



OACD NEWS

Spring 2021



Photo: Part of Clackamas SWCD owned forest land at Eagle Creek

WORKING LANDS

As we reported earlier, OACD formed a Working Lands Committee this year. The committee has now met 4 times and is developing a series of tools to share with district members for their work in this area.

What are working lands? This is the committee's preliminary definition:

"Working lands are managed forests, rangelands, and farms which may encompass natural habitat features such as wetlands, rivers, and coasts which provide an abundance of natural resources for long-term agricultural, economic and ecological benefit."

Once the results of the recent survey are compiled, there may be some

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changes, but this will serve as a working definition in the interim to explain our work further. Recently the committee launched a survey on working lands and received a strong response from districts. Once a summary is compiled it will be shared with respondents. In the next few months the committee will be working on outlining the content for a district handbook for working lands, with the potential of a workshop presentation as part of the OACD annual meeting (November 9 & 10). OACD has a grant through the Oregon Conservation Partnership (OrCP) to complete work on the handbook.



NOTES FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

May honors two national programs:

- May is American Wetlands Month when we celebrate the role wetlands play in the natural ecosystem, such as helping to improve water quality and providing habitat for plants and wildlife.
- And May is also National Wildfire Awareness month as we plan for prevention while we are still continuing restoration of over 3 million acres that burned last year in Oregon.

We continue concern this spring without having completely recovered from last year's tragic wildfire season. Climatologists share that at this point we are now even drier than last year. As counties continue to seek drought declarations (3 approved and 6 counties waiting approval), we need to be prepared for a potentially difficult wildfire season.

Funding and programs for wildfire prevention and restoration are high among the state's priorities for funding this biennium. A number of wildfire bills in the legislature remain to be coordinated and funded. Right now, we are awaiting the revenue forecast for the state that is due out May 19th that will identify for legislators what they have to spend in the next biennium starting in July. Most of the legislative bills OACD is following are in the Ways and Means Committee awaiting funding decisions.

But districts continue to develop projects with their landowners even under COVID conditions, and hopefully in ensuing months we will get closer to normal operations as the pandemic abates.

In the last week, since the permanent OSHA rules were enacted on May 4th, we have heard from a number of districts regarding their ability to meet the conditions required in the rules. One of the more difficult conditions required is ventilation as many district facilities have not updated HVAC systems in older buildings. The concerns we've heard have prompted us to set up a webinar on May 18th to have the SDAO representative who is working with all districts statewide talk with us and respond to questions. (A link for the webinar is on page 3 events calendar and there is more information about the rules on page 14 of this newsletter.)

The good news is that it is Spring! And districts are able to more safely interact outdoors with their landowners and continue the conservation work we are all proud of completing.

Jan Lee, Executive Director



COMING EVENTS

MAY 2021

All meetings listed are virtual

- 5/11-5/13 CONNECT begins May 11 and runs through the 13th. It's not too late to Register. You can register here and view the agenda.
<https://oceanconnect.org/currents/category/connect/>
- 5/15 [Naturescaping Basics](#) with East Multnomah Soil and Water Conservation District 9:00-1:00 (virtual)
- 5/18 1:00 p.m. OACD Webinar with SDAO: OSHA rules effective May 4
Ask questions on how the rules impact SWCDs; also a discussion of information on new rules for wildfire smoke and heat impacting districts
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84862441503>
Or phone 1-253-215-8782, meeting ID 848 6244 1503
- 5/18 10:00-12:00 ODFW Conservation Open House
<https://www.zoomgov.com/j/1606066241>
Discussion of challenges facing fish and wildlife and their habitat; how the conservation community can work together; and future topics
Agenda: [ODFW Conservation Open House May 18 2021.pdf](#)
- 5/19 Oregon Board of Agriculture meeting (see ODA website for link to join)
- 5/19 Special Districts of Oregon Association: Employee leave seminar
Register at SDAO: www.sdao.com
- 5/20 9:00 a.m. NACD Monthly Urban and Community will focus on engaging with tribal communities. [Register online](#)

JUNE

Northwest Land Camp, June 6th, 10th, 17th and 24th from 9:00-1:15
Register at nwlandcamp.org

JULY and Later

7/27-7/28 OWEB meeting (see link to join at website)

8/24-8/25 Soil and Water Conservation Commission meets (see ODA website)

8/30-8/31 NACD Southwest and Pacific Regional Meeting, Jackson, Wyoming
<https://conservewy.com/events/nacd-southwest-and-pacific-region-meeting/>

11/9-11/10 OACD Annual Meeting – Mark your Calendar (live or virtual?)

Naturescaping Basics – East Multnomah SWCD

Date: Sat, May. 15 **Time:** 9:00 am - 1:00 pm Held online (submit the form below to register)

Workshop Description:

Learn to Naturescape! “Naturescaping” is the practice of designing (or redesigning) your landscape so that it reduces water use and decreases storm-water runoff while saving you time, money, and energy. Please note that this class will focus on the Willamette Valley in the Pacific Northwest region of the U.S. This introductory workshop introduces the core concepts of naturescaping, and also explores:

- pollution prevention through the reduction/elimination of chemical use
- how native plants naturally resist pests & tolerate drought conditions while attracting native birds, butterflies and other beneficial pollinators to your garden
- basic site planning principals, and many other great natural gardening & design tips

Even if you decide to enlist the help of a contractor, you’ll have the framework to make decisions and effectively communicate the vision you have for your yard.

To register for the event, go to: <https://emswcd.org/workshops-and-events/upcoming-workshops/all-events/naturescaping-basics-78/> . Please contact Rhesa at (503) 935-5368 or rhesa@emswcd.org for information on accessibility or accommodation.



The **Coalition of Oregon Land Trusts** and the Washington Association of Land Trusts are pleased to announce that registration for NW Land Camp is now open! It takes place June 3, 10, 17 and 24 from 9:00-1:15 daily.

The virtual conference will host more than 40 dynamic and interactive workshops. Attendees will have access to most workshops for three months after the end of our event, so, if there are too many great workshops to choose from, you'll be able to go back and see what you missed.

Please visit the nwlandcamp.org to see the list of workshops and keynote speakers for more about the virtual conference.



FUNDING RESOURCES

FUNDING TIDE GATE CONSTRUCTION

Business Oregon is now accepting funding applications for tide gate construction projects. Applications are due June 4, 2021, at 5:00 p.m.

Grants of up to \$500,000 are available with an additional loan amount of up to \$500,000 available if needed. Awarded funds must be expended by June 30, 2023.

Construction projects are to improve a single tide gate drainage system to ensure land drainage and flood protection by the repair or replacement of tide gates, culverts, or other barriers. For more details on eligible costs and activities, or to download an application form, visit the program website: <https://www.orinfrastructure.org/Infrastructure-Programs/Tide-Gates/>. For assistance, contact Shelby Gonzales (971) 375-7892.

NACD TECHNICAL GRANTS

Just a reminder that the deadline is coming up for the NACD Technical Grants—**JUNE 1!** Ariel Rivers, the Pacific Regional Representation for NACD says, “We have received a few inquiries from Pacific Region districts, but no applications. As a reminder, we cannot award any grants without a signature sheet and list that are approved by the local team”: OACD, ODA and NRCS have to sign off based on priorities. This signoff should be requested before the June deadline. It’s important to provide notice or a copy of your application early to be able to gain support your project under the team priorities.

Additional information is available online, including the FAQs and a recent informational webinar. Information is located on the NACD website for both the webinar and the application: <https://www.nacdnet.org/technical-assistance-grants/2021-technical-assistance-grants/>

NATIONAL FISH AND WILDLIFE FOUNDATION CONSERVATION GRANTS

Browse [NFWF's conservation programs](#) and learn how to [apply for a grant](#). Currently NFWF is funding the Working Lands for Wildlife grants program. There will be 15-25 grants offered nationwide and priority will be based on species. There are grants based on salmon habitat, sage grouse and other ESA priorities. Deadline May 27. <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detailfull/national/plantsanimals/fishwildlife/?cid=stelprdb1046975>

OWEB GRANTS

- Applications for Focused Investment Partnership (FIPs) grants opens July 2021 and awards will be made in July of 2022.
- Technical Assistance grant applications will open in June this year and be awarded in January of 2021.

Attend the July 27-28 OWEB virtual meeting for updated information.

OWEB CAPACITY GRANTS FOR DISTRICTS

New capacity grants will be awarded as of July 1, 2021. However, payments cannot be made against those grants until agreements are signed. That is why the current grant runs through July 30—so there won't be a gap. Once the new grant agreement is processed, districts can back bill to July 1. Budget guidance for the grants (\$7.65 million this coming biennium) is located at <https://www.oregon.gov/oweb/Documents/GoBIG.pdf>. In addition, there is a short document on what is eligible and what is ineligible here: [Reporting SWCD Capacity Grants.pdf](#).



LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Moving into the Near End of the Legislative Session

The Oregon Legislature must adjourn no later than June 27th, by guidance of the state Constitution. Legislators now have less than 60 days to complete their work. Legislators are aiming for June 18th as their goal to end the session. At this point the next deadline is that all bills must have been assigned a “work session” by May 14th and have a completed work session by May 28th. After that bills not moving through the committees will be dead unless sent to one of the few committees open past deadlines (Revenue, Ways and Means, or Rules). All committee hearings are still virtual events.

There was a slowdown in processing bills because of four COVID cases that impacted legislators on the floor over a period of time and the necessity to quarantine. And Republican lawmakers, not feeling equitably treated, required all bills to be read word-for-word up until very recently. To change that process, an agreement was reached to have an equal number from each party represented on the Redistricting Committee. Oregon will now have a sixth Congressional member and district lines will be redrawn as they are every 10-year period. Legislators have to wait until the end of summer to receive the federal census report figures, delayed by COVID.

Currently almost all of the bills we are following are in the Ways and Means Committee. On May 19th the state's revenue forecast is anticipated to provide estimated funds available to the legislature for funding agency budgets and other programs identified in specific legislation. We anticipate that after that date some of the bills stuck in Ways and Means will start cutting loose.

To see the status of specific bills, go to the “Advocacy” section of the OACD website: www.oacd.org. Click on the 2021 Legislative Session and you will find a spreadsheet of bills we are following and below that spreadsheet, a listing of the testimony the OACD Advocacy Committee has submitted in hearings. If you have not already received your member access, contact staff@oacd.org.



If you wish to join the Friday Advocacy Committee calls, contact Stan or myself and we can add you to our list:

Stan Dean, Advocacy Chair

stan.dean@jswcd.org

Jan Lee, Executive Director

jan.lee@oacd.org

We meet 10:30-12:00 Fridays by phone.

If you want to provide testimony or stream a hearing, go to the PowerPoint on our website for the advocacy training file in our member section. It has instructions and links to the areas where you will need to go to look up committee agendas, particular bills, who the legislators are for your district and many other items. If you are going to testify, we are happy to assist you and appreciate your sharing your positions so we can fill you in on backgrounds or relationships with particular legislators as you work through the process.

CAP AND REDUCE

While “cap and trade” legislation that ended up in walkouts in past sessions is off the table this session, climate issues are being pursued directly under agency authorizations as administered by the governor’s Executive Order 20-04 on climate change. The Oregon Global Warming Commission is working on a study on how natural and working lands can voluntarily provide reductions in greenhouse gases and DEQ’s “cap and reduce” Climate Protection Program is pursuing rulemaking to implement state strategies. Both Stan and I are working within the DEQ process; I am on the 34 member RAC and Stan is my alternate. We are representing the issues on behalf of natural and working lands in that role. We have been meeting with the RAC for a full day each month. The RAC will meet through July and then following a draft set of rules, the Environmental Quality Commission will adopt rules by the end of 2021. See documents relative to this rulemaking at: <https://www.oregon.gov/deq/ghgp/Pages/capandreduce.aspx>

GOVERNOR’S EXECUTIVE ORDER ON CLIMATE CHANGE

Reports on agencies’ progress toward climate change goals will be presented to the House Committee on Energy and Environment on May 12th at 1:00 p.m. You can stream that hearing by going to the Oregon Legislature’s main site and choosing “audio/video” on the face page. That will pull down a list of hearings occurring that day and you can click on this one.

OREGON GLOBAL WARMING COMMISSION

Another entity we are closely following is the Oregon Global Warming Commission (OGWC), which meets monthly on first Fridays. The OGWC is developing a study on natural and working lands and their role in climate mitigation and adaptation. They propose to map areas where sequestration projects might be sited and to consider policy options and needs for that work. The final study results should be available in June. Thanks to many of you who participated in the surveys from OGWC to show districts’ interest in the work.



JOBS, H. R. INFORMATION, TRAINING

UPPER WILLAMETTE SWCD POSITION

The Upper Willamette SWCD is seeking a **Conservation Technician**:
<https://uwsxcd.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Conservation-Tech-Job-Description-FINAL.pdf>. This position closes May 14.

WHEELER SWCD SEEKS MANAGER

Wheeler SWCD in Fossil, Oregon, is seeking a **District Manager**. A full job description is available at <http://www.wheelersxcd.org> (541) 468-2990

MARION SWCD POSITIONS

Marion SWCD is now hiring. [Click Here for Employment Information](#) and contact (503) 391-9927 or office@marionsxcd.net for more information for the positions of **District Manager** and **Conservation Planner**.

TIME TO UPDATE WORKPLACE POSTERS

Oregon Bureau of Labor & Industries

[This year's new all-in-one posters are available for purchase](#) now for posting by July 1, 2021.

BOLI has updated all of its posters for 2021, including printables, to make sure that workers have a straight-forward summary of workplace protections. This includes updates to the minimum wage rates and sick child leave (for COVID-19). These new posters include required postings **valid July 1, 2021**.

We are also offering individual posters for [free download](#) in **seven** languages: Arabic, Chinese, Korean, Spanish, Russian, Vietnamese, and English.

Finally, note that [currently, Oregon OSHA rules](#) also require employers to post the "COVID-19 Hazards Poster." Download the COVID-19 specific posting here:
<https://osha.oregon.gov/OSHAPubs/5504.pdf>

FOLLOW UP SURVEY FOR ODA TRAINING

Eric Nusbaum seeks your survey response regarding participation in the recent training for district directors and staff. If you attended, please take a minute to complete the survey. If you have questions, you can contact Eric at 503.510.8930. Presentations are available at ODA's website. Survey: <https://survey.alchemer.com/s3/6224776/District-Training-Week-2021>

NACD UPDATES

NACD NATIONAL COMMITTEES

OACD has now been appointed to the NACD Legislative Committee so we will have a stronger voice on issues before Congress and feedback from our committee members. Terri Pegg Riggsby, our OACD President, is the main delegate to NACD and Jeff Rola, our Vice President is her alternate. Terri was also appointed to the Auction Committee.

Jeff Rola is now a member of the NACD Coastal Resource Policy Group (RPG). Coastal districts can reach out to Jeff to share issues that he can relate to the national group.

NEW NACD GROUNDWATER TASK FORCE

A new task force focused on groundwater is seeking members. [More info online](#); contact info@nacdn.org with interest in joining.

NACD GRANT TO DESCHUTES SWCD

The Deschutes Soil and Water Conservation District was awarded a technical assistance grant from NACD that will enhance water conservation efforts. The district will soon be able to provide assistance in water efficiency projects to more irrigation water users thanks to a grant from the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD). The grant will enable the district to provide on-farm assistance to landowners who want to improve their irrigation systems and water management practices, including retrofitting private irrigation laterals. As demands increase for water, many Central Oregon entities are improving the utilization of the precious water resources as demands increase and supply becomes more limited.

NACD LIBRARY

NACD held its annual meeting virtually in February. Some of the material shared virtually is available at the NACD Website: www.nacd.org.

Ariel Rivers, the Pacific Representative for NACD, has shared the following links to NACD publications. All of the publications are available at [NACD's publications](#).



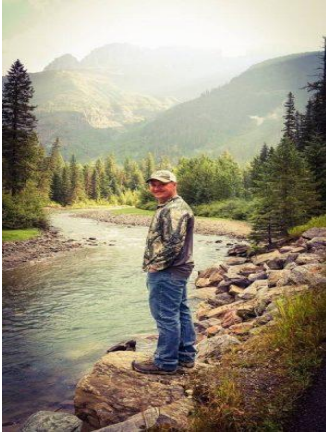
The weekly newsletters include: [eResource](#), [The Resource](#), and [Forestry Notes](#). The [archives of the monthly urban and community webinars](#) are full of example projects from the Pacific Region, as well as other projects that the Pacific may learn from.

URBAN GRANT AWARDED DESCHUTES SWCD

Oregon received its first NACD Urban Agriculture Conservation Grant. Of 37 applicants, that grant was awarded to the Deschutes SWCD. This project will improve soil health through the creation of a school gardens workshop for Central Oregon educators and provide support to amend school garden soil. A soil health lesson will be created and presented in classrooms. Youth will get hands on experience improving soil by planting pollinator corridors.

<https://www.nacdnet.org/about-nacd/what-we-do/urban-and-community/>

POTPOURRI



HARNEY SWCD'S NEW MANAGER

Jason Kesling grew up in Klamath Falls, Oregon. He went to college at Oregon State University where he studied Fish and Wildlife. He graduated in 2004 with a B.S. in Fish and Wildlife with a specialty option in Avian Ecology. He moved to Burns, Oregon in 2004 and has worked for the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, Burns Paiute Tribe and the Upper Snake River Tribe Foundation during that time. Most recently he has worked for the District of the Sage Grouse Planner/Rangeland Biologist. Jason likes to spend time with his family, and traveling, hunting, fishing, and gardening. Please welcome Jason who can be reached at 541-573-5010 or 541-891-9878 jason.m.kesling@gmail.com

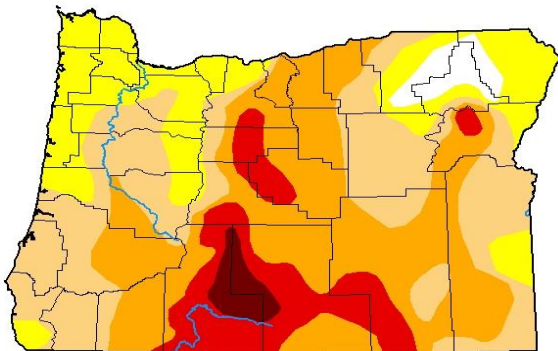
DROUGHT THREATENS WATER SUPPLY

While a number of counties have requested state drought declarations, at this point only 3 Declarations have been approved and 6 are pending. "The Klamath Basin faces one of the most difficult water years in recent memory, said the Governor in a recent press release. "Moving forward, we must look for long-term solutions to the underlying issue in Klamath and many other Oregon counties: there is too little water to get around, and as the climate changes, we are experiencing hotter, drier summers. After last year's wildfire season, we are closely monitoring drought conditions in the Klamath Basin and statewide."

OREGON DROUGHT CONDITIONS INTERACTIVE WEB MAP APRIL 20, 2021

<https://www.plantmaps.com/interactive-oregon-drought-monitor-map.php>

U.S. Drought Monitor Oregon



April 27, 2021
(Released Thursday, Apr. 29, 2021)
Valid 8 a.m. EDT

Drought Conditions (Percent Area)

	None	D0-D4	D1-D4	D2-D4	D3-D4	D4
Current	2.79	97.21	77.74	47.17	14.12	2.22
Last Week 04-20-2021	5.47	94.53	75.95	47.11	14.12	2.22
3 Months Ago 01-26-2021	7.72	92.28	75.90	59.80	25.52	0.00
Start of Calendar Year 12-29-2020	8.57	91.43	83.53	68.71	27.74	0.00
Start of Water Year 09-29-2020	6.50	93.50	84.77	65.53	33.59	0.00
One Year Ago 04-28-2020	3.84	96.16	63.65	33.43	2.36	0.00

Intensity:

- None
- D0 Abnormally Dry
- D1 Moderate Drought
- D2 Severe Drought
- D3 Extreme Drought
- D4 Exceptional Drought

The Drought Monitor focuses on broad-scale conditions. Local conditions may vary. For more information on the Drought Monitor, go to <https://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/About.aspx>

Author:

Richard Heim
NCEI/NOAA



droughtmonitor.unl.edu

DROUGHT DECLARATIONS

The Governor signs Executive Orders to confirm drought declaration. The first was

ordered on March 9th for Klamath County, then March 31 for Jackson County, and the most recent was signed on April 7th for Lake County.

There are county requests pending now for the following counties, likely to be declared soon: Baker, Douglas, Gilliam, Morrow, Umatilla and Wheeler.



USDA INCORPORATES CLIMATE MITIGATION

Enhancing Conservation and Science to Address Climate Change

Here is a summary of actions under the new administration's first 100 days in action. USDA is taking steps to put American agriculture and forestry at the center of climate smart solutions to address climate change:

- On April 21, USDA opened enrollment in the [Conservation Reserve Program](#) (CRP) with higher payment rates, new incentives, and a more targeted focus on the program's role in climate change mitigation. USDA's goal is to increase enrollment in the program by 4 million acres or more over the coming year, and CRP's long-term goal is to establish valuable land cover to help improve water quality, improve soil health and carbon sequestration, prevent soil erosion, and reduce loss of wildlife habitat.
- USDA also announced \$330 million in 85 [Regional Conservation Partnership Program](#) (RCPP) projects to address climate change and other natural resources challenges and \$25 million for On-Farm Conservation Innovation Trials, which are part of the Conservation Innovation Grants program, was announced by the Department.
- USDA made [a \\$10 million investment](#) in a new program area priority called, "Extension, Education, and USDA Climate Hub Partnerships," to train the next generation of agriculturalists and foresters to incorporate climate change research into their management practices. The projects funded in this priority area will strengthen and broaden the impacts of USDA's Climate Hubs through the Cooperative Extension Service, ensuring producers have information needed to plan for changing climate conditions and to consider climate-friendly farming practices.
- USDA [announced investments](#) of \$285 million in critical infrastructure, primarily focused on deferred maintenance, transportation, and recreation within national forests and grasslands. The United States Forest Service (USFS) [announced investments](#) of \$218 million in Great American Outdoors Act projects that work to conserve forests and wetlands, stimulate rural economies, and bolster the public's access to America's natural beauty.

CONGRESSIONAL ACTIONS

The [Thrive](#) Act has been introduced in Congress to dedicate substantial funding on climate, clean water and social justice projects. Introduced by Senator Ed Markey and Representative Debbie Dingell, it authorizes new federal spending annually over 10-years for infrastructure, clean energy, agriculture, and clean water, among other programs. **Congressman Blumenauer of Oregon** is one of the co-sponsors. Infrastructure will also include “natural infrastructure”, providing for conservation-based projects.

OUTDOOR RESTORATION PARTNERSHIP ACT

Senator Michael Bennet of Colorado has introduced the Outdoor Restoration Partnership Act which would make \$20 billion directly available to state and local governments, special districts, tribes and non-profits to support restoration, resilience and mitigation projects across public, private and tribal lands empowering local leaders.

The fund would increase support for local collaborative efforts to restore forests and watersheds, reduce wildfire risk, enhance wildlife habitat, remove invasive species and expand outdoor access. A summary of the bill is located here:

https://www.bennet.senate.gov/public/_cache/files/3/4/3493824f-24b8-43e0-9469-9d744ebabb6f/DEF27E54C52E6373E3C6554369EECFAD.outdoor-restoration-partnership-act-of-2021-section-by-section-002-.pdf

OREGON SENATORS INTRODUCE BILL TO IMPROVE WATER ACCESS

Oregon Senators Wyden and Merkley have introduced the “Water for Conservation and Farming Act of 2021” in the 117th Congress. The primary goal is to increase water access for agricultural producers and conservation efforts by improving dam safety, helping to create more resilient watersheds and benefiting both urban and rural water users.

http://www.lakecountyexam.com/wyden-reintroduces-bill-to-improve-water-access/article_8c184a7a-69ae-530a-8d65-edda93de26eb.html

FEDERAL INITIATIVES



“America the Beautiful” Initiative

WASHINGTON, May 6, 2021 – Today the Biden-Harris administration outlined a vision for how the United States can work collaboratively to conserve and restore the lands, waters, and wildlife that support and sustain the nation. The recommendations are contained in a

[report released today](#) outlining a locally led and voluntary nationwide conservation goal to conserve 30 percent of U.S. lands and waters by 2030.

The report calls for a decade-long effort to support locally led and voluntary conservation and restoration efforts across public, private, and Tribal lands and waters in order to create jobs and strengthen the economy's foundation; tackle the climate and nature crises; and address inequitable access to the outdoors.

The report, submitted to the National Climate Task Force, was developed by the U.S. Departments of the Interior, Agriculture and Commerce, and the White House Council on Environmental Quality. It outlines eight principles that should guide the nationwide effort, including a pursuit of collaborative approaches; a commitment to supporting the voluntary conservation efforts of farmers, ranchers, and fishers; and honoring of Tribal sovereignty and private property rights.

"The President's challenge is a call to action to support locally led conservation and restoration efforts of all kinds and all over America, wherever communities wish to safeguard the lands and waters they know and love," write Interior Secretary Deb Haaland, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack, Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo, and White House Council on Environmental

Quality Chair Brenda Mallory in the report. "Doing so will not only protect our lands and waters but also boost our economy and support jobs nationwide."

Based on feedback gathered in the Administration's first 100 days, the report identifies six priority areas for the administration's early focus, investments, and collaboration:

- Creating more parks and safe outdoor opportunities in nature-deprived communities.
- Supporting Tribally led conservation and restoration priorities.
- Expanding collaborative conservation of fish and wildlife habitats and corridors.
- Increasing access for outdoor recreation.
- Incentivizing and rewarding the voluntary conservation efforts of fishers, ranchers, farmers, and forest owners.
- Creating jobs by investing in restoration and resilience projects and initiatives, including the Civilian Climate Corps.

The Biden-Harris administration is already taking steps to support outdoor recreation and equitable access to the outdoors:

- In late April, USDA expanded the [Conservation Reserve Program](#) by offering new incentives, higher rental rates, and more focused attention on sensitive lands with a goal of enrolling 4 million acres and capturing 3.6 million metric tons of CO2 equivalent in this voluntary conservation program.
- This week, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service [announced a proposal](#) for the largest expansion in recent history of hunting and sport fishing opportunities for game species across 2.1 million acres at 90 national wildlife refuges and on the lands of one national fish hatchery.
- The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) recently announced the expansion of the Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary, nearly tripling the size of the sanctuary and protecting 14 reefs and banks that are habitat for recreationally

important fish.

- In the coming days, the National Park Service will announce \$150 million in funding for the Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership Program, which helps build parks in underserved communities.
- NOAA is working in partnership with the State of Connecticut to create a living classroom

for education, research, and recreation by designating a National Estuarine Research Reserve in Long Island Sound. The final designation paperwork is expected by January 2022, which will make it the 30th estuary reserve in the national system.

To help measure and track progress toward the nation's first conservation goal, the report calls for the establishment of an interagency working group, led by the U.S. Geological Survey, the Natural Resources Conservation Service and NOAA in partnership with other land and ocean management agencies. The working group will develop the American Conservation and Stewardship Atlas, a tool that will better reflect the voluntary contributions of farmers, ranchers, forest owners and private landowners; the contributions of fishery management councils; and other existing conservation designations on lands and waters across federal, state, local, Tribal, and private lands and waters across the nation.

In line with Executive Order 14008, the agencies developed the recommendations after hearing from Tribal leaders, governors and their staff, Members of Congress and their staff, county officials, state elected officials, state fish and wildlife agencies, leaders on equity and justice in conservation policy, environmental advocacy organizations, hunting and fishing organizations, regional fisheries management councils, farming and ranching organizations, trade associations, forestry representatives, outdoor recreation businesses and users, the seafood industry, and others.

The report recommends additional dialogue with key partners – including states and Tribes – to inform early collaborative conservation efforts and the development of the American Conservation and Stewardship Atlas.

“This report is only the starting point on the path to fulfilling the conservation vision that President Biden has outlined,” says the report. “Where this path leads over the next decade will be determined not by our agencies, but by the ideas and leadership of local communities. It is our job to listen, learn, and provide support along the way to help strengthen economies and pass on healthy lands, waters, and wildlife to the generations to come.”

STATE ACTIONS

OSHA PERMANENT RULES NOW EFFECTIVE – DISTRICT ISSUES

In review of the new OSHA rules that are now permanent as of May 4, districts are finding a number of areas of issue. As a result, OACD has arranged for a webinar on May 18th at 1:00 p.m. (see details on page on the events page in this newsletter). Jason Jantzi of Special Districts Association of Oregon will talk with districts who join the webinar about these issues and their impacts and respond to questions. In addition, he will talk about the new fire and smoke rules that apply to districts.

OSHA adopted rules: <https://osha.oregon.gov/OSHARules/div1/437-001-0744.pdf>

Summary of key points:

<https://osha.oregon.gov/OSHArules/adopted/2021/May4SummaryOfKeyCOVID19RuleIssues-ao2-2021.pdf>

A major issue is ventilation. HVAC systems must meet specific guidelines under OSHA rules. Is the builder owner liable, or is the employer within the building liable if they are not one and

the same? This is an issue Jason has been looking at. Written certification must be sent to OSHA when there are 10 or more employees. Others with fewer employees would be at risk when visited by OSHA or there are complaints filed.

Another issue in the rules is the requirement for disease listings and plans to implement procedures. The Oregon business community is developing this piece and it can be shared when available. Under the current rules, recordkeeping on COVID disease of employees is required.

We are not sure how long these rules will apply, but even if they are rescinded at some point in the future, there is a parallel set of rules being developed that will have three increments for combating airborne diseases and may have similar requirements.

This is not an issue OACD has been following closely, but SDAO is on top of this as a service to district members and we want to take advantage of their expertise in this area by sharing this discussion with districts and other partnership entities who will be impacted.

In the workplace



OWEB CLIMATE ACTIONS

Funding climate-related initiatives

OWEB's spending plan for the biennium beginning July 1 this year sets aside \$125,000 for climate-related initiatives. This could relate to such activities as: a) follow-up on natural and working lands efforts related to OWEB's climate initiatives and Climate Executive Order (EO)

20-04; b) climate equity and justice considerations related to OWEB's diversity, equity and inclusion work and the Impacted Communities work group under EO 20-04; and c) exploration of existing estimation and quantification tools for use in OWEB and other agency programs in conjunction with implementation of the Oregon Global Warming Commission's study on natural and working lands, among other programs.

Establishing a Climate Committee

In April of 2020, OWEB updated its board committee structure to include a new board-level Climate Committee. The role of the committee is to help identify ways to more meaningfully incorporate climate change into OWEB's grant programs. To date, the Climate Committee has been discussing such topics as:

- How OWEB addresses climate in its current grant-making processes and criteria, focusing on open solicitation grants and Focused Investment Partnerships;
- Increasing carbon sequestration benefits while minimizing greenhouse gas emissions associated with a range of restoration and conservation actions; and
- Climate adaptation co-benefits from restoration and conservation actions.

Incorporating Climate Considerations into Grant Programs

OWEB is discussing how climate considerations could be reflected and integrated into OWEB's grant programs. Given this, outreach to applicants, grantees and stakeholders will be important, so that partners are aware of the committee's and Board's interest in and work related to climate and understand potential implications of more explicitly incorporating climate considerations into OWEB's grant-making.



Malheur River

MALHEUR WATER QUALITY GRANTS AWARDED

The Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board awarded 85 grants totaling more than \$10 million to conservation organizations for projects to enhance fish and wildlife habitat and to improve water quality. Among approved projects were several in Malheur County along the Malheur River with money going to either the Malheur Watershed Council or the Malheur Soil and Water Conservation District. Most of these projects along the Malheur River have to do with water quality improvements. According to the OWEB documents, Malheur River has the second-worst water quality in the state as rated by Oregon Department of Environmental Quality. Three of the projects are within 10 miles of Ontario, one on Bully Creek, one in the Westfall region, and one near Harper.

Projects include irrigation improvements by installing pivot systems, replacing flood irrigation, and eliminating runoff containing sediment, nutrients and bacteria. The Harper projects include

protecting vegetation from unrestricted livestock access. Total funding for the Eastern Oregon restoration projects was approximately \$1.111 million, including funds for three projects in Baker County, one in Union County and one in Wallowa County.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE LANDS CHANGES WETLAND MITIGATION

Cost of the state's payment in-lieu option for mitigating removal-fill impacts will increase June 1. Oregon law requires compensatory mitigation to replace the loss of impacts due to removal-fill activity. Applicants can purchase credits from a private mitigation bank, complete their own stream or wetland mitigation projects or make a payment in-lieu of mitigation to DSL. When opting to make a payment in-lieu, the application transfer responsibility for mitigation to DSL and the DSL undertakes the project that will replace the stream or wetland benefits lost.

The increase is based on the need to ensure payments cover the actual cost of completing stream and wetland mitigation projects. It will vary from project to project. Payments are calculated on a variety of factors specific to each applicant's activity, including impacts and project location. The payment also factors in how much mitigation is required to achieve Oregon's goal for no net loss of wetlands and waters.

For assistance regarding an existing or upcoming permit, please contact the [Aquatic Resource Coordinator for your area](#). For more information about the payment calculator updates, email aquatic.resource@dsl.state.or.us or go to: <https://mailchi.mp/dsl/payment-in-lieu-of-mitigation-costs-changing-june-1?e=0cf79074c6>.



ODFW FISH PASSAGE RULEMAKING

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife has initiated a fish passage administrative rule revision process. The Fish Passage Task Force will function as a rules advisory committee (RAC) and a series of public meetings will be hosted to consider rule revisions. A final draft will be considered by the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission later this year.

To submit public comment an online comment form has been developed and is [available here](#). In addition, the RAC and ODFW have planned bi-monthly virtual public meetings scheduled every other Tuesday from 2:00-4:00 p.m. Those remaining include May 18 and June 1. Members of the public can view these virtual meetings at [Join Skype Meeting](#). Additional information on the rule revision is available on the ODFW [website](#) or by contacting Greg Apke, ODFW Fish Passage Program Coordinator at (503) 947-6228 or ODFW.Passagerules@state.or.us.

ARTICLES & PUBLICATIONS

Pamplin Media: Oregon workers may have to wait several more months beyond the scheduled January 2022 date to start collecting benefits under the state's **paid family leave** program. The Employment Department is asking lawmakers for more time to set up the program approved by the legislature in 2019. They propose the first payout in January 2023. The departments cites the pandemic as the reason for not being ready in 2022.

<https://pamplinmedia.com/but/239-news/507788-406248-oregons-paid-family-leave-program-faces-a-delay>

Willamette Week: Much of Oregon is Already in Drought. What Does that Mean for Another Massive Wildfire Season? <https://www.wweek.com/outdoors/2021/05/04/much-of-oregon-is-already-in-drought-does-that-mean-the-state-is-headed-for-another-massive-wildfire-season/>.



The state climatologist with Oregon Climate Science states “at this point, we’re actually direr than we were last year and that will play into a potentially higher fire risk.”

Capital Press: Northwest Solar, Wind Siting. Up to 146,000 acres of the Northwest, much of it farmland, could be converted to solar production by 2050, according to a recent study by the American Farmland Trust. In Oregon, about 31,000 acres are slated for solar projects, 48,000 acres for wind projects and 62,000 acres for combined wind and solar projects.

https://www.capitalpress.com/state/idaho/nw-solar-wind-developments-could-impact-vast-swaths-of-ag-land/article_b82274bc-a836-11eb-99c3-af4dfd07f4eb.html

Capital Press: Rock-picking robot: First maps, then full automation, to do the worst job on any farm... Brent Frei grew up on a dryland wheat farm on the Camas Prairie of northern Idaho. Like every farm kid, he picked his share of rocks without giving much thought to the age-old perennial chore. It's one of the worst jobs on any farm. Now, after a successful career in high-tech, he has turned his attention to that chore, starting a company that uses high-flying drones and robotics to locate and pick up the rocks that can damage farm implements.

https://www.capitalpress.com/nation_world/agriculture/rock-picking-robot-first-maps-then-full-automation-will-do-worst-job-on-any-farm/article_d005308c-8816-11eb-bd38-abe56a64fbae.html#utm_source=capitalpress.com&utm_campaign=%2Fnewsletter%2Foptimize%2Fdaily-capital-press%2F%3F-dc%3D1616695213&utm_medium=email&utm_content=headline



Oregon Conservation Partnership

WEBINARS

Each month the Oregon Conservation Partnership (OrCP) provides a virtual webinar on a topic of interest to districts, watershed councils and land trusts. We serve 160 member groups among our partners.



On April 29th, our webinar was on the recent projects funded by the Joint Chiefs' Project. The NRCS Chief and the US Forest Service Chief fund a number of projects each year focusing on conservation. (A copy of the virtual meeting will be available soon on the OrCP website: www.conservationpartnership.org.)

Oregon's Senators Merkley and Wyden recently announced funding over \$5 million from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's "**Joint Chiefs' Landscape Restoration Partnership**" for projects in Lake and Jefferson and Deschutes Counties. The two projects focus on resource resiliency in wildfire-prone areas and match conservation practices and forest management. The projects will engage private landowners and local partners, including soil and water conservation districts, watershed councils, state agencies, OSU extension, OWEB and others.

USDA's Forest Service and Natural Resources Conservation Service are working together to improve the health of forests where public forests and grasslands connect to privately owned lands. Through the Joint Chiefs' Landscape Restoration Partnership, the two USDA agencies are restoring landscapes, reducing wildfire threats to communities and landowners, protecting water quality and enhancing wildlife habitat. The partnership began in 2014, and each year the agency selects new three-year projects. An investment of \$46 million in 2021 will fund 37 projects.

Speakers included:

Jay Gibbs, NRCS: Introductory remarks about the program and new application process

Alex Enna, U.S. Forest Service, Bend-Ft. Rock District

Lars Santana, NRCS District Conservationist, Deschutes & Jefferson Counties

Todd Peplin, Deschutes Soil & Water Conservation District

Max Corning, District Conservationist, Lakeview

PowerPoints from the webinar:

"Buttes to Basins" (Deschutes/Jefferson)

"Lake Project" (Lake/Ft. Rock)

ORCP AFFINITY GROUPS - Join us!

Oregon Conservation Partnership launches affinity groups to support collaborative conservation across the state!

Some spots still remain on the following affinity groups:

- [Estuaries and Tide Gates](#)
- [Journal Club for Aquatic Habitat Restoration](#)
- [Pollinators](#)
- [Protection of working lands and easements](#)

About: Conservation/Restoration Affinity Groups are a new initiative launched by the [Oregon Conservation Partnership](#) (OrCP) in 2021, with the goal to increase connections, collaboration and conservation impact across Watershed Councils, Conservation Districts, and Land Trusts. Each group will have about 20 participants and will be led by a coordinator who will offer regular meetings over remote meeting platforms, providing an opportunity for:

- Sustained, longer term conversations;
- Information and resource sharing;
- Collaboration incubation;
- Near-peer mentoring;
- Professional development.
-

Expectations for participation: The success of Affinity groups relies on group cohesion and consistent participation of affinity group members. These groups will meet no less than six times per year and participation includes the following:

- active participation, showing up, and joining conversation
- willingness to contribute your own stories and resources for peer learning

Affinity Group Topics

Estuaries and tide gates:

To join, contact coordinator Garshaw Amidi-Abraham at nnwc@nestuccawaters.org.

Garshaw serves as the Coordinator for the Nestucca, Neskowin & Sand Lake Watershed Council in Pacific City, Oregon. From a conservation perspective, existing tide gate infrastructure and upstream drainages pose several limitations on fish passage and access to critical rearing habitat. Failing tide gates can threaten agricultural and municipal operations and infrastructure. There is growing momentum to address the suite of issues related to tide gates so that infrastructure can be improved to meet both environmental needs and the needs of coastal communities. Many conservation groups have been and intend to continue to play a key role in supporting solutions that include tide gate replacements and working lands restoration actions to improve habitat, fish passage, and water quality. These efforts require significant capacity and expertise to shepherd these complex projects through the development, implementation, adaptive management and monitoring phases of work. This group is intended to support local Watershed Councils, Conservation Districts and Land Trusts in sharing lessons learned, receiving up-to-date information on late

breaking updates, and identifying potential areas for collaboration or partnership across the coast.

Journal Club for aquatic habitat restoration

To join, contact coordinator Zac Mallon at lnwc@nehalem.tel.net.

Zac serves as the Coordinator for the Lower Nehalem Watershed Council in Nehalem, Oregon. This group will identify a scope of current research, literature, conference proceedings and other publications dedicated to specific conservation and restoration topics. Each meeting, group members will read a particular article broadly and it will be presented by one member who has read it deeply who will lead a discussion. This approach will help Watershed Council, Conservation District and Land Trust members stay current on regional/national/international best practices/lessons learned and will inform and foster collaborations. Members may also work together to develop conference sessions or articles of their own.

Pollinators

Coordinator TBA

The goal of this group is to work together, learn together and share ideas and resources so that we can collectively support the great diversity and abundance of native pollinators (bees, butterflies, bats and more). Proposed focus areas include:

- Highlight monarchs and the work we've been doing to help conserve this rapidly declining species; (Lead by Amanda Egertson);
- Highlight bees and what land trusts are doing to help restore habitat and survey for native bee populations;
- Create a summit/meeting, likely connected to another conference;
- Strategies for restoration;
- Strategies for community engagement.

Protection/restoration of working lands and easements

To join, contact Coordinator Torey Mill at torey@oregonlandtrusts.org

Torey serves as the Program Manager for the Coalition of Oregon Land Trusts in Portland, Oregon. This group is comprised of land trusts, SWCDs, agency partners, and other conservation practitioners working in the realm of agricultural/working lands easements and discusses grant applications, funding opportunities, best practices around conservation management plans, and generally provides a forum to hear from peers and colleagues about direct experience in the field.

By bringing all of the best minds together, we can creatively brainstorm solutions to some of the barriers that have hindered working lands easements in Oregon, foster and enhance relationships with agencies like NRCS, and generally advance the pace of agricultural conservation in Oregon that also benefits fish and wildlife habitat and considers climate change impacts.

Please let OACD know of district projects or issues we can feature in future newsletters.

Best,



Jan Lee, Executive Director
Oregon Association of Conservation Districts
(503) 545-9420 cell
Jan.lee@oacd.org
<https://oacd.org>

Thank you for your engagement with OACD!

If you have questions about OACD, please contact us.

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If you wish to unsubscribe to this newsletter, contact Jan at the email above.