



# Wheeler Soil and Water Conservation District

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Board of Directors  
Meeting Minutes  
ANNUAL MEETING  
March 26, 2026

## Directors

Jim Bob Collins  
Ross Ryno  
Anna Thomas  
Dave Hunt  
Brent Johnson

## Employees

Cassandra Newton  
Robin Champagne  
Kristen Neuburger  
Brooke Moore  
Laurel Tappert

## Others Present

Dan Son, ODA  
Will Coltrin, NRCS  
Don Sietz  
Virginia Sietz  
Alex Makic, USFS  
Michael Crumrine, USFS

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

## 1. Annual Meeting

Cassi explained for following:

- ORS 568.580 states that each year after the creation of the first board of directors at a time fixed by resolution of the board, the board, by giving due notice, [SWCDs] shall call an annual meeting of the landowners in the district and present an annual report and audit.
- ORS 568.590 states that no later than 15 days prior to the annual meeting, the board of directors for a soil and water conservation district shall cause notices to be published in a paper of general circulation in the area, setting forth the time and place of holding the meeting.
- ORS 568.210 states “due notice” means notice published at least twice, with an interval of at least seven days between the two publication dates, in a newspaper or other publication of general circulation within the appropriate area...

She further explained that since the notices for the January 8<sup>th</sup> event did not meet the statutory notice requirements, Wheeler SWCD had to re-notice the meeting and present the required information in a public meeting.

Cassi presented the Annual Report and audit for the 2024-2025 fiscal year. She provided physical copies to those in-person and advised that both documents are available on the District’s website or contact the office for a physical copy at any time.

## 2. Agency Reports

### a. ODA, Dan Son

Dan shared about an upcoming noxious weed collaboration meeting in April to be hosted in Prineville as an opportunity for the staff from multiple agencies to gather. He advised

**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)

that it will be an opportunity to meet everyone across the region, as well as share work and opportunities to collaborate.

**b. NRCS, Will Coltrin**

Will introduced himself as the Acting District Conservationist for Wheeler/Gilliam NRCS office. He advised that currently him and Jessica are working through applications for EQIP and CSP, hoping to get ranking completed by the end of April to determine funding. Will reminded everyone that the Wheeler NRCS Local Work Group Meeting will be held in-person at 3pm prior to the SWCD's regular board meeting on April 30<sup>th</sup>.

**c. USFS, Alex Makic**

Alex share updates on the North Slope and Upper Trout / Bridge Creek projects, as well as bid tours planned for a couple restoration projects – Double Corral and Happy Camp.

**d. USFS, Michael Crumrin**

No report.

**3. District Reports**

**a. District Manager, Cassi Newton**

Cassi advised that she ordered the new laptops and expressed appreciation for the staff's patience as we secured funding for four of the five laptops over the past year. She also advised that the new printer was delivered, but she is working on trying to find assistance in moving the old printer to its new location. Cassi informed the Board that Senators Merkley and Wyden will be hosting townhalls in the next week, both in Fossil. She reminded the Board to complete the PBA MOA, if interested in participating.

**b. Conservation Technician, Brooke Moore**

Brooke stated that her report is current. She advised that there is a CREP signup open and she has three plans in the works. Brooke provided an update on her NRCS certification efforts.

**c. Conservation Technician, Kristen Neuburger**

Kristen stated that her report is current and that she is gearing up to start spraying contingent on weather.

**d. Conservation Technician, Laurel Tappert**

Laurel stated that her report is current. She advised she has been working mostly on the house bill juniper project and working through assessments and outreach for the fire TAs.

**e. Office Assistant, Robin Champagne**

Robin stated that her report is current.

**4. Monthly Business**

**a. Review and approve minutes**

**i. February 26, 2026, regular meeting**

**ii. April 9, 2026, special meeting**

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

**b. Review and approve financial reports**

**i. December - February**

Cassi presented financial reports for the past three months. She advised that due to the direct deposit payments, there has been some discrepancies in reporting since some of the end of the month payments do not process until after the 1<sup>st</sup> of the next month.

Cassi asked the Board minded if financial reporting could be offset by one month to ensure accuracy. The Board agreed that would be preferred.

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

**c. Review and approve Accounts Payable**

**i. December-February**

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

**5. Upcoming Meetings & Events**

**a. Staff Meeting, every Monday**

**b. March**

- i. 10th OACD Meeting, 9am virtual
- ii. 17th LJDWG Meeting, 10am virtual
- iii. 19th OCEAN Board Meeting, 1pm virtual
- iv. 20th SB PBA Steering Com., 10am Spray
- v. **26th SWCD Board Meeting, 6pm Spray**
- vi. 31st-2nd OCEAN Connect – 2 staff attending

**c. April**

- i. 6th-9th After the Flames – 1(2) staff attending
- ii. 14th OACD Meeting, 9am virtual
- iii. 16th Mid JD LAC Meeting, 12pm Spray
- iv. 16th OCEAN Meeting, 1pm virtual
- v. 17th Grant SWCD Resource Fair, 9am
- vi. 20th OWEB Site Visits, 9am
- vii. **30th SWCD Board Meeting, 6pm Spray**

**6. Upcoming Deadlines**

**a. March**

- i. none

**7. District Management**

**a. Elections**

Cassi advised that Directors Collins, Hunt, and Johnson are up for election this year. She provided the candidate packets and explained the process. Director Hunt advised that he will not be running for another term, but has invited Tyler Hunt to run for Zone 1 in the 2026 election.

**b. Staffing**

Cassi advised that the Office Assistant has a reduced work schedule and is currently only working as needed. She also advised that the staff meetings were moved to monthly

instead of weekly and she hopes to implement some basic training opportunities in place of the weekly staff meetings.

**c. Policy Revision**

Cassi presented the revised evaluation policy that was discussed in February.

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

**d. Property**

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

- Conex purchase and storage
- Landowner assist to burn structure and removal plans
- Resubmission of permits with Change of Use reports
- Submission of documentation to USDA Rural Development
- Capital campaign feasibility

**8. Legislation**

**a. General Update**

Cassi provided information on HB4134, HB4153, and HR2766.

**9. Projects/Programs**

**None**

**10. Partners**

**None**

**11. Business Not Listed**

**None**

**Next Meeting:** Thursday, April 30, 2026

The Board took a 5-minute recess at 7:02 prior to beginning executive sessions.

192.660(2)(i)

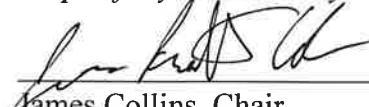
192.660(8)


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

The Board chose to table the District Manager evaluation until April due to the Personnel Chair not being present.

The board meeting was adjourned by Chair Collins at 8:13 p.m. by the clock on the wall.

*Respectfully submitted by Cassandra Newton*

  
James Collins, Chair

  
Cassandra Newton, District Manager