



Wheeler Soil and Water Conservation District

2022-2023 Annual Work Plan

Introduction and Purpose

The Annual Work Plan for Wheeler Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) covers the period from July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2023. The purpose of this Plan is to direct the District in facilitating natural resource conservation programs and project services in an incentivized approach with partners and landowners to benefit soil health, agriculture, watershed functions and resiliency, range and forest lands, fish and wildlife habitat, wise use of resources, and the overall socioeconomic prosperity of the District.

Services

Technical Assistance

Technical assistance is provided to residents and landowners through one-on-one site visits and consultation. Technical assistance involves helping residents and landowners address natural resource concerns and implement conservation practices that protect soil, water, agriculture, fish and wildlife.

Conservation Planning

A Conservation Plan is a customized, detailed guide to help a landowner manage their land profitably while protecting natural resources. Plans address site-specific issues through practices to conserve soil, water, and related plant and animal resources. The District helps develop plans at no cost to landowners with the assistance of USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) and Farm Service Agency (FSA). Each landowner makes all decisions on their plan, implements the plan, and has complete control over the activities on their land (within applicable permitting guidelines).

Financial Assistance

Financial assistance is distributed through District cost-share programs and funding partner agreements. This funding is used to implement projects to address natural resource concerns as identified in our Long-Range Business Plan. The District provides and/or facilitates grant funding applications, administrative management, appropriate contract and agreement management, and fiscal reporting.

Partnerships

The District is 100% grant funded and is reliant on funding, specialized technical assistance and overall leveraged capability through our numerous and very important federal, state, tribal, non-profit and business partners. Our most important partners are the citizens, landowners, and constituency within the District that, on a voluntary basis, allow us to work with them to accomplish beneficial conservation practices. The District is a member of the Oregon Association of Conservation Districts (OACD), Oregon Conservation Education & Assistance Network (OCEAN), Special Districts Association of Oregon (SDAO), the Frontier Chamber of Commerce, the John Day Basin Partnership (JDBP) and the Lower John Day Work Group (LJDWG).

Conservation Education

Conservation education is a very important effort of the District in working with K-12 students and adults regarding natural resource programs, projects and practices in an ever-evolving learning environment. Within our own Board of Directors and the District staff we are constantly undergoing training, specialized certifications, and practical work experience growth. The District utilizes our partnering entities and uses our District web page, social media, workshops, project tours, student natural resource curriculum, newsletters, in-person meetings, virtual presentations and other activity and event participation.

Conservation Priority Goals

Our Long-Range Business Plan for 2021-2023 outlines strategies and actions we will utilize to address nine resource concerns in Wheeler County.

- Water Quality
- Water Quantity

- Soil Health and Erosion
- Invasive Species
- Fish and Wildlife Habitat
- Forest Health
- Maintaining Agriculture Viability
- Conservation Education

Board of Directors and Staff

Wheeler SWCD was formed in 1963 and is one of 45 conservation districts in Oregon, which are defined as political subdivisions of state government. The District is not a state agency; rather it is classified as a municipal corporation, a form of local government, which is required to follow many of the same laws that govern state agencies. Wheeler SWCD is directed by an elected Board of Directors with seven (7) members and reports on a state level to the Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA). The District has a current professional staff of five (5) that work under the authority and management of the Board of Directors to provide landowners and citizens with conservation services.

Director	Area	Term Expiration
David Hunt	Zone 1 (Fossil)	December 31, 2022
Anna Thomas	Zone 2 (Spray)	December 31, 2022
Jason Davis	Zone 3 (East Mitchell)	December 31, 2024
<i>Vacant</i>	Zone 4 (West Mitchell)	December 31, 2022
Wayne Lindquist	Zone 5 (Twickenham)	December 31, 2022
Ross Ryno	At Large 1	December 31, 2022
James 'Jim Bob' Collins	At Large 2	December 31, 2022

Ted Molinari	Director Emeritus	December 31, 2022
Jeremiah Holmes	Director Emeritus	December 31, 2022

Amy Derby	Associate Director	December 31, 2022
Rob Wade	Associate Director	December 31, 2022

Staff	Position	Email
Randall 'Randy' Williams	District Manager	districtmanager@wheelerswcd.org
Cassandra 'Cassi' Newton	Administrative Manager	administration@wheelerswcd.org
Brooke Moore	Conservation Technician II	brooke.moore@wheelerswcd.org
Daniel Goodell	Conservation Technician I	danielgoodell@wheelerswcd.org
Kristen Neuburger	Conservation Technician Assistant	kristenneuburger@wheelerswcd.org

Objectives and Tasks

Objective 1 District Administration and Operations

Task 1.1 Maintain District fiscal records on QuickBooks system, other electronic and hard copy financial records, monthly Board reports, and project and technical assistance grant financial records.

Task 1.2 Conduct and submit grant financial reports and reimbursement requests, vendor and contractor payments, and other receivables and payables.

Task 1.3 Conduct proper procedures for financial transactions and maintain financial accounts.

Task 1.4 Maintain project and district files in compliance with audit requirements.

Task 1.5 Process accounts payable, accounts receivable and payroll liabilities monthly.

Task 1.6 Hold staff meetings at least three (3) times per month to coordinate programs and project efforts, conduct training, revise/develop plans, contribute outreach material and review district policies.

Task 1.7 Hold at least one (1) monthly safety meetings in conjunction with regularly scheduled staff meetings.

Task 1.8 Conduct follow-up calls/visits to landowners after projects are completed.

Task 1.9 Support scheduled training for each employee and respective position; including, but not limited to state and/or federal compliance requirements.

Task 1.10 Conduct SDAO and/or OSHA site inspection and complete self-insurance annual evaluation. Conduct small HR audits when administrative time permits.

Task 1.11 Revise the District Employee Handbook using the Oregon Government Employer Template and update additional policies, as needed.

Task 1.12 Revise the employee evaluation form, develop employee position salary matrix and salary adjustment process.

Task 1.13 Conduct annual employee evaluations in January, determine any salary adjustments, and update position descriptions, as needed.

Task 1.14 Begin revisions to Long-Range Business Plan for 2024.

Task 1.15 Draft and manage the District's Annual Budget.

Task 1.16 Host an Annual Meeting to present the Annual Report and audit, per ORS requirements.

Task 1.17 Manage District memberships and subscriptions.

Task 1.18 Educate and assist the Board of Directors, as needed.

Task 1.19 Prepare for, conduct and document board meetings.

Task 1.20 Recruit for vacant Board of Director position and facilitate 2022 director elections.

Task 1.21 Prepare, solicit and award bids per District policies.

Task 1.22 Manage District contracts and agreements.

Task 1.23 Continually seek funding for capacity and conservation needs.

Task 1.24 Utilize SDAO resources, including, but not limited to grant programs and training.

Task 1.25 Build and encourage strong working relationships with all local, state and federal agencies.

Task 1.26 Review Annual Work Plan quarterly.

Objective 2 Education and Outreach

Task 2.1 Develop and implement a comprehensive Education and Outreach Program strategy.

Task 2.2 Develop and manage a new webpage for the District that will be capable of efficient annotation, updates, event information and pertinent resources.

Task 2.3 Develop and refine District social media use, including frequent posting of program and project examples, events, educational information and District notices.

Task 2.4 Develop and implement a K-12 student series of activities and natural resource education for local school districts and charter/homeschool students, including, but not limited to a poster contest and stream table presentations.

Task 2.5 Conduct at least two (2) adult-level education workshops and at least two (2) public project tours.

Task 2.6 Prepare displays and have staff representation at opportune events within Wheeler County, including, but not limited to Wheeler County Fair and Chamber of Commerce events.

Task 2.7 Publish three (3) quarterly newsletters (Jan-Sept), an Annual Report (Dec), press releases and other specific information.

Task 2.8 Partner with local non-profit organizations and other agencies to provide education and outreach opportunities to landowners and residents.

Task 2.9 Promote partnering agency events through the District webpage and social media.

Task 2.10 Conduct outreach to develop a digital address book to reduce physical mailings.

Task 2.11 Develop and maintain a map of past and current project components and locations to be used for both as an office resource and outreach efforts.

Objective 3 Wheeler SWCD Weed Program

Task 3.1 Through the current ODA Grant, purchase equipment to conduct noxious weed treatments on private land for landowners and residents of the District.

Task 3.2 Through the current ODA Grant, coordinate and manage a Noxious Weed Cooperative Partnership with all appropriate agencies present within the District.

Task 3.3 Develop and implement a cost-share program to promote noxious weed treatments year-round regardless of available funding through agency partners.

Task 3.4 Attend appropriate training opportunities to account for CE credits required for ODA Applicator's Licenses.

Task 3.5 Maintain consistent documentation of all known weed treatments completed within the District.

Task 3.6 Renew District's ODA Dealer's License in December.

Task 3.7 Manage, conduct proper documentation, and provide weed chemical sales.

Task 3.8 Promote backpack sprayer rentals available to local landowners and residents by the District.

Task 3.9 Conduct noxious weed surveys while traveling through the District and utilize ODA Weedmapper.

Task 3.10 Conduct a minimum of two (2) landowner workshops for invasive weed management and treatment.

Task 3.11 Coordinate, as needed, with the Wheeler County Weed Board for any suggested modifications to the County Weeds List.

Task 3.12 Coordinate with the Wheeler County Court and other agencies in regard to roadside annual weed treatment.

Objective 4 Administer Grants for and Partner with Oregon Department of Agriculture

Task 4.1 Administer and coordinate with landowners and/or contractors for the current OSWB noxious weed projects implementation, meet all permit requirements, maintain fiscal records and submit reimbursement invoices, submit project reports, and subsequently conduct project monitoring.

Task 4.2 Coordinate with landowners to prepare future applications for the ODA Noxious Weed Program through the OSWB/OWEB.

Task 4.3 Coordinate with the ODA Ag Water Quality (AgWQ) Specialist to plan and conduct Local Advisory Committee (LAC) meetings.

Task 4.4 Review the AgWQ Management Area Plan (AgWQMAP), as needed.

Task 4.5 Plan and prepare for the Focus Area Monitoring Survey to be conducted in August 2023 for the 2021-2023 biennium.

Task 4.6 Plan and prepare for adding another Focus Area within the District while continuing the data collection in the current Focus Area.

Objective 5 Administer Grants for and Partner with Oregon Watershed Enhance Board

Task 5.1 Work with landowners and land managers to identify needs and develop new projects to implement conservation practices.

Task 5.2 Administer and coordinate with the landowner and/or contractors for the current small grant's implementation, meet all permit requirements, maintain fiscal records and submit reimbursement invoices, and submit project reports.

Task 5.3 Administer and coordinate with landowners and/or contractors for the current restoration projects implementation, meet all permit requirements, maintain fiscal records and submit reimbursement invoices, submit project reports, and subsequently conduct project monitoring.

Task 5.4 Administer and utilize technical assistance grant programs to sustain District staff and operations in implementing partnering programs and respective projects, including, but not limited to CREP and NRCS. Maintain fiscal accounting, agency correspondence, grant forms information compliance, and proper invoice and reports submission.

Task 5.5 Plan and prepare an application for a Stakeholder Engagement Grant to be submitted during an open solicitation in/after fall of 2023.

Objective 6 Administer Grants for and Partner with United States Department of Agriculture

Task 6.1 Encourage where appropriate and when a landowner is supportive of the use of the FSA-CREP program. Develop and implement appropriate project plans, permits, contracts and agreements, NRCS practice codes, and monitoring.

Task 6.2 Conduct all phases of the Lower John Day Canyons Restoration Initiative NRCS-RCPP project per MOA held with Gilliam SWCD.

Task 6.3 Promote and provide technical assistance for all open funding sources through USDA programs, including, but not limited to EQIP, CRP, CSP, CIG and Disaster Assistance.

Task 6.4 Continue to work with NRCS in regard to the Soil Survey for Wheeler County.

Task 6.5 Coordinate a watershed/reach assessment for the Kahler Creek Watershed with assistance from NRCS.

Task 6.6 Plan and prepare for a Joint Chief's application through NRCS to be submitted in August 2023.

Objective 7 Administer Grants for and Partner with Oregon Department of Forestry

Task 7.1 Promote and provide technical assistance for fuel reduction and forest health projects.

Objective 8 Partner with Confederate Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation

Task 8.1 Coordinate a project tour with the Pine Creek Conservation Area.

Task 8.2 Coordinate material and supply needs with CTWS staff.

Objective 9 Partner with Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife

Task 9.1 Coordinate a Butte Creek Watershed culvert assessment with the assistance of ODFW staff.

Objective 10 Participate in Organized Partnerships and Groups

Task 10.1 Participate in the John Day Basin Partnership coordination meetings, support committee work group efforts, and contribute assistance where appropriate.

Task 10.2 Coordinate and co-lead the implementation of boundary signs through the JDBP.

Task 10.3 Participate in the Lower John Day Work Group as it continues with planning and implementation of the Lower John Day Integrated Water Resources Plan.

Task 10.4 Coordinate and lead the implementation of AgriMet Weather Stations in the John Day Basin, a Strategy identified by the LJDWG.

Task 10.5 Promote Focused Investment Partnership (FIP) opportunities through the Butte Creek and Thirtymile watersheds.

Commonly Used Acronyms

AgWQ	Agriculture Water quality	MOA	Memorandum of Agreement
AgWQMAP	Agricultural Water Quality Management Area Plan	MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
APHIS	Animal Plant and Health Inspection Service	NRCS	Natural Resources Conservation Service
BLM	Bureau of Land Management	OACD	Oregon Association of Conservation Districts
BPA	Bonneville Power Administration	ODA	Oregon Department of Agriculture
CIG	Conservation Innovation Grant	ODF	Oregon Department of Forestry
CIS	Conservation Implementation Strategy	ODFW	Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife
CREP	Conservation Resource Enhancement Program	ODOT	Oregon Department of Transportation
CRP	Conservation Reserve Program	OSHA	Occupational Safety & Health Administration
CSP	Conservation Stewardship Program	OSU	Oregon State University
CTUIR	Confederated Tribes of Umatilla Indian Reservation	OSWB	Oregon State Weed Board
CTWS	Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs	OWEB	Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board
DEQ	Department of Environmental Quality	OWRD	Oregon Water Resources Department
DSL	Department of State Lands	RCPP	Regional Conservation Partnership Program
EQIP	Environmental Quality Incentives Program	SDAO	Special Districts Association of Oregon
FIP	Focused Investment Partnership	SOW	Statement of Work
FSA	Farm Services Agency	SWCC	Soil & Water Conservation Commission
ISRP	Independent Scientific Review Panel	SWCD	Soil & Water Conservation District
JDBP	John Day Basin Partnership	USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
LAC	Local Advisory Committee	USFS	United States Forest Service
LJDWG	Lower John Day Work Group	USFWS	United States Fish & Wildlife Service