

Volume 19, Issue 4

July 2019



SHERMAN COUNTY SWCD & WATERSHED COUNCIL

# The Rolling Thunder

## Soil & Water Conservation District

### Upcoming Meetings

The next SWCD District Board Meeting is Monday, September 9th at the SWCD Office, 8:30 am, 302 Scott Street, Moro, OR 97039.



### County Cost Share Funding Now Available!

The SWCD currently has new funding for county cost share grants to address resource concerns. Examples of previous projects include reshaping terraces to improve water storage capacity and ease of farming, spring developments to improve livestock distribution and water access, improving haul roads to decrease wind and water erosion, and cross fencing to improve livestock distribution. Projects under \$10,000 are reimbursed at 75% of total cost and 50% for projects over \$10,000 with project cap set at \$15,000. Participants are given one year to complete projects.

### New Watershed Program Assistant

We would like to welcome Emily Freilich to the team! Emily was recently hired as the Watershed Program Assistant. She will assist in executing day to day management, outreach, education, and administrative tasks for both the SWCD & Watershed Council. Emily came from Colorado where she was working for Colorado Parks & Wildlife at the Radium State Wildlife Area. She has a B.A. in Environmental Analysis / Geology from Pomona College in Claremont, CA and came out west from Pennsylvania. Please join us in welcoming Emily to Sherman County!



### Aerial Seeding

Aerial Seeding will be available this fall as the SWCD contracts out seeding of areas burned in the 2018 wildfires. If you have burned ground you would like seeded or other potential areas that need vegetation establishment please contact the District.

## Sherman County Area Watershed Council

### Upcoming Meetings

The next Watershed Council Meeting will be held Monday, September 9, 2019 at 8:00 am at the SWCD Office.



### Small Grant Funding

Do you have resource concerns or a conservation project in mind? Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB) small grant funding will be available in late August for conservation projects. Once funded participants have two years to complete projects. Cost share is 75% for projects under \$10,000 and 50% for projects that exceed \$10,000 with a \$15,000 cap.

### Cottonwood Canyon Field Trip

The Watershed Council appreciates the assistance from our partners in making the Cottonwood Canyon Field Trip a success for Sherman Elementary K - 3rd grades. Thanks to Oregon State Parks for allowing us to use their facilities, Grass Valley BLM Fire Crew for their fire engine and demonstrations, Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife with their furs and skulls, and the SWCD with stream table activities and demonstrations! Thanks!



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“Ah, summer, what power you have to make us suffer and like it.”- R. Baker

# Farm Service Agency



## Farm Service Agency Updates and Reminders:

- **Every Season is #scamseason:** Remember to discuss your USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) account information only with people you recognize and trust. If you have questions about your FSA accounts, contact the Sherman County FSA office at 541-565-3551 ext 2
- **ECP (Emergency Conservation Program).** As fences burned in the 2018 wildfire season are rebuilt or repaired, FSA reminds ECP participants to avoid disturbing the ground below the existing plow zone/area of previous disturbance or uprooting/cutting down of trees while implementing ECP practices. Please submit bills as soon as your projects are completed.
- **August 23:** Deadline to enroll/re-enroll CREP and Continuous CRP offers.

## Signups Available Now for Several Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) Options

Signups are going on now through August 23, 2019 for the following options under the CRP:

- Contracts set to expire this fall, except for CREP, can be extended one year to September 30, 2020, provided the contract will be 14 years old or less on September 30, 2019. The current contract's provision will remain in effect, including the current payment rate.
- Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) contracts set to expire this fall can be offered for re-enrollment in a new contract. Normal payments, including enhanced rental rates, signup incentives, and 100% cost sharing on eligible costs, continue to be available. Rental rates may be less than the rate on the current contract. Your local FSA office can determine the exact rate for your land. CREP contracts are not eligible for the 1-year extensions discussed in the first bullet above.
- New land, not currently in CREP, can be offered under the same provision as re-enrolling CREP land. Offers to enroll in any of these options must be completed and signed by at least one producer by **August 23 to be eligible**. Eligibility determinations will need to be made on the land before an offer can be signed. Contact your local FSA office timely about your CRP signup options to ensure determinations can be made and a signed offer submitted by the August 23, 2019 deadline. After the deadline, no CRP offers will be accepted until the regulations from the 2018 Farm Bill are implemented. More details on CRP implementation under the new Farm Bill are expected to be available later in the year.

## Potential for First General CRP Signup in Three Years in December

Although the final decision is contingent on implementation of the CRP regulations resulting from the 2018 Farm Bill, the Secretary has indicated a general CRP signup will be held this winter, likely starting around December 1, 2019, and running into early 2020. Details will be announced as they become available.

## Sherman County Farm Service Agency Holds County Committee Election Informational Meeting

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) Executive Director (CED) Kara Lanthorn in Sherman County reminds farmers and landowners that FSA is hosting an informational meeting regarding the 2019 County Committee Election process on **July 18, 2019, at 10:00 AM** at the USDA Service Center located at 302 Scott Street in Moro, OR. Producers, including minority, women and new farmers, are encouraged to attend the meeting and participate in the 2019 election.

The county committee nomination period began on June 14, 2019. Nomination forms must be postmarked or received in the Sherman County FSA office by close of business on Aug. 1, 2019. For election purposes, counties are divided into local administrative areas (LAA). Each LAA nominates and elects one producer to serve a three-year term on the FSA county committee. Each year, an election is held in an LAA where a committee member's three-year term is expiring. For 2019, an election will be held in **LAA 1 (Area North of Baseline Rd includes the communities of Wasco, Rufus and Biggs)**.

To be eligible to serve on an FSA county committee, a person must participate or cooperate in a program administered by FSA, be eligible to vote in a county committee election and reside in the LAA in which the person is a candidate. Farmers and ranchers may nominate themselves or others. Organizations representing minorities and women also may nominate candidates. To become a candidate, an eligible individual must sign an FSA-669A nomination form. The form and other information about FSA county committee elections are available at [fsa.usda.gov/elections](https://fsa.usda.gov/elections).

Nationwide, there are approximately 7,800 farmers and ranchers serving on FSA county committees. These individuals make decisions on disaster and conservation programs, emergency programs, commodity price support loan programs and other agricultural issues. Committees consist of three to 11 members who are elected by eligible producers.

# Natural Resource Conservation Service

## Staff Changes

We are pleased to announce that NRCS has hired Del Rae Ferguson as the permanent District Conservationist (DC) for Sherman County. Del Rae was detailed as the interim DC in Moro this year from January - early May. Del Rae was previously working for NRCS in Condon as a Range Conservationist. Join us in welcoming Del Rae back to Sherman County to stay! We also appreciate the time and hard work put in by Jake Calvert as the interim DC and wish him well in returning to Heppner as a Soil Conservationist assisting with NRCS programs in Morrow County.



## Fencing and Rangeland Restoration Large Grant

The Sherman County Area Watershed Council is interested in applying for a large grant through the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB) this fall to provide cost share on riparian and upland cross fencing, along with rangeland restoration. Potential rangeland restoration practices include range seeding, annual grass control, spring developments, and other practices improving range health. Landowners will have 4 years to complete projects and cost share is 75% without a project cap. In addition to addressing resource concerns in riparian and rangeland areas, our hope is that this grant will allow landowners to fence off riparian buffers under the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) and utilize existing pastures outside of CREP buffers. Upland cross fencing will allow for increased rotational grazing management to improve rangeland and livestock health in Sherman County, along with other rangeland practices. **If interested please contact Jacob Powell with the Watershed Council by September 15th** at (541) 565-3216 ext. 106 so we can complete required site visits and start getting an application together.



## Lower Grass Valley Canyon Noxious Weed Assistance

### Herbicide Treatment Available

The Sherman County Area Watershed Council has funding available to treat noxious weeds in the Lower Grass Valley Canyon. Surveys from 2017-2018 documented Rush Skeletonweed, Diffuse and Russian Knapweeds, Scotch, Canada, and Bull Thistles, along with White Top and Puncture Vine covering an estimated 370 acres. The Sherman County Weed District will be completing herbicide applications. Please contact the Watershed Council or Weed District if you have an area in mind to get treated in the project area. Land enrolled in USDAs Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) or Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) is not eligible.

### Biological Control Agents Available

The Sherman County Area Watershed Council is purchasing biological control agents (insects) to reduce populations of Diffuse and Russian Knapweeds, Canada Thistle, and Rush Skeletonweed. Each noxious weed has a naturally evolved insect that feeds on and parasitizes that specific plant. These insects keep noxious weeds in check in their area of origin and are host specific, meaning they will not impact other plant species. We will be targeting Rush Skeletonweed using a Gall Midge (*Cystiphora schmidtii*) and Gall Mite (*Aceria chondrillae*). Canada Thistle is being treated with a Rust Fungus (*Puccinia punctiformis*) and Stem Weevil (*Hadroplontus litura*). Knapweeds are being targeted with a Gall Midge (*Jaapiella ivannikovi*), a Flower Weevil (*Larinus minutus*), and the Root Boring Weevil (*Cyphocleonus achates*). If you know of large infestations along Lower Grass Valley Canyon or anywhere else in Sherman County please contact the conservation office. We are trying to target areas with limited access to place biological controls where herbicide treatment and access is difficult.



# Experiment Station Weather

## Air Temperature

Month	Average Max Temp °F	Average Min Temp °F
May 2019	68	45
May average	67	43
June 2019	76	48
June average	74	48

### May

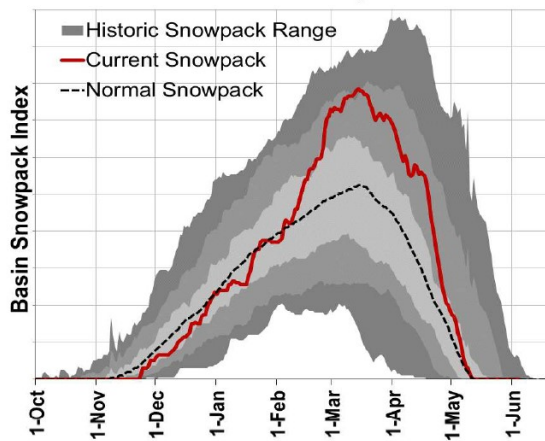
The highest temperature was 85°F on the 11th  
The lowest temperature was 35°F on the 17th

### June

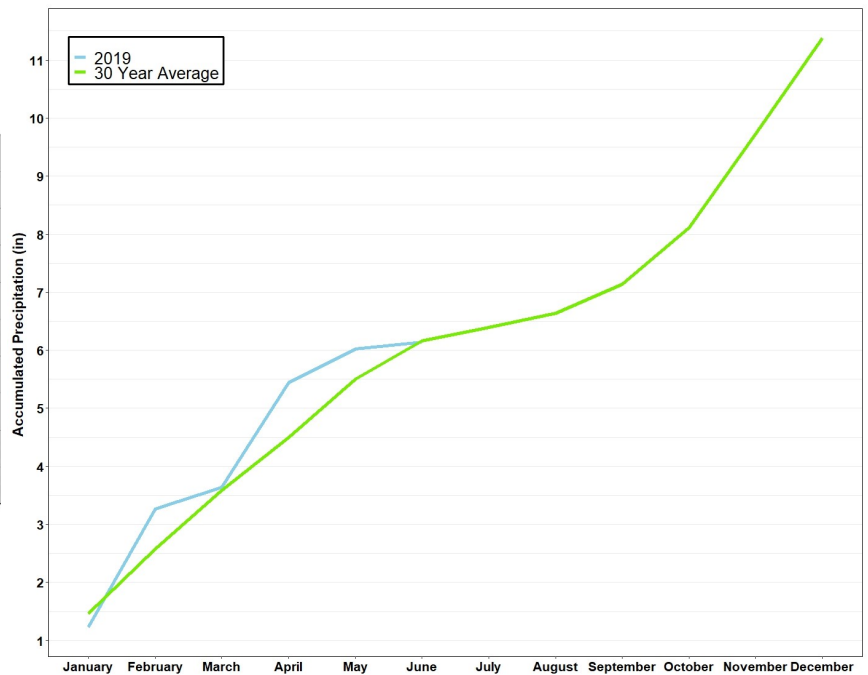
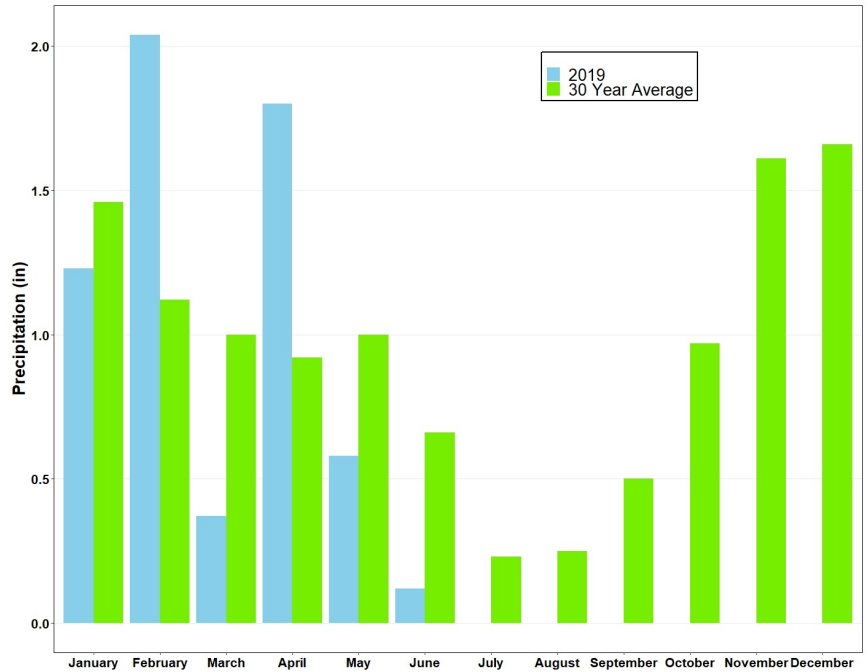
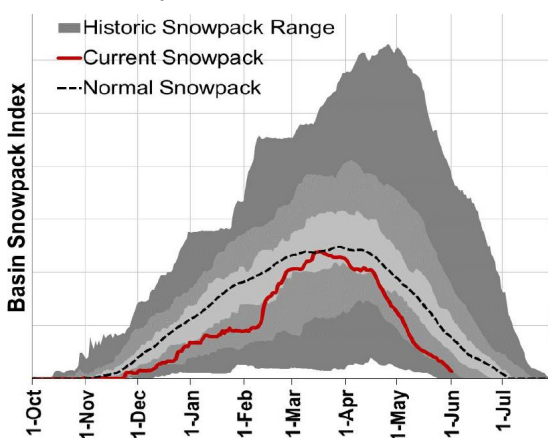
The highest temperature was 91°F on the 13th  
The lowest temperature was 35°F on the 21th

**Snowpack:** As of June 1 the John Day Basin is at 120% of normal. Hood, Sandy, and Lower Deschutes, are at 82% of normal

### John Day Basin Mountain Snowpack



### Hood, Sandy, and Lower Deschutes Basins



### Rainfall:

During May rainfall occurred on the 16th, 17th, 19th, and 21st in amounts of 0.18, 0.01, 0.3, and 0.08 inches, respectively.

During June rainfall only occurred on the 27th in an accumulation of 0.12 inches.



# Keep an Eye on Russian Thistle After Harvest

Keep an eye out after wheat harvest for emerging Russian thistle plants that may have a release in response to the harvested wheat. Russian thistle is originally from Russia and commonly referred to as “tumble weed.” One plant can produce 250,000 seeds that can tumble with the wind and spread quickly. Plants also use a shocking amount of water, a study completed in 1999 by WSU tracked water use in a spring wheat crop near Lind, WA. Researchers found that an individual Russian thistle plant used an average of 20 gallons of soil water while growing with the crop and post harvest used an additional 27 gallons of soil water. Russian thistle competed with the crop for soil water at shallow depths, but the majority of water used was from below 3 ft. Though water usage was primarily below the active crop, Russian thistle infestations reduced water for future crops. Effective control is necessary to minimize spread and crop impact. A study completed by WSU in 2009 found that Russian thistle control was 90% or greater with paraquat plus diuron compared to 75% and less with Glyphosate & 2,4-D in field trials near Ritzville, WA. In addition, treating with glyphosate may increase herbicide resistance. A study completed in 2016 by OSU extension at the Columbia Basin

Agricultural Research Center found increasing glyphosate resistance in Russian thistle in Morrow County. The good news is that the same study also looked at Russian thistle from two locations in Sherman County and determined they were not yet resistant to glyphosate. However, overuse of glyphosate will likely lead to future resistance. Small infestations of young plants can be easily controlled by being hand pulled or dug out.



## Local Advertisements

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## ~ CONSERVATION CALENDAR ~

August 3: Farmers Market, 10 am - 4 pm, Moro, OR

August 20-24: Sherman County Fair, Moro, OR

**September 2: Labor Day - Sherman SWCD Office Closed**

September 7: Farmers Market, 10 am - 4 pm, Moro, OR

**September 9: Watershed Council Meeting, 8:00 am, SWCD office**

**September 9: Sherman County SWCD Board Meeting, 8:30 am, SWCD office**

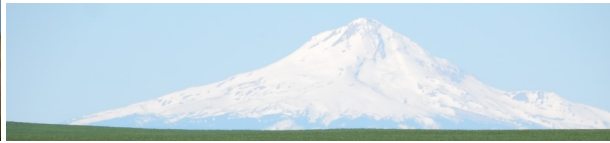
**October 8: Sherman County SWCD Board Meeting, Time TBD, SWCD office**

November 13-16: Tri-State Grower Convention, Spokane, WA



ODFW at Cottonwood Canyon

## Have a great 2019 wheat harvest!



## ~ BOARD & STAFF ~

### SWCD Staff

Amanda Whitman, District Manager

Jacob Powell, Watershed Council Coordinator

Emily Freilich, Watershed Program Assistant

### NRCS Staff

Del Rae Ferguson, District Conservationist

Emily Huth, Soil Conservationist

### Sherman County SWCD Board of Directors

Jesse Stutzman, Chair

Josh Hilderbrand, Vice Chair

Clint Moore, Treasurer

Thad Eakin, Secretary

Trevor Fields, Member



“Tickle the Earth with a hoe and she laughs with a harvest”  
- Douglas Jerrold



We're on the Web! Don't forget to check us out for current news! [www.shermancountyswcd.com](http://www.shermancountyswcd.com) and [www.shermancountywc.com](http://www.shermancountywc.com)

We're also on Facebook!

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