



Soil and Water Conservation Commission Minutes

DATE	LOCATION	START TIME	END TIME
August 27, 2025	Miller Woods, 15580 NW Orchard View Road McMinnville, OR 97128	8:30 AM	11:44 AM

CHAIR	COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT	ABSENT
Barbara Boyer	Tim Kerns, Al Hrynshyn; Jerry Ward (via phone); Jim Bob Collins, Robin Vora, and Bob Webb via Teams	

OREGON DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE (ODA) STAFF PRESENT:

Kevin Fenn, Ag Water Quality/Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) Program Manager; Eric Nusbaum, SWCD Operations Specialist; Sandi Hiatt, SWCD Grants Administrator. (Via Teams) Beth Pietrzak, AgWQ Specialist (SW Oregon); Victoria Binning, Initiatives Coordinator; Amanda Robinson, AgWQ SIA Specialist; Rick Cowlshaw, AgWQ Specialist (N Coast/N WillValley); Jenn Ambrose, GIS Specialist; Olivia Jasper, AgWQ Specialist (Mid Coast/S WillValley); Renita McNaughtan, Administrative Specialist

ADVISORS:

Andrea Kreiner, Oregon Association of Conservation Districts; Greg Becker, Natural Resources Conservation Service; Eric Williams and Brian Wolcott, Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board; Marc Desjardin, Oregon Department of Forestry

VISITORS:

Whitney Rohner, Baker County SWCDs; Andy Bleckinger, Yamhill SWCD; Josh Togstad, Yamhill SWCD; Micah Schmidt, OSU Extension; Misty Buckley, Klamath SWCD; Allison Schwister, Yamhill SWCD; Cassi Newton, Wheeler SWCD; Lincoln SWCD; Rhonda Black, Umpqua SWCD; Jan Lee, OACD; Richard Chamberlan, NET; Amanda Rau, ODF; Casey Jogerst, West Multnomah SWCD; Danny Ambrosio Burris and Misty Burris, CO2 Trust; Stan Dean, Jackson SWCD

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The regular quarterly meeting was called to order at 8:30 AM by Chair Barbara Boyer on August 27, 2025.

SWEAR IN TIM KERNS - OATH OF OFFICE

Tim Kerns was sworn in by Kevin Fenn as commissioner for region 7.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Draft minutes of the May 21, 2025, regular quarterly meeting was presented for approval. **A motion was made by Al Hrynshyn to approve the minutes. The motion was seconded by Tim Kerns. Motion passed unanimously.**

PICK OFFICERS (CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR) FOR FY 2025-2026

Nomination for Chair - Al Hrynshyn nominated Barbara Boyer, seconded by Tim Kerns. Motion passed unanimously.
Nomination for Vice Chair - Jerry Ward nominated Tim Kerns, Jim Bob Collins seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

ADVISORS REPORTS

OACD - Andrea Kreiner - board elections are underway for West At-Large; Columbia Plateau, and the Eastern regions but have not received any nominations. Planning for the OACD Conference in October in Pendleton; agenda is on the

EventBrite website. There will be district manager/director round tables and new best practices benchmark. Early registration is \$325 until Sept 20th then registration is \$375. Advocacy videos in development for district use.

NRCS – Greg Becker – Chief’s priorities in Oregon are partnerships, modernization of field offices, and precision ag. Staffing plan under review. Allocation letter will arrive at the end of September. Agreements will have more emphasis with boots-on-the-ground, which is another Chief priority.

OWEB – Eric Williams - received 179 applications requesting \$39 million. Small grant program recently expanded eligibility to include any OWEB eligible grantee. CREP TA program grants will be awarded at October meeting and board will preview revised focused investment partnership ecological priorities. **Brian Wolcott** - July 2025 OWEB board meeting approved watershed council capacity grants and funding for SWCD capacity grants. Natural working lands projects and Oregon Ag Heritage program received funding. Oregon Ag Heritage received \$2 million additional from legislature. OWEB committees will meet in September. Next OWEB Board meeting - October 28 and 29 in Astoria. CREP TA grants and FIP ecological priorities will be on the agenda. The Pacific Coast Salmon Recovery Funds are confirmed for this year; next year’s funding is still unknown, which is about ¼ to 1/3 of OWEB’s budget.

OCEAN/OACD – Andrea Kreiner – the partnership is having a legislative day, November 17th, with a table at the capitol. Will help arrange meetings with legislators. Creating a calendar of conservation work by watersheds, land trusts, and districts for legislators. Also created a deck of cards with 10 reasons to love your district.

ODF – Marc DesJardin – the next state forester will be appointed by the governor as the legislature passed a bill that directs this authority to the governor. The hope is to have that person in place by the end of calendar year. Landscape resiliency program has received dedicated long-term funding. A prescribed burn association was established in Eastern Oregon – Southern Blues Collaborative – the counties covered are Grant, Harney, Wheeler, Moro and Gilliam. Working with SWCDs on post fire restoration from last season’s fires and other grants.

ODA UPDATES:

Ag Water Quality Program/Agency Updates/ODA Vehicle Policy - Kevin Fenn – Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDL) implementation plans underway. Met with the ceded lands program of the Grande Ronde Tribe regarding the Willamette TMDL. In the process of creating the Willamette TMDL implementation plan. Next is the Umpqua with EPA creating the management plan and ODA creating the implementation plan. Then the Coquille, Rogue, John Day, and Snake/Hells Canyon follow. Rick is championing our Focused Ag Solutions (FASs) locations in Yamhill, Tualatin, and one in Polk. SIAs in Benton and Crook County. Victoria is working on a ten-year report on the SIAs, due by early 2026. Review of several ag water quality rules; four public hearings for the Umpqua, Clackamas, Upper Grande Ronde, and Lower Willamette Area Rules; for clarity, removed ambiguous terms, removed processes never put into place, and removed references to the Revised Universal Soil Loss Equation. The AgWQ Hub is available for the SWCDs to use for reporting. The AgWQ Program Advisory Committee meeting has been rescheduled to November 20th from 1-4pm.

Vehicle Use Policy – personal vehicles used for state business are treated as state vehicles when reimbursed and required safe driving record.

2025-27 OWEB SWCD Capacity Grant Updates – Sandi Hiatt

HUB reporting required every six months, fund requests quarterly. Most SWCDs have their grant agreements in place.

TRAINING – ODA SWCD PROGRAM FOR DISTRICT BOARD MEMBERS

Eric Nusbaum – seeking feedback on training needs. Suggestions are welcome. Suggestion for commission training for new members.

REVIEW SWCC STRATEGIC PLAN

Barbara Boyer – will review the Strategic Plan with Andrea Kreiner, Karin Stutzman, and Barbara Boyer and bring back to the commission.

PRESCRIBED BURN TRAINING

Presentations – Amanda Rau (ODF) and Micah Schmidt (OSU Extension)

Draft – August 27, 2025

Micah Schmidt – overview of Prescribed Burn Associations (PBAs). There are 10 PBAs forming in Oregon. Learn-and-Burn offers education in addition to live fire experience. IGNITE training is prescribed fire skills training. **Amanda Rau** – presented on the Certified Burn Manager Program. She reviewed the components of the program and the certifications and training required. Over 45 Certified Burn Managers certified. Prescribed Fire Liability Pilot Program was established. Program and fund sunsets January 2, 2028. (Covers certain eligible damages resulting from escaped prescribed burn.) The Nature Conservancy Fire Learning Network (FLN) designed the program, funded through the Forest Service, The Nature Conservancy, and the Dept of Interior.

YAMHILL SWCD'S PRESCRIBED BURNING PROGRAM AND PRACTICE

Josh Togstad – district manages ten properties with prescribed fire. Shared videos and best practices. Emphasized safety, communication, and planning.

SWCC MEMBERS REPORTS

Robin Vora – exploring new program direction for his district – Deschutes SWCD.

Tim Kerns – limited fire activity; strong growing season.

Al Hrynshyn – East Multnomah 75th anniversary in September. Marion – Scott Walker resigned. Upr Willamette – new executive director will be approved by the board. Dave Downing took early retirement. Internal candidate, Lily Leitermann.

Jim Bob Collins – local fencing projects. Local areas have openings. OPB gave good interview.

Bob Webb – extensive WQ monitoring program. Staff sharing. Working with OWRD - have completed one weir with 70 more places that weirs could be installed. Dealing with a cannabis cleanup. Two new interns doing great job.

Barbara Boyer – August is taken off by several in my areas. Federal funding uncertainty.

NEW BUSINESS

Discussion on whether ODA needs a new Land Use and Water Coordinator. Possible commission support letter. No Board of Agriculture resolutions to review.

CALL FOR UPCOMING MEETING AGENDA ITEMS/NEWSLETTER CONTENT

Agenda:

- Strategic Plan review
- Upper Illinois forest fire replanting/restoration update
- Feedback from OACD Conference roundtable

Newsletter Content:

- Officer reappointments
- Prescribed burns

WRAP UP – ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 11:44am.