



Soil and Water Conservation Commission Minutes

DATE	LOCATION	START TIME	END TIME
February 18, 2025	VIRTUAL	8:30 AM	11:31 AM
CHAIR/VICE CHAIR	COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT	ABSENT	
Barbara Boyer Jerry Ward	Tim Kerns, Al Hrynshyn, Robin Vora, Jim Bob Collins, Bob Webb		

OREGON DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE (ODA) STAFF:

Isaak Stapleton, Natural Resource Programs Director; Kevin Fenn, Water Quality Program Manager; Sandi Hiatt, SWCD Grants Administrator; Karin Stutzman, SWCD Program Lead, and Renita McNaughtan, Administrative Specialist; Beth Pietrzak, Water Quality Specialist; Olivia Jasper, Water Quality Specialist

ADVISORS:

Andrea Kreiner, Oregon Association of Conservation Districts; David Rose, Natural Resources Conservation Service; Courtney Shaff, Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board; Carolyn Sufit, Oregon Water Resources Department; Marc Desjardin, Oregon Department of Forestry, Steve Mrazik, Department of Environmental Quality

VISITORS:

Scott Walker, Marion SWCD; Lacey Townsend, Clackamas SWCD; Brian Wolcott, OWEB; Jan Lee, OACD; Cassi Newton, Wheeler SWCD; Kevin Porter, Polk SWCD; Alex Sharp, NRCS

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The regular quarterly meeting was called to order at 8:30AM by Vice Chair, Jerry Ward, on February 18, 2025.

SWEAR IN REAPPOINTMENT COMMISSIONER

Barbara Boyer was sworn in by Kevin Fenn and she assumed leadership of the meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No Public Comment

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Draft minutes of the October 24, 2004, regular quarterly meeting was presented for approval. **A motion was made by Al Hrynshyn to approve the minutes. The motion was seconded by Jim Bob Collins. Motion passed unanimously.**

2025 MEETING SCHEDULE

Future meetings scheduled for May 20-21 at Gilliam SWCD, August 26-27 Columbia SWCD (tentative), and October 23 during OACD Annual Meeting.

ADVISORS REPORTS

- **Steve Mrazik, DEQ** – provided Updates on Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) projects, nonpoint source pollution program, and grant funding challenges.

- **Andrea Kreiner, OACD** - Discussed solar siting in Eastern Oregon, legislative updates, and a new dues structure for districts.
- **Carolyn Sufit, OWRD** – provided budget updates, legislative tracking, and groundwater monitoring initiatives.
- **Marc DesJardin – ODF** – discussed looking for a state forester and deputy state forester; Kate Skinner is acting state forester. He provided updates on fire season recovery efforts, urban forest management, and the Private Forest Accord.
- **Courtney Shaff – OWEB** – noted that all of OWEB federal funds and requests are being processed normally except for BLM cooperative agreement. Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) or (Inflation Reduction Act) IRA funded payments are in review and have not been processed. Discussed going to three grant cycles, and conservation management programs.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Scott Walker raised concerns about voter registration information being used for residency verification.

BOARD OF AG RESOLUTIONS REVIEW AND COMMENTS

Chair Boyer reviewed and the commission supported a letter for Resolution 315 (Working Lands Conservation Easements). Decision to delay discussion on Resolution 314 (Land Use on High-Value Farmland) until the legislative session concludes.

UPDATES - ODA

Kevin Fenn, AgWQ Program Manager:

Provided updates on cloud seeding applications, Ag Water Quality Program initiatives, and funding for ADA-compliant district websites. He also noted that the Ag WQ Program Advisory Committee will be meeting on April 25th. Budget presentation to the legislature for ODA is week of March 24th.

ODA Strategic Planning Documents – Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) Strategic Plan

MISSION

To protect and enhance Oregon’s agricultural water quality through strategic planning, compliance, monitoring, education, and partnerships.

GOALS

1. Ensure effective implementation of agricultural water quality programs.
2. Strengthen compliance and enforcement mechanisms.
3. Modernize data management and GIS systems.
4. Enhance grant management for monitoring and implementation.
5. Support and expand monitoring efforts to address TMDLs.
6. Improve education and outreach through partnerships and new initiatives.
7. Foster collaboration with SWCDs, NRCS, nonprofits, and watershed councils.
8. Streamline strategic implementation and focus areas.
9. Strengthen TMDL implementation and address programmatic gaps.
10. Provide staff with necessary resources and development opportunities.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

AgWQ Area Plans/Rules Review - Conduct biennial reviews every two years. Revise rules in 17 areas, addressing references to RUSLE and clarifying ambiguous language.

Compliance - Work with landowners to ensure compliance. Enforce regulations as necessary.

GIS and Data Management - Modernize data systems for improved data management.

Grant Management - Oversee scopes of work and various grants. Secure funding for stream temperature monitoring and strategic implementation areas.

Monitoring - Support monitoring efforts in alignment with TMDLs. Apply for Ag WQ Support Grant to fund TMDL-related monitoring (due March 5th).

Education and Outreach - Expand collaborations with OSU Extension. Implement the Agricultural Water Technical Assistants Program focusing on water quality and quantity.

SWCD and Other Partnerships - Strengthen relationships with NRCS, nonprofits, and watershed councils. Engage with state leadership to align priorities.

Strategic Implementation and Focus Areas - Conduct four Strategic Implementation Areas (SIAs) annually. Discontinue Focus Areas as a formal program.

TMDL Implementation - Manage and implement 15 agreed-upon TMDLs. Address programmatic gaps related to TMDLs and education/outreach.

Staff Support and Development - Provide staff with necessary resources and training. Establish milestones at 1, 3, and 5 years for each initiative.

SUPPORTING PLANS AND UPDATES

- **Strategic Plan & Communications Plan:** Developed and aligned with new metrics.
- **Monitoring Plan Update:** Scheduled for this year.
- **ADA Compliance for District Websites:** Nearly all applications funded, with a few receiving partial funding.

This plan will guide ODA in ensuring effective implementation, compliance, and strategic management of agricultural water quality programs in Oregon.

25-27 OWEB Capacity Grant – Sandi Hiatt - OWEB Capacity Grant for 2025-27 will include a 5% match requirement and changes in reporting.

Districts Role in Oregon's Immigration Law – Karin Stutzman shared information on Oregon's immigration laws and compliance requirements for conservation districts.

SWCC MEMBERS REPORTS

Al Hrynyshyn – Districts are doing well in budget cycle and getting new directors oriented. Upper Willamette lost their board chair and zone director.

Jerry Ward – have not contacted other districts in his region recently.

Robin Vora – Deschutes got a tax base and moving forward with next steps. He is trying to get the District Board to focus on what programs or actions the Board would like to emphasize over the next 1, 2 and 3 years given the tax levy, perhaps by developing a one-page budget blueprint for year 3 to provide guidance for more detailed annual budgets.

Barbara Boyer – not much to report. Federal issues have been hard for some of the districts. Approved Yamhill SWCDs first ever director handbook.

CALL FOR UPCOMING MEETING AGENDA ITEMS/NEWSLETTER CONTENT

Next Meeting Agenda - Cybersecurity, OACD legislative updates, Weather Modification-presentation by E.Nusbaum-permitting requirements for cloud seeding, (what they look like, how ODA determines eligibility, how to know if the skillset of applicant is legitimate) and follow-up on public comments.

Newsletter – immigration law, responding to ODA Board regarding Commission support, profile Barbara Boyer reappointment

ADJOURNMENT: Meeting adjourned at 11:31AM.