



**Wheeler Soil & Water Conservation District**  
 40535 Highway 19  
 Fossil, Oregon 97830

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Winter  
 Jan-Mar  
 2023

# Conservation Newsletter

## Postal Customer

**Fossil & Spray residents:** We apologize for the delay in getting the Annual Report mailed out to you, as we had difficulty mailing the publication as a general delivery and had to label each report for redelivery.

*This publication made possible in part by funding provided by the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board*

## UPCOMING EVENTS & MEETINGS

- |         |       |  |
|---------|-------|--|
| 4/18    | 3 pm  | Grant SWCD Resource Fair, Grant County Fair Grounds            |
| 4/19    | 4 pm  | Wheeler County Wolf Committee Meeting, Big Sarvice Corral      |
| 4/25-26 |       | Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board Meeting                     |
| 4/27    | 6 pm  | Wheeler SWCD Board Meeting, The Rock in Spray (virtual option) |
| 5/16    | 10 am | Lower John Day Work Group- Place Based Planning Meeting        |
| 5/17    | 9 am  | John Day Basin Partnership Meeting, Condon Fire Hall           |
| 5/25    | 6 pm  | Wheeler SWCD Board Meeting, The Rock in Spray (virtual option) |
| 6/29    | 6 pm  | Wheeler SWCD Board Meeting, The Rock in Spray (virtual option) |

*Everyone is welcome to attend these events. For more information please contact*

*Cassi Newton, District Manager*

*(P) 541.468.2990 (C) 541.620.8767 (E) administration@wheelerswcd.org*

## Wheeler SWCD Seeking Office Assistant

If you are an experienced in of basic office skills with a passion for conservation, consider joining our team! We are looking for a person who enjoys a diverse role and can easily transition between days in the office and time in the field.



**Opportunity:** The Office Assistant position is responsible for assisting with both administrative tasks and conservation programs. This position exists to ensure that adequate support is provided to all other positions in providing technical, financial, and educational resources are obtained, focused, and coordinated to meet the conservation needs of local land users. The position responsibilities may include, but is not limited to secretarial/clerical assignments, grant applications and reporting, field work, and attending meetings.

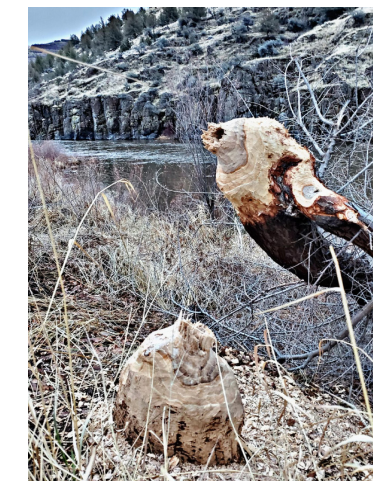
## Wheeler Soil and Water Conservation District John Day River Conservation and Community Center

Wheeler SWCD purchased 8.6 acres at the end of 2022 and has big plans of developing the property with the community at its focus! We are currently seeking funds to design and construct a "Conservation Community Center" that is centrally located between the three incorporated communities of Wheeler County. This facility will not only house the SWCD staff, but also have up to 7 offices available for lease by public/non-profit agencies, an education room, large conference room, and kitchen for catering



- all open to the public! Our goal is to construct this facility using cross-laminated mass timber with materials sourced locally. We also have long-term plans of developing an interpretive trail with conservation displays, a community garden and workshops, partnering with BLM for a nature trail system, and partnering with OSU Extension Office to host 4-H and other events. Wheeler SWCD is excited to be embarking on this venture of bringing much needed resources to our rural area!

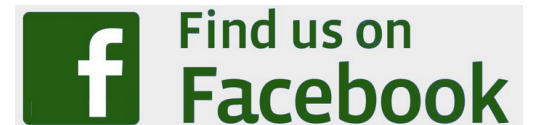
## Wheeler SWCD Outreach and Education



*(left)* Just as this beaver is working to build, so is Wheeler SWCD! Our new year resolution was to focus more on education & outreach. We have made a plan to post on soial media daily. We may miss days, but we try to catch up when time allows! What would you like to see us post about?!

We will also be publishing quarterly newsletters in April, July, and October. Our Annual Report is published in January following our Annual Meeting in December.

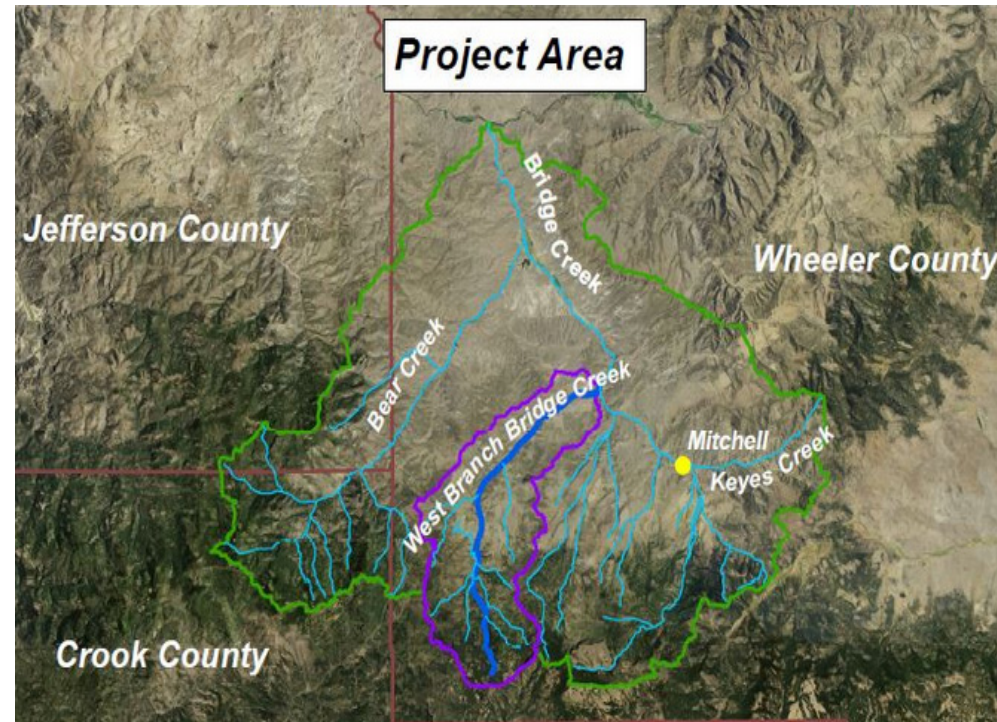
Wheeler SWCD would like to send publications to interested persons whose mailing addresses are outside Wheeler County. If you want to receive our publications electronically, send a request to [administration@wheelerswcd.org](mailto:administration@wheelerswcd.org).



[facebook.com/WheelerSWCD](https://facebook.com/WheelerSWCD)

**Our posts include:**  
 #RiparianMondays  
 #LifeofaTechTuesdays  
 #WeedWednesdays  
 #UplandThursdays  
 AND MUCH MORE!!!!

## Wheeler SWCD Riparian Restoration



Wheeler SWCD received grant funds from ODA to conduct an assessment of **West Branch Bridge Creek** which will include streamside vegetation and shade, surrounding upland surveying, and discovery of potential practices that could increase the Agriculture Water Quality (AgWQ) of the stream. With assistance from Anabran Solutions, data is being gathered to be used for riverscape restoration planning. Through guidance from RSI, Inc., Brooke is currently conducting a survey using ODFW's Intermediate Level Survey method. Late this spring, a stakeholder engagement event will be held to present the data collected through this assessment to landowners within the West Branch Bridge Creek project area. Brooke is writing a technical assistance grant application to be submitted in April to OWEB requesting funds to conduct a stream habitat assessment with ODFW Aquatic Inventories Program. In conjunction with these assessments, the staff will be designating Bridge Creek Watershed as an ODA Focus Area beginning in the 2023-2025 biennium with funding partnerships with Ochoco NF, NRCS, BLM and others!

**Riparian** is a word that describes things along the edge of a river or stream: trees, shrubs, woody debris, and wetlands.

**Why are riparian areas important?** They help filter water before it reaches the river. They provide shade that cools water temperature, and their roots hold bank soils in place. Riparian areas create curves that slow the flow of water and marshy areas that help store water. These great ribbons of green not only improve the river for fish, they are also home to all kinds of wildlife. During high stream flows, riparian vegetation slows and dissipates floodwaters. This prevents erosion that damages fish spawning areas and aquatic insect habitats.



Our conservation technicians and office staff hauled 915 plants and caging materials from CTWS's nursery to our **Butte Creek Riverscape Restoration**. Think Wild Beaver Works from Central Oregon managed the volunteer recruitment and oversight to put these plants in the ground along Butte Creek in conjunction with our Low-Tech Process Based Restoration efforts!!

Shout out to our partner, CTWS for raising and nurturing these plants the past four years in preparation of this project!

Shout out to the Think Wild Beaver Works team and volunteers for spending the last weekend of March camping in not-so-pleasant weather to see this project through!



## Wheeler SWCD Upland Restoration



2022/12/08 00:29



Wheeler Soil and Water Conservation District was awarded \$123,511 to remove encroaching juniper and thin dense and diseased conifer stands to improve the overall health, function, and wildlife habitat available on hillsides adjacent to Butte Creek.

"The proposed restoration project would have a positive impact on water quantity, quality, and provide beneficial habitat for terrestrial wildlife. Thinning the overstock conifers and eliminating the Western Juniper from the landscape will allow for more infiltration of moisture from precipitation into the watershed," says Brooke Moore, Conservation Technician II

The **Butte Creek Watershed Restoration** Project will remove encroaching juniper and thin dense and diseased conifer stands to improve the overall health, function, and wildlife habitat available on hillsides adjacent to Butte Creek. It is expected to begin in the winter of 2022-23 and be completed by December 2026.

## Wheeler SWCD Weed Program

Wheeler SWCD participates in the ODA Noxious Weed Program and submits an application annually in December. Through these projects, we are able to assist landowners with treatments by providing herbicide at a 50% cost-share and the landowners have the option to conduct the treatment themselves or the District will do the treatment at no cost to the landowner. We were awarded a 2023 ODA grant from Oregon State Weed Board to treat 240 net acres of thistles and knapweeds in eastern Wheeler County!

It's weed treatment season! Below is a list of products Wheeler SWCD has on the shelf, but we can order nearly anything. Most products come in varying container sizes: 1 quart, 1 gallon, and 2.5 gallon. Pricing depends on container size and products.

**Contact us or stop by for your herbicide needs!**

- |          |             |            |
|----------|-------------|------------|
| -Curtail | -Denonate   | -E-2       |
| -Escort  | -Grazon     | -High Noon |
| -Makaze  | -Milestone  | -Opensight |
| -Phase   | -Plateau    | -Roundup   |
| -Syl-Tac | -Weedmaster |            |

Through funding assistance from ODA Noxious Weed Program, we were able to obtain a 2023 John Deere Gator, sprayer setup and other small equipment to conduct treatments! The District is in the process of developing an in-house cost-share program that will assist landowners and the public with treating noxious and invasive weeds. Wheeler County has provided funding assistance to help launch this program in late 2023!



## Annual Grass Long-Term Treatment

Rejuvra®

Untreated

Rejuvra®

3 years after Treatment

**Rejuvra** herbicide stops cheatgrass, medusahead and ventenata at the germination level and protects rangelands for up to four years so desirable forage can return. There are no grazing restrictions when used by label recommendations. Contact us to learn more! .