

# Hood River Soil & Water

CONSERVATION DISTRICT



# Annual Report

Greetings all, we hope this report finds you well. We here at the Hood River SWCD have had a very busy year working with local partners to implement projects and provide educational opportunities that benefit natural resources, promote water and soil conservation, and enhance agricultural productivity.

This report highlights some of our most exciting projects of the year and we hope you'll take a moment to read about them. As always, we are here to serve you, and are looking forward to continued opportunities to work together. Thank you for your support!

*Heather Hendrixson, Kris Schaedel, & Cheryl Rice*

## Agricultural Training Opportunities

A collaboration between the Hood River SWCD, OSU Extension and the Columbia Gorge Fruit Growers facilitated eleven days of bilingual agricultural training and pesticide license testing opportunities. From November 2023 through April 2024, these trainings served almost 300 individuals covering the following topics: Spanish language Integrated Pest Management, Worker Protection Standards & Pesticide Handler Training, and the Private Pesticide Applications License Exam Preparation class. An opportunity to take the licensing exam was provided, as well



as an opportunity to review and retake the exam later in the spring. Trainings were taught by Washington State Department of Agriculture, Leo Garcia (formerly of Wenatchee Valley College), and OSU Pesticide Safety & Education program. To do this work, the HRSWCD secured an ODA Pesticide Stewardship Partnership program grant, Oregon Watershed Enhancement Grant, and a National Association of Conservation Districts Grant.

OSU Extension and HRSWCD worked together to become a contracted ODA pesticide license testing center. Currently, the closest testing locations are in Gresham or Hermiston which makes testing difficult for local applicators. HRSWCD can now administer the Oregon exam using the 20 computers OSU Extension purchased. Regular Pesticide License testing days will begin in November, see Page 3 for more information!



# HOOD RIVER SWCD

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

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

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

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

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

Associate Directors  
 Chuck Gehling  
 Richard Larson  
 Chal Oates

SWCD Staff  
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<b>Financial Report</b>		
<b>Hood River Soil &amp; Water Conservation District</b>		
<b>July 1, 2023 through June 30, 2024</b>		
Financial Report 2023-2024		
<u>Beginning Fund Balance:</u>	\$	294,253
<u>RECEIPTS:</u>		
Intergovernmental:		
ODA grants		189,429
OWEB grants		69,939
Other grants		71,700
Contracts:		
CTWS		12,143
Miscellaneous		28,684
Earnings on Investments		6,911
Plant sale		19,260
<u>TOTAL REVENUES</u>	\$	398,066
<u>DISBURSEMENTS:</u>		
SWCD Programs		411,661
Tree and Plant Sale		8,814
<u>TOTAL DISBURSEMENTS:</u>	\$	420,475
<u>Ending Fund Balance:</u>	\$	271,844

**SWCD Conservation Technician Hired** This summer we said goodbye to Brittany Welsh as our Seasonal Technician and welcomed Cheryl Rice to the SWCD team! Cheryl will be managing our annual native plant sale, the Hood River PSP monitoring, assisting with the OWEB Small Grants Program, the defensible space and mobile chipping project, and various other initiatives. Welcome Cheryl!

## Technical Assistance Round-Up

The SWCD is a non-regulatory provider of financial and technical assistance. In the last year we provided technical assistance to Hood River County residents via 19 site visits, 114 phone calls, 107 emails, 36 walk-in clients, and followed up with hundreds of technical guides and information. Topics included controlling weeds, upgrading irrigation systems, pesticide licenses, worker protection standards and pesticide handling, livestock infrastructure and best management practices. Calls and visits can lead to projects – we wrote and received 13 grants to get projects on the ground. We assisted over 270 people during our annual plant sale with over 6800 native plants making it back into the landscape. We also hosted and presented at 15 events that engaged over 700 community members. We are always available to help county residents become better stewards of their land, free of charge. We look forward to hearing from you!

## Hood River Basin Partnership Awarded \$10 Million in Grant Funds

In spring of 2024, the Hood River Basin Partnership was awarded an investment of \$10,140,242 over three biennia from the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB). These funds will be used to engage the community and implement projects that enhance habitat and increase the productivity of native salmon, steelhead, lamprey, and other fish in the Hood River Basin.

The **Hood River Basin Partnership** - which includes the Hood River Watershed Group, Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs, Hood River Soil and Water Conservation District, U.S. Forest Service - Hood River Ranger District, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, East Fork Irrigation District, Farmers Irrigation District, and Middle Fork Irrigation District - developed the Initiative with guidance from the Hood River Basin Strategic Action Plan that identifies and prioritizes restoration practices throughout the watershed.

The Initiative includes the highest priority irrigation delivery and on-farm water conservation projects, instream and floodplain habitat restoration, community engagement, restoration design, and project effectiveness monitoring. The SWCD will focus efforts on bilingual agricultural trainings and on-farm irrigation system upgrades.

Funding for these grants, awarded by the OWEB Board, comes from the Oregon Lottery and Federal Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery funds provided by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

## Upcoming Agricultural Trainings for 2024-25:

### November:

- Spanish-Orchard Leadership and Supervisory Skills taught by Leo Garcia
- English-Private Pesticide Applicators License Exam Preparation class and exam taught by OSU PSEP

### December:

- Spanish-Private Pesticide Applicators License Exam Preparation class and exam taught by WSDA

### January:

- Spanish and English -Worker Protection Standards & Pesticide Handler training (6 OR & WA pesticide credits)

### **Registration is now open!**

There are additional opportunities in development which include respirator fit testing, irrigation water management (Spanish), orchard Spanish (for English speakers to improve your Spanish language skills!), orchard pest, disease & beneficial insect scouting class (Spanish).

## Pesticide Stewardship Partnership

The Hood River Pesticide Stewardship Partnership program has been ongoing since 2000. It is a voluntary program that combines monitoring and targeted education and outreach with pesticide users. Results from monitoring four local streams in 2023 showed 1 pesticide of high concern (Imidacloprid) and 2 of moderate concern (2,6-Dichlorobenzamide and Deisopropylatrazine). The pesticide, Imidacloprid, was detected in exceedance of the aquatic life benchmark. Herbicides were the most detected type of pesticide, with the highest number in Lenz Creek. We secured additional funds to continue monitoring and implement riparian plantings, provide bilingual education and workshops, and begin the groundwork for a strategic plan. There are opportunities for the public to participate in PSP meetings, join our mailing list to receive notification.



## OWEB Small Grants

OWEB's Small Grant Program provides \$100,000 in Oregon Lottery funds to the Hood River team every two years. Because we granted 90% of those funds within the first year of the biennium, we were eligible to get an additional \$100,000 in 2024. These funds are distributed in grant amounts up to \$15,000. During the last year (2023-2024), four grants were completed totaling \$48,342. Funds were used to upgrade 33.4 acres of orchard to more efficient irrigation systems. Grant funds were matched by \$28,917 in local funding.

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



## Foro Comunitario—¡Preparémonos en caso de incendios forestales! Spanish language community forum on wildfire preparedness

On May 9, 2024, over 12 organizations represented by 20+ professionals met with over 60 Latinx community members to discuss wildfire preparedness. The goals of the event were to build trust and enhance communication between Latinx communities of Hood River County and the organizations that work on wildfire preparedness, resilience, and emergency response. Organizations offered guidance and resources on wildfire preparedness topics of relevance to Latinx communities and learned from the community about their priorities, concerns, and strengths related to preparing for wildfire events. Organizers were also interested in learning how participants currently prepare for and respond to smoke and wildfires. We look forward to hosting more community events with our partners to share relevant wildfire and emergency response information!



Over this past year, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) had a combination of forestry, irrigation, air quality, and pollinator projects contracted for a total of \$1,307,823 on 748 acres.

***This includes...***

- 480 acres of smudge pots removed
- 2,943 feet of on-farm irrigation pipeline installed
- 74 acres of micro irrigation system installed
- 18.8 acres of conservation cover

For the upcoming year, NRCS has several updates to EQIP which covers water conservation, air quality and forest health and resiliency.

- Water conservation-funding is available for on farm irrigation efficiency improvement projects in the Farmer's, Middle Fork, and East Fork Irrigation Districts. Projects can include micro irrigation, sprinkler systems, mainline, filters and irrigation water management.
- Air Quality-The smudge pot removal incentive program has expired, but there is funding available to do chipping and grinding in lieu of burning.
- Forest health and resiliency-NRCS has funding to do forest health practices which will lead to a more fire resilient landscape.

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

### Free Mobile Chipping Continues with ODF Grant!

With the ever increasing risk of wildfires throughout Hood River County, home owner wildfire preparedness is key. Creating defensible space and reducing the amount of fuels around your property are ways to make an area more wildfire prepared. A Small Forestland grant from the Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) enabled the Hood River SWCD to offer 10 days of free mobile chipping services to homeowners. With the chipping help of the Mt. Adams Resource Stewards (MARS), 6 mobile chipping days were offered this past spring where 49 homes participated in reducing the fuel loads around their property. Slots have already filled for two additional mobile chipping days this fall. In Spring 2025, the last 2 chipping days will be planned. SWCD hopes to continue this program in the future to help home owners become more wildfire prepared.



## CTWS Partnership

The SWCD gets support from the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs (CTWS) to assist with a variety of their projects. Salmon Days allows us to help teach 3rd and 4th graders at Mid-Valley Elementary about salmon, their lifecycle and the watershed. We assist in conducting Spring Chinook spawning surveys in 15 different reaches around Hood River county. At the CTWS West Fork hatchery, SWCD also helped fin clip Spring Chinook before they headed down to the Columbia River.



## Check Out Those Weeds!

The Weed of the Month campaign received a refreshed look with updated information describing various priority weeds, identification, environmental impacts and control/eradication methods.

The SWCD would love your input on what and where Hood River County's biggest weed problems are located. Contact the SWCD to find out how you can provide input and to help focus our efforts in the battle against these weed invaders!

### WEED ALERT

**Wanted: Knotweed, Waterway Invader!**

Knotweed is a large, invasive perennial that is sometimes mistaken for bamboo. Originally from Eastern Asia, it prefers riverbanks but it can be found along roadsides and other upland sites.




**How to Identify:**

- Grows up to 15 feet tall
- Clusters of white flowers near the end of stems
- Alternate leaves that are spade shaped
- Red slender stems when young; when mature, stems are green with jointed segments
- Similar appearance to bamboo

**Crimes Against Nature:**

- Clogs small waterways
- Reduces native plant and animal diversity
- Increases stream bank erosion
- Increases stream temperatures

**What Can You Do?**

- Flowers can be cut, bagged and placed in garbage before going to seed
- Herbicide treatment and multi-year monitoring
  - Check with OSU Extension Master Gardeners for herbicide advice

Scan here for more control info





## Puncturevine Pull Events at the Waterfront

The SWCD and volunteers continued with efforts in the eradication of puncturevine at the waterfront. With funding from the Columbia Gorge Cooperative Weed Management Area (CWMA), our partnership with the City and Port of Hood River continues. In July-September, almost 900 gallons of puncturevine was hand pulled, bagged and disposed of. Puncturevine, also known as goathead, thrives in dry, inhospitable environments. It grows flat along the



ground from a deep, woody, taproot and produces yellow flowers during the summer. Puncturevine is known for its spiny seed pods that can puncture bike tires, injure pets paws and stick to the bottom of our shoes. The seed pod can contain 5 seeds each and lay dormant for up to 5 years. Look for announcements on our website next year for upcoming volunteer events!



## Garlic Mustard Grant



The 14<sup>th</sup> year of garlic mustard abatement work continued with an Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) Noxious Weed grant. In May, our long-term integrated pest management effort endured to control the only two known areas in Parkdale. With the help of our partners and a contracted crew over three days, garlic mustard was hand pulled and bagged within a 180 acre survey area and an herbicide was applied to 0.5 acres.



Garlic mustard blooms in May and spreads its seed during the summer. It creates dense patches displacing native forest understory species and reducing biodiversity. If you think you see it, take a sample/picture and bring it in. It has a distinct garlic smell when crushed. This plant is widespread just west of here in Multnomah County, please help us keep an eye out for this burdensome weed!



# Hood River Soil & Water

CONSERVATION DISTRICT

3007 Experiment Station Rd.  
Hood River, OR 97031

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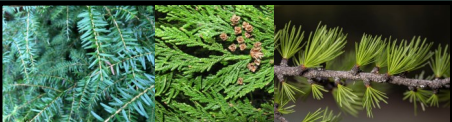
- Agricultural Trainings.....1
- Operations, Financial Report, Technical Assistance Round-Up.....2
- OWEB FIP and Small Grants, Pesticide Education, Upcoming Agricultural Trainings.....3
- Spanish Fire & Forest Health Landowner Night, NRCS, and Mobile Chipping.....4
- Confederated Tribes of Warm Spring and Weeds.....5
- Plant Sale .....6

# Native Plant Sale

Order online beginning  
January 2nd!

Online pre-orders via credit card for the conifer trees, deciduous trees, and shrubs listed below.  
A limited supply of all species will be available for purchase day-of sale (April 4th and 5th)

Orders will be available for  
pick up on  
April 4th and 5th, 2025



### Pre-Order Conifer Trees!

Bare-root conifers for \$3.50 include:

- ◆ Douglas Fir
- ◆ Grand Fir
- ◆ Noble Fir
- ◆ Ponderosa Pine
- ◆ Western Larch
- ◆ White Pine
- ◆ Western Red Cedar



### Pre-Order Deciduous Trees and Shrubs!

Bare root deciduous species for \$3.50 include:

- ◆ Quaking Aspen
- ◆ Woods Rose
- ◆ Snowberry
- ◆ Red Flowering Currant
- ◆ Red Osier Dogwood
- ◆ Pacific Ninebark
- ◆ Mock Orange and more!



### Expanded Potted Plants Selection!

Small potted wildflowers will be available only on the day of sale for \$4.50

These include: yarrow, columbine, bleeding heart, Oregon sunshine, camas, goldenrod, Oregon grape, arrowleaf buckwheat, large leaf lupine, Cascade penstemon, and so much more!!!

Check out [www.hooddriverswcd.org](http://www.hooddriverswcd.org) to place your order and get more info!  
Any questions? Contact Cheryl Rice at: [cheryl@hooddriverswcd.org](mailto:cheryl@hooddriverswcd.org) or 541-386-4588