

# Out of the Blues

## CURRENT HAPPENINGS

What a year the District has had so far in 2018. We are continuing to grow and expand in all areas of business including staffing, customer base, project type, and more. It is exciting to see all the growth that has happened in such a short amount of time.

The District was able to secure grants that enabled us to hire three new employees in early spring of this year. All three employees are now fully trained and up to speed, making the District a four person operation. This additional capacity has enabled us to get more work done quicker than we have before and provides some much needed help getting projects on the ground.

Currently, we have completed five different projects this year and are currently working on over five new ones. We have different programmatic outreaches, location-based funding, and project-type funding opportunities available. There is always something going on and new opportunities at the District. Hopefully the rest of this newsletter will give you an idea of the type of work we are doing and the opportunities that go with it.

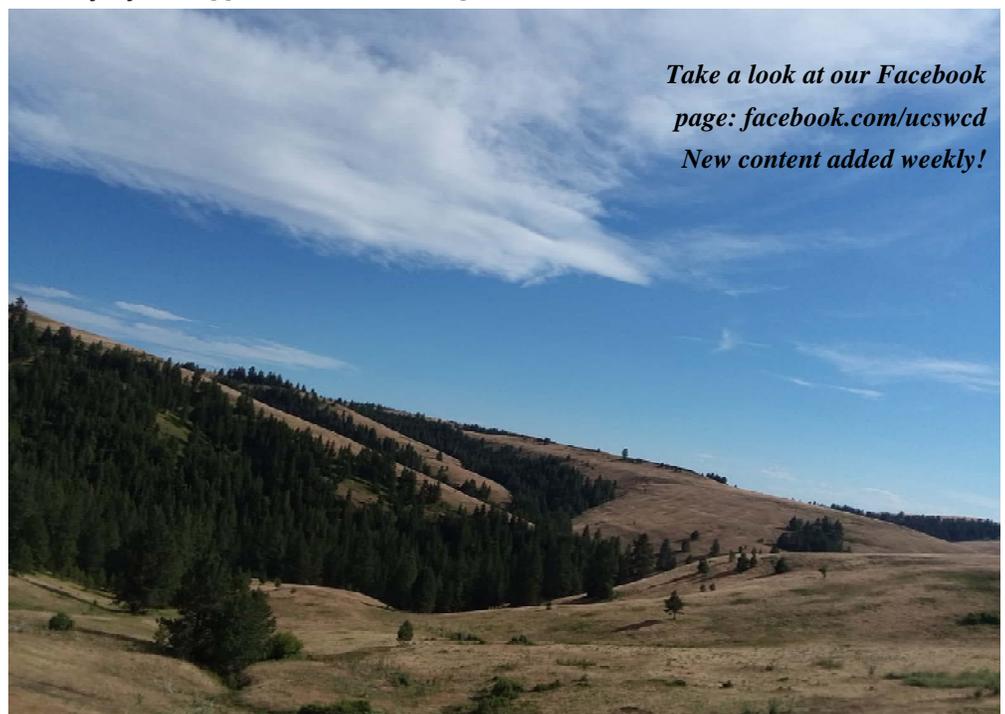
Of course, the District is always taking on Small Grant projects. With at least six funding cycles per year, there is plenty of opportunity to fund small projects totaling less than \$15,000. The District's most popular Small Grant project is livestock water developments. However, any project with a resource concern can be funded. Contact us to find eligibility. We can help you achieve your conservation goals, big or small.

Have an idea for a project? Want to know more information? Give us a call or stop by today and we can discuss your options. We are here to serve.

By Kyle Waggoner, District Manager

### **Fall 2018 Edition:**

- **Current Happenings**  
Page 1
- **Watershed Field Days**  
Page 2
- **CREP**  
Page 3
- **SIA**  
Page 3
- **Native Plant Feature**  
Page 4
- **Upcoming Events**  
Page 4



*Take a look at our Facebook page: [facebook.com/ucswcd](https://www.facebook.com/ucswcd)  
New content added weekly!*



We had another successful Watershed Field Days event in April and May of 2018! In attendance over the six-day event were a total of 846 fifth-grade students from 13 elementary schools: Windy River, Heppner, Ione, Stanfield, Irrigon, Rocky Heights, Highland Hills, McNary Heights, Pilot Rock, Helix, Washington, Sherwood, McKay, as well as a homeschool group from Pendleton. The Watershed Field Days program has happened annually since 1996 and has been an important component of the outdoor curriculum for many schools, especially those who do not attend outdoor school. Year after year, landowners generously provide their properties as the event sites for Watershed Field Days. The Lexington event takes place on the Nieffer property on Willow Creek, the Army Corps of Engineers hosts Watershed Field Days at McNary Dam, and the Cripes provide use of their property on McKay Creek. Our event is also made possible by our volunteers that coordinate the events each day. This year, we were fortunate to have help from high school students from Ione, Hermiston, Echo, the Pilot Rock FFA, the Pendleton FFA, homeschoolers, and even local birding enthusiasts from the Pendleton Bird Club. From the time that the fifth-grade students arrive each morning to the time they board the buses to go home, our volunteer high school helpers guide fifth graders to where they need to go. Staying alert to cues by walkie-talkie, helpers lead students from one station to the next. And of course, the Watershed Field Days presentations couldn't happen without the many natural resource professionals that dedicate their time to present a variety of watershed topics at seven different stations: First Foods, soils, macroinvertebrates, weather, wildlife, stream stability, and plant identification. Fifth-graders have a chance to learn about the traditions around local foods, feel soil texture, see aquatic organisms that they had never seen before, measure wind speed, learn how animals eat by the form of their teeth, plant a tree, identify problematic weeds in our watershed, and much more. We are happy to have had another great event this year and we are getting ready for another great Watershed Field Days event next year!

By Rachel Nash



Umatilla County Soil and Water Conservation District is an equal opportunity provider and employer.



## CREP is back!

The conservation reserve program (CRP) was signed into law by President Ronald Reagan in 1985. CRP holds the honor of being the largest private-lands conservation program in the United States. The conservation reserve enhancement program (CREP) was later added as an offshoot of the CRP with an overall goal to restore riparian buffers to functioning conditions, stabilize stream banks, reduce water temperature, reduce erosion and nutrient enrichment and manage noxious weeds.

CREP is a voluntary program that pays you to restore and enhance your stream side land!

This includes:

- Invasive weed removal
- Native tree, shrub and grass planting
- Fencing off livestock from waterways
- Off stream livestock watering

Cost share for installing conservation practices and an annual conservation rental payment is included for the enrolled acreage.

The Umatilla County Soil and Water Conservation District CREP Technician will provide all technical support for planning your project.

If you would like to know if your property is eligible for CREP, contact Shiloh at 541-278-8049 ext.142 or [shiloh.simrell@or.usda.gov](mailto:shiloh.simrell@or.usda.gov)

## DO YOU LIVE NEAR MCKAY, BIRCH OR STEWART CREEK?

The Umatilla County SWCD is here to provide **financial and technical assistance** with the design, installation, and maintenance of projects on your property to **improve your operation**, as well as to **enhance soil and water quality**.

For more information about the SIA, contact Rachel Nash at:

[rnash@umatillacountyswcd.com](mailto:rnash@umatillacountyswcd.com)

(541)278-8049 ext. 134

<http://www.umatillacountyswcd.com/sia.html>

## Native Plant Feature: Oregon Huckleberry

Evergreen Huckleberry, *Vaccinium Ovatum*  
 \*Photo credit: The Wild Garden, www.nwplants.com

There's gold in the hills! Well, more like blue gold. As Huckleberry season comes to an end, we thought we would highlight them one more time this season.

Picking Huckleberries with your family and friends can be a fun activity. Just don't expect to get as much as you would if you were picking Blackberries, because at no more than a centimeter, the berries are a small treat! Find patches in full or partial shade, in and around pine trees. Growing from 1 to 5 ft. tall, they tend to form a patch as they grow. This is great news for us, but be careful as bears tend to like them also. There are several different varieties of huckleberries that grow in Oregon. The two natives that most people are familiar with are the evergreen or blue huckleberry, *Vaccinium ovatum* and *Vaccinium membranaceum*, and the less well known red huckleberry, *vaccinium parvifolium*. If you didn't get a chance to go picking, watch for jams, jellies, and syrups, among other vittles for sale as the holidays approach.



OSU Department of Horticulture and the Oregon Flora project are both good resources if you want to learn more. Oregon Flora project provides an option to search for confirmed sites in your state. Simply select the scientific name, state and county and it will show you where you can get started today. Be safe and enjoy the bounty of our county!

By Tiffany Schademan

Upcoming Events:	Date, Time and Place:
November Board of Directors Meeting Open to the Public	Nov. 20th, 2018 6 PM USDA Service center - Conference room
Hermiston Farm Fair Trade Show	Nov. 28th—30th, 2018 9 AM—6 PM Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center
Annual Meeting Open to the Public	Dec 11th, 2018 6 PM Location TBD

**Come see us with questions or concerns at the USDA Service Center - 1 SW Nye Ave Ste. 130 Pendleton, OR 97801**

- Kyle Waggoner, District Manager, kwaggoner@umatillacountywcd.com 541-278-8049 ext. 138
- Rachel Nash, Conservation Specialist, rnash@umatillacountywcd.com 541-278-8049 ext. 134
- Shiloh Simrell, CREP Technician, shiloh.simrell@or.usda.gov 541-278-8049 ext. 142
- Tiffany Schademan, Administration Assistant, tiffany.schademan@or.oacdnet.net 541-278-8049 ext. 109