Irrigation Water Management Trainings Continue

In March, the Hood River SWCD and OSU Extension Service hosted two Spanish-language Irrigation Water Management (IWM) workshops at the Pine Grove Grange. These trainings are part of a three-year project funded by OWEB to increase understanding of irrigation practices and inspire more active and efficient management of water. Leo Garcia from The Next Step, based in Wenatchee, WA, provided the free, day-long trainings to 50 Spanish speaking agricultural workers involved in on-farm irrigation. Attendees were given practical information on plant physiology, crop water demand, soils, and techniques for irrigating efficiently for better crop production and water conservation. The goal was to increase knowledge and encourage active management which ultimately will result in less water

(Continued on page 10)

Agricultural Water Quality in Hood River

In fall 2016, Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) selected Odell Creek Watershed as one of six Strategic Implementation Areas (SIAs) across the state. Over the past two years, the SIA program aimed to provide education and outreach to agricultural landowners and assist them in addressing water quality concerns. Concerns include: erosion of sediment into Odell Creek and warming waters due to lack of shade from streamside vegetation. The SWCD was tasked by ODA to be the local agency working with landowners on a voluntary basis and providing technical and financial assistance to implement improvements on their land. In the last year, the SWCD secured funds from OWEB to assist valley residents in the Odell Creek watershed with fencing, hardened crossings, off-channel watering systems for livestock, and riparian plantings. The Odell Creek SIA
The Hood River Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD) is a legal subdivision of state government and receives funds to administer its programs from ODA, OWEB, CTWS, irrigation districts, and others. The SWCD is governed by a locally elected, volunteer Board of Directors.

The Board of Directors meets on the first Thursday of each month from 4 - 6 pm at the OSU Extension meeting room, 2990 Experiment Station Road, Hood River, OR 97031.

Meetings are open to the public. For information or agendas, contact us at info@hoodriverswcd.org or stop by the office at 3007 Experiment Station Road, Hood River. Office hours are Monday-Friday, from 8 am to 4 pm.

The meeting location is accessible to persons with disabilities. A request for an interpreter for the hearing impaired or for other accommodations for persons with disabilities should be made at least 48 hours before the meeting by calling 541-386-4588.

Directors
Brian Nakamura, Chair
Larry Martin, Vice-Chair
John Joyer, Secretary/Treasurer
Cindy Collins
Rick Ragan

Associate Directors
Chuck Gehling
Richard Larson
Pete Siragusa

Staff
Heather Hendrixson, District Manager
541-386-4588  heather@hoodriverswcd.org
Kris Schaedel, Conservation Technician
541-386-4588  kris@hoodriverswcd.org
Cindy Thieman, Watershed Coordinator
541-386-6063  cindy@hoodriverswcd.org
Megan Saunders, Watershed Project Manager
541-386-6063  megan@hoodriverswcd.org

Website: www.hoodriverswcd.org

Financial Report
Hood River Soil & Water Conservation District
July 1, 2017 through June 30, 2018

Beginning Fund Balance: $134,827

REVENUES:
Intergovernmental:
- ODA grants $83,783
- OWEB grants $173,315
- OSWB grants $7,500
- OWRD grants $25,437
- USFS grants $7,913
- Other grants $4,875

Contracts:
- Irrigation District support $24,000
- CTWS support $43,628
- Neal Creek restoration - CTWS $25,671

Contributions $434
Earnings on Investments $296
Tree sales $10,189

TOTAL REVENUES: $407,041

EXPENDITURES:
Administration:
- Personnel Services $64,677
- Materials and Services $13,981

Conservation Technician:
- Personnel Services $30,214
- Materials and Services $8,634

Hood River Watershed Group:
- Personnel Services $100,340
- Materials and Services $19,090

Projects:
- Materials and Services $166,968

TOTAL EXPENDITURES: $403,904

Ending Fund Balance: $137,964
Fighting the Good Fight: Battling Noxious Weeds

Garlic Mustard
In Spring 2018, the SWCD utilized Oregon State Weed Board funds to continue garlic mustard abatement work in the upper valley for an eighth season. This long-term weed eradication project is conducted on private lands at the only two known locations of garlic mustard in Hood River County. Garlic mustard is a high priority weed because of its ability to out-compete native vegetation and become the dominate plant in an ecosystem. Garlic mustard reduces the ecological diversity of a forest and threatens critical habitat and food sources for wildlife. This year, significant gains in eradication were seen due to the continuous and ongoing treatment of the infested areas. Looking ahead, the SWCD has secured funding from the U.S. Forest Service to continue garlic mustard abatement work in Hood River County for three additional years.

Crews hand pull garlic mustard growing adjacent to National Forest lands.

Weed of the Month
For the third year, the Hood River County Weed Board, Central Gorge Master Gardeners, and the Hood River SWCD partnered on a "Weed of the Month" outreach campaign in the Hood River area. This project focused on a different weed each month from April-September. Partners produced posters, press releases for local newspapers, recorded PSAs on the radio, and handed out brochures at the Hood River Farmer’s Market and other tabling events. Hopefully, you saw the user-friendly information on tree-of-heaven, Canada thistle, puncturevine, knapweed, scotch broom, English ivy, and Italian arum. If you missed it, check the Columbia Gorge Cooperative Weed Management Area or SWCD websites for more information.

Hood River Forest Collaborative Continues Waucoma Planning
Over the past year, the Hood River Forest Collaborative (aka Stew Crew) has focused on increasing collective knowledge of current conditions in the Hood River Ranger District’s 6,000-acre Waucoma planning area located just east of Mt. Defiance. The group worked on developing a science-based understanding of forest restoration needs in the area in order to provide feedback to the Forest Service on forest management and conservation. The Collaborative also developed and adopted a Charter, which clarifies group purpose, operating principles and decision-making process. To learn more or get involved with the Collaborative, visit www.hrstewcrew.org.
Hood River SWCD Hires New District Manager

District Manager Jordan Kim decided to step down from her position at the SWCD at the end of July 2018 to pursue other endeavors. Jordan served as the District Manager for 2.5 years, and as Assistant Manager for over ten years. “It is bittersweet” she explained. “I have loved working for the SWCD. I am incredibly grateful for the experiences, relationships, and professional growth I’ve enjoyed during the twelve years I have worked with the District”.

Anne Saxby also decided to fully step into retirement at the end of July. Anne had worked for the District as District Manager for 25 years, followed by two and a half years as the District’s part-time Financial Manager.

While the SWCD is sad to see Jordan and Anne leave, they are happy to welcome Heather Hendrixson as the new District Manager. Heather joins the SWCD after 15 years in the Klamath Basin. There she worked managing and restoring wetlands and leading restoration partnerships. Heather is excited to be joining such a wonderful group of people working hard to put conservation projects on the ground. Stop on in and welcome Heather to Hood River!

Getting Restoration on the Ground with OWEB Small Grants

With the implementation of four new OWEB small grant projects in 2017-2018, over 53 acres of orchard land have been upgraded to more efficient irrigation systems. These new irrigation systems will use an average of 50% less water than the systems they replaced which should result in an estimated 0.5 cfs conserved annually. To further the efficiency of these systems, these projects will use flow meters and soil moisture sensors on the upgraded orchards to monitor tree water need and help land managers schedule irrigations. Efficient systems, combined with good irrigation water management, have been shown to maximize water conservation.

These projects are funded through the OWEB small grant program, which provides $100,000 in Oregon lottery funds to the Hood River Small Grant Team each biennium. In the last year, the $45,000 in OWEB small grant funds spent in Hood River County were matched by $54,045 in local funding.

The Hood River Small Grant Team is made up of representatives from the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs, the Hood River Watershed Group, and the Hood River SWCD and is assisted by representatives from local and state stakeholders and natural resource agencies.

Landowners or land managers can apply for up to $15,000 in small grant funding to implement watershed restoration projects on their land. Eligible projects include: irrigation system upgrades, streamside livestock fencing, manure storage facilities, and other on-the-ground restoration projects. For more information about this program or to develop a project proposal, contact Watershed Project Manager Megan Saunders.
NRCS Funds Conservation

In 2018, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in Hood River County was able to secure funds for another round of the National Air Quality Initiative of the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). With nearly $445,000 in funds, 7 contracts were signed with area growers to convert oil burning smudge pots to cleaner burning systems. NRCS also worked closely with the East Fork and Mt Hood irrigation districts to secure EQIP funding for on-farm irrigation upgrades. Over $127,000 funded 5 contracts with East Fork and Mt. Hood irrigation district patrons to upgrade to more efficient irrigation systems. There was also one Certified Organic contract funded in Hood River County.

In the last year, 41 acres of smudge pots were removed, 2,469 feet of irrigation pipeline was installed, 172 acres of microsprinkler irrigation system was installed, 52 acres of irrigation water management was applied and 1 high tunnel system was also installed.

EQIP funding is still available for East Fork and Mt. Hood irrigation district patrons.

For information on EQIP and other NRCS programs, contact District Conservationist Carly Heron at 541-352-1037.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

All With the Help of Our Friends

We couldn’t get by without the support of our partners referenced in this report by the following acronyms:

- CWMA - Columbia Gorge Cooperative Weed Management Area
- CGFG - Columbia Gorge Fruit Growers
- CGMGA - OSU Extension Service - Central Gorge Master Gardener Association
- CLT - Columbia Land Trust
- CTWS - Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation
- DEQ - Oregon Dept. of Environmental Quality
- DID - Dee Irrigation District
- EFID - East Fork Irrigation District
- FCA - Farmers Conservation Alliance
- FID - Farmers Irrigation District
- GGFN - Gorge Grown Food Network
- HRC - Hood River County
- Hood River News
- HRVPRD - Hood River Valley Parks & Rec. District
- MFID - Middle Fork Irrigation District
- MCAREC - Mid-Columbia Agricultural Research & Extension Center
- MHID - Mt. Hood Irrigation District
- NRCS - Natural Resources Conservation Service
- ODA - Oregon Dept. of Agriculture
- ODF - Oregon Dept. of Forestry
- ODFW - Oregon Dept. of Fish & Wildlife
- OPRD - Oregon Parks and Recreation Department
- OSWB - Oregon State Weed Board
- OWRD - Oregon Water Resources Department
- OWEB - Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board
- PP&L - Pacific Power and Light
- USFS - US Forest Service

Thank you!

Special thanks to Chuck Gehling, Sam Doak, and Greg Short for their help with the HRWG; to the Central Gorge Master Gardeners who help with the District’s plant sale; and to Dede Garcia for her work on the “Weed of the Month” effort.
The Hood River Watershed Group (HRWG) is the local watershed council for the Hood River Basin. HRWG receives operational funding from OWEB and generous support from our local partners. HRWG’s mission is to sustain and improve the Hood River Watershed through education, cooperation and stewardship. Core partners include CTWS, local irrigation districts (DID, EFID, FID, & MFID), CLT, DEQ, ODFW, NRCS, and USFS (see the acronym key on page 5). The Hood River SWCD is also a core partner, as well as HRWG’s fiscal sponsor. HRWG staff include Coordinator Cindy Thieman and Project Manager Megan Saunders, who work throughout the year to host presentations on watershed topics at monthly HRWG meetings, raise funds for restoration projects, help implement water conservation and habitat restoration work, and lead long-term planning efforts to enhance and preserve watershed conditions. Below are some of the key projects and accomplishments of HRWG and its partners in the past year.

FID Completes First Step in Kingsley Reservoir Expansion Project

Last fall, FID replaced the outlet pipe at Kingsley Reservoir, which was an essential first step in preparation for increasing the height of the dam and expanding the reservoir by 650 acre-ft. The original outlet pipe was installed 80 years ago when the reservoir was built. It was undersized, prone to valve failure, and significantly deteriorated. In order to complete the project, a portion of the dam had to be removed to install the new outlet structure and encase the new outlet pipe in concrete. FID started the project at the end of the 2017 irrigation season and finished in November, hours before the first snowstorm!

Access to the reservoir and surrounding area was closed starting in September 2017 so that FID could implement a number of projects related to the reservoir expansion. FID hopes to complete the project in 2019, pending permit approvals. The project will raise the dam height approximately 11 feet by building a new dam on the downstream face of the existing dam. The expanded reservoir will allow FID to increase irrigation water reliability and improve stream flows. FID dedicated 1.5 cfs of conserved water to Green Point Creek, which supports winter steelhead and cutthroat trout.

HRWG helped secure the OWRD grant that is providing $2.2 million in funding for the reservoir expansion, which is matched by $1.8 million from DEQ’s Clean Water State Revolving Loan Fund.

Strategic Action Plan in Development

The Watershed Group received $95,000 from OWEB to develop a Strategic Action Plan that identifies and prioritizes restoration and management actions that will improve conditions and restore aquatic habitat for native fish species. Over the past year, partners have met to articulate desired long-term outcomes, review limiting factors, develop strategies, and identify specific actions they will take to achieve desired outcomes. Some of these actions are a continuation of successful conservation approaches, such as instream large wood placement and agricultural water conservation, while others are new, such as education on forest management that will benefit fish habitat and water quality.
EFID Awarded $1.6 million from NRCS for Water Conservation Projects

NRCS awarded over $1.6 million to EFID for distribution and on-farm water conservation projects. Over $1 million will go towards piping a portion of the Eastside Lateral Canal, which will be matched by $1.1 million in funding from CTWS. Approximately $550,000 will go towards on-farm water conservation projects through NRCS’ Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) and Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP). EQIP and CSP funds will be targeted towards commercial agricultural lands served by the Eastside Lateral. To apply for EQIP funding, please contact Carly Heron at carly.heron@or.usda.gov or (541) 352-1037.

The Eastside Lateral Pipeline project is currently in its scoping phase, with planning and preliminary design being facilitated by Farmers Conservation Alliance. The final design will be completed in 2019 and HRWG will be working with EFID to find additional funding to pipe the entire 6-mile long canal. EFID plans to start installing the pipeline in 2020. For questions about the pipeline project, please contact EFID District Manager John Buckley at (541) 354-1185.

Water Bank Feasibility Study Update

With lower summer streamflows expected in the future, water conservation tools will become even more important than they are today. In an effort to evaluate new approaches, HRWG is studying the feasibility of operating a water bank in the Valley. Anticipated outcomes of the water bank would be to increase resiliency for agricultural water users and stream flows for fish and wildlife during dry years. Water for these purposes would come from landowners growing crops like hay and alfalfa who were willing to be paid to fallow their fields during dry years. This voluntary program would not put any water rights at risk of forfeiture.

In a recent survey of 200 landowners with hay and pastureland, owners were asked if they would consider participating in a water bank program. Of the respondents, 71% said “yes” or “maybe”. This is a positive result compared to response rates from similar surveys in the Western U.S.

Remaining study tasks include: identifying where fallowing would benefit streams the most, which organization would operate the water bank, and how it could be funded.

Interested in Learning More about the Watershed Group?

There are several ways to get engaged with the Watershed Group, including receiving our monthly meeting announcements, volunteering to help with a restoration project, watershed planning, or even exploring a restoration project on your own property. Contact Coordinator Cindy Thieman at cindy@hoodriverswcd.org or 541-386-6063.
Pesticide Stewardship Partnership Efforts Ongoing

Since 1999, the Hood River Basin has been working to reduce pesticide levels in local waterways through the Pesticide Stewardship Partnership (PSP). PSPs are a voluntary, collaborative approach to management and involve: 1) monitoring for pesticides in surface waters, 2) identifying streams with elevated pesticide concentrations or high number of detections, 3) collaborating with pesticide users to implement voluntary best management practices, and 4) follow-up monitoring to determine improvements over time.

In 2017, ten rounds of water samples were taken by SWCD staff at five sites: East/West Fork Neal Creek, Lower Neal Creek, Lenz Creek, and Odell Creek. All water samples were analyzed for over 130 herbicides, insecticides, fungicides, and a few breakdown products (degradates). Glyphosate sampling occurred during each sampling round, but only at the Odell Creek site.

In the 2017 samples, DEQ detected 13 different pesticide analytes (two insecticides, nine herbicides, and two fungicides) in the water samples. Only one detection of imidacloprid (an insecticide) exceeded the EPA aquatic life benchmark. The most frequently detected pesticides were commonly used herbicides, such as diuron and 2,6-dichlorobenzamide (a degrade of dichlobenil). Diuron was detected in about 57% of samples and 2,6-dichlorobenzamide was found in about 70% of samples, although at very low levels. These herbicides are used by homeowners, rights-of-way managers, and agriculture.

Landowners can do their part to minimize pesticide pollution by: 1) applying, storing, and disposing of pesticides according to the label, 2) using pesticides as part of a multi-pronged approach to pest control, with pesticide usage as a last resort, 3) using the least-toxic pesticide possible to address the problem, and 4) maintaining healthy vegetation corridors along streams and ditches on your property to help filter out any chemical laden runoff.

We’re Here to Help!

The Hood River SWCD is available to help county residents become better stewards of their land. The SWCD works on a voluntary, non-regulatory basis and provides technical assistance free of charge. Contact us by phone, email, or stop by the office to set up a site visit and/or talk about potential projects. The SWCD can assist you with a variety of topics, including: irrigation water management and system upgrades, mud and manure management, livestock and pasture management, stream protection, fish passage, noxious weed abatement, and more. Financial assistance may be available to help you implement these projects. Contact us to find out how we can help you better manage your land!
Agricultural Water Quality Cont’d

(Continued from page 1)

Fencing livestock out of streams helps protect water quality.

project wrapped up in summer 2018 but the SWCD will continue to assist agricultural landowners in the Odell Creek watershed and throughout the valley with water quality improvement projects.

ODA is the state agency required to regulate water pollution from agricultural activities as directed by the Agricultural Water Quality Management Act, passed in 1993. ODA utilizes the Water Quality Management Area Plan and Rules to prevent and control water pollution from agricultural activities.

The Area Plan and Rules guides landowners on how to prevent water pollution and includes information on specific concerns and how to address them. A group of local farmers, community leaders, and other stakeholders serve as the Local Advisory Committee (LAC). The LAC and SWCD helped ODA develop the Hood River Area Plan and Rules in 2001.

The SWCD helps ODA conduct a biennial review and update of the Area Plan and Rules, and reports implementation activities to the LAC and the state Board of Agriculture. The LAC assists the SWCD with the review. The next review of the Hood River Area Plan and Rules is December 13, 2018.

The Rules require that agricultural landowners maintain sufficient vegetation on area streams to control water pollution by moderating solar heating, minimizing streambank erosion, and filtering sediments and nutrients from surface runoff. State regulations also require that agricultural landowners prevent pollutants from entering rivers or streams.

Oregon’s SWCDs receive funding from ODA to help agricultural landowners minimize their impacts to water quality in local rivers and streams. In recent years, the primary focus of this effort has been on increasing streamside vegetation. The biggest pollutant statewide is solar heating.

Do you have a stream on your property that needs additional vegetation? Contact the SWCD for assistance with planting plans and other potential projects. Would you like to take part in the next review of the Area Plan and Rules? Taking part in the biennial review is a great way to become familiar with the state requirements surrounding agriculture and water quality as well as provide input to the plan. It’s also a great way to learn about projects that have been implemented since the last biennial review in 2016. If interested, contact District Manager Heather Hendrixson for more information.

The SWCD provides landowner assistance to address water quality concerns.

Oregon’s SWCDs receive funding from ODA to help agricultural landowners minimize their impacts to water quality in local rivers and streams. In recent years, the primary focus of this effort has been on increasing streamside vegetation. The biggest pollutant statewide is solar heating.

Do you have a stream on your property that needs additional vegetation? Contact the SWCD for assistance with planting plans and other potential projects. Would you like to take part in the next review of the Area Plan and Rules? Taking part in the biennial review is a great way to become familiar with the state requirements surrounding agriculture and water quality as well as provide input to the plan. It’s also a great way to learn about projects that have been implemented since the last biennial review in 2016. If interested, contact District Manager Heather Hendrixson for more information.

The Area Plan and Rules detail the many Best Management Practices that landowners can use to prevent water pollution and describe desired conditions on agricultural land.

The Area Plan and Rules are available online at www.hoodriverswcd.org/resources

Violations of the Area Rules should be reported to Theresa DeBardelaben at ODA: 541-318-9088

The Hood River SWCD works with landowners on a voluntary basis only; it is not a regulatory agency.
SWCD Completes Strategic Plan

In December 2017, the Hood River SWCD Board, staff, and key outside partners began working on a Strategic Plan to guide future work of the SWCD.

The process started with an assessment of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) facing the SWCD. This SWOT analysis helped develop a shared understanding of the context in which the SWCD works. From there, Board and staff members reviewed the mission, vision, values, and natural resource concerns listed in guiding documents. Long-term goals and objectives were developed, followed by the identification and prioritization of strategies. The Strategic Plan was drafted, and these goals, objectives, and strategies were reviewed and refined.

The SWCD identified five long-term outcomes to work towards using the goals and strategies outlined in the Plan. They are: 1) water is conserved, 2) land management practices enhance water quality and development practices protect water quality, 3) native species are abundant and healthy, 4) the community embraces a stewardship ethic, and 5) farmers remain in farming.

The SWCD will use the new Strategic Plan to guide its work into the future. Check out the website to view the Strategic Plan and learn about the great projects already going on.
Hood River Soil & Water Conservation District
Conservation Tree & Shrub Sale 2019
ORDER FORM

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<tr>
<th>Conifer Trees - $1.50 ea.</th>
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<td>Douglas Fir</td>
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<th>Deciduous Trees - $2.50 ea.</th>
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<td>Vine Maple</td>
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<td>Red Flowering Currant</td>
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<td><strong>Total Ordered:</strong></td>
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**Orders will be available for pick up:**
Friday, April 5th 1pm-5pm
& Saturday, April 6th 9am-1pm

These are bare root seedlings. Please be prepared to plant them soon after pick up!
More information about each species can be found on the Hood River SWCD website: [www.hoodriverswcd.org](http://www.hoodriverswcd.org)

All orders are subject to plant availability. Customers will be notified if shortages occur. Orders are filled in the order they are received. Prepaid orders will receive priority.

**~ Order and pay early to ensure availability ~**

The last day to order is March 22nd

**TOTAL ORDER**

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<td>Shrubs</td>
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**Total Cost of Order:**

Paid by: Check Cash

Please make checks payable to the Hood River SWCD.

*Sorry, we cannot accept credit card payments.*

Submit Order and Payment to:
Hood River SWCD
3007 Experiment Station Road
Hood River, OR 97031

We will have *free* tree tubes available on sale days
Now’s The Time to Order Your Native Plants!

The Hood River SWCD will be hosting a native tree and shrub sale to help promote the planting of native species. We strive to provide local residents with a convenient and inexpensive way to obtain their favorite plants. Native plants beautify the landscape, provide food and habitat for pollinators and other wildlife, and add value and privacy to property. Native plants require little maintenance once established.

We offer a variety of native conifers, deciduous trees, and shrubs. These plants are bare-root seedlings, 1-2 years old, grown by regional nurseries. Conifers cost just $1.50 and deciduous trees and shrubs cost $2.50. For 2019, we have some new species for you to try (Rocky Mountain maple and tall Oregon grape) as well as the previous year’s favorites. Tree and shrub orders can be placed now by mail. Get your requests in early to ensure availability! Orders will be accepted until March 22, 2019. Purchases will be available for pick-up on Friday, April 5th and Saturday, April 6th, 2019. Plants that have not been pre-sold will be available for purchase on pick-up days.

Check out the District’s website at www.hoodriverswcd.org for more information on plant descriptions, suitability for various sites, and wildlife usage. You can also download an order form online.

During the 2018 native plant sale, nearly 5,000 trees and shrubs were purchased by over 200 landowners. Over 600 trees and shrubs were donated for stream bank restoration and local area projects. Use the order form on the opposite page of this newsletter to place an order today!