



1945 Main Street, Suite 200 | Klamath Falls, Oregon 97601  
541-883-6924 | [www.klamathswcd.gov](http://www.klamathswcd.gov)

## **KSWCD REGULAR MEETING MINUTES September 10, 2025**

### **Attendance:**

#### **Board Members:**

**Present:** Ken Masten, David Cone, Charles Dehlinger, Robert Douglas, Lyndon Kerns, Earl Miller.

**Absent:** Jolene Robison.

**District Staff:** Misty Buckley

**Agencies:** Josh Elke, NRCS District Conservationist.

**Community/Other:** none.

### **Proceedings:**

**Meeting called to order:** 1:31 pm – Ken Masten

**Quorum present?** Yes

**Agenda Additions/Changes:** n/a.

- Approve Financials for August 2025 – David Cone reported that he did not notice anything significant; he pointed out Julie’s report of the unrestricted balance. Lyndon Kerns motioned to approve the August 2025 financial reports. Earl Miller seconded this motion. The motion passed unanimously.
- Approve Minutes for August 2025 Regular Meeting – Lyndon Kerns motioned to approve the minutes for the August 2025 Regular Meeting. David Cone seconded this motion. The motion passed unanimously.

### **Reports:**

- SBC – n/a
- NRCS – Josh Elke presented regarding recent NRCS projects; one specific forestry project in the Lost River watershed was selected through the ranking process and has a release of information form which has allowed the project information to be shared. Josh discussed project objectives, partners, rollout and projected timeline. Funding challenges include more applicants than available funds and how to allocate limited funds; current methods prioritize fully treating fewer properties before moving on to additional properties rather than partially treating a greater number of properties. This property has part that is primarily juniper and part that is mixed conifer but removing the juniper with the least disturbance will improve mule deer habitat. Josh also discussed alignment with other funding agencies to complement each others’ investments and the opportunity for development of workforce that can support these efforts year over year. Challenges include limited manpower to complete large-scale prescribed fire operations when conditions are most advantageous and restoration materials such as native seeds can be in

short supply; Lyndon shared that cattle can be used to help sow seeds. Misty added that it could be a challenge to quickly implement the quantity of work needed even if funds were not an issue because there is so much room for growth in the professional workforce. Josh invited feedback and questions. Josh also discussed shifting into FY 2026 and reduced program funding from what had earlier been projected; formal mailings will be sent out along with phone communications. Josh also discussed the investment of time into the past search for an NRCS liaison position which resulted in a failed search, and the shift in direction to a search which will be developed for an agricultural irrigation specialist which will be a focal point to support needs that aren't met with other agencies and that will bring a high value to the area producers. Josh discussed a growth trajectory in natural resources field salaries and the observation that there may have been a discrepancy between the advertised salary range and the position requirements in the first search; this proposed irrigation specialist position will require an increased investment to get the required skillset and to be competitive for well-qualified job seekers and that may create inequities with other district positions. Josh also observed that higher salaries can offset lack of benefits at the district as total compensation from other employers is a factor we need to keep in mind. Charles added that the home prices here are incongruent with entry-level wages. Josh encouraged the district to evolve with what NRCS can offer and to be mindful of growth needs and to provide strategic direction for the future by continuing to revisit this topic. Misty shared that OACD is collecting information on a voluntary basis to help districts be aware of comparative salary ranges.

- FSA – n/a
- ODA – Nina Caldwell was unable to attend today but Misty reported that she is working well with Nina.
- District Manager – Misty e-mailed 9/9/25. Misty confirmed that everyone had received it and asked if there were any questions. Charles Dehlinger stated he felt more Board members should have attended the training at the Running Y and David Cone clarified if Charles' concern was the cost or people's availability. Misty commented that the budget is finite in terms of being able to pay for every person to attend every training and that's why it is important for those who do attend to share the handouts and information with the other members. Charles encouraged attendance at training opportunities.
- Chair – nothing to report.

#### **Unfinished Business:**

- SDAO's Best Practices program offers 5 areas where districts can earn 2% credit towards SDIS insurance contributions; in order to receive one 2% credit, our district must have adopted or have a current policy (updated within the last two years) in regards to Paid Leave Oregon. Paid Leave Oregon is different from other types of leave, like the Oregon Family Leave Act (OFLA) and the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA). SDAO offers a sample policy. Charles Dehlinger made a motion to adopt the presented Paid Leave Oregon policy. Robert Douglas seconded this motion. The motion passed unanimously.
- The Oregon Association of Conservation Districts (OACD) Annual Conference is Oct 21-23 in Pendleton; with the Soil and Water Conservation Commission (SWCC) meeting held in conjunction as well. The approved annual work plan indicates at least one director shall attend the OACD Annual Conference and Board of Districts meeting; while at least one staff member shall attend the annual Connect Conference. Charles Dehlinger expressed interest in attending. Lyndon Kerns made a motion to pay for travel and registration for Charles'

attendance at the OACD Annual Conference. David Cone seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**New Business:**

- KSWCD has been awarded funds in support of the 2025-2027 Long-Term Temperature and Streamside Vegetation Monitoring program as submitted. Lyndon Kerns made a motion to approve signature of the grant agreement. Earl Miller seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
- Three local businesses responded to the request for bookkeeping proposals; only two submitted proposals. Earl Miller made a motion to engage services from High Desert Bookkeeping. Lyndon Kerns seconded the motion. Ken questioned alignment with the previous district policy to use a third-party bookkeeper; Misty indicated she is already coding the invoices and this only eliminates duplication of effort, but will still result in third-party oversight. David Cone wanted to verify integrity and continuity of data because this would occur mid-fiscal year; Misty indicated that the data will be rolled into the new file per the recommendation of the auditing firm and the one-time fee to High Desert Bookkeeping will aid in that rollover process so there should be no loss of data and no issue with the next audit. The motion passed unanimously. Misty will work with High Desert Bookkeeping to present an engagement contract at the next meeting.

**Board Discussion & Comment:**

- Lyndon Kerns shared a concern regarding property purported to be donated to the Klamath Tribes. His concerns are a) the land will be taken out of agricultural production, b) taken off of the tax rolls, and c) there may be changes to water use and this should be subject to legal review of the water rights. This is the location of a recent OWEB-funded irrigation improvement project.

**Public Comment:**

- None

**Adjournment:**

- Charles Dehlinger made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Earl Miller seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 3:15 pm.