

Groundwork

September / October

Volume 50 Number 5

Splinters from the Board

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June: The Board met on June 10th. They approved the May minutes and Treasurer's report. Four District Cost Share Applications were presented and approved along with the 2.5% increase to the cost share rates (2 Irrigation Upgrades, 1 Fuel Reduction, and 1 Haul Road). The Board approved a Vehicle Reserve and Replacement Policy, a Trailer and Towing Safety Policy, and authorized opening a rental account with Global Rental Co. (Altec) to support the Highline Ditch project. Then the Board convened a budget hearing and adopted the 2026-2027 budget of \$7,256,603.

Updates Included the Miles Creek TMDL process, long-range planning, and ongoing project work, as well as information from our partners, including NRCS funding awards, FSA disaster assistance programs, and the Wasco County CWDG Wildfire mitigation program. The Board also convened its Weed Advisory Board meeting to affirm its role under Resolution 26-007 and adopt the interim Oregon State Weed Board noxious weed list which should be ready for the September meeting.

July: The Board met on July 8th. The Board received and approved June's Treasurer's Report and minutes. Four District Cost Share applications were reviewed and approved (3 Haul Roads, 1 Irrigation Upgrade). There also was an approval for contracting with GSI for claims of beneficial use on the Tygh Valley Wells tied to the Highline Ditch Elimination project. The FY 2026-2027 Annual Plan of Work was approved. A special Board Meeting held on July 23rd relating to Mosier Million #2.

Updates included a recap of the Annual Meeting and the June 24th Legislative Tour, feedback submitted on the Miles Creek TMDL, and continued work on the Mosier Million #2 and Highline Ditch Elimination projects. The District also heard from partners, including NRCS funding awards, FSA program deadlines, and an upcoming OSU Extension Wildfire Fuel Break Tour for August.

Watershed Council Updates

The Wasco County Area Watershed Councils have taken most of the summer off and are gearing back up to meet in the Fall. Mosier Watershed will have a meeting on September 29th; The Dalles meets on October 14th; Fifteenmile is scheduled for early October; and The White River and Bakeoven Watersheds will be meeting in late October/early November.

The Coordinating Board met on September 9th. The Board held their annual officer elections as well as completed the self evaluation process. Council updates were shared regarding the Spring Grant Cycle application process from OWEB as well as the mid-biennium Watershed Council Capacity Grant Progress Report. The next CB meeting is scheduled for October 14th following the SWCD Board meeting. John Runyon will be in attendance to provide an update on the Watershed Council Action Plan. For more information on any of the individual councils and upcoming meeting dates, reach out to Coordinator Drake Gilbert at drake.gilbert@or.nacdnet.net

Fall 2026 Tree & Shrub Sale

Saturday, November 7th, 2026

Come early for the best selection!

9:00 AM - 3:00 PM
2325 River Road
The Dalles, OR

Wasco County Soil & Water Conservation
District invites you to shop our annual Fall Plant
Sale, featuring a variety of native trees and
shrubs well-suited to our region

Available Species:

Grand Fir	Service Berry	Common Snowberry
Ponderosa Pine	Mock Orange	Birchleaf Spiraea
Douglas Fir	Oceanspray	Chokecherry
Oregon White Oak	Golden Currant	Coyote Bush
Cottonwood	Creeping Oregon Grape	Red Osier Dogwood
Bigleaf Maple	Nootka Rose	Dwarf Red Twig Dogwood
Vine Maple	Woods Rose	Black Hawthorne
Blue Elderberry	Red Flowering Currant	Pacific Ninebark



Partner Updates:



Oregon State University
Extension Service

Farm Service Agency

Agricultural Risk Coverage / Price Loss Coverage (ARCPLC)
Signup for 2026: Sept. 15 - Dec. 11.

Livestock Forage Program (LFP): Sign ups are happening now
through March 1, 2027.

Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees & Farm-raised
Fish Program (ELAP): now through March 1, 2027.

Non-insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP): Sign up
for 2027 coverage is November 20, 2026.

Acreage Reporting for Fall Planted Crops are due December 15;
perennial fruit crops are due January 15, 2027.

County Committee Election: November 2 - December 7, 2026.

Emergency Conservation Program (ECP) for 2026 wildfires
coming soon.

Emergency Forest Restoration Program (EFRP) for 2026 wildfires
coming soon.

Wy'East RC&D

Wy'East RC&D attended the Eastern Oregon Economic Summit in Ontario, OR themed "When Eastern Oregon Thrives, Oregon Rises," covering energy, water, childcare, and economic development. The "Powering the Future" panel spotlighted rural innovation topics, including irrigation efficiency, cloud seeding, geologic hydrogen production, and lithium mining plus talks on Malheur County's workforce pipeline.

Producers anywhere in Oregon exploring irrigation efficiency for their farm or ranch, and rural small business owners seeking energy project funding support, contact Michael Kluz at mkluz@wyeast-rcd.org to learn more.

Scan the QR code at right for the full event recap!

NRCS

After 3 years serving Wasco County as a Soil Conservationist, Dellaina Morse is headed to New Mexico NRCS! Wishing her well on her next adventure.

Applications for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) are accepted on a continuous basis. For Wasco County, FY2027 funding will prioritize applications that address natural resource concerns related to on-farm inefficient irrigation water use, wildfire hazard, and weed/pest pressure. The application deadline to be considered in our next round of funding is November 13th, 2026! Please reach out to Emily Huth for more information. Call 541-705-3634 or email Emily.Huth@usda.gov



Pesticide Manuals Available in Spanish

Manual Nacional para la Certificación
de Aplicadores de Plaguicidas
Tercera Edición 2025
Manual Nacional de Estudio para Aplicadores de Plaguicidas



Pesticide Educational Resources Collaborative (PERC) released the 3rd edition of the National Pesticide Applicator Certification Core Manual in print in Spanish! The manual and exam bank are intended for the certification of commercial and private pesticide applicators in the core competencies related to laws and safety. The revision includes the newly required competencies under the 2017 revised Certification of Pesticide Applicators Rule (40 CFR Part 171). PERC has many training resources related to the Worker Protection Standard (WPS).

Swing by the SWCD office to grab your copy, or visit <https://www.pesticideresources.org/> for more information.



Wildflower Talk

Wapato
Sagittaria latifolia

Wapato is a wetland plant that is important to both the people and the wildlife of the Pacific Northwest. It can be found growing from rhizomatous roots and colorful tubers along the edges of ponds, lakes, wet ditches and swampy areas throughout North America, though it does not like sandy soils. Its large arrow-shaped leaves provide ample shade and cover for aquatic and riparian wildlife, and its sizable white flowers feed many kinds of pollinators and beneficial insects. Other wildlife, such as deer and ducks, may forage on the plants, seeds, and roots. It also acts to improve water and habitat quality by tolerating and assimilating high levels of excess nutrients and heavy metals, while also stabilizing muddy soils and sediments.



Article by Kristin Currin at Humble Roots Nursery

Bakeoven & ODFW Wildlife Area Herbicide Application

North Wind Aviation completed Rejuvra and Imazipic application across two key project areas in September, targeting invasive annual grasses. A total of 543 acres were treated in Bakeoven, while an additional 1,300 acres were treated on the ODFW Lower Deschutes Wildlife Area. These treatments were conducted to help manage noxious weeds and support long-term rangeland health and habitat improvement efforts.



Why Defensible Space Matters: A lesson from the Grasshopper Fire

By Shilah Olson, Wasco SWCD District Manager

When the Grasshopper Fire made a major run through the Friend area on August 10, 2026, it destroyed six homes and fifteen outbuildings. Several of those outbuildings were mine. Our house, however, survived, thanks largely to the defensible-space work we had completed beforehand.

With support from ODF's hazard tree removal program, we removed ten large hazard trees near our home, creating critical space around the structure and reducing fire risk. We also raked pine needles, cleared the roof and gutters, removed nearby shrubs, mowed around the property, and moved flammable items away from the house as the fire approached.

The fire burned with incredible intensity, consuming an estimated 12,000 acres in a single hour. There was no safe way to directly defend structures during that run. When the smoke cleared, our barn, shop, and dog kennels were gone, but our home was still standing.

This experience reinforced an important lesson: defensible space doesn't guarantee a home will survive a wildfire, but it dramatically improves the odds. The work done before a fire starts, such as thinning vegetation, removing hazard trees, and reducing fuels around structures, can make all the difference. Programs like ODF's hazard tree removal effort and broader Community Wildfire Defense Grant initiatives give landowners the tools to take that proactive step, and in our case, that preparation helped save our home.



(ob)noxious weeds

Herb Robert *Geranium robertianum*

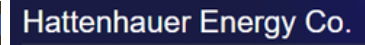
Herb Robert (*Geranium robertianum*) also known as Robert geranium, Stinky Bob, Red Robin, or Fox geranium is a common forest species that has rapidly invaded the Pacific Northwest since the early 80's that grows in shaded to semi-shaded environments. Herb Robert has a strong smell of diesel and mint when walked through. Primarily this weed inhabits forestland on the west side of the Cascade Range and invades the drier oak and brush habitat on the eastern Columbia River Gorge and can be found in moist areas of eastern Oregon. Herb Robert is a branching, low growing winter and spring annual, with its light green leaves that are deeply dissected and release a pungent odor making it easy to recognize. It has been mainly dispersed by human activities into many watersheds.



announcements & important dates

- The next regularly scheduled board meetings will be held on October 14th and December 9th, 2026 at 1:00pm at the USDA Service Center in The Dalles.
- Upcoming Events: Oct 7: 6 pm Virtual Fence Meeting at Azure Standard, Dufur. Contact Jack: [541-919-5109](tel:541-919-5109)
- Office Closures: October 12 (Columbus Day), November 11 (Veteran's Day), November 26 (Thanksgiving)
- SWCD updates air on KODL the first Monday each month at 10:07 AM on 1440 AM, 100.7 FM, or kodl.com.

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