

MEMO TO BOARD: for March 11, 2026

Action Items

- a. **District Cost Share Requests:** Abbie will bring applications for the board's consideration.
- b. **Agreement with Columbia Land Trust for ECOP Outreach:** Columbia Land Trust (CLT) has asked us to enter into a professional services agreement to support targeted outreach for the East Cascades Oak Partnership (ECOP). Since we already participate in ECOP conversations and community engagement, this would simply formalize that role and provide reimbursement for staff time. We are drafting a scope of work, and CLT has provided their agreement template. I shared it with our insurance agent, who felt it looked fine overall and suggested only one minor clarification related to Professional Liability coverage. At this point, I'm seeking the Board's direction on how you would like us to proceed:
- Authorize staff to finalize the scope and execute the agreement once we are comfortable with the terms; or
 - Direct staff to finalize the agreement and bring it back next month for Board approval before signature.

This is not expected to be a large contract or a significant workload. I just want to confirm that the agreement template is acceptable and that there are no concerns before we move forward.

- c. **Agreement with OPRD for Lower Deschutes CWMA:** OPRD has drafted an Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) with Wasco SWCD to support vegetation management work along the Lower Deschutes, including noxious weed control and annual grass fuel reduction. This agreement would allow OPRD to request work from us as needed and reimburse the District for staff time and subcontracted work. The IGA establishes a not-to-exceed amount of \$100,000 through 2030 and uses OPRD's standard statewide template. We have been working with OPRD staff to review the draft. The scope is broad but consistent with the work we already perform within the Lower Deschutes Cooperative Weed Management Area. The agreement follows the State's standard IGA format, including their required provisions on dispute resolution, contribution, termination, and insurance. Nothing in the template appears unusual or outside the norm for state-agency IGAs. At this point, I am seeking the Board's direction on how you would like us to proceed:
- Authorize staff to finalize and execute the IGA once we are comfortable with the terms and the scope of work for 2026; or
 - Direct staff to finalize the agreement and bring it back next month for Board approval prior to signature.

OPRD understands that the District needs Board approval before signing, and they are prepared to move forward once we confirm our internal process. Again, I want to ensure the agreement template is acceptable and that there are no unexpected issues before we commit.

- d. **Annual Meeting Date Resolution:** The board needs to formally pass a resolution setting the annual meeting date, which we previously determined would be Wednesday, June 10, 2026.

- e. **Update Financial Policy & Add Abbie Forrest as Signer on Bank Account:** At the February meeting, the Board discussed adding Abbie Forrest as an additional check signer to ensure coverage when other signers are unavailable. The Board asked that this come back with proposed financial-policy language outlining the limited circumstances under which that authority could be used. I am still drafting those proposed policy updates and will provide them separately or bring talking points to the meeting. For now, I am keeping this item on the agenda so the Board can continue the discussion. Once you have reviewed the proposed policy language, we can determine whether adding Abbie as a signer under defined circumstances is the right approach.
- f. **SDAO Best Practices Checklist – Public Meetings – Policy & Training:** I sent an email to the Board earlier this week with instructions for completing the updated Public Meetings Law training required under Oregon HB 2805 and the SDAO Best Practices Program. This training must be completed by October 31, 2026, for the District to receive the 2% insurance credit associated with the Public Meetings category. At the meeting, we will briefly review our existing Public Meetings Policy to ensure it aligns with SDAO’s updated checklist requirements for the additional 2% credit. The remaining Best Practices items for this year are already complete.
- g. **Updating Long Range Plan – Refine Priorities & Objectives:** At the February meeting, the Board completed a dot-voting exercise to help refine operational priorities, resource concerns, and emerging issues for the Long-Range Plan update. Water conservation, irrigation efficiency, wildfire mitigation, invasive species, rangeland condition rose to the top, along with staff capacity and funding stability on the operational side. Several emerging issues were also identified, including groundwater, water quality, piping, green energy, and urbanization.

Staff are coordinating to prepare an initial recommendation for the March 11 meeting based on the dot results and the comments received to date. We are also aligning this work with two partner processes already underway. First, NRCS has asked the SWCD to take a stronger facilitation and presentation role at the Local Working Group (LWG) meeting on April 16, which provides a timely opportunity to gather broader input on resource concerns and project priorities. Second, we are leveraging our existing contract with John Runyon (Watershed Professional Network) to broaden the scope of the watershed council’s action-planning work so that it can also inform both the LWG and the District’s Long-Range Plan.

In response to the Board’s discussion about gathering public input, Dana obtained a quote from Minuteman Press Powell (who prints and distributes our newsletter) for a county-wide Every Door Direct Mail (EDDM) postcard survey. Estimated costs are:

- EDDM including PO Boxes (11,436 addresses): \$5,777.61
- EDDM Residential Only (9,780 addresses): \$5,003.87

These figures include printing, bundling, route paperwork, delivery to USPS, and postage at \$0.253 per piece. We will review these options at the meeting as part of the discussion on how best to engage the broader community during the LRP update. This agenda item is intended to continue refining priorities and outline how staff will integrate input from these coordinated efforts into the next phase of the Long-Range Plan.

Updates

- a. **Next Regular Mtg, April 8th, 2026, 1:00 PM USDA Service Center:** Jill Amery, Tax Assessor, will provide an update at this meeting.
- b. **Highline Ditch Elimination:** Staff continue to work with ODFW, the Simer family, and their contractor on finalizing the design for the Highline Ditch elimination project. Once the design is complete, the District will purchase materials, ODFW will construct the fish screen and provide installation oversight, and the landowner's contractor will handle installation. We still anticipate installing the screen at the end of the 2026 irrigation season. Staff will work with OWEB and OWRD on any necessary extensions and final sign-offs. Remaining tasks include decommissioning the Highline Ditch and completing site restoration.
- c. **Fires: CWDG Grant, Larch Creek TA:**
 - **CWDG Grant:** Staff continue to move the project forward on several fronts. The seasonal crew will be returning through April, and onboarding is underway. Defensible space assessments are ongoing, and several projects are ready for implementation once the crew is back in the field. In the Juniper Flat area, coordination continues with local fire partners as contractors create strategic fuel breaks along key roadways and priority locations. These treatments are intended to support emergency access, strengthen evacuation routes, and help slow or stop fast-moving wildfires before they reach homes and critical infrastructure. Staff are also working with legal counsel to confirm and update our procurement approach before expanding contractor work this season. This includes ensuring our processes align with current public contracting requirements and the guidance we received from USFS. The County is preparing a Round 4 application for work in northwest Wasco County and has asked the District to serve in a similar administrative role. A "Living With Fire" series is also in development for South County, and we will be assisting with that effort. In addition, staff are coordinating with the County and Mid-Columbia Fire & Rescue to plan a series of community chipping events within the CWDG project area. These events will provide curbside pickup and chipping of limbs and branches to support defensible space work and help residents reduce wildfire risk around their homes. Planning is underway on outreach materials, scheduling, and coordination with partner crews.
 - **Larch Creek TA:** The TA contract has been executed with IAE and work will begin shortly.
- d. **Pesticide Stewardship Partnership Program:** We are working closely with John Runyon of WPN, OSU Extension, ODA, DEQ, the watershed councils, and local landowners to shape meaningful PSP projects within our current funding framework. ODA has asked the District to revise its budget and submit an updated request that includes support for additional administrative tasks, a blackberry inventory and removal demonstration, and a malathion drone demonstration. Staff are coordinating with partners to refine these project concepts.
- e. **Updating SWCD Employee Handbook – Working with HR Answers:** I've received an updated template from SDAO with changes for 2026 and am working with HR Answers to update it.
- f. **Tree Sale – March 21, 2026:** The District's annual spring tree sale will be held on March 21. Additional details, species lists, and ordering information are available on our website: <https://www.wascoswcd.org/2026-spring-plant-sale>