



# Annual Report

## Fighting the Good Fight: Garlic Mustard

With worn out hands, bags full of pulled weeds, and the ever-present aroma of garlic wafting through the air – diligent weed warriors pressed on to complete another season of garlic mustard eradication effort in the Hood River Valley. The SWCD has remained vigilant for nine consecutive years, working to eradicate the only known infestation of garlic mustard in Hood River County. Garlic mustard is a plant originally brought over to North America from Eurasia for its culinary uses, however this weedy invader quickly took hold and proved to be detrimental to



forests, wetlands, grasslands and anywhere it could establish. Once established, garlic mustard puts off a chemical which impedes other plants from growing and obstructs natural forest regeneration. It threatens the ecological diversity of Oregon's forests and sensitive habitats. For this reason, the SWCD has prioritized garlic mustard eradication efforts year after year. In 2019 the SWCD worked alongside partners from Oregon Dept. of Agriculture and the U.S. Forest Service to survey approximately 160 acres, hand-pull approximately 55 acres, apply herbi-



*(Continued on page 5)*

## Technical Assistance Round-Up

The staff of the SWCD are happy to assist the residents of Hood River County in many ways. Throughout the year we take calls from private landowners, meet with people one-on-one at their properties, and provide technical assistance, information, and resources. We have heard and seen it all and it's a big part of what we do!

In the last year we fielded over 125 phone calls from landowners and land managers and assisted 78 walk-in clients. We went on 43 site visits, exchanged 59 emails, and followed up with 315 technical guides and information. Additionally the SWCD hosted an annual native plant sale, a soil moisture monitoring workshop, and a Pesticide Stewardship Partnership meeting, and promoted programs at the county fair and through the quarterly eNews publication. *(continued on page 4)*



*SWCD office in fall colors*

# HOOD RIVER SWCD

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

## Financial Report

**Hood River Soil & Water Conservation District  
July 1, 2018 through June 30, 2019**

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 by phone or email 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, At-large  
Rick Ragan, Vice-Chair, At-Large  
Cindy Collins, Secretary/Treasurer, Zone 2  
Pete Siragusa, Zone 1  
Ben Saur, Zone 3

### Associate Directors

Chuck Gehling  
Larry Martin  
Richard Larson

### 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@hoodriverwatershed.org

Alix Danielsen, Restoration & Outreach Project Mgr.  
541-386-6063 alix@hoodriverwatershed.org

Beginning Fund Balance: \$137,963

### REVENUES:

#### Intergovernmental:

ODA grants	78,488
OWEB grants	186,675
OSWB grants	7,500
OWRD grants	28,450
Other grants	297

#### Contracts:

Irrigation District support	34,000
CTWS support	35,084
Neal Creek restoration - CTWS	29,900

#### Contributions

Earnings on Investments	543
Tree sales	<u>9,495</u>

TOTAL REVENUES: \$410,432

### EXPENDITURES:

#### Hood River SWCD

Personnel Services	106,170
Materials and Services	19,434

#### Hood River Watershed Group:

Personnel Services	109,740
Materials and Services	19,479

#### Projects:

Materials and Services	<u>179,587</u>
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TOTAL EXPENDITURES: \$434,410

Ending Fund Balance: (\$23,978)

NEW WEBSITE!

We've worked hard this year to upgrade our website. Check it out! You'll find information on meetings, news, events, and services - all with an updated design!

[www.hoodriverswcd.org](http://www.hoodriverswcd.org)

## Getting Restoration on the Ground with OWEB Small Grants



With the implementation of five new OWEB small grant projects in 2018-2019, over 65 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. This is estimated to result in an estimated 0.33 cfs conserved annually. To further the efficiency of these systems, orchardists will use flow meters and soil moisture sensors on the upgraded orchards to monitor irrigation effectiveness 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 \$54,200 in OWEB small grant funds spent in Hood River County were matched by \$41,480 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, culvert replacements, riparian plantings, and other on-the-ground restoration projects. For more information about this program or to develop a project proposal, contact the Hood River SWCD.



## Hood River Pesticide Stewardship Partnership



*Kris Schaedel collects a water sample for pesticide analysis*

The SWCD has been working with landowners for over 20 years to reduce pesticide levels in local waterways through the Pesticide Stewardship Partnership (PSP). The Hood River PSP is funded through ODA and is one of nine throughout the state. 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 numbers of detections, 3) collaborating with pesticide users to implement voluntary Best Management Practices, and 4) follow-up monitoring to determine improvements over time.

In 2018, 44 samples were collected during eleven rounds of water sampling by SWCD staff. Samples were collected at five sites: East/West Fork Neal Creek, Lower Neal Creek, Lenz Creek, and Odell Creek. All samples were analyzed for over 130 herbicides, insecticides, fungicides, and a few breakdown products.

Eight out of the 130 different pesticide analytes were detected in samples, although concentrations were so low that they did not represent a risk of concern for aquatic life. Local growers are doing a good job mitigating risk to water pollution by implementing Best Management Practices. In the future, this program will look at expanding the suite of chemicals it tests for to include additional current use pesticides.

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 pesticides as the last resort, 3) using the least-toxic pesticide possible to address the problem, and 4) maintaining healthy vegetation corridors along streams and ditches to help filter out any chemical-laden runoff.



## Agricultural Water Quality in Hood River

Clean, cold water: we love to drink it, recreate in it, and see it tumble down Mt. Hood and wind its way through our beautiful valley towards the Columbia River. The Hood River supplies irrigation water to orchards and farms and hosts several species of salmon, steelhead, and lamprey.

Preventing pollution of this important resource is critical to the economic, cultural, and social identity in Hood River. The Oregon Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Water Quality Program focuses on voluntary and cooperative efforts by landowners and other entities to protect water quality.



The Oregon Department of Agriculture (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. A local advisory committee, made up of Hood River stakeholders, helped ODA develop the Area Rules in 2001. This group also updates the Plan every two years. The last update took place in December 2018. The plan highlights projects and activities undertaken by the community to protect water quality

and serves as a framework for landowners to achieve water quality goals. The SWCD receives funding from ODA to help landowners voluntarily put the program into practice.

As part of this program, the SWCD chooses smaller watersheds within the larger Hood River Basin to concentrate efforts for several years at a time. These "Focus Areas" help with documenting the effectiveness of water quality improvement programs. In the past year the SWCD focused on Odell Creek and offered assistance to landowners living in the Odell Creek Watershed. Primary focuses of this program include: upgrading irrigation systems, planting riparian vegetation, fencing livestock out of waterways, and providing off-channel watering facilities. Whiskey Creek will be the Focus Area for the next two years. The SWCD will contact agricultural landowners in the Whiskey Creek drainage to offer voluntary assistance to address any concerns.

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](http://www.hoodriverswcd.org/resources)

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

*(Technical Assistance continued from page 1)*

These interactions help guide landowners to become better stewards of the land. Sometimes these interactions lead to landowners securing financial assistance to implement projects on the ground. Last year we submitted nine grant applications for landowner projects. The Hood River Valley is comprised primarily of small parcel private lands so every seemingly small action can have an impact on the landscape as a whole. That one flowering shrub is an important fuel stop for a native pollinator, that culvert being removed allows fish to access more habitat, and that irrigation upgrade will help conserve water resources.

The Hood River SWCD is available to help County residents. 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 or talk about potential projects that you want to do!

## NRCS Funds Conservation



This year in Hood River County, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) was able to secure funds for the East Fork Irrigation District-Mt Hood On

Farm Irrigation Conservation Implementation Strategy, the East Cascades Forest Health Initiative, and the East Fork Watershed Restoration Project through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP).

With just over \$555,000 in funds, nine contracts were signed with local landowners. In the last year, 338 acres of smudge pots were removed, 7,969 feet of pipeline was installed, 117 acres of micro irrigation system was installed, and 144 acres of irrigation water management was applied.



*7,969 feet of irrigation pipeline was installed in the past year*

NRCS also worked closely with multiple partners to write a Conservation Implementation Strategy that reaches both Hood River and Wasco Counties to bring funding for beneficial and pollinator habitat improvement on orchard, vineyard, and berry producers' lands.

EQIP funding is still available for these programs! 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 (and there are a lot of them). It is with sincere gratitude that we say...

*Thank you!*

*(Garlic Mustard continued from page 1)*

cide to 0.01 acres, and remove every flowering plant found during these efforts. Also this year the SWCD secured funding from the Forest Service to continue survey and control efforts for the next three years. The SWCD will work to ensure the gains and investments made over the last nine years are not jeopardized. Noxious weeds are one of the greatest threats to the diversity of our landscapes, so keep an eye out for this weedy invader. We do not want this one spreading any further!



### SWCD says goodbye to longtime board member, welcomes newcomer!

Long time board member John Joyer stepped away from his Director position this year. We recognize his valuable contributions to the SWCD over the past 10 years. Pete Siragusa, an associate board member, was voted into the vacant Zone 1 position in November, 2018. Larry Martin served on the SWCD board for 16 years and now serves as an Associate Director. We welcomed newcomer Ben Saur to the Zone 3 position. We are grateful for the dedication and support the board brings to the SWCD. The next election will take place in 2020.

### FRESHWATER MUSSELS



Perhaps you've seen their shells while walking along the shoreline of the Columbia or Hood River during low water, but did you know freshwater mussels have recently been seen in small tributaries to the Hood River? These bivalves can live upwards of 100 years, rely

on fish to successfully reproduce, and are indicators of good water quality. You probably won't see them in the more flashy, glacially dominated streams, but take a look elsewhere next time you're out and about. Share your observations with us for inclusion in the Xerces Society's freshwater mussels database!

## Soil Moisture Monitoring and Irrigation Water Management

In May, the Hood River SWCD and OSU Extension Service hosted a Soil Moisture Monitoring workshop at Astrion Orchards in the upper Hood River Valley. This workshop was part of a multi-year project funded by the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB) to increase understanding of irrigation practices and inspire more active and efficient management of water. Soil moisture monitoring is an important tool for any agricultural operation. Knowing the water availability in soils helps growers manage irrigation set times for water conservation and improved crop production. Seven representatives from four different irrigation and soil moisture monitoring companies were present at the workshop. They were there to talk about their soil moisture monitoring technologies, demonstrate how they work, and how to utilize the data to inform irrigation scheduling. Many area orchardists attended the workshop.

This workshop was the final event funded through the SWCD's irrigation water management grant from OWEB. The goals of the grant were to increase understanding of irrigation water management and new technologies for the purpose of increased on-farm water conservation. Other aspects of this project included two IWM workshops for Spanish speakers, one-on-one training with several growers, and two tours at local orchards where efficient

irrigation equipment and practices are implemented.

Conservation of water resources in the Hood River Basin is vital to both the agricultural economy and threatened salmon and steelhead. The SWCD will continue to seek out opportunities to assist landowners with planning, funding, and implementing projects. If you are interested in more trainings like this in the future, or more information on water management, contact the SWCD.



*Participants gathered to learn from industry representatives during the soil moisture monitoring workshop in May*

### Farming for Pollinators

Everyone knows that honey bees are important pollinators, especially in agricultural crops. But did you know that native bees are more efficient pollinators than honey bees? There are some simple and inexpensive things you can do to increase native bees and other beneficial insects living on your land. One of the most important things you can do is plant native flowering vegetation. You may be eligible to receive funding from NRCS for your efforts.



Contact NRCS District Conservationist Carly Heron at 541-352-1037 for more information.

### Weed of the Month

For the fourth year, the Hood River SWCD and partners continued the "Weed of the Month" outreach campaign. The project focused on a different weed each month from April through September. Informational posters were hung throughout the County, articles appeared in local newspapers, public service announcements aired on the radio, and brochures were distributed at community events. Hopefully you saw the user friendly information on Italian arum, tree of heaven, scotch broom, knapweed, Canada thistle, and English ivy. If you missed it, check out our website for more information or visit the Columbia Gorge Cooperative Weed Management Area website at: [columbiagorgecwma.org](http://columbiagorgecwma.org).





# Hood River Soil & Water Conservation District Native Tree & Shrub Sale 2020 **ORDER FORM**



Name:			
Address:			
Phone Number:			
Email Address:			
How would you like to be reminded of the pick up date?		<input type="checkbox"/> Phone	<input type="checkbox"/> Email
		<input type="checkbox"/> Both	

## Conifer Trees - \$1.75 ea. QTY

Douglas Fir	
Grand Fir	
Noble Fir	
Western Red Cedar	
Ponderosa Pine	
Western Hemlock	
Giant Sequoia	
Total Ordered:	

**Orders will be available for pick up:  
Friday April 3<sup>rd</sup> 1-5 pm  
& Saturday April 4<sup>th</sup> 9 am-1 pm**

These are bare root seedlings. Please be prepared to plant them soon after pick up!

More information about each species can be found at:  
**[www.hoodriverswcd.org](http://www.hoodriverswcd.org)**

## Deciduous Trees - \$2.75 ea. QTY

Vine Maple	
Pacific Dogwood	
Quaking Aspen	
Blue Elderberry	
Paper Birch	
Total Ordered:	

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.

**The last day to order is March 20<sup>th</sup>**

**\*Please note the \$0.25 price increase this year\***

## Shrubs - \$2.75 ea. QTY

Showy Milkweed	
Redstem Ceanothus	
Tall Oregon Grape	
Woods Rose	
Snowberry	
Douglas Spirea	
Mock Orange	
Oceanspray	
Indian Plum	
Red Osier Dogwood	
Serviceberry	
Red Flowering Currant	
Pacific Ninebark	
Golden Currant	
Total Ordered:	

## TOTAL ORDER

Conifer Trees \_\_\_\_\_ x \$1.75 = \_\_\_\_\_

Deciduous Trees \_\_\_\_\_ x \$2.75 = \_\_\_\_\_

Shrubs \_\_\_\_\_ x \$2.75 = \_\_\_\_\_

**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**



## Hood River Soil & Water CONSERVATION DISTRICT

3007 Experiment Station Rd.  
Hood River, OR 97031

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

PRSRT STD.  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
ODELL, OR  
PERMIT NO. 10

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## *Now's The Time to Order Your Native Plants!*

The Hood River SWCD hosts an annual native plant sale every spring to promote the planting of native species. We strive to provide residents with a convenient and inexpensive way to obtain their favorite native plants. Native plants beautify the landscape, provide food and habitat for wildlife, add value and privacy to your property, and require little maintenance once established.

Pollinators and other beneficial insects have been dominating the headlines with stories about population declines, loss of habitat, and threats to ecological diversity. One of the best things we can do to support our beneficial insect is to plant native flowering plants that bloom throughout the season!

We offer a variety of conifers, deciduous trees, and shrubs. These plants are bare-root seedlings, 1-2 years old (8"-18" tall) grown by local nurseries. Conifers cost just \$1.75 and deciduous trees and shrubs cost \$2.75. Place your order now by mail or stop by our office. Orders will be accepted until March 20<sup>th</sup>. **Purchases will be available for pick-up on Friday and Saturday, April 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>, 2020.** Any plants that have not been presold will be available for purchase on pick-up days.



Available for the 2020 sale are all the old favorites plus giant sequoia, Pacific dogwood, paper birch, redstem ceanothus, and showy milkweed! Check out the District's website at [www.hoodriverswcd.org](http://www.hoodriverswcd.org) for more information on plant characteristics, site suitability, and wildlife usage.

During the 2019 native plant sale, nearly 4,500 trees and shrubs were purchased by about 200 landowners. Over 450 trees and shrubs were donated for streambank restoration and local area projects. Use the order form on the opposite page of this newsletter to make sure you get your order in!