



# 2017-2018 Annual Report



# 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 seven member, locally elected Board of Directors. The USWCD generally overlaps with the boundaries of the Upper Grande Ronde River Basin, and is divided into 5 zones. The Board of Directors is made up of one Director from each zone and two at-large Directors.

## 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.

<b>2017-2018 Financial Summary</b>		
	<b>Year Ended June 30,</b>	
	<b><u>2018</u></b>	<b><u>2017</u></b>
Cash and Investments	354,203	365,608
Capital Assets	<u>10,850</u>	<u>15,626</u>
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$365,053</b>	<b>\$381,234</b>
Total Liabilities	4,518	1,292
Net Position:		
Invested in Capital Assets	10,850	15,626
Restricted	---	---
Unrestricted	<u>349,685</u>	<u>364,316</u>
<b>Total Net Position</b>	<b>\$360,535</b>	<b>\$379,942</b>

# Union SWCD Board of Directors

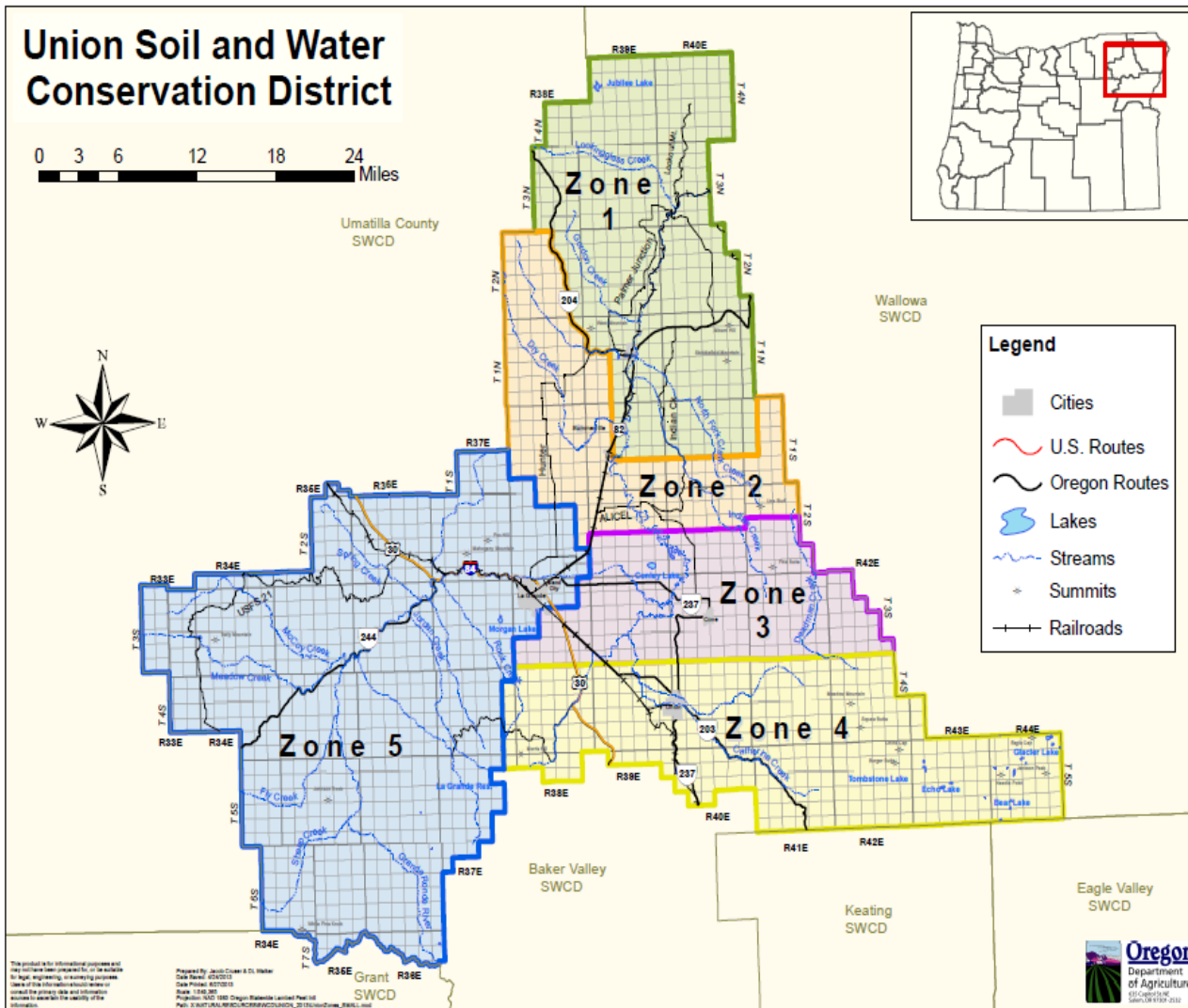
Jarod Teeter-Chairman, Zone 2  
Paul Boehne-Vice-Chairman, At-Large  
Curtis Ricker-Treasurer, At-Large  
Doug Watts-Secretary, Zone 5  
Fred Wallender- Zone 3  
Gene Hardy- Zone 1  
Vacant-Zone 4, Union  
Gary Kiemnec- Associate Director  
Dale Counsell- Director Emeritus

# Union SWCD Staff

Jim Webster-District Manager  
Aaron Bliesner-Project Manager  
Christopher Moats-Conservationist

# CONTACT US

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**Phone Number:** 541-963-1313



# Featured Conservation Project

The Union SWCD is assisting landowners and farmers in the Willow Creek Watershed to improve fish habitat conditions while maintaining important irrigation systems. Two irrigation dams constructed in lower Willow Creek during the 1950's limited fish passage into the upper watershed where more healthy habitat conditions exist. The combination of these physical barriers and low summer streamflow limit adult salmonids from reaching spawning areas and juvenile salmonids from making a journey to the ocean. Although adult summer steelhead are able to negotiate the dam structures at higher flow, spring/summer Chinook salmon adults moving into Willow Creek in the early summer months are specifically impacted by the decrease of instream flow and installation of stoplogs necessary to create backwater.

Summer steelhead currently inhabit the mainstem and tributaries of Willow Creek, a tributary to the Grande Ronde River near Imbler, Oregon. Adults typically enter Willow Creek between March and mid-June each year resulting in some of the highest redd densities in the Grande Ronde Subbasin. The timing of juvenile steelhead outmigration most often coincides with increases in streamflow during the spring and fall periods.

Spring/summer Chinook salmon are known to access the downstream portion of Willow Creek from the Grande Ronde River to the lowest dam structure from May through July. Chinook salmon have not been documented upstream of the dam structures since the 1950's, but anecdotal evidence from early fishing reports and local information suggests these fish may have historically inhabited much further upstream.

Improving and restoring passage by improving the physical conditions or extending available instream flow at the two dam sites would increase the availability of fish habitat. Steelhead adults would have a longer opportunity to pass these obstructions and Chinook adults may begin using the watershed. Juvenile fish could also move more easily to migrate out or avoid high water temperatures. The District will be working with technical partners over the next year to design a solution that improves conditions for fish migration and also supports agricultural uses.



Upper Dam



Lower Dam

# Past Projects

The primary goal of the Aiwahi Cisco Dry Creek project was to enhance and increase the natural channel function and geomorphic processes that improve habitat suitability for spawning and rearing summer steelhead, spring Chinook salmon, and other native fish and wildlife resources. Project priorities included restoring juvenile rearing habitat for steelhead during both summer and winter months, as well as spawning habitat for adult steelhead. Site-specific project objectives were developed to address the primary limiting factors.

Project actions included:

- 26 large wood complexes constructed
- 590 feet of channel length increase
- 4,600 plants planted for bank stabilization
- 5,302 total plants installed



Dry Creek Pre Project



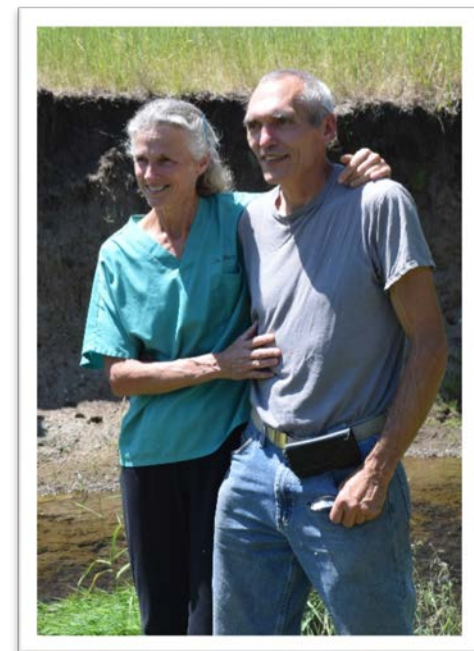
Dry Creek Post Project

# 2018 Good Steward Award

The District honored Mary Aiwahi with the Good Steward Award for her contribution to conservation during 2018. Ms. Aiwahi owns and manages property near Summerville, Oregon where she raises a small band of sheep and operates the Grande Ronde Mobile Veterinary Clinic.

Mary collaborated with the District over the past several years to explore options for improving river and floodplain conditions. The District coordinated the completion of an engineered design to restore historic meanders and add large woody debris to improve fish habitat and cover. Mary has been actively involved in review and approval of the design plans, and continues to provide useful input and support to the project. The project was constructed in 2018 and a conservation easement is currently being established.

Mary has been very supportive of conservation and restoration planning through coordination with the District, and is well deserving of the Good Steward Award for 2018.



Mary Aiwahi and David Waln

# 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.

Currently the District is working on a Spring Development and a Forest Thinning grant.



Proposed Spring to be Developed



Proposed Thinning Area



Proposed Trough Location



Proposed Thinning Area

# Upper Grande Ronde Initiative Focused Investment Partnership

The Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB) has developed program funding for Focused Investment Partnerships (FIPs) to address natural resource issues of significance to the state. The USWCD, as a partner in the Upper Grande Ronde Initiative with the Grande Ronde Model Watershed, Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife and the USDA Forest Service, was awarded FIPs funding in 2016 to support habitat improvements for spring Chinook salmon and steelhead in the Upper Grande Ronde River Basin. The FIPs program will help this local partnership plan, develop, and implement coordinated restoration and conservation projects strategically with multi-year funding and longer timelines.

Proposed outcomes for this Focused Investment will improve and increase habitat quantity, quality, and diversity for all life stages of spring Chinook salmon, summer steelhead, and other aquatic species in Catherine Creek and the Upper Grande Ronde River. Partners of the Upper Grande Ronde Initiative are committed to the restoration of aquatic habitat by protecting and restoring watershed processes, cold water refugia, and diverse instream and floodplain habitats. value of collaborative relationships Partners in the restoration of this habitat

The Union SWCD plays an important role in the partnership through established relationships with local landowners and agricultural producers. With knowledge of agricultural history, practices and technical programs in the basin, the USWCD strives to offer technical assistance to landowners and sponsor projects to facilitate initial project discussions, design, and implementation with partners and funding agencies. This is ultimately achieved through collaboration with landowners to develop conservation projects that have both ecological and land management merit while engaging in variety of habitat and upland restoration.

## Union SWCD Partners

**BOR**-Bureau of Reclamation  
**NRCS**-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  
**OSU Extension**-Oregon State University Agriculture Extension Service  
**OTEC**-Oregon Trail Electric Consumer Cooperative

**OWEB**-Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board  
**SWCD**-Soil and Water Conservation Districts  
**USFS**-United States Forest Service  
**USFWS**-United States Fish and Wildlife Service  
**WRD**-Water Resources Department  
**BPA**-Bonneville Power Administration  
**USACE**-United States Army Corps of Engineers  
**CTUIR**-Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation

**DEQ**-Department of Environmental Quality  
**DSL**-Department of State Lands  
**EPA**-Environmental Protection Agency  
**FSA**-Farm Service Agency  
**GRMW**-Grande Ronde Model Watershed  
**NACD**-National Association of Conservation Districts  
**NOAA Fisheries**-National Marine Fisheries Service  
**TCCWMA**- Tri-County Cooperative Weed Management Area

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.

# Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)



## Conservation Funding for Ag Operators

Funding is now available to farmers, ranchers and forestland owners in Union County to help them save water, improve forest health and fish habitat, thanks to this watershed restoration project. The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is offering the funding under a five-year project called the **Grande Ronde Watershed Conservation Partnership**.

The Upper Grande Ronde is home to a number of federally-endangered species, including the spring Chinook salmon, summer steelhead and bull trout. NRCS and project partners are working together on instream habitat improvements.

Farmers and ranchers may receive funding to help them with projects such as:

- ▶▶ Prescribed grazing and fencing
- ▶▶ Off-channel water developments,
- ▶▶ Irrigation efficiency improvements
- ▶▶ Forest thinning and slash disposal

These types of projects will help farmers and ranchers improve the production efficiency of their farms and ranches and reduce soil erosion and run-off into streams to improve water quality.

In this fourth year of the program changes to the program include the addition of groundwater irrigation system improvements to the proposals eligible for funding and the increase of the maximum acres of forest thinning and slash disposal to 80 acres per contract.

For more information, contact USWCD at 541-963-1313 or NRCS at 541-624-3098.