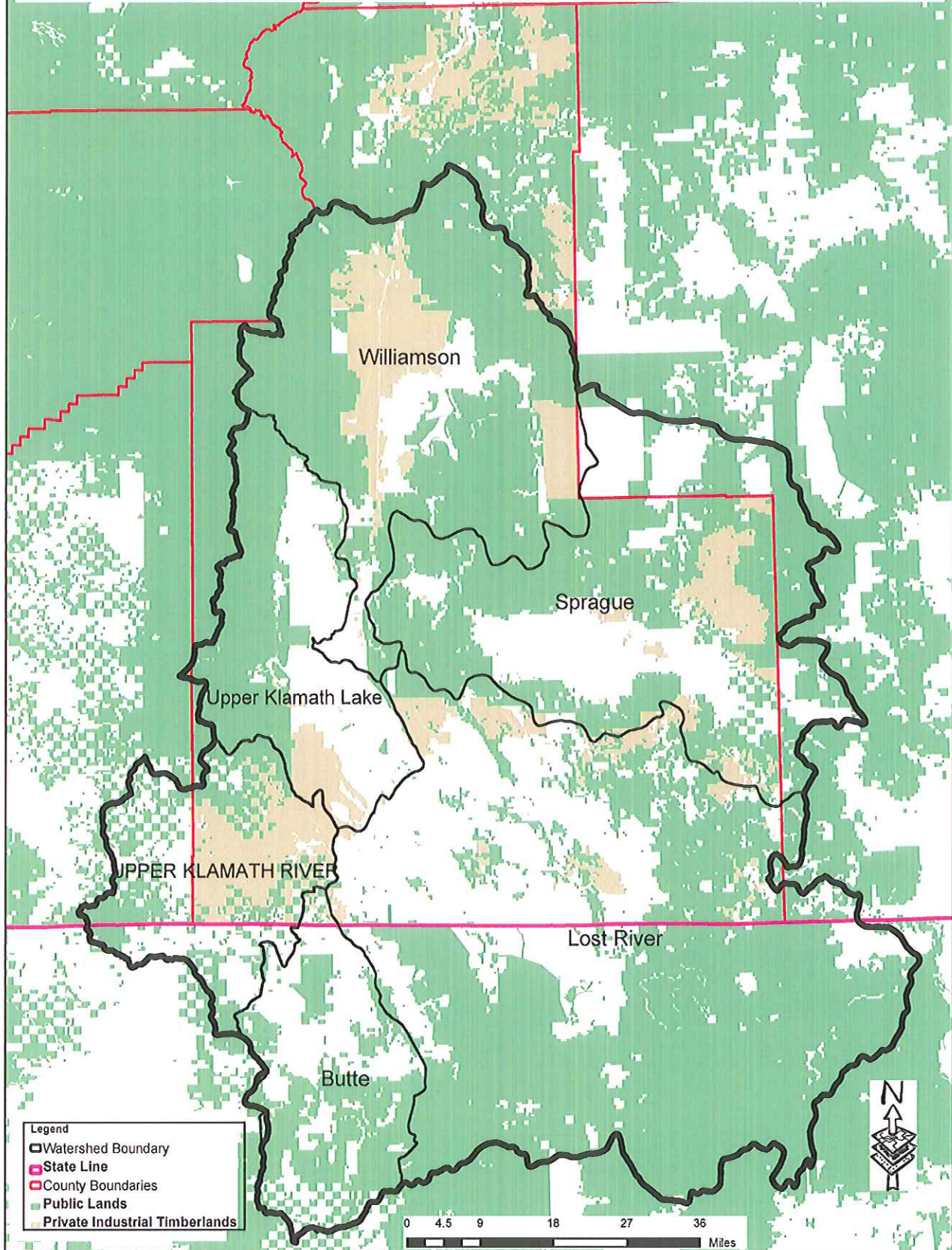


Klamath County with Major Hydrologic Subbasins



3/1/2023

Local Work Group Meeting Notes

Presenter/Facilitator: Will Natividad (SWCD)

Attendees:

Klamath Soil and Water Conservation District, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Farm Service Agency, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Trout Unlimited, Oregon Department of Agriculture, US Bureau of Recreation, Intermountain West Joint Venture, Klamath Watershed Partnership, Energy Trust of Oregon, Klamath Lake Land Trust, Klamath Irrigation District, Horsefly Irrigation District, Klamath Herald and News.

Dawn Haight (Klamath Lake Land Trust), Laura Hall (Farm Service Agency) , Gene Souza (Klamath Irrigation District), Amber Olsson (Bureau of Reclamation), Kelley Delpit (Sustainable Northwest), Brian Hidden (USFWS), Nell Scott (Trout Unlimited), Bailie Mockridge (LVID), Lauren Healy (USFWS), Sam Fletcher (SWCD), Ken Masten (landowner/SWCD), Alex Sharp (SWCD), Justin Eary (Horsefly Irrigation District), Brad Moore (Energy Trust of Oregon), Klamath Herald and News, Bill Lehman (Klamath Watershed Partnership), Mark Johnson (Klamath Watershed Partnership), Leigh Ann Vradenburg (Klamath Watershed Partnership), Nina Andrews (Oregon Department of Agriculture), Ed Contreras (Intermountain West Joint Venture), Ali Moss (NRCS) Henry Robinson (NRCS), Josh Elke (NRCS)

Introductions: 9:00-9:25

Open the meeting with introductions of everyone who participated at the meeting in-person and virtual. Presenter/Facilitator Will Natividad provide an overview of the county and how NRCS (Natural Resource Conservation Service) and SWCD (Soil and Water Conservation District) splits the county project areas into watersheds for discussion purposes. The main watersheds that were focused on, 1. Lost River, 2. Sprague, and 3. Williamson, 4. Upper Klamath Lake, and 5. Upper Klamath River.

Lost River: 9:45-10:05

Priority Concerns: Wildfire risk and Water Quantity

Current conservation focuses within this watershed are 1) Juniper removal projects addressing wildfire risks near town and within wintering Mule Deer habitat and 2) improving irrigation water use efficiency with ground water wells.

- 1) NRCS has funding for this year to focus on juniper removal and expect more funding in the coming years for this CIS (conservation implantation strategy). The focus in the for

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this area is to remove Juniper encroachment into riparian areas and rejuvenate historic springs. Increased demand is anticipated.

- a. The consensus felt irrigation projects were targeting lands of importance and landowner interests show demand. Prioritization of water rights was described and how B and C contract water users are least likely to receive irrigation water and should be least likely to utilize infrastructure improvements annually. The main issue that the public wants guidance and remedies on water availability and how some may need 100% financial assistance to justify implementation of irrigation infrastructure. Additional collaboration with Energy Trust of Oregon will further incentivize federal and state programs for private landowners and help absorb the out-of-pocket expenses. Irrigation land-leveling projects were identified as a need that USFWS was helping address but additional support with rising costs. Klamath Drainage District has expressed interest in land-leveling for irrigation purposes. Klamath Irrigation District mentioned how they're focusing on piping in the urban and suburban areas within his district. SWCD has also been focusing on irrigation ditch piping on private landowners and are exploring utilizing small grants to help.

Sprague River: 10:05-10:25

Priority Concerns: Water Quantity and Water Quality

Current focus within this watershed is irrigation water use efficiency projects with ground water wells.

Sprague river watershed is mostly pasture/rangeland with some forestry as well. Some of the issues that were mentioned about this area were artesian well updates, groundwater issues, and grazing along the river. The artesian wells that are within this area were most likely built 70+ years ago and not constructed to code. A lot of conversation occurred about the issue of trying to update these wells and barriers to implementation (state regulations). SWCD recommend fencing away from the bank to reduce the impact of grazing on this sensitive ecosystem, then flash grazing this area. This allows this land to still be productive for grazing, while giving it the time to recover. The main idea to remember is fencing isn't trying to take a landowner's land away but using it as a management tool.

Williamson River: 10:25-10:45

Priority Concerns: Water Quality and Quantity

Current conservation focuses within this watershed are irrigation projects with ground water wells improving irrigation water use efficiency.

Short discussion of interest in maintaining water quality, maintaining flow of springs that may be slowing. Attendance is slowly growing at Sustainable Northwest's listening sessions where NRCS and SWCD garner public input on existing resource concerns; hopefully this will lead to more increased direction from landowners.

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Upper Klamath Lake/ Upper Klamath River: 11:10-11:30

Resource Concerns: Wildfire risk, Riparian Habitat and Water Quality

Short discussion included: planned dam removal and impact on fisheries. The USFWS has a lot of interest in this area. Their main concern is being prepared for habitat changes and species survival when dam removals occur on this river. Interest in finding funding so landowners can install fish screens at no cost. Clarification about the goals of an experimental chinook release planned by ODFW, UC Davis, USFWS, Klamath Tribes, TU. Discussion about unpiped ditches – reluctance to pipe due to potential negative impact on groundwater recharge and domestic wells, however piping in suburban/urban areas may be desirable.

Other Topics: 11:30-11:45

A lot of the focus of all the partners at this local work group meeting is making sure that we are in communication with each other, so everyone is on the same page. As a county, the goal for all the partners is helping landowners be able to get in contact with the right organization for a certain conservation practice. This is to make sure the landowner gets in touch with the best technical/financial assistance for a particular practice.

Closing remarks occurred and we thank everyone for attending this meeting and adding their input.