

Groundwork

May / June 2025

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Splinters from the Board

April: The board approved the March meeting minutes and March treasurer’s report. They approved a district cost share application for one haul road amounting to \$1,745. Chris Sorensen was appointed to the budget committee to replace Robert Wallace. The board accepted Cascade Well Drilling’s bid for the Mosier Million #2 project, agreeing to cover \$27,075 to close out the BizOregon grant. They approved a Memorandum of Understanding with Juniper Flat Rural Fire Protection District for the CWDG grant project. Finally, they agreed to provide CWDG grant administration services for Wamic Rural Fire Protection District, and received updates from our agency partners.

May: The board met on May 14th, starting with the FY25-26 budget committee meeting in the morning and a regular board meeting in the afternoon. They reviewed cost share rates for the coming year and discussed creating an in-stream leasing program. Usual project and partner updates were provided in writing to save time, as Eric Nusbaum of ODA joined us to provide board training on good governance practices.

watershed council updates



Mosier: The Watershed Council met on April 29th and received updated groundwater monitoring data from OWRD. Shallow aquifers show promising responses to drought conditions and conservation efforts, with improvement trends in the Pomona, Frenchman Springs, and Priest Rapids aquifers.

Fifteenmile: The council does not currently have a meeting scheduled. However, OWRD will hold an outreach and info session on their planned water budget study for the Fifteenmile Basin on Thursday, June 5th, 2025, in the Dufur School cafeteria from 5:30 to 7:30. This session provides an important opportunity for affected landowners and residents to share observations on declining groundwater levels and engage directly with OWRD on water resource concerns in the watershed. Community input will help inform future water management strategies and potential conservation efforts in the basin.

The Dalles: Cherry Tour takes place May 29th, featuring a Spray Drone demonstration. ODA & DEQ will introduce the topic and discuss malathion in Mill Creek, highlighting how targeted applications can reduce pesticide drift and contamination.

Coordinating Board: The board met in April and will meet in July for the first meeting of the fiscal year. Agenda items include chair elections, project updates, and next steps for the Action Plan.

General CRP sign-ups are happening now!

This year marks the 40th anniversary of the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). On May 12th, FSA announced the 2025 Continuous and General CRP sign-ups were starting.

The deadline for producers and landowners to make offers is June 6 for both Continuous and General CRP. But, if there are available acres after June 6, FSA will accept Continuous CRP offers through July 31, 2025.

WELCOME TO THE TEAM!

We're excited to welcome several new team members to our office! Allie Marker joined us in February as our watershed technician intern. She's already made a positive impact by supporting watershed council meetings, helping with cost share programs, and becoming familiar with all aspects of the SWCD operations. Kyle Marick and Tim Payne have come aboard as seasonal weed technicians. They've been providing valuable assistance to Dean on the Lower Deschutes CWMA and will work with Scott on various weed management contracts throughout the National Forest and surrounding County areas. This July, we look forward to welcoming Andrew Grabacki as an additional weed technician, and Holly Miles as an intern who will collaborate with both the SWCD and the Deschutes River Alliance.

Farm Service Agency

FSA staff have been working on the ECAP sign up for the wheat and other cereal grain crop payments. August 15 is the deadline.

Acreage reporting for Spring plantings, hay, grazing land and CRP deadline is July 15.

CRP signups are happening now.

If you are a producer needing to conduct business with FSA please plan early and make an appointment as they will be short-staffed for the foreseeable future.

NRCS

Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP): CSP is a great opportunity to continue building on your existing conservation efforts on crop, pasture, range, and forestland. Our local staff can assist you in selecting conservation enhancements that work best for your operation. Applications are accepted on a continuous basis. Please reach out for an application and to discuss your program eligibility.

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP): EQIP provides one-on-one technical and financial assistance towards implementing a conservation plan to address on-farm natural resource concerns. Wasco County NRCS currently has assistance available to implement projects such as forest health and wildfire fuels reduction, juniper removal, wildlife habitat enhancements, livestock water and grazing infrastructure, and much more. Please reach out to Emily Huth, (541) 298-8559 Ext. 111, to learn about all of the available opportunities and submit an application. Applications are accepted on a continuous basis.

Wy'East RC&D

The first BEAM solar power stations are now operational in Wasco County at Wamic Market and Antelope Market, serving our most rural Oregon communities. These units offer free EV charging—simply plug in with no app or card required. Phase 1 includes four BEAM Global stations providing Level 2 EV charging daily while serving as backup power generators during emergencies.

Visit www.wyeast-rcd.org/ to learn more about the CREP Grant awarded to Wy'East and SWCD through the Oregon Department of Energy.



OSU Extension

- The Wasco County Crop Tour will be on Thursday, June 5th, starting at the OSU Wheat Variety trials at 8 am next to the Dufur Community Cemetery.
- The Sherman County tour will be Wednesday, June 4th, starting at 8 am at the extension office in Moro.
- The Sherman Experiment Station field day will be Wednesday, June 11th starting at 8 am at the Sherman County Fairgrounds.
- Youth Tractor Safety Training, June 17-18, starting at 9 am at the Sherman County Extension Office. RSVP required by emailing jacob.powell@oregonstate.edu or call 541-298-3581. Class provides OSHA required training to youth younger than 18 driving tractors in agricultural operations.

(ob)noxious weeds

Perennial pepperweed *Lepidium latifolium*

Perennial pepperweed, native to southern Europe and western Asia, was likely introduced to the U.S. in contaminated sugar beet seed during the 1930s. It invades moist saline soils in eastern Oregon and coastal salt marshes, forming dense canopies that compete with native grasses.

This weed is widespread throughout eastern Oregon with occasional small outbreaks in the western half of the state. It's an erect, semi-woody perennial forb growing 1-6 feet tall with lance-shaped leaves (larger at the base) that are bright to gray-green. Its small white flowers form dense clusters near branch ends and produce a distinctive odor. The plant forms dense monocultures, rapidly expanding through both root fragments and seeds.

Perennial pepperweed rapidly degrades wetlands and nesting habitats while outcompeting desirable grasses in natural areas and hay meadows. It mines subsurface salts and deposits them on the soil surface through leaf drop. Infestations reduce forage production and increase weed control costs, potentially affecting cropland values. It thrives in disturbed areas, bare soil, agricultural land, rangeland, and ditches with sufficient moisture.

Currently, no approved biological control agents are available.



Photo by Richard Old www.xidservices.com

Wildflower Talk

Article by Kristin Currin at Humble Roots Nursery

Silverleaf phacelia

Phacelia hastata

This PNW native perennial is an important plant for local pollinators and beneficial insects. It is utilized to improve crop pollination by supporting native bees, and it attracts beneficial insects that prey on crop pests such as aphids. Found in dry, open areas, it begins blooming in April at low elevations, continuing to bloom through August at higher elevations. Its tight coils of white to lavender flowers unwind as individual flowers bloom providing for a prolonged bloom time, which makes it a great plant for supporting bees. Dense, bristly hairs give this plant a silvery sheen and its common name, silverleaf phacelia.



fire + water Fire preparedness and water wise tips as we head into the summer months

For Wasco County residents, especially small-acre farmers, balancing fire safety with water conservation is increasingly crucial. Create defensible space by maintaining a buffer around structures—remove dead vegetation, trim trees to prevent crown fires, and keep grass short.

For water conservation, consider replacing traditional lawns with drought-resistant native grasses or xeriscaping. When watering is necessary, do so during early morning or evening hours to minimize evaporation, and install drip irrigation systems for gardens and crops.

Small-acre farmers should implement rotational grazing to reduce fire fuel while preserving soil health. Consider planting fire-resistant crops and establishing windbreaks using fire-resistant species.

In gardens, group plants with similar water needs together and use mulch to retain soil moisture and suppress weeds. Collect rainwater where possible for fire protection, as well as for watering lawns/gardens, and livestock.

These practices not only protect your property during fire season but conserve precious water resources year-round.

Lower Deschutes River Weeds

FIRST FLOAT TRIP OF THE SUMMER

The Wasco County SWCD Weed Technicians, joined by partners from ODFW and ODA, kicked off the season with a splash—literally—on the Lower Deschutes River. This first rafting trip of the year wasn't just about paddling; it was a three-day mission targeting invasive weeds in high-traffic areas like campsites and trails. The main culprit? Rush Skeletonweed. But the team didn't stop there—they also tackled Knapweed, Scotch Thistle, and Hoary Cress (Whitetop). In total, the crew covered 107 gross acres and treated 5.3 net acres, spanning roughly 5 river miles. Between navigating rapids and setting up camp under the stars, the team made serious progress in protecting native habitats. Another trip is already on the books for later this summer—because when it comes to weeds, this crew doesn't just float by!



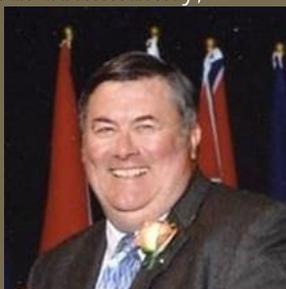
Sandy MacNab In Memoriam

Alexander "Sandy" Macnab July 12, 1953 - April 19, 2025

The Wasco SWCD community mourns the loss of Sandy Macnab, a cherished colleague and friend who dedicated his life to agricultural education and community service. As the OSU Extension Agent for wheat in both Sherman and Wasco counties for 37 years, Sandy was an invaluable partner to Wasco SWCD, collaborating on countless crop tours and outreach events that enriched our local agricultural community.

A Sherman County native and OSU graduate, Sandy's impact extended far beyond his extension work. His weekly "Off the Farm" column in The Dalles Reminder showcased his Mark Twain-inspired wit, while his service on numerous agricultural boards, including the Sherman SWCD, Oregon Wheat Growers League, and Cattlemen's Association, helped shape local agricultural policy. Known for his playful sense of humor and dedication to the Mid-Columbia agricultural community, Sandy remained engaged even after retirement, continuing to report rainfall data from his home in Dufur.

Sandy is survived by his children Jennifer (Drew) Brost, Scott, and David Macnab, and grandchildren Anna and Avery Brost. Services will be held Friday, May 30, at St. Peter's Catholic Church in The Dalles, beginning with a rosary at 10:30 a.m., followed by Mass at 11 a.m.



Join Us for our Annual Meeting

Annual Meeting & Board Meeting Announcement

Join us on June 11th @ 3:00pm at Bargeway! Attend our regularly scheduled board meeting from 1:00-3:00pm at the USDA Service Center and then take a walk along the Riverfront trail next door to the Bargeway Pub for a no-host social.

We will present our 2023-2024 Annual Report & Audit

For more information, contact the Wasco County SWCD office

We look forward to seeing you there!

announcements & important dates

- The next regularly scheduled board meetings will be held on June 11th with Annual Meeting to follow, and July 9th, 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: May 26th, Memorial Day, June 19th, for Juneteenth and July 4th, for Independence Day.
- If you would like to receive this newsletter digitally please email wasco@wascoswcd.org.

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