

MEMO TO BOARD: For June 10, 2026

Action Items

- a. **District Cost Share Program: Review Applications & Set 26-27 Rates:** Abbie will review applications for the board's consideration and walk us through the proposed 26-27 rates.
- b. **Providing Input on Miles Creek TMDL:** The Oregon Department of Environmental Quality has released its draft Temperature TMDL for the Miles Creeks watersheds, and staff (Shilah & Drake) are participating in the Rule Advisory Committee (RAC) process alongside ODA and other partners. Staff are reviewing the draft and may submit initial written comments by DEQ's first feedback deadline this Friday. We have been coordinating closely with ODA to ensure our concerns are consistent with their site-capable vegetation framework and with past conservation work documented in the Fifteenmile FAAP and CEP reports. We are seeking board feedback on our initial concerns. A more detailed update will be provided at the July meeting, and Board members who wish to review the draft materials in the meantime can find them on DEQ's project webpage.
- c. **Vehicle Replacement Policy:** An updated policy was distributed for consideration following the discussion at the budget committee meeting. The policy establishes a structured approach for maintaining a safe and reliable fleet by budgeting \$15,000 annually into a reserve fund capped at \$70,000. The policy outlines clear roles for the Safety Manager, District Manager, and Board in tracking vehicle condition, evaluating replacement needs, and approving purchases. Vehicles are assessed for replacement based on mileage, repair costs, safety concerns, and operational reliability, with a formal evaluation process used to guide decisions. The policy is reviewed each year during budgeting to ensure the reserve level and replacement criteria remain aligned with operational needs and market conditions.
- d. **Trailer & Towing Safety Policy:** A draft policy was distributed for consideration. This policy establishes clear expectations for the safe towing and operation of all District trailers, including utility, equipment, UTV, mounted-equipment, and rented units. The policy requires that only trained and qualified employees operate trailers, outlines tow-vehicle and load-securement standards, and mandates compliance with DOT, OSHA, ANSI, and manufacturer requirements. It also includes required training, pre-trip and post-use inspections, and procedures for reporting accidents or equipment issues. The policy is intended to ensure safe operations, protect staff and the public, and supplement the District's existing Vehicle Use Policy.
- e. **Rental Account with Global Rental Co., Inc. (Altec):** For the Highline project on the Wassenmiller property, we propose opening a rental account with Altec/Global Rental Company to rent a self-loading reel trailer needed to unspool the electrical wire. The landowner has the equipment to dig the trench and can unspool the wire himself, which will save several thousand dollars compared to having Coburn Electric perform that portion of the work. Coburn will still complete the electrical connections. The trailer rents for \$1,500 per 28-day billing cycle and is prorated to the day it is returned, which brings the cost to approximately \$53.57 per day. We anticipate needing the trailer for only one to two days. Staff have confirmed the trailer meets project specifications and have prepared the required rental agreement and credit application pending Board approval.

Convene Budget Hearing & Budget Discussion

A revised draft budget was distributed for review. We will discuss the proposed changes, receive public comments, and pass the resolution adopting the budget, making appropriations, imposing the tax, and categorizing the tax.

Updates

- a. **Next Regular Mtg, July 8th, 2026, 1:00 PM USDA Service Center**
- b. **Legislative Tour June 24:** The Oregon Association of Conservation Districts and Wasco SWCD are hosting a restoration project site tour on the Lower Deschutes Wildlife Area on June 24 from 8:30 a.m. to noon. The tour will highlight ODFW's large-scale rangeland restoration work, including aerial herbicide treatment on 5,000 acres, native grass reseeding, and planting of 50,000 shrubs to restore shrub-steppe habitat. Funded through Oregon's 2023 Natural and Working Lands Fund, the project showcases cross-boundary collaboration and innovative approaches to improving habitat connectivity and landscape resilience. Space is limited, and attendees are asked to RSVP to OACD.
- c. **FY 2026-27 Annual Plan of Work:** The APOW is still in development. Staff will distribute the draft plan to the Board ahead of the next meeting for review, with formal adoption proposed for the July meeting.
- d. **Updating Long Range Plan:** The Long-Range Plan is also scheduled for proposed adoption in July. The county-wide survey has now closed, and staff are incorporating the public input and final edits. Board members, staff, and partners are encouraged to share any additional thoughts or suggestions. A revised draft will be distributed ahead of the next meeting for review.
- e. **15mile Managed Underground Storage & Water Budget & FAST:** We have an OWEB grant pending for the next phase of the 15mile MUS project. We will know if it is funded following their meeting in July. FAST contracts have all been completed and staff are preparing for the upcoming hot weather.
- f. **Mosier Groundwater Restoration & Mosier Million #2:** The Mosier Million #2 project is now largely complete, with the remaining task being the Claim of Beneficial Use (COBU) for Leon's well. Funding is included in the proposed FY26–27 budget to hire GSI Water Solutions to assist with this final step, and we anticipate completing the COBU later this summer. With all grant funds for the Mosier Million and related efforts now fully expended, the broader Mosier Groundwater Restoration work is at a natural pause point. Staff will work with OWRD and other partners to continue monitoring groundwater levels, tracking available funding opportunities, and staying in close communication with landowners should the data indicate a need for additional work. This approach allows us to evaluate the cumulative effects of the well repair and replacement projects completed to date while remaining ready to pursue the next phase of restoration if/when conditions warrant.
- g. **Highline Ditch Elimination:** The Highline Ditch Elimination Project continues to advance toward removing the diversion barrier on Tygh Creek and restoring continuous flow to approximately 5.2 miles of habitat. All participating properties have completed well drilling or point-of-diversion approvals, and landowners are now moving into installation and COBU or extension steps as

needed. Updated cost estimates from Kerns Irrigation and Coburn Electric have increased the remaining project budget by \$50,000, reflecting refined pricing for pump and vault infrastructure, an additional Riverscreen, shipping, and related components. Materials and construction estimate from ODFW for the fish bypass are still pending, and current figures represent the best available information for ensuring adequate coverage of the remaining work. Staff are also coordinating the short-term rental of a reel trailer to allow Mr. Wassenmiller to unspool his wire at significantly lower cost than contractor deployment. Finally, staff recommend engaging GSI Water Solutions to assist with COBU documentation for the three smaller wells (Mayfield, Martin, Cubic) this summer, at an estimated cost of \$7,000; this work requires a Certified Water Rights Examiner, and GSI will provide a refined scope and budget soon.

- h. Fires: CWDG Grant, 2024 Larch Creek:** We will hear an update from Melissa Napoli, Wasco County Wildfire Coordinator on the CWDG grant progress. The 2024 Larch Creek grant is well underway, with field work being conducted by our consultants with IAE in late May & early June. We anticipate a draft of their inventory and assessment work to review late summer or early fall.
- i. Director Elections – Zones 2 & 4 & At-Large 2 are up in 2026:** These positions held by Shawn Sorensen, Stan Shephard, and Phil Kaser are up for election in November 2026. The Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) oversees SWCD director elections statewide, including eligibility requirements, filing deadlines, and zone-verification rules. Candidates must file a Declaration of Candidacy or a Declaration of Intent and Request for Write-In Votes to be Tallied by the statutory deadlines, and zone-position candidates must meet landownership or residency requirements within the zone they seek to represent. Additional details, forms, and the 2026 election calendar are available on ODA’s SWCD Elections webpage: <https://www.oregon.gov/oda/natural-resources/swcd/pages/elections.aspx>. Directors and prospective candidates are encouraged to review these requirements and timelines to ensure compliance.
- j. SDAO Best Practices Checklist – Public Meetings Training Reminder:** SDAO has released updated Public Meetings Law training, which all elected board members are required to complete under HB 2805. Completing the training also earns the District a 2% insurance discount through the SDIS Best Practices Program. Each board member now has an account in the SafePersonnel system with the assigned 31-minute “Public Meeting Law” module, which must be completed by October 31, 2026, to receive credit. Please let Shilah know once you have completed the training so it can be recorded for the Best Practices survey. Staff will continue coordinating the remaining Best Practices items for this year.
- k. Board Duties & Responsibilities Handbook:** A draft handbook will be distributed for review ahead of the July meeting. The forthcoming Handbook provides a clear, consolidated overview of board roles, statutory obligations, meeting procedures, ethics requirements, and expectations for communication and governance. It draws directly from ORS 568, ORS 198, Oregon Public Meetings Law, and Oregon Ethics Law to outline how the Board functions collectively, how officers carry out their duties, and how authority is delegated to the District Manager. The handbook is intended to give board members a single, easy-to-reference guide that supports consistent, transparent, and legally compliant governance.

Agency Reports (NRCS, FSA, Wasco County CWDG, WyEast RC&D) - Partner agencies will provide their regular updates on program activity, producer services, and upcoming deadlines.

Informational Reports

- a. **Internal Financial Review:** The internal financial review team members will provide their monthly update on reconciliations and oversight practices.
- b. **Facilities Status:** Staff have continued refining internal scoping materials for the shop and site development project, including required components, optional features, and preliminary phasing. We are still waiting on updated materials from AKS to support the next steps in the City Site Team process, including the signature form referenced in their March correspondence. Staff have checked in periodically and will continue doing so while we prepare for the multi-year development timeline.
- c. **Watershed Council Updates:** Most of the watershed councils pause their regular meetings over the summer months. During this period, staff will be focused on executing active projects, coordinating with partners, and preparing for fall planning cycles when council meetings resume.

District Manager Report

- a. **Work Plan Progress & Grant Status:** A summary will be provided of current work plan implementation, active grants, and pending applications.
- b. **Activity Reports and Schedule:** Activity reports are available on request, and the schedule is on the back of the agenda.

Adjourn SWCD Meeting & Convene Weed Board: The SWCD meeting will adjourn at approximately 2:45 p.m., followed by the Weed Board meeting.

SWCD Annual Meeting to follow at Bargeway Pub