

Volume 20, Issue 2

April 2020



SHERMAN COUNTY SWCD & WATERSHED COUNCIL

The Rolling Thunder

Soil & Water Conservation District

Upcoming Meetings

The next SWCD District Board Meeting is Tuesday, May 12 at 8:00 am.
Location dependent on Governor's executive order.



Service Center Updates

USDA Service Centers in Oregon will continue to be open for business by phone appointment only and field work will continue with appropriate social distancing. While our program delivery staff will continue to come into the office, they will be working with our producers by phone, and using online tools whenever possible. All Service Center visitors wishing to conduct business with the Farm Service Agency, Natural Resources Conservation Service, or any other Service Center agency are required to call their Service Center to schedule a phone appointment. If the Service Center is closed, producers can receive assistance from the closest alternate Service Center by phone.

Phone numbers:

FSA: 541-565-3551 ext 2 NRCS: 541-565-3551 ext 3

SWCD: 541-565-3551 ext 5

NRCS DelRae cell: 541-707-7045 NRCS Emily cell: 541-707-7058

Landowner Lunch Workshop Survey

We will be hosting a landowner/producer lunch workshop in the fall and we want your input on the topic! Please fill out our poll at tinyurl.com/landownerlunch.

What topic are you most interested in learning about? *

- Stockwater and Grazing Management
- Natural Water Storage
- Farm Transition Planning
- Fire Restoration and Prevention
- Riparian Planting for Dry Areas
- Other: _____

Annual Meeting

Thank you for attending the SWCD and Watershed Council annual meeting! We ate great food from The Riverside and heard about grazing management from Troy Forrest, Program Manager for the Utah Grazing Improvement Program. Troy talked about solutions for grazing including pasture rotation, piping water from spring developments to uplands, flash grazing riparian areas, and training your cows to eat noxious weeds by putting a little molasses on them. Troy's presentation "Sherman SWCD Annual Meeting 2020" is available to view on YouTube. Call the SWCD to learn more about these ideas or apply for cost share to implement them.



New Watershed Program Assistant

We would like to welcome Taryn Asmus to the SWCD team! Taryn comes to us after working with the Lower Deschutes Cooperative Weed Management Area. She is from Texas and lived in Washington State for 5 years prior to moving to Oregon. She has a background in conservation and noxious weed management and a degree in Fine Arts. In her free time she enjoys gardening and spending time with her husband and two dogs, Banjo and Opal. She will be assisting with watershed projects and CREP.

CREP.

Farm Service Agency

FSA is open for PHONE and EMAIL appointments during this time to continue serving the local producers. Please call our office for assistance with spring acreage reports, ECP fencing reimbursement, farm changes, operator changes, newly acquired land, CREP re-enrollment and new CREP enrollment, Grasslands sign up, etc. Look for announcements on deadlines, etc in upcoming bulletins. For now please remember the following deadlines:



- Primary Nesting Season: **March 1 - July 15 (NO activity on CRP, unless approved in advance by COC)**
- 2018 ECP Wildfire Fencing Installation due: **April 15, 2020**
- CRP Grasslands sign up ends: **May 15, 2020**
- ARCPLC 2020 Enrollment ends: **June 30, 2020**
- Spring Acreage Reporting Deadline: **July 15, 2020**
- Last day to request a farm division or combination: **August 1, 2020**
- CREP sign up ends: **August 21, 2020**
- **Last day to update PLC yields: September 30, 2020**

CRP Continuous/CREP Enrollment Period

The Farm Service Agency is accepting offers for specific conservation practices under the [Conservation Reserve Program \(CRP\) Continuous Signup](#).

CRP is a voluntary program that contracts with agricultural producers so that environmentally sensitive agricultural land is devoted to conservation benefits. CRP participants establish long-term, resource-conserving vegetative species, such as approved grasses or trees (known as “covers”), to control soil erosion, improve the water quality and enhance wildlife habitat. In return, FSA provides participants with annual rental payments and cost-share assistance. Continuous signup enrollment contracts are 10 to 15 years in duration.

Under continuous CRP signup, environmentally sensitive land devoted to certain conservation practices can be enrolled in CRP at any time. Offers are automatically accepted provided the land and producer meet certain eligibility requirements and the enrollment levels do not exceed the statutory cap.

Unlike CRP enrollments under general CRP signups or CRP Grasslands, offers for continuous enrollment are not subject to competitive bidding during specific periods.

If you have a CREP contract expiring 9/30/2020 and wish to re-enroll it, please contact the FSA office and let us know. We will then have NRCS come out and do a field visit to determine needs and feasibility of continuing with the project.

For more information, including a list of acceptable practices, call the Sherman County FSA office at 541-565-3551 x 2.

CRP & CREP Participants - Remember Primary Nesting Season & Weed Control

Although most CRP participants carry out necessary insect and weed control measures, we wish to remind you, as a CRP/CREP participant, to be alert to insect and weed (especially noxious weed) growth on your CRP/CREP acres.

The FSA County Committee (COC) is required to review all CRP/CREP maintenance work done during the **PRIMARY NESTING SEASON (PNS) OF MARCH 1 TO JULY 15**. Weed control work during this period will be limited to spot treatment of the affected areas.

If you wish to perform any activity during this time, please contact the Sherman County FSA office to sign and submit the required request form.

All CRP/CREP participants need to comply with the Oregon Noxious Weed Law and ensure noxious weeds are controlled. They also need to make sure annual weeds, insects, and rodents do not inhibit the established practice during the CRP/CREP contract period. These requirements are part of the terms of your CRP/CREP contract.

Failure to abide by the terms of your CRP contract can result in the application of a payment reduction, termination of the affected CRP/CREP acres, or termination of the entire CRP/CREP contract(s). The FSA County Committee (COC) does not wish to apply any of these penalties for failure to carry out the terms of the CRP/CREP contracts, and those penalties can be avoided when proper insect and weed control measures are performed in a timely manner.

Farm Service Agency continued

CRP General Signup Results Announced

USDA announced that 3.4 million of the 3.8 million acres offers in general CRP signup 54 were accepted, or 89%. In Oregon, 139,830 of the 141,311 acres offered were accepted on 721 contracts, or 99%. County Offices have mailed letters to most producers notifying them of the status of their offer. For accepted offers producers have 30 days to contact the office and confirm if they still want to proceed with the offer. If you do not respond within 30 days, the offer will be rejected. The notification can be by telephone, letter, email or fax.

Once you confirm you want to proceed with the offer, FSA will provide NRCS with the information in your offer. NRCS will work with you to develop a conservation plan about the cover establishment, enhancement or maintenance for your offer. The plan must be signed by NRCS and all signatories to the CRP contract. NRCS must provide the completed conservation plan, with all required signatures, no later than September 11 so FSA can approve the contracts by September 30. All offers accepted in this signup will have an October 1, 2020 start date.

Natural Resource Conservation Service

Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) Application Deadline April 17th

Farmers and ranchers interested in financial and technical assistance for conservation measures on their working lands should think about applying for Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) funding for Federal fiscal year 2020.

One funding pool is for landowners within the Pine Hollow/Jackknife Watersheds. This includes property in Sherman and Wasco Counties. The primary practices to be cost shared will be juniper removal, livestock water developments, cross fence, range seeding, and prescribed grazing.

The second funding pool includes all expiring CRP acres within Sherman and Wasco Counties. The primary focus of this project will be to make vegetative and infrastructure improvements on recently expired CRP acres to maintain perennial grass stands and facilitate livestock grazing. The primary practices to be cost shared will be livestock water developments, fence, fuel/fire breaks, prescribed grazing, herbaceous weed control, and range planting.

Applications that address local conservation priorities are evaluated and ranked for funding. The number of applications funded will be based on ranking and available 2018 Farm Bill funding.

Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) Application Deadline May 29th

The next deadline for Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) applications to be considered for funding this year is May 29, 2020. Through CSP, USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) helps farmers, ranchers and forest landowners earn payments for expanding conservation activities while maintaining agricultural production on their land. CSP also encourages adoption of new technologies and management techniques.

Interested parties for EQIP and CSP should contact DelRae Ferguson or Emily Huth at the Moro USDA Service Center, 541-565-3551 extension 102 (DelRae) or extension 108 (Emily).



Sherman County Area Watershed Council

Upcoming Meetings

The next Watershed Council Meeting will be held Tuesday May 12 at 7:30 am.

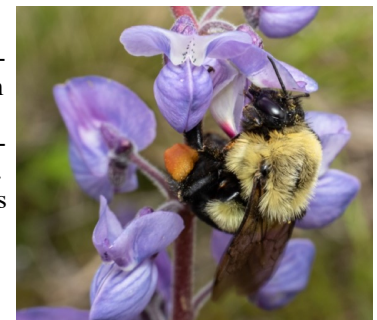
\$25,000 Awarded for Lower Grass Valley Canyon Weed Control

The Oregon State Weed Board (OSWB) awarded \$25,000 to the Sherman County SWCD for the Lower Grass Valley Weed Control project. The LGVC Project will treat noxious weeds on rangeland, scablands, and riparian areas with biocontrol agents and herbicide. It is expected to begin April 2020 and be completed by September 2020.

This is a continuation of the weed control progress made last year in LGVC. We will have biocontrol agents available again this year. Call Emily at 541-565-3216 ext 101 if you want biocontrols for your property.

\$500 Awarded for Bill Todd Pollinator Garden

The Scotts Miracle-Gro Foundation and KidsGardening awarded \$500 for the Watershed Council to establish a pollinator garden at the Bill Todd Nursery. We will be planting the garden soon and encourage you to visit! The pollinator garden will display a variety of native pollinator plants that you can plant in your garden, field borders, or seed in your CRP or rangelands. Pollinator gardens are important to provide food and habitat for native insects, butterflies, and birds. As native habitat has been lost to development, native insect populations have collapsed. Insects form the base of complex food webs and collapse of insect populations has huge negative impacts on other animals and the security of our pollination dependent food crops. The plants for the Bill Todd Pollinator Garden will come from Humble Roots Nursery in Mosier. The Bill Todd Nursery is located off Highway 97, next to the school batting cage.



Experiment Station Weather

Air Temperature

January

The highest temperature was 56° on the 5th. The average high temperature was 43.6°. The lowest temperature was 15° on the 15th. The average low temperature was 30.3°.

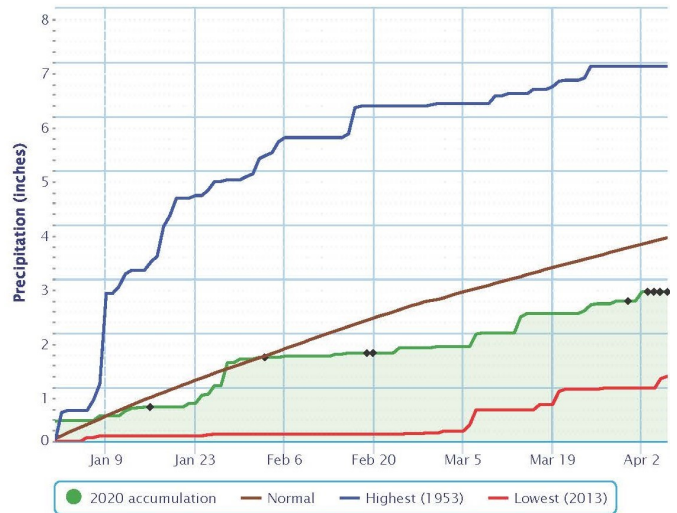
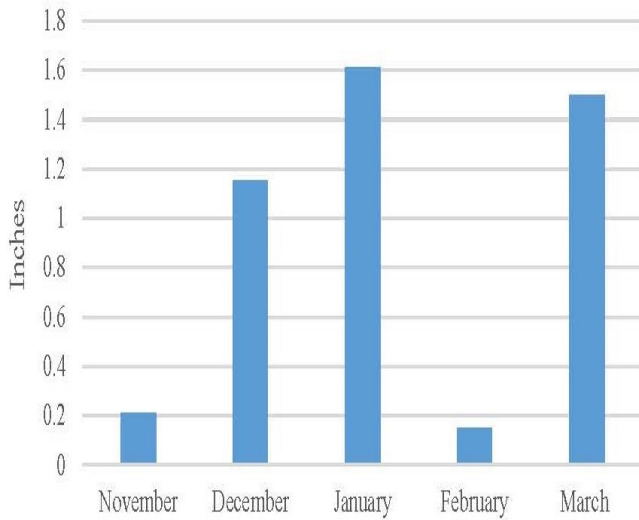
February

The highest temperature was 61° on the 1st. The average high temperature was 48.5°. The lowest temperature was 18° on the 19th. The average low temperature was 28.3°.

March

The highest temperature was 61° on the 21st. The average high temperature was 48.2°. The lowest temperature was 21° on the 13th. The average low temperature was 29.5°.

Rainfall

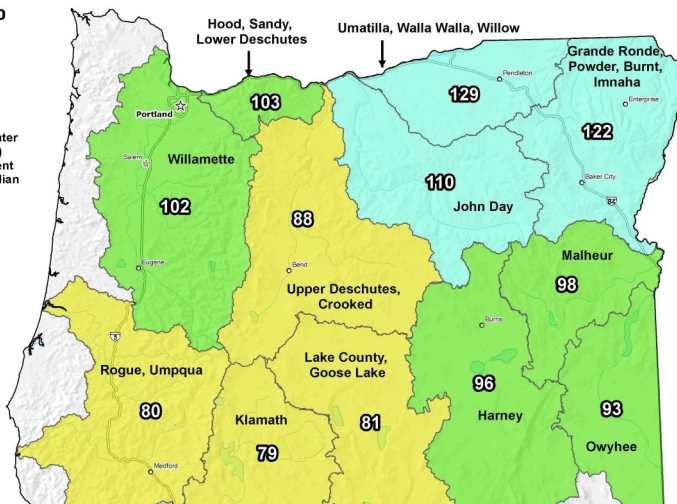
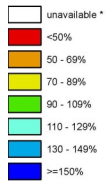


Snow Pack

Oregon SNOTEL Current Snow Water Equivalent (SWE) % of Normal

Apr 13, 2020

Current Snow Water Equivalent (SWE) Basin-wide Percent of 1981-2010 Median



Soil Temperature

Month	4" Max	4" Min	12"
January	39.5	38.4	37.3
February	43.0	40.3	39.1
March	49.1	44.2	42.4

Plant Spotlight

Elderberry is a native shrub or small tree that grows around streams in Sherman County. It is easy to establish and adaptable to many site conditions. It has incredible ecological benefits and is a great shrub to add diversity to your streams! Birds, squirrels, and large mammals love the berries and foliage. Because it is shorter than many other trees it adds multiple layers to your habitat that allows many different kinds of animals to make homes in the shrub. The canopies help shade streams and keep water temperatures cool enough for trout and salmon. Meanwhile, elderberry roots are particularly good at helping hold stream banks together and improve the quality of water entering the stream.



Elderberries are also edible for people when cooked properly. In the middle ages elderberry was considered a "Holy Tree." It was said to improve health and help you live longer. Elderberries can be made into jams, pies, wines, etc. Below is a recipe for elderberry flower fritters to start your spring off right.

Elderflower Fritters

Pick your elderflowers when the buds are freshly open, before the petals brown around the edges. That is when their flavor is at its best. Rinse away any tiny insects by dunking the whole flower heads into a bowl of cold water.

Sift 100g (0.8 cup) of plain flour into a bowl then add 2 tablespoons of oil and 175ml (3/4 cup) of sparkling mineral water. Beat to a thick paste, then stir in a tablespoon of sugar. Set aside for 30 minutes. Just before frying the elderflowers, beat an egg white and fold it into the batter. Rinse 12-16 elderflower heads, shake them dry and snip the flower heads into small stems. Get a pan of oil hot then dip the elderflowers into the batter and lower them into the oil. Hold them under the oil by pushing down on the stem. Fry until the batter is pale gold and crisp then lift out and dip straight into a dish of caster sugar and drizzle with honey. Eat the fritters while they are hot and crisp.

Sources: *USDA Blue Elderberry Plant Guide*; Recipe: *Nigel Slater, The Guardian*

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~ CONSERVATION CALENDAR ~

May 12: Watershed Council Meeting, 7:30 am
May 12: SWCD Board Meeting, 8:00 am
May 15: OSU Morrow County Crop Tour
May 25: Memorial Day, Office Closed
May 29: CSP Application Deadline
June 1: OSU Crop Hop, Sherman County
June 2: OSU Crop Hop, Wasco County
June 9: SWCD Board Meeting, 8:00 am, SWCD office
July 3: July Fourth Holiday, Office closed



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ShermanCounty Area WatershedCouncil: [Facebook.com/shermanwc](https://www.facebook.com/shermanwc)

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Emily Freilich, Watershed Council Coordinator
Taryn Asmus, Watershed Program Assistant

NRCS Staff

Del Rae Ferguson, District Conservationist
Emily Huth, Soil Conservationist

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Stay safe and thank you for your great conservation work!



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We're also on Facebook!

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