



Rolling Thunder Review

VOLUME V, ISSUE 2

SHERMAN COUNTY SWCD

SUMMER 2005

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

July

4 - Independence Day - District Office will be closed



August

18 - 21 - Wasco Co. Fair, Tygh Valley
30- Sept. 3 - Sherman Co. Fair, Moro

September

1 - Large Grant Project Deadline
5 - Labor Day - Office will be closed
13 - SWCD Board Meeting, 8:30 am, Moro Field Office



**HAVE
A SAFE AND
PRODUCTIVE
HARVEST!!!**

Interested in Direct Seeding? Here's your chance!

Direct seeding has been the topic of many discussions around Sherman County for years. "Is it feasible in this dry, arid landscape?", "What can we do about the weeds?", "Can you even make money at it?". All legitimate questions, and for those operators who would like the opportunity to answer some of these questions, Sherman SWCD is writing a grant for cost-share funding related to direct seed operations from the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board.

The proposed grant is open to the entire county. Sign up for the grant will end on September 1st. Listed below are the criteria necessary to be eligible for the grant and the guidelines that must be followed during the 4-year grant cycle.

Timeline for the grant:

- 4 year grant cycle
- Operators who participate can use whatever rotation they want as long as they don't till for four years

Criteria:

Land Requirements:

- Ground to be enrolled (in Sherman County) has **NOT** been managed to meet *NRCS Interim Direct Seed Standards* for the previous three (3) years.
- Ground to be enrolled is **NOT** currently involved in EQIP Direct Seed / No-Till programs involving landowner or operator.
- Any one operator may not receive more than **500 acres** worth of assistance

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SHERMAN SWCD BOARD HIGHLIGHTS

June 14, 2005

- **Watershed Updates**

Buck Hollow: There was no activity to report.

Pine Hollow/Jackknife: Joli is working on the final report for OWEB grant 203-068 that is due August 15th. She is also working on a watershed assessment grant that is due in October. Jason reported that several spring development projects are still being held up waiting for cultural resource responses. There is still enough moisture to complete one of the water & sediment control basin in the watershed.

Grass Valley Canyon: The Solar/Wind Hybrid Off-Stream Stock Water Development grant will be completed by October 15th. Jeff reported that the Landowner project mapping project had taken longer than anticipated but will be mailed out today. He will begin writing the portions of the assessment that will need review and approval by partnering agencies.

North Sherman: Joli was able to get an extension on the OWEB Direct Seed Initiative grant (203-067) until December 30, 2006. Landowners have been contacted and some data has been turned in. Infiltration and residue testing will be done in September. The first landowner payments should go out in November.

- **Small Grant Update**

Funds will be received for the Lower Deschutes and the Lower John Day watersheds for the 2005-2007 biennium.

- **Direct seed grant**

Funding will be pursued for another direct seed incentive grant. It was agreed that if this is done it would be open to all watersheds in the county. In order to allow the producer flexibility in choosing to chemical fallow the board would prefer to get funding for 3 or 4 years. OWEB funding is a 2 year cycle. Joli will check in to the feasibility of applying in a "phase a & b" format in order to provide funding for 4 years. The vote was called for with response as follows: Gary, Tracy and Bill for, Kyle and Brad against. Motion carried.

- **New Business**

2005 Annual Meeting – If the audit is ready by October 1, the board would like to have the annual meeting in October or November.

- **NRCS Report**

Mary Beth reported that 32 CSP applications were received. The data is still being entered. She and Emily may go to The Dalles Field Office to assist with CSP data entry there. She reported that 2 GRP contracts in the county will be eligible for funding. The board discussed the priority watersheds for CSP in the coming years. They will discuss the issues faced by the John Day and Deschutes watersheds with the County Judge.

- **Agency Report**

FSA – Elections for County Committee are coming up soon. Ken Melzer can not run for another term. Kevin gave an update on programs and deadlines. Information will be coming out in the next newsletter.

Extension – Sandy gave a brief overview of the Jill Clapperton Soils workshop. He and Tom McCoy visited with a writer for the Oregon Trout magazine. They talked with him about the efforts of producers to protect water quality and referred him to the school district to learn about their educational projects. The board asked Sandy to forward a copy of the information on to them when it is published. The County will be participating in efforts to control wildlife such as feral pigs and cougars. Sandy suggested that we contact the county court about this.

- **Next Meeting**

No Board Meetings will be held for July or August.

The next meeting will be held on Sept. 13, 2005 at 8:30 AM.



Conservation Security Program (CSP) Watershed Q&A

With the CSP sign-ups complete, you still may have many unanswered questions. Below is a list of frequently asked questions and their corresponding answers.

Q. Why is NRCS implementing CSP on a watershed basis verses a nationwide basis?

A. A staged, watershed-based implementation of CSP makes sense - economically, practically and administratively. Here's why: Focusing on high priority watersheds will reduce the administrative burden on applicants, and will reduce the costs of processing a large number of applications that cannot be funded.

NRCS expects that a significant number of producers will seek participation in CSP and ask for assistance to determine their potential eligibility for the program. By law, NRCS cannot incur technical assistance costs in excess of 15 percent of the funds expended in that fiscal year for CSP.

Q. Will producers in every watershed have an opportunity to participate?

A. Yes. Because everyone lives in a watershed, and because each year producers in approximately one-eighth of the nation's 2119 watersheds will be eligible for the signup, everyone will have the opportunity to participate over the eight-year period.

Q. Why not use county or state lines as the delineation for the signup area?

A. Watersheds are nature's boundaries. They are also a common sense way to group together producers working on similar environmental issues. They offer a chance to measure our environmental success in a way that state or county lines couldn't be expected to do. Using a watershed approach will also help ensure that CSP's finite resources are focused first on the most achievable environmental performance areas. And since everyone lives in a watershed, as we rotate through the nation's watersheds every farmer and rancher will get a chance to participate within the next eight years.

Q. What if my watershed is not selected this year?

A. Signups for participation in the program will be rotated between watersheds on an annual basis. Each year (after the initial signup) producers in approximately one-eighth of the nation's watersheds will be eligible for the signup. Producers who are not in a selected watershed can use that time to assess the resources on their farms and ranches and begin preparing for participation in the program when their watershed is rotated into the signup. To help them do so, producers can select from a portfolio of USDA, state and local conservation programs to make the necessary natural resource improvements on their operations.

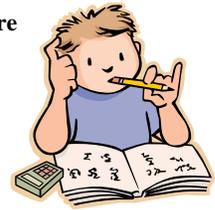
Q. Will I get the help I need to participate?

A. Yes. The staged approach using priority watersheds will allow existing agency staff and private technical service providers to more thoroughly assist landowners who apply during the CSP sign-up, as well as those landowners who will be seeking technical assistance to ready their farms and ranches for subsequent signups.



Q. Will more money be available in future years?

A. Over the next seven years the administration is committing \$13.4 billion in funding for the Conservation Security Program. Ultimately, Congress will determine the funding available for each future fiscal year. The watershed approach allows NRCS all the flexibility needed to expand the program as Congress makes more funds available. The eligibility gates can easily be swung open to allow additional watersheds and farmers and ranchers - or even all watersheds and farmers and ranchers - to be added to the CSP sign up. Within the watershed context, eligibility criteria can also be relaxed. However, watersheds also provide the necessary narrowing of the gate in years where funds do not exist to either adequately fund contracts or provide the conservation services necessary to run a quality CSP program.



Q. How are watersheds selected?

A. There were several criteria for selecting the watersheds to participate. These include: high priority resource needs to be addressed, a history of good land stewardship, the availability of technical tools, including digitized soil surveys, and staff capacity. In Oregon, priority recommendations are first developed with the involvement of the Basin Work Group to ensure broad input. Those recommendations are forwarded to the state office, who reviews the recommendations, and develops a statewide recommendation that also takes into consideration the need to have enough watersheds to cover 1/8 of the state's agricultural producers. Once this recommendation is sent to National Headquarters, they review all state recommendations and forward a list to the Secretary of Agriculture, who reviews the list and makes the final announcement.

Meet Emily Fife

Sherman County's Newest Soil Conservationist

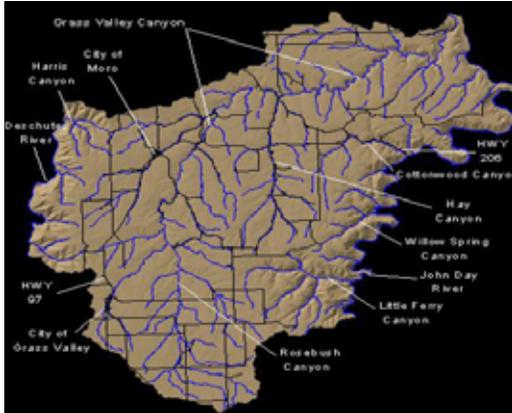
Emily Fife grew up in Concord, Ohio, which is a suburb of Cleveland. For the last three years she has been living in Clarksville, Tennessee with her husband who is a soldier and parachute rigger with the United States Army stationed at Fort Campbell, Kentucky. She went to school for two years at Bowling Green State University in Ohio. After getting married she transferred to Austin Peay State University where after another year and a half she graduated with a degree in Agricultural Science. She applied for a position with USDA-NRCS as a soil conservationist. After life-long dreams of moving west, she leaped at the chance to move to Oregon when offered a job here in Moro. She made the three day drive with her dogs for company. Now she is working for USDA-NRCS as a soil conservationist and hopes to have a long and prosperous career. Her husband and she love Oregon and are happy they took the chance of a life-time to live here.



ROLLING THUNDER REVIEW

GRASS VALLEY WATERSHED ASSESSMENT UPDATE

by Jeff Bird



The first step in inventorying conservation practices within the Grass Valley watershed is complete. The producer maps have been mailed out to respective landowners and producers. In a little over a week I have already received a solid response in terms of detailed maps being returned to me. I would like to thank those of you who are taking the time to aid us in completing the inventory.

With the first phase of the inventory under way, I will be starting the actual writing process for several sections of the assessment. I will begin with the segments on water quality, fish, and fish habitat. Upon completion these sections will be sent to the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality and the Oregon Fish

and Wildlife Department for review.

The goal remains to have the initial draft of the assessment completed in September, at which time it will be sent out to reviewers for evaluation. The assessment will also be available to the public for anyone who would like to examine it. It would be very useful to have members of the community offer their feedback and comments on the early draft so that I can address any concerns for the final draft. The first draft will be available for evaluation for several months before the editing process and work on the final draft will begin. The finished assessment is scheduled to be completed in June 2006.

Small Grant Funds for 2005 - 2007 Biennium

Now Available

Small Grant funds for the Lower Deschutes and Lower John Day Watersheds are now available. Grants are awarded on a first-come-first-served basis. The Small Grant Program is an easy-to-engage-in, competitive grant program that awards funds of up to \$10,000 for on-the-ground restoration projects. Projects eligible for funding are agricultural and/or range projects which address sheet, rill and gully erosion. Funding for this program is provided by the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board. Landowners who are interested can contact Joli Munkers at the Moro SWCD office.

Grant Money Available for Implementing Prescribed Fire Plans

By: Mike Benefield

I would like to take this opportunity to solicit interest from farmers who manage CRP lands adjacent to the Deschutes River Canyon and its tributaries. As the Division Fire Chief for the BLM, I would like to offer BLM assistance in developing and implementing Prescribed Fire Plans on these lands so as to reduce the severity of summer wildfires in the western sections of Sherman County. My intent is to coordinate fire mitigation measures between private land owners and the BLM, where the potential exists for wildfires to escape BLM lands and threaten private lands above the canyons. Federal grant money may be available to private land owners to implement this endeavor. If any private landowners in these strategic areas are interested in participating, they should contact me at the numbers below.

Mike Benefield
Rivers Division Chief (DV32)
Central Oregon Fire Mgt. Service
(541) 416-6748 (Office)
(541) 447-9049 (Pager)
(541) 408-3198 (Cell)



Sherman County Experiment

April Weather Stats

- ✓ Total precipitation for April was .75" which is .04 below normal.
- ✓ Total precipitation for the crop year is 5.19" which is 4.09" below normal.
- ✓ The highest air temperature was 74 degrees on the 27th.
- ✓ The lowest air temperature was 18 degrees on the 2nd.
- ✓ Long time averages indicate we can expect air temperatures of 76 and 26 degrees.
- ✓ The average air temperature was 47.5 degrees.
- ✓ 4" soil temperature ranged from 71 to 41 degrees.
- ✓ The average wind speed of 3.4 is .07 below normal.



Station Weather Statistics

May Weather Stats

- ✓ Total precipitation for May is 2.44" which is 1.65" above normal.
- ✓ Total precipitation for the crop year is 7.63" which is 2.44" below normal.
- ✓ The highest air temperature was 91 degrees on the 29th.
- ✓ The lowest air temperature was 35 degrees on the 21st and 23rd.
- ✓ Long time averages indicate we can expect air temperatures of 87 and 30 degrees.
- ✓ The average air temperature was 56.5 degrees.
- ✓ 4" soil temperature ranged from 88 to 59 degrees.
- ✓ The average wind speed of 3.8 is 1.3 below normal.

Ford Institute Proposes a Year-Round Love-A-Fair

A Sherman County leadership class, supported by the Ford Institute Leadership Program, wrapped up 60 hours of classroom work on May 21 and announces the selection of a community revitalization class project at the fairgrounds near Moro.

Graduates of this rigorous leadership course are: Russ Bourgeois, Bryan Cranston, Elizabeth Cranston, Rick Danielson, Michelle Delpit, Jill Harrison, Gary Irzyk, Jessa Irzyk, Fred Justesen, Tate Justesen, Sherry Kaseberg, Mary Ann King, Nancy Kivett, Donna Lohrey, Bo Macnab, Mary Macnab, Carol Mauser, Jenine McDermid, Ron McDermid, Jennifer Miller, Richard Misener, Frank Rivera, Grant Simpson, Melva Thomas and Kathy Thompson.

An integral part of this leadership development course is a real community project that the class identifies, plans, develops and implements, giving participants the opportunity to practice skills learned in the class. The Institute provides up to a \$10,000 matching grant for the project with the class using its fund-raising skills to develop the match. See www.tfff.org for more information.

Following an intense selection process involving several important project proposals, the class chose to create a safe, pleasant gathering place at the Sherman County Fairgrounds to be called The Commons.

Proposals for A Year-Round Love-A-Fair, the first phases in revitalizing the fairground, include picnic tables, pavers, playground equipment, windbreaks, landscaping and a flag pole in a park-like setting. The project will stimulate year-round use and additional improvements for an attractive and functional multi-use facility while building a broad base of knowledgeable, skilled and motivated community leaders, effective community organizations, and productive collaborations among organizations and communities. Class participants are expected to contribute 20 to 50 additional hours each to complete the project.

This class is the first in Ford Institute's five-year commitment to building the capacity of leaders and community organizations in Sherman /County. The next four years will bring additional opportunities for courses in leadership, effective organizations and community building skills with related funding.

Sherman County Fair

The 2005 County Fair is fast approaching. The district will have a conservation booth at the fairgrounds for the duration of the fair. Everyone is encouraged to stop by and see the exciting things we have to offer. We will be handing out pamphlets and brochures, answering questions, showing displays, and passing on information on how you can make a difference with conservation.



ROLLING THUNDER REVIEW

Guidelines:

Production Analysis Requirements:

These will be taken twice: once prior to the first seeding and once after the last harvest

- Yearly Soil Samples
- Moisture samples
- Yield/Production data
- Residue Levels
- Infiltration test data
- Photo point

Controls Required

- All cropping operations must meet standards set in Federal Crop Insurance Guidelines
- Grazing by domesticated livestock will be allowed as long as adequate stubble is maintained to prevent erosion.
- Management of weeds will be such that it meets the requirements of Sherman County Noxious Weed Ordinance and Buffer Zone Policy ORS 570.505 through 570.600.
- Under certain conditions, permission may be granted to control weeds by means of _____. Permission may be granted by SWCD technician.

All information provided to the Sherman County Soil and Water Conservation District will be removed of location and ownership. The information obtained may be used in public presentations, tours, and as background information for the development of new programs.

Payment:

- 1st contracted payment will be made in the Winter of 2006 and the 2nd payment will be made in the Winter of 2008, regardless of cropping cycle.
- Cost share adopted by Sherman County SWCD Board of Directors was set at \$11.25 per acre per year for two years for up to 500 acres.

Monitoring:

- Maintenance will occur with no-till and direct seeding for the life of the grant
- Landowners are strongly encouraged to continue with direct seed after the end of the grant, but this is not required
- Projects will be monitored for five years on fields with established direct seeding
- If the operator doesn't keep no-till on acreage after the life of the grant, monitoring on that property will no longer be required

Included in this newsletter, on page 7, is a sign-up questionnaire that can be dropped by or mailed to the office for interested operators. Remember, deadline to sign-up for grant is **September 1st**. If an overwhelming interest is found and funding becomes limited, precedence of applicants will be set as follows:

High Precedence

1. First time direct seed operators – individuals who have never practiced direct seed on any property they own or operate
2. Single operator/single operation
3. Multiple operator/multiple operation

Low Precedence



Direct Seed Grant Application

Sherman County Soil and Water Conservation District

Contact Information

Name: _____

Date: _____

Phone #: _____

Cell #: _____

Project Information

Location of proposed project site: _____

Tract #: _____

of Acres to be enrolled: _____

Proposed crop rotation:

(ex. Seed Fall 2006 / Fallow 2007 / Seed Fall 2008 / Fallow 2009)

Is ground to be enrolled currently involved in EQIP Direct Seed / No-till programs involving landowner or operator?

____ YES ____ NO

Will ground to be enrolled be grazed by domestic livestock?

____ YES ____ NO

Have you, the operator, direct seeded before?

____ YES ____ NO

If yes, have you direct seeded as a single operator/single operation?

____ YES ____ NO

or

If yes, have you direct seeded as a multiple operator/multiple operation?

____ YES ____ NO

Date available for field visit with SWCD technician: _____

Other (Questions or Comments):

Turn the completed form into the SWCD Moro Field Office by September 1st.



ROLLING THUNDER REVIEW

Sherman County SWCD Board of Directors

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Tracy Fields, Vice Chair
Brad Eakin, Secretary
Kyle Blagg, Treasurer
Gary Irzyk, Member

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Krista Coelsch, District Coordinator
Jason Faucera, District Technician
Jessa Irzyk, CRP Technician
Jeff Bird, Grass Valley Assessment Technician
Joli Munkers, Watershed Coordinator

NRCS Staff

Mary Beth Smith, District Conservationist
Emily Fife, Soil Conservationist

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