



Wasco County Soil and Water Conservation District
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A publication of the Wasco County Soil & Water Conservation District



Groundwork

November / December 2022 Volume 45 Number 6

Splinters from the Board

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October: The board met Oct. 5th. National Association of Conservation Districts President, Michael Crowder attended the board meeting and provided an updated on what the USDA is anticipating in the coming years including: climate smart grants, technical assistance grants; as well as hot topics such as carbon models, and cover crops. There were 9 cost share applications that the board approved for funding. The board also heard updates from local partners and updates on the Tygh Valley Water projects, Mosier Groundwater, and the 2020 White River Fire and 2022 Miller Road Fire.

November: The board met Nov. 2nd. The board approved 3 cost share applications as well as approved a budget amendment to move \$25,000 from the haul road funds to the general cost share budget. Other action item included health insurance renewals. The majority of this meeting was focused on the 15mile Managed Underground Storage Stakeholder engagement project. Board members participated in the facilitated workshop and discussed the roadmap for implementation of the project, staff capacity, facility maintenance and operations.

PROJECT Updates

Fifteenmile MUS Project

The Fifteenmile MUS Project received the final permits and monitoring has commenced. Construction of the infiltration basin is on track to start this winter. Next steps include the SWCD board appointing committee members to examine governance structures, staffing considerations, refining cost estimates, funding opportunities and legal considerations.

Mosier Groundwater

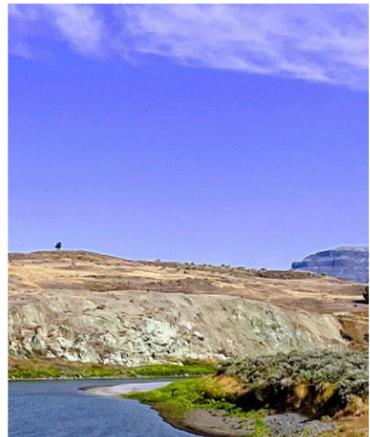
The Mosier Deep Well #2 project has successfully completed its first year of operation. Data collected throughout the year will be compiled and used to estimate energy savings scenario for the potential deepening of Deep Well #1. Bonneville Environmental Foundation has expressed interest in the project for potential conservation funding.

SNOTEL Site

After many years of working with NRCS the new SNOTEL Site has been installed. The site is located in the Fifteenmile Watershed near High Prairie. This station will provide accurate snow/water equivalent data and up to date snow depth measurements. The information gathered from this site throughout the year helps producers and water managers predict stream flow and water availability

Watershed Council Updates

- The Dalles met November 9th and received an update from DEQ about analysis work completed in regards to the Mill Creek *E.coli* problem.
- Bakeoven met November 7th to plan and coordinate projects funded as a result of the Bakeoven Rangeland Improvement grant.
- White River is scheduled to meet on Tuesday, December 6th.
- Mosier met October 19th and discussed Mosier Million #2, the completion of the second deep well, and ECOP.
- Fifteenmile will meet at an undetermined date in December, and an SWCD board workshop was held to catch the board up on the Fifteenmile MUS project and discuss the operations and maintenance side of owning the facility.
- The Coordinating Board will be meeting the first part of December with the Wasco County Board of Commissioners to present the 2021-2022 Watershed Councils Annual Report.



Service Center News

Dufur has a new Agrimet station that was installed near the city of Dufur. The station ID is FTMO - Fifteenmile. Follow the link below to get the latest data.

<https://www.usbr.gov/pn/agrimet/wyreport.html>

The service center held a Halloween party with special guest appearance by the Rockford peaches.

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 meeting will be held January 4th.

Wasco County Coordinating Board meeting will immediately follow.

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

Partner Updates



Oregon State University
Extension Service



Wildflower Talk

Article by Kristin Currin
Humble Roots Nursery

Snowberry

Symphoricarpos albus

Snowberry is a common PNW native shrub capable of growing in a wide range of conditions. Its small, pink to white flowers produce copious amounts of nectar and attract hummingbirds, butterflies, and native bees, as well as nonnative honey bees. By late summer it develops showy, white, berrylike fruits that persist through winter, giving the plant its common name. These ornamental fruits are an important food source for birds and other wildlife. A great plant for hedges and hedgerows, this deciduous shrub spreads quickly with aggressive rhizomes making it useful for erosion control and soil stabilization.



Fire Wise Tips Part 2

Article and photos provided by Shilah Olson

Wildfire fuels include everything from native trees and grasses to landscaping ornamentals, and even buildings and homes. We can manage fuels by reducing their amount, height, and continuity. Take note of the density of fuels across your landscape and refer to your aerial and topo maps to consider how steep slopes and prevailing winds might cause a fire to burn faster or hotter. Things to consider are possible ignition sources. Two major fire causes are lightning and humans. Not all human causes are arson or carelessness. Fires can also be sparked by powerlines, railroad tracks, or faulty mechanics. Note on your map areas with the most likely ignition sources, which may extend well beyond your property but can give you an idea of the direction(s) that fire may come from. Once you understand the fuel loads and how a fire might move across your land, you can design ways to strategically reduce fuels. Not everyone will have the same goals for their property, but fire management strategies can work with many different priorities. There are several ways to manage vegetation. This can be done mechanically by mowing or cutting; through chemical means such as herbicides, or biological means including grazing with livestock. For structural protection, it is critical to create defensible space around homes and buildings. This can be done by creating fuel breaks of bare ground or low vegetation close to the structure and pruning branches on trees to reduce the risk of flames climbing into the tops of trees. Thinning vegetation and overgrazing can have negative impacts on wildlife habitat so it's important to find a balance. Decrease thinning activity in areas of flatter terrain and along waterways. Determine proper stocking rates and develop a prescribed grazing plan prior to turning animals out. Consider leaving clumps of brush for animals to nest and hide in, and strategically leave some dead trees and down logs for habitat and to return nutrients to the environment. While wildfires can be frightening, they have always been a part of our landscape. Residents and landowners can work to meaningfully reduce the threat of a catastrophic wildfire. Your local Conservation District can help you achieve land and fire management goals while balancing watershed health and economic strategies.

Farm Service Agency

The following are reminders from the FSA

- COC Election for South County- ballots returned or postmarked: December 5th
- 2023 Fall planted crop acreage reporting deadline: December 15th
- 2023 Perennial fruit crop acreage reporting deadline: January 15th
- 2022 LFP and ELAP deadline: January 30th
- Food Safety Certification Cost Share Program deadline: January 31st

NRCS

The EQIP application cutoff for FY23 was on November 18th, however producers can still turn in applications for future signups. (Barlow Forest Health, Pollinator & Wildlife Habitat, and the Food Security Initiative)

The NRCS Oregon Public Affairs teams has been working on an updated website. Its a quick place to look and read about which programs are currently offered in the County and can be accessed by the public. There's a site for each county in Oregon and a direct link for producers.

<https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/conservation-basics/conservation-by-state/oregon/wasco-county>

Wy'East RC&D

Wy'East held their quarterly council meeting on October 20th. The board was introduced to new staff members Sara Sweetser hired to help with the administrative and finance work, Michael Kluz the RARE AmeriCorps member, and Pat Davis hired to help move tractors to and from different sites. Attending members received a finance update as well as Energy Project updates including the BPA/SOLO Workforce, Central Electric Cooperative, Deschutes County SWCD, FAST, OIT-USDA RD Energy Audit Electric Tractor Project. Continuing projects and new business updates were shared as well as round table discussions. New business included the announcement of retiring council member Lloyd Foreman. Wy'East is seeking new council members contact Robert Wallace for more information at robert@wyeast-rcd.org or 541-815-5503.

The next meeting is scheduled for January 19, 2023.

OSU Extension

There are a number of classes and trainings coming up in the next few months.

- Continuing education Pesticide trainings in December with 3 ODA credits per class. Monday December 12th in The Dalles and Friday December 16th in Moro
- OSU Calving Class in The Dalles December 14th at the Wasco County Extension Office from 4:30pm - 8pm
- Farm First Aid Class January 18th in The Dalles
- Pacific Northwest Direct Seed Association Cropping Systems Conference, January 10-11 in Kennewick, WA
- Other classes planned in 2023 include: Ag Wildfire Training (February 8th) and Soils Class for producers offered in The Dalles and Moro

For more information contact Jacob Powell at jacob.powell@oregonstate.edu

