



# Wheeler Soil and Water Conservation District

40535 Highway 19, Fossil, OR 97830

(P) 541.468.2990 • (F) 541.468.2991

administration@wheelerswcd.org

Board of Directors

Meeting Minutes

April 30, 2026

## Directors

Jim Bob Collins  
Ross Ryno  
Anna Thomas  
Dave Hunt  
Brent Johnson  
Jason Davis  
Zach Bruce

## Employees

Cassandra Newton  
Robin Champagne  
Kristen Neuburger  
Brooke Moore  
Laurel Tappert

## Others Present

Brandon Ferguson, ODF  
Will Coltrin, NRCS  
Alex Makic, USFS

The board meeting was called to order by Vice Chair Thomas at 6:11 p.m. by the clock on the wall.

## 1. Agency Reports

### a. NRCS, Will Coltrin

Will provided an overview of the Local Workgroup Meeting that was held immediately prior to the SWCD board meeting.

### b. ODF, Brandon Ferguson

Brandon provided an update on staffing and agency organization.

### c. USFS, Alex Makic

Alex shared updates on the North Slope and Upper Trout / Bridge Creek projects, as well as an update on the progress of fence repair/installation.

## 2. District Reports

### a. District Manager, Cassi Newton

Cassi advised that all pertinent items within her report will be discussed in detail during the meeting.

### b. Conservation Technician, Brooke Moore

Brooke advised that the three CREP plans were accepted. She provided an update on application submissions and field work conducted.

### c. Conservation Technician, Kristen Neuburger

Kristen stated that her report is current and that she is primarily focused on conducting treatments when weather allows.

### d. Conservation Technician, Laurel Tappert

Laurel stated that her report is current. She advised that she has been working alongside Brooke in the field and working on applications for the upcoming OWEB solicitation.

### e. Office Assistant, Robin Champagne

Robin stated that her report is current.

## 3. Monthly Business

### a. Review and approve minutes

#### i. March 26, 2026, regular & executive meetings

**Meeting Location:** The Rock in Spray, Oregon

**To Join from a computer or smartphone:**

<https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/954414701> (Contact the office for meeting password)

**To dial in using a phone:**

(571) 317-3122 (Access Code: 954-414-701)

‡**Motion** made by Vice Chair Thomas to approve the board meeting minutes presented, Director Davis seconded the motion. Chair Collins, Vice Chair Thomas, Director Ryno, Director Hunt, Director Johnson, Director Davis, Director Bruce voted yes. There were no opposing votes. The motion passed unanimously.

**b. Review and approve financial reports**

**i. March**

‡**Motion** made by Director Davis to approve the board meeting minutes presented, Director Johnson seconded the motion. Chair Collins, Vice Chair Thomas, Director Ryno, Director Hunt, Director Johnson, Director Davis, Director Bruce voted yes. There were no opposing votes. The motion passed unanimously.

**c. Review and approve Accounts Payable**

**i. March**

‡**Motion** made by Vice Chair Thomas to approve the board meeting minutes presented, Director Davis seconded the motion. Chair Collins, Vice Chair Thomas, Director Ryno, Director Hunt, Director Johnson, Director Davis voted yes. There were no opposing votes. The motion passed unanimously.

**4. Upcoming Meetings & Events**

**a. Staff Meeting, every Monday**

**b. May**

i. 4th Capacity Rulemaking, 1pm Redmond

ii. 12th OACD Board Meeting, 9am virtual

iii. 18th Capacity Rulemaking, 1pm virtual

iv. 21st OCEAN Board Meeting, 1pm virtual

v. **25th Memorial Day OFFICE CLOSED**

vi. 27th JDBP Meeting, 9am

vii. **28th SWCD Board Meeting, 6pm Spray**

**5. Upcoming Deadlines**

**a. May**

i. 30<sup>th</sup> USFWS Partners F/W Grant

**b. June**

i. 30<sup>th</sup> Annual Budget

ii. 30<sup>th</sup> Annual Work Plan

**6. District Management**

**a. FY26-27 Annual Budget**

Cassi presented the annual budget. She explained that based on funding forecasts, she is recommending no to implement the step increases for the staff at this time, but she did recommend a COLA of 2.8% for full-time staff.

‡**Motion** made by Director Ryno to approve the 2.8% COLA for full-time staff, Director Bruce seconded the motion. Chair Collins, Vice Chair Thomas, Director Ryno, Director Hunt, Director Johnson, Director Davis, Director Bruce voted yes. There were no opposing votes. The motion passed unanimously.

Cassi advised that suggested edits must be provided by the end of May to ensure a final draft to be presented for adoption at the June meeting. There were no recommended edits during this board meeting.

**b. Property**

Cassi provided updates on the project at the property pertaining to:

- Status of current lease
- Sale of manufactured home building
- Landowner assist to burn structure and removal
- Redirected plans for structures

**7. Legislation**

None

**8. Projects/Programs**

**a. OWEB Grants Planned**

Staff provided an overview of the grant applications being drafted for the summer solicitation.

**b. AgriMet**

Cassi advised that BOR is working with OSU to install the remaining two stations in Wheeler, as well as two others in the John Day Basin.

**9. Partners**

**a. Central Oregon Weed Partners**

Kristen provided an overview of the meeting hosted by Dan Son in Prineville that included all noxious weed partners across the ODA Central Oregon region.

**10. Business Not Listed**

**a. OWEB Winter Open Solicitation Rankings**

Brooke and Cassi presented the rankings of the submitted applications. The Board discussed the proposed projects and ranking results in detail.

**Next Meeting:** Thursday, May 28, 2026

The Board took a 5-minute recess at 7:58 prior to beginning executive sessions.

192.660(2)(i)

192.660(8)

To evaluate the performance of an officer, employee or staff member if the person does not request an open meeting.

The board meeting was adjourned by Chair Collins at 8:46 p.m. by the clock on the wall.

*Respectfully submitted by Cassandra Newton*

  
James Collins, Chair  
Cassandra Newton, District Manager

