



**Watershed Updates**

*For information on any of these watershed councils, please contact Watershed Coordinator Drake Gilbert, Wasco Co. SWCD at 541-296-6178 ext 117.*



**Watershed Council General Update**

Most in-person meetings have been canceled for the time being. Visit <http://www.wcwatersheds.org/> to keep up to date and when regular in-person meetings will resume.

**Coordinating Board**

The Coordinating Board met this month to share updates from their individual councils among board members. Additionally, the board also reviewed the final version of the 2020 Watershed Council Annual Report and discussed the presentation of the report to the county commissioners.

**Mosier Watershed Council**

The Mosier Watershed Council held a meeting on January 11th and received updates on the second Mosier Million project, the second deep well, and snowpack within the Mosier region. The second Mosier Million project continues to progress slowly, with GSI and consultants continuing to make progress on finalizing the priority list for outreach. Drilling on the second deep well is complete, with the installation of the pump and connection to electric utility service being all that's left to make the well operational. Finally, snowpack in the Hood-Sandy-Deschutes basin is looking phenomenal, with Snow Water Equivalent at 195% as of January 9th.

**The Dalles Watershed Council**

The Dalles Watershed Council held a meeting in December to discuss the Chenoweth Creek Restoration Project, the annual tree sale, as well as the status of The Dalles Fish Monitoring. The SWCD has been working to procure all of the necessary permits for the Chenoweth Creek Project, with noxious weed removal, revegetation of native plants, and the installation of beaver dam analogues or large woody debris expected to continue through this year. The annual tree sale is expected to take place in March, although a specific day has not been set at this time. Finally, The Dalles Fish Monitoring is set to continue next year in Mill, Threemile, and Chenoweth Creeks.

**Fifteenmile Watershed Council**

With many members of the Fifteenmile Watershed Council also involved in ongoing meetings for the Fifteenmile Managed Underground Storage (MUS) project, the Fifteenmile Water-

shed Council decided to come together for a short meeting following the first MUS meeting to take care of some small house-keeping items. The main purpose of the meeting was for the council to discuss changes to the FAST program heading into 2022, as signups for FAST are set to start in late January or early February. Additionally, the second MUS stakeholder meeting is tentatively scheduled for February 17th.

**Bakeoven/Buck Hollow Watershed Council**

The Bakeoven Watershed Council is planning a meeting in the next couple of months to select those projects that they anticipate will have the greatest impact on the condition of their range. Their plan is to roll them into one grant application, to be submitted during the spring OWEB funding cycle.

**White River Watershed Council**

The SWCD submitted an OWEB grant to secure funding for White River fire recovery on public lands. The SWCD is hoping to secure funding to work with ODF, USFS, East Cascades Oaks Partnership, NRCS, and ODFW to implement forest restoration activities within the White River wildlife area including the control of invasive annual grasses and noxious weeds.

**It's Official! CRP General Signup Begins**

Agricultural producers and landowners can now sign up for the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), a conservation program offered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

The General CRP signup will run from Jan. 31 to March 11, and the Grassland CRP signup will run from April 4 to May 13.

Alongside these programs, producers and landowners can enroll acres in Continuous CRP under the ongoing sign up, which includes projects available through the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP).

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There are currently 22.1 million acres enrolled in General and Grassland CRP, and FSA is aiming to reach the 25.5-million-acre cap statutorily set for fiscal year 2022.

Check with your local FSA office for more information. Wasco and Hood River Counties call 541-298-8559, ext 1.

### Service Center News

**SWCD - Cost Share and OWEB Small Grant Programs** - The District Cost Share program is out of money for general conservation projects. However, we still have funds allocated for haul roads; contact Scott Susi for more information at scott.susi@or.nacdnet.net.

- The OWEB Small Grant program has finally been reauthorized with renewed funding through June 30, 2023. Contact Shilah Olson if you have a project in mind.

- Due to rising COVID numbers in Wasco County, The annual Neighborhood Meetings & the SWCD Annual Meeting are being postponed until later in the spring.

### FSA - Wasco and Hood River Counties

FSA County Committee elections were held and Michael H. Kelly will be representing Central Wasco Co. and Trent Wese-man, Hood River. Committee members are an important voice for local producers in their LAA. Megan Thompson, Tim Morelli, and Bob Benton, Jr. complete the 5 member committee. Members assist FSA in making program decisions regarding programs such as commodity support, conservation, indemnity and disasters as well as emergency programs and eligibility criteria.

- Acreage Reporting: Please call for an appointment to report planted acres for the 2022 crop year: All other crops, including spring-planted and CRP-Jul 15th.

- Agricultural Risk Coverage/ Price Loss Coverage (ARCPLC) enrollment for 2022 is underway. Please make sure your farm is enrolled for one of the coverage options by March 15, 2022

- ECP (Emergency Conservation Program): Please submit completed fencing documentation or a request for an extension PRIOR to your practice deadline.

- NAP (Non-insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program): Applications for payment for 2021 losses must be submitted by Feb 15th. Please submit production records as soon as practical.

For sign up for these programs or get more information, please contact the FSA Wasco and Hood River County FSA office at 541-298-8559, ext. 104.

### NRCS - Conservation Programs for Wasco Co. Producers

Applications are being accepted for the following programs.

- Applications are being taken for Pollinator and Beneficial Insect Habitat - this will be for 2023 funding.

- CSP Classic Application deadline is March 18, 2022. The 2-year waiting period to apply for CSP has been waived for CSP Renewal applicants and they may apply in this year's sign up if their Renewal was unfunded.

- Wasco County NRCS will be holding its annual Local Work Group meeting via Zoom on February 24th from 10am

to 12pm. Please contact Emily Huth, Wasco Co. District Conservationist for details and to receive a link to the meeting. For more information and to apply - (541) 298-8559, ext. 111 or emily.huth@usda.gov.

- NRCS is working with the Oregon Wheat Growers League to enter into an agreement to joint fund a position that might best be called a liaison. NRCS and the OWGL have a long history of cooperation and open communication, and many OWGL members are participants in Farm Bill Programs such as CSP.

Given the wide variation in landscapes for our wheat growing regions, there is a lot of opportunity for identification of new practices and CSP enhancements. We encourage producers to be thinking ahead into next year and bring forward ideas for new enhancements – or modifications to existing enhancements- that would ensure CSP can better work for wheat growing areas.

Talk with your OWGL county president and NRCS staff about how a liaison could help address concerns, and what new or improved enhancements may be most beneficial for your operation. Growers know their environments and feedback to these programs for the varying areas is important.

### Project Updates

**Mosier Deep Well#2 & Mosier Million #2** – Deep well #2 project is nearly completed and now waiting for contractors and weather to be aligned. A well pump has been purchased and now waiting for Pacific Power to install service to the well. For Mosier Million #2, staff are working on the contract with Biz Oregon. They are continuing along the same framework as was done with the first Mosier Million wells.

**Fifteenmile Managed Underground Storage** - This project is on track and the next stakeholder meeting is scheduled for February 17th. Permits through water resources have been applied for. The group will continue to discuss general logistics of the project including generator versus solid power from Wasco

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Electric and along with other logistical issues.

**Tygh Valley Highline Ditch Project** - Highline Ditch & Lindell Dam Removal – Staff are working on a plan with a landowner in the Highline Ditch project for an irrigation fish screen. Their pump is working, but there are some logistics they need to figure out on the fish screen. Three of the 4 wells have been completed in Tygh Valley and are waiting on weather for the last well. An extension on the well project through the end of 2022 has been approved by the grantors.

**White River Fire Restoration** – The District received \$75,000 from OWEB for round one of the restoration project. However, a grant agreement wasn't in place until June so the project was late getting contracted for spraying. OWEB agreed to a one year extension for the spraying part of the project and is encouraging the District to apply for round two funding.

### Ag Water Quality

The Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) is responsible for developing plans and ensuring rule compliance to prevent and control water pollution from agricultural activities and soil erosion on rural lands.

One of the tools ODA uses to help agriculturists achieve water quality goals and standards is through Strategic Implementation Areas. ODA water quality specialists assess streamside conditions in SIA areas by using a variety of publically available tools – such as satellite mapping and field verification from publically accessible areas. Letters are sent out to affected landowners to inform them of available resources available to help them voluntarily address potential agricultural water quality issues. One such resource is Soil and Water Conservation Districts. District planners can be invited to do on site assessments and determine if a problem exists and/or provide assistance to determine what corrective measures need to be taken. The Districts can often assist in seeking financial assistance should conditions warrant.

*(continued on page 4)*

Find us on the web at [www.wascoswcd.org](http://www.wascoswcd.org).

## The Garden Plot

by Tammy Tripp



Wow! It's hard to believe but spring is just around the corner, it seems like we just put our gardens to bed.

Still, as the days turn longer we can't help but turn our thoughts to gardening. While here in Wasco County, we aren't ready for actual digging and planting – that is still 3 or 4 months away - what we can do is start planning.

How about a kitchen garden this year? Fresh herbs like parsley, sage, chives, lavender, dill or other culinary herbs make wonderful additions to many summer dishes. Or perhaps save some money by incorporating drought tolerant herbaceous perennial flowers that come back year after year, or grow your own annuals.

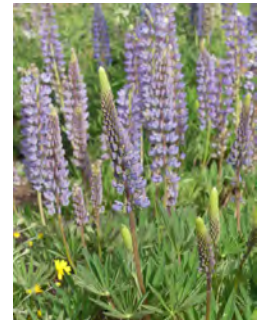
A cold frame or a nice sunny spot by a south facing window is an excellent way to feed your green thumb and get a jump start on gardening for 2022.

### Wildflower Talk

by Kristin Currin, Humbleroots Nursery

#### Bigleaf lupine

*Lupinus polyphyllus*



Bigleaf lupine is a robust perennial typically found growing in moist meadows and riparian areas. It has showy spikes of bluish purple flowers which attract bees, hummingbirds, butterflies, and other insect pollinators. It produces large pea-like seed pods and can spread vigorously by seed. Typical of plants in the pea family, its roots host nitrogen-fixing bacteria and this species is often used in riparian and wetland restoration. This Northwest native has been used in plant breeding to produce some of the most commonly cultivated varieties of lupine.

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**Ag Water Quality** (continued from page 3)

The Eastern Lower Deschutes SIA Area - which encompasses part of Sherman and Wasco Counties along the Deschutes River is currently active. Go to [https://www.wascoswcd.org/wcswcd\\_website\\_029.htm](https://www.wascoswcd.org/wcswcd_website_029.htm) for more information about the program and tools to assist with self-assessments.

**SPLINTERS FROM THE BOARD**

**January 5, 2022**

**Convened 1:03 PM**

- Board approved 1 DCS project for an irrigation system demo and 2 haul roads; voted to retain the current slate of officers; re-appointed budget committee members Covert, Lindell and Wagenblast; received and approved the FY20-21 audit; approved extending the GSI contract for Mosier groundwater studies through June 2022; and approved step increases for both the Office Assistant and NRCS Liaison.
  - Board heard updates to ongoing projects – Mosier Deep Well #2, Highline Ditch, White River Fire Restoration, and the 15Mile Managed Underground Storage Study.
  - Partners FSA, NRCS, Wy'East RC&D and OSU Ext. gave program updates, along with updates from board committees, committee representatives, and the District Manager.
- Adjourned 2:41 PM

**February 2, 2022**

**Convened 1:02 PM**

- Board approved 3 DCS projects for 2 haul roads and an irrigation system upgrade; contracting with Belozer's Outdoor Enterprises LLC for aerial recon of feral pigs; and 2 riparian planting projects in the 8mile SIA.
  - Board heard updates on Google's SIP agreement with the City & County, on insurances from John Anderson, Wheatland Insurance, and ongoing projects – Mosier Deep Well #2, Highline Ditch, White River Fire Restoration, and the 15Mile Managed Underground Storage Study.
  - Partners FSA and NRCS gave program updates, along with updates from board committees, committee representatives, and the District Manager.
- Adjourned 2:37 PM

**Conservation Calendar**

*Catch Wasco Co. SWCD on KODL Coffee Break at 10:00 am with Al Wynn, the first Monday of each month! Unless otherwise noted, the SWCD Board Meeting is always the first Wednesday of the month.*

- Feb 23 OSU Ag Wildfire Trng, 1:00 PM, In person, Ext Ofc
- Feb 21 President's Day - Office Closed
- Feb 24 NRCS Local Work Group, 10:00 AM, Zoom
- Mar 2 SWCD Board Mtg, 1:00 PM, Zoom
- Mar 3 WC Forest Collaborative, 1:00 PM, Zoom
- Apr 6 SWCD Board Mtg, 1:00 PM, Zoom
- Apr 7 WC Forest Collaborative, 1:00 PM, Zoom
- Apr 8 NCLA Bull Tour, Time: TBD, Sherman County
- May 4 SWCD Budget Cmte Mtg, 10:00 AM, USDA Svc Ctr
- May 4 SWCD Board Mtg, 1:00 PM, USDA Svc Ctr
- May 30 Memorial Day, Office Closed
- Jun 1 SWCD Board Mtg & Budget Hearing 1:00 PM, Zoom
- Jun 2 WC Forest Collaborative Mtg & Field Tour, Zoom
- Jun 6 Juneteenth Holiday - Office Closed
- Jul 4 Independence Day - Office Closed

<b>Elected Directors</b>	
Bill Hammel	Phil Kaser
Stan Shephard	Pat Davis
Bob Krein	Shawn Sorensen
Ken Bailey	
<b>Associate Directors</b>	
Bryce Molesworth, Director Emeritus: Mel Omeg	
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SWCD District Manager:	Shilah Olson
SWCD Office Administrator:	Tammy Tripp
SWCD Office Assistant:	Jennifer Sampson
SWCD Project Manager	Abbie Forrest
SWCD Watershed Council/ FAST Coordinator	Drake Gilbert
SWCD NRCS/Field Office Assistant	Samantha Filbin
SWCD Custodian	Malorie (Lia) Chadwick
SWCD Planners:	Ryan Bessette, Josh Thompson
	Karen Lamson, Scott Susi
NRCS District Conservationist:	Emily Huth
NRCS Soil Conservationist:	
NRCS Soil Conservationist:	
Conservation Liaison/Farm Bill Biologist:	Hillary Duolos
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