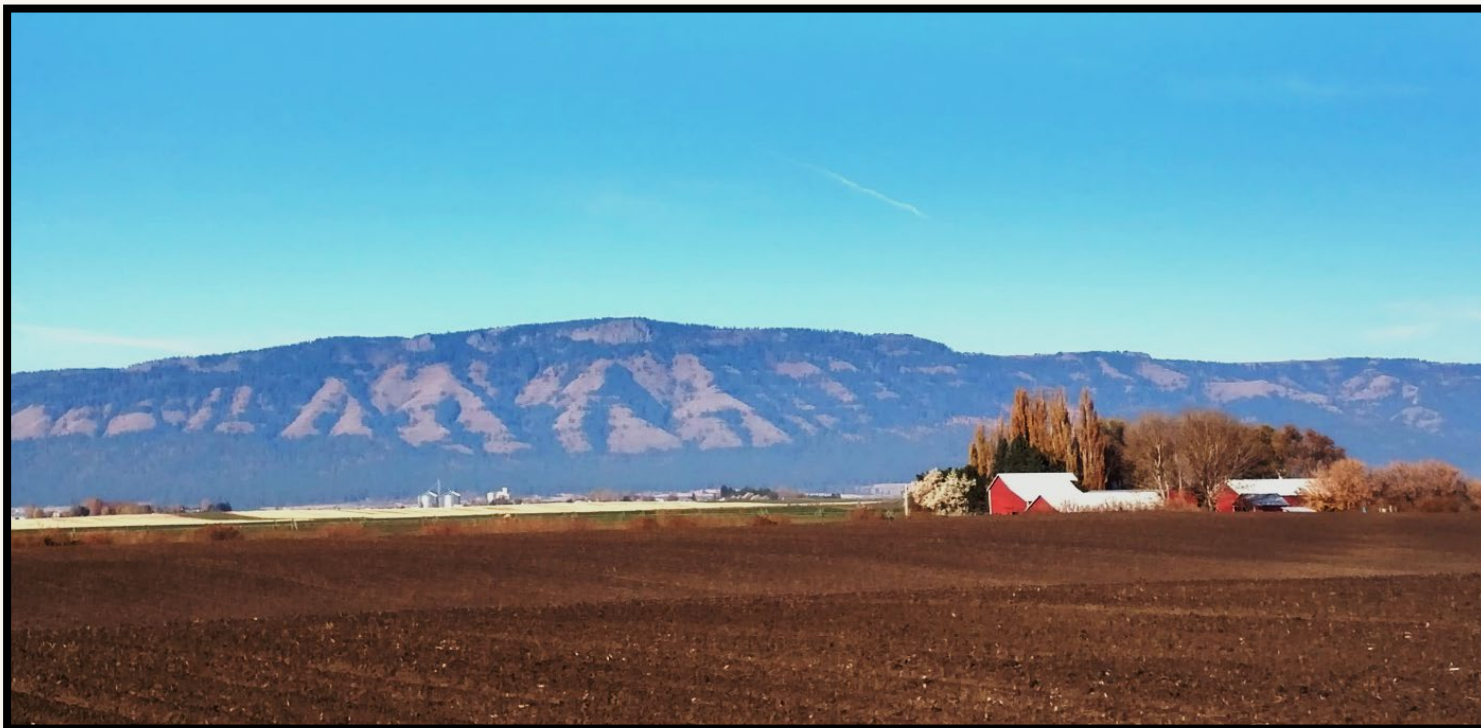




Local people making local decisions to achieve conservation

2021-2022 Annual Report



Our Mission

The Mission of the Union Soil and Water Conservation District is to assist and educate interested landowners in the development, protection, and conservation of natural resources.

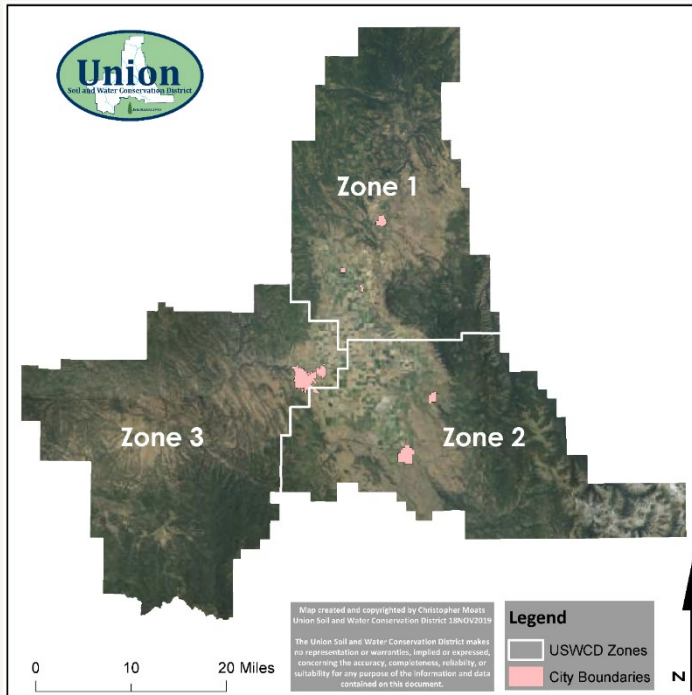
Values

The following values guide our work:

- Wise use of natural resources to balance agricultural production with conservation
- Local people making local decisions to achieve conservation.
- Voluntary initiatives over regulatory mandates.
- Efficient and effective use of public resources.
- Projects are partnerships in which everyone contributes, everyone benefits.

Organization of the Union Soil and Water Conservation District (USWCD)

The USWCD, one of 45 conservation districts in Oregon, is a form of local government governed under Oregon Revised Statute (ORS) 568.210-890 and ORS 568.900-933, the laws which govern state agencies and special districts. The USWCD was established in 1946 and is currently led by a five member, locally elected Board of Directors. The USWCD generally overlaps with the boundaries of the Upper Grande Ronde River Basin and is divided into three zones. The Board of Directors is made up of one Director from each zone and two at-large Directors.



Board of Directors

Jarod Teeter-Chairman, Zone 1
Paul Boehne-Vice-Chairman, At-Large
Curtis Ricker-Treasurer, At-Large
Doug Watts-Secretary, Zone 3
Fred Wallender- Zone 2

Staff

Jim Webster-District Manager
Aaron Bliesner-Project Manager
Deric Carson-Watershed Conservationist

2021-2022 Financial Summary

	Year Ended June 30,	
	<u>2021</u>	<u>2022</u>
Cash and Investments	\$440,641	\$448,353
Capital Assets	<u>512</u>	<u> </u>
Total Assets	\$441,153	\$448,353
Total Liabilities	66,661	86,471
Net Position:		
Invested in Capital Assets	512	-
Restricted	66,661	86,470
Unrestricted	<u>307,319</u>	<u>275,413</u>
Total Net Position	\$374,492	\$361,883

Catherine Creek RM 38 Fish Habitat Improvement

The Catherine Creek RM 38 project is located on privately owned property along Catherine Creek downstream of Union, Oregon. The property is currently managed as an operating farm and ranch, with much of the historic floodplain being in hay and pasture production. This project enhances aquatic habitat conditions in five pools with large wood additions, promotes riparian plant establishment and survival by reducing stream bank slopes, and decreases mass wasting of stream banks through the placement of large wood complexes.



The Union SWCD was successful in implementing the Catherine Creek RM 38 Fish Habitat Restoration Project during the in-water work window of 2021. The project elements included:

- Enhancing 2 large pool bends with large wood structures,
- Floodplain benching to encourage recruitment of woody and herbaceous plant species,
- 6 three log wood structures to increase habitat diversity and provide channel structure,
- A total of 209 whole trees and logs installed, 800 willow cuttings and 600 woody riparian plants.

Willow Creek Fish Passage Project



The Union SWCD began planning efforts in 2019 with landowners and irrigators to improve fish passage at diversion dams on Willow Creek, a tributary to the Grande Ronde River near Imbler, Oregon. This collaborative effort resulted in a design to construct a 100-foot vertical slot fishway around the most downstream dam structure. The new fishway will provide passage for adult and juvenile Chinook Salmon and Steelhead to access the Willow Creek subbasin. Additionally, the left streambank across from the fishway entrance was stabilized by an encapsulated soil lift that will provide a foundation for establishing riparian vegetation. Project construction started at the beginning of the instream work window on July 1, 2022, and was completed the first week of October.

Project partners for this project include, Bonneville Power Administration, the Grande Ronde Model Watershed, Natural Resource Conservation Service, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, and irrigators and landowners on Willow Creek.

2022 Good Steward Awards

The Good Steward Award is sponsored by the Union SWCD and presented to individuals or groups that have promoted conservation and land stewardship in coordination with agricultural operations. For agriculture to be successful over the long term, it is necessary to be good stewards of the land we manage. The Union SWCD selects a recipient that manages property for agricultural use within the District boundary, considering:

1. Partnerships with the District to complete projects or manage land for the purpose of conserving natural resources and promoting sustainable agriculture.
2. The amount or intensity of conservation practices implemented.
3. Projects that provide significant support to conservation and restoration of natural resources.

The Good Steward Award is presented at the annual Union County Farmer Merchant Banquet each fall. Since the banquet was postponed for two years due to the Covid-19 pandemic, two separate awards were presented.

Robert and Wendy Langford

The first award was presented to Rob and Wendy Langford for their contribution to the Red Mill Reach Restoration Project. Rob and Wendy own and manage agricultural property adjacent to Catherine Creek near Union, Oregon. Catherine Creek in this area supports sensitive summer steelhead and spring chinook salmon.

Rob worked with the District in 2019 and 2020 to improve irrigation efficiency and protect river and floodplain conditions. Flood irrigation on the Langford's land was upgraded to a pressurized system that provides more even water coverage and uses much less water from the creek. The Langfords have been supportive of this conservation effort and restoration planning through coordination with the District and are well deserving of the Good Steward Award.



Diane Kinsley

The second award was presented to Diane Kinsley for her contribution to the Kinsley Campground Correction Project. Diane owns and manages property adjacent to Catherine Creek upstream of Union, Oregon. Diane was a participating landowner in the CC-44 Fish Habitat Restoration project in 2016. In 2020 Diane asked the District to help address a bank erosion problem that was forming, and to improve a large pool that had filled in with sediment. In 2021 whole conifer logs and boulders were used to create a stable streambank and gravel pointbar. A large scour pool was excavated for improved fish habitat. Diane was very cooperative in working with the District and is well deserving of the Good Steward Award.



Conservation Implementation Strategy (CIS)

The Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) Oregon uses a Strategic Approach to Conservation to administer Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) dollars. By using a strategic approach, NRCS works with local communities, partners and landowners to determine county-level resource concerns and priorities and focuses its EQIP investments in those areas. These priorities are addressed in a local Conservation Implementation Strategy, or CIS.

Catherine Creek Mid Elevation Irrigation Efficiency

The primary goal of this conservation implementation strategy is to improve irrigation efficiency by 20 percent on 1,300 acres that are irrigated using Catherine Creek water. A secondary goal is to reduce nonpoint source pollution to surface waters from agricultural sources through implementation of conservation plans on 5,500 acres. Interested parties within the boundary identified in the map below can contact the Union SWCD directly or our local NRCS office.

Conservation Practices Offered

- Irrigation Pipeline
- Pumping Plant
- Sprinkler System
- Irrigation System, Micro irrigation
- Irrigation Water Management
- Spring Development
- Livestock Pipeline
- Watering Facility
- Fencing
- Tree/Shrub Establishment
- Prescribed Grazing
- Water Well



Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board Small Grants

OWEB Small Grants award up to \$15,000 per project to assist landowners with lower cost, on-farm projects that improve water quality and conserve natural resources. These projects may include spring developments, off-channel water developments, windbreaks, riparian exclusion fencing, and more. Grants require a contribution of 25% from the landowner, and can be in the form of either cash, in-kind services or materials. The USWCD can help landowners identify concerns, develop project solutions, and apply for funding.

Please contact us about a project on your property.



Proposed Thinning Area



Completed Thinning



QAPQÁPNIM WÉELE / GRANDE RONDE COMMUNITY SCIENCE PROJECT



We are a community of scientists investigating how the Grande Ronde Watershed is changing over time.

QAPQÁPNIM WÉELE MEANS "THE COTTONWOOD STREAM" IN THE CAYUSE NEZ PERCE LANGUAGE.

The Qapqápnim Wéele / Grande Ronde Community Science Project is a participant driven science research program sponsored by the Grande Ronde Model Watershed in which the Union SWCD advises, routinely takes part, and encourages our community to participate. The community is asking how our watershed is changing over time. In the last two years, the project has engaged 737 community scientists, most of whom are grades 5- 12, from 11 schools throughout the Grande Ronde Watershed. They have monitored 16 sites including Catherine Creek and the Grande Ronde River both in the valley and on forestland.



Union students monitored Catherine Creek in Fall 2022.

Other partners include: area school districts. US Forest Service, Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation. Oregon Fish and Wildlife, US Fish and Wildlife, Caretakers of the Land, Camp Elkanah, Cove Ascension School, and GO STEM.

The project's goals are to:

1. Empower the communities in our region, especially underserved youth, to see themselves as scientists and lifelong stewards of their environment by engaging in watershed monitoring and educational activities.
2. To be guided by and to amplify our Indigenous neighbors' voices in the Grande Ronde watershed by integrating Traditional Ecological Knowledge into monitoring and educational activities.
3. Increase our community's knowledge of water issues by monitoring stream restoration sites within the Grande Ronde Watershed.



Imbler students monitor Grande Ronde River with Deric Carson.

Our Generous Sponsors



Union SWCD Partners

The Union SWCD thanks our partners and colleagues for their assistance and support.

BOR – U.S. Bureau of Reclamation	BPA – Bonneville Power Administration
CTUIR – Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation	FSA – Farm Service Agency
GRMW – Grande Ronde Model Watershed	NRCS – USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
OACD – Oregon Association of Conservation Districts	ODA – Oregon Department of Agriculture
ODF – Oregon Department of Forestry	ODFW – Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife
ODSL – Oregon Department of State Lands	OSU Extension – Oregon State University
OWEB – Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board	OWRD – Oregon Water Resources Department
TCCWMA – Tri-County Cooperative Weed Management	TU – Trout Unlimited
Union County – Planning and Public Works	USACE – U.S. Army Corps. of Engineers
USFWS – U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	USFS – U.S. Forest Service

Contact Us

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Website: www.unionswcd.org

Phone Number: 541-963-1313

The District prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, age, color, national origin, gender, religion, political beliefs, disability, sexual orientation, and marital or family status. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means when working with the District should contact us.