



Our Mission

The mission of the Powder Basin Watershed Council is to facilitate community-supported maintenance and restoration of streams, rivers, and lakes within our watersheds.

Powder Basin Watershed Council

<https://www.powderbasinwatershedcouncil.org/>

2021 Annual Report

INTRODUCTION

In 2020, the Powder Basin Watershed Council (PBWC) reached its 25th year of facilitating watershed maintenance and restoration. Initially, known as the Baker County Water Advisory Board, the Council consisted of professionals in natural resource management and water resources. In 1995, the state of Oregon authorized and began funding Watershed Councils throughout the state to bring the general public into the process of determining priorities for water resources management. Originally under the auspices of the Baker County Commission, the Council formed an independent 501(c)(3) corporation in 2008. Initially, the PBWC was run entirely by volunteers. This included the developing projects, compiling and publishing data in watershed assessments, and the managing the organization. Eventually, funding was acquired to hire a coordinator which served as the organization's backbone.

The PBWC implements its Mission to facilitate community-supported maintenance and restoration of streams, rivers, and lakes within our watersheds across the Powder River, Burnt River and Brownlee subbasins. The PBWC's Vision is that the Powder Basin watersheds are healthy and meet the needs of the people and the environment.

In 2021, the impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic affected PBWC activities. The interruption of Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB) funding cycles in 2020 led to one of the PBWC signature activities, water quality monitoring, not being funded in 2021. Thus, the Monitoring and Research Coordinator position was vacated, pending reinstatement of future funding. In addition, uncertainties of the pandemic and associated restrictions continued to limit or prevent outreach activities including outdoor schools, watershed field days, community presentations, and other past PBWC education and outreach activities.

Even though the Pandemic effected activities, the PBWC still accomplished a significant portfolio of work.

In early 2021, through funds provided by the Baker Focused Investment Partnership (FIP), an award provided by the OWEB, PBWC hired Emmy Tyrrell as the Sage-grouse Candidate Conservation Agreement with Assurances (CCAA) Coordinator. Emmy is doing a fantastic job establishing the PBWC's Sage-grouse CCAA Program and initiating landowner outreach/participation.

In 2020, the Council assumed the Enhancement of Survival Permit (EOS) (Number TE-56630B-0) and CCAA for Greater Sage Grouse from the Baker County Soil and Water Conservation District. Assumption of the EOS and CCAA includes working with landowners who have already expressed interest, cultivating interest among landowners who are unfamiliar with the program (through educational activities such as presentations, tours and printed materials), developing Site Specific Plans for properties where enrollment in the program is sought and submitting the SSP's to the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) for approval. The execution of this program is part of an integrated plan to address declining sage grouse populations in eastern and southern Baker County and includes participation from private landowners, Tri-County Cooperative Weed Management Area, Baker County, Oregon State University Extension

Service, ODFW, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), USFWS and Bureau of Land Management (BLM).

The PBWC restored and bolstered the organization's funding in 2021. PBWC restored funding for the Water Quality Monitoring Program with significant enhancements (2022-2024) by securing a \$174,066 OWEB grant. We were awarded OWEB funding for one restoration grant and one technical assistant grant totaling \$98,404. In addition, we were awarded an OWEB Watershed Council Capacity Grant for \$131,464. At the moment, we have \$372,997 of grants and associated cash match pending from funding requests made in fall 2021.

MONITORING & ASSESSMENTS

Sage Grouse Mesic Habitat Assessment (OWEB Grant 220-8206-19543)

In April 2021, PBWC submitted a successful proposal to fund a seasonal position that would conduct ground truthing surveys to assess map accuracy and mesic habitat quality. The outcomes of this survey work will direct future upland wet meadow, spring, and wetland restoration and/or enhancement projects. Greater sage-grouse (*Centrocercus urophasianus*; hereafter sage-grouse) rely on mesic habitat during late brood-rearing periods, however, within the Sage-grouse Baker Priority Area for Conservation (Baker PAC), the quality and extent of mesic habitat was not well known. The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) in collaboration with the Institute of Natural Resources (INR) developed a mesic resources map using Assessment, Inventory and Monitoring (AIM) plot data with additional monitoring by the Sage-grouse Baker Local Implementation Team (LIT) to better inform mesic habitat restoration planning within the Baker PAC. The LIT approved funding the seasonal position to assess mesic habitat through the Baker Focused Investment Partnership (FIP) grant awarded by the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB).

PBWC in cooperation with the Baker LIT conducted mesic assessments on five different private properties and on BLM land. The PBWC seasonal technician completed 147 surveys with 103 surveys occurring on private land and 44 on BLM land. By the end of 2021, PBWC staff checked and edited the collected data. PBWC continues to work with the Baker LIT and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, using the data collected, to determine which areas surveyed are the best candidates for restoration projects. PBWC plans to submit project grant proposals for mesic restoration work in the fall of 2022. If awarded, the restoration work would start in the spring/summer or fall 2023.

Long-term Water Quality Monitoring (OWEB Grants 218-5055-15953 and 221-5058-19515)

The PBWC has conducted water quality monitoring throughout its geographic scope since 2013. The work has primarily been funded through OWEB grants. The latest grant (OWEB Grant 218-5055-15953) was implemented 2018 through 2020. PBWC staff completed the final reporting on this grant in early 2021. The report is available on the PBWC website (<https://powderbasinwatershedcouncil.org>). However, interruption of grant opportunities from

OWEB due to the COVID-19 Pandemic resulted in no funding available to implement water quality monitoring in 2021.

The reinstatement of grant opportunities through OWEB in early 2021 provided an opportunity to reapply for grant funds. PBWC submitted an application to continue water quality monitoring from 2022 through 2024. This request was successful with a grant award occurring in late October 2021 (OWEB Grant 221-5058-19515).

As loss of funding led to loss of the staff person coordinating the water quality monitoring project in early 2021. Thus, one of the first steps to reinitiate the PBWC's water quality monitoring program included the hiring of a staff person to implement the project. PBWC staff started the hiring process in mid-November 2022, but at the end of 2021, the position is still unfilled.

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) Elk Feeding Station Water Quality Monitoring

ODFW operates ten wild ungulate feeding stations within wildlife areas along the foothills of the Elkhorn Mountains in the Powder Basin. These feeding stations serve as a tool to discourage elk and deer from wintering on agricultural fields lower in the valleys. Two of these feeding stations are located adjacent to perennial waterways. In addition to wild ungulates, the feed sites managed by ODFW are grazed by cattle during the summer months.

PBWC's work to monitor water quality on the ODFW Elkhorn Wildlife Area is a direct response to local livestock producers who contacted us expressing concern that the concentration of elk and deer over-wintering at the feeding sites may impact water quality in Anthony Creek and the North Powder River, further exacerbating water quality concerns downstream. The PBWC shared these concerns with ODFW staff. As a result of these communications, ODFW contracted with the PBWC to conduct water quality monitoring at these sites over a period of three years, 2019 through 2021, to investigate water quality at the elk feeding sites.

Water samples were collected to determine numbers of *E. coli* bacteria and total phosphorous concentration, pollutants often associated with concentrated animal feeding operations. We sampled at five locations, two at both feed sites and one on the North Powder River 8.5 miles downstream. On the feed sites, sample locations were located upstream and downstream of the actual feeding locations. The project sampled at the lower site to provide a comparison to water quality with typical land uses, agriculture, and livestock grazing.

We collected water quality samples from each sampling location tri-annually: late January when elk numbers were high at the feed sites (feeding), late April – mid-May during runoff (runoff), and early August during stream baseflow (baseflow).

We found that numbers of *E. coli* bacteria sampled at both feed sites were relatively low and did not increase upstream to downstream for the feeding and runoff period samples. We found a similar result for total phosphorous. Thus, the data do not suggest that elk feeding at the sites is degrading water quality with respect to *E. coli* bacteria and total phosphorous.

Samples collected during the baseflow period, when livestock grazing occurs, did show high *E. coli* bacteria counts, some exceeding state water quality standards. We are having discussions with ODFW regarding actions that could address this concern and they have asked us to pursue several solutions including watering livestock off-channel, increasing riparian buffer widths, and restoring instream and wetland habitats. We look forward to developing effective projects with ODFW and the local community.

This project highlights the responsiveness of the PBWC and ODFW willingness to evaluate a citizen concern and make changes in management to address the concern.

North Fork Burnt River (NFBR) Stream Gage (OWEB Grant 220-5047-17446)

In 2019, Oregon Water Resources Department (OWRD) announced they were planning to discontinue operation of a stream gage on the NFBR due to budget constraints. In March 2019, the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest (WWNF) solicited comments on the proposed Patrick Vegetation Management Project (PVM) in the watershed. The project is proposed on 48,753 acres of WWNF-managed land upstream of the NFBR stream gage. In this watershed, many streams are on the Oregon Department of Environmental Qualities 303d list for impaired water quality for temperature and/or habitat conditions. The long period of record (27 years) makes the gage especially valuable for detecting changes in stream flow related to the PVM project. The Council requested 2019 funds from OWEB on behalf of a group of partners to partially fund the continued operation of the NFBR stream gage from 2020-2022.

Several entities stepped up to make financial contributions to this effort including Greater Hells Canyon Council, Oregon Wild, OWRD, and local concerned citizens. Several entities submitted letters of support including the Burnt River Irrigation District, Idaho Power, and the WWNF. In April of 2020, the Council was awarded OWEB grant funds to continue operating the NFBR gage. Through this funding, the PBWC has supported operation of this gage since October 1, 2019. The gage data will document any management related changes that occur (positive or negative) to stream flows in the NFBR, and potentially help guide future project development.

RESTORATION

Powder River Fish Habitat Enhancement Project (OWEB Grant 220-5023-17032)

The concept for the Powder River Fish Habitat Enhancement Project started in early 2019 when a passionate Baker City resident approached the Council with hopes to improve the Powder River's fishery. The idea gained momentum and the Council gained support from numerous agencies including ODFW, US Forest Service, Trout Unlimited, and the city staff of Baker City. To improve the Powder River fishery, the PBWC must first understand the current conditions. To accomplish this task the Council decided to pursue an aquatic habitat inventory. In the fall of 2019, the Council secured OWEB funding for the fish habitat survey. The project started outreach for the project in 2019 and received a positive response.

The Council contracted the ODFW Aquatic Inventory Team to conduct the fish habitat survey. This project stretched from Hughes Lane in Baker City upstream to the Mason Dam and includes approximately 200 properties. The PBWC made contact with private landowners and secured access to do the survey on 64 properties. The survey was conducted September 2-24, 2020, and was only conducted in locations where permission from landowners on both sides of the river was granted. Surveyors collected measurements on pool depth, bed composition, bank stability, and streamside vegetation. They also documented barriers to fish movement and any unscreened irrigation diversions.

Approximately half of the survey (8.0 miles) was successfully inventoried in 2020. In early 2021, staff sent out letters to landowners that had not responded to previous mailings to secure access for an additional survey effort in September 2021. However, the PBWC only received five responses. We determined that this provided an insufficient volume of survey work to have ODFW return for another survey effort.

With survey efforts complete, ODFW completed summary and reporting of the survey data and provided it to the Council at the end of 2021.

Plans for 2022 include assembling a Technical Team to interpret the data to identify redband trout limiting factors, develop restoration conceptual alternatives, and engage landowners and community to develop a restoration plan.

Idaho Power Company Water Efficiency Program

The Council assisted the Idaho Power Company (IPC) with implementing its 2021 Water Efficiency Program (WEP) in the Pine Creek Basin by participating on the project review team, and by implementing a service agreement to administer IPC funds to implement projects. Three projects were selected from seven applicants; one of the projects (the Norman Project) was completed in 2021. The following is a description of the approved projects:

- The Norman project received \$4,989 of funding to complete a sprinkler project on 7 acres. This project uses water from Pine Creek via the foothills ditch. This project was completed in the fall of 2021.
- The Denson project was awarded \$48,178 from the IPC Water Efficiency Program (partially funding the project) towards the completion of two pivot sprinklers on 100 acres. This project diverts water from East Pine Creek, via the Oliver Sullivan Ditch and will improve water efficiency by converting to sprinklers from flood irrigation. Additional project funding was requested from OWEB through a large grant in the fall 2021 funding cycle. This project was included in a list of projects recommended to OWEB for funding. If this project receives funding from OWEB, it will be completed in the fall 2022.
- The Joseph Ranches project was awarded \$26,833 from IPC Water Efficiency Program (partially funding the project) towards the completion of two pivot sprinklers on 85 acres. This water is diverted from Dry Creek and will be converted from flood to sprinkler irrigation. Additional project funding was requested through OWEB through a large grant in the fall 2021 funding cycle. This project was included in a list of projects recommended to

OWEB for funding. If this project receives funding from OWEB, it will be completed in the fall 2022.

Cusick Creek Restoration Phase II: The Restoration Continues (OWEB 221-5009-18948)

In the summer of 2020, the PBWC collaborated with Diebel Contracting, LLC. and landowners of Thief Valley Ranch to develop and apply to OWEB to implement Phase II of restoration actions on Cusick Creek, a tributary to the Powder River. The grant was awarded spring of 2021.

Thief Valley Ranch had worked with the Keating Valley SWCD to implement Phase I actions on Cusick Creek 2013-2015. Then the Malheur Watershed Council received an OWEB grant to design Phase II of Cusick Creek Restoration on a reach upstream of Phase I and still on the Thief Valley Ranch.

In 2021, the PBWC and Diebel Contracting, LLC., entered a contract for Ken Diebel to assume primary project management responsibilities. The PBWC Executive Director will also be responsible for project management aspects.

Accomplishments in 2021 include securing a cooperative agreement with the landowner and permits/authorizations for implementation of the instream components including ODFW fish passage approval, Oregon Department of Environmental Quality 401 Water Quality Certification, US Army Corps of Engineers authorization under Nationwide Permit No. 27, issuance of Oregon Department of State Lands Fill Permit No. 63612-FP, and Union County land use and floodway certification.

Implementation of instream restoration actions are planned for summer-fall, 2022.

Cusick Creek Restoration Phase III: Aspen Restoration and Conifer Resiliency (OWEB 222-5002-19852)

In the fall of 2021, the PBWC worked with landowners of Thief Valley Ranch and Ken Diebel to develop and submit a restoration application to OWEB to restore six aspen clones on the ranch and adjacent to Cusick Creek, implement forestry activities on a ponderosa pine stand adjacent to Cusick, implement limited riparian planting along upper Cusick Creek and construct an access trail to facilitate implementation of these activities. The project has been recommended for funding by the OWEB Region 5 Review Team, with a favorable ranking. We expect the OWEB Board to approve funding of the project April of 2022. Cost share on the project includes an existing Natural Resources Conservation Service CIC forestry contract, landowner in-kind, and a cash contribution by ODFW for buck and pole fencing.

Implementation would occur in 2022 and 2023.

Pine Creek Fish Habitat Enhancement (OWEB Grant 221-5042-19551)

This project is located on the Corrigan property within and adjacent to Pine Creek, approximately six miles upstream from the town of Halfway, OR. Pine Creek has been the focus

of attention for fish recovery during the past decade due to efforts by ODFW and IPC to re-establish migratory bull trout from the current population that resides high in the headwaters of Pine Creek year-round. In addition, redband trout, which are considered a species of concern in Oregon, reside throughout the Pine Creek system year-round. In 2010, Pine Creek experienced a 30-year flood event, which highlighted to many landowners the poor health that the stream system is in. Because of this, landowners have been interested in working with us to improve function of the watershed. The goal of this project is to enhance fish habitat, while addressing the concerns of landowners regarding damage from past and future flooding. By using engineered log structures to deflect high flows and stabilize approximately 220 feet of eroding banks, managing livestock grazing through installation of a riparian buffer fence, and planting of native willows, there will be multiple benefits to Pine Creek. Benefits include reducing sediment inputs, increasing shade to lower water temperatures, more overhanging vegetation to provide hiding cover for fish and increasing in the diversity of fish habitats through pool formation and establishment of backwater habitats. Partners on this project include the landowner, who is providing logs from the property and IPC. IPC will provide a \$14,505 cash contribution for rootwad installation, riparian fencing installation, and an in-kind donation of boulders and willow whips for the project (\$4,928 value).

In the summer of 2020, the PBWC submitted an application to OWEB to fund the project, but funding was not awarded. PBWC worked with the landowner to address OWEB Region 5 Review Team comments and resubmitted the project for funding in April 2021. The OWEB Board approved the project for funding in October 2021. This enhancement project was the result of project design completed as part of Upper Pine Creek Flood Restoration Design, OWEB Grant 217-5049-14218.

To date, a cooperative agreement with the landowner has been signed and work has begun on the removal-fill joint permit application.

We hope to complete permitting by fall 2022, put the construction work out to bid fall of 2022, and construct the project summer and fall of 2023.

Camp Creek Ecosystem Resiliency (OWEB Grant 222-5016-19918)

This project is on Camp Creek in the North Fork Burnt River (NFBR) watershed, approximately 45 miles southwest of Baker City, north of Whitney Valley on lands administered by the Whitman Ranger District of the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest (WWNF). Watershed issues addressed are: 1) degraded groundwater recharge and water storage functions, 2) limited water table maintenance supporting narrower riparian vegetation communities, 3) limited zones for water quality filtering, 4) excessive bank erosion resulting in streambeds with abundant fine silts. Throughout the 2.5-mile project reach the creek is incised, not connected with its broad historic floodplain, and beaver are not present. The result is a stream with a current riparian vegetation community consisting of sagebrush and/or lodgepole pine, instead of multiple species of willow, simplified aquatic habitat and one that is more efficient at routing water out of the system. Both Camp Creek and the NFBR experience low summer base flows and water temperatures that exceed state water quality standards (303d water quality impaired for water temperature). We propose to utilize low-tech process-based restoration techniques (beaver dam analogues – BDAs)

to reconnect Camp Creek with its historic floodplain and facilitate restoration of the native willow community by fencing to exclude ungulates from seven protection areas averaging 0.80 acres in size. This is a collaborative project between the PBWC, ODFW, and the WWNF.

We submitted applications for funding to both OWEB and the Oregon Conservation and Recreation Fund (OCRF), in October of 2021. OCRF approved \$20,000 in funding for the project. The OWEB Region 5 Review Team recommended the project for funding and ranked it number one of twelve restoration projects recommended for funding. We expect the OWEB Board to approve project funding in April 2022.

Work planned for 2022 will focus on preparation for implementation in 2023 including execution of a partner agreement between the US Forest Service and PBWC, completing NEPA, cultural review/clearance, ODFW fish passage approval, county land use approval and removal-fill permitting. We plan to hire interns in the summer of 2022 to collect pre-project data of channel cross-section and longitudinal profile, and gather posts and poles needed for project implementation.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Makin' Clarity on the Run (OWEB Grant 221-5048-19501)

This technical assistance project will address water quality, fish passage, channel instability, and irrigation efficiency issues associated with five irrigation diversions in the South Fork Burnt River watershed. Four diversions are located on Bull Run Creek (tributary to South Fork Burnt River) and one diversion is located on Miners Creek (tributary to Bull Run Creek). The project area is located on private land approximately three miles southwest of Unity, Oregon. These diversions currently do not have permanent diversion structures, requiring the water user to annually install push-up dams to divert water. Installation of push-up dams increases sedimentation, blocks or inhibits passage of native redband trout and destabilizes the bed and banks of the stream. In addition, irrigation waters are routed to desired application areas by open ditch, where the water is applied by flood irrigation. This method of delivery/application can lead to significant loss of water. This can cause alterations in the routing of sediment, nutrients and herbicides/pesticides into the waterway. The water user desires to install permanent diversion structures and ditch piping to accomplish more time-efficient and environmentally sustainable irrigation practices. This project will result in design of permanent diversion structures and irrigation water delivery piping. The design process will explore alternatives, and lead to a 90% engineering design of the selected alternative that best meets the needs of the water user and addresses water quality, fish passage, and channel instability issues.

This project was funded by OWEB in October of 2021. Cooperative agreements have been signed with the two cooperating landowners. A request for proposals was distributed to several design contractors in early 2022. We hope to have fully completed designs by mid-October 2022 so we can seek implementation funding with a desired implementation date in 2023.

Upper Pine Creek Flood Restoration Project (OWEB Grant 217-5049-12418)

Development of restoration designs for the Upper Pine Creek Flood Restoration project was completed in 2021. This includes final designs for the Morgan and Dugger properties. Designs were previously completed for the Corrigan and Forrester properties. Midway through this design project, a partnership was formed with IPC to address fish passage at the Tarter Slough Diversion. Through funding provided by IPC, the PBWC issued a contract with Resource Specialists Incorporated to design improvements to the Tarter Slough Diversion including fish-friendly diversion structure and fish screening.

In total, designs have been completed for the Tarter Slough diversion and for four adjacent properties (Corrigan, Dugger, Forrester, and Morgan). In collaboration with the Eagle Valley SWCD, IPC will implement the designed improvements to Tarter Slough and two adjacent properties (Forrester and Morgan) in 2022. As described previously, PBWC plans to implement the designed improvements on the Corrigan property in 2023.

In anticipation of developing an OWEB application to fund the designed work on the Dugger property, we met on-site with the landowner and a representative from IPC. Upon assessment of current site conditions, we agreed that good vegetative recovery is underway and that there is currently no need to implement the designed work.

Powder Basin Groundwater Records Review (OWEB Grant 220-5043-17407)

The Council developed a project in collaboration with the OWRD and the Oregon Department of Geology and Mineral Industries (DOGAMI) to utilize the existing data on groundwater resources to determine whether groundwater is declining within the Powder Basin. There is growing concern that areas within the Powder Basin may be at risk for declining groundwater levels. Changes to groundwater levels often have long-lasting direct effects to stream flow, fish habitat, water quality, and agricultural operations.

Based on conversations with the public and OWRD staff, it was determined that the most logical first step in assessing the current status of groundwater in the Powder Basin was to review existing data that is stored by OWRD. The goal of this project is to summarize existing data, identify trends in groundwater levels over time, extract geologic data that is relevant to groundwater storage, identify restoration needs to mitigate declines in groundwater, and determine data gaps. This effort will include summarizing all existing groundwater records within the entire Powder Basin, and compiling all geologic information from well logs in the Baker Valley.

PBWC's role in this project is to develop a database to organize data on groundwater levels and well lithology, and then populate the database from information gathered from OWRD well logs. OWRD and DOGAMI will then use this data in modeling exercises to characterize the groundwater resource in Baker Valley.

Our Research and Monitoring Coordinator began compiling groundwater level data and extracting lithologic data from well logs in September 2020. This effort was continued intermittently through mid-April 2021, when the position was vacated. As this position's funding was primarily provided by our water quality monitoring program, which was not funded in 2021 due to impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic, we were not able to fill this vacancy. Thus, no further work was completed on this project in 2021. In late 2021, we were awarded an OWEB grant to continue our water quality monitoring program in 2022-2024. With these funds we hope to reestablish the monitoring position and resume work on this project.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Sage Grouse CCAA (OWEB 220-8206-18736)

In August 2020, the Endangered Species Act Section 10(a)(1)(A) Enhancement of Survival Permit associated with the Baker/Union County Programmatic Sage-grouse Candidate Conservation Agreement with Assurances (CCAA) was successfully transferred to PBWC. The CCAA is an agreement between the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the PBWC to address the local conservation needs of sage-grouse. In return for conservation measures included in the CCAA, participating property owners receive assurances that no additional conservation requirements will be imposed if sage-grouse are listed under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). To manage the CCAA program, PBWC applied for a grant to fund a Sage-grouse CCAA Coordinator position. The Baker Sage-grouse Local Implementation Team (LIT) awarded the CCAA Coordinator grant using funds from the Baker Focused Investment Partnership (FIP), a grant award provided by the OWEB. PBWC hired the Sage-grouse Candidate Conservation Agreement with Assurances (CCAA) Coordinator (hereafter, Coordinator) who started in February 2021.

The Coordinator engaged with enrolled landowners as an introduction and began the process of building relationships with local landowners. The Coordinator also met with local, state, and federal stakeholders including USFWS, members in the Baker LIT, Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Tri-County Cooperative Weed Management Area (CWMA), Baker County Weed Control, and the Oregon All Counties Steering Committee (OACSC) to establish a rapport and increase landowner awareness of the CCAA program. COVID-19 proved challenging for outreach activities but a modified approach resulted in the following: Baker LIT newsletter article, a mailing which introduced the Coordinator and the CCAA program sent to ~1,500 households, an educational booth at the Baker City Farmers' Market (outside event), adding information about the CCAA program to the PBWC webpage, and creating a presentation for the debut of the CCAA program at the Sage-grouse Conservation Partnership (SageCon) annual summit (virtual). Additionally, the Coordinator worked with partners, landowners, and the PBWC Board to form the CCAA Advisory Board and held a successful first meeting in October 2021.

The Coordinator retrofitted all data from enrolled landowners into a database (using the platform Fulcrum) developed by the OACSC which will streamline future monitoring data and annual reports. The Coordinator constructed a geodatabase within ArcGIS to organize and generate all geospatial data and site specific plan (SSP) information of enrolled landowners. When the

CCAA program transferred to PBWC, we received a single landowner's Letter of Intent (LOI). The Coordinator met with the landowner several times over 2021, conducted the baseline inventory, and developed their draft SSP. PBWC expects the approval of the SSP and full enrollment by early 2022 which will add approximately 6,000 enrolled acres bringing the total CCAA enrolled acres to approximately 44,341. Discussions with other interested landowners began in late 2021 and we expect to receive several LOIs in early 2022. The Coordinator plans to increase landowner outreach in 2022.

The Coordinator applied for four grants over the course of the 2021: Sage-grouse Mesic Habitat Assessment (OWEB Grant 220-8206-19543), CCAA Coordinator Biennium 2, Baker Local Implementation Team Restoration Project Monitoring, and West Nile Virus Monitoring. All four grants were successfully funded. The Coordinator served as the project manager for the Sage-grouse Mesic Habitat Assessment grant which finished in the fall of 2021 (see above Sage-grouse Mesic Habitat Assessment OWEB Grant 220-8206-19543 report for more details). The remaining grant funds and associated projects will start in late spring 2022.

OUTREACH & EDUCATION

Due to restrictions/uncertainties of the COVID-19 Pandemic and capacity issues, many of the outreach and education activities normally implemented on an annual basis were not implemented in 2021.

In 2021, the PBWC again collaborated with the Baker Resources Coalition to implement its high school internship program. PBWC served as the employer of record for the interns and administered grant funds from the Ford Family Foundation, U.S. Forest Service, and Baker School District for the program. Intern activities included stream restoration, wildlife friendly fencing, forest vegetation monitoring plots, wildfire prevention and vegetation management at Anthony Lakes Mountain Resort.

COUNCIL ADMINISTRATION

The existing Bylaws and Membership Policy and Procedure were revised in response to difficulties recruiting members due to Covid-19 related restrictions on social engagement. As a result, there were several changes in the PBWC Board of Directors in 2021. Margaret Durner of Halfway joined the Board in July. Ben Norton of Baker City and Curtis Martin of North Powder both joined the Board in September. Alan Egger stepped down from the Board in September. The PBWC Board of Directors includes the following individuals as of December 31, 2021:

<u>Director</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Residence</u>
Dorothy Mason	President	Baker City
Karen Riener	Secretary/Treasurer	Richland
Levi Old	Director at large	Baker City
Margaret Durner	Director at large	Halfway
Ben Norton	Director at large	Baker City
Curtis Martin	Director at large	North Powder

The PBWC applied for and was awarded an OWEB Watershed Council Capacity grant for the 21-23 biennium. This grant is critical for the organization as it partially funds the salary for the Executive Director and funds a portion of basic operational expenses (office, utilities, accounting, and infrastructure). The total award was for \$131,464 and is effective for the period July 1, 2021 through July 31, 2023.

As required by OWEB for watershed councils awarded capacity grants, the PBWC conducted a self-assessment exercise to understand overall organization performance. The assessment illuminated impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic and complete staff turnover that occurred in 2020. Limitations to program capacity were identified including: the need for more Directors, and lack of funding/staff to implement programs (water quality monitoring and education/outreach). Significant progress was made on these identified capacity issues. This progress included the PBWC staff and board increasing the number of Directors from four to six, and securing funding for water quality monitoring, 2022 through 2024. The PBWC also made plans to request funding to support outreach and education.

The Council made significant progress toward securing project funding to support watershed actions, staff, and operations. A total of \$471,424 in project related grant funds with associated cash match were secured in 2021, with an additional \$372,997 pending and expected to be secured in early 2022. Funding sources include OWEB, ODFW, IPC, U.S Forest Service, OCRF, Burnt River Irrigation District and private landowners.

In addition to self-assessment, the Council also began planning an update of the PBWC Strategic Plan. The current plan is intended to be effective from 2018 through 2022. The staff and Board of Directors will engage with stakeholders to assess accomplishments and effectiveness over the past five years and update the plan for 2023 through 2027.

FINANCIAL STATUS

Balance Sheet Summary as of December 31, 2021

ASSETS	
Current Assets	
Checking/Savings	97,564.61
Accounts Receivable	-221,103.47
Other Current Assets	-43,002.39
Total Current Assets	-166,541.25
Fixed Assets	3,172.83
TOTAL ASSETS	-163,368.42
LIABILITIES & EQUITY	
Liabilities	
Current Liabilities	
Accounts Payable	219.06
Other Current Liabilities	-254,836.22
Total Current Liabilities	-254,617.16
Total Liabilities	-254,617.16
Equity	91,248.74
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	-163,368.42