

## **KWP Board Meeting Minutes February, 2<sup>nd</sup> 2023**

**Members Present:** Roger Smith, Mark Buettner, Karl Wenner, Matt Walter, Ashton Greer

**Members Absent:** Shirley Kerns, Ann Wenner

**Quorum:** Yes

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

**Minutes:** October minutes were approved

**Financials/Other:** Bill introduced new staff member Jeff Kerber. Bill encouraged recruiting new board members, preferably someone to represent the agricultural community and someone with a forestry background. The board mentioned a few possibilities and also discussed recruiting younger board members and the challenge of them typically being busier with families, or already involved in other organizations locally.

Total operational funds were approximately \$824,682 two weeks prior to the board meeting and grew to over \$1,000,000 by the time the meeting was held. This doesn't include the over \$50,000 donated to KWP in 2022. Nearly \$4.4 million in new grant funding was secured between October 2022 and February 2023 with over \$7.7 million in total, current grant funding. An additional \$1 million+ in funding is currently submitted or in the process for the next three months. No requests were denied in the last three months. The NICRA is anticipated to be 12% in 2023 but is still being negotiated.

Bill discussed payroll projections and requested an increase of \$125 per month to the health insurance stipend for each employee adding \$6000 to payroll costs annually. The motion to increase the stipend and budget were approved.

Bill also brought up the potential need to hire additional staff or increase pay and workload of current staff in the future to account for the additional funding and associated capacity requirements. The board discussed potentially needing more office space and also being cautious not to grow too fast in case funding potentially reduces after the recent wave into the Klamath Basin.

An updated version of the policies and procedures and bylaws were provided to the board. Changes included language mandated by OWEB as a part of council capacity grant funding and were approved by the board.

Karl began a discussion on the potential capacity to increase effectiveness monitoring of with KWP in a more secure financial position by possibly hiring a staff member or contractor to monitor longer-term success of individual projects. This could highlight not just the number of projects completed and amount of funds administered, but document the effectiveness of KWP as an ecological restoration organization. Roger discussed the additional benefits monitoring provides to adaptive management to make KWP projects even more effective in the future.

## **Project Manager Report – Leigh Ann Vradenburg**

Leigh Ann updated the board on the following:

1. Bootleg streams – The first (\$75,000) grant was closed out in January after ~8 miles of stream were treated by hand felling trees in and near stream channels to trap sediment, increase shade, increase habitat, act as a livestock barrier, as well as other benefits. The board discussed this technique and its effectiveness in high-gradient and high sediment load streams with potential unintended consequences following a large rain on snow flood event or heavy precipitation event. Liability concerns of such a flood event and woody debris causing damage downstream was discussed. Mark B. provided the leader of the Tribes' restoration team's perspective of the project. The benefit of a fluvial geomorphologist's expertise was brought up; Leigh Ann's multiple attempts and cost of getting such expert opinion on-site was also discussed. The consensus was that the ability to treat 8 miles with \$75,000 dollars was impressive and this project highlights the need for long term effectiveness monitoring that was previously discussed.
2. Bootleg Fivemile - \$100,000 fence was completed and stream work planned for 2023 with Anabran Solutions. The importance of protecting bull trout critical habitat and associated springs in headwaters of these streams was referenced.
3. OWEB 242 Reforestation – 150,000 seedlings will be planted in Spring 2023 with an additional 400,000 to be planted in 2024. 90 acres prepped for LWD project on the Lower Williamson near Collier Park.
4. Wells and Riparian Fence – Leigh Ann updated the board on progress and challenges (weather and limited well drillers for short timeline) of the USFWS and OWEB stockwater well programs. There is still concern of completing the OWEB funded portion by the June 30, 2023 deadline if it is not extended. Leigh Ann informed the board that KWP and other entities have provided information to OWEB in the hopes the deadline can be extended. Roger asked about wildlife-friendly fencing and Leigh Ann confirmed the fences follow the recommended minimum height of the smooth bottom wire at 16 inches and top wire no higher than 42 inches.
5. Conferences – Leigh Ann updated the board on a recently attended conference in Redding- The Forest Vegetation Management Conference and two upcoming conferences- the 21<sup>st</sup> Annual Foresters Forum in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho in February and the virtual Restoring Riverscapes Conference in March.

## **Project Coordinator Report – Mark Johnson**

Mark updated the board on the following:

1. KDD irrigation efficiency – Mark discussed progress on laser leveling projects which includes  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the leveling completed on the USFWS funded field. OWEB funds will be used to finish that field and a second one and he will be applying for more USFWS fund to complete the 3<sup>rd</sup> field.

He anticipates more focus on this work from USFWS which could translate to more opportunities for KWP.

2. ODA Bootleg Noxious Weed Treatment – \$39,000 was used to treat noxious weeds on Green Diamond property within the Bootleg Fire footprint. The remaining 10% of funding will be used to map and potentially treat annual, invasive grasses this Spring with closeout to soon follow.
3. Lowland Farms Wet Meadow Project – Work to start in the next few weeks to restore a 107-acre wet meadow, replace water control structures, and rebuild fence and levees. In addition to improving irrigation efficiency this project will improve September-October migratory waterfowl and shorebird habitat.
4. Whiskey Creek BDA's – This \$60,000 grant has funded a cattle crossing constructed in October 2022 and planning is ongoing for fall 2023 BDA implementation.
5. Off-Stream Watering – Mark updated the board on a pending funding request for the final round of funding under this program. The first 2 funding rounds generated approximately \$650,000 in funding for 10 wells on 6 properties. \$412,599 has been submitted for the final 4 wells to be installed on 2 new properties.
6. USFS RAC Weed Grants – Mark reported that this program has been popular with landowners and contracts are in place for 2023 though there is less funding available. He discussed the challenge of when the funding has been approved with two grants submitted for different regions at the same time and one was approved months ago and the other still pending with funds delayed to 2023 due to the lag in processing the application.
7. Ongoing and Future Potential Projects – Mark discussed how he will have much more field work in 2023 after projects that were funded and planned in FY 2021 and 2022 come to fruition. The USFWS partners program out of the Refuges has shown increased interest in the Lost River drainage with the goal of preventing streambank erosion and reducing associated total maximum daily loads. He has conducted outreach to five potential landowners for riparian fencing and planting projects. Other projects include the OWEB small grant Gerber Ranch spring development, Lower Lake upland habitat project with ODFW, and the Buettner upland enhancement with USFWS.

#### **KWP Executive Director Report – Bill Lehman**

See attached PowerPoint slides. Bill updated the board on the following:

1. USFWS Science and Funding Workshop – Bill informed the board it was helpful to get this many stakeholders together in one room. The board asked if the USFWS had come up with a more comprehensive guideline on restoration at a basin or watershed scale. Bill discussed that the KBRA attempted to accomplish this across land ownership boundaries and after it failed he highlighted the challenges of any single organization dictating restoration goals across the many management boundaries in the Klamath Basin.

2. KWP BIL infrastructure Funding Proposals – Bio-char phase 2 pilot project approved. Large-scale beaver dam analogue work was discussed in which Trout Unlimited will lead a Watershed Action Plan partners proposal and KWP will be contracted to perform work. The board discussed BDA's and their effectiveness which included clearly stating the objective of BDA's so their effectiveness can be evaluated after implementation. SNW Landowner Outreach has received additional USFWS funding and KWP will be a partner under a contract. Bill also updated the board on the USFWS Lake Euwana and Keno Stretch of the Klamath River Feasibility and Restoration project. KWP was approached by the national firm leading Klamath dam removal (RES) for this project and Bill discussed communication differences from typical projects involving government partners. A meeting facilitator is in the process of being hired at the request of KDD.

**Other Discussions:**

Bill brought up the Klamath Tribes Ambodat Restoration Policy which is requesting the Tribe be involved in planning restoration projects located within the boundaries of their former reservation lands. Mark B. informed the board it applies to in-stream and riparian restoration projects. He also discussed the different, historical perspective of Traditional Ecological Knowledge of elders within the Tribe and how this can impact future planning efforts.

Roger requested KWP provide something to commemorate the many years of service to KWP by board member Shirley Kerns. The board and staff agreed this is a great idea and will think of ideas.

**Meeting Adjourned 7:30 p.m.**

**Next Meeting – TBD**

**Minutes submitted by:** Jeff Kerber