

## Grant SWCD Board of Directors

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## GRANT SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

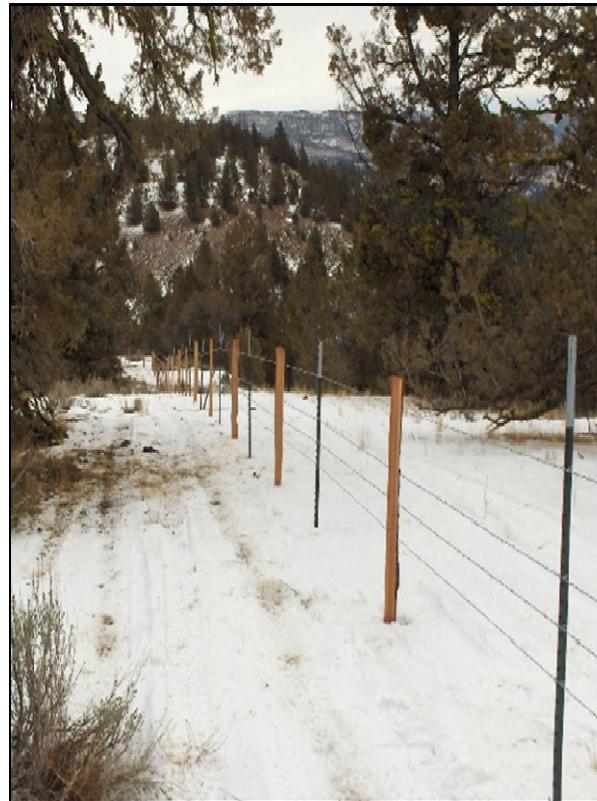


721 S. Canyon Blvd.  
John Day, OR 97845

Phone: 541 575-0135, X 110  
E-mail: [jkehrberg@ortelco.net](mailto:jkehrberg@ortelco.net)

## GRANT SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT 2017 ANNUAL REPORT

*The purpose of the Grant Soil and Water Conservation District is to conserve, protect, and develop the soil, water, and related natural resources within Grant County for the economic benefit and general welfare of it's residents.*

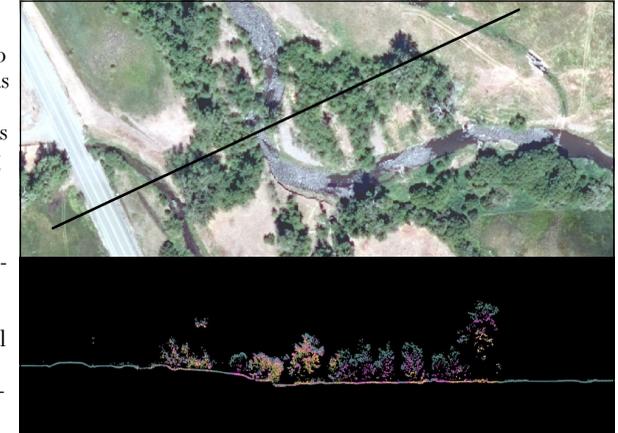


*Serving the Citizens of Grant County since 1956*

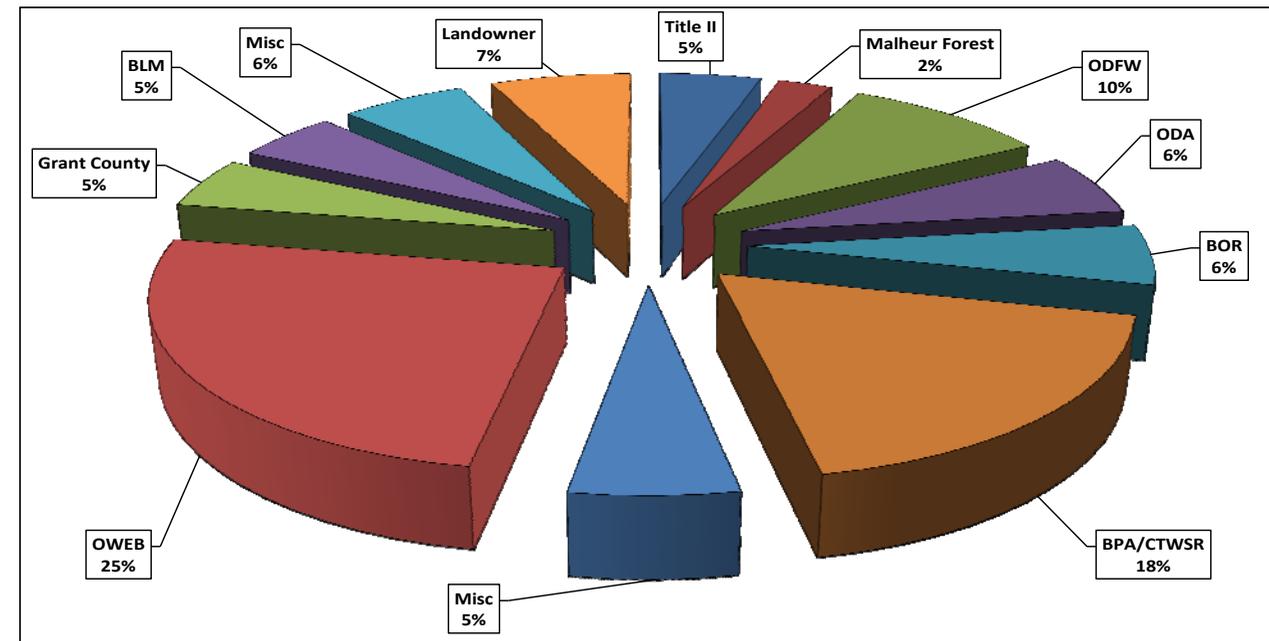
## Agriculture Water Quality Management Program Assessing Riparian Vegetation Changes Over Time

Under Oregon's Agricultural Water Quality Management Program (Program) and associated laws, administered by the Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA), all agricultural producers and rural landowners are tasked to limit their management impacts near water areas, allowing site capable vegetation to grow and establish naturally. Since the adoption of these regulations in 2006, the Grant SWCD has worked extensively to provide technical and financial resources to assist landowners with making the management changes necessary to achieve program compliance. Landowners within Grant County and throughout the State have made great strides fulfilling the requirements of this riparian vegetation regulation, and very few streamside areas continue to demonstrate symptoms indicating non-compliance. Grant SWCD in partnership with ODA are currently working to create a credible record of program success and water quality value through the use of recently obtained Light Detection and Ranging (LIDAR) survey data. This information is an aerial recorded laser measurement of the ground surface, including vegetation, structures, or all other reflective features.

Grant SWCD Technical Staff have created a computer modeling framework to combine the new LIDAR data with aerial imagery to allow for the creation of three dimensional maps for surveyed areas as demonstrated in the example. These constructed surfaces can then be used to calculate actual vegetation volumes and dimensions of a riparian area, which has not been possible without performing an intensive ground survey. Comparing quantities between past and future surveys, vegetation growth rates and changes can be determined, along with changes to stream channel forms. The information can also be analyzed to determine solar radiation influences to a water body resulting from vegetation shading. To further inform riparian growth potential, Grant SWCD will soon be able to calculate similar measures of vegetation using historic aerial photos with a second new modeling technique. The resulting information would be highly valuable in determining relative vegetation and landform conditions chronologically back to the 1930's.



### Total 2017 Project Investment—\$1,689,234



## BLUE MOUNTAINS VEGETATION HEALTH INITIATIVE



Grant SWCD and Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) began enrolling landowners into this five year conservation program to establish a public to private land partnership model, capable of enhancing ecological conditions at a watershed scale. By consolidating private land conservation incentives to build upon similar vegetation treatments applied through federal land stewardship projects on the Malheur National Forest, this program intends to improve forage and browse productivity to benefit both livestock and wildlife production, preserve forest health, protect water quality, reduce the threat of wildfire, and optimize land conditions for hydrologic resiliency to drought throughout a significant portion of the Upper John Day River Basin. Primary program elements will target the performance of over 5,000 acres of invasive juniper removal and forest thinning operations within priority areas, selected to maximize water availability benefits. Complimentary conservation practices to include noxious weed control, controlled burning, riparian and in-stream enhancements, range improvement, and prescribed grazing will be applied to further promote and aid in the retention of the conservation elements established by this Program.

## BLM—ALDER CREEK RESTORATION PROJECT

In partnership with the Bureau Land Management, Grant SWCD provided engineering and contracting services to implement meadow and stream channel enhancements along one mile of Alder Creek, including a 25 acre wet meadow complex. Project was performed in two phases over a period of three years, resulting in the installation of 55 separate in-stream structures designed to arrest channel down cutting and improve floodplain connectivity. The below before and after aerial photos show the results of the project indicated by an increase of water retention and green vegetation influenced by the installed structures.



Before—2013



After—2016

## RANGELAND SEED DRILL



Grant SWCD was fortunate to have obtained the resources to allow for the replacement of its aging rangeland drill. The new drill is scheduled to arrive in spring 2018 and will become immediately available for rental use on a first come first serve basis.

## RIPARIAN MANAGEMENT RESOURCES AND NEW CREP TECHNICIAN

Grant SWCD sponsored a series of projects to aid landowners with increasing the management of sensitive riparian areas to benefit the protection of water quality. Over 17 miles of barbed wire fencing along with a solar powered pump stockwater system were implemented across 8 different projects in 2017. To increase the cost-share resources for riparian management improvements, Grant SWCD was successful in securing funding to establish a dedicated staff position to manage the Federal Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) within Grant and Baker Counties. This Farm Service Agency Program focuses on improving riparian conditions by providing financial assistance to landowners to install riparian protection fencing, control noxious weeds, replant vegetation, and provides an annual payment for the removal of the area from agricultural production for 10-15 year contract periods. Additional information regarding the CREP Program is now available by contacting Tereasa Perkins, Grant SWCD CREP Technician at 541-575-0135 ext. 106 or [tperkins@ortelco.net](mailto:tperkins@ortelco.net).



## GRANT WEED CONTROL



Larinus Minutus—Biological control for Diffuse and Spotted Knapweed



Plumeless Thistle



Squarrose Knapweed

In 2017 Grant Weed Control treated noxious weeds on 2,100 acres, 563 miles of Grant County roadside shoulders and aerially applied Medusahead treatment to 4,443 acres. Biological control was released at 6 sites.