



Wasco County Soil and Water Conservation District
Board Meeting Minutes – March 11, 2026

Directors: Bill Hammel Jeff Crump
Phil Kaser Larry Powell

Directors via Teleconference: Bob Krein

Staff: Dana Woods Dean Dark

Staff via Teleconference: Shilah Olson Abbie Forrest Allie Marker
Karen Lamson Drake Gilbert

Guests:

Wasco SWCD: Pat Davis, Director Emeritus
NRCS: Emily Huth, District Conservationist
FSA: Patti Fields, Acting County Executive Director
Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs: David Stuart

Guests via Teleconference:

Wasco SWCD: Ken Bailey, Director Emeritus
Watershed Professionals Network: John Runyon
OSU Extension: Jacob Powell, County Agent

1:00 PM Call to Order

Bill called the meeting to order and asked if there were any additions or changes to the agenda. Shilah noted that since the Public Meeting Policy was not sent out with the Board mailing, she asked that Action Item E – Public Meeting Policy be tabled until the next meeting.

Minutes: Bill asked if there were any additions or corrections to the February regular board meeting minutes. None were made. Jeff commented that the minutes noted that an updated financial policy would be brought to the next meeting, but he did not recall seeing it in the current Board packet. Shilah responded that she is working on it but did not get it finished in time for the March meeting. *Phil moved to approve the February regular meeting minutes as presented; Jeff seconded. Motion carried with Bill, Bob, Jeff, Phil and Larry voting in favor.*

Treasurer’s Report: Shilah reviewed the February Treasurer’s Report, noting beginning balance, income, expenses, account and fund balances. *Larry moved to receive the Treasurer’s Report for February; Jeff seconded. Motion carried with Bill, Bob, Jeff, Phil and Larry voting in favor.*

The loans payable/loans receivable report was also included for information.

Public Comment (5 Min. limit/person) – none

Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs – Basin Restoration Priorities

David Stuart, the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs Watershed Restoration Coordinator was in attendance. He shared with the Board that they are working on a proposal for possible 5-year funding through the BPA. Funding would be for anadromous fish habitat restoration. David expressed interest in a potential partnership with the District in the 15Mile basin. Pat asked if there is ever any review of the White River basin for potential restoration projects above White River Falls. David indicated that it could possibly be addressed through other funding sources, but not through the BPA funding. Phil suggested that David be added to the 15Mile Watershed mailing list.

Action Items

a. District Cost Share Program: Abbie presented one District Cost Share application:

U. Ruegger – This application is for a fuels reduction project of approximately 48 acres to include brush clearing, re-seeding with the use of a drone and cross fencing to improve grazing management. The amount requested is \$7500. *Jeff moved to approve the district cost share application for U. Ruegger as presented; Phil seconded. Motion carried with Bill, Bob, Jeff, Phil and Larry voting in favor.*

b. Agreement with Columbia Land Trust for ECOP Outreach – Columbia Land Trust has asked the District to enter into a professional services agreement to support targeted outreach for the East Cascades Oak Partnership (ECOP). The District already participates in ECOP conversations and community engagement so this would formalize that role and provide reimbursement for staff time. The draft agreement was provided for Board review. Shilah requested direction from the Board on how to proceed. *Jeff made a motion to authorize staff to finalize the scope and execute the agreement; Larry seconded. Motion carried with Bill, Bob, Jeff, Phil and Larry voting in favor.*

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 fuels reduction. This agreement would allow OPRD to request work from the SWCD as needed and reimburse for District staff time and subcontract work. The draft agreement was provided for Board review. Shilah requested direction from the Board on how to proceed. *Phil made a motion to authorize staff to finalize and execute the IGA once comfortable with the terms and scope of work for 2026; Jeff seconded. Motion carried with Bill, Bob, Jeff, Phil and Larry voting in favor.*

d. Annual Meeting Date Resolution – One of the District’s legal requirements is to have an annual meeting once a year. At the February meeting, Board consensus was to hold the annual meeting in June immediately following the regular board meeting. Resolution 20260311 is included in the packet and establishes the date of the annual meeting as June 10, 2026. *Larry moved to approve Resolution 20260311 to host the annual meeting immediately following the June 10 regular board meeting; Phil seconded. Motion carried with Bill, Bob, Jeff, Phil and Larry voting in favor.*

e. SDAO Best Practices Checklist – Public Meetings – Policy & Training: The public meetings policy review item has been tabled. By completing the items on the SDAO Best Practices checklist, the District can receive up to a 10% premium discount on the liability insurance policy. So far, the District has secured 6%. An additional 2% discount can be secured by completing a review of the District’s Public Meetings Policy and the final 2% can be achieved when each Board member completes the updated Public Meetings Law training by October 31, 2026. Shilah previously sent instructions on how to complete this training, which can be done on the SDAO Training Portal.

f. 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. Several emerging issues were also identified at that time. Also at the February meeting, there was a suggestion that the District gather public input, so staff obtained a quote for a county-wide Every Door Direct Mail (EDDM) postcard survey. A draft postcard along with the list of survey questions were provided for Board review. To encourage higher participation, staff propose purchasing a gift card, and all individuals who respond will be entered into a drawing for a chance to win. Jeff suggested that the blank space that is on the current postcard design could be used to highlight some of the District’s completed work or Mission Statement. *Larry made a motion for staff to move forward with postcard design and proposed questions and to approve funding for the county-wide mailing and gift card purchase; Jeff Seconded. Motion carried with Bill, Bob, Jeff, Phil and Larry voting in favor.*

Updates

a. Next Meeting – The next regular meeting is scheduled for April 8, 2026, at 1:00 PM, at the USDA Service Center and via Zoom. Jill Amery from the Wasco County Tax Assessors office will be in attendance to provide an update on taxes ahead of the budgeting process for fiscal year 2026-2027.

b. Highline Ditch Elimination – Written update provided. Shilah will check in with Art Wassenmiller to see how his project is progressing. Pat commented that the final pieces of this project have been a small hiccup, but once completed, this project will be a great success story.

c. Fires: CWDG Grant, Larch Creek TA - written update provided. Wasco County will hold a CWDG Community Outreach event on March 26th, from 6-8 pm at the Wamic Grange Hall. This event will be part one in the Fire-Adapted Wasco Workshop Series. The Larch Creek TA contract has been executed with IAE and work will begin shortly.

d. Pesticide Stewardship Partnership Program – written update provided. ODA has asked the District to revise the project budget and submit an updated request to include support for additional administrative tasks, and blackberry inventory and removal demonstration and a malathion drone demonstration. Included will be additional work to trap the Spotted Wing Drosophila, which are suspected of living in the blackberry bushes. The hope is that blackberry removal will reduce the numbers of the Spotted Wing Drosophila.

e. DEQ Miles Creeks Temperature TMDL Update – The Miles Creek Watershed Area document is currently in the process of being updated. Shilah and Drake will be participating in the process.

f. Updating SWCD Employee Handbook – Working with HR Answers – Shilah continues to work on this project with HR Answers. She is approximately 1/3 of the way through.

g. Update Financial Policy & Add A. Forrest as Signer on Bank Account – As noted earlier in the meeting, Shilah is working on updating the financial policy for Board consideration.

h. Tree Sale – March 21, 2026 – 8 AM to noon. Additional details, species list and ordering information are available on our website.

Agency Reports

a. NRCS – Emily reported that they are still working through 66 EQIP and 32 CSP applications. She is planning on attending the March 26th CWDG workshop. On March 18, they will be visited by Emily Fife, the NRCS Regional Conservationist for the West Region. The Local Working Group meeting is scheduled for April 16th at the Dufur Parish Hall. John Runyon will assist in the discussion and action planning piece.

b. FSA – Patti reported that general CRP enrollment is going on now through April 17. Now is the time to submit offers for new enrollment. Continuous CRP enrollment first batching period ended on March 20, 2026. Grassland CRP has not been announced yet. The Farmer Bridge Assistance (FBA) Program is going on now through April 17th. Pre-filled applications are available to producers who timely filed their 2025 acreage reports. Producers just have to sign and submit their applications to receive funding. Assistance for Specialty Crop Farmers (ASCF) is a new program that was just announced, they do not have any details on the program yet. Acreage reporting deadline for spring plantings is July 15th.

c. OSU Extension – Jacob reported that he has been working with Oregon Ag Trust on the Farm Financial Planning workshop that is scheduled for March 24th at 1:00 PM. It will be held at CGCC Building 3. He is also planning a fuels break training which will also be held on March 24th from 3:45 to 4:45 at CGCC. Both trainings will be live and on Zoom with recordings to be made available afterwards. The crop tour dates are set for June 1st and June 2nd. Still to be determined is which County will be which day. June 10th will be the Experiment Station Field Day in Moro followed by the Oregon Wheat Growers League 100 year Anniversary, beginning at 1:00 PM.

d. Wy'East RC&D – Robert was not able to attend the meeting.

Informational Reports

a. Internal Financial Review – none

b. Facilities Status – Shilah has been unable to make contact with Darrin from AKS for an update on the shop / facilities expansion planning. Another facilities item that has been discussed is the possibility of entering into an MOU with the Gymnastics Center and asking that they provide a Certificate of Insurance since they do use a portion of our parking lot.

c. Watershed Council Updates – Drake reported that the Fifteenmile Watershed Council meeting will be on March 18 at 5:00 PM in Dufur, the Mosier meeting is scheduled for April 28th and The Dalles meeting will possibly be scheduled for sometime in the first couple of weeks of April.

District Manager Report

a. Work Plan Progress & Grant Status – Shilah noted that the grant status report is included in the meeting packet. The District currently has 38 active grants and open contracts. There are currently 9 submitted or pending applications.

b. Activity Reports and Schedules – No activity reports were presented; however, they are available for review upon request. The schedule was distributed with the agenda.

Adjourn Regular Board Meeting at 2:40 pm