

# Watershed Councils

## 2021-2022 Annual Report Summary

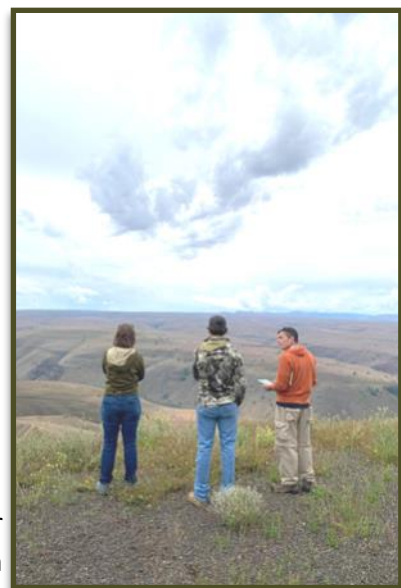
*Working collaboratively with communities and landowners to develop and carry out voluntary watershed protection, restoration, enhancement and stakeholder engagement activities across all land uses.*



**Coordinating Board** The Wasco County Coordinating Board held quarterly meetings throughout the last fiscal year. Board members provided updates from their respective councils, progress on specific projects and upcoming events. Board officers reelected in July were Pat Davis, Chair; Bob Krein, Vice Chair; and Bryce Molesworth Secretary/Treasurer. In July 2021, The Coordinating Board became members of the Network of Oregon Watershed Councils (NOWC); Abbie Forrest and Drake Gilbert have used the NOWC as a great resource and participated in regional meetings to connect with other watershed councils in our region.



**Bakeoven / Buck Hollow** The watershed council held two meetings, as well as one tour with the OWEB Review team. The Bakeoven council put together and submitted a grant application to fund a watershed scale rangeland restoration project spanning nearly the entirety of the Bakeoven Watershed. Three OWEB Review team members made up of NRCS, DEQ and OWEB representatives met with 4 landowners and toured their ranches to get a better picture of the need for restoration. Tour stops included looking at the locations of some of the identified projects, as well as showing similar projects that have been implemented and the benefit to the watershed as a whole. The grant application is focused on uplands enhancement and restoration through improved livestock management practices such as cross fencing, water distribution, range seeding and juniper removal.



**Mosier** The Mosier watershed council held three meetings and one summer celebration. They continued to be active in addressing the groundwater drawdown issue and were successful in obtaining \$900,000 in funding from the state legislature through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) to repair or replace comingling wells in the watershed. Members worked with the SWCD and contractors to strategize outreach to landowners with wells in zone 1 and zone 2. Mosier Deep Well #2 was drilled and almost at completion at the end of the fiscal year. The remaining components of that project were well installation and testing. The deep well will also be complete with a Variable Frequency Drive (VFD) and groundwater monitoring probes installed by Wy'East RC&D to provide real-time data. This winter's snowpack reports and water supply outlook for the 2022 season were presented from the Hood-Sandy-Deschutes basins in the Spring and E.coli monitoring results were shared the previous fall.

**White River** The watershed council held one meeting in November. Partner updates for ongoing programs included Lindsey Cornelius (CLT) on the East Cascades Oak Partnership, Kameron Sam (USFS) on White River Fire Restoration progress as well as road and campground closures, Hilary Doulos (ODFW/NRCS) on the Joint Chiefs Project for forest health for adjacent private land and public forestlands, Lissa Biehn (FSA) on FSA drought assistance, and Josh Thompson (SWCD) on Threemile Culvert Replacement & the Highline Ditch Piping project. At the end of the fiscal year, all of the Tygh Valley wells have been drilled, and the dam removal has been contracted and will begin in the fall.

**The Dalles** The watershed council held three meetings this past year. The council partnered with Columbia Gorge Toyota and hosted a community cleanup day. Volunteers helped remove trash from the creek bed to prepare for restoration activities beginning fall 2022. The council and SWCD staff also hosted a planting day on Lower Chenoweth Creek. The focus on Chenoweth Creek is stemmed from a recent grant awarded to the SWCD. Planned restoration activities include the removal of invasive weeds, planting native riparian and wetland vegetation, and installing large woody debris. At the end of the fiscal year the SWCD was working to procure all the necessary permits. Water quality monitoring is a strong focus for the watershed council. The watershed councils have been sampling for water quality for over a decade now, with the Pesticide Stewardship Partnership and the Mill Creek E.coli monitoring projects longstanding history leading the way in ensuring important water quality issues are being brought to light. PSP monitoring and E.coli monitoring was conducted Summer of 2021 and started up again Spring of 2022. The council worked with the SWCD to purchase stream gaging equipment to install gages in both Mill and Threemile Creeks in an attempt to relate streamflow data with annual pesticide data. Additionally, the council continued assisting ODFW with fish monitoring in Mill Creek, down stream of the side-channel project.



**Fifteenmile** The watershed council held three meetings and hosted several stakeholder meetings in regards to the 15mile Managed Underground Storage project. In June, the stakeholder engagement group met for the last time; facilitated by Emily Stranz with DS Consulting the group came to a consensus for the ownership of the pilot project, identified through a strategic scoring matrix developed by David Pilz, with AMP Insights, who was hired as our subject matter expert. The stakeholder group identified the SWCD in partnership with the Watershed Council as the most qualified and willing entities to own the facility. The SWCD and Watershed council will work in close partnership with State agencies such as OWRD and ODFW for guidance when the system is in full operation. There are still unknowns that will continue to be explored such as Safe Harbor Agreements and liabilities for Fifteenmile irrigators. The pilot project for the Managed Underground Storage Facility is making progress and currently in the permitting and design phase. Construction should start Fall of 2022. Fifteenmile Action to Stabilize Temperatures (FAST) is in full swing at the end of the fiscal year. No alerts have been called so far for the 2022 irrigation season. This time last year however extreme high temperatures made for a very unusual irrigation season, and was the main topic during the fall meeting after the irrigation season in 2021. Changes regarding when an alert will be called were made to the FAST program during an emergency meeting last season, and compensation rates per acre were increased to stay current with the rising costs of fertilizer, fuel, and pumping costs. Last fall was also the award announcement of the Fifteenmile Fish Monitoring grant that was submitted in partnership with the SWCD and ODFW. The monitoring application ranked as the number 1 project in the state for that funding cycle. At the Fall meeting council members also received snowpack updates and the water supply outlook report from NRCS and groundwater monitoring data from OWRD.