



Wasco County Soil and Water  
Conservation District  
2325 River Road, Suite 3  
The Dalles, OR 97058

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# Annual Report 2021-2022

Groundwork Newsletter Special Edition

## Service Center News Tammy Tripp retired after 27 years with the District.

On June 29th the SWCD staff, Board members and agency partners held a party at the Dufur City Park, celebrating Tammy Tripp on her retirement from the SWCD. Tammy has served with the District as the Office Administrator since 1996. She will be leaving Wasco County and moving back to Michigan to be closer to her family and friends. We wish Tammy a happy retirement and best wishes on her next adventure.



### Staff & Partner Updates

In August of 2021 the SWCD hired Samantha Filbin as an office and NRCS assistant funded through NACD.

Garrett Duyck took a position as the NRCS Soil Conservationist for the Warm Springs satellite office in Jefferson County.

Emily Huth was hired as the new NRCS District Conservationist for Wasco County and Jon Ludovico was hired as the new NRCS Soil Conservationist.

Misty Strayhorn accepted the NRCS District Conservationist position in Sherman County.

## SWCD Staff

Shilah Olson, District Manager  
Tammy Tripp, Office Administrator  
Jennifer Sampson, Office Assistant  
Josh Thompson, Conservation Planner/Facilities Mgr  
Ryan Bessette, Conservation Planner/Technician  
Karen Lamson, Conservation Planner/Technician  
Scott Susi, Conservation Planner/Technician  
Abbie Forrest, Grants & Program Manager  
Drake Gilbert, Watershed Coordinator  
Samantha Filbin, Office / NRCS Assistant  
Dusty Eddy, SIA Program Temp.  
Lia Chadwick, Custodian



## Board Members

Bill Hammel, Chairman Zone 3  
Bob Krein, Vice Chair, Zone 5  
Shawn Sorensen, Sec/Treasurer, Zone 2  
Stan Shephard, Director Zone 4  
Ken Bailey, Director, Zone 1  
Pat Davis, Director, At-Large  
Phil Kaser, Director, At-Large

## Associate Director

Bryce Molesworth

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## About the Wasco County SWCD

Since 1990, the Wasco County SWCD has secured and completed over \$18 million through 316 different grants. At the end of the 2021-2022 fiscal year the SWCD had 32 active grants and \$4,347,166 in secured funding, as well as 5 pending grant applications for \$964,564 and 3 more in the works.

The projects that have been completed to date, and grant dollars secured just skim the surface, showing the success of the SWCD. The District Staff, Board of Directors, our agency partners and Watershed Councils work together to provide the biggest impact to our producers, and natural resources in Wasco County.

The following pages contain just a highlight of the work completed this year. *Enjoy!*



Service Center in The Dalles

## Our Mission

*To work cooperatively  
with others to promote  
and encourage  
conservation and wise  
use of natural resources.*

## Message from the Manager

Fiscal year 2021-22 again presented the District with many challenges and opportunities. We continued to broaden our scope and capacity, while adaptively managing operations in response to the global coronavirus pandemic. Our mission remains to work cooperatively with others to promote and encourage conservation and wise use of natural resources. We continued to work in close partnership with the area Watershed Councils, focusing on common goals and objectives.

We wrapped up and renewed several key support grants, including capacity grants through ODA for the District's scope of work and OWEB for Watershed Council support; CREP TA allocations from both OWEB and BPA; a support grant from OWEB for the Forest Collaborative; and a Farm Bill TA support grant from NACD. A 2-year OWEB FAST grant was closed out, which lasted an additional year thanks to a grant from DEQ. Staff were successful in securing an additional 2-years of funding from OWEB and expect a similar award from DEQ. We also closed out the stakeholder engagement piece of our Fifteenmile Managed Underground Storage feasibility explorations and are continuing with pilot project implementation. The SWCD board will next determine a long-term operations plan based on recommendations from the stakeholder group.

At the close of the FY, grant applications were pending for upland range restoration in the Bakeoven watershed, juniper removal on Young Life Ranch, and continued post-fire restoration on the scar of the 2020 White River Fire. Through our annual report, I hope you find a connection with the work that the District is doing to support conservation efforts and assist our local community through all types of challenges and opportunities.



If you are interested in receiving this newsletter electronically please email [wasco@wascoswcd.org](mailto:wasco@wascoswcd.org)



# Conservation Programs

## ODA Capacity & Monitoring

Water quality and quantity is at the forefront of priorities for the district. Capacity funding is provided by the Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA). The support from this grant provides outreach and technical assistance to our landowners and community members. During the last fiscal year the SWCD distributed the *Groundwork* newsletter to over 977 landowners and participated in 12 KODL “*Coffee Break*” radio talk shows. Technical assistance through one-on-one conversations and on-site visits was provided to over 304 landowners through programs including the District Cost Share, CREP, and CRP. 17,817.8 acres were written into 88 conservation plans. The SWCD hosted 5 events that included planting and cleanup days on lower Chenoweth. We sponsored the Annual Bull Tour and Spring Crop tours. Staff attended 25 events in partnership with the local Watershed Councils, Wy’East RC&D, FSA and NRCS to coordinate conservation planning and financial assistance to producers.

E.coli monitoring efforts continued in The Dalles Area Watershed and water quality samples were taken in support of the Pesticide Stewardship Partnership Program (PSP). Water samples for the PSP program were also collected on Fifteenmile Creek near Seufert Falls.

## BPA & OWEB CREP Buffers

The Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) is a Farm Bill program implemented through the Farm Service Agency. Conservation Plans are developed by our certified conservation planners. Financial support for this program is provided by the Bonneville Power Administration for anadromous streams and the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board for non-anadromous streams. The primary goal of the CREP program is to protect and enhance riparian and floodplain habitat for fish and wildlife. Riparian buffers reduce sediment inputs, stabilize streambanks and provide shade. CREP plans typically include shrub/tree and grass plantings, weed control and livestock exclusion to enhance riparian areas. SWCD planners completed 3 new and 18 renewal CREP plans in the fiscal year protecting 1,458.33 acres of riparian habitat and 29.64 miles of streams.

## NACD Farm Bill TA

Technical Assistance for Farm Bill programs was secured this FY through the National Association of Conservation Districts and the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board to assist our local NRCS with their workload and ensure that Farm Bill programs are successfully implemented in Wasco County. Conservation Planners provide technical assistance for the EQIP program as well as CRP and CSP. Forest Management, Grazing Lands and Soil Health/Erosion were the primary natural resource concerns this fiscal year.

## Projects Completed/Closed

- ODA Operation Capacity 19-21: \$156,976
- OWEB WC Capacity 19-21: \$122,900
- OWEB FAST 20-22: \$110,000
- OWEB CREP TA 20-21: \$131,807
- OWEB Forest Collaborative 2021: \$44,974
- OWEB Yellow Flag Iris 20-21: \$4,086
- BPA CREP 20-21: \$75,000
- NACD NRCS Farm Bill TA 20-21: \$75,000
- DEQ FAST 2021: \$24,915
- OWEB 15mile MUS SE 21-22: \$31,513
- OWEB SG Trail Creek Upland Mgmt.: \$8,841
- OWEB SG Duling Juniper Flat Pivot: \$15,000
- OWEB NRCS Farm Bill TA 21-22: \$50,000

## Projects Updates

The SWCD has an agreement in place for Mosier Million #2. Our partners with GSI and OWRD have identified the next round of priority wells for repair and landowner outreach has begun.

The Mosier Deep Well #2 project is drilled with the remaining steps being the variable frequency drive and pump installation and final testing.

The Fifteenmile Managed Underground Storage project has two open grants for building the pilot project. The stakeholder engagement grant to identify an owner and operator wrapped up at the end of the FY. The pilot project is in the pre-monitoring and permitting stages moving towards breaking ground in late 2022 or early 2023. The Stakeholders held a final meeting at the end of June and the group recommended that the owner and operator be a partnership between the SWCD, Watershed Council, and supported by agencies such as OWRD and ODFW.

Tygh Valley water project Highline Ditch & Lindell Dam removal projects are still making progress. The Lindell dam removal was contracted to start summer of 2022. All four Tygh Valley wells have been completed. The last well is still waiting on a new pump, and two wells will need liners installed. The Highline ditch project was waiting on approval from ODFW for a reverse drain field that will hopefully be installed this next winter.

The SWCD and Hydro agreed on a Supplemental Environmental Project (SEP) to restore stream function for water quality on lower Chenoweth Crk.

FAST is ongoing and remains a popular program.

# Partners NRCS / FSA / Wy’East RC&D

**Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)** NRCS had a busy year receiving 22 EQIP contracts, nine CSP contracts and 40 CRP plans being accepted. NRCS worked with SWCD staff to submit a Conservation Innovation Strategy (CIS) for the Bakeoven and South County areas for range improvements as well as working with ODF and USFS on wildfire risk reduction. NRCS is working on updating their long range plan and will work with the SWCD to align goals and tasks. Wasco County NRCS has temporarily welcomed Sherman County NRCS into the building.

**Farm Service Agency (FSA)** Over the last year FSA has been busy implementing Emergency Drought programs, along with the annual Conservation Reserve Program signup. Because of the long standing drought our area has had, FSA was able to distribute payments to producers for the Emergency Relief Program and Livestock Forage Program, as well as open up CRP for Emergency Haying and Grazing to livestock producers. Along with program work, Wasco County FSA has temporarily welcomed Sherman County FSA into the building.

**Wy’East RC&D** E-tractors have been a major focus for Wy’East this past year. Robert secured grant funding for two tractors that are being used for different demonstrations throughout the state. He was also featured in an article from the Capital Press. Wy’East has been installing new designs for soil moisture probes in the Dufur area to compliment the FAST program. Wy’East was accepted into the RARE program through University of Oregon and will be getting a RARE student in September to work on projects through the following June.

## District Cost Share Program

### Approved and Completed Projects

The Cost Share Program was expanded this year with a total budget allocation of \$125,000. 37 cost share applications were submitted and 33 projects were approved for funding. 13 General Conservation Cost Share projects were approved for funding totaling \$76,304. Conservation projects included irrigation sprinkler, mainline & pivot upgrades, orchard chipping, spring developments, river screens and an irrigation system demonstration.

19 Haul Roads were approved for funding totaling \$47,500.

There were 21 projects completed throughout the fiscal year that paid out \$78,623.80.

Some of the projects completed this FY include cross fencing, wild-life guzzler, solar panel livestock water, haul roads, LESA irrigation sprinkler upgrades, water right transfer, orchard chipping, carbon budget models, precision ag fertilizer control, raised bed community garden and Smart Controller irrigation projects.



## Financials 2021-2022

The District uses cash accounting for its day to day operations. Fund accounts include the General Fund and 2 Reserve Funds: the Building Reserve Fund and the Vehicle Reserve Fund. The District has a permanent tax rate limit approved November 2004 for \$0.25/\$1000 valuation, which raised \$610,795.58 in the 2021-2022 fiscal year.

Unaudited Cash Accounting	General Fund	Reserves
Beginning Balance July 1, 2021	\$442,783.00	\$134,321.00
Income	\$2,131,709.00	\$114,381.00
General Fund Transfers	\$146,390.00	\$(68,480.00)
Expenses	\$1,870,653.00	\$33,953.00
Balance June 30, 2022	\$850,229.00	\$146,269.00

