



# Groundwork

January / February 2024 Volume 48 Number 1

## In This Issue

- Splinters from the Board (1)
- Watershed Council Updates (1)
- Partner Updates (2)
- (Ob)noxious Weeds (2)
- Wildflower Talk (3)
- Summer Planning (3)
- Salmon & Gardens (3)
- FAST & Drought (4)
- Service Center News (4)
- Upcoming Events (4)

## Splinters from the Board

**December:** The board met December 6th and approved the October and November treasurer's report & minutes. Carol Friend from RTO presented the 2022-23 audit. Four DCS applications were presented which initiated a long discussion around rainwater harvesting and groundwater issues in the Mosier area. 3 of the 4 applications were approved. The board approved GSI's SOW for the 15mile MUS project to continue work within the recent grant received from OWEB. Project updates were tabled due to time constraints. NRCS introduced new Soil Con. Dellaina Morse, and stated another new hire will be starting in January. Audit and Facilities committee reports were also shared.

**January:** The first meeting of the year was held on the 3rd. The December treasurers report was tabled until February. John Anderson, with Wheatland Insurance, provided a renewal update. Part of that discussion included how fire risk assessment has affected insurance premiums. Officer elections were held, and all current positions were reelected. Shilah reported that there are two budget committee appointees with terms expiring, both of which expressed willingness to continue serving. Agenda also included a policy review for associate director appointments. 4 DCS applications were presented and approved. Other items included PSP strategic planning, neighborhood meeting discussion, progress on the 15mile MUS and fire grants as well as partner agency updates.



## Watershed Council Updates

- The Fifteenmile Council will meet again on March 20th, but this date could change to coincide with neighborhood meetings when those end up happening. In addition to their regular meetings, grant applications were submitted for large woody debris placement in Fifteenmile Creek on the National Forest in partnership with the Forest Service, as well as a water acquisition grant to continue funding for the FAST program.
- The Dalles Watershed Council met January 10th and received their yearly fish monitoring updates from ODFW. Number of outmigrating smolt were down this year compared to last year. Additionally, The Dalles Watershed Council continues to be invested in the PSP program. They received updates on the PSP strategic plan, as well as developments on concerns expressed in a letter from OFS to the state PSP leads.
- The Mosier Watershed Council has a meeting scheduled on January 31st at the Mosier Grange. For more information or to be added to the distribution list, please email Drake at [drake.gilbert@or.nacdnet.net](mailto:drake.gilbert@or.nacdnet.net)
- White River and the Bakeoven / Buck Hollow Watershed Councils are planning on meeting at a possible neighborhood meeting. More details to follow.
- The next Coordinating Board meeting will be held on February 6th, immediately following the SWCD Board meeting.

## Wy'East RC&D is Hiring!

WY'EAST IS GROWING AND ARE LOOKING TO ADD TO THE TEAM.  
FULL AND PART-TIME POSITIONS AVAILABLE.

- Finance Manager & Administrative
- Program Manager
- E-Farms Technician

### APPLY NOW

Please send an email expressing interest with a copy of your resume to [Robert@WyEast-RCD.org](mailto:Robert@WyEast-RCD.org)



## OSU Extension

**Wasco Mid Columbia Soil Acidification Workshop for Wheat**, The Dalles, Jan. 25th, 12:30-5pm. Consider coming to this free workshop to learn more about managing soil acidification on dryland wheat at CGCC. RSVP is encouraged at <https://beav.es/qPS>. Guest speakers include Christian Hagerty, OSU Cereal Pathologist and Paul Carter, Professor Emeritus from WSU. 2 ODA Continuing Education Pesticide Credits have been approved.

**Farm First Aid Training**, Feb. 21st, The Dalles, 12:30-5pm. First aid training for farm owners and farm workers, including CRP and severe trauma. Cost is \$20 paid at the door. Class tentatively planned at CGCC.

**Get Ready for Spring Pesticide Training**, Feb. 28th, The Dalles 1:30-4:30pm at CGCC. Pesticide training with a focus on spring weed control for fallow, wheat and forage production systems. 3 ODA pesticide credits anticipated (2 of the 3 will be CORE credits). Cost is \$20 paid at the door. To RSVP to any of the above workshops/trainings email [jacob.powell@oregonstate.edu](mailto:jacob.powell@oregonstate.edu) or call 541-298-3581.

## Wy'East RC&D

Robert and Wy'East staff are excited to start off the new year attending and presenting at various Agricultural Shows throughout the state. Wy'East will be in attendance in Central Oregon this winter at the Central Oregon Farm Fair, February 7-8th in Madras, and the Central Oregon Ag Show, April 6-7th in Redmond. If you are a rural small business or agricultural producer looking to save energy through efficiency upgrades for your farm or business or want to implement a renewable energy system, the USDA REAP (Rural Energy for America Program) might be the perfect fit for you. REAP can fund up to 50% of total project costs. For more information give Wy'East a call at (541) 223-9683.

## NRCS

- Wasco County Local Work Group Meeting will be Thursday, February 29th 10am-12pm at the Dufur Parish Hall. Partner agencies and organizations as well as landowners and operators are encouraged to attend to help shape plans and priorities for future projects in the County. More info to come. Please reach out to Emily Huth for more details. 541-298-8559 ext. 111 or [emily.huth@usda.gov](mailto:emily.huth@usda.gov)
- Application deadline for the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) is March 29th. If you are interested in applying, please reach out to us as soon as possible so that we can review enhancement options with you and ensure your application is eligible.
- We have a new employee! Erin Beuttenmuller started January 16th as a Soil Conservation Technician. We are Excited to have her on the team!

## Farm Service Agency

Important updates and deadlines from FSA:

- January 30th is the deadline for ELAP and LFP Livestock for 2023.
- January 31st is the deadline for Food Safety Certification Cost Share.
- March 15th is the deadline for ARC/PLC and NAP coverage for Hemp.
- ERP-2022 is ongoing, and no deadline has been set yet.
- The CRP general sign up has not been announced, please check your email and USDA announcements.

For more information or questions, contact the FSA office at 541-298-8559

## (ob)noxious weeds

### Jointed goatgrass

*Aegilops cylindrica*

Jointed goatgrass is a winter annual growing to around 2.5 feet tall. The leaves have a number of visible hairs growing along the edge of the leaf and the foliage is a deep blue-green color. Seed heads (spikes) are cylindrical and narrow and break into individual segments at maturity during the summer months. The spike is made up of a number of spikelets, also called joints. Each joint is about an inch long and contains from one to three seeds that are generally viable for 3 to 5 years.

Jointed goatgrass is widespread through the Northern parts of Oregon. It is found as far west as Wasco County and all along the state's northern border east to Union County. It is also found in the south eastern portion of the state, down in Malheur County.





# Wildflower Talk

Article by Kristin Currin at Humble Roots Nursery

## Indian biscuitroot / salt and pepper *Lomatium piperi* / *Lomatium gormanii*

These small, low-growing species of *Lomatium* are among our earliest blooming wildflowers. Typically blooming between February and April, their umbels of small white flowers have been spotted as early as January, and even December. Growing in sunny, open areas east of the Cascades, these drought tolerant plants attract butterflies and other native pollinators when in bloom, but go dormant in the summer to protect themselves from desiccating conditions. There are other lomatiums in the region, some of which may be rare and endemic, that have white flowers and look similar to these two early identical species.



# Dreaming of Summer? US TOO

Even though we may have the winter blues, now is the time to start planning those warm weather projects. With the heavy snow we have been getting are your pastures and paddock areas going to be full of mud? When the temperatures warm up do you have a system to collect some of the runoff for livestock water, or a way to divert to keep your critters from standing in water? The SWCD in partnership with ODA and OSU Extension put together "Living on the Land" publications to help livestock owners and producers like you. In the link below, you will find helpful information on the basics of pasture and livestock management, spring pasture safety checks and pasture essentials, managing manure, and winter livestock care.

Now is also a great time to start thinking about spring plantings. The Living on the Land publications have guides to growing cover crops, how to use your irrigation water legally, as well as tips for growing plants when you live next to a stream. If you are interested in learning more information on ways you can enhance your property, reach out to a conservation planner or contact Abbie Forrest to learn how your warm weather project may be eligible for cost share through the OWEB Small Grant Program, 541-296-6178 ext. 102 or [abigail.forrest@or.nacdn.net](mailto:abigail.forrest@or.nacdn.net).

<https://extension.oregonstate.edu/catalog/pub/series-1-living-land>

## salmon & gardens

NEW SERIES: PART 1



The Wasco County SWCD has been working with the ODEQ and ODA for the past 13 years, collecting samples and monitoring our streams for pesticides through the PSP program. In the process of developing a new Strategic Plan, we have set a goal to help provide information to our local producers, as well as urban landowners on the effects of pesticides on our streams and aquatic species. An article by NOAA Fisheries called "Seeds for Salmon: How Gardening Can Improve Salmon Habitat" provides information and tips on how a small urban lot, a sprawling suburban yard, or a few planters on a balcony, can affect Pacific Salmon.

The first in this series focuses on the connection between your greenspace and salmon. Pesticides and herbicides can make their way into waterways through runoff. When these pollutants reach creeks and streams, they can impair reproduction, stunt growth and even kill fish. Unlike their non-native counterparts, native plants require little or no pesticides or herbicides to manage.

Fertilizers also pose a risk to our streams and creeks. When too many nutrients from fertilizers run off into local creeks, streams, and rivers, they can cause algal blooms and low-oxygen (hypoxic) waters. This process is known as eutrophication. When oxygen levels become too low, fish and other aquatic organisms will die. Native plants need little to no fertilizers to thrive in their native ecosystem.

Turbidity and erosion also play a large role in healthy habitat for aquatic organisms. Salmon need clean gravel beds to lay their eggs. When there is too much sediment (like sand and fine soil) in water, it can suffocate salmon eggs. This is known as high turbidity. High turbidity can make it harder for young salmon to find their prey. In extreme cases it can clog their gills. But how do our gardens contribute to turbidity? When soil is left bare, wind and water can erode it and carry it into nearby waterways. Areas dominated by invasive plants have shallow root structures that do not grip the soil to the earth well. During severe rains and floods, these areas are more likely to erode, sending sediment into the rivers with the storm runoff. Native plants can develop deep roots that help hold soil in place. To read more on this topic, follow the link below.

<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/west-coast/endangered-species-conservation/seeds-salmon-how-gardening-can-improve-salmon-habitat>

# FAST & current drought conditions

## FAST Signups

FAST sign ups for the 2024 irrigation season are happening now through March. Contracts will be developed in April and May. No signups will be allowed after May 1st.

There have been a few changes to the program this year which include new eligibility criteria.

If you would like to enroll in the program or have questions regarding the new eligibility criteria, contact Drake Gilbert at 541-296-6178 ext. 117 or drake.gilbert@or.nacdnet.net.

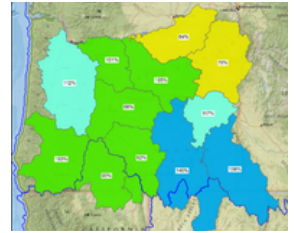
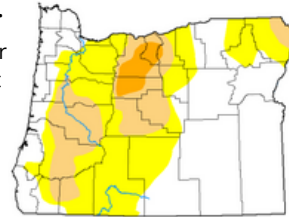


## SNOTEL & Current Snowpack Update

According to the January 16th OWRD Water Conditions report, most of the state is in either D1 or D2 drought, with a majority of Wasco County so far fairing the worst in the state. The NRCS SNOTEL map shows that snowpack within the Hood-Sandy-Deschutes basin is at 101% for the year when compared to the 1991-2020 median value. Although this could be promising news for drought conditions, there's still plenty of time left that may cause outlooks to change drastically. Water reports are distributed once a week, and the NRCS snow pack report once a month. Plan to attend one of the upcoming The Dalles or Fifteenmile Watershed Council meetings to receive the latest information. Also available in the link below is access to the most recent snow pack information and drought conditions.

[https://apps.wrd.state.or.us/apps/wr/wr\\_drought/current\\_updates.aspx](https://apps.wrd.state.or.us/apps/wr/wr_drought/current_updates.aspx)

<https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/oregon/snow-survey>



## Service Center News

### March 16th is Tree Sale Pick Up Day.

If you purchased trees through our Annual Tree Sale please plan on picking up your order at the Service Center on March 16th. Scott Susi and other staff will be available to help you load your order. Remaining inventory will also be available for purchase on the 16th. Please come through the back gates and let staff in the office know you are here. We will not have space to hold trees for an extended period of time. If you ordered trees but have not paid for them, call Jennifer at the front desk to pay before interest on the unpaid balance is charged.

## Upcoming Meetings & Events

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

The next SWCD Board meetings will be held February 7th, 2024 at 1:00pm and March 6th, 2024 at 1:00 pm.

SDAO conference February 9-11th in Seaside.

Upcoming Office Closures: February 19th Presidents Day

If you would like to receive this newsletter digitally please email [wasco@wascoswcd.org](mailto:wasco@wascoswcd.org)

## Newsletter Sponsors