



Partnership for Lake Abert and the Chewaucan

Meeting #8 via Zoom

Wednesday, April 24 from 1-4 PM (PT)

Meeting Summary

Facilitation Team: Bobby Cochran, Jennah Kiefer (Oregon Consensus), Hannah Steele, Aaron Wolf (Oregon State University)

Participants: Jessica Driscoll, Theo Dreher, Matt Anderson, Ashley Tunstall, Barry Shullanberger, Cole Hendrickson, Colleen Withers, Ed Contreras, Emily Hamel, Erin Wheeler, Marc Hudson, Mark, Marty St. Clair, Philip Milburn, Ramon Naranjo, Scott Hynek, Steph Hayes, Tess Baker, Tyler Dearman, Vanessa Loverti, Mark Salvo, Richard Pyzik, Wilson Wewa, Autumn Muir, JP Pratt

Updates

Vanessa Loverti shared an update about a recent [petition from Center for Biological Diversity](#) to list the Wilson's phalarope as a threatened species. USFWS has 90 days to review the petition and make an initial finding about whether the petition has scientific claim. Mountain Prairie Region is taking the lead on the petition and is currently assigning staff. After USFS acts on the petition, the determination may result as one of the following: A) species listed as threatened B) petition found as not warranted or C) petition warranted but action deferred due to need to prioritize other higher listings.

Joint Fact-Finding Narrative Discussion

Aaron Wolf provided a reminder about the purpose of the Joint Fact-Finding effort - to develop a narrative about how the group collectively views issues in the basin. Hannah Steele then reviewed the major changes for each chapter since the last meeting on February 21st.

- *New draft land acknowledgement* written in consultation with OSU Director of Tribal Engagement Dr. White Eyes - pending approval and any refinement through other consultations.
- *Water Resources Chapter* - working on clarifying and confirming data from various OWRD reports. Some reorganization for consistent formatting. Impacts of fire on uplands was moved to the main fire chapter.
 - Wilson Wewa raised a question about HB 3099 and asked for additional conversation to clarify how the legislation has been discussed in the JFF document, and what relation to Tribes it may have. OSU will change the references to the actual language in HB3099 (drafted and agreed to) and HB 2010 (package that was actually passed) and will add the full legislative text in the appendix.
- *Agricultural Practices Chapter* - Some citation and formatting clean-up and minimal clarifying language around wet meadows. The OSU team and Colleen Withers will look over this chapter and see if any further updates are needed relevant to livestock-specific information.
- *Fish & Wildlife Chapter* - Received feedback last week that will be incorporated going forward. Current changes include a greater alignment between marsh and lakes sections; refined species to those with a

known presence in the Chewaucan Basin; section added for the birds, additional information around birds for what happens to when the lakes are dry; and additional sources being added.

- *Upland Processes* - Updated and clarified citations. Added fire-related history from the first chapter into this one. Added expanded wildlife considerations in the appendix. Answered question around how fire processes negatively impact uplands.
- *Cultural Heritage / Lived Experience Chapter* - New chapter now completed. Compiled multiple perspectives intended to represent the breadth of knowledge throughout the basin.
 - Wilson Wewa, Paiute Tribal Elder, shared that he feels this chapter is important to highlight the connection between people and the land, as well as the sacredness of water for Tribes who have used its resources for many years in order to set a foundation of understanding.
 - A suggestion was raised to talk with Zachary with Oregon Black Pioneers to capture historical perspective about the African American population in Eastern Oregon.
- *Drought Considerations Chapter* - No major changes.

Marc Hudson (OAT) suggested adding a chapter or outline of what is known regarding economic dependencies of the watershed basin (but not an impact analysis). Zoe (OSU) will get in touch with Marc and Tess to work on this, with resources from Bobby and Teresa.

As for next steps, a word document of the Joint Fact-Finding report will be shared with the full group to review and **submit tracked changes or comments back to the OSU team by MAY 1st**. Comments provided should be focused on mission critical, substantive issues with the goal of group consensus in mind.

- May 10th, OSU team will send out an updated version of the report based on the provided feedback.
- May 15th, final comments or edits due.
- A full review, as well as an executive summary and glossary will be completed by a professional copy editor hired by OSU.
- May 20th, final full draft of the report provided to the full group.
- Approximately May 24th, finalize and approve the document via consensus, aiming to have the document completed prior to the June meeting in Paisley.

Bobby reminded the group about the intended purpose of this document to serve as a collection of information around the “why” and a reflection of what is known, in order to soon shift into discussions about ‘what to do,’ which, he noted, will be the focus of the next meeting.

Group Charter

Bobby reviewed the [Draft Charter](#) and highlighted the current lists of self-identified voting and non-voting members, as well as the consensus decision-making process. The group can still move a decision forward even if one or two voting members don’t support a decision, but if there are any serious concerns raised in consensus-seeking, those concerns will always be discussed, attempted to be addressed, and documented. He



provided examples of what decisions the voting members of the group may make down the road, like approving the Joint Fact-Finding document, or developing recommendations around management options down the road, a potential drought response plan, etc. OC will send out the final Draft Charter for final comments, then towards the end of May will ask for consensus on it via email.

June Meeting Plan & Revisiting Objectives

The next meeting is June 11 and 12 in-person in Paisley. Bobby reviewed possibilities for what the group might want to work on together in order to help set the group's next program of work over the next year, building upon previous efforts. A brainstorm of suggestions from the group included, but were not limited to:

- Discuss questions at the end of the JFF Drought Chapter - identify which questions to prioritize addressing, brainstorm what additional information is needed, and what options exist.
 - Organize short-term data sets vs long-term data sets (layout timescale of questions we think we can answer)
- Investigate how much water the lake needs (amounts and timing) to support the lake's food web.
 - Landowners need to have confidence that whatever drought mitigation is eventually determined, that it will be impactful in order to have buy-in.
 - Theo shared a reminder about ORLA water model in development
 - A suggestion was raised that a gage at the mouth of the Chewaucan River (before it enters the lake) will help determine whether water stored or traded to increase lake storage actually arrived.
- Presentation from Tony Svejcar (help set new baseline about what is "normal")
- Presentation from Mike Casazza about USGS (AIMS program) tagging shorebirds (and other waterbirds) with satellite tags and/or MOTUS tags that are providing data about birds, Abert, and the surrounding landscape.
- [BOR WaterSMART Small-Scale Water Efficiency Projects](#)
- Develop a list of low-hanging fruit options around efficiency and water conservation like lower hanging sprinkler packages (of interest to producers!) These are efforts previously funded by NRCS but not currently resourced.

OC, the Planning Team, and maybe Marc Hudson will create a framework for a 12-month map that addresses the inevitable tension between the group wanting to take action and needing to have enough information to provide assurances within the agricultural community (exploring options and scenarios) and make decisions about water management.

Adjourn