenged all other councils in the Wasco County area to an Acorn Challenge. He hopes other councils will participate in planting acorns throughout the county and to have at least 100 planted by early next spring.

Next Meeting Date and Agenda Items: Weeds, Range Management, What to do with streams that don't have salmon and steelhead?

Pat explained that although White River does not have Salmon, he is looking for ways to benefit streams. He has been talking to the fish biologists about potential work that could be done to help overall watershed and stream health. Depending on availability, the next White River meeting may have a presentation from a fish biologist to explain potential next steps.

The Bakeoven watershed council decided to have their next meeting after the neighborhood meeting in February. White river will have theirs after the neighborhood meeting as well. Councils decided to not do another joint meeting.

Meeting adjourned.

Minutes prepared by Abbie Forrest