



Groundwork

November / December 2023 Volume 47 Number 6

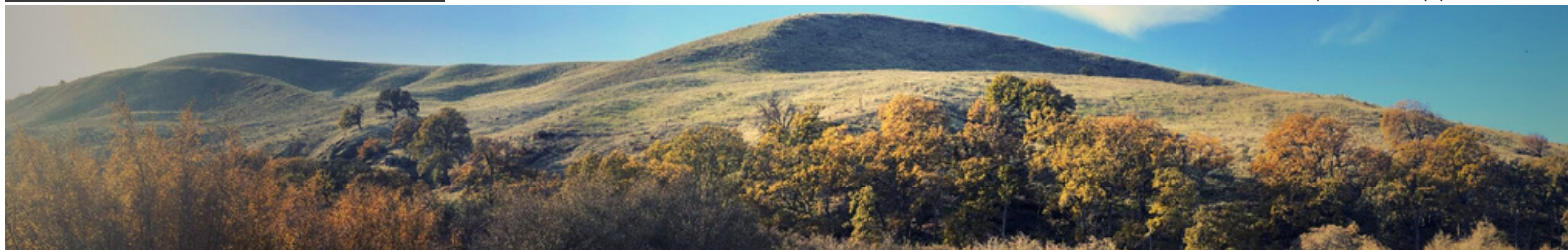
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Splinters from the Board

October: The board met on October Fourth and approved the Sept treasurer's report & minutes. 5 DCS applications were approved. The board approved adding a new benefit of Lifeflight Membership, knowing staff health & safety is a foremost concern. Staff provided an update on the ODA-funded PSP plan & board agreed to contract with WPN to complete the work. Highline ditch elimination progress was reviewed, along with 15 mile MUS, Fires, and the Mosier Million. Josh reported on new building upgrades and maintenance. He also reported on plans for new infrastructure, including a shop and other items of interest.

November: The first Wednesday meeting date was postponed until the 8th. The agenda was shortened as we were not able to meet in our conference room and most board members joined remotely. Action items included reviewing the minutes and treasurer's report. One DCS application for rainwater harvesting was presented and tabled until the December meeting. The board formally acknowledged a deficiency identified in the fiscal year 2022-23 audit. The district's accounting personnel do not possess advanced training and expertise necessary to prepare the financial statements. This is common for organizations of our size and the board will continue to thoroughly review financial statements prior to approval.



NEIGHBORHOOD MEETINGS are back!

After taking a few years off during COVID due to office closures and meeting restrictions, the SWCD and our partners have decided to bring back our neighborhood meetings. The SWCD's goal is to host these meetings throughout the year in different areas of the County. Check the SWCD website as we move through the planning process for the most up to date information including meeting dates, locations, topics and more. www.wascoswcd.org

Watershed Council Updates

- The Dalles Watershed Council met on November 8th. They are ramping back up into their four meeting per year schedule that they were on prior to COVID, and discussed which topics they would like to discuss as a council moving forward. They also received updates on the PSP advisory council process, Chenoweth Creek restoration, and the Watershed Assessment process.
- The Mosier Watershed Council met on October 25th. The meeting was capped off by a great discussion on ongoing groundwater issues within the Mosier Watershed. Additionally, they received updates on the Western Pond Turtle sampling taking place within the watershed, as well as the Mediterranean Oak Borer.
- White River will meet in early December.
- Bakeoven will meet next spring.
- The Fifteenmile Watershed Council will meet in December.

Farm Service Agency

Important updates from FSA:

- Acreage Reporting: December 15 is the deadline for fall planted crops like wheat. January 15 is the deadline for orchard crops.
- Emergency Relief Program 2022, Tracks 1 and 2. The program for crop and/or revenue losses for 2022 is now open. Please call to set up an appointment or go to <https://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/emergency-relief/index> for more information.

NRCS

- Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) technical and financial assistance opportunities:
- Barlow Area Forest Enhancement & North Wasco Joint Chiefs: If you are interested in forest health, wildfire fuels reduction, removal of standing dead trees and slash, and wildlife habitat enhancements on forestland, this opportunity is for you!
- South Wasco Rangeland Enhancement: If you are interested in improving upland vegetation, removal of juniper, annual grass treatment, livestock water infrastructure, grazing infrastructure, or wildlife habitat enhancements on grasslands in southern Wasco County, please reach out!
- Fifteenmile Basin Fish Screen Replacement: If you have fish screens in need of replacement or unscreened diversions within the Fifteenmile Basin, NRCS and ODFW have partnered to assist landowners with this task.
- *Deadline to apply for Fiscal Year 2024 funding is November 17th. All applications received after this date will be deferred to our FY2025 funding cycle.
- Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) application deadline for Fiscal Year 2024 is March 29th, 2024. CSP is a 5-year program that rewards landowners for existing conservation efforts and has enhancement opportunities to build on those efforts. This is a whole-operation program and all land uses are eligible.
- Wasco NRCS is in the early stages of planning our annual Local Work Group meeting. This is an opportunity for landowners, partner agencies, and any other stakeholders to get together and discuss natural resource needs in the county and 'what's next' for funding opportunities. If you have topics that you'd like to be covered at this meeting or any other input about timing, location, etc. please reach out to Emily Huth at Emily.Huth@usda.gov or 541-298-8559 ext. 111.

Wy'East RC&D

Robert Wallace, Executive Director, was named 2023 Energy Professional of the Year by the Oregon Association of Professional Energy Managers for his work advancing energy efficiency in rural communities and fostering partnerships. RARE Fellow, Lanier, is currently providing no-cost project assistance and application support to ag producers and rural small business for USDA REAP, which provides funding for energy efficiency upgrades and renewable energy projects. For info contact Lanier@wyeast-rcd.org



OSU Extension

Mid Columbia Winter Pesticide Trainings

Pesticide training for agricultural producers in the Mid-Columbia with topics including pasture management, pesticide poisoning, and other topics for wheat producers and orchardists. Each class will be worth an anticipated 4 ODA credits.

- Wednesday, December 13th, 1 pm to 5 pm, Building 2, 3rd floor lecture hall, Columbia Gorge Community College in The Dalles.
 - Thursday, December 14th, 1 pm to 5 pm, Sherman County Extension Office, Moro
- ~~~ Registration is encouraged, but not required, available at this link: <https://beav.es/TH8>

(ob)noxious weeds

Tree-of-Heaven

Tree-of-heaven can reach a height of 25 to 50 feet. The leaves are often mistaken for sumac, with prominent leaf scars on the bark remaining when they are detached from the stem in the fall. The flowers are small, yellowish to reddish in color, and have five petals. Tree-of-heaven has a rank odor, similar to foul smelling peanuts. (Source ODA)

Tree-of-Heaven is widespread throughout Wasco County. Classified as a class B in Oregon, Tree-of-Heaven is a major pest for homeowners and land managers. It is extremely hard to control. Manual removal with herbicides applications can take years to see results. If you find Tree-of-Heaven on your property and would like tips for control, contact the Wasco County Soil and Water Conservation District.



Wildflower Talk

Pearhip rose
Rosa woodsii

The fruits of this beautiful PNW native rose are small to medium sized and hang in clusters. Ripening in fall, their vibrant red adds to the seasonal color. Called hips, the fruits have an edible flesh that is high in vitamin C and provides a nutritious food for deer, elk, and other wildlife. Plants serve as a larval host to various butterflies and moths, and when blooming in late spring to early summer the fragrant pink flowers attract many native pollinators. This drought tolerant species is found growing naturally east of the crest of the Cascade Mountains where it forms thickets, which makes excellent bird habitat.

Article by Kristin Currin at Humble Roots Nursery



Mediterranean Oak Borer (MOB)

An appreciation of the many beautiful wildflowers of the area inherently includes an appreciation of the East Cascade oak woodlands that provide excellent habitat in which many wildflowers thrive. Sadly, a new threat to our white oaks has arrived in Oregon. The Mediterranean oak borer (MOB) is a small ambrosia beetle that tunnels into the outer sapwood of oak trees where it farms a fungus that stains its branching tunnels a dark color. Within 3-5 years an infected tree will be girdled and die. One of the differences between this new exotic beetle and our native ambrosia beetles is that the MOB attacks live trees, from the top down, while our native beetles prefer dead or dying trees. Known to produce a large amount of wood boring dust as it tunnels, this light colored dust is noticeable on the outside of an infected tree. Seeing this dust, also called frass, is one way to detect if MOB is present.

For more information go to

www.oregon.gov/odf/Documents/forestbenefits/fact-sheet-mediterranean-oak-borer.pdf

and report any suspect trees to the Oregon Invasive Species Council at 1-866-INVADER (1-866-468-2337).



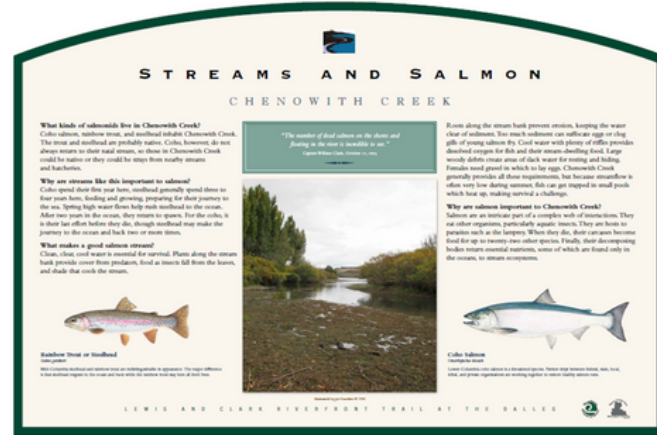
PROJECT updates

Fifteenmile Managed Underground Storage

Manager Shilah Olson, along with two grad students from Oregon State University and Professor Salini Sasidharan, recently visited the MUS site to discuss what is next for the project and how they can help. The SWCD has signed an agreement with OSU to help find materials that will be best suited for filtration within the basin while also making sure the filtered water is meeting DEQ groundwater standards.

Lower Chenoweth Creek Restoration Project

Restoration efforts were on pause this summer as staff worked on securing permits for the 2024 instream work period. The SWCD has requested an extension on the project with the goal to wrap up the project by the end of 2024. Plans include installing 2 interpretive trail signs, and large wood or beaver dam analogs. SWCD staff have worked with the Port and local volunteers on cleanups and plantings along the project site.



Service Center News

OWEB Small Grant funding available! This program is for landowners to implement small restoration actions on their property that provide a watershed benefit. Cost share requirements vary with a total award amount up to \$15,000. For more information contact Abbie Forrest at abigail.forrest@or.nacdnet.net or 541-296-6178 x102

The SWCD District Cost Share Program still has funding available for Haul Roads. Contact Scott Susi at 541-296-6178 x122 to learn more about the program and how to apply.

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 December 6th, 2023 at 1:00pm and January 3rd, 2024 at 1:00 pm.

Upcoming Holiday Office Closures: Thanksgiving Day Nov. 23, Christmas Day Dec. 25, New Years Day January 1.

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