

GRANT SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

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Mission Statement:

Grant Soil and Water Conservation District is committed to sustainable conservation through leadership, education, planning and implementation of environmentally sound projects to ensure the long term productivity and responsible management of Grant County's natural resources.

Serving the Citizens of Grant County Since 1956

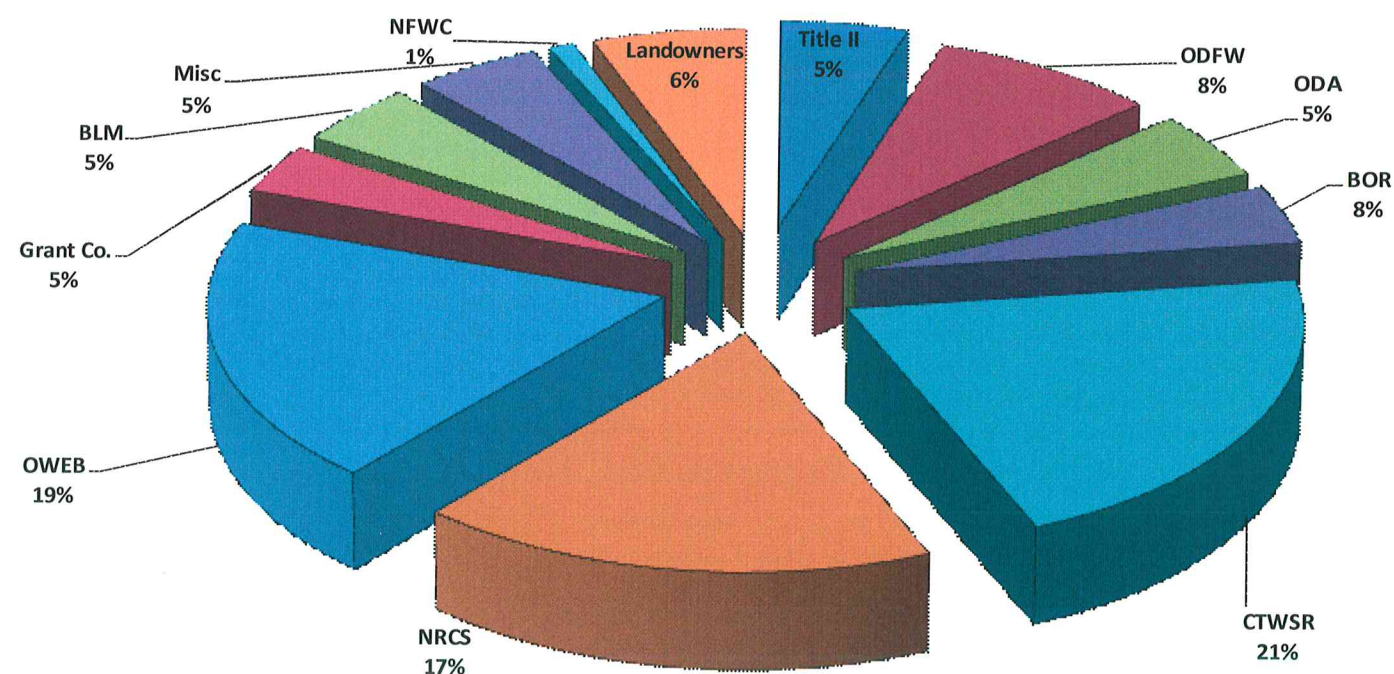
District Staff

Jason Kehrberg, District Manager
Brad Armstrong, Staff Engineer
Levi Voigt, PE, District Engineer
Kyle Sullivan, Engineering Technician
Pat Holliday, Programs Assistant
Matt Wenick, Weed Control Coordinator
Colby Farrell, Herbicide Applicator
Tereasa Perkins, Herbicide Applicator

Grant SWCD Board of Directors

Pat Voigt
Phil St. Clair
Roger Ediger
Joanne Keerins
Rick Henslee
Associate Directors
Kristy St. Clair
Nick Stiner
Ted Clausen
Director Emeritus:
J.C. Oliver

2015 Project Investment \$2,294,080



Program Partners

- ♦ Grant County Landowners—\$133,487
- ♦ CTWSR/BPA—Confederated Tribes Warm Springs/Bonneville Power Administration—\$478,314
- ♦ ODFW—OR Dept. Fish & Wildlife - \$196,811
- ♦ BOR-Bureau of Reclamation - \$99,137
- ♦ NRCS-Natural Resources Conservation Service—\$400,841
- ♦ North Fork Watershed Council—\$21,946
- ♦ ODA—OR Dept. Agriculture—\$115,000
- ♦ USFS—Malheur Forest/Title II - \$111,329
- ♦ Grant County—\$82,581
- ♦ BLM-Bureau of Land Management—\$105,724
- ♦ OWEB-OR Watershed Enhancement Board—\$438,447
- ♦ Misc.—ODOT, Ritter Collaborative, Community Wildfire—\$110,463

Grant Soil & Water Conservation District

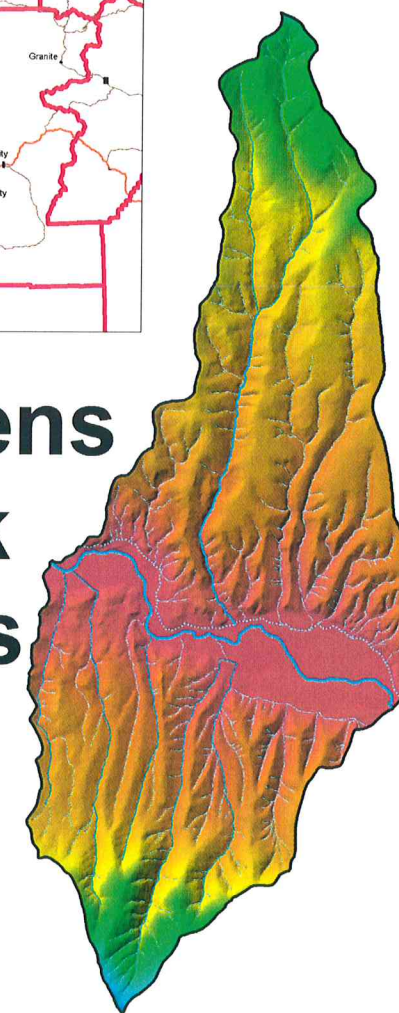


2015 ANNUAL REPORT

Upper Mainstem & South Fork John Day River Agricultural Water Quality Management Area Plan



Warrens Creek Focus Area



Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) has continued its statewide effort to better document the effectiveness of its Agricultural Water Quality Management Program through the use of "Focus Areas". A Focus Area is a small watershed within each State Agricultural Water Quality Management Area, selected by ODA, capable of exhibiting measurable water quality improvement over a short time period and with use of limited resources. As part of this Focus Area process, ODA completes a streamside assessment of the area using aerial photos to estimate vegetation conditions related to water quality benefits and compliance with State Agricultural Water Quality Management Rules. These rules say that streamside areas **"must allow for the establishment, growth, and active recruitment of vegetation, consistent with the vegetation growth capability of the site, for protection of water quality by filtering sediment, stabilizing streambanks, and providing shade"**.

Appraised streamside areas that do not support vegetation growth are categorized by ODA as Bare Ground sites. ODA consider these Bare Ground areas along streams to be a "trigger" of concern because it may indicate a water quality issue due to the lacking presents of mitigating vegetation and the potential for soil instability. If agricultural activities are found to be contributing to the creation of Bare Ground conditions, the associated landowner may be responsible under Oregon Law to take appropriate action to allow vegetation to naturally re-establish. ODA provides financial resources to the Grant SWCD to provide voluntarily assist landowners in assessing water quality conditions, and if available, seek cost-share opportunities to implement appropriated restoration measures. No enforcement actions are applied to Focus Areas or will result from the associated assessment.

In 2015, ODA selected and assessed the Warrens Creek Watershed as a Focus Area for the Upper Mainstem and South Fork John Day River Agricultural Water Quality Management Area. The area includes lands both north and south of the John Day River, extending between the Junctions of Highway 26 and Moon Creek Lane and Highway 26 and Belshaw Creek Lane. In partnership with ODA, the Grant SWCD will be actively working over the next two years to provide targeted program information and assistance to the area's 54 landowners. Any resulting water quality improvement activities will then be incorporated into future ODA streamside appraisals of the Focus Area, establishing a measurable record of water quality improvement.

Grant Soil & Water Conservation District provides a variety of services and programs encouraging the sustainable use and conservation of natural resources. The projects presented here represent Grant SWCD's 2015 Program Highlights.

Fish Passage and Habitat Improvements Projects

Grant SWCD has systematically worked to provide opportunities for area landowners to improve fish passage and habitat conditions, through the installation of alternative irrigation diversion structures, irrigation efficiency improvements, culvert replacements, streambank stabilization, riparian protection, and stream channel complexity enhancements. These types of activities have received regular sponsorship from Bureau of Reclamation, Bonneville Power Administration, Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon, and Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife.



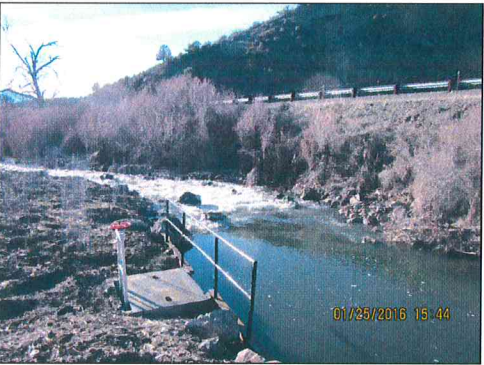
Island Ditch—Before



Island Ditch—After



Meredith Diversion #3—Before



Meredith Diversion #3—After

Pine Creek Firewise Community

Grant SWCD in partnership with Grant County, sponsored the creation of the Pine Creek Firewise Community Defensible Space Assistance Program. This incentive program is providing financial assistance to 17 property owners within the Pine Creek Firewise Community to carry out related wildfire protection measures within 300 feet of structures and along emergency access roads. Performance of the sponsored fuels reduction practices are anticipated to reduce fire intensity and improve access for emergency responders in the event a wildfire threatens the community and individual properties. Grant SWCD expects this effort will serve as a model for future projects to be replicated throughout Grant County.



Before Project Implementation



After—Defensible Space Created

Ballance Creek Riparian Enhancement Phase I

Project cooperated with a commercial cattle producer to improve water quality conditions associated with their winter feeding areas by installing riparian protection fencing to remove unrestricted livestock access to 1.1 miles of stream segment designated as spawning and rearing habitat for endangered Summer Steelhead. Along with the exclusion fencing, an alternative spring feed livestock watering system was constructed. This system now provides reliable winter stock water through 1,700 feet of buried pipeline, serving a series of 8 troughs. The system was designed with the capacity to support up to 400 head of adult cattle. Project funding was provided by an Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board Grant, along with landowner cash and in-kind contributions.



Phillip W. Schneider Wildlife Area Range Restoration



Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife and the Grant SWCD partnered to implement a landscape scale project to control invasive annual grasses which are degrading range conditions on the Phillip W. Schneider Wildlife Area. Herbicide applications were aerially applied across 6,500 acres to provide selective suppression of existing annual grass species in the fall of 2014. Following designated protocols, approximately 5,700 acres of the treated area were reseeded in the fall of 2015. Seed was both aerially applied and performed with rangeland drills according to terrain limitations. The Natural Resource Conservation Service prescribed the seeding mixture which included a combination of native and introduced perennial grass species, tailored

to the area's climate, elevation, and soil types. Other project participants included Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board, Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon, South Fork John Day Watershed Council, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, and Mule Deer Foundation.

Canyon Creek Complex Fire Rehabilitation



Following the Canyon Creek Complex Fire, Grant SWCD assisted effected landowners in the performance of 4,100 acres of aerial rehabilitation seeding, applying approximately 69 tons of seed. Sponsored through a USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) Program, with cost-share from OR Dept. Fish & Wildlife, 46 landowners commonly agreed to have the Grant SWCD contract the performance of all seeding operations by a single helicopter contractor. This significant level of cooperation reduced project costs and implementation timelines, maximizing the opportunity for the seeding to be effective at stabilizing soil and restoring forage for livestock and wildlife. Grant SWCD received a 2015 Partnership Award from Oregon NRCS in recognition of its role in this project.



2015 Weed Control Projects



2015 *Larinus obtusus* Release for Spotted Knapweed



2015 Plumeless Thistle



2015 Pheasant Eye



2015 Squarrose Knapweed



Manual Weed Pulling



Summer Conservation Youth Crew



Through a cooperative effort with the Malheur National Forest, the Grant SWCD provided summer employment to five local high school students. This program allowed these area youths to gain work and educational experience while participating in multiple areas of natural resource management. Lead by Forest Service Professionals, the crew spent time working on projects associated with range, wildlife, fisheries, silviculture, hydrology, and recreation management.



Grant Soil and Water Conservation District Noxious Weed Control Department

In 2015 Grant Weed Control treated approximately 3,587 acres, coordinated treatment of 1,745 acres, for a total of 5,332 acres. Treatment projects included:

OR Dept. Agriculture Grants	1,150 acres	Bureau of Land Management	54 acres
Grant County Roadsides	930 acres	OR Dept. Fish & Wildlife	52 acres
North Fork Watershed Council	149 acres	OR Dept. Transportation	49 acres
Title II-Grazing Lands	336 acres	Private Landowners	775 acres
OR Watershed Enhancement Board	42 acres	Aerial Application Coordination	1,745 acres



2015 Medusahead Project