

Hood River Soil & Water

CONSERVATION DISTRICT



Annual Report

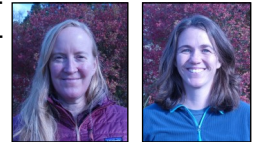
Greetings all, we hope this report finds you well. We here at the Hood River SWCD would like to update you on the activities of the last fiscal year, while also looking forward to exciting things happening in the next year.

Several projects wrapped up and plans for new activities are in the works. We also worked on our branding—check out our new logo! An updated website is coming soon. We welcomed new staff member Brittany Welsh in March, whom many of you worked with on the mobile chipping program.

As is always the case, we work to serve the community of Hood River County whether through a workshop or training, mobile chipping, plant sale, or a

site visit to your property. Our success comes from community members like you who value and steward the natural resources of Hood River County.

We will continue to work with local partners to implement projects and provide educational opportunities that benefit natural resources, promote water and soil conservation, and agricultural productivity. As always, we invite your feedback and look forward to working with you!



Thank you for your support!

Heather Hendrixson & Kris Schaedel

Hood River County Wildfire Preparedness

Wildfire preparedness activities in Hood River County are focused on creating defensible space around structures and implementing fuels reduction activities with forest landowners. A one-time investment from Oregon State Fire Marshal enabled the Hood River SWCD to offer free mobile chipping services to homeowners. For many landowners, a hand crew assisted with brushing, limbing, and cutting of trees and shrubs.



The photo on the left is prior to defensible space work being implemented on the site. The photo on the right is after the Mount Adams Resource Stewards chipped the materials collected by the resident.

Project partners also conducted education and outreach activities with participating homeowners and hosted a Community Wildfire Preparedness event at Solera Brewery in Parkdale. In all, mobile chipping was conducted at 68 homes and forested properties and defensible space activities were implemented with 22 residents. This program fostered community engagement in preparing for future wildfires and facilitated cooperation across county, state, and federal agencies. Partners and the SWCD have recently applied for additional grant funding to keep this program going—stay tuned for more information!

HOOD RIVER SWCD

“To provide educational, technical, and financial assistance to our community for the protection, conservation, and restoration of natural resources.”

The Hood River Soil & Water Conservation District is a legal subdivision of state government and is governed by a locally elected, volunteer Board of Directors.

The Board of Directors meets on the first Thursday of each month from 4pm - 6pm. Meetings held in person at the OSU Extension conference room or via Zoom. Call ahead for accommodations.

Meetings are open to the public. For information or agendas, contact us by phone or email or stop by at 3007 Experiment Station Dr., Hood River. Office hours are Monday-Friday, from 8 am to 4 pm.

Directors
 Brian Nakamura, Chair, Zone 2
 Pete Siragusa, Vice-Chair, Zone 1
 Andrew Halliday, Secretary/Treasurer, At-Large 1
 Ben Saur, Zone 3
 Annie Alsheimer, At-Large 2

Associate Directors
 Chuck Gehling
 Richard Larson
 Chal Oates

SWCD Staff
 Heather Hendrixson, District Manager
 541-386-4588 heather@hoodriverswcd.org
 Kris Schaedel, Conservation Specialist
 541-386-4588 kris@hoodriverswcd.org
 Brittany Welsh, Conservation Technician
 541-386-4588, brittany@hoodriverswcd.org

Financial Report

Hood River Soil & Water Conservation District July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2023

<u>Beginning Fund Balance:</u>	\$	157,275
 <u>RECEIPTS:</u>		
Intergovernmental:		
ODA grants		167,896
OWEB grants		210,262
Other grants		276,061
Contracts:		
CTWS		77,568
Miscellaneous		18,281
Earnings on Investments		964
Plant sale		16,453
<u>TOTAL REVENUES</u>	\$	767,485
 <u>DISBURSEMENTS:</u>		
Salaries and Related Costs		
		159,905
Professional Fees		19,685
Materials and Services		36,377
Tree and Plant Sale		8,129
Projects		341,863
Other Disbursements		64,549
<u>TOTAL DISBURSEMENTS:</u>	\$	630,508
 <u>Ending Fund Balance:</u>		
	\$	294,252

New SWCD Board Members

This year we welcomed Chal Oates and Annie Alsheimer to the SWCD board! Annie stepped into the vacant At-Large 2 position and Chal is serving as an Associate. We appreciate their support and all the knowledge and experience they bring to the District!

SWCD Seasonal Technician Hired

This summer we welcomed Brittany Welsh to the SWCD team! Brittany was hired to manage the defensible space and mobile chipping project (front page). She was tremendously helpful and we are extremely thankful for her contributions this summer!

Technical Assistance Round-Up

The SWCD is a non-regulatory provider of financial and technical assistance. In the last year we provided technical assistance to Hood River County residents via 15 site visits, 62 phone calls, 68 emails, and followed up with over 30 technical guides and information. Topics included controlling weeds, conserving water, upgrading irrigation systems, habitat for pollinators, livestock infrastructure and best management practices. Calls and visits can lead to projects – we wrote and received 5 grants to get projects on the ground. We also assisted over 250 people during our annual plant sale and hosted and presented at 15 events that engaged over 600 community members. We are always available to help county residents become better stewards of their land, free of charge. We look forward to hearing from you!

Agricultural Training Opportunities

In the past year, HRSWCD and OSU Extension provided two bilingual training opportunities to local area orchardists. Last fall 85 students attended an orchard pest and disease management workshop taught in Spanish by instructor Leo Garcia from Wenatchee, WA. This past spring, 70 attended an airblast sprayer calibration workshop to improve pesticide applications. The class was taught by instructors from Washington State Department of Agriculture in both Spanish and English. Pesticide credits were available at both events.

We asked workshop participants, growers, industry reps, and researchers what additional kinds of trainings they wanted to see locally and generated a list of potential classes and workshops. We are working closely with OSU Extension Agent Ashley Thompson, OSU Pesticide Safety and Education Program, and Oregon Department of Agriculture to develop new local opportunities. The next upcoming opportunity for training will be a Spanish language private pesticide applicators license exam preparation class in February 2024. More licensed applicators means more people learning proper pesticide use and handling, and also how to protect our environment and human health. Look for announcements about the class later this fall.



Pesticide Stewardship Partnership



The Hood River PSP program has been ongoing since 2000. Results from monitoring four local streams in 2022 showed zero pesticide levels of high concern and three of moderate concern. No pesticides were detected in exceedance of the aquatic life benchmark. Herbicides were the most detected type of pesticide, with the highest number of detections in Lenz Creek. We secured additional funds this year to continue monitoring and implement riparian plantings, provide bilingual education and workshops, and begin the groundwork for a strategic plan. There will be an opportunity in early Spring for the public to participate in a PSP meeting. Join our mailing list to receive notification.

Riparian Plantings

In Spring of 2023, we planted riparian buffers to protect water quality from solar heating, runoff, and other potential pollutants. We planted 2,000 feet of riparian area at three separate properties adjacent to orchards, installing over 2,500 native plants. The plants were small but will establish quickly in the next few years. These buffers will protect tributaries to the Hood River, Neal Creek, and Odell Creek from potential sources of pollution. These waterways are important to locally threatened and endangered fish. Funds from the Tri County Hazardous Waste Management small grant program were matched with Oregon Department of Agriculture Pesticide Stewardship Partnership funds and the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs to accomplish the



work. We are working to continue to install riparian planting projects to minimize pesticide pollution in our local waterways. Call us if you have a waterway in need of riparian plants!

Ash Creek Forest Management employees plant bare-root trees and shrubs along a ditch carrying water to the Hood River, adjacent an orchard.

Oregon Department of Agriculture Water Quality Support Grant

We are working to improve summertime stream flows, water quality, and habitat conditions for salmon and steelhead in the Hood River and its tributaries. Efforts to achieve this have focused on reducing on-farm water use by upgrading irrigation systems. This will allow irrigation districts to better allocate their water resources and will result in more water being left in streams and rivers. Higher seasonal flows during irrigation season will result in cooler water temperatures and more instream habitat for fish and other aquatic life in the Hood River and its tributaries.



The Hood River SWCD recently completed Phase 1 of a multi-phase project that identified, assessed, and mapped the status of irrigation systems on agricultural lands in Hood River County. Additional funding for Phase 2 will continue efforts to assess irrigation systems, address barriers to participating in irrigation improvement projects, and will build a fund-raising strategy to facilitate on-farm irrigation improvements. Riparian planting projects will also be a focus of our efforts. We have a long history of working with partners such as local orchardists, irrigation districts, NRCS, and OWEB to improve on-farm irrigation systems and irrigation water management, and have been successful. Implementing Phase 2 will enable us to better focus technical and financial resources on the remaining acreages needing upgrades and address the specific needs of the landowner or manager.



This year the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

had funds available for improving forest health, planting pollinator habitat, irrigation upgrades in Farmers Irrigation District, and removing smudge pots across Hood River County.

Looking forward to 2024, NRCS will have an opportunity for Middle Fork Irrigation District patrons to apply for irrigation improvement funding. The pollinator/beneficial insect habitat funds and air quality funding pools will also still be available, and the food security initiative is ongoing. New in 2024— forest owners can apply for assistance through the new Hood River County Forest Resilience Initiative to address concerns of wildfire risk by improving forest resilience!

Last year...

- 200 acres of smudge pots removed
- 1,582 feet of on-farm irrigation pipeline installed
- 50.2 acres of micro irrigation system installed
- 15.9 acres of irrigation water management applied
- 1.8 acres of cover crop planted
- 40 acres of forest improved
- 475 feet of hedgerow planted for pollinators

Go to www.nrcs.usda.gov and search for “What’s available in my county” to learn more.

For more information on these and other programs, contact District Conservationist Carly Heron at 541-352-1037 (carly.heron@usda.gov) or visit www.or.nrcs.usda.gov.

NRCS Hires New Staff Member



NRCS welcomed a new staff member this year—Josh Flores. Josh has a degree in soil science from OSU and spent two years interning with the NRCS Pathways Program before being hired in the Parkdale office. Josh will work with Carly to assist landowners with project development and cost share assistance. Welcome Josh!

OWEB Small Grants

The Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board’s Small Grant Program provides \$100,000 in Oregon Lottery funds to the Hood River team every two years. Because we granted 90% of those funds within the first year of the biennium, we were eligible to get an additional \$32,000 in grant funds.

These funds are distributed in grant amounts up to \$15,000. During the last biennium (2021-2023), ten grants totaling \$131,424 in small grant funds were used to upgrade 49.2 acres of orchard to more efficient irrigation systems and improve riparian and livestock areas on three properties. Grant funds were matched by \$101,608 in local funding.

Eligible projects include irrigation system upgrades, streamside livestock fencing, manure storage facilities, riparian plantings, and other on-the-ground projects. We’re developing projects now—contact the SWCD for more information!



Hood River Weed Control Board Returns!

The Hood River SWCD has recently signed an Intergovernmental Agreement with Hood River County to serve as the County’s officially designated Weed Entity! We are excited to work cooperatively with the County to control noxious weeds. This designation will allow us to apply for funds to implement weed control projects such as outreach and education, planning and implementing control projects, and developing cost share projects with private land managers.

The District will begin to organize and convene meetings of the Weed and Pest Control Board starting in 2024. We’d love input from you on what and where our County’s biggest weed problems are and your help prioritizing efforts. If you are interested in participating, contact us!



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Check out our new logo!

The **Weed of the Month** campaign continues with articles describing various priority weeds, how to identify them, and tips for getting rid of them. Join the Weed Board efforts (*see story at left*) to provide input into how an where the SWCD focuses efforts in Hood River County.

WEED ALERT

Knapweed, Pasture & Rangeland Invader!

Knapweed threatens wildlife habitat, pastures and grasses. It causes significant loss of grazing forage and increases soil erosion.



When flowering from early summer to fall, knapweed has upright branched stems from 1-5 ft. tall. It has medium green leaves with a silver gray cast that become smaller as they move up the flowering stem.



For more information check out: www.columbia gorgecoop.com/na.org

Knapweed flower heads can be pink, purple or white, depending on the variety.



Plants prefer full sun and well drained soils, growing well in loose gravel and disturbed areas.

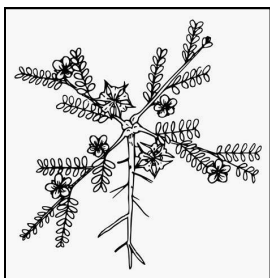
Do not compost plants with flowers. Pull, bag and place in garbage.

Scan here for control info.



PUNCTUREVINE REMOVAL

In partnership with the City and Port of Hood River, and with funding from the Columbia Gorge Cooperative Weed Management Area, the SWCD and volunteers met in July at the Waterfront to pull puncturevine. The group removed puncturevine along the waterfront trail and in front of businesses. Puncturevine, also known as goathead, is a dryland, weedy invader known for its spiny seed pods that are great at puncturing bike tires and paws. Unfortunately puncturevine germinates continuously throughout the season and by late August the puncturevine had come back. Another work party was quickly planned. This time volunteers pulled several large garbage bags full of the prickly weed. Next year we’ll plan on several work parties spanning July—September!



GARLIC MUSTARD



2023 marked the 13th year of garlic mustard abatement work. Garlic Mustard was discovered throughout a Parkdale orchard in 2010. At one point in time the infestation was so extensive we could only control the perimeter to prevent further spread. After years of committed, diligent work by the SWCD, Oregon Department of Agriculture, the US Forest Service, contracted hand-pulling crews, and landowners, we are now treating the infestation in its entirety and it has not spread beyond the known boundary.

Garlic mustard is a prolific herbaceous plant that spreads by seed and turns diverse wild landscapes into monocultures, threatening the diversity and beauty of the place we call home! If you think you see it, take a sample or a picture and bring it in. It has a distinct garlic smell when crushed. This plant is widespread just west of here in Multnomah County, so we need everyone to keep an eye out for this burdensome weed!



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3007 Experiment Station Rd.
Hood River, OR 97031

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Native Plant Sale

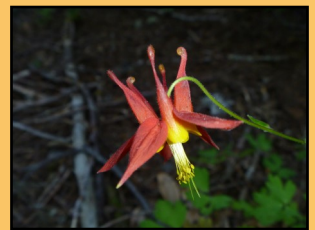


Taking online orders via credit card for the species listed below.

A limited supply of all species will be available for purchase day-of sale (April 5 & 6)

Call anytime with questions or for assistance!

Order online starting January 2nd!



- Doug Fir
- Grand Fir
- Noble Fir
- Western Red Cedar
- Ponderosa Pine
- Western Hemlock
- Western Larch
- White Pine
- Vine Maple
- Quaking Aspen
- Paper birch
- Beaked Hazelnut
- Showy Milkweed
- Redstem Ceanothus
- Woods Rose
- Snowberry
- Douglas Spirea
- Twinberry
- Mock Orange
- Oceanspray
- Osoberry
- Red Osier Dogwood
- Serviceberry
- Red Flowering Currant
- Pacific Ninebark
- Smooth Sumac
- Salmonberry
- Oregon viburnum
- Thimbleberry

- New this year—small potted wildflowers available day-of sale only! **Including: Iris, yarrow, columbine, lupine, goldenrod, camas, aster, blanketflower, bleeding heart, and more!**

Check out www.hoodriverswcd.org
To place your order and get more info!

Orders will be available for pick up April 5 & April 6, 2024