



Wasco County Soil and Water Conservation District
2325 River Road, Suite 3
The Dalles, OR 97058

Address Correction Requested

NONPROFIT ORG
US POSTAGE
PAID
THE DALLES, OR
PERMIT NO. 157

A publication of the Wasco County Soil & Water Conservation District



Groundwork

January / February 2023 Volume 46 Number 1

In This Issue

- Splinters from the Board (1)
- Watershed Council Updates (1)
- Welcome & Thanks (1)
- Partner Updates (2)
- (Ob)noxious Weeds (2)
- Wildflower Talk (3)
- Neighbors Helping Neighbors (3)
- Project Updates (4)
- Service Center News (4)
- Upcoming Events (4)

Splinters from the Board

December: The board met Dec. 7th. There were 7 cost share requests that were all approved and used up the remaining allocation for the fiscal year. Board members were presented updated policies from SDAO, as well as learned details of the new Paid Leave Oregon program. Josh presented updates on the 15mile MUS project and the board appointed a subcommittee of 3 board members to help with the project and contracting. The board approved a contract with the Watershed Professionals Network for updating watershed assessments with a grant secured through ODA. Project and partner updates were also shared.

January: The board met Jan. 4th. Four board members took the Director's Oath of Office and officer elections were held. Bill Hammel (Chair), Bob Krein (Vice Chair) and Shawn Sorensen (Secretary/Treasurer) were all reelected for their current positions. Carol Friend, CPA presented the FY21-22 Audit. The board discussed proposed updates to the District Cost Share program. Updates were provided by our agency partners and SWCD staff provided progress reports on the Mosier groundwater, Tygh Valley Irrigation, and 15mile MUS project projects.

PROJECT Updates

Fifteenmile MUS Project

Construction is underway. A contractor has been selected for the buildout of the infiltration basin and work started on January 16th. Wy'East RC&D is in the process of purchasing monitoring equipment, with data collection beginning after construction of the basin. GSI has submitted to OWRD the last of the information required to obtain our Limited Licenses and are now just waiting on issuance.



FAST Sign Ups

Irrigation season is fast approaching. FAST signups will be held following the Fifteenmile Watershed Council meeting in February (date to be determined) at the Barlow Ranger Station. FAST is a voluntary program to curtail your irrigation water during alerts when low flow and high stream temperatures are predicted. Compensation is based on water right priority and acreage. If you missed the signup date and have not participated in the past please call Drake Gilbert at 541-296-6178 x117.

Watershed Council Updates

- The Dalles met on January 11th at 5:00pm. They received data for this years fish tagging efforts, NRCS Snotel site update, and discussed the revision of their *E.coli* sampling plan with help from DEQ.
- Projects funded by the Bakeoven Upland Enhancement grant are underway. The council will likely reconvene in the Spring for project monitoring and to discuss work progress.
- White River met December 6th. ODF and USFS provided updates. Josh Thompson updated the council on the White River and Miller Road Fires as well as the ongoing irrigation projects.
- Mosier will meet in February. Agenda topics will include Mosier Million #2 updates and groundwater monitoring data from the fall.
- Fifteenmile will meet in February. See Project Update section for more details.
- The Coordinating Board met on January 4th. Watershed Professionals Network (WPN) attended to discuss their SOW and timeline for the watershed assessments grant.

WELCOME and Thank You

The SWCD would like to introduce the newest member to our board of Directors, Larry Powell. Larry ran for the open At-Large position on the SWCD board as a write-in candidate. He has an extensive resume including being retired from the railroad, a meat cutter at Albertsons, worked at the aluminum plant, was a code enforcement officer for The Dalles, a Weigh Master for ODOT in Cascade Locks, a volunteer fire fighter, and a foster parent. He now owns an orchard up Mill Creek and has nine grandchildren. We look forward to working with Larry and having him join our board of Directors.

We also want to take this time to thank Pat Davis for his years of service on the SWCD board. Pat became a board member in 2020. Before that Pat has been involved with the Watershed Councils as the White River and Coordinating Board chair for the past 8 years. Although he is stepping down from the role of District Board member, he still has plans to continue his participation with the watershed councils and more recently helping Robert Wallace, Wy'East RC&D with the transportation of the electric tractor. Pat was appointed as a Director Emeritus at the January board meeting. We will miss Pat as a board member and appreciate all he has done throughout the years.

Thank you Pat, for your service, and welcome to the board Larry!

Service Center News

REMINDER: Tree Sale orders are due by January 20th. Plant pickup day will be March 18th from 9:00am - 1:00pm at the USDA Service Center.

The District Cost Share Program pool of money has been allocated for the remainder of the fiscal year. However, Small Grant Program funds are still available. Contact Abbie Forrest at 541-296-6178 extension 102 or abigail.forrest@or.nacdnet.net for more information.

Please visit the Wasco SWCD website for full meeting minutes and announcements. www.wascoswcd.org

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 meeting will be held February 1st, 2023.

The SWCD board plans to present the annual report and audit in conjunction with an upcoming regular board meeting and will plan a celebration later in the year, stay tuned for details.

If you would like to receive this newsletter digitally, please email wasco@wascoswcd.org

Farm Service Agency

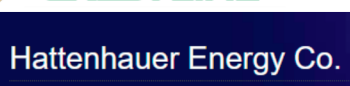
The following are reminders from the FSA.

- Deadlines for Livestock LFP/ELAP as well as the ECP signup for the Miller Road Fire is January 30th.
- ERP (Emergency Relief Program) Phase 2 will be rolling out soon, stay tuned for more information.
- ARC/PLC election & enrollment deadline is March 15th.



Wy'East RC&D

Wy'East is pleased to announce that they are now the Irrigation Lead for Energy Trust of Oregon under the new ETO contract awarded to Energy350. Wy'East is excited to introduce new staff member Brad Moore, who will help Wy'East to deliver Energy Trust of Oregon's Irrigation Program. USDA Rural Energy for America Program (REAP) funding has just been raised, to fund renewable and energy efficiency projects up to 40% of total project cost. If you are a producer or rural small business, Wy'East can help you apply. Additionally, as part of the Rural Electrification (E-Tractor) Project Wy'East and their nonprofit partners have secured \$1.5 million awarded through the U.S. Department of Energy and \$500,000 awarded through the Governor's Strategic Reserve Fund. This funding supports efforts to bring cutting edge electric farm equipment to Rural Oregon Producers. Keep your eyes peeled and you might spot the Rivian R1T Electric Truck that will be hitting the ground in Wasco County in the coming weeks.



NRCS

There will be a 2nd sign up for EQIP for FY23. The application deadline has not been announced but likely will be in the Spring. For those who missed the November deadline for Barlow Forest Health, Pollinator & Beneficial Insect Habitat, or Food Security Initiative, NRCS is still accepting applications. Almost \$12 million is allocated for the CSP program general sign up for FY23 in Oregon. This is the year to consider applying, with additional IRA funds potentially coming as well. Please contact Emily Huth DC, NRCS to discuss new enhancement options.

OSU Extension

Upcoming Events

- February 7th, Wildfire Training to meet OSHA requirements at CGCC, 1pm start. Or virtually February 10th.
- Sherman County SWCD Annual Meeting, with Oregon Wheat Growers League meeting, February 8th at 4:30pm.
- Nutrient Management and Soils workshop for Ag producers, February 22nd, 2pm in Moro.
- Succession Planning with the Oregon Ag Trust introductory workshop, March 13th from 1-3pm at CGCC.
- Spring Pesticide Training, March 13th in The Dalles 9:30am - noon.



Oregon White Oak

Quercus garryana var. *garryana*

Oregon white oaks are one of the most important trees in the region. Growing primarily in the Pacific Northwest and prevalent in our area, they are vital to hundreds of species of wildlife. These long-lived, fire resistant trees produce both male and female flowers in spring, and large edible acorns by fall. They are wind pollinated, yet support numerous species of beneficial insects, butterflies, and moths, which in turn make up the diet of many birds. With nearly 97% of Oregon white oak habitat now lost to development and other uses, the conservation of these trees and the habitat they provide is critical. To learn more about the oaks in our area and efforts to conserve and manage oak woodlands, visit the East Cascades Oak Partnership website and attend one of their meetings.

www.columbialandtrust.org/our-work/east-cascades/east-cascades-oak-partnership

"Neighbors Helping Neighbors"

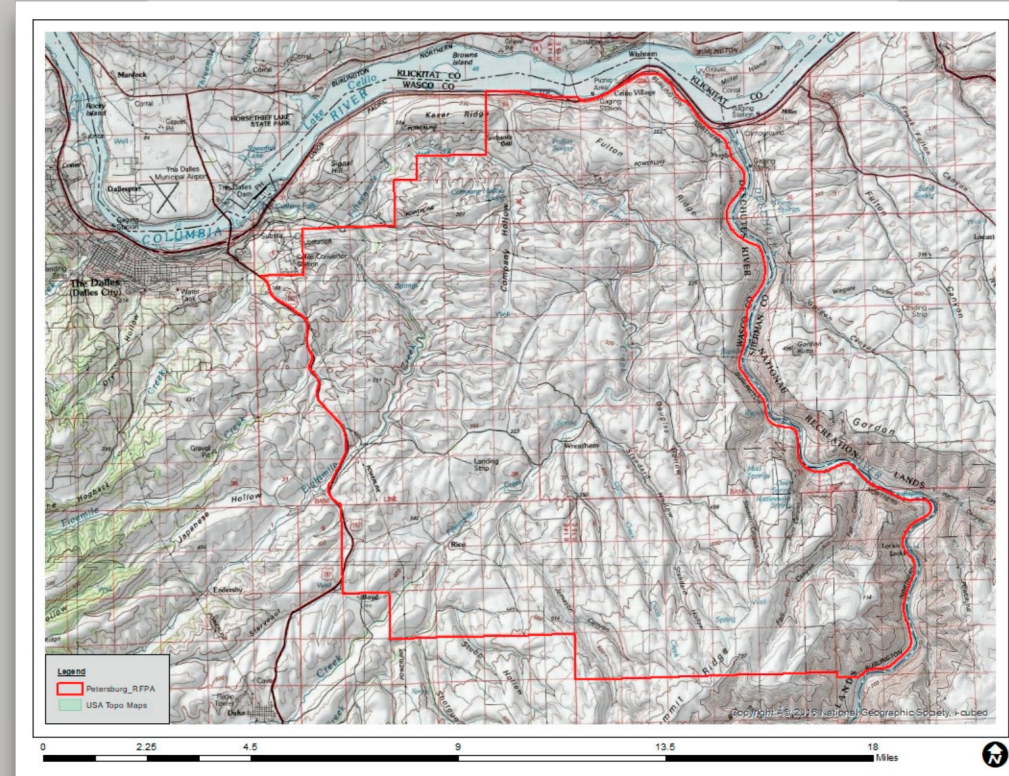
Petersburg Rangeland Fire Protection Association.

Information provided by Rick Fletcher, ODF Rangeland Fire Protection Specialist.

The Columbia River Basin and those who live, work and build livelihoods in it are no stranger to rapid moving wildfires with catastrophic consequences. In Oregon, Rangeland Fire Protection Associations (RFPA) have been helping landowners respond to these fires since 1964. RFPA's have a long-standing history of successful fire prevention and suppression in much of Eastern Oregon but may be a new concept to those living in Oregon's Wheat country. As of January 4th, 2023 Columbia Rural Fire Protection District will officially become the Petersburg Rangeland Fire Protection Association and the 27th RFPA to form in Oregon. The benefits to those who live in Northern Wasco County and participate in the RFPA are immense. They have scheduled their first set of trainings for early February. The newly formed RFPA has developed a communications plan and will begin acquiring the tools to communicate and coordinate with all fire response agencies in the area who may come to assist, and have begun planning for equipment that will help boost their ability to rapidly suppress fire in wheat country. What they need is engagement and participation from landowners in the area to help ensure all affected by this are heavily involved in steering the association to be successful.

The formation of the Petersburg RFPA will ensure that community-based response is done so with the landowner and producers are at the forefront of decision-making in response to wildfire in northern Wasco County. Doing so with a baseline of training, an engaged user group, coordinated response, and the right equipment will improve the safety of those living here and help reduce the impact that fire may have on your homes and livelihoods.

For those who have any questions about the RFPA program or how to get involved please reach out to Rick Fletcher, at Richard.a.fletcher@odf.oregon.gov



(ob)noxious weeds

Scotch Thistle

(Onopordum acanthium L.)



Scotch Thistle is an invasive plant native to Eurasia. It can spread rapidly and form dense stands in abandoned fields, rangeland forest openings and riparian areas.

Scotch Thistle is a biennial with spiny leaves and can grow up to 8 ft tall. The large purple flowers bloom in the late spring and can produce thousands of seeds that can remain viable in the soil for over 30 years. Scotch Thistle can be removed by hand tools, mowing or by herbicide application.



In Wasco County Scotch Thistle hotspots include along the Deschutes and John Day rivers, southeastern Wasco County and along many of the riparian areas south of The Dalles.

Article by Scott Susi