

HARNEY BASIN WETLANDS INITIATIVE MEETING: SUMMARY NOTES
THURSDAY NOVEMBER 29, 2018 9 AM - 3:30 PM

Location: Harney County Education Service District 25 Fairview Heights, Burns, OR

Attendees: James Pearson, Tammy Wood, Bruce Taylor, Chris Colson, Robert Esquivel, Chad Karges, Carey Goss, Alexa Martinez, Edwin Sparks, Ben Cate, Karen Moon, Bob Sallinger, Jeff Mackey, Brenda Smith, Becki Graham, Dave Banks, Calla Hagle, Dan Nichols, Gary Ivey, Teresa Wicks, Janelle Wicks, Karen Leiendecker, Ed Contreras

By Phone: Esther Lev, Jason Dunham, Marla Polenz, David Kling, Eric Hartstein

Action Items:

- Develop PowerPoint for OWEB Board presentation for Biennium 2 (January) – *HDP staff (lead), James Pearson, Esther Lev*
- Prepare grant application materials for project proposals moving forward for February 15th grant cycle – *Tammy Wood, Dave Banks, Jason Dunham, Esther Lev, Chris Colson, HDP staff*
- Pull together group of people involved in both HBWI and Community Based Water Planning effort to identify overlap / potential influence of one effort to the other – *Ben Cate*
- Follow up with Eric on Additional Monitoring funds availability to partially fund Fish Distribution project – *Ben Cate*
- Investigate potential consultant options for social network analysis – *Teresa Wicks*

Welcome, Introductions, Meeting Objectives/Agenda and Updates

1. Welcome, agenda review and introductions
 - o Ben Cate will be facilitating this meeting in the absence of Peter Harkema.
 - o What is each member most proud of in 2018? What are we looking forward to in 2019?
 1. Members were proud of the Malheur Restoration Summit, the data collected during the biennium, the multiple collaboratives (e.g., HCWC, HCRC and CBWP) operating in the basin, the High Desert Partnership, and the fact that the group is still functioning and addressing the ecological, economic and social issues in the basin.
 2. Members are looking forward to Biennium 3 monitoring projects, future systems modeling work, integrating collaboratives that operate in the basin, and continued collaboration among partners.
2. General partner updates – All
 - o Water planning update - Brenda Smith, Watershed Council (co-convenor)
 1. HCWC has an OWRD grant to do place-based planning around groundwater/surface water in the basin and are two years into their work. The CBWP collaborative was formed through this grant and is addressing concerns and issues regarding water within the basin. The collaborative is at the point where they are now starting to discuss solutions and strategies for the basin. There is also a groundwater study that is ongoing in the basin and initial results have been presented to the community. The groundwater presentations along with collaborative discussion are starting to galvanize the community in addressing strategies and solutions to solve the basin's water problems.
 2. Chad: There are different working groups within the CBWP operating in different silos. The next phase for CBWP is to start integrating these different working groups. What are the issues for surface

water and groundwater? What are the strategies? The CBWP may first deal with groundwater issues and deal with surface water at a later date.

3. The legislature is going to meet and decide on whether to approve future funds to continue this project (community-based water planning). Folks in Salem are really interested in how these projects are going.
- o FIP biennium 2 reporting – *Robert Esquivel*
 1. The 2017-2019 OWEB Biennial Report is now complete and will be sent to OWEB November 30th. Would like to thank all project leads for their contributions to the report. The next item on the agenda is to discuss who will be presenting to the OWEB Board on January 15, 2019.
- o Identify partners to report at January OWEB board meeting
 1. The group would like to have James Pearson present on his ‘systems model’. James agrees to present. The group would like to have Esther Lev present on her wet meadow work. Esther agrees to present. Ben or Brenda (or both) will present on the HBWI communications strategy.
 2. High Desert Partnership will coordinate with James, Esther, Brenda/Ben on getting the PowerPoint put together.

HBWI Project Implementation Efforts (*includes break*)

- Status of existing projects and grants
 - o Communications and community engagement – *Communications Committee*
 1. Making great progress on communications strategies to include for Biennium 3. There are talks of a “branding campaign” for the Basin, but nothing has been set yet.
 - o Malheur Model – *James Pearson*
 1. James is continuing to work on his carp and systems models, which includes carp removal efforts and lake-level fluctuations to restore Malheur Lake. James will make the carp model more general (i.e., to include different life-stages) and would also like to move away from the strategy to electroshock carp eggs. Sediment resuspension results from summer 2018 are now being incorporated into the systems model. The Predictive Model for Light Project is also helping James move forward with his systems model.
 2. Chad: The commercial carp fishermen are terminating their operations in Malheur Lake. Commercial fishing can still be a tool, just not for this particular contractor. We are asking them for a summary of what worked well and what were their processing issues. This would help future carp harvesting efforts in Malheur Lake.
 - o Structure replacement and diversion improvement – *Chris Colson*
 1. Ducks Unlimited sent an engineer out to Malheur Refuge to analyze sediment/soil profiles. The overall goal of this work was to determine whether there were interactions between groundwater and surface water. The results of the sediment/soil profiles revealed an abundance of elastic silts, which indicates groundwater-surface water interactions. This is important to know because the elastic silts will function as clay and anything heavy that is built on them (e.g., a levee) will have a shelf life. Examples were given of historical levees in MNWR that are no longer functional.
 2. The partnership was initially seeking an exemption from the fish passage requirement for diversion replacements, but the Salem folks weren’t supportive of that. Exclusionary screens for the fish

ladders may be included in the final dam designs, but final review concurrence has yet to be established. Waiting for final design approval from ODFW.

3. Tyler Dam was sent out for bid in fall 2018, but only one contractor placed a bid and it was nearly double the amount DU anticipated. It was determined that it would be too costly to construct in the winter. Therefore, Tyler Dam will be out for bid in July 2019 with intent to build in August 2019.
 4. Sweek dam should go in at the same time Tyler Dam goes in (August 2019).
 5. King Dam is located on the Bell-A ranch which consists of 20+ members (co-op). The 20 members don't want to maintain a fish ladder and have decided to pull out of the King Dam project. Ben, Robert and Chris met with the water master to determine other high priority dams. Peila Dams (West fork Silvies River) may serve to replace King Dam. Rattlesnake Diversion Dam may also be a potential for replacement as the landowner seemed into the idea.
 6. The construction and placement of riffle structures in Dunn Dam are being discussed as an alternative to concrete slabs. Riffle structures could also be constructed for the Rattlesnake Diversion Dam, which would significantly cut costs while still meeting the requirements for fish passage.
- o Others?
1. Esther: Robert will be helping out with the statistical analysis of the piezometer and wet meadow vegetation data. The results from the analysis will help us move forward with future wet meadow monitoring.

Project proposal review with group (Q&A) – *Partners who submitted proposal*

- Project Proposals (see basecamp for project proposals and details)
 - o Nutrient Dynamics in Malheur Lake – *Tammy Wood*:
 1. Chad: If we don't take this information into the model, what are we at risk of?
 2. Tammy: You can't manage what you don't understand. Nutrients are a big piece of turbidity that we need to understand.
 3. Jeff: Would reducing wind also reduce the phytoplankton?
 4. Tammy: Placement of a windbreak will not reduce phytoplankton in the water column.
 5. Chris: Will we be able to identify a nutrient threshold that will bring the lake back to a stable state?
 6. Tammy: Can't answer that at this point.
 - o Moon Reservoir Rotenone Treatment – *Dave Banks*
 1. Jeff: Can carp be in any diversions that would let them have a stronghold?
 2. Dave: Yes, that's why treatment would be performed in lower water years. There are also no carp in the forested part of Silver Creek.
 3. Ben Cate: Had conversations with Doverspike and was told Silver Creek goes dry in the summer.
 4. Dave: We could expand the rotenone treatment to include areas of standing water.
 5. James: Is there a non-target species we need to worry about? What about effectiveness monitoring?
 6. Dave: There is always a risk of impacting non-target species. Effectiveness monitoring will be done after the treatment.
 7. Ben: Will there be any water quality monitoring? Or other monitoring to determine the impacts of treatment on the reservoir?
 8. Dave: Yes, effectiveness monitoring will happen after the rotenone treatment.
 - o Harney Basin Fish Distribution – *Jason Dunham*
 1. Chad: How does this work connect back to the results chain?

2. Jason: This would connect back to improving aquatic habitat for native fish species. We currently don't know what the status of fish species is throughout the basin. Without having these baselines, we wouldn't know if the basin improved as a result of our restoration strategies.
3. Bruce: Wasn't improving habitat for native fish species specific to Malheur Lake, not for the entire basin?
4. Ben: Not necessarily, NRCS has a basin-wide strategy and Zola wanted to see projects conducted outside of the refuge.
5. Bruce and Ben: Is there any match to the project? If so, how much?
6. Jason: Yes, from the Blitzen project (~\$100K, not including my time).
- o Water Well and Wet Meadow Monitoring – *Esther Lev*
 1. Chad: How does this connect back to the refuge?
 2. Esther: We will be looking at the whole basin together, which will also tie back into the refuge
 3. Bruce: Is there potential match for the \$40K
 4. Chad: Refuge would be able to cover the needed match
- o Social Science Project – David Kling
 1. This project will measure knowledge of a preference toward Malheur Lake management. What the average Oregon household knows about the refuge, the lake, and their preferences for alternative futures of the lake. Will include a choice experiment. This is an outreach tool that hasn't been done before in the Basin.
 2. Jason: There are lots of ways this info can be applied. Will varying surveys be sent out for various regions in Oregon?
 3. David: Surveys will be structured for different regions. It would be a great opportunity to learn what people know about their resources/public lands.
- o Network Analysis – David Kling
 1. Jason: This would be a formal way to look at relationships within our collaborative and allows us to understand how resilient we are (addition or subtraction of key people)
 2. Chad: Peter Walker working on documenting the collaborative process of High Desert Partnership.
 3. Ben Cate: There is also some network analysis going on in the Forest (Restoration) Collaborative and Wildfire Collaborative.
 4. Bruce: IWJV is also sponsoring work to understand flood-irrigated work (IWJV Human Dimensions project).
 5. Ed C: Workshops have been conducted to better understand landowner perspectives on flood irrigated wet meadows, water, wildlife, and conservation. Information from these workshops now getting out to the public, via webinars and published papers.

Lunch

- Budget Review – *HDP staff*
 - o Review remaining funds in Biennium 2 and additional monitoring funds
 - o Discuss best use of 'Conservation Easement' funding (currently set aside)
 1. OWEB gave the okay to use easement funds (\$550,000) for other HBWI projects. However, any projects funded through these easement funds will require match contributions. Bruce brought up the idea of saving some of these easement funds for future land conservation work, which could include workshops for landowners. Esther agrees and would like to save \$50K for these workshops.

She would also like to pull these funds from the \$550,000 easement funds, rather than Biennium 3 easement funds. This will enable her to start the workshops in the winter when landowners are more likely to attend.

2. Dan Nichols would also like to see these workshops discuss the advantageous benefits for businesses that provide this habitat (meadows). Landowners could tell us what works for them and we could go from there.
3. Brenda wants to know what the \$50K will go to. Will we need capacity funds to pull off these workshops? Do we need to have a dedicated person for this? How does the \$50K break out? Esther says yes to all the above and will need to think about what these workshops will entail. She mentions \$50K was just a number that was thrown out and a true budget has yet to be developed. Ben mentions that grants would need to be submitted in February 2019.
4. Eric states that OWEB is okay with transferring easement funds to different projects and is supportive of keeping a chunk of those funds for landowner engagement. He reminds the collaborative that half of the FIP budget from Biennium 2 was for restoration, acquisition, and on-the-ground projects. The collaborative needs to keep that in mind going forward.

Discussion around prioritizing and funding proposals – *Group Discussion*

- Additional FIP Monitoring Funds
 1. *Water Well and Wet Meadow Monitoring (\$40K)*: This proposal feeds back into what Esther has been accomplishing on private lands. The work done will continue to inform the state-and-transition model. It is also a simple investment towards Esther's work. The group decides to fund the project
 2. *Harney Basin Fish Distribution (\$214K)*: This work was important in the FIP and would be nice to know where carp are present/absent. Jason's work will definitely fill in the gaps and we don't have a lot of data on private lands. Chad asks Jason how valuable is this work for informing management decisions. Jason states that fish in the Harney Basin have limited distributions and you have to factor in the native fish community as well as carp when making management decisions. The group decides to fund the project. As of right now it will partially be funded with the remaining FIP monitoring funds. Ben will have to confirm with Eric that OWEB is okay with this plan
- Biennium 2 – highest priority proposals – time sensitive – February grant application
 1. *Moon Reservoir Rotenone Treatment (\$40K)*: The collaborative agrees that it needs to showcase on-the-ground projects and success to the community. This would be a great opportunity to eradicate carp from an area visited by many for recreational activities. The collaborative decides to fund this project
 2. *Fish Ladders (290K)*: Chris is seeking to fund three fish ladders from the remaining Biennium 2 funds or from Biennium 3. Each fish ladder would cost \$150K for a total of \$450K. Eric mentions that there are two restoration grants in OWEB that will require fish ladders (Tyler and Sweek Dams) and that they are scheduled to go in within the next year. The collaborative is supportive of getting these fish ladders funded using Biennium 2 funds and approves this project.
 3. *Nutrient Analysis of Malheur Lake (\$273K) + Nutrient Water Quality Monitoring for Carp Biomass Project (\$9,000)*: Ben mentions that Doug Peterson would like to do some additional nutrient water quality monitoring for the Carp Biomass Project and has talked to Tammy to try and connect her project with his project. The collaborative is on board with Tammy's project and will completely fund it using Biennium 2 funds. The collaborative also approved Doug Peterson's request.

- Projects that were not funded
 1. The collaborative decided not to fund the General Survey and Network Analysis projects. Bruce mentioned that \$50K-\$90K for a Network Analysis seemed too high and that the collaborative should look for a consultant that can do it cheaper. Teresa was volunteered to find a consultant that could do a Network Analysis. Chris also mentions that the FIP will already be finished by the time the General Survey and Network Analysis are completed. Chad does believe these social projects will increase our effectiveness as a collaborative when the FIP is over. Dan and Calla also believe that the community may perceive our collaborative more highly if they see us completing on-the-ground projects.
 2. Is it possible to fund a social study using Biennium 3 funds? Yes, from the \$60K that will no longer support herding carp via sonication
- Biennium 3 – Priority to fund – not time sensitive – July or after application date
 1. There is \$60K that will no longer support herding carp via sonification that could potentially be used for a Social Study Analysis. There is also \$1.5 million for Carp Control that could be held as seed money for the future.
 2. Brenda: What does the last two years of the FIP project look like? Will there be more project proposals? sideboards? Any suggestions on how we begin to move forward?
 3. Bruce: When will lake modeling be complete for us to start considering strategies?
 4. James: Lake model will probably not be done for another two years. However, a big portion of the model will be done in Jan 2020 for us to start thinking about restoration strategies.
 5. Chris: We also said we will look at feasibility of restoration strategies once the model is done. That is worth holding onto the \$1.5 million for restoration strategies.
 6. Dave: Would James be able to present his findings at the Science Conference in fall 2019?
 7. Bob: May not want to do this at the science conference. Also, James' model may not be complete by fall 2019
 8. Chad: We need to figure out how to structure Biennium 3 to allow the project (initiative) to continue after Biennium 3.

Wrap Up and Next Steps

1. HBWI meetings were scheduled for March 20th, June 20th and September 18th in 2019
2. Grants need to be submitted in the middle of February

Adjourn