



Wheeler Soil and Water Conservation District

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Board of Directors
Meeting Minutes
October 30, 2025

Directors

Jim Bob Collins
Jason Davis
Anna Thomas
Dave Hunt
Brent Johnson

Employees

Cassandra Newton
Brooke Moore
Kristen Neuburger
Robin Champagne

Others Present

The board meeting was called to order by Chair Collins at 6:13 p.m. by the clock on the wall.

1. Agency Reports

a. none

2. District Reports

a. District Manager, Cassi Newton

Cassi apologized for not having a written report and provided a few highlights verbally pertaining to:

- Discussion with Senator Wyden's office pertaining to the rescinded RCPP funding and NRCS staffing and she was informed Wyden is interested in lobbying for an exception in the hiring freeze for the Condon NRCS office, which directed them to NRCS contacts, but due to the government shutdown they are out of the office.
- She helped with the Stockgrower's Annual Meeting.
- Attended the OACD Conference; staff attended the single full day. She provided a high level overview of take aways from the conference and urged the Board members to attend in the future.
- She is assisting with the updates to the JDBP Operations Manual.
- Due to staff capacity limitations, she contracted the West Branch Bridge Creek assessment compilation out to a Central Oregon contractor.
- Assisting staff with project documentation and reporting.
- Onboarding of the Office Assistant and continued training for staff.
- A significant amount of her time has been geared towards the SWCD property and the annual audit.

b. Conservation Technician, Brooke Moore

Brooke advised that she has been working on project completion reporting with two being ready for Cassi's review and the third being almost done. She further advised that she is working with Laurel on a few grant applications and planning for OWEB open solicitation.

c. Conservation Technician, Kristen Neuburger

Kristen advised that she is working on the ODA grant application and the bulk of her time the past month has been spent on conducting surveys and treatment for the USFS Crazy Creek Fire BAER Recovery.

Meeting Location: The Rock in Spray, Oregon

To Join from a computer or smartphone:

<https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/954414701> (Contact the office for meeting password)

To dial in using a phone:

(571) 317-3122 (Access Code: 954-414-701)

- d. **Conservation Technician, Laurel Tappert**
Not present – at training
 - e. **Office Assistant, Robin Champagne**
Cassi introduced Robin and she gave an overview of what she has worked on aside from onboarding and training.
- 3. Monthly Business**
- a. **Review and approve minutes**
 - i. **September 25, 2025, regular meeting**
‡**Motion** made by Vice Chair Thomas to approve the board meeting minutes, Director Johnson seconded the motion. Chair Collins, Vice Chair Thomas, Director Davis, Director Hunt, Director Johnson voted yes. There were no opposing votes. The motion passed unanimously.
 - b. **Review and approve financial reports**
 - i. **October**
‡**Motion** made by Director Davis to approve the financial report as presented, Director Hunt seconded the motion. Chair Collins, Vice Chair Thomas, Director Davis, Director Hunt, Director Johnson voted yes. There were no opposing votes. The motion passed unanimously.
 - c. **Review and approve Accounts Payable**
 - i. **October**
‡**Motion** made by Vice Chair Thomas to approve the check register with the exception of check 5783 written to David Hunt, Director Johnson seconded the motion. Chair Collins, Vice Chair Thomas, Director Hunt, Director Johnson voted yes. Director Davis abstained. There were no opposing votes. The motion passed unanimously.
‡**Motion** made by Director Davis to approve check 5783 written to David Hunt, Vice Chair Thomas seconded the motion. Chair Collins, Vice Chair Thomas, Director Davis, Director Johnson voted yes. There were no opposing votes. Director Hunt abstained. The motion passed unanimously.
- 4. Upcoming Meetings & Events**
- a. Staff Meeting, every Monday
 - b. November
 - i. 4th OACD Board Meeting, 9am virtual
 - ii. **11th Veteran’s Day, OFFICE CLOSED**
 - iii. 17th Conservation Partnership at the Capitol
 - iv. 20th OCEAN Board Meeting, 1pm virtual
 - v. **20th SWCD Board Meeting, 6pm Spray**
 - vi. **27th Thanksgiving, OFFICE CLOSED**
- 5. Upcoming Deadlines**
- a. November
 - i. 6th NACD NRCS TA
 - ii. 13th OWEB OAHP
- 6. District Management**
- a. **Annual Meeting**

Cassi presented resolution setting the Annual Meeting

‡**Motion** made by Director Davis to approve Resolution 2025-01 Establishing Annual Meeting, Director Hunt seconded the motion. Chair Collins, Vice Chair Thomas, Director Davis, Director Hunt, Director Johnson voted yes. There were no opposing votes. The motion passed unanimously.

Cassi advised the Board of the devastating news about Gabe Williams wife, Katie. She requested approval for a silent auction to be hosted at the Annual Meeting. Cassi explained that she visited with ODA and it was suggested that the SWCD staff nor Board handle any of the money. Cassi stated that she will be getting a family or community member to manage the auction and collection of money for the benefit.

‡**Motion** made by Vice Chair Thomas to host a silent auction benefit for the Katie Williams family at the 2024-25 Annual Meeting, Director Davis seconded the motion. Chair Collins, Vice Chair Thomas, Director Davis, Director Hunt, Director Johnson voted yes. There were no opposing votes. The motion passed unanimously.

b. Property

Cassi advised that Wheeler County Planning Hearing was held on October 8th and the CUP was approved, but the fee was not waived and the SWCD had to pay the permit fee again. She stated that she published the bid solicitation for a contractor and awarded the contract to Shannon Excavation. Cassi explained the details of the contract pertaining to the contractor's statement of work and remaining components that she will handle or assist with.

7. Legislation

a. None

8. Projects/Programs

a. Weed Board

Cassi explained the organization of weed control districts in Oregon and the current resolution on record with Wheeler County following the administration of the Wheeler County Weed Board being returned to Wheeler County in 2022. She further explained that Wheeler County has not recruited for the weed board nor held any meetings since 2022. Cassi also explained the revisions to the Oregon State Weed Board county grant funding pool and the SWCD's staffs' aspirations to continue seeking the funding for Wheeler County landowners. She presented a new resolution she drafted to would like to provide to Wheeler County Court that will designate Wheeler SWCD as the weed entity for the county and delegate administration of the Wheeler County Weed Board back to the SWCD. Cassi also presented a draft of bylaws she developed for the Weed Board.

‡**Motion** made by Director Davis to accept designation of the weed entity and administration of Wheeler County Weed Board should Wheeler County Court approve the Resolution, Director Johnson seconded the motion. Chair Collins, Vice Chair Thomas, Director Davis, Director Hunt, Director Johnson voted yes. There were no opposing votes. The motion passed unanimously.

b. USFS Forest Collaborative

Staff provided an overview of the Forest Collaborative application submitted to OWEB.

c. OWEB Open Solicitation

Cassi and Brooke provided an update on the Keeton Creek project. Staff also provided overviews of the three open solicitation applications they are planning for the February deadline.

d. ODFW Private Forest Accord

Staff provided an overview of two applications they are planning to submit for the new cycle of PFA.

e. ODF Small Forestland (*business not listed*)

Staff provided an overview of two fuels reduction applications they are writing for post-fire recovery and fuels reduction near the Lone Rock Fire scar and West Branch Bridge Creek.

9. Partners

a. Prescribed Burn Association

Cassi stated Laurel attended the Certified Burn Manager training in La Grande and she provided details of the planned training the SWCD is bringing to Wheeler County. She also presented packets to all the directors that were provided at the October 24th event.

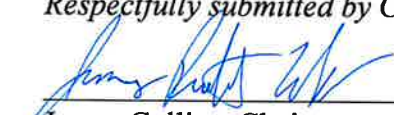
10. Business Not Listed

a. None

Next Meeting: Thursday, December 18, 2025

The board meeting was adjourned by Chair Collins at 7:02 p.m. by the clock on the wall.

Respectfully submitted by Cassandra Newton


James Collins, Chair


Cassandra Newton, District Manager