A publication of the Wasco County Soil & Water Conservation District

Groundwork

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Splinters from the Board

September: The Board met on September 9th. The Board approved the July regular and special meeting minutes, as well as the July and August Treasurer's Reports. During public comment, the Board approved an additional $564.94 in Cost Share funding for a completed rainwater harvesting project. The Board also approved two new rainwater harvesting applications through the District Cost Share Program, the FY 2025-2026 Annual Report, Contracting with HR Answers, updating the Long-Range Plan, and the Board Duties and Responsibilities Handbook.

Updates included Watershed project updates, 2026 fires, CWDG, ECOP FIP Projects, and Director elections. Partner updates were provided from NRCS, FSA and Wy'East RC&D.

October: The Board met on October 14th. The Board approved the September meeting minutes and Treasurer's Report. The Board approved an additional reimbursement request for a previously approved haul road project and approved 3 DCS applications for post-fire reseeding, irrigation piping, and a spring development. Additional actions including approving a credit account with Wilbur Ellis for herbicide purchases, a dump trailer lease agreement with Wasco County for the CWDG project, updated wage rates for the CWDG crew, and updated the Wasco County Noxious Weed List and Classifications. Updates included submission of a Water SMART grant application for the MUS project, and progress updates on other watershed projects. The Board received updates on the FY26-27 audit, upcoming director elections, and current grant status.

Watershed Council Updates

Watershed Action Planning is in full swing, with Mosier and The Dalles hosting action planning meetings in October and November. Fifteenmile, Mosier, and Bakeoven / White River will host one more action planning meeting before the end of the year, although they are not yet scheduled.

Please keep an eye out for dates to be announced soon!

The Coordinating Board met on November 18th. John Runyon was unable to attend the meeting, however, Watershed Coordinator Drake Gilbert gave a quick update on the Action Planning process as well as current project updates. The Councils are scheduled in January to meet with the Wasco County Board of Commissioners to present the 2025-2026 Annual Report and provide Watershed Council updates once the new Commissioners have taken office. The next Coordinating Board meeting will be on January 13th.

For more information on any of the individual councils and upcoming meeting dates, reach out to Coordinator Drake Gilbert at drake.gilbert@or.nacdnet.net



Partner Updates:

Farm Service Agency

- **Acreage Reporting:** Fall Planted Crops should be reported by **December 15, 2026** to be considered timely-filed. Perennial fruit crops are due by **January 15, 2027**. Please call to schedule an appointment with FSA staff.
- **ARCPLC** (Agricultural Risk Coverage/Price Loss Coverage): 2026 Election sign up is underway. Deadline to sign completed election is **December 11, 2026**. *Failure to make an election by this deadline will negate any potential payments for 2026.*
- **ECP** (Emergency Conservation Program): 2026 sign up begins **November 2, 2026** and runs through **December 31, 2026.** Please schedule an appointment with FSA staff to complete the sign up process for livestock fencing burned in 2026 wildfires.
- **EFRP** (Emergency Forest Restoration Program): 2026 sign up begins **November 30, 2026** and runs through **April 9, 2027.** Please schedule an appointment to complete the sign up process for restoring non-industrial private forestland damaged from 2026 wildfires.
- **LIP/ELAP Losses**: Deadline to sign up for 2026 pasture losses from 2026 wildfires for the Livestock Indemnity Program or Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-raised Fish program is **March 1, 2027.**
- **LFP** (Livestock Forage Program): Wasco County is eligible for 2026 LFP benefits. Please schedule an appointment to submit livestock inventory and annual lease agreements to participate in this program. Deadline to enroll for 2026 is **March 1, 2027.**
- **NAP** (Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program): Please remember to submit production records when completing 2027 acreage reporting.
  - **November 20, 2026**: Deadline to purchase 2027 coverage for perennial fruit crops.
  - **November 30, 2026:** Deadline to purchase rangeland and/or forage coverage for 2027 grazing year.
- **OCCSP** (Organic Certified Cost-Share Program): FSA is now accepting 2025 and 2026 cost-share applications for organic certification. Deadline is **December 31, 2026.**

OSU Extension

Last Chance Pesticide Recertification Class, Dec. 4th, The Dalles This training will be both online and in person from 9 am - 3 pm in The Dalles at the CGCC, Bldg. 2, 2nd floor conference room. 5 ODA pesticide credits are available and the class is free. You can attend the entire class, or just the morning or afternoon (3 credits in the am session, and 2 credits in the pm session). Topics include: ODA updates, Mayweed chamomile control in wheat, fungicides and plant health in wheat and pulses, IPM for Russian Thistle, and more. Registration is required here: https://forms.gle/K8fJtt87cLbFQpeC6. You can also email jacob.powell@oregonstate.edu if registering for the in-person option. Contact Jacob Powell for questions at 541-298-3581.

2026 Mid Columbia Wheat Meeting, Tuesday Dec. 15th, 1pm - 4:15pm, 66365 Lonerock Rd, Moro. This free class will cover wheat focused topics ranging from wheat varieties, fungicide use, use of Rejuvra, vegetative fuel breaks, and updates from the ODA pesticide investigator. NWGG will also provide wheat marketing updates. 3 ODA pesticide credits will be available.

Farm First Aid Classes, Classes will provide American Red Cross First Aid and CPR certification at cost and will also include additional training on Stop the Bleed and other important first aid skills to use on the farm. Stay tuned for dates in January and February 2027. Contact Jacob for questions or if interested.

NRCS

The deadline to submit an application for the **Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)** and **Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)** is coming up on **November 30th, 2026.** Applications received by this deadline will be considered for funding in our FY2027 cycle. EQIP is being administered using Act Now this year, which means applications will be funded in the order in which they are received if they meet program requirements. EQIP projects that are addressing the locally led priorities of **Wildfire Hazard, Inefficient Irrigation Water Use, and Pest Pressure** will take priority.

Please reach out to field office staff with any questions.

- Emily Huth - District Conservationist (emily.huth@usda.gov or 541-705-3634)
- Michael Cistulli - Resource Conservationist (michael.cistulli@usda.gov or 541-705-3644)
- Erin Beuttenmuller - Forester (erin.beuttenmuller@usda.gov or 541-705-3635

Wy'East RC&D

USDA has issued a final rule changing the Rural Energy for America Program (REAP), which helps agricultural producers and rural small businesses fund renewable energy and energy efficiency projects. Projects must now be completed and operating, with 12 months of energy data, before applying. Grants cover up to 25% of allowable costs. USDA anticipates applications opening in early 2027 through its new ProsperUS portal. Planning a project or recently completed one? For questions contact Michael at Wy'East mkluz@wyeast-rcd.org or learn more at wyeast-rcd.org/reap.

Wildflower Talk



Oregon boxwood
Paxistima myrsinites

Oregon boxwood, also known as mountian lover, is a relatively small evergreen shrub found in forest understories and along forest edges at all elevations. Growing to about 3 feet tall and wide, its glossy, leathery leaves may be browsed by deer, elk, and other wildlife especially in winter. It produces tiny, curious red to maroon colored flowers where its leaves meet its stems, which bloom in spring to summer (depending on elevation) and attract pollinating insects such as native bees. It does not produce any berries, and its seeds develop in small capsules. Although found on both sides of the Cascades, this PNW native shrub is fairly drought tolerant and is often found growing in rocky sites.



Article by Kristin Currin at Humble Roots Nursery

Chenoweth Creek Restoration

Following post-fire restoration work completed along lower Chenoweth Creek in 2022, the Wasco SWCD will continue restoration efforts with approximately 2.5 acres of Himalayan blackberry removal made possible through new funding from an environmental mitigation donation. This work builds on previous restoration activities, including large woody debris placements that helped improve stream habitat, stabilize banks, and reconnect the creek with its floodplain.

Himalayan blackberry can quickly outcompete native vegetation, restrict access to the stream, and reduce the quality of riparian habitat for fish and wildlife. To further restore native plant communities and reduce the likelihood of blackberry recolonization, the SWCD plans to plant a variety of native trees and shrubs throughout treated areas. Species under consideration include black cottonwood, coyote willow, ponderosa pine, golden currant, red currant, blue elderberry, and red elderberry. Over time, these plants will provide shade, improve wildlife habitat, stabilize streambanks, and contribute to a healthier, more resilient riparian corridor along Chenoweth Creek.





Oak-Conifer Forest Health Restoration

Walk & Talks





The Conservation District, in collaboration with the East Cascades Oak Partnership (ECOP), held 2 "walk and talk" tours of forest health restoration projects this summer and fall, in Wamic on July 22nd, and in Mosier on November 2nd .

The tours were each hosted by private landowners with both treated and untreated oak-conifer woodlands on their property, and were by invitation, focusing on properties adjacent to ECOP's existing restoration projects.

Woodland owners had the opportunity to see and discuss varying approaches and methods of oak woodland management, depending on the landowner's goals, and to learn more about potential funding opportunities.

Following the tours, the next step will be to identify restoration projects to include in an upcoming grant proposal to be submitted early 2027.

Stay tuned!

(ob)noxious weeds

Canada Thistle *Cirsium Arvense*

Canada thistle (Cirsium arvense) is also known by several common names, including Californian thistle, Canadian thistle, creeping thistle, and field thistle. Native to southeastern Eurasia and Europe, it was introduced to the United States in the early 1600s, mainly through contaminated imported grain. Canada thistle is found throughout Oregon in cultivated fields, riparian areas, pastures, rangelands, forests, lawns, gardens, roadsides, and waste areas. Its leaves are wavy to deeply lobed, up to 6 inches long, and armed with sharp yellowish spines. This weed produces small purple to white flowers that grow in clusters. Without proper weed management, Canada thistle can spread rapidly and reduce crop yields by up to 25% in heavily infested areas.

Information & photos provided by ODA: Noxious Oregon Weed Profile, and Washington State Noxious Weed Control Board







announcements & important dates

- The next regularly scheduled board meetings will be held on December 9, 2026 and January 13, 2027 at 1:00pm at the USDA Service Center in The Dalles.
- Upcoming Events: Annual Spring Tree Sale, place your orders by February 1, 2027. Pickup Day is March 13th .
- Office Closures: November 26 (Thanksgiving), December 25 (Christmas Day) and January 1 (New Years Day)
- SWCD updates air on KODL the first Monday each month at 10:07 AM on 1440 AM, 100.7 FM, or kodl.com.

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