

**Grande Ronde Model Watershed
Board of Directors' Meeting
February 26, 2013 – 5:00 p.m.
Wallowa Community Center – Wallowa OR**

Approval of Minutes and Agenda:

Mike Hayward, Chair, and Mark Davidson, Vice-Chair, were attending a meeting in Washington D.C., so Ted Taylor volunteered to chair this meeting. Introductions followed. Ted Taylor reported that Mark Davidson has been appointed to the Vice-Chair position on our Board. Steve McClure's duties with Union County have been redirected.

Norm Cimon moved to approve the December 11, 2012, planning session minutes; Dave Yost seconded; Ted Taylor noted that there were a couple of minor spelling errors in the minutes and the motion carried (attachment to file). Bruce Eddy moved to approve the February 26, 2013, meeting agenda; Daryl Hawes seconded and the motion carried (attachment to file).

Calendar/Announcements: Calendars for February, March and April were provided (attachment to file).

Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB) Update:

Karen Leiendecker, OWEB Regional Program Representative, provided the Board with three handouts: 1) 2011-2013 Regular Grant Program Spending Plan and Total Staff Funding Recommendations; 2) Eastern Oregon Restoration Applications recommended for funding by the Regional Review Team and OWEB staff; and 3) funding information on three restoration projects: Ladd Creek Highway 203 Bridge Replacement (CTUIR); Wallowa River/6-Ranch Habitat Restoration Projects 2 (GRMW) and Beaver Creek Dam Fish Passage (City of La Grande) (attachments to file). Karen indicated that the Regional Review Team and OWEB staff met in Ontario on December 7, 2012, and discussed 51 project applications. She indicated that the OWEB Board will probably fund the project applications that were recommended for funding by the OWEB staff. The OWEB Board will review/approve project applications in two weeks in Salem. Ladd Creek Highway 203 Bridge Replacement and Wallowa River/6-Ranch Habitat Restoration Projects were highly recommended for funding by the Regional Review Team and OWEB staff. There were three monitoring applications reviewed with the Grande Ronde Basin Stream Flow Gauging Stations Operations (GRMW) being highly recommended for funding. The project evaluations are available on OWEB's website. There will be two listening sessions held one in Baker City on February 27th and the other in Pendleton on February 28th.

New Topics: None.

Continuing Discussions: The following items were also mentioned in the written staff report (attachment to file).

Update on North Fork Catherine Creek Ford Replacement Project: At the annual planning session, the GRMW Board asked La Grande District Ranger, Bill Gamble, to meet with the Union County Access and Travel Management Plan (ATMP) Advisory Committee to clarify his intent as the status of the USFS roads accessed by this proposed bridge construction. Jeff received an email from Bill Maslen, Bonneville Power Administration (BPA), pointing out that considerable BiOp credits were to be attained if this project was implemented. Jeff Oveson stated that Bill Gamble and Union County Commissioner Mark Davidson

convened a meeting with the Union County Access and Travel Management Plan (ATMP) Advisory Committee on January 10, 2013. During the meeting, Gamble stated that it was his intent that this road would remain open in the final ATMP. GRMW's Executive Committee (Mike Hayward, Steve McClure, Allen Childs, and Ted Taylor) unanimously supported funding the project as proposed with the condition of approval that the La Grande Ranger District submit the project completion report to the GRMW and include financial documents related to contracting including the bid item tabulation of contract bidders and construction contract invoices of the successful bidder. A few of the Board members and staff had the concern of spending \$400,000 for this project. Norm Cimon stated that we need to stress to the Forest Service that we need a transportation plan where the public is involved in putting the plan together. Bruce Eddy indicated the Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife (ODFW) could take out the ford at no cost to the La Grande Ranger District. Dave Yost had concerns of the continuation of the road; and that he is opposed to paying that much money and is upset with USFS projects that include BPA funds being used for someone's salary when those salaries should be covered with appropriated funds.

Northwest Power and Conservation Council (NPCC) Project Proposal Review Update: Oveson mentioned that on December 6, 2012, there was a workshop on the Geographic Review process in Pendleton. Project proposals are due on February 28, 2013. Seven out of the eight GRMW staff members have been working on the project proposal. Ted Taylor reported that this project proposal will affect the funding GRMW will receive for the next five years. The Independent Scientific Review Panel (ISRP) will be in La Grande for a project site tour on April 24, 2013, and there will be presentations held in Pendleton on April 25, 2013. The itinerary for the tour will be available soon. The Board was welcome to meet up at certain project sites.

Restoration Atlas Update: Last November was the first overview meeting of the restoration atlas. The next Science Technical Advisory Committee meeting will be held on April 2nd & 3rd in La Grande. During the meeting, they plan to go over the objectives and the process; presentations on the RME data; review the current reach breaks and identify activity types. Lacey Moore has geo-referenced 65 data layers in the Catherine Creek area. Ted Taylor stated that he sees that BPA is going to have the Science Technical Advisory Committee approve or disapprove projects before the project proposals ever come to the Board. Basically, it will be a done deal with BPA before it gets to our Board. He told the Board that we need to watch this process pretty closely over the next couple of months. A stakeholder committee has not been formed. Norm Cimon suggested that a BPA intern could visit landowners, etc., with GRMW staff to get a better understanding on things we do in here and relay that information back to BPA in Portland. Lyle Kuchenbecker and Jesse Steele are part of the Science Technical Advisory Committee. Mason Bailie and Lacey are also working on the atlas doing the RME data, etc.

Upper Grande Ronde Tributary Assessment: Oveson stated that there hasn't been much happening here since the folks involved in this have been working on NPCC Geographic Review. He shared with the Board what the requests of the Bureau of Reclamation were. This is noted in the written staff report (attachment to file).

Staff Report: A written staff report was provided (attachment to file).

Project Update:

Catherine Creek Wilson Mitigation Wetland Project: Oveson stated that the contract has been signed with Tetra Tech. The mitigation plan has been completed. The construction of the project is planned for 2016-2018.

Wallowa River 6-Ranch Phase II: Coby Menton reported that the BPA funds for this project have been approved. We should hear if the OWEB funds are approved by early April. Construction will probably begin this fall. He indicated that he will be meeting with the Restoration Review Team (HIP III) on March 6th on the project site. This is the first time we will implement the new HIP III programmatic consultation between BPA, NMFS and USFWS in the Grande Ronde Basin. This will cover bull trout, steelhead and Chinook. The landowner needs to utilize the land for their cattle operation. The design of the project will not exclude grazing. Daryl Hawes thought the project needed a grazing plan because it is very hard to walk through. The landowner is well aware that the objective of this project is restoration. There usually is a contingency that the landowner cannot graze the land for 10 years with OWEB funding. A grazing management plan will be submitted. Karen Leiendecker stated that there could be an addendum to the grant on reducing the years of nonuse.

Trout Creek/Alpine Meadows Fish Passage: Menton indicated that the golf course is a mess right now. The pond has been excavated out. Henderson Logging has been held up because of the frozen ground. The ground restoration work will take place throughout the summer. The golf course has to be open during the late spring and summer. They are working hard to stay on schedule.

Boyd Wetland Enhancement Project: Oveson reported that the Bureau of Reclamation has completed the rapid site assessment. Lyle has met with the Catherine Creek Corridor Group on that stretch of river. It will be difficult to get wetland enhancement done on this property.

Legislative Update: Oveson stated that they are holding conference calls every Friday throughout the legislative session with Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB), Oregon Association of Conservation Districts (OACD), and the Network of Oregon Watershed Councils, primarily to receive updates on proposed legislation relevant to councils. He provided information on the House Bill 2173 and Senate Bill 338. These bills would make creation, restoration or enhancement of wetlands a conditional use in the Exclusive Farm Use Zoned Land. More information was provided in the written staff report. This is a Farm Bureau bill. This bill is putting agriculture against restoration. They shouldn't be against each other. This will be very hard on restoration. Electronic comments are due February 26th and there will be a hearing held on February 27th. Daryl Hawes will find out more information on this and get back to Jeff. Bruce Eddy moved to have Jeff Oveson write a letter to the legislation stating that GRMW is not in support of the House Bill 2173 and Senate Bill 338, Norm Cimon seconded, and the motion carried.

House Bill 2516 allows monies in Watershed Conservation Operating Fund and Watershed Conservation Grant Funds to be used for educating elementary school students concerning protection and restoration of native fish and wildlife habitats, watersheds or ecosystems. This is targeting OWEB funding in which could hinder receiving any restoration funding.

OWEB Budget Hearing: OWEB is holding a budget hearing on March 11, 2013, in Salem. Liza Jane McAlister, landowner of the 6 Ranch, will be present to give her testimony. GRMW is picking up her travel expenses.

GIS: A contract is being prepared for GIS Services. GRMW could potentially provide 40 hours a month of GIS Services to Anderson Perry for appropriate remuneration on a contractual basis.

Public Participation: None.

Next Board Meeting: The next scheduled Board meeting will be held on April 23, 2013, at 5:00 p.m. at the Elgin Community Center. If you have any questions or comments, please call (541) 663-0570 or write GRMW, 1114 "J" Avenue, La Grande OR 97850. To reach us on our website, go to <http://www.grmw.org>. The meeting adjourned at 6:25 p.m.

The mission of the Board of Directors' of the Grande Ronde Model Watershed is "to develop and oversee the implementation, maintenance and monitoring of coordinated resource management that will enhance the natural resources of the Grande Ronde River Basin."

Meeting Attendance:

Board Members and Alternates: Ted Taylor, Norm Cimon, Mikayla Frei, Dave Yost, Daryl Hawes, Bill Howell, Troy Abercrombie, Katie Frenyea and Bruce Eddy.

Others: Karen Leiendecker.

Staff: Jeff Oveson, Coby Menton and Mary Estes.