

Klamath Watershed Partnership minutes for August 1st, 2024 board meeting

Members Present: Roger Smith, Bill Harworth, Dani Watson, Ashton Greer, Karl Wenner, Matt Walter, Anne Wenner

Member Absent: Ryan Hartman

Quorum: Yes

Staff present: Bill Lehman, Mark Johnson, Jeff Kerber, Leigh Ann Vradenburg

April minutes: Karl motioned to approve and Anne seconded. Minutes approved.

Bank Statements: Bill went over our accounts and discussed possible investments. Roger suggested funding a local scholarship.

Grants pursued: 2.8+ million in grant and contract funding has been pursued during this quarter. Most opportunities are coming from the USFWS partners program.

Grants Secured: Jeff showed graphs depicting funding acquired for the current and previous three quarters, total and operational funding for the current and previous three quarters, and total and operational funding available per year through 2027. There is approximately \$6,564,671 in total funding secured and \$1,318,217 in operation funding available. \$2,563,989 in new funding has been acquired since the last board meeting. Operational funding includes personnel, travel, and admin categories. Board discussed reliance on the USFWS partners program and continuing to pursue diverse funding sources. Oregon Conservation fund and other non-federal sources were discussed. Board approved financials.

Board discussed pay raises for Mark, Leigh Ann, and Bill. Dani motioned to accept budget and Karl seconded. Potential hiring needs were discussed. Hiring KWP staff versus contracted positions was discussed. Leigh Ann has two contracted positions currently, one for a few months and another for five years. Board voted to approve budget and financials.

Board discussed the various NGO's in the basin and The Klamath Tribes and how involved each is and interactions between organizations. This conversation tied into how to grow KWP in regard to hiring decisions.

Bill Harworth announced his resignation from the board.

Bill shared the results of our annual audit with the board.

Project Manager Update: Fivemile Creek phase 3 fencing will install 0.75 miles of cattle exclusion fencing. About 14 acres of site prep will occur for reforestation. A road will be re-located out of a wet meadow.

The OWEB stream classification project is wrapping up with flow permanence surveys and a contractor conducting ground truthing.

Leigh Ann is expanding her work in the Upper Williamson River watershed to complement six previous off-stream stockwater wells and riparian fencing on adjacent and upstream landowners. The funding is

from the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission and partners are The Klamath Tribes and the USFWS Partners Program.

Leigh Ann presented at the Oregon Society of American Foresters conference on post-fire recovery in May. She participated in a tour of bootleg fire recovery work with the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife Commission in June. In July she participated in a tour of bootleg fire recovery with the Klamath Forest Protective Association. She also hosted a tour for Louisiana State University wetland professors and graduate students.

Leigh Ann's fire recovery work since September of 2021 includes large wood additions to 16.5 miles of streams. Completed work includes 1,360 acres of reforestation, 14 acres of meadow restoration, 1,821 acres of noxious weed mitigation, 8.6 miles of cattle exclusion fencing built, and 200+ miles of road hazard trees removed.

Roger discussed the potential for upland work to improve shrub habitat for mule deer, potentially striving to build a partnership with The Klamath Tribes for this work.

Project Coordinator update: Four properties were treated with the remaining Lost River RAC Weed funding.

Thirty potted willows were installed along Whiskey Creek. Approximately 90% mortality occurred of willow cutting previously installed due to beaver activity. A follow-up visit revealed a beaver had plugged a structure at the OC&E trail which caused water level in Whiskey Creek to be extremely low.

Mark updated the board on the Klamath Wing Watcher Wetland and adjacent ag land project. Phase one fiscal year 2023 funding included money to develop engineering designs with River Design Group hired as the engineer. This led to phase II and III of a larger Lake Ewauna Wellness project involving more partners. Work up to this date has included scoping meetings, conceptual designs, and drawings developed by a landscape architect. Stakeholder discussions began in June with four sub-groups identified to work on different aspects of the overall project.

Mark discussed partner involvement including Res, River Design Group, and the Klamath Wingwatchers. Karl brought up the idea of installing a Steven Svedes bird sculpture as a part of this project. Matt stated the he and KCC could help with signage.

Mark's ongoing work includes developing projects for FY25 with the Lost River working group, scoping with The Nature Conservancy and The Klamath Tribes, and planting in fall for Patty's Garden pollinator project, and engineering for the Ish Tish Creek fish passage project. Well drilling on Browesy Acres is ongoing which will allow the landowner to cease using surface water from Paradise and Badger creeks. A well was drilled for the Teddy Powers meadow off-channel livestock water project, and planting will occur in fall for the Buck Camp project.

Grants and Projects Administrator update:

The OWEB Whitcomb fencing/off-stream watering small grant was approved and USFWS will cover the necessary match with Mark's KRRR 4 funding which includes similar work on the Lost River.

Jeff applied for new funding from the USFS RAC committee for the noxious weed mitigation program. He combined the two previous Lost River and Sprague/Keno region grants into one to reduce paperwork and increase flexibility on where to spend the funding.

Pollinator plantings will occur in the fall. Site visits to assess survival and site prep will occur in August.

He assisted the SWCD on a small grant application to treat Yellow Flag Iris at Lakeside Farms as the coordinator of the OWEB Klamath 21 small grant team.

Executive Director Report: Ashton discussed her attendance at a Big Swing meeting and the board discussed practical solutions to get landowner involvement. Concern was voiced by the board that coordinated incentives are not a greater focus, though there is hope for improved options based on the variety of partners pushing to create a package of options that will secure more landowner support and funding for the region.

Board discussed Wallow Resources subcontract aimed at expanding the capacity of the local NRCS office. Karl brought up the potential to hire someone since current staff are busy. Bill brought up the concern of limitations with NRCS and capacity for them to build this partnership, some forestry projects are ready but not certain the local staff has the capacity now to take on bigger projects.