



Groundwork

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Splinters from the Board

October: The October meeting was the first since July with a packed agenda. Treasurer's reports from July, Aug., and Sept. were presented, as well as the July meeting minutes. Six cost share applications were presented and approved, as well as the announcement of the \$100,000 for the urban program. The board approved Shilah to negotiate a contract with Columbia Helicopters for a LWD project with the USFS as well as extend the contract with GSI for Mosier projects and the 15mile MUS. Contracting was also approved for the ECOP FIP to hire GeoVisions for cultural resource studies. The board participated in an SDAO Public Meetings Training video and approved re-enrolling health insurance. Shilah provided an official update since Josh's passing how the district has been navigating the loss. Project updates and agency reports were also shared.

November: The board met on November 13th. Board members approved the October minutes, Treasurer's Report, as well as the updated Public Meeting Policy. Shilah reported an update from the Columbia Gateway, Downtown Urban Renewal Plan to increase Maximum Indebtedness by \$6.1M. Brittany Mills provided an update from ODA, and Emily Stranz presented the board with an outline for developing their Succession Plan. Drake presented an update from OWRD on the Fifteenmile Groundwater study, and Fifteenmile landowners attended to share their recent struggles with groundwater declines. WyEast provided an update on the ODOE C-REP grant in partnership with the SWCD. Agency reports were provided from FSA and WyEast. Committee reports and the District Manager Reports were tabled due to time constraints.

Goodbye AND Welcome

Jennifer Sampson started with the District as Office Assistant in 2019. She was promoted to Office Administrator in 2022 and has done an outstanding job for the SWCD, providing a warm welcome to visitors and efficiently handling our daily operations. We will miss her greatly and wish her all the best in her future endeavors as she begins a new chapter to be closer to her family.

As we bid farewell to Jennifer, we are pleased to introduce Dana Woods as our new Office Administrator. Dana currently works for WyEast and has been collaborating closely with Jennifer to facilitate a seamless transition. She will officially take over on December 2nd, while Jennifer's last day will be on November 27th.

We encourage everyone to take a moment to say goodbye to Jennifer and extend a warm welcome to Dana during your next visit to our office!

Watershed Council UPDATES

- The Dalles Watershed Council met September 16th to discuss the results of their summer E. coli monitoring, as well as the growing SWCD noxious weed control program. The councils next meeting is scheduled for January 8th, and they will receive updates on the recently completed Chenoweth Creek Restoration Project.
- The Bakeoven and White River watershed councils held a joint meeting at the Imperial River Company in Maupin to discuss the ongoing Bakeoven Upland Restoration project funded by OWEB, as well as the Community Wildfire Defense grant.
- The Fifteenmile Watershed Council hosted a meeting on October 3rd at the USFS building in Dufur to discuss this year's FAST season, as well as the upcoming OWRD water budget study to be completed for the Fifteenmile Watershed.
- The Mosier Watershed Council met on October 23rd at the Mosier Grange to discuss progress made on the Mosier Million Well Replacement Project, as well as the upcoming Watershed Council Action Plan project. Their next meeting is scheduled for January 28th.
- The next Coordinating Board meeting will be held on January 8th, following the SWCD board meeting. Agenda items will include an update from the County Commissioners presentation, as well as the Action Plan and regular council/project updates.

Farm Service Agency

- Acreage Reporting: Please call 541-298-8559 Ext. 2 to schedule an appointment for 2025 acreage reporting.
 - December 15, 2024 for fall-planted crops, such as small cereal grains.
 - January 2, 2025 for honey and honeybee colonies.
 - January 15, 2025 for perennial fruit crops, including apples, cherries and pears.
- CRP (Conservation Reserve Program): Emergency grazing available to livestock grazers impacted by 2024 wildfires.
- ECP (Emergency Conservation Program): Sign up for rebuilding/replacing burned fences from recent 2024 wildfires begins October 7, 2024 and will run through December 5th.
- EFRP (Emergency Forest Restoration Program): Sign up for technical or financial assistance on nonindustrial private forestland damaged by recent 2024 wildfires begins October 7, 2024 and will run through April 4, 2025.
- FSCSC (Food Safety Certification for Specialty Crops): Eligible specialty crop growers can apply for assistance for expenses related to obtaining or renewing a food safety certification on their calendar year 2024 expenses beginning July 1, 2024, through Jan. 31, 2025.
- LIP/ELAP Losses: Please contact FSA office to report your losses from 2024 wildfires before January 30, 2025 for the Livestock Indemnity Program or Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-raised Fish Program.
- NAP (Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program): Sign up deadlines for 2025 coverage are coming soon! Please get your coverage by:
 - November 20, 2024 for perennial fruit crops.
 - November 30, 2024 for grazing and hay crops.
- OCCSP (Organic Certification Cost-Share Program): Certification costs may be reimbursed at 75%, not to exceed \$750 per scope. Late-filed applications are still being accepted.
- TAP (Tree Assistance Program): Once cost-share agreements have been approved, participants have 12 months to complete practices. Please keep these deadlines in mind as you finish replanting your trees, bushes or vines under a TAP claim.

Please call the FSA office for more information and to schedule your signup and reporting appointments as soon as practical.

NRCS

- FY2025 EQIP application deadline is November 29th.
- FY2025 General CSP application deadline is February 28th.
- Join us in welcoming our new employee, Michael Cistulli! He is filling the role of Resource Conservationist and comes to us from NRCS Idaho. We're glad to have Michael on The Dalles' team.

For any NRCS program related questions, please reach out to Emily Huth at 541-298-8559 ext. 111 or emily.huth@usda.gov

OSU Extension

Pesticide Trainings - all trainings are free

- December 6th, 9am to 3pm. In person webinar in The Dalles (CGCC Building 2) or online (RSVP for online class here: <http://beav.es/GqA>) *Both ODA and WSDA credits available.
- December 17th, 1pm to 4pm, The Dalles, CGCC Building 2.
- December 19th, pm to 4pm, Moro, Sherman Co. Extension Office.

Farm First Aid Trainings

- January 15th, 1pm to 5pm, The Dalles, CGCC Building 2, in English.
- February 17th, 1pm to 5pm, The Dalles, CGCC Building 2, in Spanish.
- March 6th, 1pm to 5pm, Hood River (location TBD), in Spanish.
- Trainings cost \$25 and provide hands on CRP and Stop the Bleed training with a focus on preventing and responding to traumatic farm accidents.

Contact Jacob Powell for questions at 541-298-3581 or email jacob.powel@oregonstate.edu

Wy'East RC&D

Recently, the SWCD and Wy'East RC&D partnered and have been awarded a C-REP grant from the Oregon Department of Energy! With this grant, Wy'East plans to deploy four mobile battery units, two e-chargers, and a mobile trailer to increase resiliency for towns in Wasco County by summer 2026. For further questions, reach out to Anna Peach at anna@wyeast-rcd.org. On October 24th Jackie Solomon and Lanier Fussell attended the Oregon Solar and Storage Conference in Portland, where Lanier and Lake County Resources Initiative staff presented, primarily to solar developers, about Rural Energy for America Program (REAP) grants. On November 13th Lanier and Jackie attended the Willamette Valley Ag Expo in Albany to meet with potential REAP applicants and solar developers, there were also various types of farm equipment to explore. On December 13th Lanier will be leaving Wy'East and heading back home to Arkansas. Jackie will be taking on the entirety of REAP grant assistance.

Wildflower Talk

Chokecherry *Prunus virginiana*

Article by Kristin Currin at
Humble Roots Nursery

This keystone native plant benefits a wide array of insects and wildlife. Hundreds of species of butterflies and moths use plants in the genus *Prunus* as larval hosts, making these plants critical to local food webs, particularly for 96% of terrestrial birds which rely on insects such as caterpillars to raise their young. Found throughout the PNW, chokecherry is adaptable to a variety of conditions and soils. This suckering shrub to small tree produces beautiful flowers, showy fruits, and colorful fall foliage, making it a desirable plant in the landscape. Planting keystone plants like chokecherry is a great way to support local wildlife and beneficial insects.



No-Till November

This month, let's all join NRCS in their annual celebration of "No-Till November," and help inspire more producers to practice no-till this year. Through no-till (also called zero tillage or direct seeding/drilling), farmers can grow crops or pasture year over year with minimal soil disturbance through tillage. Here are three ways that you can engage:

- Pass it on to your professional networks. Remind your coworkers, especially anyone who works directly with producers, as well as partner organizations, conservation districts, etc., about the opportunity to talk about the benefits of no-till this month.
- Share, like, and comment on the NRCS [Facebook page](#), [national](#) and State X accounts, and [LinkedIn page's](#) no-till posts. There will be several posts every week in November about no-till.
- Solicit and submit no-till photos from your community to be featured on NRCS social media. Show your no-till enthusiasm and encourage submissions for your personal and professional networks. Send pictures in the comments or messages to the NRCS Facebook Page, tweet them to @USDA_NRCS, tag NRCS on LinkedIn, or email sm.fpac.nracs.facebook@usda.gov.



(ob)noxious weeds

Purple Starthistle *Centaurea calcitrapa*

Purple starthistle is native to the Mediterranean region, southern Europe and northern Africa. It is well adapted to a range of temperature and moisture regimes. Its potential impact on agriculture, wildlife and recreation would be significant. Distribution in Oregon: In Oregon, purple starthistle was first detected in Clackamas County and this site has been monitored and treated since 1993. A 2010 survey failed to locate any surviving plants. In 2009, a new infestation was discovered in Wheeler County. The Wheeler County site is receiving annual monitoring and treatment leading to eradication. Description: Purple starthistle is actually a heavily armored knapweed species and not classified as a true thistle. It can function as an annual or biennial depending on moisture conditions. Seedlings will sprout in the fall or early spring forming spiny rosettes in May and June. Blooming continues from midsummer through fall as the plant grows 1 to 6 feet tall. To conserve moisture the plant is covered in fine hairs, with narrow linear leaves retarding moisture loss. Flower heads are purple and arrayed with straw-colored spine-like bracts over 1 inch in length. Seeds are not plumed, the distinguishing factor between this plant and Iberian starthistle.

Purple Star Thistle has not been detected in Wasco County although the county has suitable habitat for this invasive plant. It was found in contaminated grass seed in Sherman County years ago but weed managers eradicated it quickly.

Article by Scott Susi



Photo Credits: Summit CWMA & Malcolm Storey; Virtual Field-Guide (UK)



Fifteenmile Watershed Groundwater

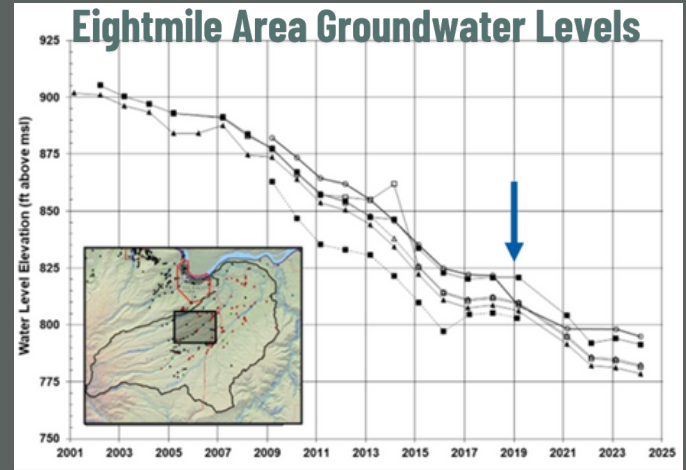
The Oregon Department of Water Resources (OWRD) gave a presentation at a September Fifteenmile Watershed Council meeting to discuss their upcoming plans for the implementation of a comprehensive water budget study for the watershed. The goal of the water budget study is to quantify all of the water resources within the watershed, accounting for both inputs and outputs of water within the basin.

With that being said, groundwater drawdown has been occurring for decades within the Fifteenmile Watershed. If you live in the Fifteenmile Watershed and have concerns around declining or drying wells, OWRD has provided guidance on submitting a dry well report to the department. A report may be submitted for a well that is dry, or has declining production by visiting the link below and submitting the requested information. Furthermore, it may be advisable to have your well level measured if you are concerned about well level declines and have not had your well measured in a significant period of time. For additional information, please contact your local watermaster Bob Wood at 541-506-2652.

Dry Well Reporting:

To report a dry or declining well, please follow the link below. Click on "Report Your Dry Well Here". From there, the dry well complaint form will open with instructions and prompts for filling out the form.

<https://www.oregon.gov/owrd/programs/gwwl/pages/drywell.aspx>



urban LANDOWNERS Important UPDATE

for the urban conservation cost share program

The Urban / Small Acreage Conservation Program was recently announced in the Sept/Oct issue of the Groundwork newsletter.

A few updates to note include the maximum award amount for projects has been increased to 50% of total project costs up to \$7,500. Funding is for conservation projects on lots less than 5 acres. Riparian planting, rain water harvesting, pollinator gardens, irrigation efficiency upgrades, and more can apply!

If you have a project in mind and own or operate a small piece of land, please reach out to Abbie Forrest at abbie.forrest@wascoswcd.org or 541-296-6178 x102

announcements & important dates

Tree Sale Reminder!

Don't forget to order early! Pre-orders will only be accepted through January 17th. Plant pick up day is **March 15th, 2025**

- The SWCD has moved their monthly board meetings to the second Wednesday of the month.
- The next regularly scheduled board meetings will be held on December 11th and January 8th, at 1:00pm at the USDA Service Center in The Dalles.
- Listen for SWCD & Partner updates on the KODL Coffee Break the first Monday of each month at 10:07 AM on 1440 AM Radio, 100.7 FM or streaming online at kodl.com.
- Upcoming office closures: Thanksgiving, Nov. 28, Christmas, Dec. 25, and New Years, Jan. 1.
- If you would like to receive this newsletter digitally please email wasco@wascoswcd.org.

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