

The Soil and Water Conservation District/NRCS Link in Resource Conservation

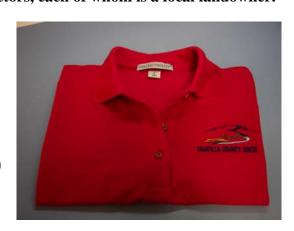
The Soil & Water Conservation District Board provides direction for local programs and ensures that the District staff fulfill its primary mission of working with landowners to install Best Management Practices (BMPs) to control erosion, protect water quality, and provide other measures necessary to enhance and protect the environment. SWCD staff gathers data to assess resource needs, provide educational programs, conduct tours, writes grant applications and develop other activities in support of the overall resource conservation effort.

The function of NRCS at the local level is to provide technical leadership, delivery of special programs, and overall leadership of each office. Federal cost sharing typically flows through a sister agency called the Farm Services Agency, but any payments to landowners is contingent upon certification by NRCS that practices for which payments are made meet NRCS standards and specifications. The NRCS provides a District Conservationist (DC) to nearly all of the State's 45 SWCDs in Oregon. The DC works under the direction of the seven-member District Board of Directors, each of whom is a local landowner.



FOR SALE
UMATILLA COUNTY
SWCD

CAPS \$10.00 AND SHIRTS \$15.00





Umatilla County Soil and Water Conservation District

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Financial Summary 2006-2007

Combined Statement of Revenues & Expenditures Year ended June 30,2007

Beginning Balance July 1, 2006 \$ 61,021.12

INCOME:

Grants/Projects 325,375.63 Interest Income 2,515.55 Miscellaneous 1,736.00

Total Revenue \$390,648.30

EXPENDITURES:

Office Operation 27,075.05 Salaries & Benefits 126,113.65 Project Implementation 184,752.76

Total Expenses \$337,941.82

Fund Balance—June 30, 2006 \$ 52,706.48

SWCD Board of Directors

Phil Walchli - Chairman of the Board

Berk Davis - Vice Chair

Tom Straughan - Treasurer

Cheri Cosper - Director

Chuck Hemphill - Director

Louie Dick - Director At Large

Robert Rosselle - Director At Large

Dinah Hemphill - Associate Director

Frank Woody - Associate Director Ray Reser - Associate Director

Teresa Walchli - Associate Director

Tim Spratling - Associate Director

District Staff

Bev Kopperud– District Manger Heidi Hartman– Natural Resource Specialist Corrie Thorne– Ag Resource Specialist Tera Woods– Outreach Specialist Jan Bothum– Clerical Assistant



Jan, Corrie, Bev, Heidi, Tera

2006-2007 Umatilla County Cooperator of the Year NELSON RANCH

The Umatilla County Soil and Water Conservation District has selected the Nelson Ranch of Pendleton, Oregon as Umatilla County's "Cooperator of the Year." Eric and Gail Nelson are being honored for their innovative use of natural materials in their new home, and their work towards organic farming.

The Nelsons are in the final stages of building an environmentally friendly home. Known as the "straw house", their home uses about 200 wheat straw bales as insulation. Friends and Family aided in the labor-intensive process of stuffing bales of straw into a wood-concrete frame. The Nelson's home also utilizes many energy saving devices and employs solar power for two systems; grid inter-tied electricity and hot water.

The Nelsons commitment to the environment does not stop with their home but includes also a move towards organic farming. With help from the USDA – Natural Resources Conservation Service, Eric and Gail have used the Environmental Quality Incentives Program to start converting cropland into pasture and hayland. Eventually after getting a hold on the weed population, a portion of the land will be converted back into organic cropland. A portion will stay in grassland to raise organic beef, and a portion will be kept in hay as supplemental feed for cattle.

For their efforts in promoting conservation through innovative methods the Umatilla County Soil and Water Conservation District is proud to honor Eric and Gail Nelson.

Umatilla/ Morrow ESD Watershed Field Days, were held the first week in May at two sites; McKay Creek and Oxbow. Approximately 800 5th graders participated learning about water quality from ODA and the SWCD. Tom

ODA, Heidi Hartman, Corrie Thorne and Tera Woods participated. Kids learned about water quality testing, weed identifi-





Sunridge Middle School hosted Outdoor School at the Kiwanis Cabin on the North Fork of Umatilla River during the month of May. The SWCD participated on each Thursday presenting information focusing on wa-

ter quality and quantity at four sessions with 10-12 students attending

each.







July 2007

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	NOTES
1	2	3	Independence Day SWCD Office Closed	5	6	7	
8	9	10	11 Tüchám CD mtg. 4:00pm CTUIR SWCD Board Meeting 7PM John Murray	12	13	14	
15	16 Walla Walla Basin Water- shed Council 7-8:30 pm	17	18	19	20	21	
22	23 Umatilla Basin Water- shed Council Mtg. 6:30pm	24	25	26	27	28	
29	30	31					

Partnerships



The Columbia Basin Agricultural Research Center (CBARC) conduct field research emphasizing the production of wheat and rotational crops such as barley, legumes, and canola. Scientists at the Columbia Basin Center specialize in research and extension work important to the production of field crops on 1 million acres in north-central and northeastern Oregon. Wheat, barley, and legumes in this region generate

10 to 15 percent of Oregon's agricultural cash receipts, with a market value of more than \$150 million annually. ARS, the District, and other Natural Resource Agencies formed a Technical Committee to monitor Wildhorse for sediment and temperature in 1999, then in 2005 a sampling protocol for nitrate was established. Heidi-SWCD Natural Resource Specialist assisted John William-ARS Hydrologist with a geomorphic assessment of Wildhorse Creek, a major tributary of the Umatilla River.

The District works closely with the Umatilla Basin and Walla Walla Watershed Councils, promoting natural resource conservation through; the OWEB small grant program, Title II & III funding, workshops, landowner conservation projects and participating in board meetings.

The Natural Resources Conservation Service and SWCD, have been "joined at the hip" since 1937. In that



year, Congress established the Soil Conservation Service (SCS) and mandated that this new agency would work directly with local Soil & Water Conservation Districts to protect the resource base on farms and ranches throughout the Nation. NRCS provides funding through a contribution agreement with the District to conduct status reviews on fields enrolled in the USDA programs.

NRCS Staff pictured left to right: Sue Ellen, Tom, Heath, Kacee, Ann , Misty, Colleen, and Loren Unruh– District Conservationist

August 2007

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	NOTES
			I Tiichám CD mtg. 4:00pm CTUIR	2	3	4	
5	6	7	8 SWCD Board Meeting 7PM John Murray Building	9	10	11	
12	13	14	15	16	17	18	
19	20 Walla Walla Basin Water- shed Council mtg. 7-8:30 pm	21	22	23	24	25	
26	27 Umatilla Basin Water- shed Council Mtg. 6:30 pm	28	29	30	31		

Incentive Programs



Variable Rate Fertilizer Application

The SWCD started the Precision Agriculture Incentive Program in 2005 with the assistance of OWEB, EPA and DEQ grants. The program has proven to be successful in rousing grower interest in trying variable rate fertilizer application methods. In typical farming practices, nutrients are added uniformly to field to amend crop needs that the soil may be lacking, such as nitrogen, sulfur and phosphorus. This practice can lead to over-application in some areas resulting

in waste and leaching which contribute to elevated nitrate levels in surface and groundwater and under application in other areas resulting in failure to reach crop potentials. Variable rate technology uses site-specific knowledge and can target rates of fertilizer based on soil, topographical and other conditions. The SWCD incentive program pays \$20.00 per acre on up to 200 acres for 2006-2007. Fifteen growers participated in the program.

Creatively Controlling Cropland Weeds

Umatilla County currently has an increasing weed control problem on cropland. The conversion from traditional systems to no-till or direct seed system has created an opportu-

nity for weeds to flourish which has increased herbicide use significantly. To counter the potential dangers associated with increased herbicide use, the District applied for an OWEB grant to provide incentive payments to growers to use the WeedSeeker® technology. Due to lack of local equipment, the District has not been able to implement this project.



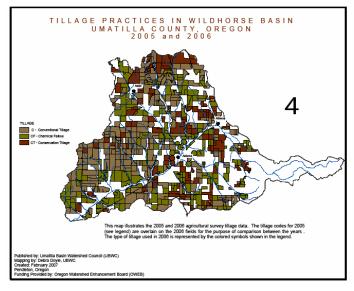


September 2007

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	NOTES
						1 Labor Day	
2	3 Labor Day Observed SWCD Office Closed	4	5 Tiichám CD mtg. 4:00pm	6	7	8	
9	10	11 Pend	12	<i>13</i>	14	15	
16	17 Walla Walla Basin Watershed Council	18 Columbia RC&D mtg. 10-2:30 pm	19 SWCD Board Meeting 7PM John Murray Building	20	21	22	
23	24 Umatilla Basin Water- shed Council Mtg.	25	26	27	28	29	
30							

Wildhorse Watershed

The Umatilla County SWCD, ODA, and Umatilla Basin Watershed Council partnered to map the current tillage practices in the Wildhorse Watershed a tributary to the Umatilla River. The mapping project proved to be a powerful tool in that it displayed where concentrated areas of conventional tillage still exist. According to the mapping project, approximately 50% of the watershed is still in conventional tillage. Some of these conventional tillage areas near the foothills of the Blue Mountains and the north end of the watershed have considerable slopes and as a result experience significant soil erosion. These areas are significant because impacts from increased sediment production from hillsides decreases channel carrying capacity resulting in streambank erosion or overland flows and increased costs for road maintenance.



The District applied for an OWEB grant to encourage farmers in the Wildhorse Basin to convert from conventional tillage practices by providing a direct seed cost-share program.



Sediment plugging up Gerking Creek (tributary to Wildhorse). Approximately 6" clearance under bridge.

October 2007

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	NOTES
	1	2	3 Buffer Basics Work- shop 9:00 am 276-8131 info Tiichám CD mtg. 4:00pm	4	5 Waste Pesticide Collection Event Transfer Station Boardman	6	
7	Columbus Day Waste Pesticide Collection Event Pendleton	9	10 SWCD Board Meet- ing 7PM John Murray Building	11	12	13	
14	15 Walla Walla Basin Watershed Council mtg. 7-8:30 pm	16	17	18	19 OWEB Grant Application Deadline	20	
21	22 Umatilla Basin Water- shed Council Mtg. 6:30pm	23	24	25	26	27	
28	29	30	31 Halloween				



November 2007

NOTES

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	NOTES
				1	2	3	
4 Daylight Savings Ends	5 OACD	6 Election Day	7 Tiichám CD mtg. 4:00pm CTUIR	8	9	10	
11 Veteran's Day/ Armistice Day	12 Veteran's Day Observed	13	14 SWCD Board Meeting 7PM John Murray Building	15	16	17	
18	19walla Walla Basin Watershed Council mtg. 7-8:30 pm	20	21	SWCD Office Closed	23	24	
25	26 Umatilla Basin Wa- tershed Council mtg. 6:30	27	28	29	30		



Precision Ag Seminar

On December 14, 2006, the District hosted the second annual Precision Ag Seminar and SWCD Annual Meeting at the Pendleton Convention Center. The Seminar was held to promote the use of technology that promotes more efficient use of agricultural inputs while reducing environmental impacts. The District acquired grant funds for incentive payments to local growers encouraging them to participate in using this technology. This includes using soil condition mapping, zonal soil sampling and application of fertilizers using variable rate applicators. The Seminar featured several breakouts sessions including; Using Mapping Software to make Farm Management Decisions, the WeedSeeker®, Adding Value at the Farm Gate, Increasing Grain Quality: Monitoring and Segregation, and Environmental

Issues/Positive Results. Several local Exhibitors and Round Table Discussion were featured.



Tom Straughan with the Oregon Department of Agriculture display featuring information on the Ag Water Quality Area Plan and accompanying rules.



Inside tractor view of computerized variable rate application system



Clive Kaiser OSU Extension Professor presenting Adding Value at the Farm Gate

December 2007

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	NOTES
						1	
2	3	4	5 1st Day of Hanukkah Tiichám CD mtg.	6	7	8	
9	10	Precision Ag Seminar & Annual mtg.	12 No SWCD Board Meeting -	13	14	15	
16	17 Walla Walla Basin Watershed Council	18 Columbia RC&D mtg. 10-2:30 pm	19	20	21	22	
23	24 Christmas Eve	25 Christmas Day SWCD Office Closed	26	27	28	29	
30	31 New Year's Eve						

Annual Meeting Dec 14, 2006

PENDLETON CONVENTION

The Annual Meeting was held during lunch in conjunction with the Precision Ag Seminar at the Pendleton Convention Center. The keynote speaker was Bill Hansell, Umatilla County Commissioner. He has represented Umatilla County in Washington DC as President of the National Association of Counties

Bev Kopperud-District Manager presented a PowerPoint overview of past activities adding voice over and animation. Several local businesses donated items for drawings and to present to the "Cooperator of the Year".

> FFA students participated in the event, video taping, attending sessions and learning more from the vendor booths.



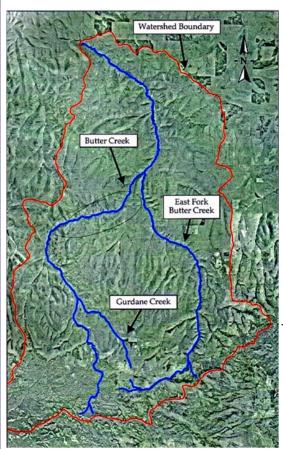
Pictured in red shirts Jan and Dinah SWCD and guests

Mayor Phil Houk, presented the "Cooperator of the Year" award to the Nelson Ranch. The Nelson's were selected through a statewide competition during the Oregon Association of Conservation Districts Annual meeting

January 2008

							NOTES
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	NOTES
		SWCD Office Closed	2 Tiichám CD mtg. 4:00pm CTUIR	3	4	5	
6	7	8	9 SWCD Board Meeting 7PM John Murray Building	10	11	12	
13	14	15	16	17	18	19	
20	21 Martin Luther King Jr's Day SWCD Office Closed	22	23	24	25	26	
27	28 Umatilla Basin Watershed Council Mtg. 6:30pm	29	30	31			

Butter Creek Watershed Project



"The Upper Butter Creek Enhancement Project" located west of Pilot Rock, encompasses over 90,000 acres in Umatilla and Morrow Counties, 17 miles of main stem Butter Creek, 10 miles of the East Fork and 18 miles of various tributaries.

In 2004 the District contracted with Columbia Environmental Sciences, Inc. to do an assessment of watershed conditions including their restoration recommendations. The map shown here is part of the assessment.

Since 1999 the District has been installing many different types of conservation projects, such as; upland and riparian restoration, off stream watering, cross fencing and improved confined animal

feeding. During this fiscal year the District installed several new projects including 2 small grants for off stream watering and 3 large grants for off stream watering and cross fencing.



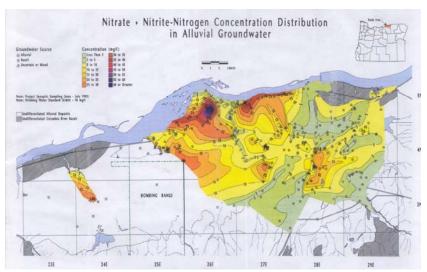
February 2008

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	NOTES
					1	2	
3	4	5	6 Tiichám CD mtg. 4:00pm CTUIR	7	8	9	
10	11	12	13 SWCD Board Meeting 7PM John Murray Building	14	15	16	
17	18 President's Day SWCD closed	19	20	21	22	23	
24	25 Umatilla Basin Water- shed Council Mtg. 6:30 pm	26	27	28	29		

Lower Umatilla Basin Groundwater Management Area

"The Lower Umatilla Basin Groundwater Management Area" (LUB) was declared in 1990 after nitrate contamination was identified in the 352,000 acre area in the northern portions of Umatilla and Morrow Counties. Efforts are being made to address water quality and quantity concerns in the LUB. Numerous reports and surveys have been generated to evaluate the public's understanding of water quality concerns relating to human health and the environment. The survey's stated that more outreach must be done to raise public awareness of the growing concerns for water quality and quantity in the Umatilla Basin. The District applied for funding through OWEB and DEQ for a RARE (Resource Assistance for Rural Environments) participant to compile data in regard to the LUB GWMA Action Plan and partner with the Umatilla County Critical Groundwater Task Force.

The District provided outreach in the LUB and completed three LUBGWMA Action Plan Surveys: 1) irrigated agriculture, 2) rural residential and, 3) confined animal feeding operations. The outreach portion is an ongoing project. The District created "PURE" Preserving Umatilla's Resources through Education program to promote public knowledge of the water quality problems. Along with "PURE" the District will be implementing "The Clean Water Neighborhood" through the RARE program.



March 2008

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	NOTES
						1	
2	3	4	5 Tiichám CD mtg. 4:00pm	6	7	8	
9	10	11	12 SWCD Board Meeting	13	14	15	
16	17 Walla Walla Basin Wa- tershed	18 Columbia RC&D mtg. 10-2:30 pm	19	20	21 Good Friday	22	
23 Easter	24 Umatilla Basin Water- shed Council Mtg. 6:30pm	25	26	27	28	29	
30	31						



Resources

Education

Preserving Umatilla's Resources through Education program is designed to promote the implementation of improvement projects by educating residents about current natural resource concerns and providing them access to organizations and resources for assistance. The program is made up of two components, the first is outreach to local schools. Through the PURE Program teachers and school districts will have access to materials that complement curriculum and teach the necessity of conservation. The second component is community outreach. Within Umatilla county land use will vary. Uses include; vineyards, orchards, dryland wheat, irrigated crops, animal feeding operations, rural residential, etc. Each of these uses require a different approach to resource management precluding a "one size fits all" approach. The goal of the PURE Program is to provide residents conservation information specific to their land use. For example: workshops targeting rural residents include small acreage management

tips such as information regarding septic systems, manure management, animal access to surface water, etc., while workshops targeting dryland wheat farmers include information pertaining to direct seeding, precision Ag, buffers, etc. These meetings are held in a variety of locations.



Presentation on the AgWQMAP rules, held in a growers shop.

April 2008

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	NOTES
		1	2 Tiichám CD mtg. 4:00pm CTUIR	3	4	5	
6	7	8	9 SWCD Board Meeting 7PM John Murray Building	10	11	12	
13	14	15	16	17	18 OWEB Grant Application Deadline	19	
20	21 Walla Walla Basin Watershed Council mtg. 7-8:30 pm	22 Earth Day	23	24	25	26	
27	28 Umatilla Basin Watershed Council Mtg. 6:30pm	29	30				

Relocation of the USDA Service Center

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), the Farm Service Agency (FSA), Rural Development, the Columbia-Blue Mountain Resource Conservation and Development Council, the Oregon Department of Agriculture, and SWCD relocated to a new office building at 200 SE Hailey Ave last November. The building, known by locals as the John Murray Building, has gone through extensive renovations. Built in 1912, the John Murray Building has served as a high school and a junior high over the years. In 1982, the last class of seventh and eighth graders finished the year in the old building. NRCS and FSA are located in what used to be a balcony area that overlooked the old gym. Oregon Department of Agriculture occupies the old principal's office. Other offices are in former classrooms.



The SWCD lobby



Inset: The SWCD & Pendleton Chamber of Commerce hosted a ribbon cutting on July 19

May 2008

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	NOTES
				1	2	3	
4	5	6	7 Tiichám CD mtg. 4:00pm CTUIR	8	9	10	
11 Mothers Day	12	13	14 SWCD Board Meeting 7PM John Murray Building	15	16	17	
18	19 Walla Walla Basin Watershed Council mtg. 7-8:30 pm	20	21	22	23	24	
25	26 Umatilla Basin Water- shed Council Mtg. 6:30pm Memorial Day SWCD Office Closed	27	28	29	30	31	

Annual Report 2006-2007

Letter from the Chairman

I believe the last year was a particularly challenging one for this District. Like any organization a District is only as good as its people allow it to be. When there is turn over in staff it presents a unique set of challenges. The first challenge is maintaining consistency and quality of the day to day operation. Secondly, it is a challenge to recruit people with the necessary qualifications to maintain the high quality of work performance demanded by this District. I am pleased to report that the District is now fully staffed with qualified personnel to meet the challenges. But most importantly, like any good organization, this District has to constantly stretch the boundaries of what is and what can be. In this writers humble opinion this District is doing that. This District has a mission to provide a service to the people, or stakeholders if you prefer, that comprise its constituency. This requires flexibility, awareness, vision and a whole lot more. It requires a need to avoid the traps and trappings of becoming just another bureaucracy bogged down in rules, procedures and red tape.

The success of this District is the product of the synergy its partners, staff and Directors. I play a very small part in this success. I am proud of my role and meager contributions. Due to a lack of allotted space it is impossible to credit all the vital contributors to this success. I am reminded of a quote attributed to JFK. Success has a thousand parents. Failure is an orphan. If you have read this far you may be one of those valuable contributors to making this District special. Or maybe what the District is doing is interesting to you. If so the invitation to join in the fun is open to all. That is just the way it is.

Fletflihl

Our Mission To Serve You...To conserve, protect, and develop soil, water, and other natural resources for the economic and environmental benefit of the residents of Umatilla County.

June 2008

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	NOTES
1	2	3	4 Tiichám CD mtg. 4:00pm CTUIR	5	6	7	
8	9	10	11 SWCD Board Meeting 7PM John Murray Building	12	13	14	
15 Fathers Day	16 Walla Walla Basin Water- shed Council mtg. 7-8:30 pm	17 Columbia RC&D mtg. 10-2:30 pm	18	19	20	21	
22	23 Umatilla Basin Water- shed Council Mtg. 6:30pm	24	25	26	27	28	
29	30 SWCD Fiscal Year End						