



New Coos SWCD Staff Provide Technical Assistance to Landowners

The Coos Soil and Water Conservation District would like to welcome and introduce the two new employees hired in 2003.

Walt Shearard joined the District staff in March, thanks to a technical assistance grant from the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board and the Oregon Department of Agriculture. (And thanks to Janice for developing the proposal.) Walt's primary duty is to provide technical assistance to landowners implementing the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program or CREP. The CREP is a



USDA Farm Bill program providing financial incentives for riparian protection. (see CREP article p.2). Walt has been hard at work providing information to landowners through one-on-one site visits, working closely with partner agencies to determine landowner eligibility for CREP, and serving as the primary contact for CREP participants. To date, Walt has contacted over 50 landowners, has completed 11 CREP plans, has four plans in progress, and has 28 plans to monitor for project completion and compliance. Walt has also assisted with other grant projects and attends the OWEB Small Grant Team meetings.

Walt's forestry degree from Humboldt State University and 30 years experience as a forester provides a strong working knowledge of forestry practices essential to this position, which is a lot about growing

trees. Walt says the best part of the job is working out in the field with his clients.

Pat Jones was hired in September as the new Watershed Technical Specialist or WTS. As the WTS, Pat assists landowners with developing and upgrading voluntary farm plans, also called conservation plans or land/resource management plans. She has eagerly dove into the process of contacting individual landowners, many of whom have been on a waiting list for some time. Pat assists landowners in determining land use goals, assesses current conditions and features of the land, and uses the information to develop farm plans.



Farm plans are site-specific management tools used to address natural resource concerns such as erosion control, forest productivity, management of nutrients, grazing systems, and riparian enhancement.

Pat will also be helping to develop potential grant projects and has been attending the local OWEB Small Grant Team meetings. The Small Grant Team, made up of representatives from the SWCD, local watershed associations and the tribes, reviews and administers grants for watershed improvement projects under \$10,000. For more information on the OWEB Small Grant Program or farm planning call Pat at 396-2841x34.

Pat's is a familiar face around the office since she has served on the Farm Service Agency Committee as the minority advisor since 1998, and is also a member of the local, advanced Forage and Nutrition Group. She has a degree in Farm Management from Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, and raises cattle on her farm. Pat says she is heartened by the staff's ability to pool resources and work together efficiently.

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- ◆ CAFO Update
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Incentive Program Helps Farmers with Riparian Management

The Coos and Coquille Area Agricultural Water Quality Management (AgWQM) Plan, adopted locally in March 2002, focuses much of its attention on riparian areas on agricultural land. Riparian areas, or riparian buffers, are the land and vegetation immediately surrounding a waterbody. Riparian areas are crucial in maintaining and improving water quality. A well-managed, vegetated riparian buffer functions as a natural filtration system for runoff draining into the river, stream, lake or wetland. Properly vegetated riparian areas also serve to stabilize banks, provide shade to keep water cool, and provide fish and wildlife habitat.

Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program

While the Coos and Coquille AgWQM Plan requires landowners to maintain native vegetation in their riparian areas, there is a popular Farm Bill program that can turn this responsibility into economic gain for volunteering landowners with qualifying waterbodies. The program is the USDA Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program known as CREP. This program provides economic incentives to plant native trees and shrubs in riparian areas on currently, or historically, agricultural land.

Landowners can enroll riparian areas, with qualifying soil types, with a 35 - 180 foot average set back from the stream, and in some cases an entire field if it is in the floodplain.

Participating landowners receive:

- A signing bonus once enrolled in the program of \$10 per acre times the number of years in the contract. And another bonus, when all the practices in the contract are completed, of 40% of total project costs.
- Annual rental payments averaging \$100 per acre for a 10 or 15 year period. If landowners want to lease their water rights for the enrolled area as part of a CREP contract, they receive a rental rate at about \$140 per acre.
- Reimbursement (including bonuses) for 115% of the cost for establishing the project site such as fencing, off stream livestock watering, and tree and shrub establishment.
- If over 50% of a stream bank along a five-mile

stream segment (i.e. over 26,400 feet of stream bank) is enrolled in the program, all participants in that segment receive another one-time bonus payment.

- In return, participating landowners must maintain all practices for the length of their contract.
- At the end of the 10 or 15-year contract, the land is no longer contracted and the program is ended. Option to re-enroll acres will be dependant on future program funding.

This is an excellent opportunity, especially for those who are concerned about their riparian conditions and may already be planning this type of project.

The Coos Soil and Water Conservation District employs a full-time Conservation Technician that can answer your questions about the CREP program, tell you if your riparian area is eligible for enrollment, and even calculate what your payments would be.



CREP Project on the South Fork Coquille

Eric Wiley, of Broadbent, was born and raised on his family's century farm, which borders the South Fork of the Coquille River. His family ran a dairy until the mid-1970s when they switched to beef cattle. He says his father enjoyed pasture and farm management, and from the looks of it, Eric Wiley does too. Wiley, who hays his pastures twice in the summer and grazes about 50 beef cows/yearlings on these bottom pastures in the spring and fall, signed up for CREP in

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**For more information about
CREP contact Walt Shearard at the Coos
SWCD, (541) 396-2841x30.**

**For more information about the
Coos and Coquille AgWQM Plan, call
(541) 396-2841x34, or see our website
www.coosswcd.oacd.org**

CAFO Information & Update

CAFOs (Confined Animal Feeding Operations), which are regulated and permitted through the ODA (Oregon Department of Agriculture), recently underwent a change to now encompass both Oregon's water quality laws and the federal Clean Water Act. The resulting new Oregon CAFO General Permit is now available from the ODA. If you are unsure whether or not your operation qualifies as a CAFO or an AFO (Animal Feeding Operation) you are strongly encouraged by ODA to file an ATR (Application to Register) to make this determination. It is extremely beneficial to the operator or landowner to have this determination documented with an ATR. Chris Anderson, ODA Livestock Water Quality Specialist for this region, is available to answer questions, provide courtesy inspections and other information for educational purposes, and assist with the permitting process. Anderson will be in the Coos county area over the next couple months performing winter CAFO inspections.

For more information contact Chris Anderson, ODA Livestock Water Quality Specialist, (541) 955-9873.

CAFO Inspections: From the Chair

My name is Jeff Cochran and I am a father, husband, dairyman and the Chairman of the Coos Soil and Water Conservation District.

The other day I received written notice that the Confined Animal Feeding Operation "CAFO" inspector was going to stop by. Several days later he showed up and explained to me the reason for the inspection. In October he drove by my facility and noticed that it did not appear that my roof runoff was adequately diverted from the animal waste storage.

He then began his walk through inspection that took about 15 minutes. Without going into countless details, my farm inspection went great. The inspector commented that I even diverted my roof runoff without being told. I explained to him that it is a yearly ritual I do before the rainy season starts.

The reason why I am telling this story is: 1) The inspector noticed a potential problem while driving by during the dry season. 2) Your operation may be next to a county road or highway with easy visibility. 3) "CAFO" inspectors throughout the state are noticing locations of perceived blatant violations of the SB 1010 area plans when driving between dairies for their routine inspections. Some of these managers may receive a visit from a compliance official before the

2005 date. 4) In 2005 regulatory action begins for the Coos and Coquille Area Agricultural Water Quality Management Plan. That is 1 year from now! 5) If a manager or owner is assessed a civil penalty you may not qualify for grants or bank loans to fix the problems you may have on your operation. 6) During the rainy season as you manage your winter operations, asses your situation and needs to keep regulatory action from happening on your farm. The most important is to avoid #5, that is where the SWCD can help. We are a non regulatory agency that can help with technical and/or financial assistance. We want to keep the local farmers and ranchers in this area in business. If you have any questions please call our qualified staff or NRCS members listed below.

Pat Jones, Watershed Tech. Specialist: 396-2841 x 28

Walt Shearard, CREP Technician: 396-2841 x 30

Bessie Joyce, SB 1010 Outreach Coord.: 396-2841 x34

Tom Purvis, NRCS Resource Conservationist: 396-2841 x 33

Dennis Chamberlin, NRCS Resource Conservationist: 396-2841x32

Free Workshop...

Protecting Your Home Investment: Learning About Your Well and Septic Systems

Wednesday, December 3rd, 6:30 p.m.
at the Coos Bay Public Library
Myrtlewood Room

Bring well water samples for
FREE NITRATE TESTING

Presenters:

Ivan Gall, Hydrologist with the Water Resources Department will speak about well construction, maintenance and decommissioning.

Dell Cline, of DEQ will speak about septic system installation, maintenance, failures and septic standards.

Hosted by the Coos Watershed Association
with assistance from the
Coos Soil and Water Conservation District.

For more information or to register
please call 396-2841x34.

**SB 1010, Coos & Coquille Area
Agricultural Water Quality
Management Plan**

*Information, rules and fact sheets available
on the Coos SWCD website:*

**www.coosswcd.oacd.org
or call (541) 396-2841x34**

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the spring of 2002. He became interested in CREP as a management tool to protect the riverbank and keep the cattle where he wants them. Wiley adds, "If the livestock are kept out of the river it gives the [riparian] trees a chance to establish."

The Wiley CREP project consists of 4500 feet of 4-strand barbed wire fence (better than woven wire for flood conditions) at a 35-foot average set back from the river's edge, or the mean water mark. Most of the seven acres of fenced riparian buffer was then planted with dogwood, red cedar, and hemlock, and protected with vexar tubing. Wiley says he would like to add more hardwood plantings in the future. This winter, willow cuttings will be planted on the lower banks to help stabilize the soil even more. Previous to enrolling in CREP, Wiley's riparian area was mostly non-native blackberries. These were cleared for tree planting, and therefore, explains Wiley, very little hay pasture was converted. Wiley, who also practices careful rotational grazing, uses the new fence for attaching temporary cross-fencing of single-strand electric wire.

Wiley says his biggest challenge with the project is to keep the brush down around the young trees for their first three years. Wiley does the maintenance on the project himself. CREP reimburses costs for site-preparation (clearing brush for planting), moisture conservation and one 'release' or brush clearing around the young trees. After that, CREP pays a small amount for maintenance per year per acre.

District Staff

District Administrator-----Janice Anglin
SB1010 Outreach Coordinator-----Bessie Joyce
Watershed Technical Specialist-----Pat Jones
Conservation Technician-----Walt Shearard

Annual Meeting December 5th

The Coos SWCD will be holding its 43rd annual meeting on December 5th, 6:30 p.m., at the new Extension Service conference room in Myrtle Point. Agenda items for the meeting include awarding Joe Ficher of Triple J Farms as the Outstanding Cooperator of the Year for 2003, awarding the Dorothey Guerin Memorial Essay Contest Winners, and keynote speakers Senator Ken Messerle and Representative Wayne Krieger speak about natural resource issues. Due to budget cuts, pie and refreshments will be served rather than a full dinner. The meeting is open to the public - please register by calling Janice at 396-6879.

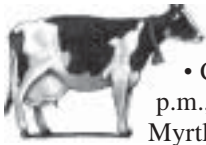
**Grant Approved for
Fence and Plant Project**

The OWEB (Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board) recently approved a grant proposal submitted by the Coos SWCD for riparian protection on private agricultural land. The project involves three adjacent landowners on the lower South Fork of the Coquille river. OWEB will be providing funds for installing 12,500 feet of fence, purchasing trees to be planted in riparian "wash out" areas, and installing off-stream watering facilities for cattle. The goal of the project is to help stabilize critical erosion areas along the riverbank by planting trees and willows, and excluding livestock from the riparian area.



District Board of Directors

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Director-----Dan Varoujean
Director-----Dan Brelage
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Associate Director-----Tom Guerin
Associate Director-----Don Gray
Director Emeritus-----Ken Messerle



Calendar of Events

• Coos SWCD Annual Meeting, Dec. 5th, 7 p.m., Extension Service conference room Myrtle Point.

- Workshop: Learning About Your Well and Septic Systems, December 3rd, 6:30 p.m., Coos Bay Public Library, for information call 396-2841x34.
- Coos SWCD meetings open to the public 7:30 pm every 4th Thursday, for information call 396-6879
- Curry SWCD meetings open to the public 7:30 pm every 4th Tuesday, for information call 247-2755
- Coquille Watershed Council meetings open to the public 7:00 pm every 3rd Monday at the OSU Extension Office, upstairs conference room, for information call 396-2229
- Tenmile Watershed Council meetings open to the public, last Thurs. every other month, for information call 759-2414
- Coos Watershed Council meetings open to the public, for information call 888-5922

Coos & Coquille Agricultural Water
Quality Management Plan,
Local Advisory Committee
bi-annual review of the Plan is
coming up in the spring, 2004.

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Written and produced by Bessie Joyce, Coos & Coquille Area AgWQM Plan Outreach Coordinator



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