

CITY OF SPRAY
PO Box 83
Spray, OR 97874
(541)468-2069
(541)468-2044 fax



March 1, 2023


To Whom It May Concern,

This letter is to indicate the City of Spray's full and enthusiastic support of the Wheeler Soil and Water Conservation District's application to receive funding.

As you are aware, Wheeler County is large in acreage but very small in population which makes it difficult to finance this type of public conservation project. The addition of this property improvement will make a significant contribution to our county and its effort to improve the education and development of our local and state's conservation effort. The facility they are proposing to build along with the community gard, trail system, and partnership with OSU will be a major community benefit. Our communities needs this type of facility to grow and education our local population as well as encourage positive tourism in Wheeler County.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,


Arcadius St. Laurent
Mayor
City of Spray



**CITY OF
FOSSIL**

P.O. Box 467
Fossil, Oregon 97830
ph: (541) 763-2698
f: (541) 763-2124

March 1, 2023

Regarding: Funding Request – Wheeler Soil and Water Conservation District Facility

To Whom It May Concern,

As you are aware, Wheeler County is large in acreage but the least populated county in Oregon with approximately 50% of the population residing within unincorporated areas. Thus, it is difficult to finance this type of project. The addition of this property improvement will make a significant contribution to our county and its effort to improve local education and community development. In addition, the construction of this facility, along with the future plans of the property, will assist with natural resource conservation efforts within Wheeler County.

All residents of and visitors to Wheeler County will experience direct positive impacts from the implementation of this project. Further, the project will enable Wheeler County to grow and educate the local population, as well as encourage positive tourism.

In closing, we are pleased to support Wheeler Soil and Water Conservation District's funding request and respectfully urge you to do the same.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Terri Hunt". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Terri Hunt

Mayor

City of Fossil

March 2, 2023

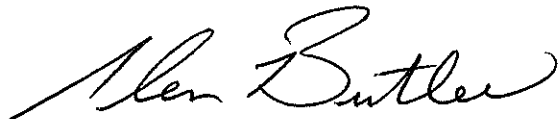
To Whom it may concern,

Good day, my name is Glen Butler and I am the current superintendent for the Spray School District located in Spray, Oregon and Wheeler County. I have been asked to write this letter to add my support of the Wheeler County Soil and Water Conservation District's request for grant funding to construct an educational facility in Wheeler County.

I feel this would be a great addition to our county. This facility would provide a conference and training center, and provide an educational experience to help our students, county community members and visitors learn more about the geological wonders and the natural resources of this county.

Please consider funding this wonderful addition to our remote communities, for us and others to enjoy.

Sincerely



Glen Butler

Superintendent/ Principal,

Spray School District #1

541-468-2226

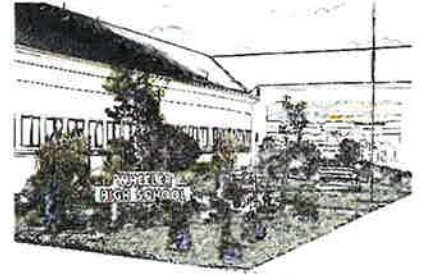
gbutler@spray.k12.or.us



Fossil Elementary

Fossil School District 21J Fossil Charter School

PO Box 206 Fossil, OR 97830-0206
541-763-4303
Jon McMurray, Superintendent



Wheeler High School

March 1, 2023

To Whom it May Concern:

My name is Jon McMurray, the superintendent of Fossil School District 21J in Fossil, Oregon. This letter is written in support of Wheeler County Soil and Water Conservation District in their desire to build an educational facility within our county.

Wheeler County is a very sparsely populated county and has not always had access to facilities such as the one the SWCD would like to build along the John Day River. We have always struggled with finding ways that students could engage in meaningful educational opportunities of this type within our county. In the past, we have had to travel outside of our small county to provide this type of opportunity for our students. I strongly feel that having a facility of this type within our own county will further strengthen our natural resources focus and show our students that there are opportunities within their own county for careers that would allow them to stay in the communities in which they were raised.

A facility of this quality would allow us to focus our attention more on the home front and enable us to be even more involved in programs that would support our charter's focus. A facility of this kind would be a boon for our staff because they would be able to plan outings that would either be able to be done in half of a day or would allow us a full day to learn with less travel time.

With all of these things in mind, I feel that granting this funding to our small, and often underserved county, would be a boon to all the local residents as well as the students who populate our schools. This opportunity truly excites me with what possibilities it would present. I urge you with all of my heart to make this a reality for our communities.

Sincerely,

Jon McMurray
Superintendent

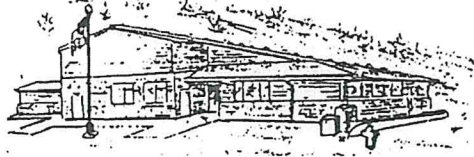
Fossil School District 21J

MITCHELL UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT No. 55

P.O. Box 247 MITCHELL, OREGON 97750

PHONE (541) 462-3311 • FAX (541) 462-3849

Superintendent
Vince Swagerty



Board Members:
Miesha Bennett, Chair
Ross Ryno
Adam Temple
Heather Spitzer
Anna Charapata

March 1, 2023

To Whom it may concern:

My name is Vince Swagerty and I am the superintendent of the Mitchell School District here in Mitchell, Oregon. I am writing this letter to express my support for Wheeler Soil and Water Conservation District's request for grant funding to construct an educational facility here in Wheeler County.

Wheeler County is the least populous county in Oregon and yet we are at the heart of some of the most impressive geological wonders in Oregon. However, the opportunities for students to access educational information are limited to what we can provide in our respective schools.

This facility would provide educational opportunities right here in Wheeler County that would make a positive difference for our students. Mitchell is fortunate to have staff members who are developing a strong natural resources program (Mitchell Outdoor Program) and supporting this proposal with grant funds will truly impact our kids.

Therefore, I urge you to give this request the highest possible consideration and support frontier education here in the heart of Oregon.

Sincerely,

Vince Swagerty, Superintendent
Mitchell School District #55



March 1, 2023

From: N. Lynn Morley, Judge, Wheeler County

Regarding: Funding Request - Wheeler Soil & Water Conservation District Facility

Wheeler County's economy is largely dependent upon our natural resources. Farming, ranching, forest operations, and the jurisdiction's growing popularity as a natural resource tourism destination are key economic drivers. The Wheeler Soil and Water Conservation District is a leading partner in educating residents and private land managers on conservation planning and securing funding to support project implementation. The District also plays an increasingly important role in directly providing opportunity for local contractors and non-profits via the delivery of these projects.

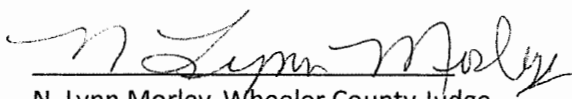
The District's current facility is insufficient to support their goals particularly as it pertains to the goal of expanding hands-on natural resources education opportunities for area youth and all residents. In addition to providing a dedicated space capable of supporting this important function, the proposed new facility will also help fill several other important needs in Wheeler County.

First, accessible, modern, and conveniently located public meeting spaces are in short supply in Wheeler County. The location of the District's new facility in central Wheeler County will support more equitable engagement of the public and volunteer groups across the County's geographic areas.

Similarly, modern and appropriately equipped office space in Wheeler County is a rare commodity. The planned inclusion of several such spaces available for lease will help bridge the gap between available and needed office space to support the delivery of important programs and services.

Finally, the use of mass timber construction for the proposed facility will serve to showcase this innovative and impactful technique which has the potential to bring significant economic and environmental benefit to the state of Oregon as a whole.

Respectfully Submitted,


N. Lynn Morley, Wheeler County Judge



311 S. MAIN STREET
P.O. BOX 315
CONDON, OR 97823
(541) 384-7777

March 7, 2023

To Whom It May Concern,

It is with great excitement that we write this letter demonstrating our support of the Wheeler Soil and Water District in their efforts of obtaining funding to help build a conservation and community center in Wheeler County.

The Oregon Frontier Chamber of Commerce works with the communities within Gilliam, Wheeler, and Sherman counties. The construction of this new facility would allow not only the direct impact of natural resource conservation in the county, but would also allow for Wheeler County to educate local youth groups and offer new tourism opportunities for folks outside of the region.

This project will result in a vital community asset for Wheeler County; a facility that is accessible to not only natural resource agencies but also community members. We are committed to supporting the Wheeler Soil and Water Conservation District as they work to develop the communities of Wheeler County through sustainable resource management, education opportunities, and tourism possibilities.

In closing, the Oregon Frontier Chamber of Commerce is pleased to support Wheeler Soil and Water Conservation District's funding request and hope you will strongly consider the support of this conservation district and the meaningful work they are doing.

Signed respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "K'Lynn Lane".

K'Lynn Lane

Executive Director - Oregon Frontier Chamber of Commerce

WHEELER COUNTY

DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

March 2, 2023

From: Greg Smith, Officer of the Board, Wheeler County Development Corporation

Regarding: Funding Request – Wheeler Soil and Water Conservation District

To Whom It May Concern,

Wheeler Soil and Water Conservation District, Wheeler County, and Wheeler County Development Corporation recognize the urgent need for community resources. Our shared goal is to provide all residents with a centrally located facility that could serve as meeting and event space, office space, and as an educational resource. In addition, Wheeler Soil and Water Conservation District understands the need to mitigate climate change, as well as protect and restore forest and rangeland.

In response to this need, Wheeler Soil and Water Conservation District has coordinated with state, federal and private partners to successfully build a mass timber building on property recently purchased by the District, which is centrally located amongst Wheeler County's three incorporated cities, Fossil, Mitchell, and Spray. This facility will serve as a showcase for the eastside of Oregon as the first mass timber structure constructed predominately of wood with additional sustainable features being integrated.

In closing, WCDC is pleased to support Wheeler Soil and Water Conservation District's funding request and urge your consideration.

Sincerely,



Greg Smith, Officer of the Board
Wheeler County Development Corporation



The Honorable Greg Smith

Oregon House of Representatives
District 57

March 2, 2023

From: State Representative Greg Smith

Regarding: Funding Request – Wheeler Soil and Water Conservation District

To Whom It May Concern,

I support the Wheeler Soil and Water Conservation District in their funding request for a mass timber multi-agency community & education center. Wheeler Soil and Water Conservation District is 100% grant funded without a tax base and I understand their struggle to procure funding for this needed facility.

This funding will significantly assist Wheeler Soil and Water Conservation District, Wheeler County, its residents, and the visiting public. Wheeler Soil and Water Conservation District is also contributing to the need to mitigate climate change. As well as protect and restore forest and rangeland by constructing with mass timber products and other sustainable features to be used.

I am pleased to support Wheeler Soil and Water Conservation District's funding request and urge your consideration.

Best Regards,

Representative Greg Smith
District 57



United States Department of the Interior



NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
John Day Fossil Beds National Monument
32651 HWY 19
Kimberly, OR 97848

IN REPLY REFER TO:
L3215 (JODA)

March 8, 2023

RE: Funding Request- Wheeler County, OR Soil and Water Conservation District Facility

To Whom It May Concern:

John Day Fossil Beds National Monument consists of 14,400 acres in three noncontiguous units. Since the inception of the monument in 1975, its operation has primarily focused on conducting paleontological research and educating the public about the international paleontological significance of the area.

Today John Day Fossil Beds National Monument is committed to expanding resource stewardship efforts and seeking ways to establish and strengthen interagency, community, and tribal connections. I am writing with respect to the John Day River Conservation & Community Center proposal that Wheeler Soil and Water Conservation District is submitting to the Wood Innovations Grant Program.

This proposal will create a multi-agency hub for efficient collaboration on conservation efforts in the Wheeler County region, such as sagebrush, grassland, and riparian ecosystem restoration, benefiting a wide variety of wildlife, such as elk and steelhead trout. The proposed center will also contribute to the recreation and education opportunities and economies of the local rural communities. Showcasing innovative wood product design and manufacturing, this operational center will help facilitate the preservation of resources for future generations, which aligns with the mission of the National Park Service.

Sincerely,

Roy M. Zipp
Superintendent
John Day Fossil Beds National Monument
Roy_Zipp@nps.gov
Office: (541) 987-2333 ext. 1212

March 1, 2023

To Whom It May Concern:

As you are aware, Wheeler County is large in acreage but is the least populated county in Oregon with approximately 50% of the population residing within unincorporated areas. Thus, it is difficult to finance this type of project. The addition of this property improvement will make a significant contribution to the county and its effort to improve local education and community development. In addition, the construction of this facility, along with the future plans of the property, will assist with natural resource conservation efforts within the county.

All residents of and visitors to Wheeler County will experience direct positive impacts from the implementation of this project. Further, the project will enable Wheeler County to grow and educate the local population, as well as encourage positive tourism.

In closing, SDAO is pleased to support Wheeler Soil and Water Conservation District's funding request and respectfully urge your offices to do the same.

Sincerely,



Frank Stratton
Executive Director



March 2, 2022

From: Oregon Association of Conservation Districts

RE: Funding Request – Wheeler Soil and Water Conservation District Facility

As you are aware, Wheeler County is large in acreage but is the least populated county in Oregon with approximately 50% of the population residing within unincorporated areas. Thus, it is difficult to finance the type of project Wheeler SWCD is proposing. The addition of this property improvement will make a significant contribution to the county and its effort to improve local education and community development. In addition, the construction of this facility, along with the future plans of the property, will assist with natural resource conservation efforts within the county.

All residents of and visitors to Wheeler County will experience direct positive impacts from the implementation of this project. Further, the project will enable Wheeler County to grow and educate the local population, as well as encourage positive tourism.

In closing, we are pleased to support Wheeler County SWCD's Wood Innovation Grant funding request and respectfully urge your agency to do the same.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jan Lee".

Jan Lee, Executive Director

(503) 545-9420

Jan.lee@oacd.org

www.oacd.org

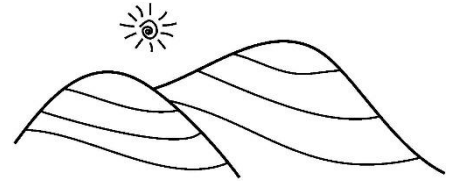
Mid John Day Watershed Council

PO Box 265

Spray, Oregon 97874

541-420-4479

Midjohndaywatershed.org



3/3/2023

To Whom it May Concern:

I am writing in support of Wheeler Soil and Water Conservation District's funding request. The Mid John Day Watershed Council and Wheeler SWCD share a similar mission to conserve natural resources for the ecological and economic benefits to the people in our area.

Wheeler SWCD's proposal to construct a conservation and education building will provide a central location for meetings and a destination for schools, tour groups, and workshop opportunities. Wheeler County is large in acreage but is the least populated county in Oregon with approximately 50% of the population residing within unincorporated areas. It is difficult to finance this type of project. The addition of this property improvement will make a significant contribution to the county and its effort to improve local education and community development. In addition, the construction of this facility, along with the future plans of the property, will assist with natural resource conservation efforts within the county.

In closing, we are pleased to support Wheeler Soil and Water Conservation District's efforts. We look forward to seeing the District's success in this project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Debra Bunch". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Debra Bunch
Executive Director



Wasco County Soil & Water Conservation District

2325 River Road, Suite 3

The Dalles, OR 97058-3551

Tel: (541) 296-6178 ext. 3, Fax: (541) 296-7868, E-mail: wasco@wascoswcd.org

March 2, 2023

RE: Funding Request – Wheeler Soil and Water Conservation District Facility

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing in support of Wheeler Soil and Water Conservation District's (SWCD) Wood Innovation Grant proposal. Wasco County and Wheeler County SWCDs share a county boundary as well as a mutual vision to promote the conservation and wise use of Oregon's natural resources. A large part of what we do involves education, outreach, and community development.

As you are aware, Wheeler County is large in acreage but is the least populated county in Oregon with approximately 50% of the population residing within unincorporated areas. Thus, it is difficult to finance the type of project Wheeler SWCD is proposing. The addition of this property improvement will make a significant contribution to the county and its effort to improve local education and community development. In addition, the construction of this facility, along with the future plans of the property, will assist with natural resource conservation efforts within the county.

All residents of and visitors to Wheeler County will experience direct positive impacts from the implementation of this project. Further, the project will enable Wheeler County to grow and educate the local population, as well as encourage positive tourism.

In closing, we are pleased to support Wheeler County SWCD's Wood Innovation Grant funding request and respectfully urge your agency to do the same.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in purple ink that reads 'Shilah Olson'.

Shilah Olson
District Manager

C:f



Grant Soil and Water Conservation District
Kenneth H. Delano Agricultural Service Center
721 S. Canyon Blvd. - John Day, OR 97845 - Phone (541) 575-0135

March 2nd, 2023

RE: Funding Request – Wheeler Soil and Water Conservation District Facility

Dear Sirs,

Please accept this letter as Grant Soil and Water Conservation District's (SWCD) support of Wheeler SWCD's effort to construct a multi agency community center near Service Creek.

Facilities such as the one proposed are an essential element to providing vital services in frontier counties. Given the low population densities and dispersed nature of homes; many landowners, in some cases, need to travel hours to access services related to natural resource conservation. This facility will serve as a hub and provide better access for those services to the residents of Wheeler County.

Additionally, this site can be further used by residents as well as other agencies and organizations to hold meetings, community gatherings and other events. Such facilities are critical to the outreach and informative efforts that Districts and our partners undertake to advance natural resource conservation programs. In Grant County, we are fortunate to have a few facilities such as the one proposed; however, there is a high demand for their use from a myriad of diverse groups and public bodies.

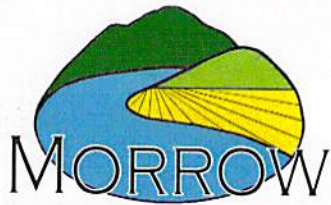
Discussions with our federal partners regarding recent programs such as the Infrastructure Act, the Inflation Reduction Act as well as anticipated changes to the upcoming Farm Bill have demonstrated a need to increase coordination and develop ways for District's to assist with the implementation of these programs. A modern, state-of-the-art facility with associated amenities will enhance Wheeler SWCD's position to provide vital support for community members as well as agencies for upcoming programs and the future.

Thank you both for supporting natural resource conservation efforts in frontier Oregon.

Sincerely,



Kyle S. Sullivan
District Manager



Our Mission: *To conserve, protect, and develop soil, water and other natural resources for the economic and environmental benefit of the residents of Morrow County*

Soil & Water Conservation District

www.morrowswcd.org

430 W. Linden Way, PO Box 127, Heppner, OR 97836-0127

Phone (541)676-5452 Fax (541)676-9624

March 1, 2023

From:

Morrow Soil & Water Conservation District
430 W. Linden Way
Heppner, OR 97836

Letter of Support for the Wheeler Soil and Water Conservation District's proposed John Day River Conservation & Community Center

To Whom This May Concern,

I am writing this letter to express support for the Wheeler SWCD's intent to develop a multi-agency community center in Wheeler County along the John Day River.

The Morrow SWCD's mission is to conserve, protect, and develop soil, water and other natural resources for the economic and environmental benefit of the residents of Morrow County. The southern end of Morrow County is in the Lower John Day and North Fork John Day watersheds, and this center's ability to highlight conservation and natural resource agencies goals and objectives will be mutually beneficial to residents and organizations in not only Wheeler and Morrow County, but greater Eastern Oregon as a whole.

We look forward to utilizing the John Day Conservation & Community Center as a resource to participate in and offer various educational and outreach activities in this rural area of Oregon.

Sincerely,

Kevin D. Payne
District Manager
Morrow Soil & Water Conservation District



March 1, 2023

From: Staci Merkt, Jefferson County Soil and Water Conservation District

Regarding: Funding Request – Wheeler Soil and Water Conservation District Facility

As you are aware, Wheeler County is large in acreage but is the least populated county in Oregon with approximately 50% of the population residing within unincorporated areas. Thus, it is difficult to finance the type of project Wheeler SWCD is proposing. The addition of this property improvement will make a significant contribution to the county and its effort to improve local education and community development. In addition, the construction of this facility, along with the future plans of the property, will assist with natural resource conservation efforts within the county.

All residents of and visitors to Wheeler County will experience direct positive impacts from the implementation of this project. Further, the project will enable Wheeler County to grow and educate the local population, as well as encourage positive tourism.

In closing, we are pleased to support Wheeler County SWCD's Wood Innovation Grant funding request and respectfully urge your agency to do the same.

Sincerely,

Staci A. Merkt

Staci Merkt, District Manager
Jefferson County Soil and Water Conservation District