



Rolling Thunder Review

Volume V, Issue 3

Sherman County SWCD

Fall 2005

CALENDAR OF EVENTS



OCTOBER

- 24 - Local Work Group Meeting, 6:00 pm, Moro Field Office
- 30 - Day Light Savings Time Ends
- 31 - Halloween



NOVEMBER

- 8 - SWCD Board Meeting, 8:30 am, Moro Field Office
- 11 - Veteran's Day, Office Closed
- 13-16 - OACD Convention, Newport, OR
- 15 - America Recycles Day
- 17 - "Keys to a Profitable Farm Business" Seminar, 6-9 pm, Columbia Gorge Community College
- 24 - 25 - Thanksgiving Holiday, Office Closed

DECEMBER

- 26 - Christmas Day Observed, Office Closed

Be sure to refer to our website (www.sherman.oacd.org) for up to date meeting notices and activities.



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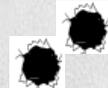
WANTED

Grass Valley Canyon Landowner Maps!

Jeff Bird, the districts Watershed Assessment Technician is hard at work putting on the finishing touches on the initial draft of the Grass Valley Canyon Watershed Assessment. There has never been a comprehensive assessment for the Grass Valley Canyon Watershed. This assessment will help quantify past conservation accomplishments and prioritize the Council's future conservation efforts.

Jeff has sent out over 100 producer maps to respective landowners and producers in the watershed as a first step in inventorying conservation practices. After receiving an initial solid response in detailed maps being returned, it has steadily declined since with only 27% of the maps being returned thus far. Jeff will be sending out a letter to those landowners/producers who have outstanding maps.

We cannot stress enough the importance of these maps and their roll in getting a thorough and detailed inventory of what conservation work has been done in the watershed. This is your opportunity to boast about your conservation work - so get your maps in before we send out a search party!



Sherman SWCD Board Highlights

September 13, 2005

- Watershed Updates

Pine Hollow/Jackknife: OWEB grant number 206-123 was fully funded. Participating landowners have been notified that they may start their projects. OWEB is not accepting Watershed Assessment Grant applications this year because there is not enough funding.

Grass Valley Canyon: OWEB grant number 203-178 is near completion. Projects have been laid out and are to be complete in November.

Assessment Report - Jeff handed out the draft Watershed Description and Map. He plans to finish the first draft soon. While this is being reviewed, he will continue to work on the inventory of conservation practices. Jeff sent out over 100 producer maps, but has only received 27% of the completed maps back from the landowners. It is extremely important that these maps be completed! Jeff would like to have all of the maps back by November 1st.

North Sherman: OWEB grant number 203-067, "Direct Seed Initiative" must be completed by 12/30/06. Landowners have been contacted, initial data has been gathered, infiltration testing and residue checking are completed for this year. Data will be available by the next meeting. Eligible landowner payment should be made in November.

OWEB Grant Application Updates: The Solar/Wind Hybrid Off-Stream Stock Water Development grant application is near completion.

Direct Seed Grant application includes ten operators signing up a total of 4,388 acres.

- Small Grants

Lower John Day: 2-year monitoring reports were completed for two grants. One grant application was presented and approved in the Lower John Day Sub Basin.

Lower Deschutes: Two grant applications were presented and approved in the Lower Deschutes Sub Basin.

- Lower John Day Update

Jason gave the board a report on the status of the Sub Basin Plan. The Pine Hollow/Jackknife watershed was included as a priority by the planning group. Funds will have to be applied for in the next 2-3 months.

- Lower Deschutes Update

Nothing new has been received regarding the Sub Basin Plan.

- ESA Update

Jason is still waiting to hear about the next meeting.

- OACD Convention Nov. 13-16

Gary, Jason, Joli and Jessa will be attending. Board members directed Gary to act as their voting delegate. They approved both of the proposed resolutions.

- CREP Update

Jessa reported that she has 25 contracts completed with 28 applications still waiting. She has completed 25 status reviews and has 36 to be completed.

- New Business

Conservation Easement Workshops - The District will not be participating in these.

Cost List/Hold Down Rates - The question of contractors being eligible for higher reimbursement than landowner/operators was discussed. Spring development costs were also discussed. Jason will work on some draft revisions. He will consult other districts and use the NRCS EQIP cost list as references. Discussion will continue at the November meeting.

- NRCS Report

Krista reported that she and Mary Beth had attended a Basin Work Group meeting. CSP priority areas were discussed. Lower John Day and Lower Deschutes will be the number 1 and 2 recommendations for funding coming from the Deschutes Basin. The Local Working Group meeting was rescheduled for Monday October 24th, 6 PM in the Moro Field Office.

- Other Business

The Districts Residue measuring service was discussed. The board agreed to increase the cost to \$20 per hour for measurements done this fall.

The Bill Todd memorial Tree Plot needs to be weeded and some pruning/thinning done. The board suggested asking senior students or F.F.A. members to assist with the project for community service hours.

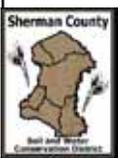
OWEB is offering scholarships for two short courses. One is titled "Stream Hydrology & Hydraulics for habitat" and the second is "Stream Channel Processes, Bed and Bank Erosion, and Erosion Control". Jessa has applied for the scholarships. The board agreed to pay her other expenses if she receives the scholarships.

- ODA

Ellen Hammond answered questions concerning Ag Water Quality Management Plans. She also presented a revised draft of the Compliance Evaluation and Resolution Flow Chart.

- Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on November 8, 2005 at 8:30 am



Selected Watersheds
Agriculture Deputy Secretary Chuck Conner announced 110 watersheds across the nation whose private land managers may be eligible for CSP. At this time, based on the projected availability of funds the McKenzie, Upper Grande Ronde and Upper Klamath Lake watersheds in Oregon have been selected to participate in the 2006 Conservation Security Program (see map).

Remaining Watersheds
Over the next several years, we anticipate all private land managers in Oregon will have the opportunity to apply for CSP as their watershed is selected for a signup. The Deschutes and Lower John Day watersheds were not selected on this round of announcements. This provides landowners with an opportunity to better prepare for CSP in their watershed.

The Conservation Security Program is the first program to reward farmers who have adopted good conservation practices, and it provides substantial incentives to expand or enhance current conservation efforts. Consequently, agricultural producers with on-going, documented stewardship activities will be in a better position to reap the benefits of the program when it's offered.

Producers can improve their chances of having a successful CSP application if they focus on activities that protect soil and water quality. In addition, improving wildlife habitat and air quality, conserving energy, and addressing related natural resource concerns, are also important program goals. Many of these concerns can be addressed in a conservation plan.

Following are 10 tips that, while not guaranteeing a successful CSP application, can put producers in a much better position to reap the rewards of their stewardship activities.

Keep good records. To qualify for the CSP you must go into your local NRCS office for an interview and show records of your current conservation practices - particularly soil tests.

Maintain and improve soil quality. To qualify for the CSP you need a positive Soil Conditioning Index (SCI) score. This usually means a high residue crop, for short rotations and some form of conservation tillage, and hay or perennial crop for longer rotations.

Talk with farmers who have participated in the CSP. They can give you helpful advice based on their experiences.

Attend a local NRCS CSP information meeting or visit with NRCS. Even if you are unsure that you have land that qualifies for the CSP, consider speaking with your local NRCS professionals, just to be certain. If you're interested in the CSP for the future, visit with NRCS to see if there are practices you should begin now and to find out if there are programs to help.

Get a copy of the CSP Self-Assessment Worksheets. If you're in a priority watershed this year, complete the worksheets (available at your local NRCS office or on the Web at <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/csp/>) and start gathering the records you'll need to document conservation work on your farm. If not, review the worksheets and take note of the soil and water quality requirements.

Get your foot in the door. Currently, the CSP is available only in selected priority watersheds each year. If there is a signup in your watershed, you can go one step at a time. You can qualify for the CSP even if you have just one field, pasture, or orchard that meets the designated requirements.

While payments might be low for a CSP contract involving just a few acres, once you're enrolled you may be able to upgrade your enrollment by adding more acres and conservation enhancements. Land eligible for the CSP must meet basic NRCS standards for soil and water quality, so consider how much of your land might qualify.

Enhancement payments may be significant. Enhancement payments, offered for exceptional conservation efforts and additional conservation practices, represent the best financial rewards. Although you may need to start small, you can set goals that will help you qualify for enhancement payments in the future. It is also important to remember that the size of annual CSP payments is linked to the number of acres enrolled in the program.



Think comprehensively. The CSP rewards producers who are broadly addressing many different resource concerns.

Be prepared. When the CSP comes to your watershed there will be a limited time to enroll. Learn about the program in advance and keep your records updated so you will be ready to enroll when the time comes.

Get started now. If the CSP is offered in your watershed this year, complete the CSP Self-Assessment Worksheets, gather documentation for tillage, crop rotations, soil testing, and nutrient and pesticide applications, and attend a local NRCS informational meeting.

The importance of record keeping cannot be overstressed. Farmers who received CSP payments in 2004 had good records of pasture, range, nutrient, and pest management practices. If you're interested in the CSP for the future, review the Self-Assessment Worksheet and the soil and water quality standards for your operation and start or continue documenting your conservation efforts.

Producers interested in CSP are responsible for gathering documents and records to provide proof of existing conservation efforts. Those who plan in advance will be in a much better position to benefit later.

Get more information about CSP. For more information on CSP and other conservation programs, contact your local NRCS office or visit www.nrcs.usda.gov.



Investing in Rural America

Support for Youth Leadership

Do Something

Do Something is a national nonprofit organization that inspires young people to believe that change is possible, and trains, funds, and mobilizes them to be leaders who measurably strengthen their communities. The Do Something BRICK Awards program supports the efforts of dynamic leaders age 25 and under who have implemented innovative solutions to problems in their local communities in the areas of community building, health, and the environment. BRICK winners receive higher education scholarships and grants for continued community work. Do Something Grants provide \$500 grants to potential community leaders age 18 and under who identify problems in their communities, and then create game plans to do something to change their world. The deadline for the BRICK Awards is November 1, annually. For application information visit their website at www.dosomething.org

Rural Programs Supported...

CHS Foundation

The CHS Foundation is committed to investing in the future of rural America, agriculture and cooperative business through education and leadership development. The Foundation supports national efforts, as well as those within the CHS trade territory. The Foundation's funding focuses on the following six program areas: Cooperative Education, Rural Youth and Leadership Development, Farm and Agricultural Safety, Returning Value to Rural Communities, Emergency Assistance and Disaster Relief, and Scholarship Programs. All grant requests are accepted on an ongoing basis, with the exception of the Cooperative Education Grants, which are due in the fall of each year. For more information on the Foundation's program areas, visit the following website:

<http://www.chsfoundation.org/programs/index.htm>

Small Grant Funds Now Available!

The Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB) has provided funding for two locally administered small grant programs on land that drains into the Lower John Day and Lower Deschutes Rivers. These grants support projects designed to improve water quality, water quantity, and fish and wildlife habitat. Funding awards will be based on local priority resource concerns, habitat values, and watershed functions. The goal is to encourage landowner participation in watershed improvements by implementing technically sound and economically feasible practices that benefit watershed health across all land uses.

A "small grant" is classified as a grant awarded for an eligible watershed restoration project for up to 75% of the project cost, with OWEB covering costs up to but not exceeding \$10,000. Sherman County has received nearly \$66,000 between the two regions for conservation work these past two years.

The small grant teams are meeting once a month to review grant applications. Applications are due into the Sherman County SWCD office at the end of each month. If awarded, money should be available within 45 days.

We are now accepting applications for the 2005-2007 funding period. Projects eligible for funding are agricultural and/or range projects which address sheet, rill and gully erosion. Please keep in mind that if OWEB funds requested do not exceed \$5,000 the required match is 25%. If OWEB funds requested do exceed \$5,001 the required match is 50%.

Our staff will assist you in completing the application form. Please stop by the office or call at Joli at (541) 565-3216 Ext. 109 for more information.

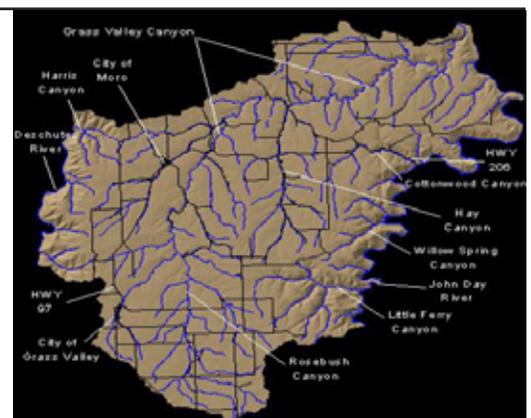
GRASS VALLEY WATERSHED ASSESSMENT UPDATE

By Jeff Bird

The first draft of the assessment is nearing completion. I hope to be finishing it up near the end of October. Once the first draft is completed it will be sent out for evaluation and it will also be available for public review. At this time people will be welcome to stop by the SWCD office to examine the assessment and offer input on the draft.

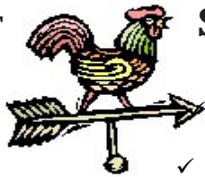
While the assessment is undergoing the review process, I will be continuing with the inventory of conservation practices in the Grass Valley watershed. This project is based on the tract maps that were mailed out in the spring to producers within the watershed. At this stage of the project I will be entering the data and information

from the maps that have been returned to me into the computer system. For those who have not yet returned maps, I would appreciate it if these maps could be returned by November 1st. I would like to say thank you to all those who have already taken the time to complete their maps and get them back to me.



SHERMAN COUNTY EXPERIMENT AUGUST WEATHER STATS

- ✓ Total precipitation for August was a trace which is .29" below normal.
- ✓ 2005 Crop year total is 7.88" which is 3.42" below normal.
- ✓ The highest air temperature was 97 degrees on the 1st.
- ✓ The lowest air temperature was 41 degrees on the 24th.
- ✓ Long time averages indicate we can expect air temperatures of 97 and 41 degrees.
- ✓ The average air temperature was 69.6 degrees which is 2.1 degrees above normal.
- ✓ 4" soil temperature ranged from 70 to 94 degrees.
- ✓ The average wind speed was 4.0 mph which is .5 below normal.



STATION WEATHER STATISTICS SEPTEMBER WEATHER STATS

- ✓ Total precipitation for September was .05" which is 0.44" below normal.
- ✓ The highest air temperature was 87 degrees on the 2nd and the 9th.
- ✓ The lowest temperature was 35 degrees on the 21st.
- ✓ Long time air temperature averages indicate we can expect 91 and 33 degrees.
- ✓ The monthly average temperature was 59 degrees which is 1.4 degrees below normal.
- ✓ 4" soil temperature ranged from 83 to 61 degrees.
- ✓ The average windspeed was 3.4 m.p.h. which is 0.4 below normal.

PROFIT SEMINAR HELPS FARMERS AND RANCHERS REDUCE RISK

If a profitable ranching business is a goal of yours, then join other farmers and ranchers and presenter Dave Pratt for a dynamic three hour presentation entitled "Generating Wealth: Keys to a Profitable Farm Business" on November 17th from 6-9 pm in The Dalles, Oregon.

"This seminar is the first of a series we plan to offer to farm and ranch managers in conjunction with our Farm and Ranch Survival Kit program," says Brian Tuck, OSU Extension in Wasco County. Sponsored in part by the Western Center for Risk Management and in partnership with WSU, this seminar will give participants a concentrated look at creative ways to solve everyday challenges that arise from farming and ranching in today's changing environment.

Presenter Dave Pratt owns and operates the "Ranching for Profit School and Executive Link Program," a school that has changed many farming and ranching operations from losing money to profitability in a very short time. In the three hour segment, Mr. Pratt will cover topics including how to analyze your financial performance for making profitable financial decisions, how to drought proof your business, how to increase the livestock carrying capacity of your ranch without added expenses and how to identify family and business goals. Ideas presented in this workshop will be applicable for all agriculture-based businesses.

"Generating Wealth: Keys to a Profitable Ranch Business" will be held on Thursday, November 17th from 6-9 pm at Columbia Gorge Community College, Building 2, Room 2.384. Participants costs are \$25 per person or \$35 per management team. To insure your seat, please pre-register by Tuesday, November 17th. To register contact:

OSU Extension Service
400 East Scenic Drive #2.278
The Dalles, Oregon 97058
Phone: (541)296-5494
e-mail: brian.tuck@oregonstate.edu

DVD PROJECT HELPS LAND MANAGERS PLAN FOR THE FUTURE

By Steve Dohrill

CORVALLIS - Rural land managers reflect on their past and plan for the future in a new DVD produced by the Oregon State University Extension Service.

"Landmarks in Conservation" is designed to help rural landowners, farmers, ranchers and foresters devise sustainable natural-resource management plans for their operations. The interactive multimedia project utilizes both DVD and web technologies.

"This project draws on the experiences of nearly 30 land managers from across our state," said Bill Braunworth, agriculture program leader for the OSU Extension Service. "It demonstrates the importance of resource management planning, whether you operate a five-acre farm near Portland or a 100,000-acre ranch in southeast Oregon."

The DVD and its companion website are a cooperative effort funded by the OSU Extension Service, the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service and a private gift to the OSU Foundation. The DVD holds nearly two hours of video clips, while the website serves as a gateway to more than 120 print, video and online resources.

"We are excited about the scope and potential impacts of this project," said Sara Megenheimer, public affairs specialist with the Natural Resources Conservation Service. "It presents technical, research-based information in an understandable, user-friendly fashion."

"The insights and stories of these Oregon land managers are really what bring this project to life," Braunworth said. "They help viewers understand that connection between healthy natural resources and a profitable, sustainable operation."

"Landmarks in Conservation" (DVD-1) is available at the District Office for check-out. Please contact Joli Munkers if you are interested.



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