



Groundwork

September/October 2023 Volume 46 Number 5

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Splinters from the Board

July: The board met July 12th. There were 7 Cost Share applications presented and approved. The board approved extending the contract with GSI to continue work on the Mosier Million project through June of 2024. The board also approved the updated MOU with WyEast providing administrative support. Also approved was splitting the cost of a Summer Celebration with WyEast on July 20th, as well as making a donation to the youth livestock auction pool of \$1,000. Project updates on the 15mile MUS, Highline Ditch Elimination, White River and Miller Road fires were shared, as well as Agency reports from Farm Service Agency, NRCS and OSU Extension. The facilities committee has not met recently but Josh shared progress on building security upgrades including new cameras and locks. Shilah noted the Work Plan is closing out with the end of the fiscal year and most all items were completed.

September: On September 6th the SWCD board met, with a packed agenda due to the board taking the month of August off. The July treasures report as well as minutes were approved. 4 District Cost Share applications were approved and the board had an extensive conversation around the remaining funding for the year and popularity of the program. The Annual Report draft was submitted as well as the Watershed Council's. The board approved amending the contract with GSI for the 15mile project, as well as approved a professional services contract with Campbell Phillips for legal services. Project updates were given on the Mosier million project as well as a short presentation on the FAST program. The board also heard updates from the Summer Celebration and the Wasco County Fair.



Watershed Council Updates

- The Dalles met on September 13th. DEQ representative Smita Mehta as well as water quality volunteer Kevin Brannan, attended the meeting and participated in discussion after the 2023 Mill Creek E.coli monitoring presentation. Council members also received the recently completed The Dalles Watershed Assessment. Council members also heard an update from council member and City of The Dalles representative Steve Byers on the Dog River Pipeline. Other council business discussed included Mill Creek Fish monitoring and the Chenoweth Creek restoration project.
- Bakeoven Watershed Council will be meeting on September 26th to discuss the uplands enhancement project progress, ask questions and determine if any additional projects need to be considered for upcoming funding cycles. The council will also hear an update from Emily Huth with NRCS on the recently approved South County CIS.
- White River will hold their next meeting in November. Meeting date and time TBD.
- Mosier held their informal summer gathering in July and will be meeting next on October 25th, more details to come.
- The Fifteenmile Watershed Council met on September 20th. The council heard an update on the uneventful 2023 FAST season due to no alerts being issued and relatively moderate temperatures throughout the summer. Those in attendance received updates on the MUS project, Watershed Assessments, as well as held a discussion on the new Fifteenmile Fish Screen CIS that was recently approved through NRCS and instream leasing. (see inside newsletter for more information on protecting your water rights and instream leases).

OSU Extension

- ODA Pesticide Pre-Exam classes planned during the second week of November in both The Dalles and Moro to help prepare producers needing to take their pesticide exam, 4 continuing education credits anticipated for those already licensed.
- Pesticide trainings planned during the second week of December in both The Dalles and Moro with 4 continuing education credits planned each.
- Soil pH and nutrient management workshop for wheat planned in January 2023 with guest speakers from WSU and OSU.

Contact jacob.powell@oregonstate.edu for more details. Updates will also be in the Mid Columbia Farmers Newsletter.

Wy'East RC&D

Wy'East recently welcomed our new Resource Assistance for Rural Environments (RARE) AmeriCorps Fellow, Lanier Fussell. Lanier will continue providing technical assistance and application support to agriculture producers and rural small business on the USDA Rural Energy for America Program which provides funding for energy efficiency upgrades as well as renewable energy projects. Wy'East will be a sponsor of Sustainable Northwest's Making Energy Work Symposium which focuses on rural energy resiliency and innovation. Come join Wy'East November 1-3 in Corvallis. This month Wy'East alongside Forth (e-mobility nonprofit) hosted our first 'Ride and Drive' event as part of the Wasco EV Charging Plan. This plan will allow the Wasco County region to effectively pursue federal and state funding for electric vehicle infrastructure. Please reach out to Michael or Robert if interested in more information, info@wyeast-rcd.org

Farm Service Agency

The USDA Service Center reminds producers to complete acreage reporting for 2024 as soon as practical after seeding is completed. Please call 541-298-8559 ext. 2 to schedule an appointment.

- CRP (Conservation Reserve Program): Please complete your mid-contract management activities and submit results to FSA. Emergency grazing is available. Please contact the Wasco/Hood River Co office to begin the process for requesting. Annual payments will be disbursed starting in October.
- LFP (Livestock Forage Program) Wasco County is eligible for payments, deadline to apply for benefits is January 20, 2024.

Please contact the FSA office for more information.

NRCS

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) applications are due by November 17th, 2023. Available funding opportunities include:

- Barlow Area and Joint Chiefs Area forest health & fuels reduction on private forestlands
- Rangeland improvement funding for livestock infrastructure, wildlife habitat and upland vegetation health in South Wasco County
- Fish Screen replacement in the Fifteenmile Basin to prevent entrapment of salmonids in diversions

Please reach out to District Conservationist, Emily Huth, to find out if your property is in one of these funding boundaries and to receive and application. Emily.Huth@usda.gov or 541-298-8559 x111

Soil Conservationist, Jon Ludovico, moved on to Connecticut NRCS in July

(ob)noxious weeds

American Pokeweed

Pokeweed is an Oregon "Class B" weed meaning it's widespread throughout the state. Pokeweed can be found in limited distribution throughout Wasco County but tends to infest the northern portion of the country. Pokeweed is toxic to humans and livestock. If you think you have located Pokeweed feel free to contact the Wasco SWCD or the county Weed Master.

Photo and information from Washington State Weed Board and www.nwcb.wa.gov/weeds/pokeweed

Article by Scott Susi



*Welcome to
Wasco County!*

Wasco NRCS Welcomed a new Soil Conservationist, Dellaina Morse!



Wildflower Talk

Streambank globemallow *Iliamna rivularis*

The seeds of this Pacific Northwest native plant lie dormant in forest soils for decades, even centuries, waiting for fire to clear the canopy and competing vegetation, and trigger germination. It then grows quickly reaching 2 to 4 ft. tall or taller. With white to pink, hibiscus-like flowers blooming in summer, this beautiful perennial feeds hummingbirds, butterflies, bees, and other native pollinators. Along with feeding pollinators, it is an important food source for many species of wildlife following a forest fire, providing forage for deer and elk and seeds that are eaten by chipmunks and squirrels.

Article by Kristin Currin at Humble Roots Nursery



PROTECT YOUR Water Right

Do you have a water right that has not been used in quite some time? Have you ever considered leasing your water right instream? Oregon Water Resources Department offers an instream lease arrangement that benefits the water right holder by putting the right to beneficial use, which is required to be exercised every five years.

Oregon water users who are at risk of forfeiture of their water rights due to non-use may find instream leases to be a good management option. Oregon's instream leasing program provides a voluntary means to aid the restoration and protection of streamflows and provides benefits both to water right holders and to instream values.

Water rights may be leased instream for an initial period of up to five years, and may be renewed at the water right holder's discretion. Landowners who have a current instream lease that is about to sunset can complete the 1 page application to renew the lease. Leased water is protected instream by the Water Resources Department for the benefit of fish and other instream uses.

The SWCD and 15mile Watershed Council offer the FAST program for irrigators in the 15mile watershed, however participation does not protect your water right under the legal description of beneficial use. If you have participated in the FAST program in the past and are not likely to use your water right in the near future an instream lease might be for you.

For more information please follow the link below

<https://www.oregon.gov/owrd/programs/WaterRights/IS/IL/Pages/default.aspx>

TREE SALE



The Annual Tree Sale is happening now!

The insert contains the order form to purchase trees and shrubs. Similar to last year, folks will be able to purchase trees online at the SWCD's website:

<https://wascoswcd.square.site/>

Order forms can be mailed in and dropped off at the SWCD office until January 19th, 2024. There will only be a certain number of each species ordered. Orders will be taken on a first come first serve basis. We will do our best to update the website with the available plant list.

Pickup day will be held on March 16th
8:00am-noon.

For more information or to chat about any of these native plants and if they would be a good fit for your property reach out to a conservation planner at the SWCD office
541-296-6178 x3.

PROJECT

Updates

Mill Creek E.coli Monitoring

The Dalles Watershed Council with help from DEQ decided to place a further emphasis on the upstream sites of Mill Creek that show consistent E.coli contamination, in addition to continuing to further investigate Whisky Gulch and Skyline Tributary. At DEQ's recommendation, we also hope to conduct sampling outside of our typical summer sampling season, that will likely take place from October to November. E.coli concentrations were also generally higher this year in Mill Creek than last year. Flows generally seemed lower this year, which may be due in part to construction on the Dog River Pipeline. Low flow may concentrate E.coli due to less water being available to dilute it.

Miller Road and White River Fire Restoration

Restoration efforts continue on the 2020 White River Fire and The 2022 Miller Road Fire. Wasco SWCD is partnering with the ODFW White River Wildlife Area to treat 1,500 acres of the White River Fire Area, largely on the Wildlife Area with Open Range G. Open Range G is a granular imazapic herbicide that treats



annual invasive grasses such as cheatgrass and medusa head. The Miller Road Fire burned over 13,000 acres and destroyed 543,875 feet of fencing. The USDA Farm Service Agency's Emergency Conservation Program (ECP) is providing over 3 million dollars in funding to repair and replace the damaged fencing. Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board Provided \$35,000 in funding the perform woody debris removal in key areas on the fire to reduce fuel hazards and aid in fire suppression and prevention.

Service Center News

OWEB Small Grant funding available soon. 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

Work is continuing on updating the Pesticide Stewardship Partnership Program Plan. An advisory meeting will be held in conjunction with the LAC meeting on Sept. 28th at 11:00am.

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 October 4th, and November 1st, 2023 at 1:00pm

The Lower Deschutes Local Advisory Committee meeting will be held on September 28th, at 11:00am at the Service Center.

[If you would like to receive this newsletter digitally please email wasco@wascoswcd.org](mailto:wasco@wascoswcd.org)

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