



Groundwork

January / February 2025

Volume 49 Number 1

In This Issue

- Splinters from the Board (1)
- Watershed Council Updates (1)
- Thank you & Welcome (1)
- FAST Signups (1)
- Partner Updates (2)
- Wildflower Talk (3)
- Chenoweth Project (3)
- (Ob)noxious Weeds (3)
- SNOTEL Snowpack (4)
- Forest Collaborative (4)
- FAST Signups (4)
- Announcements and Important Dates(4)

Splinters from the Board

December: The Board met on December 11th. Three DCS applications were approved (1 haul road, 1 irrigation system upgrade and 1 juniper removal project). The board approved a 2.5% COLA (cost of living) increase for staff as well as raised the health benefit stipend. Members of the public attended the meeting to share their current experience with declining groundwater and potential overallocation. The board also welcomed new office administrator, Dana Woods, to the team. Updates from past fire seasons, as well as ongoing projects were shared. The board heard partner updates from FSA, OSU, NRCS and the Watershed Councils. There are currently 38 active grants totaling \$6.4 million dollars with 4 pending applications. Since 1990, the SWCD has completed 351 grants totaling nearly \$21M.

January: The Board met on January 8th and administered oaths of office to reelected directors Bill Hammel, Bob Krein, Larry Powell and new board member Jeff Crump. The board also held officer elections and voted to keep the same slate of officers: Chairman- Bill Hammel, Vice Chair- Bob Krein, and Secretary/Treasurer- Shawn Sorensen. Ken Bailey was appointed as Director Emeritus, and three budget committee members were reappointed. The board adopted a succession plan developed with the help of facilitator Emily Stranz of DS Consulting. Board approved entering into a C-REP agreement with ODOE and subawarding the contract to WyEast RC&D. Regular updates and routine reports from partners were also shared.



WATERSHED COUNCIL UPDATES

Thank You & Welcome

The SWCD staff and board want to thank Ken Bailey for his years of service on the SWCD Board as well as for representing Wasco County and conservation districts across the state. Ken served on many other boards such as the Oregon Association of Conservation Districts (OACD), Soil and Water Conservation Commission (SWCC), and the Oregon Ag Heritage Program (OAHP). We are also excited to introduce our newest elected At-Large director, Jeff Crump. Welcome, Jeff!



Ken Bailey



Jeff Crump

- The Dalles Watershed Council met on January 8th to discuss the results of their winter E.coli sampling, as well as hear the project completion presentation for the Chenoweth Creek Restoration Project.
- Fifteenmile Watershed Council will meet on January 21st to discuss the next year of the FAST program, as well as Fifteenmile groundwater resources.
- The Mosier Watershed Council will meet on January 28th to discuss the progress of the Mosier Million project, as well as hear updates and presentations from partners.
- Bakeoven / Buck Hollow watershed council has not met since the fall, however participants of the upland restoration project have been implementing numerous restoration projects including livestock water developments, and range treatments.
- The Coordinating Board met on January 8th, following the SWCD board meeting. The board shared updates from their respective councils, as well as shared highlights from the County Commissioners meeting. The OWEB review team met that day and also recommended the 2025 Action Plan Technical Assistance grant for funding. The final OWEB decision will be made during their Spring meeting. The next Coordinating Board meeting will be held on April 9th.

FAST Sign ups

Signups for the 2025 irrigation season are happening now. If you are interested in participating in the Fifteenmile Action to Stabilize Temperatures program, please reach out to Drake Gilbert at drake.gilbert@or.nacdnet.net or 541-296-6178 x117

Farm Service Agency

The USDA announced the 2025 enrollment periods for key safety-net programs including the Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC), Price Loss Coverage (PLC) and Dairy Margin Coverage (DMC). Agricultural producers can submit applications to FSA for ARC and PLC for the 2025 crop year from January 21 to April 15 and for DMC for the 2025 coverage year from January 29 to March 31.

ARC and PLC provide financial protections to farmers from substantial drops in crop prices or revenues and are vital economic safety nets for most American farms. DMC provides dairy producers with price support to help offset milk and feed price differences.

Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybee, and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP) Deadline. ELAP provides emergency assistance to eligible livestock, honeybee and farm-raised fish producers who have losses due to disease, adverse weather or other conditions, such as blizzards and wildfires, not covered by other agricultural disaster assistance programs.

Eligible losses include: **Livestock** - grazing losses not covered under the Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP), loss of purchased feed and/or mechanically harvested feed due to an eligible adverse weather event, additional cost of transporting water and feed because of an eligible drought and additional cost associated with gathering livestock to treat for cattle tick fever. **Honeybee** - loss of purchased feed due to an eligible adverse weather event, cost of additional feed purchased above normal quantities due to an eligible adverse weather condition, colony losses in excess of normal mortality due to an eligible weather event or loss condition, including CCD, and hive losses due to eligible adverse weather. **Farm-Raised Fish** - death losses in excess of normal mortality and/or loss of purchased feed due to an eligible adverse weather event. If you have suffered any of the above losses during calendar year 2024, you must file a notice of loss and an application for payment by January 30, 2025.

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

Wy'East RC&D

Wy'East Resource Conservation & Development is hiring!

Wy'East has an open position for an Administrative and Finance Manager.



This position will work directly with the leadership team of Wy'East Resource Conservation and Development Council (Wy'East). If you or someone you know is interested in completing the day-to-day financial operations within the company and providing administrative support for the Wy'East organization please check out the Wy'East website for the full position description.

<https://www.wyeast-rcd.org/careers>

OSU Extension

American Red Cross CPR / First Aid and Farm Safety Trainings

- January 22nd, 12:30pm to 5 pm, Sherman County Extension Office, Moro, OR in English only.
- February 17th, 12:30pm to 5 pm, The Dalles, CGCC Bldg. 2 (English and Spanish), a few spots left for Spanish Speakers.
- February 22nd, 12:30 to 5 pm, The Dalles, location TBD, English only.
- March 6th, 12:30 to 5 pm, Hood River Fire Station, English and Spanish
- Trainings cost \$60 and provide hands on CPR and Stop the Bleed training with a focus on preventing and responding to traumatic farm accidents. American Red Cross First Aid/CPR certificates will be given to attendees.
- Space is limited and registration is required by contacting Jacob Powell at 541-298-3581 or email jacob.powell@oregonstate.edu

Wednesday, March 5th, Spring Meeting for Wheat Producers

Tentatively planned meeting for wheat producers covering use of drones in wheat production, stripe rust and crop condition updates, and a few pesticide credits and topics are anticipated. Planned to be at Columbia Gorge Community College from 1pm to 4pm. Contact Jacob Powell at 541-298-3581 or email jacob.powell@oregonstate.edu for more information. RSVP not needed.

NRCS

- 2025 Local Work Group Meeting - Thursday, February 27th from 10am-12pm at the Dufur Parish Hall! Wasco County NRCS and SWCD invite you to bring your ideas and concerns surrounding natural resources to the table to help shape future planning and funding opportunities in the county. Lunch is provided!
- Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) General Sign-Up Application Deadline is February 28th . CSP is a great opportunity to continue building on your existing conservation efforts. Our local staff can assist you in selecting conservation enhancements that work best for your operation. Please reach out for an application and to discuss your program eligibility.

Please reach out to Emily Huth for more information: emily.huth@usda.gov or 541-298-8559 ext. 111

Wildflower Talk

Hairy manzanita *Arctostaphylos columbiana*

Article by Kristin Currin at Humble Roots Nursery

This evergreen shrub blooms early in the growing season, producing clusters of white to pink, urn-shaped flowers in late winter to spring. These flowers attract a variety of native pollinators but are especially loved by bumble bees, which buzz pollinate the plants by producing vibrations that cause the pollen to be released. Once pollinated, rusty-red fruits begin to develop and ripen by late summer. These fruits feed wildlife and are an attractive feature against the gray-green to bluish evergreen foliage in fall. The roots of this plant can harbor ectomycorrhizal fungi that may benefit nearby conifer growth.



Chenoweth Creek Restoration Project



The Chenoweth Creek Restoration Project was recently wrapped up this November, with the final hurdle being crossed with the completion of large woody debris placement on Port property near the mouth of the creek. The objective of the addition of large woody debris to the system was to reconnect a former side channel of the creek, which we anticipated would have positive outcomes for both native fish and the recreating public by directing water away from the trail.

Shortly after the completion of the large woody debris placement, several beavers went to work creating a series of small beaver dams down the main channel. Additionally, a large beaver dam was also constructed near the mouth of the creek shortly after project completion. By late-December following a series of prolonged precipitation events, the sediment berm blocking the side channel had been washed away and the side-channel was flowing. Starting in January, several salmonids have been seen utilizing the side channel, as well as the slack water pools created behind the logs, boulders, and root wads that were placed in the creek.

(ob)noxious weeds

Myrtle Spurge *Euphorbia myrsinities*

Article by Scott Susi

Also commonly known as creeping spurge, and donkey tail spurge, Myrtle Spurge is a Class "B" rated noxious weed. Although not widespread, it is found throughout Wasco and Jefferson County as well as most of Eastern Oregon. This perennial blooms in early spring, and can grow between 4 and 6 inches tall. Leaves alternately arranged in close spirals around the fleshy, trailing, blue-green stems. Flowers inconspicuous and surrounded by a showy yellow green bract. Originally planted as a rock garden ornamental, the species has escaped and is spreading on to open lands in dryer parts of the state. Seeds can be ejected when plants are distributed, sticking to wildlife hair and enabling transport far from the parent plants. Aside from displacing desirable native species, the plant invades playgrounds and parks in some states. The sap of myrtle spurge is caustic and creates rashes, swelling and blistering of the skin and is a human health concern. Wasco County has 3 known sites in old landscaping in Antelope, Maupin and The Dalles. If you find Myrtle Spurge contact the SWCD.

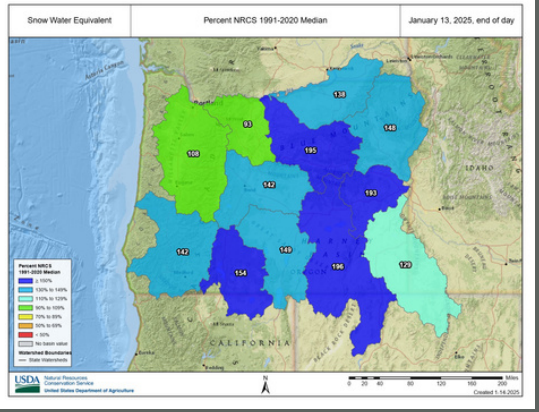
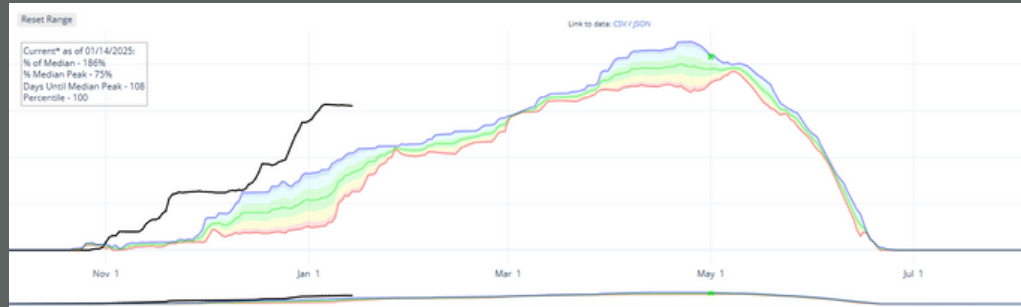
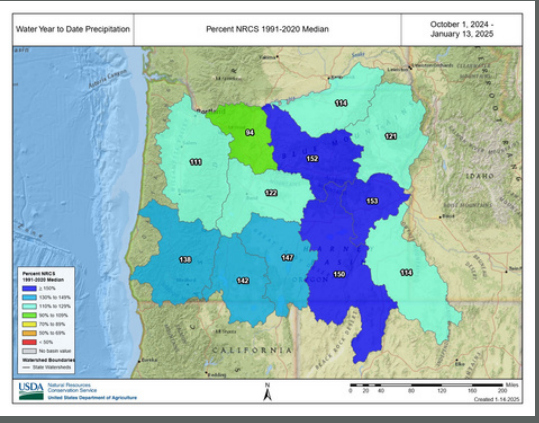


Photo Credits: Oregon Dept. of Agriculture



SNOTEL Update

After a relatively wet start to the winter, most of the basins within the state are above 100% median Snow Water Equivalent (SWE) as of January 13th. Unfortunately, here in the Hood-Sandy-Lower Deschutes basin we do fall below that 100% mark with 93% SWE. Similar to the last few years, many of the storm impacts seem to be affecting regions further to the south, with many of the basins in Southern Oregon clocking in at over 140% SWE. A similar story can be seen in the map showing statewide precipitation by basin, with almost every basin registering over 100% with the exception of our own at 94%. Finally, the new Fifteenmile SNOTEL site is showing that it is at 183% of its median value for SWE; however, it is important to note that the period of record for this site only includes the last two years of data. With all that being said, it seems we've had a fairly decent start to the water year, but with many more winter days ahead of us things could still change pretty drastically over the coming months.



The Wasco County Forest Collaborative brings together federal, state, and local natural resource agencies and stakeholders to plan forest restoration and wildfire risk reduction projects.

Since 2015, the collaborative has planned nine projects encompassing more than 30,000 acres of treatment on the Barlow Ranger District. The Mt. Hood National Forest was designated a Wildfire Crisis Priority Landscape in 2022, and significant increases in federal and state funding have accelerated implementation of fuels treatments over the last two years. In 2024, the collaborative completed planning of the 27 Road Fuel Break Project, which will reduce hazardous fuels within a 1000-foot corridor of the 27 Road from Badger Creek north to Fifteenmile Creek. This fuel break was identified as a high priority to reduce the potential spread of wildfires towards the communities of Wamic, Pine Hollow, and Friend. This year, the collaborative will focus on the Hootenanny Project area, where forest treatments are anticipated on ODFW White River Wildfire Area and Forest Service lands in the Tygh Creek, Pen Creek, and Jordan Creek watersheds.



announcements & important dates

Tree Sale Plant pick up day is **Reminder! 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 February 12th and March 12th, 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: January 20th: Martin Luther King Jr. Day & February 17th: Presidents Day.
- If you would like to receive this newsletter digitally please email wasco@wascoswcd.org.

Newsletter Sponsors

Wasco Co. SWCD & USDA are Equal Opportunity Employers & Service Providers

www.wascoswcd.org