



Groundwork

March / April 2026

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Splinters from the Board

February: The Board met on Feb 11th. They approved the January minutes and Treasurer's Report. Glen Kearns presented the FY 2024-25 Audit and John Anderson, Wheatland Insurance presented the renewal update. Three District Cost Share applications for haul roads were presented and two approved for funding, with one application being denied. Board appointed the Budget Officer for the 2026-2027 budget year and discussed a date in June for the annual meeting. The Board also discussed updating the Long-Range Plan with an activity to help prioritize district programs. Dean provided an update on the Lower Deschutes CWMA. Partner updates were provided by NRCS, FSA, and OSU Extension. Board was reminded the Annual Plant Sale is March 21.

March: The Board met on March 11th. They approved the February minutes and the Treasurer's Report. One District Cost Share application was funded. Staff were authorized to finalize agreements with Columbia Land Trust and OPRD. The Board set the annual meeting date and discussed best-practices requirements. Work continued on the Long-Range Plan update, including approval to proceed with a county-wide postcard survey. Updates covered the Annual Plant Sale, Highline Ditch, CWDG, PSP revisions, Miles Creek TMDL work, the employee handbook update, and progress on the financial policy. NRCS, FSA, and OSU Extension reported on program activity and upcoming events. The District is managing 38 active grants.



watershed council updates

The Dalles Watershed Council met on Monday, April 13th to hold their second watershed council action planning meeting. They also received updates on snowpack, as well as the PSP annual data presentation.

The Fifteenmile Watershed Council met on March 18th, receiving their annual PSP data presentation as well as a SNOTEL water supply outlook.

The Mosier Watershed Council's next regularly scheduled meeting is set for April 28th at 6:30 pm at the Mosier Grange. The council will receive groundwater level updates, as well as an update on snowpack.

The Bakeoven and White River watershed councils will hold a joint meeting sometime this summer.

SWCD Long Range Plan Post Card Survey

The Wasco County SWCD is looking for your input! Every 5 years the SWCD works with the NRCS and the board to update our Long Range Plan. This year we are asking the community for input to help shape our priorities.

A survey postcard mailer has been sent to residents of Wasco County. Please take the time to participate in the survey and enter for a chance to win a \$50 gift card to Coastal Farm & Ranch. Follow the link or scan the QR code to take the survey.

Entries must be received by 11:59 p.m. on Monday, May 11, 2026. The drawing will be held that week, and the winner will be notified by Friday, May 15, 2026.

Your input will guide our future.

Tell us which conservation issues and project types matter most to you. Your feedback helps shape the SWCD's Long-Range Plan.

Scan to take the survey!



Share your conservation priorities by completing a brief survey and enter for a chance to win a \$50 gift card!

<https://tinyurl.com/WascoSurvey>



PARTNER UPDATES:



Oregon State University
Extension Service

Farm Service Agency

Acreage Reporting: Please remember to schedule an appointment to report your crops once they are planted.

- July 15, 2026 is the deadline to report spring planted crops, rangeland and CRP, to name a few.
- Please report any new land ownership or leases within 30 days of control to avoid any late file fees.

ASCF (Assistance for Specialty Crop Farmers): Updates coming soon!

NAP (Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program): Please remember to report losses to NAP crops within 72 hours of event, or when you notice damage. You will have 15 days after event to file the notice of loss.

SDRP (Supplemental Disaster Relief Program): Sign up began July 10, 2025, for disaster assistance to crops suffering losses in 2023 and/or 2024 from eligible weather disasters.. Deadline for both Stage 1 & 2 has been set for April 30, 2026.

TAP (Tree Assistance Program): Once cost-share agreements have been approved, participants have 12 months to complete practices. Please keep these deadlines in mind as you finish replanting your trees, bushes, or vines under TAP.

FSA has hired Grace Schatz who will be focusing on conservation programs, ARCPL and wheat/feed grain acreage reporting.

Welcome to the team Grace!

Wy'East RC&D

Wy'East RC&D is a regional leader in on-farm energy efficiency and irrigation savings. If you're exploring upgrades or funding options, Wy'East can help you navigate solutions and connect with the right partners. The Wy'East team presented at OCEAN CONNECT+ in Seaside, OR, March 31–April 2, sharing practical strategies on irrigation improvements, on-farm cost savings, energy efficiency, and fund stacking to support energy projects on working lands. The event included a March 31 panel, "Innovative Pathways to Cost Savings for Oregon Businesses and Producers," with Jackie Solomon (Wy'East RC&D), Wendy Simons (Oregon Department of Energy), and Brad Moore (Energy Trust of Oregon). On April 1, Brad Moore also presented "Cut Irrigation Pumping Costs with Proven Energy Solutions." Questions? Contact Jackie Solomon at jackie@wyeast-rcd.org

OSU Extension

Mark your calendars for the 2026 crop tours!

Wasco and Sherman County Crop Tours are planned for June 1st and 2nd. More information will be available as we get closer to the tour dates.

For all other OSU Agriculture Extension inquiries contact Jacob Powell at 541-298-3581 or jacob.powell@oregonstate.edu.

NRCS

NRCS held its annual Local Working Group meeting on April 16, bringing together farmers, ranchers, partner agencies, and conservation organizations to discuss natural resource priorities in Wasco County. These meetings help NRCS identify local conservation needs, shape Farm Bill program delivery, and guide future investments in soil health, water quality, wildlife habitat, and working lands stewardship. NRCS provides voluntary, technical, and financial assistance to agricultural producers and landowners. Their programs support conservation planning, on-the-ground practices, and long-term resource management across the county. For more information, contact District Conservationist Emily Huth at 541-705-3634 or emily.huth@usda.gov, or visit their local webpage: <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/state-offices/oregon/wasco-county>

South Wasco County Fire-Adapted Workshop Series

April 30th 6-8PM

Fire-Adapted Communities

- The Oregon Division of Financial Regulation will be on site to answer your INSURANCE questions.
- Defensible Space and Home Hardening: Prepare your home for wildfire.
- The Firewise USA Program: How to help your community become Firewise USA recognized.

South Wasco High School Cafeteria
699 4th St., Maupin

May 21st 6-8PM

Safe & Effective Wildfire Response

- Safe and Efficient Evacuations with the Wasco County Sheriff's Office
- Smoke Readiness - Resources with Smoke Ready Gorge
- Create an emergency evacuation plan!
- Sign up for emergency alerts!

Sportmans Park Clubhouse
124 Lake Way, Tygh Valley, (Wamic)



Wildflower Talk

Osoberry
Oemleria cerasiformis

The One of the PNW's earliest spring flowers belongs to *Oemleria cerasiformis*, commonly called osoberry. Alongside cucumber-scented tufts of bright-green leaves, this shrub to small tree produces pendulous clusters of white flowers from late winter to spring, providing an important early nectar source for pollinators such as mason bees and hummingbirds. Later, with the pollinators' help, the flowers become plum-like fruits that ripen from peach to deep purplish blue. Being doieicious, fruits only form on female plants. Favoring moist, shady habitats, osoberry occurs primarily west of the Cascades. An OSU herbarium specimen collected in 1917 in Wasco County may be one of the easternmost records of the species in Oregon.

Article by Kristin Currin at Humble Roots Nursery



NACD STEWARDSHIP WEEK

April 26 - May 3, 2026

The 2026 NACD Stewardship Week theme, Soil. Where It All Begins, celebrates the incredible power of soil to support life in all its forms. Soil is not just the ground we walk on. It is the starting point for healthy food, clean water, thriving habitats, and resilient communities. From backyard gardens to forests and city parks, everything begins with what is beneath our feet.

Soil does a lot more than grow plants. It holds water, cycles nutrients, and provides homes for billions of living organisms that help keep nature in balance. It keeps roots in place, helps prevent flooding, and supports wildlife and people alike. The trees in our neighborhoods, the food on our tables, and the natural places we love all depend on healthy soils.

Conservation districts across the country work every day to protect this vital resource. Through education, technical support, and local partnerships, Conservation Districts help landowners and communities keep soil healthy, productive, and resilient. Districts also provide free educational resources to schools, families, and community groups to inspire the next generation of soil stewards and help people of all ages connect with conservation in meaningful ways. Whether it is helping farmers manage erosion or supporting school gardens in town, Conservation Districts lead the way in caring for the land.

When we take care of soil, we are taking care of everything it supports. That is why soil is where it all begins.

Held annually since 1955 from the last Sunday in April through the first Sunday in May, Stewardship Week unites communities in celebrating and protecting our natural resources. Conservation districts and their partners host workshops, field visits, and community events to promote soil health, water quality, and pollinator habitats.

Visit the Wasco Co. SWCD website for more information.

Soil.

Where it all Begins



DEQ is Developing NEW Temperature Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDL) for the Miles Creeks area

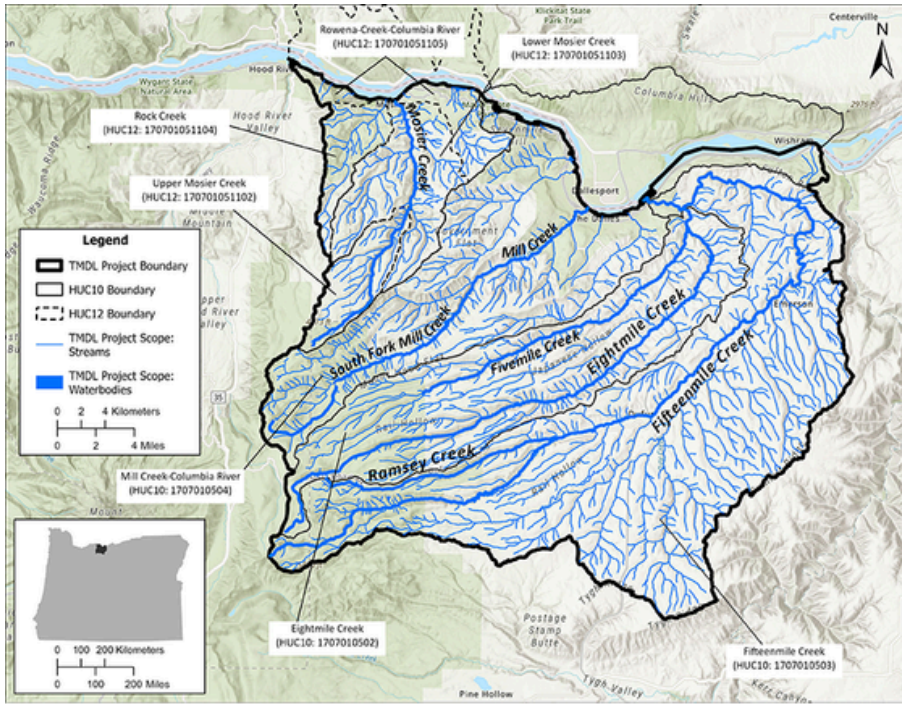
The Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) is developing new Temperature Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) for the central portion of the Middle Columbia-Hood Subbasin, also known as the Miles Creeks area. This project covers all Oregon surface waters that drain to the Columbia River between Mosier and The Dalles, including the Eightmile Creek, Fifteenmile Creek, and Mill Creek-Columbia River watersheds, as well as four subwatersheds within the Mosier Creek-Columbia River basin (Upper

Mosier, Lower Mosier, Rock Creek, and Rowena Creek). The Columbia River itself, and waters in Washington, are not included.

Temperature TMDLs are clean-water plans required under the Clean Water Act. They identify how much heat a stream can receive while still protecting fish and meeting state water-quality standards, and they help guide future restoration actions such as improving streamside vegetation and supporting cold-water habitat for salmon and steelhead.

DEQ is in the early stages of this multi-year project and will be seeking public input as draft materials are released. Landowners, watershed council members, and anyone interested in local water quality can learn more and sign up for project updates on DEQ's website:

<https://www.oregon.gov/deq/wq/tmdls/Pages/MilesCreeks.aspx>



(ob)noxious weeds

Old Man's Beard *Clematis Vitalba*

A Old man's beard also known as traveler's joy was introduced to North America as an ornamental plant and has since rapidly spread throughout Western Oregon. Transported by wind, water or animals, you'll find this weed in river margins, roadsides, gardens, hedges, and forest edges. Old man's beard is mostly found in western Oregon, especially in the north end of the Willamette Valley and now occurs in river drainages from the Umpqua northward. This invasive weed has robust vines that readily climb trees facilitating tree damage during ice storms. Once a tree falls, the invasive species will grow along the ground, several feet thick, preventing native plant growth.

Information & photos provided by ODA: Noxious Oregon Weed Profile, and Washington State Noxious Weed Control Board



RANGE DRILL AVAILABLE FOR LEASE

The SWCD offers a Rangeland Drill for rent to help landowners improve range and habitat plantings. Made possible through funding from the Oregon Wildlife Heritage Foundation and the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, this tool is available at affordable, usage-based rates (by hours/acres).

Landowners participating in the ODFW Upland Cooperative Access Program receive a 50% rental discount.

For more information or to reserve the Rangeland Drill, contact Ryan Bessette at ryan.bessette@or.nacdnet.net or (541) 705-3636.

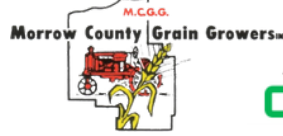
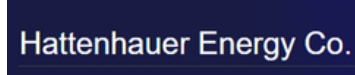
OREGON WILDLIFE FOUNDATION



announcements & important dates

- The next regularly scheduled board meetings will be held on May 8th, 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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