



# OACD NEWS

April 2024



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## Get Involved – OACD Diversity Equity and Inclusion

The OACD Board adopted a DEI Policy at it’s March Board meeting. You can see the policy [HERE](#). The policy is the first step in OACDs 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.

Our April Board meeting will be at CONNECT+ on the **17<sup>th</sup> at 2pm**. We invite you all to attend and join in our discussion about how we look at diversity in our Districts.

|   |                    |             |                           |                   |              |
|---|--------------------|-------------|---------------------------|-------------------|--------------|
| 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       |



This is the season for rulemaking! Not only will there be several new rulemakings later this year and into next year as the result of legislation (see the legislative summary on p.6), but several sets of rules are already underway. **How can you help?** As Rulemaking Advisory Committees (**RACs**) are assigned, you can request the opportunity to participate. Often there will be notice of the RACs, but to see notices you will have to be signed up with agencies to receive their notices—or some may be mentioned in this newsletter. If you are interested in rules related to the Oregon Water Resources Department, the Oregon Department of Agriculture, or the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board, go to the agency website - there will be a place to sign up for notices.

***What's going on right now?***



- [Solar siting in Eastern Oregon](#) – That RAC established at the Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD) held its first meeting and Andrea has been representing Districts.
- [Groundwater Allocation](#) – That RAC has finished its work, but there will be regional information meetings in April and public comments will close in May. See more info on p.8.
- The [Integrated Water Resources Strategy](#) is a plan that will provide direction on water issues for up to 8 years from now, with reports of progress out every 2 years. It includes a cooperative effort among all natural resource agencies. Our OACD Advocacy Committee is following this rulemaking and others and will report out to members. More info on p.7.
- [Farm and Forest Lands Protection](#) – This program was established 50 years ago at DLCD and proposed changes have been discussed over the last 10 years. This RAC is looking at some of the issues that are needed to add further protections to our farm and forest lands. I'm on that RAC as is Jim Johnson, the land and water specialist from ODA. Barbara Boyer (Yamhill SWCD) leads the RAC as its liaison with the LCDC Commission.

***Are you coming to CONNECT? APRIL 16-18<sup>th</sup>, Sunriver Resort***

Over 400 are already registered! This year it is **CONNECT+**. In the “plus” year, all of the Oregon Conservation Partnership (OrCP) partners (districts, watershed councils and land trusts) work together to develop the program. We have several tracks to share this year, including the new **Working Lands Track**. See later in the newsletter info about the OACD board meeting and district managers’ roundtable that will be featured at Connect. Registration closes April 1. Here is the newly Updated [program](#) schedule.

Jan Lee, OACD President

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## COMING EVENTS

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

**[OWEB](#)** – April 23-24, Baker City

**[LCDC](#)** – April 25-26, Salem

**[Fish & Wildlife Commission](#)** – April 19, Tillamook

**[Oregon Board of Agriculture](#)** – April 29, location tbd

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### OACD Board Meeting – in person at CONNECT+

District participation and comments are encouraged.

**April 17, 2pm**

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**CONNECT+** will be held on **April 16-18, 2024**, at **Sunriver Resort in Sunriver, OR**.

See the Program [HERE](#).

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### NACD

**Pacific Region Session – April 4** The National Conservation District Employees Association (NCDEA) will be hosting a conservation district employees meet/greet at 2pm PT, and region needs planning session. The NACD Pacific Region session will begin at 3pm PT zoom link [HERE](#)

**Conservation Coffee** NACD's next "Conservation Coffee" event is scheduled for April 11<sup>th</sup> at 3pm ET. Please [register here](#) to learn about this year's Stewardship Week and the NACD resources available to local districts.

**Pacific & SW Region Meeting** September 11<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup>, 2024 in Anchorage, AK. Event details and useful links can be found [here](#) – stay tuned for more to come!

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## DISTRICT to DISTRICT

### Economics of Soil Health Systems - Featuring Noah Williams of Oregon

**NACD** recently [shared the results of their multi-year collaboration with the Soil Health Institute \(SHI\) and NRCS](#), which highlight the positive impacts of improving soil health on farm profitability and resilience. Extensive interviews were conducted with 30 farmers implementing **soil health management systems (SHMS)** across 20 states to learn about their experiences with adopting those systems and to assess the impact of that adoption on net farm income.

This week NACD highlighted **Noah Williams' farm in Wasco, OR**. This farm produces winter wheat and sunflower and Noah has increased winter wheat yield and decreased production costs for sunflower with an SHMS of no-till production and cover crops. With these practices, Tim's net farm income has increased \$88.31/acre for winter wheat and \$16.35/acre for sunflower.

Check out and share the video, producer narrative, and fact sheet about the farm [here](#)

## FUNDING RESOURCES

### NRCS/OWEB Technical Assistance Grant Offering

The goal of this grant program is to provide funding for Technical Assistance to help implement local Inflation Reduction Act programs. The Inflation Reduction Act has generated more need for technical assistance than the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) can provide to landowners. Funding is provided to partners to assist with local conservation efforts. There is \$743,110 available for this program and individual requests over \$50,000 will be granted as funds allow. Please review the [NRCS/OWEB TA Guidance document](#).



Grant applications must be submitted by **5:00 pm on April 30, 2024**, through [OWEB's Online Application System](#). If you need to set up a login, please email [Leilani.sullivan@oweb.oregon.gov](mailto:Leilani.sullivan@oweb.oregon.gov). **Questions?** Visit the [NRCS/OWEB Technical Assistance Grant Program webpage](#), or contact Heidi Hartman, Federal Programs Specialist at [heidi.hartman@oweb.oregon.gov](mailto:heidi.hartman@oweb.oregon.gov) or 971-707-0226.

### NACD Climate Smart Commodities Planning & Capacity Grants

**Planning & Capacity Grants** are available for up to \$15,000 to support the early-stage development of a climate-smart commodities project. These grants are intended to support the participation of limited resource conservation districts and partners representing underserved producers. They may focus on community needs assessments, partnership development, and building preliminary capacity to begin programming. The deadline to apply for these grants is **May 15, 2024**. An informational webinar on the Planning & Capacity Grants was recently held. If you missed it, or would like to view it again, you can [watch the recording here](#).

### FY2025 National Coastal Wetland Conservation Grant (NCWCG) Program

NCWCGs are awarded annually with funding from the USFWS to acquire, restore, and enhance coastal wetlands. OWEB serves as the official grantee of the federal award and makes the federal funds available to local partners through sub-grants.

Awards typically range from \$125,000 to a maximum of \$1,000,000 and require a 25% non-federal match contribution. OWEB funding can be used to satisfy the 25% non-federal match requirement. Eligible projects must ensure the long-term conservation of coastal wetland ecosystems.

NCWCG projects proposing **restoration** activities are due **by 5:00 pm on April 29, 2024**, and must be submitted via OWEB's online grant application.

Visit OWEB's [Coastal Wetlands Grant webpage](#) for program and login information. Direct questions to [Jillian McCarthy](#), Coastal Programs Coordinator.

### USDA Urban Agriculture And Innovative Production Grants

USDA is accepting applications for grants to support urban agriculture and innovative production. The competitive grants will support the development of urban agriculture and innovative production projects through two categories, Planning Projects and Implementation Projects. Applications are due **April 9, 2024**. Learn more [here](#).

## OWEB Spring 2024 Open Solicitation Grant Offering.

These grants support voluntary efforts by Oregonians to protect and restore healthy watersheds—including actions supporting the Oregon Plan for Salmon and Watersheds and the Oregon Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy. OWEB anticipates making a combined total of over \$12 million available through this solicitation for the following grant types:

- [Restoration](#) \* (25% match is required)
- [Technical Assistance](#) (NEW: \$1 match is required; no cap on requests)
- [Engagement](#) (NEW: \$1 match is required)
- [Monitoring](#) (25% match is required)

**Grant applications are due by 5 pm on April 29, 2024**, and must be submitted via [OWEB's online grant application](#).

## OWEB Partnership Technical Assistance Grants

Projects do not have to address one of OWEB's Board-identified Focused Investment priorities. Partnership technical assistance grants are available for either *Partnership Capacity*, for partnerships that are already operating as a collaborative partnership and have a strategic action plan or *Partnership Development*, for partnerships that desire to develop a strategic action plan and a collaborative partnership. **Partnership TA grants are required to lead to implementation of conservation actions.**

OWEB expects to distribute up to \$500,000 under this offering; applicants can request up to \$150,000 and projects can last up to 3 years. The partnership TA application is available through [OWEB's Online Grant Application system](#). **Deadline for application is May 6, 2024, at 5pm.**

## 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**

## 2024 OHA Drinking Water Source Protection Fund

is accepting grant applications for projects that reduce risk to surface water or groundwater sources of public drinking water. Public Water Systems (PWS) can apply for **grant funds of up to \$50,000** (per water system per year) or low interest loans of up to \$100,000. **Letters of Interest (applications) will be accepted through April 19<sup>th</sup>** by OHA. This may be a great opportunity for watershed partners (SWCDs, Watershed Councils, local governments, etc) to work with local PWSs on projects that are mutually beneficial. PWSs in the same basin are encouraged to work together to meet common goals and address regional water quality issues.

No match is required for grant funds. Projects are rated on the potential to reduce risk in the delineated source areas or contribute to reduction in contaminant concentrations at the drinking water source. For more information see [here](#). Information on eligible projects and the rating criteria are found in the document titled: [DWSPF - General Information on Funding \(pdf\)](#). Maps of drinking water source areas can be found on DEQ's DWP Interactive viewer at <https://www.oregon.gov/deq/wq/programs/Pages/DWP-Maps.aspx>.

# NEWS and OPPORTUNITIES



## Legislative Summary 2024

The following is a summary of legislation that passed in the short session:

- **Oregon Agricultural Heritage Program:** The \$10.8 million in funding requested in HB4060 did not pass, but the funding was folded into the Capital Spending Bill ([SB5701](#), Sect 458-459) as follows. The supporters of the bill will be back requesting more and ongoing funds in the next biennium:  
\$5.8 million in program funds      \$619,320 for OWEB administrative costs.  
***Next steps: OWEB is developing new rules for administering the program, but current rules are still active.***
- **Natural and Working Lands Fund ([HB4102](#)):** This Bill enables the Fund (created in 2023) to accept funds from outside organizations. This will enable additional monies to potentially be made available for projects.
- **Oregon Invasive Species Council Funding:** Another bill that was folded into [SB5701](#), (Sect 441-444) for funding:  
\$250,000 for outreach and education      \$750,000 for mitigating impacts of invasives.
- **Liability on Public Lands ([SB1576](#)):** Due the results of recent court proceedings, liability protections on public lands have been denuded. This bill provides some temporary relief for some public agencies (but it appears that not SWCDs are not included).  
***Next steps: A study/work group will be created; we are working to get SWCD representation.***
- **Governor's Housing Bill ([SB1537](#)):** While providing some useful tools to enhance housing development, the bill includes provisions allowing for the expansion of urban growth boundaries outside the existing statutory process. The amount of land added depends upon the size of the city (see Sections 48 to 60). This threatens agricultural working lands adjacent to the current UGB's.  
***Next steps: Cities who wish to use this expansion tool will need to report their plan to the Department of Land and Conservation Development and those local entities will need to hold public hearings prior to expanding.***
- **Brassica Production in Willamette Valley ([HB4059](#)):** Defines "Canola" to mean plants of the species Brassica napus and Brassica rapa. Changes the requirement that growers get a license to a permit from ODA and changes the isolation distance between Canola and other crops in the Willamette Valley.
- **Walla Walla Water Strategy ([SB1567](#)):** Directs OWRD and Confederated Tribes of Umatilla to work with Washington to implement the Walla Walla Water 2050 Strategic Plan.  
***Next steps: OWRD will be inviting coordination with relevant government entities.***
- **Other Items in [SB5701](#):**
  - Section 48 - \$4,500,000 for resilient food systems, specialty crops and food safety.
  - Section 154-155 – Added \$10 million to the Landscape Resiliency Fund.
  - Sections 133, 143, 147, 148 – Raised spending limits in ODA, ODF, and ODFW to enable the programs to be funded by the Natural and Working Lands Fund.
  - Section 408 – Funded ODA \$1,250,000 for grasshopper suppression efforts.

- Section 168: Fund through OWRD:
  - (1) City of Beaverton, South Cooper Mountain Nonpotable (Purple Pipe) Project: \$2,500,000.
  - (2) North Unit Irrigation Dist., Infrastructure Modernization Project: \$2,000,000.
  - (3) Deschutes River Conservancy, Conserving Water Through Piping and Improved Monitoring and Measurement: \$1,500,000.
  - (4) Rogue River Irrigation District, Fourmile Creek Project: \$1,530,000.
  - (5) City of Monroe Water, Prefilter and Automated Controls Infrastructure: \$1,500,000.
  - (6) City of St. Paul, Water Reservoir Improvement Project: \$636,000.
  - (7) City of Bay City, Earthquake Isolation Valves for Water Reservoirs: \$225,000.
  - (8) City of Halsey, New Well: \$300,000.
  - (9) City of Sodaville, [*Jackson Well Conversion to Municipal Use*] Water System Expansion: \$370,000.
  - (10) City of Falls City, Water Main Line Replacement Project: \$591,750.
- Section 225 - \$10 million for the Private Forest Accord Grant Program.
- Section 409-420 - \$1 million into the Water Well Abandonment Fund.
- Section 483:
  - Oregon Community Food System Network to develop food hubs and regional food system infrastructure: \$1,500,000.
  - Baker County for infrastructure improvement projects (water, sewer, road): \$2,250,000.
- Sections 510, 511, 512, 513. Funds to implement Article XV, section 4b, of the Oregon Constitution, Watershed Conservation Operating Fund, use of net proceeds from state lottery for fish and wildlife, watershed and habitat protection.
- \$489,666 for ODA, \$356,056 for State Police, \$434,967 for ODFW, and \$375,253 for DEQ

## Integrated Water Resources Strategy

The First Draft of the IWRS is available for comment through April 4. The draft document and instructions for submitting comments are located here:

<https://www.oregon.gov/owrd/programs/Planning/IWRS/Pages/default.aspx>

## Oregon Water Resources Commission Openings

Oregon Water Resources Commission sets policy for the Oregon Water Resources Department. There are 7 commissions from around the state, appointed by the Governor for four-year terms within various regions per this map:

<https://www.oregon.gov/owrd/aboutus/Commission/Pages/default.aspx> Position coming open is June: West-at-Large. In 2025, at least 3 of the remaining 6 will be open: West Central, East-At-Large, North Central. Applications submitted to the governor's office can be held for up to 2 years. Submit application: <https://www.oregon.gov/gov/Pages/board-list.aspx>

## Special District Grant Accessibility Act, or H.R. 7525

This bill is about ensuring special districts like SWCDs get the support needed to serve your communities effectively. This legislation finally puts districts on equal footing when it comes to accessing federal assistance and resources. Streamline is inviting our community partners, including local organizations, businesses, and other leaders, to sign on to a coalition letter led by the California Special Districts Association. To sign on to the H.R. 7525 Coalition Letter, please use the link below to sign no later than April 5. [Learn more and sign >>](#)

## Rulemaking Information for Groundwater Allocation – Notice and Opportunity to Comment

**SUMMARY:** The Oregon Water Resources Department (OWRD) is seeking public comment on proposed rule modifications to Oregon Administrative Rules (OAR) 690, Divisions 8, 9, 300, and 410, pertaining to the process for allocating new groundwater rights. These rule changes are needed in order to manage groundwater resources more sustainably and to protect existing water uses. You are receiving this email because you are one of the parties required to be noticed, the Department has identified you as a potential interested party, or because you are on one of our notification listservs.

Public hearings are scheduled for April 4, 2024, April 18, 2024, May 16, 2024, and May 21, 2024, for members of the public to submit oral comments. Pre-hearing, information only sessions are offered prior to each hearing.

The Department will accept written **public comments on the rules through 5:00 pm on May 31, 2024.**

The Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, including the Statement of Need & Fiscal Impact and the Draft Proposed Rules are available on the rulemaking website:

<https://www.oregon.gov/owrd/programs/GWWL/GW/Pages/Groundwater-Rulemaking.aspx>.

The pre-hearing information only sessions will be recorded and available for viewing within 48 hours on the rulemaking website: <https://www.oregon.gov/owrd/programs/GWWL/GW/Pages/Groundwater-Rulemaking.aspx>.

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## Drone Pilots Must Comply With Remote Id

The FAA's [policy](#) for exercising discretion in determining whether to take enforcement action for drone operators who were not able to comply with the Remote ID Rule ends on March 16, 2024. Operators who do not comply after that date could face fines and suspension or revocation of their drone pilot certificates. Public safety officials can visit the FAA's [compliance program](#) website to learn more about enforcement. Additionally, the FAA's [Public Safety and Government webpage](#) provides information on authoritative guidance.

[Remote ID](#) applies to drones which are required to be registered or have been registered with the FAA, including those flown for recreation, business, or public safety, and drones that are foreign-registered.

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## NACD's 69th Stewardship Week - April 28 to May 5, 2024.

The theme is "May the Forest Be with You" and materials can be found here: [Stewardship Week - NACD](#)

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## New Webinar Recording: The Ecosystem Services Value Of Rangeland Conservation Practices

Brush management, herbaceous weed treatment, and prescribed grazing are three rangeland conservation practices that may provide ecosystem services including carbon sequestration, wildlife habitat, soil fertility and retention, water supply, and more. USDA's Conservation Effects Assessment Project (CEAP) recently [shared new findings](#) from the 11-state Western Range and Irrigated Region on the ecosystem services value of these practices – in dollars and cents – for non-federal rangeland and rangeland managed by the Bureau of Land Management. [Access Webinar Recording and Resources](#)





**Union SWCD - Firewise Community / CREP Coordinator.** For more information, see [here](#). Applications due April 5.

**Jefferson SWCD – Weed Program Coordinator.** Open until filled. For more information, see [here](#)

**The McKenzie Watershed Alliance** is currently hiring for two positions: A Pure Water Partners Program Coordinator, and a Project Manager. The job announcements can be found at:

<https://www.mckenziawc.org/jobs/>



**Oregon Association of  
Conservation Districts**

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