



# UPPER WILLAMETTE

## SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

### 2021 ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, February 2, 2022, 2:00 pm – **Approved 3/8/2022**

Meeting held via Zoom

Directors Present: Al Hrynyshyn, Gary Jensen, Abel Kloster, Malcolm Wilson. Staff Present: Dave Downing, Clarissa Berndt, Lily Leitermann, Leslie Owens. Partners Present: Tom Snyder, NRCS; Nancy Toth, EWEB; Public Present: Karen Wildish, and Tom Mitchell.

The meeting was called to order at 2:04 pm by Chair Hrynyshyn. He welcomed all to the 67th Annual Meeting of the Upper Willamette Soil & Water Conservation District.

**Review of Agenda:** Chair Hrynyshyn discussed the agenda as presented and moved onto the State of the District.

**State of the District:** Director Hrynyshyn pointed out that the 2020-2021 fiscal year was history in the making with the Tax Levy being passed. Director Hrynyshyn expressed deep gratitude to the public for the opportunity to put their tax dollars to work, stating that clean water and healthy soils are basic needs, and the District is grateful to be able to represent the public and will be good stewards of the finances given to us. Director Hrynyshyn expressed that the District is working with partner organizations to get a feel for the needs of the district and how we can best address those. It was clear that the conservation needs were great. In the middle of this, the Holiday Farm Fire caused the district to pivot its efforts towards relief and recovery in that area. The district was not deterred in its efforts to address the conservation needs of those most affected by the fire and how to keep our drinking water safe. Director Hrynyshyn thanked all who have been a part of the district efforts, and expressed pride in the dedicated, hardworking employees the district has on board.

**Cooperator of the Year Awards:** Director Hrynyshyn opened with the mention of deciding to have multiple Cooperator's of the Year for this year. Dave Downing presented Dana Burwell his award and discussed the project and ongoing dedication Mr. Burwell has to keeping our McKenzie Watershed healthy. Dana Burwell has been a member of the McKenzie Watershed for 68 years; he has created an equine waste and recovery center that turns waste into compost. His property and pride in the land has made a big difference in the watershed for himself and his neighbors, whom he often gives compost to in exchange for their manure. Dana graciously accepted this award and thanked the District for their help in working together for the common good.

Lily Leitermann introduced Katie and Sue McAlister and presented them with their award. Lily mentioned the Holiday Farm Fire tragedy and the resilience Katie and Sue have for their property and community, despite losing so much in the fire. She mentioned their long-standing historical relationship with the Pure Water Partners program. Sue and Katie were one of the 1<sup>st</sup> property owners to volunteer for PWP and Lily thanked them for their cooperation and engagement in a 15-year agreement that fosters cooperation, concern for habitat and protecting our water. Lily noted that Katie and Sue have shown strength, resilience, dedication and are more than worthy of recognition. Katie and Sue McAlister thanked the district for this award and all the partnership they have been shown. They pointed out the uplift of hope that was brought by seeing the sprouting of the seedlings found and planted by PWP, and the District.

Both Dana Burwell and the McAlister's had property damaged by the catastrophic Holliday Farm Fire. Chair Hrynyshyn mentioned sincere appreciation for their partnership, and empathy for their struggles, mentioning that our hearts go out to them, and congratulated them all on their awards.

**NRCS Report:** Tom Snyder expressed his gratitude for the partnership between the NRCS and the District. He shared the accomplishments of 2020-2021. NRCS – has been utilizing Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) funding to implement projects within the Conservation Implementation Strategy focus areas. In 2020, there were 20 projects funded through EQIP. In Lane County there are 3 local strategies, oak woodland restoration, forest enhancement and water quality improvements in the McKenzie Watershed. There were 7 oak projects funded totaling \$591,751 in obligations for those projects. In the forest funding pool, \$33,240 was allocated to fund 4 projects. In the McKenzie watershed 4 projects totaling \$84,382 was allocated to improve water quality in the

McKenzie River. In addition to local funding pools, the State has a high tunnel funding pool and an organic funding pool. The Eugene Field Office completed 4 contracts totaling \$29,673 and one organic contract for \$70,078. The total EQIP funds utilize for fiscal year 2020 was \$809,124.

**ODA Update:** Dave discussed the long-standing relationship with ODA in implementing agricultural water quality. He discussed the accomplishments over the past year. The district continued to provide local voluntary technical assistance to agricultural landowners located in the Camp Creek sub-basin of the McKenzie watershed as a partner with the Oregon Department of Agriculture's Strategic Implementation Area Process to address ag water quality concerns. In the 2020-21 fiscal year staff assisted three landowners with projects that addressed potential negative impacts to water quality of Camp Creek a tributary of the McKenzie River.

Dave mentioned that this year the capacity was low, the workload high and the catastrophic natural disaster of the Holiday Farm Fire led to an increased workload. He went on to discuss the partnerships the district has and how the district helped multiple partners with multiple projects, including: MWQI Initiative, McKenzie NW strategic plan, implementing funding to cover the plan, the strategic plan with the Long Tom Watershed Counsel for the City of Monroe and the Small Grant Program. He mentioned that although progress wasn't what it had been in past years, we still made progress.

**PWP Update:** Lily Leitermann discussed the continuation of collaborative work we are involved in to protect the water quality and wildlife habitat along the McKenzie River. Due to the Holiday Farm Fire, the workload had shifted to restoration and recovery response to keep debris out of the water. Lily shared a slide show that went into detail about the efforts of the district and PWP in helping with the recovery of the communities affected by the Holiday Farm Fire.

Nancy Toth from expressed her appreciation for Lily's work, stating that there would have been no way that EWEB would have been able to pull off the recovery efforts without the districts help and the partners working together.

#### **No Public Comment.**

Chair Hrynshyn expressed his gratitude for the hard work of all of the staff, board, and partners. The board echoed his appreciation.

Chair Hrynshyn adjourned the meeting at 3:10 pm.

*All supporting documents mentioned in the minutes are a part of the official record and are available upon request. Please contact the office at [admin@uwsxcd.org](mailto:admin@uwsxcd.org) to request copies.*

*The Upper Willamette SWCD prohibits discrimination against its customers, employees, and applicants for employment on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, sex, gender identity, religion, reprisal, and where applicable, political beliefs, marital status, familial or parental status, sexual orientation, or whether all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program, in employment or in any program or activity conducted by the Upper Willamette SWCD. The Upper Willamette SWCD is an equal opportunity employer.*