



OACD NEWS

May 2024



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We Want YOUR INPUT

The OACD Board adopted a [DEI Policy](#) as the first step in OACD's efforts to help Districts **promote conservation on as many acres as we possibly can**. To do this, we need to understand more about all the different people in our Districts, and how these differences affect the way we need to reach out and/or present information.

YOUR INPUT: Take a look at the Diversity chart below. What 3 things resonate most to you in your work. Send that list to Andrea at andrea.kreiner@oacd.org by **May 10**. THANKS!!!

EDUCATION	GENDER	AGE	DISABILITY	THOUGHTS	PERSPECTIVES
PHILOSOPHIES ON CONSERVATION (farmer, rancher, gardener, Urban)	SEXUAL ORIENTATION	RACE	SOCIO ECONOMIC STATUS	CULTURE	EXPERIENCES
EXPERTISE	IMMIGRANTS	VETERANS	NEW AND BEGINNING FARMERS	DIVERSE PRACTICES	GENERATIONAL
THOSE OUTSIDE AG INDUSTRY	LOCATION	COMMUNITIES	INDUSTRY	ACREAGE	TALENT



Hello Conservation Partners,

I am putting this newsletter together after returning from a 10-day journey through Eastern Oregon. I toured SWCD and Watershed Council projects in Monument, Prairie City, and Baker City, saw sage grouse strutting their stuff on a lek, and met with Tiicham CD in Pendleton. The photo on page 1 is a beaver dam I found on the Powder River outside Baker City. In between I attended the OWEB Board meeting, Solar Siting in Eastern Oregon RAC meeting, and...CONNECT+ with 400 of you!

It was a busy trip that was a great way to increase my learning as I am about to reach my 1-year anniversary with OACD. It also left me with the feeling that I still have a lot to learn. I set a goal of getting out to every District in the first 3 years, I have hit 1/3 so far, and can't wait to get to the rest. So, if you have an event or project you want to share, please let me know!

Now, for this newsletter...

Please look at the Diversity Chart on page 1 and let me know which items resonate with you in the work you do. This will help guide where OACD puts its efforts in developing resources to help build capacity to meet our needs in getting conservation on every acre we can.

I have removed the Jobs section for now since OACD is now managing the Oregon Conservation Partnership website ConservationPartnership.org and the job listing page there. That listing will be the most up to date we have.

It is a quiet month for commission meetings, but, as always, there are new funding opportunities, news, and opportunities. Check out the guest opinion piece by Ellen Hammond of Jefferson SWCD that was in the Bend Bulletin.

A handwritten signature in green ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'A' followed by a long, wavy horizontal line.

Andrea Kreiner, OACD Executive Director
Andrea.Kreiner@OACD.org, 971-988-9929



COMING EVENTS

Agency Meetings (all events are hybrid; see details at link to websites)

EQC – May 23, Portland

OACD Board Meeting

District participation and comments are encouraged.

May 28, 9am-11am. Zoom link [HERE](#).

NACD Pacific & SW Region Meeting

September 11th-13th, 2024 in Anchorage, AK. Event details and useful links can be found [here](#) – stay tuned for more to come!

FUNDING RESOURCES



Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)

\$1.5 billion in funding will be available through RCPP this year, supported by funds from the Inflation Reduction Act. The funding will be split through 2 separate funding announcements.

- **RCPP Classic:** proposals due **July 2, 2024**. RCPP Classic projects are implemented using NRCS contracts and easements with producers, landowners, and communities in collaboration with project partners.
- **RCPP Alternative Funding Arrangements:** proposals due **July 2, 2024**. Through RCPP AFA, the lead partner works directly with agricultural producers to support the development of innovative conservation approaches that would not otherwise be available under RCPP Classic.

For more information and upcoming webinars, click [HERE](#).

USDA Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative

The USDA is investing up to \$22 million in partnerships that expand access to conservation technical assistance for livestock producers and increase the use of conservation practices on grazing lands. NRCS is accepting proposals through its Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative until Sunday, May 26, 2024. For more information and upcoming webinars, click [HERE](#).

Water Project Grants And Loans And Irrigation Modernization Funding

Application Deadlines: 5 p.m. on Wednesday, July 10, 2024

[Water Project Grants and Loans](#) provides grants to evaluate, plan, and develop instream and out-of-stream water supply projects. This funding opportunity will invest in projects that meet water supply needs and result in public economic, environmental, and social/cultural public benefits. Projects require a 25% cost match.

- **Eligible Projects:** Water conservation, reuse, above-ground storage, below-ground storage, streamflow protection or restoration, water distribution, conveyance or delivery systems, and other water resource development projects that result in economic, environmental, and social/cultural public benefits.
- **Anticipated Funding Available:** \$5 million
- **How to Apply:** Application materials are available [online](#).

[Irrigation Modernization projects](#) that improve water use efficiency of irrigation systems on currently irrigated agricultural lands. The project must leverage federal funds associated with NRCS's authorized watershed plans, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation's WaterSMART grants or U.S. EPA's grants that are eligible to be on the DEQ's Intended Use Plan. This funding opportunity will invest in projects that meet water supply needs and result in public economic, environmental, and social/cultural public benefits.

- **Eligible Projects:** A project that improves water use efficiency of irrigation systems on currently irrigated agricultural lands. Eligible activities include, but are not limited to: piping irrigation canals, ditches or laterals; lining irrigation canals, ditches or laterals; installing sprinkler or microirrigation systems; upgrading existing infrastructure, such as flumes or pipes; installing or upgrading pump stations, including variable speed pumps; installing measuring devices or soil moisture monitoring; installing Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) systems; purchasing irrigation scheduling software; and upgrading turnouts.
- **Anticipated Funding Available:** OWRD has \$25 million available for 2024 awards, including for applications received in January. Projects may be awarded provisional funds from the additional \$25 million that will be available in 2025.
- **How to Apply:** Application materials are available [online](#). See the application materials listed under "Irrigation Modernization Funding" on the WPGL webpage.

Pre-Application Conference: OWRD encourages all applicants to request a pre-application conference before applying. Staff will review your draft application and provide feedback. You must submit your draft application two weeks before the pre-application conference. To learn more, see the [pre-application conference form](#).

For more information, please contact: Adair Muth | 971-301-0718 | OWRD.Grants@water.oregon.gov

Western SARE Farmer/Rancher Research & Education Grant Program

Advancing on-farm sustainability solutions by funding innovative producer-driven research and outreach. This grant program involves agricultural producers (main applicants) and technical advisor(s) implementing projects to address identified needs in sustainable agriculture. See the call for proposals [here](#). Proposals are due **October 23, 2024**

NEWS and OPPORTUNITIES



Soil and Water Conservation Commission (SWCC) Commissioner Region 3

ODA is soliciting nominations and expressions of interest from *currently serving SWCD directors* to act in the capacity of Commissioner for Region 3: Coos SWCD, Curry County SWCD, Illinois Valley SWCD, Two Rivers SWCD, Jackson SWCD, Klamath SWCD, Ft. Rock/Silver Lake SWCD's, and Lakeview SWCD.

Purpose of the SWCC:

1. Ensure close contact between the State Department of Agriculture and the various soil and water conservation districts in the state.
2. Keep the department advised as to matters of soil and water conservation in the state.
3. Act as a representative for the SWCC region of the state.
4. Advise and develop policy with the department.

Click [HERE](#) for more information about the SWCC.

If you are interested in nominating yourself or another eligible candidate (with their permission), please email an expression of interest describing your qualifications and experience to: Karin.Stutzman@oda.oregon.gov

Nominations will close at end of business day May 13, 2024.

Oregon's Draft 2024 Integrated Report on Surface Water Quality and 303(d) List of Water Impaired Waters

is now available on DEQ's website. DEQ will be accepting comments on its 2024 assessment results and TMDL priority rankings through **5 PM, Monday, June 17, 2024.**

Comments can be submitted IntegratedReport@deq.oregon.gov

DEQ will be holding two webinars to walk through updates and conclusions from the draft 2024 Integrated Report and to provide technical assistance for reviewing and providing comments on the report. The webinars will have the same content.

Webinar Information for 2024 draft Integrated Report:

Webinar 1: May 1, 2024 at 10:00 a.m. [Register via Zoom](#)

Webinar 2: May 7, 2024 at 6:00 p.m. [Register via Zoom](#)

DEQ Rulemaking – Willamette Mainstem and Major Tributaries Temperature TMDL Replacement Advisory Committee Meeting 2 to be held May 16, 2024

DEQ has formed a Rule Advisory Committee to provide DEQ with input on the Willamette River Mainstem and Major Tributaries temperature Total Maximum Daily Load replacement. The role of the rule advisory committee is to advise DEQ on the economic and fiscal impacts of the proposed rules, revision of required TMDL elements with a focus on the TMDL allocations to be updated based on the current temperature criteria for the Willamette River Mainstem and Major Tributaries and revisions to the Water Quality Management Plans.

The meeting materials will be posted to the rulemaking webpage: [Willamette River Mainstem and Major Tributaries Temperature TMDL](#)

Meeting information: **9 a.m. to noon on May 16, 2024**

[Join via Zoom](#) Call-in number: 669-444-9171 U.S. Toll-free

Meeting ID: 850 0821 4566

2024 SWCD Elections

The [Candidate packet](#) and [SWCD packet](#) are on the Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) website. Sandi Hiatt is the ODA elections officer for the SWCD director elections. SWCD director elections occur every two years during the General Election. The date for the General Election this year is **November 5, 2024**, per ORS 568.520 . (1) A regular election shall be held in each soil and water conservation district on the first Tuesday following the first Monday of November in each even-numbered year for the purpose of electing directors to succeed the directors whose terms expire the following January.

Municipal Audit Program Notice Of Proposed Rulemaking, Oar 162-010

Municipal Audit Program amendments to OAR 162-010 Minimum Standards for Audits of Oregon Municipal Corporations. Legislative amendments enacted during the 2023 Legislative session made several revisions to Municipal Audit Law (ORS 297.405 to 297.990). These amendments align with those revisions.

The Notice of Proposed Rulemaking including Statement of Need and Fiscal Impact and Proposed Rules (new language **underlined in bold**, deleted language ~~has a line through it~~) is available [on our website](#).

Send written comment on the proposed rules by **5:00 PM on Monday, May 22, 2024**, to:
Julie Sparks, Rules Coordinator, Secretary of State, Audits Division
255 Capitol Street NE Suite 180
Salem, OR 97310
or via email to: julie.a.sparks@sos.oregon.gov

EPA/ESA Chemical Requirements

There is a new legal requirement being developed for chemical application. The rules are being revised based on USDA and farmer concerns and **will be reissued by August 30**.

The website <https://www.epa.gov/endangered-species/bulletins-live-two-view-bulletins> has more information. The mapping tool on the website listed adobe will either tell you no restrictions or give you a list of suggested mitigations. Be sure to keep records of the map and what steps you took for mitigations.

Public Lands Rule

On April 18, 2024, the BLM [announced](#) an update to its regulations that will guide balanced management of America's public lands now and for the future. The Public Lands Rule recognizes conservation as an essential component of public lands management, on equal footing with other multiple uses of these lands.

For more information see [HERE](#).

EIS Statement For Greater Sage-Grouse Rangewide Planning – Comment Period

Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has prepared a Draft Resource Management Plan Amendment (RMPA) and Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for Greater Sage-Grouse Rangewide Planning and by this notice is providing information announcing the opening of the comment period on the Draft RMPA/EIS and on the BLM's consideration of potential areas of critical environmental concern (ACECs). See the federal Notice [HERE](#) for the links and dates.

DISTRICT to DISTRICT

Bend Bulletin: Guest Column: Meeting Central Oregon's water challenges

BY ELLEN HAMMOND, Jefferson SWCD

Thank you for the recent series of articles in The Bulletin by Michael Kohn about the complex water availability issues facing Central Oregon. Jefferson County farmers greatly appreciate having their story told. Agriculture is vital to the economy and sociocultural fabric of our neighbors to the north around Madras. In Jefferson County, over 90% of farms are family operations; the oldest are fifth- or sixth-generation farmers. Many farmers are innovators and early adopters of new technologies. The area is known for the production of high-value specialty and seed crops. The 100-square-mile North Unit Irrigation District (NUID) is the second largest irrigation district in Oregon, and its farmers are some of the most efficient users of irrigation water in the state.

Jefferson County agriculture is part of a regional, national, and international network. Over 90% of Jefferson County irrigated land is dedicated to crop production with less than 10% planted for pasture, unlike most of the rest of the agricultural lands in the Upper Deschutes Basin. Half of the hybrid carrot seed planted *worldwide* comes from Jefferson County; enough carrots are grown from this seed to feed 1 billion people! Jefferson County is also home to the second largest producer of wildflower seed in the U.S., which supports monarch butterflies in the Midwest. Over 10% of the bluegrass seed used in American lawns, sports turf, and greenscapes comes from the Madras area. Additional irrigated crops include other grass seed, alfalfa seed, potatoes, grains, nursery crops, herbs, mint for oil and tea leaf, garlic, and fresh vegetables.

Agriculture continues to drive Jefferson County's economy. Gross income from agricultural sales totaled \$63 million in 2022. By comparison, agricultural sales in Deschutes County totaled \$40 million. Jefferson County is one of Oregon's poorest counties, with a 15% poverty rate, 6.1% unemployment rate (twice that of Oregon), and a median household income that is \$15,000 less than the state of Oregon.

The agricultural economy in Jefferson County is being devastated by drought. Forty percent of NUID lands did not receive any irrigation water in 2022, as a result of drought and 100-year-old infrastructure and water laws.

In November 2022, the Jefferson County Agricultural Drought Resiliency Group was convened to develop a long-range plan to help Jefferson County agriculture thrive despite drought. The group is open to any interested parties that seek to move forward in a collaborative manner to help both fish and farmers.

The group's concerns if the water situation is not addressed include:

- Increased conflict between various interests (not only humans, but also fish, wildlife, and the earth) competing for scarce water.
 - Farmers/ranchers leave their land; the landscape deteriorates from increased desertification.
 - The end of Jefferson County irrigated agriculture and, therefore, the loss of the main economic base for the area and community.
 - Land taken over by non-agricultural interests, e.g., housing and commercial developers.
 - The whole Deschutes River Basin deteriorates environmentally, socio-culturally, and economically.
- The group identified over 40 tools to help Jefferson County agriculture (and Central Oregon) thrive. Some of the highest priorities right now are:
- Piping canal infrastructure in Upper Deschutes Basin irrigation districts, which can transfer saved water to NUID. While NUID is also piping selected canals, piping all 300 miles of NUID canals would cost almost \$2 billion dollars and is less cost-effective than piping other districts.
 - Diversifying crops even more, optimizing irrigation water use, and planting cover crops.

Jefferson County has an exciting opportunity to create a resilient agricultural watershed. We are optimistic that your Jefferson County farmers, friends, family, and neighbors can adapt to meet changing climate conditions. And we need your help! Learn about us. Participate in farm tours. Attend the Deschutes River Conservancy seminars and other educational opportunities, raisethedeschutes.org. View our video at [Jefferson County Agriculture & Conservation — YouTube](https://JeffersonCountyAgriculture&Conservation-YouTube). Read our long-range plan at jeffswcd.org/managing-for-drought. Participate in the Drought Group.



**Oregon Association of
Conservation Districts**

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