

# **Wheeler Soil & Water Conservation**

## **Annual Work Plan**

### **Fiscal Year 2019-2020**

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#### **MISSION STATEMENT**

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To maximize economic and environmental watershed values for Wheeler County

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#### ***Goals***

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Improve health of the watersheds through holistic measures that enhance water quality and quantity for beneficial uses.

Improve soil conservation and health to ensure continued resource availability for future generations.

Provide education and outreach to the public and partner agencies/organizations.

Manage the business of the district in an efficient and effective manner.

*For period: July 2019 – June 2020*

*Board Approved: June 26, 2019*

AgWQMAP	Agricultural Water Quality Management Area Plan
ARS	Agricultural Research Service
BCWA	Bridge Creek Watershed Assessment
BLM	Bureau of Land Management
BPA	Bonneville Power Administration
CCRP	Continuous Conservation Reserve Program
CHaMP	Columbia Basin Habitat Monitoring Project ( <i>techniques used by ODFW</i> )
CIS	Conservation Implementation Strategy
CREP	Conservation Resource Enhancement Program
CRMP	Conservation Resource Management Plan
CRP	Conservation Reserve Program
CSP	Conservation Stewardship Program
CTWS	Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs
DEQ	Department of Environmental Quality
DSL	Department of State Lands
EQIP	Environmental Quality Incentives Program
FIP / OWEB	Focused Investment Partnership (OWEB)
FSA	Farm Services Agency
LO	Landowner
LAC	Local Advisory Committee
LJDWG	Lower John Day Work Group
LMA	Local Management Agency
Mid-C Plan	Middle Columbia River Steelhead Recovery Plan
MJDBCWC	Mid-John Day Bridge Creek Watershed Council
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NOAA	National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration
NRCS	Natural Resources Conservation Service
NWPCC	Northwest Power & Conservation Council
OACD	Oregon Association of Conservation Districts
ODA	Oregon Department of Agriculture
ODA NRD	Oregon Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Division
ODF	Oregon Department of Forestry
ODFW	Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife
ODOT	Oregon Department of Transportation
OCEAN	Oregon Conservation Education and Assistance Network
OPLI	Oregon Paleo Lands Institute
OSHA	Occupational Safety & Health Administration
OSU	Oregon State University
OSWB	Oregon State Weed Board
OWEB	Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board
OWRD	Oregon Water Resources Department
RCPP	Regional Conservation Partnership Program
SDAO	Special Districts Association of Oregon
SOW	Statement of Work
SWCC	Soil & Water Conservation Commission
SWCD	Soil & Water Conservation District
TMDL	Total maximum daily load
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
USFS	United States Forest Service
USFWS	United States Fish & Wildlife Service
WQ	Water quality
WRD	Water Resources Department
WC	Watershed Council
WSWCD	Wheeler Soil & Water Conservation District
WTA	Watershed Technical Assistance

<b>OBJECTIVE:</b>	<b>Improve health of the watersheds to enhance water quality and quantity and improve soil conservation and</b>	
<b>ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>TASK</b>	<b>ACCOMPLISHMENTS</b>
Assessments, Action Planning, Conservation Planning	Continue to work collaboratively with ODFW to update and map inventory list of fish passage barriers within the District.	The district works with ODFW on a regular and ongoing basis for removal and assessment of fish passage barriers within the district. The ODFW Screen Shop has worked on in-stream projects assisting with installation work and installing fish screens, helping us meet grant match requirements.
	Assist landowners with Ag Water Quality and conservation planning.	Landowner contacts pertaining to AgWQ Q1: non-FA: 79 ; FA: 22 Q2: non-FA: 100 ; FA: 23 Q3: non-FA: 69 ; FA: 15 Q4: non-FA: 63 ; FA: 12
	Continue reach evaluations within the District to develop watershed database and action plans.	No reach evaluations were completed in this fiscal year; however, potential funding sources are currently being researched.
	Work cooperatively with the watershed council to develop a reach evaluation/action plan for Butte Creek Assessment and seek match partners.	Due to other ongoing work commitments, this has not yet been accomplished.
	Work cooperatively with ODOT & ODFW to establish culvert replacement priority list within Butte Creek Watershed.	There was no work completed for this task in the current fiscal year.
	Continue outreach to acquire LO participation in Butte Creek and Kahler Creek Reach Evaluations.	Butte Creek: Sign ups ran from Fall 2019 through April 2020. Staff worked on landowner recruitment, mapping and designs, and getting cultural resources submitted.
	Consider changing to new focus area or expanding Mountain Creek Focus Area. Discuss w/ ODA staff expanding the Mountain Creek Focus Area, and collect baseline data if FA is expanded.	Discussions were held at the staff meeting level and the decision was made to maintain the current Mountain Creek Focus Area.
	Continue to participate in Lower John Day Work Group's place-based planning process.	The District staff have continued to participate in the place-based planning process with the Lower John Day Work Group. Staff has attended all meetings, contributed to discussions, reviewed and revised planning documents, participated in subcommittees and assisted with decisions.
Form and/or maintain partnerships with federal, state, local agencies, tribes and conservation organizations and foundations.	Work to define agencies' roles, working relationships and support of natural resource enhancement activities; supply technical, fiscal or other assistance.	The District works cooperatively with regional agencies/groups, including John Day Basin Partnership, Lower John Day Work Group, OACD, BLM, FSA, EcoTrust, OWEB, CTWS, BPA, NRCS, ODFW, USFWS, USFS, Oregon Land Trust, Blue Mountain Land Trust and others. Technical and financial assistance is provided as requested. Two staff members serve on the OWEB Small Grants Team. District Manager attends conference call meetings with OACD.
	Assist and promote watershed council activity, provide technical advice, and continue capacity building for the watershed council.	Watershed council maintains a Facebook page to keep LOs informed of and interested in watershed council activities and uses it to help promote District activities, as well. The Facebook page had 26 posts reaching 988 people.  Two small grants submitted and awarded. Two large grants submitted, one review team made and three large grants were awarded. Was also awarded the capacity grant.  Q1: TA provided 16 times, other LO contacts occurred 12 times. Two displays prepared for Wheeler Co. Fair (attended by approximately 450 people). Q2: The annual meeting (attended by 52 people) had two displays and multiple fact sheets and brochures. TA provided 24 times, other LO contacts occurred 9 times. Q3: TA provided 17 times. Q4: 534 quarterly reports mailed. TA provided 26 times.
	Participate in John Day Basin Partnership and the Lower John Day Working Group.	Staff attended all meetings of John Day Basin Partnership and the Lower John Day Working Group.
	Continue to work with joint agencies developing coordinated weed management.	The District continues to work with adjacent districts and local landowners to note and map weed location. The Tri-County Weed Management grant included Crook and Jefferson SWCDs, as does the Central Oregon Coordinated Biocontrol Project. The District also participates in APHIS funding through the USDA. Field Technician II handles most tasks related to weed management, he continues to learn about weed management and make networking connections with landowners and partners.
	Participate in the LJDWG and provide facilitation assistance in conjunction with WRD (place-based planning).	Staff participates in Lower John Day Working Group, and serves as a co-convenor for the place-based planning project.
	Continue to work w/ NRCS, NPS & CTWS in outreach activities.	Staff worked with NRCS, NPS, and CTWS in designing the kiosk.
	Work with ODA to develop proactive communication regarding potential enforcement issues, allowing WSWCD to work preemptively with local landowners.	Due to the Coronavirus pandemic, the biennial review was postponed and did not take place in the 2019-2020 fiscal year.
	Establish strategic priorities based on identified needs and requirements within the District, with consideration to the John Day Sub-basin Plan, Oregon Plan, ODFW inventories, CTWS's John Day River WS Restoration Strategy and Watershed Council Action Plan, the Mid-Columbia River Steelhead Recovery Plan and the John Day Partnership Strategic Action Plan. Incorporate new plans as adopted.	No new plans were adopted. The District and WC use these plans to focus work in the high priority watersheds. The majority of Wheeler SWCD projects continue to be in Butte, Bridge, Mountain and Kahler creeks.

Set strategic priority work areas.	Continue noxious weed inventory and mapping as staff time allows. Continue to gather and include in weed inventory existing data from partner agencies.	Weed Technician: Q1: LO contacts: 22 Q2: LO contacts: 14 Distributed 20 weed brochures Submitted grant application for WC Priority Noxious Weed Grant Released biocontrols Completed surveys, maps, and preproject report Q3: LO contacts: 7 Released biocontrols Teleconference with ODA regarding noxious weed project Distributed 2 weed brochures Completed one exam for herbicide license Q4: LO contacts: 34
	Craft the District's Long Range Strategic Business Plan for 2020-2025.	The Long Range Business Plan is being revised and is on schedule to be adopted by the Board before January 2021. Due to current and upcoming staffing and operational changes, the revised plan is a 2-year plan for 2021-2023.
Implementation of projects and practices.	Contact landowners and conduct evaluations of project sites.	The staff continues to contact landowners and conduct evaluations of project sites regularly.
	Provide technical assistance, engineering designs and project installation specifications.	The staff continues to provide technical assistance, engineering designs and project installation specifications.
	Facilitate necessary project permitting and consultations.	The staff continues to facilitate necessary project permitting and consultations.
	Promote and implement USDA programs, and continue to support implementation of CREP in Wheeler County.	The District continues to promote and implement USDA programs. CREP is still being implemented in Wheeler County and it is an integral part of District function.
	Implement and promote OWEB projects.	15 OWEB projects were in the implementation phase during the fiscal year: 10 Restoration 5 Technical Assistance  7 OWEB projects were completed during the fiscal year: 4 Restoration, now in monitoring 3 Technical Assistance  13 OWEB restoration projects were monitored during the fiscal year
	Implement and promote Small Grant projects.	3 small grants were in the implementation phase during the fiscal year.
	Implement and promote CTWS/BPA projects, and monitor funding packages.	145 acres of upland habitat was treated through CTWS contract T-18676-19.  Consultation with SHPO & THPO determined that additional archaeological research was not anticipated for the work through CTWS contract T-19115-20. Work will be implemented in 2020-21 fiscal year.  2 renewed contracts and 6 new contracts were supported through Riparian Buffer BPA contract #82532, which covered approximately 285 acres and an estimated 15-18 miles of stream.
	Seek and implement other funding agency projects.	Staff has implemented APHIS as a new funding source.
	Ensure project implementation meets NRCS compliance standards.	Each project application funded is compared against NRCS compliance standards. The District Manager is a certified NRCS planner and helps monitor project work for NRCS standards. Both District Field Technicians are going through training to become a certified NRCS planner.
	Implement NRCS RCPP and other programs.	Landowner contact and Technical Assistance numbers are included in totals reported elsewhere in this work plan. Cultural resource surveys have been completed on all needed contracts.
	Implement and promote State Weed grant projects.	2 OSWB grants were completed within the fiscal year. 2 OSWB grant were submitted, funded, and are being implemented.
	Implement and document accomplishments for the Mountain Creek Focus Area.	Accomplishments are reported in the FAAP report submitted to ODA quarterly. Q1 LO Contacts: 22 Q1 Site Visits: 12 Q1 Work: Applications for grant funding were planned and prepared, and sources of match funding explored.  Q2 LO Contacts: 23 Q2 Site Visits: 11 Q2 Work: One funding application was submitted for landowner projects. One completion report completed. The interim assessment was completed and accepted.  Q3 LO Contacts: 15 Q3 Site Visits: 7 Q3 Work: BDA designs were completed and ODFW fish passage approval was awarded for 220-6005.  Q4 LO Contacts: 12 Q4 Site Visits: 2 Q4 Work: RCPP was not extended. One project funding and match source was pursued. One pre-project photo report with photo points was completed.  **Work accomplishments are not reported until the completion report is submitted, so there may be work that was done during the fiscal year, but not yet reported.
FIP project planning and implementation.	Two FIP projects were planned and awarded.	

Project Monitoring	Complete photo points and effectiveness monitoring, and submit funding agency monitoring reports.	Project photos and monitoring reports have been submitted, as required. 8 OWEB restoration project monitoring reports were completed
	Document post project conditions for reach evaluations/action plan database. Update database to document project effectiveness.	This task is currently still in progress.
	Conduct Mountain Creek Reach Evaluation focus area monitoring: buffer vegetation shade, and erosion.	Mountain Creek Reach Evaluation FA monitoring is continuing and ongoing regarding water temperature, percentage of shade totals, erosion and reach improvement. Data is periodically benchmarked in the FAAP.
	Assist JDP as needed with FIP monitoring.	Staff is implementing use of the JDBP Project Tracker for FIP projects

<b>OBJECTIVE:</b>	<b>Provide education and outreach</b>	
<b>ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>TASK</b>	<b>ACCOMPLISHMENTS</b>
Provide education and outreach to the public and partner agencies/organizations.	Provide AgWQMAP information and fact sheets for distribution, and participate in local community events.	AgWQMAP information and WQ handouts were made available at the Wheeler County Fair in August (approx. 450 attendees) and at the Wheeler SWCD Annual Meeting (69 attendees). Due to Coronavirus pandemic, all spring and summer events were cancelled, so displays and distributions were unable to be done.
	Provide information about USDA Farm Bill programs and activities.	Information provided at Wheeler County Fair in August (approx. 450 attendees) and at District's Annual Meeting (69 attendees). These programs are also highlighted in the District's newsletters and Annual Report.
	Publish an annual report, periodic newsletters and press releases of district functions.	Annual Reports distributed: 512; Newsletters distributed: Summer-478, Fall-434
	Conduct workshops annually, as beneficial.	No workshops were conducted.
	Conduct county-wide project tours or day fairs.	No county-wide project tours or day fairs were conducted.
	Participate in community activities with county fair exhibit, annual presentation to county public entities and annual meeting presentations.	Displays made for the Wheeler County Fair in August (approx. 450 attendees), Wheeler SWCD annual meeting (69 attendees). Due to Coronavirus pandemic, all spring and summer events were cancelled, so other displays and distributions were unable to be done.
	Assist OSU Extension Service with workshops.	Staff assisted with a weed workshop.
	Create displays and provide presentations for various agency conferences and symposiums.	No displays created or presentations conducted for various agency conferences and symposiums.
	Assist Wheeler County Stock Growers with workshops pertinent to natural resources.	No workshops pertinent to natural resources conducted for the Wheeler County Stock Growers.
	Implement development of interactive educational kiosk of district project work.	Staff worked with NRCS, NPS, BMLT, and CTWS to develop a kiosk display. Design is finalized, but not yet installed at the Painted Hills picnic area.
	Provide work and project information to legislative agencies and natural resource organizations.	Newsletters and annual reports are sent to local elected officials, state and federal legislators
	Provide assistance to OCEAN board to support CONNECT conference.	CONNECT was cancelled due to the Coronavirus pandemic.

<b>OBJECTIVE:</b>	<b>Manage the business of the District</b>	
<b>ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>TASK</b>	<b>ACCOMPLISHMENTS</b>
Seek funding	Seek funding to support staff positions.	With no taxing authority, the staff positions are funded along with technical assistance and project work through grant funding from OWEB, BPA, ODA, CTWS, USA/NRCS, USFS Title II and OSWB.
	Seek funding for project implementation.	12 funding applications were submitted for landowner projects. Sources include OWEB, OSWB, CTWS, BPA, USDA, APHIS, and CRWMA.
	Seek alternative funding opportunities.	Staff continually seeks alternative funding opportunities.
	Seek funding for Action Plans and Reach Evaluations.	This activity is ongoing.
District Activities	Continue to seek completion of NRCS county soil survey and acquire program status information.	Per Redmond MLRA Soil Survey Office Leader, Kurt Moffitt on 06.04.2020, <i>We are getting close to publication of RAIL. In Wheeler County, all major field work is complete. Remaining workloads are focused on the database side of things. We are hoping to publish in late 2021 or early 2022.</i>
	Prepare statements of work for ODA, BPA and Watershed Council grant projects.	Statement of work for ODA, BPA, and Watershed Council projects are drafted as needed and required.
	Maintain and update the District web site and Facebook page.	The District's website(www.wheelerswcd.org) is managed and updated regularly with Board meeting information, as well as program and staffing changes. The Facebook page is used for sharing information and news articles of interest, as well as advertising for job openings and pertinent District information.
	Continue to use Oregon Purchasing and website for distributing district bid information, along with other advertising agencies.	This District website is used and updated when there are "Request for Bids" and/or "Request for Proposals," with the ability to download bid packets by interested contractors and others.
	Attend work related workshops, conventions and training sessions.	Q1: None Q2: None. Q3: Staff attended OWEB New Grantee Training. District Manager completed Cons. Desktop training that will replace Toolkit NRCS Planning Software. Q4: Staff and directors attended a public contracting training with Eileen Eakins. Field Tech II completed a New Grant Agreement training by ODA and a 2020 CREP TA training. Field Tech I continued Apprentice Conservation Planner Certification training.  Field Technician I continued drone training throughout the fiscal year. Staff completed monthly SafePersonnel trainings. <u>Administrative Assistant attended SDAO First Thursday trainings.</u>
	Recruit as needed to fill vacant Board of Director positions: recruit Associate Directors for training to fill Board positions.	There were no Director vacancies or new Associate Directors in the fiscal year.
	Prepare budgets, conduct audits and complete reports as required.	Monthly budget reports are prepared for each Board meeting. All documents were prepared for the annual audit. Audit files were taken to and recovered from auditor, Barnett & Moro. Budgets and quarterly reports were prepared for all grants. <u>SDIS-SDAO Best Practices Survey was submitted.</u>
	Hold monthly board meetings and an annual meeting.	August 28th September 25th October 30th November 28th December 12th, Annual Meeting January 29th February 26th No March Meeting, COVID19 April 22nd, held virtually May 27th <del>June 24th</del>
	Hold committee meetings as needed.	Personnel Committee meetings were held to conduct interviews for vacant Administrative Assistant and Field Technician I positions.
	Hold monthly staff and safety meetings, or complete online SDAO Safety Trainings.	September 9th February 6th June 8th
	Review and update District policies, and develop new policies as needed.	The following policies were revised and adopted: Revised Board of Directors Policy Revised Director Overview Revised Public Meeting Policy Revised Hazard Communication Policy Revised Ethics Policy  The following addition to the Personnel Policy Handbook was adopted: 302 Retirement  The Administrative Assistant is working on revising all District policies into a uniform format.
	Update county weed list and submit to County Court for approval as needed.	The County Weed List is being revised by the Weed Technician to align with OSWB's Weed List. The Weed Board plans to submit the revised list to the county court in December 2020.
	Update Weed Board Member appointments.	Weed Board members were appointed on November 6, 2019.
	Continue to work with Ag WQ Planner on next AgWQMA Plan biennial review, documenting accomplishments, compiling information for the Board of Agriculture report, and updating plan as needed.	AgWQMAP biennial review was postponed and not held in the 2019-20 fiscal year, due to the Coronavirus pandemic.

Participate in NRCS work group.	<p>The Board received the NRCS Civil Right Affirmation from NRCS, which outlines board member responsibilities, federally assisted and federally conducted program responsibilities, program outreach, and public notification responsibilities.</p> <p>Staff completed a desktop training for Toolkit NRCS Planning Software.</p> <p>Both Field Technicians are continuing AgLearn training to obtain certification as NRCS planners.</p> <p>Staff participated in a NRCS workshop/outreach event with landowner engagement.</p>
Review District's Annual Work Plan quarterly.	The District's Annual Work Plan was reviewed by staff in December 2019.
Conduct SDAO or OSHA site inspection and complete self-insured annual evaluation.	<p>No SDAO or OSHA site inspection was conducted. A Risk Management Review is scheduled for July 2020.</p> <p>No self-insured annual evaluation was completed.</p>
Transition planning and development of new job description, if needed.	<p>Staff transitioned as follows: Field Technician II became District Manager, Field Technician I became Field Technician II. New hires filled the vacant positions of Field Technician I and Administrative Assistant.</p> <p>The District is in the process of revising/updating job descriptions.</p>
Conduct employee evaluations, develop new written employee training policy.	No employee evaluations were conducted.