



# Groundwork

March / April 2024

Volume 48 Number 2

## Splinters from the Board

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**February:** The board met February 7th. Minutes from the January meeting were presented, along with the Treasurer's report from December and January. Updates to the District Cost Share Program Policy were shared with the board. The updates will be formally approved in June. Four Cost Share requests were presented and approved. The board approved sponsoring the OSU Ext. Cherry Day, and approved holding the Annual Meeting on June 5th, in conjunction with the regular board meeting. Also approved was to contract with Pauly Rogers & Co for the 2023-24 fiscal year audit. The board discussed neighborhood meetings and heard regular project updates, as well as updates from our partner agencies.

**February & March Special Meetings:** The first special meeting was held on February 28th. One District Cost Share application for a haul road was presented & approved. The regularly scheduled March meeting was cancelled. The second special meeting was held on March 13th. One District Cost Share application for irrigation upgrades was presented & approved. Other agenda items included approval to work with DS Consulting to meet the new NACD requirements on board succession planning for the 2024 Technical Assistance grant to help NRCS carry out tasks such as EQIP and CSP. The board went into Executive Session during both special meetings, before reopening the meetings to share updates and progress on current grant status.

## PHOTO *contest*

We are looking for photos to be included in the Wasco SWCD 2025 calendar!

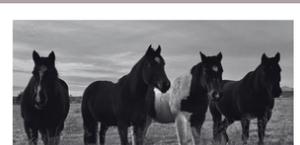


Photos must be agriculture or conservation related.

If you would like to have your photo included in the contest, please fill out the entry form on the Wasco SWCD website along with a digital copy of your photo by November 1, 2024.

There are no limits to the amount of entries. The top 12 photos will be compiled and submitted online for voting Nov. 15th-29th. The winner with the most popular photo will be featured on the cover of the calendar and win an SWCD swag basket!

For full contest rules visit the SWCD website at [wascoswcd.org](http://wascoswcd.org)



## Watershed Council Updates

- The Dalles Watershed Council held a meeting on March 13th and received their yearly snowpack report from the NRCS, in addition to discussing a storm and sewage water project taking place on Second street.
- The Fifteenmile Watershed Council will meet in April or May to discuss the upcoming FAST season, receive their yearly NRCS SNOTEL Report, and discuss the upcoming large woody debris project in the watershed.
- The Mosier Watershed Council meets on April 24th, and will receive their yearly SNOTEL update and continue discussing groundwater trends within the watershed.
- The Bakeoven Watershed council has yet to meet this year, but a plan for hosting a meeting to discuss progress made on the Bakeoven Restoration Grant is in the works. They will also hear updates from NRCS on the CIS funding.
- The next Coordinating Board meeting will be held on April 3rd, immediately following the SWCD Board meeting.

Aside from the upcoming meetings and agenda items, council projects are gearing up with the start of field season. The fish traps will soon be deployed for The Dalles and Fifteenmile Steelhead monitoring projects and PSP sampling started at the beginning of March. Water quality sampling on Mill Creek will also start soon.

## NRCS

EQIP Technical and Financial assistance opportunities:

- Barlow Area Forest Enhancement and 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 or grazing infrastructure, or wildlife habitat enhancements on grasslands in southern Wasco County, please contact NRCS!
- Fifteenmile Basin Fish Screen Replacement: If you have fish screens in need or replacement or unscreened diversions within the Fifteenmile Basin, NRCS and ODFW have partnered to assist landowners with this task.

The deadline to apply for our next funding cycle will be in Fall of 2024. Please reach out to our office for an application form and to learn more.

Conservation Stewardship Partnership (CSP) application deadline for FY 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.

The Wasco NRCS Local Work Group meeting was held February 29th in Dufur. There were over 30 attendees including both partner agencies and private landowners. If you would like to know more about the outcomes of this meeting, or provide additional feedback, reach out to Emily at 541-298-8559 ext. 111.

## Wy'East RC&D

Wy'East recently welcomed new Finance Manager Dana Woods. Dana will be providing financial and administrative support for Wy'East's rural energy programs. Alongside e-mobility non-profit Forth, Wy'East will be hosting a Ride and Drive event in The Dalles on May 9, 2024. The event is a part of the Wasco EV Charging Plan, which supports the Wasco County region in pursuit of federal and state funding for electric vehicle infrastructure. Wy'East is continuing to provide technical assistance for the Rural Energy for America Program (REAP). REAP provides up to 50% of total project costs for energy efficiency upgrades as well as renewable energy projects. For more information contact [Lanier@wyeast-rcd.org](mailto:Lanier@wyeast-rcd.org).

## OSU Extension

OSU Extension is close to picking the final dates for upcoming crop tours in June. More details will be available in the May/June newsletter. For any questions or for more information contact Extension Agent Jacob Powell at [jacob.powell@oregonstate.edu](mailto:jacob.powell@oregonstate.edu) or call 541-298-3581.

## Farm Service Agency

Important updates and deadlines from FSA:

- ERP-2022 Track 2 is still available.
- Report crop losses for weather events as soon as they become apparent.
- Complete Spring acreage reporting when seeding is done, but no later than July 15th.
- Continuous Conservation enrollment continues for HELI, CREP and SAFE.
- ARCPLC contract enrollment is now considered late-filed, but producers can still sign up.

For more information or questions, contact FSA at 541-298-8559.

# (ob)noxious weeds

## Field Bindweed

*Convolvulus arvensis*

Field bindweed is a deep-rooted herbaceous perennial. Its stems are prostrate, one to four feet long often climbing fences and shrubs or forming dense tangled mats. Leaves are alternate, arrowhead-shaped with lobes at the base. Flowers are bell or trumpet shaped, white to pinkish and one inch in diameter. Its fruit is a small, round capsule, usually four-seeded. It looks and grows similar to the ornamental morning glory.

Field bindweed, also commonly known as Morning Glory, lesser bindweed, possession vine, or creeping jenny, is a "B" rated weed, widespread throughout the entire state of Oregon inhabiting roadsides grassland grain fields, and urban landscapes. It is also a common feature in home gardens. The species is difficult to remove once it is established. The twining nature of the plant hampers harvesting of crops, especially in orchards and vineyards.

Information provided by Oregon Department of Agriculture

Picture credit: <https://www.oregon.gov/oda/programs/Weeds/OregonNoxiousWeeds>



# Wildflower Talk

Smallflower prairie star  
*Lithophragma parviflorum*

Article by Kristin Currin at  
Humble Roots Nursery



This dainty looking perennial survives in dry, rocky places by blooming and growing while soils are wet in the spring, then, after storing energy in small bulblets that grow along its slender rhizomes, it goes dormant in the summer. From attractive, low-growing foliage rise green to reddish stems bearing clusters of feathery pink to white flowers that are eye-catching when in bloom. This plant has coevolved and formed an interesting relationship with one of its pollinators, a moth named *Greya politella*, which lays eggs in the flowers so that its larva can later feed on the seeds.

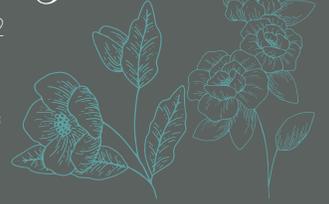
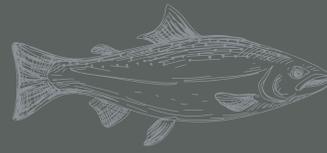
## Riparian Buffers



Many streams in Wasco County are listed by DEQ as not meeting criteria for Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) for both sediment and temperature. Problems contributing to this include inadequate riparian vegetation and sediment inputs from agricultural practices. However, Wasco County has over 300 miles and 10,000 acres enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP), which is the highest of any county in the state. The goal of the CREP program is to restore, maintain, and enhance streamside areas along agricultural lands to benefit fish, wildlife, and water quality. Landowners who voluntarily enroll in CREP sign 10-15 year contracts to protect their riparian areas and in return receive annual rental payments and state and federal cost-share incentives to install approved conservation measures, such as planting trees and shrubs and installing fencing and livestock water facilities. If you are a streamside landowner and are interested in the CREP program, reach out to an SWCD Conservation Planner!

## salmon & gardens

NEW SERIES: PART 2



Seeds for Salmon: How Gardening Can Improve Salmon Habitat, from NOAA Fisheries. The second part to this series dives into water and helps envision a salmon-friendly greenspace.

All salmon need cool, clean water. Across the West Coast, Pacific salmon are increasingly affected by drought due to climate change. Since native plants are adapted to local conditions, they typically need less water than non-native plants.

Envisioning a salmon-friendly greenspace: With a few tweaks to your gardening and landscaping routines, you can make a real difference for water quality and our iconic Pacific salmon. In the long run, you'll also save time on maintenance and money on chemical additives. The first stop on our salmon-friendly gardening journey is learning how to build healthy soil. The most important start for any project is its foundation. So, what holds everything together in a garden? Soil. Healthy soil is the foundation of healthy, productive gardens and landscapes. Billions of organisms in the soil create structures that circulate air, water, and nutrients into plant roots. The structures created by soils are so intricate that they can allow plant roots to exchange nutrients, creating an underground communication system throughout your garden. These organisms thrive on organic matter such as dead leaves, mulch and compost. Healthy soil reduces erosion, maximizes water infiltration, and improves nutrient cycling. When we build healthy soil, we need to water and fertilize less frequently, reducing our impact on local waterways.

Wondering how can you build and maintain healthy soil? Learn what your soil needs. A soil test will tell you what nutrients your soil needs. Amend your soil, learn about the soil your plants require and amend it with compost as needed. And lastly, mulch it. Mulch stabilizes soil temperature, prevents weeds, feeds the soil and helps to conserve water. Add 1-3 inches of mulch as needed. Keep it about an inch away from stems and trunks.

To read more on this topic, follow the link below.

<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/west-coast/endangered-species-conservation/seeds-salmon-how-gardening-can-improve-salmon-habitat>

The Wasco County SWCD invites you to our

# ANNUAL meeting & social hour

June 5th, 2024

help us celebrate the  
end of the fiscal year!

Attend our regulary scheduled  
board meeting from 1:00-3:00 pm at  
the USDA Service Center and then  
take a walk along the Riverfront  
trail next door to the Bargeway Pub  
for a no-host social.

We will present our 2022-2023  
Annual Report and Audit.

For more information contact the SWCD  
office at 541-296-6178 x3



## 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 April 3rd, at 1:00pm and May 1st, at 1:00 pm.

Watershed Councils Coordinating Board Meeting April 3rd following the SWCD Board meeting.

FAST Signup deadline is March 30th.

Check the watershed council updates section for all new meeting dates.

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

CONNECT Conference April 16th - 18th at the Sunriver Resort.

Budget Committee meeting will be May 1st at 10:00 am.

Upcoming Office Closures: May 27th Memorial Day.

# happy spring!



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