

OUT OF THE BLUES

Umatilla County Soil and Water Conservation District Newsletter

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Monthly Board Meetings:

- April 16th
- May 21st
- June 18th

*Meetings are held on the third Tuesday of each month at the USDA service center at 6 PM in the conference room and are open to the public.

Message from the Manager

We at the District are thrilled to finally see spring begin to warm the chill of winter. While the heavy winter weather put a damper on field visits, we have not been idle. A variety of ideas are blossoming into projects as we head into spring. The Umatilla SWCD is attempting to apply for **two new major programs** in April, one outreach and one certification program. We also have our **drone program** up and running, and have begun flying for interested landowners. As always, we are making great strides with **small grants, CREP, and the SIA program.**

If you have a project idea, give us a call or stop by the office! We are here to serve.

Drone in Flight



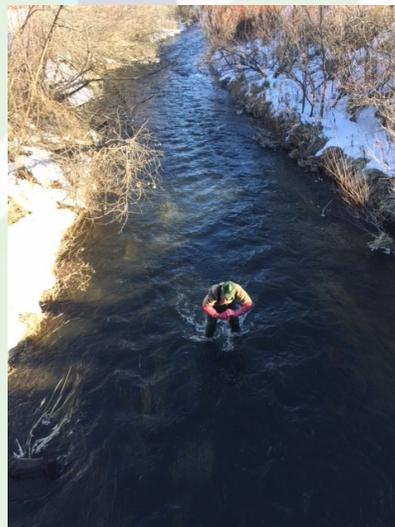
ATTENTION ALL CREP LANDOWNERS

In our efforts to revamp the CREP program, we will be implementing frequent monitoring of CREP projects to better manage the effectiveness of CREP over the life of the contracts. CREP sites will be visited on an annual basis in the first 5 years and will be periodically visited thereafter depending on the contract length. This will assure landowner adherence to the program requirements and allows for measures to be taken to improve plant growth and survival.

Monitoring is an important component of habitat restoration. Without it, there can be no knowledge of what has been done, where it has been done, and no measurement of success in the investments and techniques.

Spring Water Sampling...

The Umatilla SWCD's first water sampling event happened during the month of March 2019. Sampling will continue every two weeks for several years and will exclude summers while flows are low. The purpose of the water sampling is to monitor potential changes in water quality by taking samples before, during, and after projects are implemented on agricultural land. This is part of the Strategic Implementation Area (SIA) program, in which the ODA targets a watershed and SWCDs conduct outreach to landowners to provide technical and financial support for the purpose of implementing projects that improve water quality. The watershed includes Birch Creek, Stewart Creek, and McKay Creek, all of which are part of the sampling plan. Project types include fencing and off-stream watering facilities to keep cattle out of creeks, riparian vegetation plantings, and reinforcing heavy livestock use areas to reduce muddy conditions. Samples will be analyzed in a lab for sediment, nitrogen, phosphorus, and E. coli. Umatilla SWCD staff will also measure flow at each sampling location for the interpretation of lab results, as flow fluctuates throughout the seasons. Lab results will indicate agricultural inputs such as fertilizers, pesticides, animal waste, and eroding soil, all of which degrade water quality.



We are still accepting new projects in the SIA, so give us a call!