

HARNEY BASIN WETLANDS INITIATIVE MEETING: ALL PARTNERS

Friday February 23, 2018 9:00 am – 3:00 pm

**Meeting Location: Harney County Community Center
484 N. Broadway Burns, OR**

Conference Call Number as needed – 913 904-9364 Access code 5894220#

Participants: Zola Ryan, Ken Beirley, Gary Ivey, Ed Sparks, Chad Karges, JR Johnson, Alexa Martinez, Jeff Mackey, Joe Barnett, Carey Goss, Ben Cate, James Pearson, Karen Moon, Dave Banks, Chris Colson, Melissa Speeg, Gary Marshall, Peter Walker, Brenda Smith, Calla Hagel, Ed Contreras **Call in** – Doug Peterson, Bruce Taylor, Esther Lev

Meeting Objectives:

- *Provide updates on ongoing FIP activities to meet the three objectives*
- *Provide updates on Restoration Alternatives Summit outcomes*
- *Provide updates on ongoing grants, November and February grant cycle proposals*
- *Discuss upcoming OWEB meetings*
- *Confirm next steps, meeting schedule, and who will do what by when*

Welcome, Introductions, Meeting objectives/agenda and updates

General partner updates

Zola Ryan – District Conservationist with NRCS

NRCS has offered and the position has been accepted for the SONEC biologist. Carlton Strough starts on Monday. For the current EQIP sign up we had our first batch of applications (due in November) and we have 4 applications for the flood irrigation improvements, 3 of which rated high (screened as high priority and are good applications). The other one screened as a medium. We should have the plans (need to work with the engineers) rough cost for what we should do. Can be funded under RCPP and our regular EQIP funding pool, so we could fund them either way. Think they will be funded through the RCPP but that is something that needs to be sorted out between us and Lake County. Silver Creek LIDAR has been flown and Zola needs to send them a hard drive to download the data on to. We are ready to get the data. Is it raw data or will it be products? It will be raw. In the same grant there is funding for data processing to develop products that are user friendly. Zola has been really short staffed and under water recently. Is all this LIDAR data getting consolidated into one place? Yes. Dan Craver seems to be most consistently engaged and competent. Chris pulled it from DU and sent it to Dan. Dan has already put the Silvies and the Malheur one together and that is what he using to make the contours we will use. He is putting the data/products in the Denver Office so it is easily accessible to everyone else.

Gary Ivey – Friends of Malheur Refuge

We hired a new executive director last September. He is on the ground doing a lot of media outreach and getting our monthly newsletters out. Have 600+ members and 11,000 Facebook friends. If we have some small projects we can fund them. Have been successful at doing this at a small scale.

Ed Sparks – Refuge biologist

Wetlands habitat on the MNWR. Just had a meeting on some stuff we can work on with wet meadows. Seeing if we need to stay the course or make changes for the studies taking place there.

Chad Karges – MNWR

Will talk just briefly about the community based water planning collaborative. It could potentially link to HBWI. That water collaborative is currently focused on groundwater issues in the basin, which is a designated area of concern. There will probably be a need sometime in the future to share information with this effort. Don't know what that will look like right now. Have to see how the ecology conversation will frame up. As we move forward you should expect to hear more on what is going on with this collaborative.

Alexa Martinez – biologist on MNWR

Just had our wildlife working group meeting in January. Was really helpful for everyone that was there. Getting survey protocols up to date. Currently doing winter trumpeter swan surveys.

Karen Moon – Harney County Watershed Council

Think we heard several mentions of our projects lately. Carp biomass project should be finished this summer. Helping with the LIDAR on both Silver Creek and Harney Basin. Those should be coming to a close pretty soon with products.

Dave Banks – District Fish Biologist with ODFW

Some things linked to aquatic health summit. Started doing some pre-work that we need to do internally with our agency. Moving forward with a a Rotono project on Moon Reservoir. Ben Rameriz left us. New hire probably won't be on board until May.

Brenda Smith – HDP Executive Director

Our office has moved again. The office across from ODFW now houses Harney County Watershed Council. We moved up the road to in front of the golf course. The main reason is that there is more room. Want to invite you all as partners to use it. If you need to come to town to meet somebody, please feel free to stop in. We have a small meeting room to have a conversation in.

Gary Marshall – Landowner, HDP Board Member, OWEB Board Member

OWEB's next meeting is April 24th and 25th in Frenchglen. Hopefully will be able to give the OWEB board a view of some of the things going on in the wetlands here. Generally, that agenda is quite full. Expect quite a few people there.

Christina Santana – Basin Wildlife Biologist for NRCS

Have some conservation implementation strategies focusing on SONEC and maintaining wet meadow flood irrigation.

FIP Outcome 1: Improved Aquatic Health

Overview of Malheur Aquatic Health Summit– Chris Colson

In an effort to come up with a carp solution in Malheur Lake a few years ago, the Malheur Lake Working Group formed to come up with solutions. The path to those solutions brought James in with regards to modeling. There were concerns that they weren't moving in the same direction as the aquatic health group. Linda was in the middle of this and when she left, it left the group without leadership. It was decided it would be worth coming together to develop a unified path forward. There was data collection going on that needed to go in a different direction (no consideration of economic/social, turbidity, etc.). Wanted to take everything into consideration. We left the summit and people had some walking orders. Want to make sure that the next step involves due diligence to show that it is a really good solution going forward. Optimistically have a path forward by next January, but we will take more time if we need to.

When we started putting it together, this was the 3rd attempt to do something like this, but got the impression that this one was the most productive and set us on a path to success. The first two were about carp control. This one was quite a bit different because it looked at a broader scope. Elements that get at carp management, turbidity, and manipulation of lake's hydrology. All of these are being analyzed from a feasibility and efficacy standpoint. One thing to recognize is that there are different ideas on the table. That is all they are at this point. Refuge isn't endorsing anything right now. These are just possibilities and doesn't mean we are pursuing them at this time.

What are the next steps? James had some ideas and things he needed to incorporate into his modeling, which will need some more data collection. So, it is going to be a while. The group came to a consensus that James will give updates every 3 months, but it will take a while for data to come in. Coming together slowly but surely so everyone can be on board. James is making sure that he is hitting on everyone's ideas. In a year the model will be better framed, but there might not be outputs in a year. If we stick to this next meeting in 3 months will have some new things. There is some engineering feasibility being done with lake draining. This next one won't be enough time for James and socioeconomic hasn't kicked off, but the first update will be a progress report of things in motion. In the following one would expect to have some more concrete things. Might be able to say this has a lot of hurdles, or this one is more attractive. This one at 3 months might not be a meeting but an update instead.

James' primary task is to build the model, not run every possible alternative that we come up with. Should have a functioning model for us to use in the future. Want to build it so it can be used for these ideas. Who can run it? Can Ben run it? The idea is that we should get to a place where anyone can run the model. The carp model, when we originally made it, wasn't usable by most people, but want to make it so years down the road that Chad could use it. Carp management is more understandable. The turbidity says that the wind effects are so much that the clarity won't be addressed even with carp management. By draining the lake you are getting rid of the carp, the suns on it so you are going to enable all the vegetation to re-germinate, and the wind effect is taken out. In one effort, you take care of wind fetch, carp, and revegetation. We need real information on the germination of vegetation. It hasn't been revegetated since the 1984 flood, could there be a seed bank issue? Not likely, wetland seed has a long life (thousands of years), so the seed bank should be there, the conditions just haven't been right for vegetation establishment. Implementing something without understanding vegetation response to your actions can create a system of annuals, which isn't what you want. Understanding the dynamics is important. Don't want to change the system, want to just alter it. Some wonky things potentially going on. Gary remembers in 1979

the water was clear in Malheur Lake. There is this huge data set of lake aquatic health and turbidity to evaluate it to see what is going on. Sago pond weed was better after the rotenone treatments.

Eric Harstein was at the summit and is tracking our changes and is supportive of this more comprehensive project. OWEB is understanding of what we are trying to do on a larger scale. Have a green light on that. If we have the ideal situation and figure out what we want to do, we have \$1.5 million to address this issue, which isn't that much for what we are proposing to do. Our FIP is a lot different than the other FIPs, and OWEB still funded us.

Breakdown of Restoration Alternatives Summit Outcomes

Immediate actions / Summer work plans – Ben Cate / Joe Barnett

Immediate actions that came out of the summit included more data gathering over the summer. Ben recently submitted a grant to hire more technicians for this summer to continue doing the turbidity study. Will also help with the carp threshold/biomass study Doug Peterson is doing. So that is the work that is taking place this summer. There was a little bit of talk about doing a wind turbidity curtain this summer as an experiment, but that got pulled back. Ben and Joe will have to look at some ideas. Seems like it would complicate the current project, so not going to move forward this year. Seemed like a lot to take on without a lot of time to implement it.

Update on Carp/ Water Quality – Joe Barnett / Ben Cate

Baseline information would be the same as in the biennium 1 grant: water quality (Ph, turbidity, etc.) and fish surveys (carp presence or absence surveys in Silver Creek and Silvies river). Maybe down in the Double O unit in the MNWR. Those are our immediate actions. Hire some people. Planning on kicking off water quality monitoring on the lake. Will take the ice auger out. Will do that a few times until March 19th. The ice movement last year destroyed the stations that were measuring water quality. Ben and Joe will replace those and begin their weekly runs to monitor water on the lake again.

In May, Dr. Wood's colleague will look at sheer stress. Will go out (2-day effort) to take a few core samples of the sediment. Has something to analyze it and look at sheer stress. That will go on in mid-May. Sheer stress is how easily the sediments lift off the substrate. By June, all our techs will be on board. June will start the carp threshold study with Doug Peterson. We should acknowledge the work has been done. Have been able to build 21 enclosures with help from the refuge. Finger's crossed that they will hold up over the winter. We are going to start this late summer, conditions permitting. Drones will photograph vegetation over time for the vegetation sampling. A big effort to get the experiment up and running. Training for fisherman? Joe researched it and tried calling several people. It is a commercial industry and it is competitive, so people don't want to share trade secrets.

Question / Answer regarding Restoration Alternatives Summit

FIP money went to the summit, but further meetings won't be paid by that. What is the current population of carp in the lake? James said there aren't as many large adults. Their biomass is down, but recruitment was up. When the water filled back up, a few adults created a large population of juveniles. The fishermen caught adults, but not as many as they did in 2013. There aren't that many adults out there. But there is a large class of juveniles that were born this spring.

FIP Outcome 1: Improved Aquatic Health, continued

Updates on funding of Social & Economic aspects of restoration - Chad Karges

Often when we do these different ecological projects we struggle with implementation or sustaining them through time. Sometimes this is because of the social and economic situations. With this effort on Malheur Lake, which you know is going to be complex, costly and lengthy in time, going to want to look at social and economic. Want to look at how to make sure we reach long term objectives. Agree that we need to look at social and economic aspects. Have an agreement with Kelly Biedenweg, social scientist at OSU, in the process of framing up some initial interview questions for stakeholders who would have a perspective on Malheur Lake. Will be doing rounds of interviews and get a baseline of people's opinions of Malheur Lake to give us a better picture of social values and what walls we might potentially run into. We can use that knowledge of social science down the road so that we are successful.

Also doing the economic analysis. David specializes in invasive species economics. Working on USFWS money to work on carp economics. That will better inform us on what we can sustain on carp management on a long-term basis. OWEB said there may be potential for additional funding as we continue to move forward. Don't know about the economic analysis and how we will fund that. Know that we will have to build on these two things as we move forward. We have provided names to Kelly, and a number of partners are on that list, so expect contact. Might see this email next week. Want to do interviews in March and April. Chad is hoping that there are certain value sets out there. How do we engage with those values so that we can move forward? What is the timeline? She will have something done by this fall. Will have a final report to us. Bob is interested in political end of it. Some of the questions will be directed at political. Haven't really figured out how to engage the political aspect to advance our goals.

Update on Ecosystem Modeling – James Pearson

The presentation isn't linear because not all the aspects aren't all straight forward. Small lake decreases recruitment and sabotages habitat. We see a two-year response after rotenone. Need to know the past. Waterfowl and sego pond weed reflect success. Will draining the lake negatively impact other species? Species are already impacted by carp, so that could be an argument for doing it. The intent is that it would be drained in the spring, and then be filled back up by the summer. Not supposed to be a multiyear dryness, just a few weeks.

What are the next steps of the modeling? The next steps would be to ensure that the model is 100% working correctly. Going to run it with environmental variables. Going to check it against the data that Tammy is collecting. If they are close, then you can say that the model is working. Going to put the instruments in a way that we can better inform the model. The first step is rough validation. James has done a little of that so far, and it is tracking along. Is it perfect? No. But it is working. There is one model that shows that there is a relationship between carp biomass and turbidity, and will try to use that in the model. That is where we are going next with that. Doug is going to get a lot of cool results, which will be directed into the carp dynamic model again. 100 kg per hectore was a study that was done in the Midwest on a huge lake. Doug's stuff will be more relatable on depth and sediment characteristics in this dryer climate. What time of year are the average maximum wind velocities? Looked at Tammy's data from this summer and it seems sustained. Have a large gust every few days

that is sustained for a couple of hours.

FIP Outcome 2: Maintain and enhance private flood meadows

Update on status of irrigation infrastructure projects – Chris Colson

We have been at a loss without the SONEC biologist position. Haven't maximized this effort, but now have Ed and some others coming in. Put in 3 proposals to continue the replacements of the in-stream structures. This fall we are looking to do Tyler and Sweek dams. Then Dun and King dams. Part of the battle is that for a while we were pursuing fish passage exemptions, and now we are going to go a different way. Looking to put a passage on, but with a gate so that we don't have to seek the exemption. Then if we ever get a handle on the carp we can unlock the gates. Our timeline is based on how fast we can get the passage guys to move on this. Can we get a carp trap put in? Landowners might not be supportive of having to manage the fish passage. It would have to be the right kind of landowner to take that on. It could be the carp harvesters that manage it.

These are bolt on structures that are stainless steel. That is a change from the original designs so we don't have planned money for the fish passages. Chris put in an application for automated flood irrigation infrastructure. Working with someone out of Australia on this and it wasn't going fast enough. Now have someone at Grants Pass that sees the opportunity. The idea is to build it with the OWEB funds and then go for NRCS Conservation funds (1 to 1 match, so double the money). The nice thing is from talking with landowners, the biggest motivation for conversion is that pivots are automated. So this would get that pioneering technology out on the ground. It gets the component on their list that makes it an offering on the EQIP list.

Update Wet Meadows plant communities study and landowner engagement – Esther Lev

The first four years we were doing all the work we did it down on the refuge. It was interesting seeing the difference between the areas. This last year they moved into the private lands. The same time Dan, Gary and Esther talked to a bunch of landowners on their ideas on managing properties, their thoughts about the future, etc. Of all the places Esther has worked in she has never seen people more attached to a habitat type. Turned out that a lot of the people they had the conversations with were the same people that they did the transects of this summer. Esther was able to be out to be out on the land with the landowners and see what they liked and didn't. A lot of what they liked was the same that Esther liked from an ecological standpoint. Next step to see what their thoughts are on long time conservation with more landowners. When talking to landowners and other partners the state and transition model was to help people manage land better, but it is too complicated right now. Tony and Esther came up with an idea to put on some wet meadow get togethers. Only people there will be the ones that manage wet meadows. Esther and Brenda will be the only ones present not managing. Silvies and permittees of the refuge and refuge staff and people outside the refuge boundaries.

A lot of research done in the 60s and 70s and that has all dried up and the vegetation has changed in the meadows. Have a lot more invasive species now. The whole literature done is based on different plant communities. Not a lot of research done of meadows now. Esther though it was a good time to bring people together as they are learning what the current state of the meadows is. Part of the value is the forage they are taking off, water

management, soil erosion, etc. Understanding the plant uses on that side and what is happening with birds. Good to get information and broaden the group involved. There is a lot that landowners don't know. How do we bring in some local/eastern Oregon expertise so people can start considering conservation of their lands. Giving people more background on what this means and how it might tie in to their life planning. Finding legal and economic people from eastern Oregon so they can start evaluating those choices.

There have been some things that we have talked about the past few years, that have lined up well. Tony Svejcar recently retired from the EOARS. Dustin Johnson does the research at the refuge on haying and grazing. Dustin is going to figure out how the research transfers to how landowners manage their lands. Ed is going to work with refuge staff to see if any of it makes sense to do on the refuge. Will be coming back with recommendations. Going to be looking at how the wildlife side connects.

We talked to people who have wet meadows and they were all older. They have been a part of their operations a long time. It is important to look at the future of wet meadows and if anyone is going to want to do it. It is important to everyone that is doing it now and they see all the benefits of it but that might not be the case in the future. It is a lot easier to do pivots than flood irrigation. All these people that Gary and Esther talked to, they are all really excited about participating in these conversations that Tony and Dustin are putting together. The interviews opened the doors to see that people care about the land so much, to looking at how to protect these lands and collectively as a community keep them going. Talked about two different strategies – easements and plant communities.

Can you talk about how understanding the plant communities goes back to the FIP? Understanding the plant communities and wildlife relationships helps us understand the challenges and threats. Where are the places that we need to conserve and sustain? What kind of knowledge and practices can we do knowing that we are living a changing climate/world. Opens the door for a lot more involvement from landowners. The Harney Basin is public and private land. Opportunity to bypass barriers to implementation on the refuge. Could be done on private land no problem. Will the state transition model provide quantifiable information about the amount and quantity of water that is needed to maintain these types of communities? That is what we are hoping for. Want to find out what do we want to know and how will we use it? Do we want to ask the same questions, or are there new questions we should be asking? A couple of the private landowners would like to get rid of the canary grass on their property and they don't want to use chemicals. Looking at using water management to do that. Candace said that people should make sure that doesn't negatively impact the birds.

Through the interviews have gathered a good amount of information about their feelings on wet meadows. Kelly Biedenweg might be interested in this information. Sharing information with Kelly Biedenweg? Thinks it would be a great idea. Kelly is only focused on Malheur Lake. They are both aware of each other's efforts and are coordinating their efforts to make sure we aren't duplicating contacts. One of the items on the agenda is reestablishing the ecology working group and merging some people that may be interested in that group. Esther said she would take this on. Currently the ecology work group is Chris Colson, Ed, Dustin, Esther, Jon Christy, Marty St. Lewis.

Ecology Working Group – Who wants to be working with this group?

Currently this group consists of Chris Colson, Ed, Dustin, Esther, Jon Christy, and Marty St. Lewis. That group came from the CCP and is still operating. The CCP is still being implemented. Both of those things are happening. The ecology work group is still in order. Just at hiatus because at a point where we are starting to synthesize all this information. Will use the research that Dustin is working on. This group would be greater than what is happening in MNWR. Will be looking at 6 years of data on water and vegetation, haying and grazing, canary grass study, and the conversations with landowners. Will look at how do we go forward with that? The idea of the goals and what we will be doing next. Everyone will get to see the information, but the group will be the first to vet the information.

Will probably be meeting at the middle or end of March. Can send Esther an email about who is going to participate. Before we have that open invitation, we need to talk to Peter about management of the process before we make it an open invitation. From the big view, we have seen with the FIP funding there is a lake working group and there have been changes in who is involved and a greater group came together for the Malheur Summit. Feel we need a similar group for the wetlands. The ecology group has some tangible things they need to achieve through the CCP. Maybe they are two different groups.

Land Trust & Conservation Easement discussions –Bruce Taylor

On the flood irrigation side we started out talking about infrastructure and data gathering. Had a simplistic idea of conservation easements, but it is more complicated than we thought. There has never been very much interest in conservation easements among landowners out here. The second part is that we don't have much land trust capacity in protecting flood plains. Through Esther's work we are making good progress on the landowner side. Need to look at the tools that fit into making easements. Having people wake up to succession planning, and easements are a tool in this. Esther is laying the groundwork for a thoughtful approach to this.

On the land trust side we had high hopes last summer. OWEB said they could provide some funding on expanding land trust capacity. Had a large group meeting in October that we went into with high hopes to have discussions on what we need and what we would ask OWEB for. Had good discussions but didn't get into the heart of the issue, which is the main land trust isn't very functional. Left to a small group of people to figure out what the next step was. Walked out without a clear path forward. Bruce was put in charge of figuring out what the next step should be. Talked to several board members of the Northwest Rangeland Trust about concerns Bruce had. Became apparent to Bruce that we could ask OWEB for funding and come out at the same place that we are right now.

The Trust's business model is based on payments from landowners in conjunction with easements. This is what funds the operation. Trusts takes on huge obligations when they take on easements to make sure that the agreements are held. Bruce doesn't feel like this group would be a good choice for holding easements in Harney County. Their board doesn't meet that often. They need a change of staff. The picture could change in the next 6 or 8 months. Recognize the reality that this is going to be a long-term process and we want to make sure that it works right. Make sure that we aren't rushing into something with landowners where the trust isn't ready to hold the obligations.

Esther had conversations about what tools landowners would be interested in using. OWEB has a good appreciation for the difficulty we are facing in conservation easements. We want to protect flood irrigation. Can't force people to flood irrigate with water that they don't have. We have some challenges to address out there. The good part of this process is that we can work our way through it. OWEB has hired Jenifer Arnold to look at the process. This is a common theme. The two primary entities needed to have a conservation easement program in Harney County will not support or approve funding if Northwest Trust is going to be the holder of the easement. Wanted to paint the importance of the what we are facing. The FIP and RCPP funds can only really pay for one easement right now. The Rangeland Trust is looking to hold some landowner workshops in Harney and Lake counties. If it is going to be something formal and developed it won't happen for a while. Sometimes it is a last minute, hurried effort on their part to put meetings together.

Ed Contreras is the new SONEC coordinator working with IWJV. His goal is to facilitate and coordinate conservation on private lands in the SONEC region. Working with Chris Colson (DU holds one of the major RCPP grants). Part of that RCPP and the programs they are working through with NRCS. Have \$6 million in easement funds, but there isn't very much money in Oregon. \$500,000, which is a drop in the bucket. This is to help promote pilot projects. We are looking at it as a pilot project. It currently expires in 2019, looking to extend it to 2020. Going through the easement program in NRCS is a process.

Looking at if they can fund an easement in eastern OR. We are looking at in terms of time frames. We would need to submit a full application by next spring, which entails have non-federal match in hand. This isn't a long time frame. The RCPP covers California where there is a lot more traction. There are a lot of land trusts working down there. Working to have them expand some. Can move this funding from OR to CA. Would like to keep funds in OR to see if we can get something to materialize in the next 9 months. We are working to keep that open, but at some point, if something presents itself down in CA, we will probably move the funding down to CA to deliver on easement goals. Looking to start our own non-federal match program. Looks like a good opportunity to work with HDP. There are a lot of other things we must address including land trust capacity.

FIP Outcome 3 – Stakeholder engagement and communication to solve complex problems

Show HBWI Partners Film

We can share this film at events and when partners give presentations. Asked Sue and Richard if we can have the film on a hard drive. Richard said he could do that, but will need to make sure that it is downloaded on the computer in order to view it because the processor isn't fast enough to play it off the external hard drive.

Communication plan for Biennium 2 - Melissa Speeg

We are using the bird festival to reach out to the community. Chris and Ben will be giving a local's restoration tour. Going to be reaching out to the community to find a handful of participants to come learn about our work. Also going to be having an egg hunt as part of the festival's Kid's Nature Day. The idea is to have partners participating in Fair in the Field to also set up a similar station at the nature day. Also, will be putting in an insert in the Burns Times Herald, through which we could share the turbidity handout we developed.

Will be hosting some landowner workshops to bring together landowners who receive water from the in-stream structures that we will be putting in such as Tyler, Sweek and King. This will be informal workshops where everyone meets in the field. Partners will include JR, Chris, and Zola. The goal is to provide everyone with information about EQIP to achieve a greater impact. Esther will be creating some messaging out of Wet Meadow Information Gathering workshops she is holding.

To engage our regional audiences, we will be holding some events in western Oregon. We can use those events to share the information that we are learning through our work on turbidity and carp. We can also use these as a tool to get our messages out in a proactive way to get ahead of negative audience reactions. We also will be having restoration birding tours led by Chris, Brenda and/or Ben that typically consist of 10 to 12 people from outside the area that are interested in our work.

To improve our internal communications, Melissa will be sending out internal newsletters, which she anticipates will eventually not be necessary anymore after we establish Basecamp. Basecamp is project management software that will help us work more cohesively together and communicate more effectively.

We also have several activities that are designed to reach multiple audiences. The State of the Harney Basin Conference is intended for scientists, community members, etc. who are interested in our work. We could also use this to engage the political audience we discussed earlier. We will need to start planning this now, as we anticipate holding it in spring/summer of 2019. In addition, we have our factsheet series, such as the lake turbidity handout and another handout on flood meadow irrigation that Melissa is developing with Chris. These can be used anywhere to share information about our work.

Bob said they are hiring for the docent full time position. The position deadline is soon. Portland Audubon has funding for 3 years through the FIP and private donations. Think there is a lot of opportunity with this position as far as outreach. Can make connections in the community. Melissa asked the group what is the process for ensuring partners have buy-in on messaging? For day-to-day, go to stakeholders who have direct ties in the messaging. For larger and potentially controversial topics, we will need to work on messaging with most if not all partners.

OWEB Meetings Discussion

All FIP's gathering at Menucha Retreat Center March 13-14 and OWEB Board Meeting April 24-25 in Frenchglen /Setting up tours for OWEB Board -Brenda Smith

When OWEB started the FIP they had a meeting of the FIPs. This is their second one, and we have Chris, Ben and Bob to share what we are doing and some of our messages. It is a learning effort. The next one is the OWEB full board meeting April 24th and 25th. There are a number of folks who will be involved. The Harney County Watershed Council and Sage Grouse are also supported by OWEB. Brenda developed an outline for what a tour for HBWI could look like. This would be an optional tour for people coming in early on Monday. There will be a reception early evening. This is only Brenda's ideas and isn't set in stone. If you have a good idea of what would be a good tour spot.

There could be value in seeing the flood meadows. Ben and Chris could do the same locals tour that they are doing for the bird festival. There is potential value in stopping at ARS because there are scientists involved in a number of collaboratives in the community (Dustin

Johnson and Chad Boyd). There could be value in giving OWEB board members information about HCWC's projects. Wright's Point is always a good viewpoint for that. OWEB investing out here is a big deal. They have always been fish centric. Want them to know how important this habitat is. Get them in the loop on the carp issues. Can have James talk about carp. The board can do some bird watching. OWEB had asked Brenda about pulling together a dinner for OWEB board members on Monday night. Marty Goold has a five creeks project that won a national award. Eric asked if board members could go to the Peter French Round Barn. Brenda doesn't have a good feel for the reception. Where will Gary welcome the group? It is between the Tuesday afternoon and the dinner. The welcome is usually done by an organization doing things in the area. It is usually a half hour thing that is informal with appetizers. Had a situation where played a film of what is going on. Other times a personal talk. Normally people at this reception aren't necessarily at the main reception. Brenda is going to meet with OWEB, Marty and Karen and get an idea of this schedule. Dave Banks offered up Lee Foster, who is ODFW's Sage Grouse coordinator who would be good to talk with the group.

Wrap-up, Next Step Tasks

Discuss meeting schedule for 2018

Would be good to piggy back off of other meetings. Maybe doing it in conjunction with the water meetings? The group decided on May 30th as the first full day meeting, which will tie in with the 3 month update from the Malheur Lake Summit. The next two meetings are set at September 27th and November 29th.