



UMPQUA

SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

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Newsletter – September 2023

Umpqua Soil and Water Conservation District is a non-regulatory agency here to help our community conserve natural resources through educational, financial and technical assistance. Since 1953 Umpqua Soil and Water Conservation District has been serving the residents of Northwestern Douglas County by partnering with landowners to empower them to be stewards and experts on their own land.

NEWS

Glover Estuary Enhancement Tide Gate Pre-Project Tour

Umpqua Soil & Water Conservation District and the Partnership for Umpqua Rivers held a pre-project tour at the end of July for local landowners, board and council members, and restoration groups.

We provided an informational talk and handout describing the history and timeline of how Umpqua SWCD began involvement in the tide gate process, how the Glover Estuary Enhancement Tide Gate Project developed over time with us and our partners, followed by a tour of the two tide gate sites and of the new tide gates at the staging site waiting to be installed.

Join us and our partners for a post installation tour in Spring 2024!



Interested in replacing your tide gates that may be undersized or not working as well as you would like? Umpqua SWCD can assist you with your tide gate replacement project(s)!

Mud & Manure Farm Tour

In early August we visited two farms with established heavy use protection areas for livestock as follow-up to our workshop in the Spring. OSU Extension Service Livestock Forages Specialist Shelby Filley showed us how she assisted landowners in constructing heavy use areas and the landowners talked about what they liked about implementing this kind of project. The first farm we visited had a heavy use protection area at the livestock entrance to their barn, and the second farm we visited had a heavy use protection area installed in their cattle corral and pen system.

During the tour Umpqua SWCD Conservation Planner Rhonda Black, Douglas SWCD Conservation Technician Cindy Bright, OSU Extension Service Assistant Professor Animal and Rangeland Science Tammy Barnes, and OSU Extension Service Small Farms Program Coordinator Logan Bennett provided information to attendees and answered questions. Tours like these are a great way to find information about projects, and to learn what landowners like about their project and what they might change if they were to implement a similar project.

Installation of heavy use protection areas on muddy sites can improve animal health. Mud transmits bacterial and fungal diseases and provides a breeding ground for flies. Hoof suction makes it difficult for cattle to move around in muddy areas and mud reduces the insulation value of hair coat causing animals to use more energy to keep warm. As temperatures fall animals may bunch up reducing pasture vegetation leading to erosion and water quality concerns.

Heavy use areas are designed to provide a hardened surface for livestock during the wet winter months, or anytime you might need to remove livestock from pastures. For instance, when pastures need a recovery period from grazing, when fields are amended with fertilizers and/or lime treatments, or when herbicides are applied to fields. Practices like heavy use protection areas prevent damage to pastures and provide the opportunity to improve pasture condition.



Above: Landowner discussing the benefits of their heavy use protection area installed at the livestock entrance to their barn.

Below: OSU Livestock Forages Specialist Shelby Filley describing how she designed the cattle pen for the landowner of the second farm and the benefits of using the heavy use area within the cattle movement system.



SERVICES

Soil Testing: Are You Prepared for Fall? Do you know your soils pH?

Did you know lime can be applied in the Fall? Yes, it can, and it's a great time to make the most of lime applications. Contact the Umpqua Soil & Water Conservation District Office today to schedule your soil test in preparation for Fall lime applications. Lime can take several months after application to break down and change your soil pH. The benefit of adding lime to your soil in fall is that freeze-thaw cycles, abundant rain, and for our area, sometimes snow, common during the fall and winter months will help break down the lime and start raising the soil's pH. Lime should never be applied to pastures that are stressed or dormant, so please keep that in mind. Soil tests are currently free to District residents and provide application rates for lime, nitrogen, phosphorous, potassium, and boron.

Blooms & Butterflies Celebration



Umpqua SWCD had a wonderful time at the Blooms & Butterflies Celebration in Elkton at the Elkton Community Education Center where we offered information about the services we provide and answered questions to those who visited our display.

This year at the celebration Umpqua SWCD was part of a natural resources set of informational tables including Douglas SWCD, Umpqua Native Plant Partnership, Umpqua Native Plant Society, Umpqua Watersheds, and Umpqua Valley Bee Keepers Association.

This is a delightful event that takes place each June.

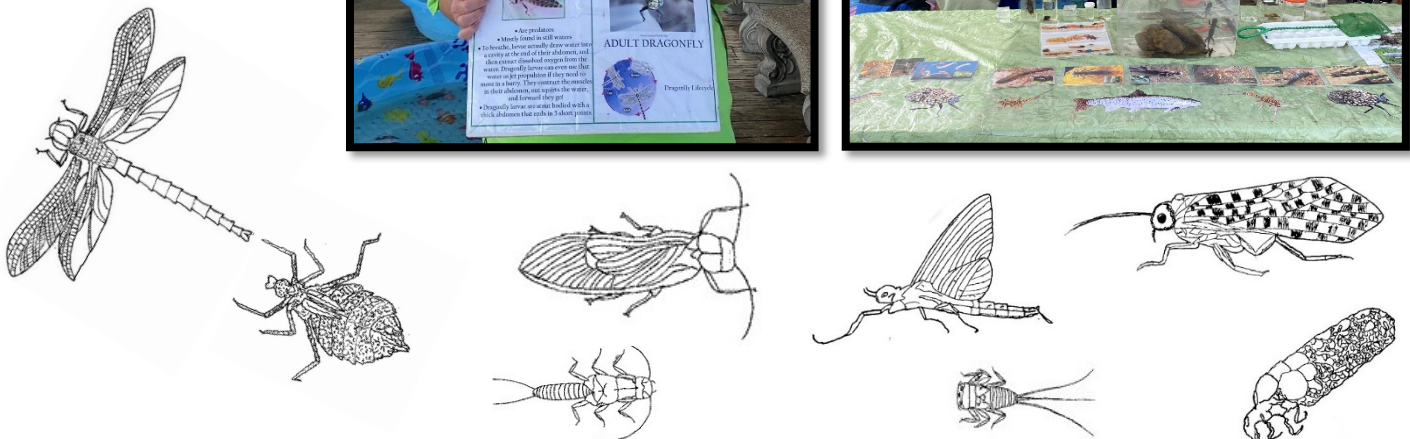
Thank you to everyone who stopped by our table and paid us a visit!



Tsalila Education Days 2023

Tsalila Education Days celebrates 26-years of watershed and cultural resources youth education this September. Held annually at the Umpqua Discovery Center in Reedsport, Umpqua Soil and Water Conservation District's station is "The Bug Zone" where we teach 3rd grade students about benthic macroinvertebrates, commonly known as water bugs, along with water quality at this hands-on learning station.

We would like to thank our volunteers who helped us collect the water bugs and those volunteers who assisted us at the Tsalila event!



UPCOMING EVENTS

Soil Health Management for Agriculture and Pastures

Presented by OSU Extension Small Farms Program and Umpqua Soil and Water Conservation District

Learn best management practices for increasing soil tilth on farms and pastures. During this presentation, learn how to improve return on investment in crops and forage, take and interpret soil samples, and strategies to minimize erosion and runoff while improving soil quality on farms and ranches. Start looking for information about this class in early Winter 2023 as we are currently in the planning stages.

SERVICES

Weed Wrench Loan Program

Weed Wrenches are woody plant pullers and available for loan through Umpqua Soil & Water Conservation District. These plant pullers are most effectively used when the soil is soft in the spring and are suited for leveraging scotch broom, small trees, and even blackberry roots from the soil. Requires a \$25 refundable deposit for a 2-week time period. Contact us today to rent one of these helpful tools.

Farm Conservation Planning

Farm Conservation Plans are documents developed jointly by Umpqua Soil & Water Conservation District and land managers. Farm Conservation Plans include actions that land managers can take to achieve their land use goals while protecting water and other natural resources. The planning process takes into consideration the size of the farm, type of soils, slope of the land, proximity to streams or water bodies, type of livestock or crops, and resources such as machinery, buildings and available finances.

Umpqua SWCD's Conservation Planner looks at changes that can be made to improve farm productivity and reduce impacts on natural resources. Some examples include stream-side fencing, gutters and downspouts, composting manure, pasture management and renovation, weed management, creating sacrifice areas, cross fencing and pasture rotation of livestock. Our Farm Conservation Planner can offer technical assistance on questions such as what grasses to plant, how to build a fence and when to mow.

Once the land manager has decided which changes they'd like to make on their property, they work with our Conservation Planner to set a tentative implementation schedule. Revisions of the schedule and the plan can be made as the goals and needs of the land manager change.

Farm Conservation Plans can help land managers, who have livestock, to meet the requirements of the Oregon Department of Agriculture Umpqua Basin Agricultural Water Quality Area Plan. This document can be found by going to:
<https://www.oregon.gov/oda/shared/Documents/Publications/NaturalResources/UmpquaAWQMAreaPlan.pdf>

All aspects of Farm Conservation Planning services provided by Umpqua SWCD are free of charge and without obligation. Umpqua SWCD is a non-regulatory, non-enforcement agency.

SMALL GRANTS PROGRAM

Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board Small Grants will be available to District residents and producers for a variety of water quality/Ag WQ and habitat improvement projects through our Umpqua 7 Small Grant Team starting this Fall! Now is the time to start thinking about projects to implement in the Spring/Summer of 2024.

Contact the Umpqua Soil & Water Conservation District Office in order to begin the application process. Grants are available in amounts up to \$15,000.

Project Examples:

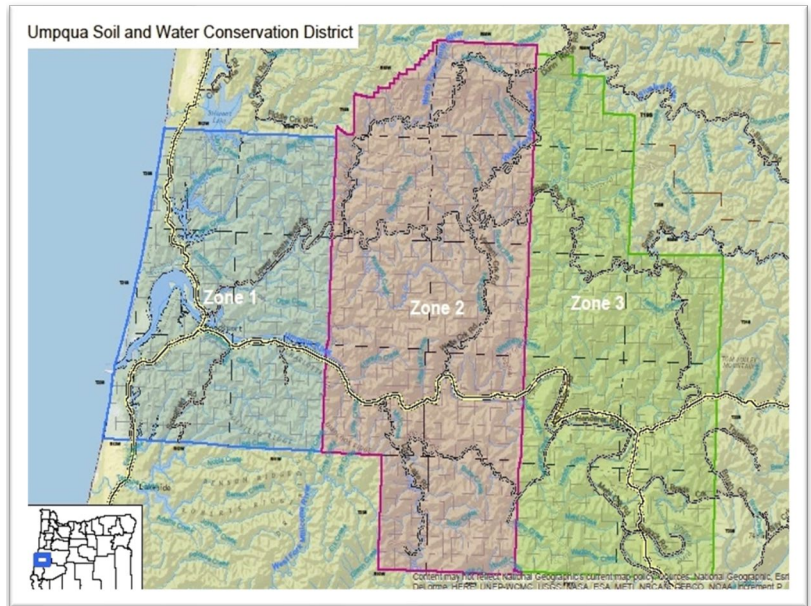
Livestock Exclusion Fencing, Off-Stream Watering Systems, Hardened Livestock Feeding Areas, Improved Livestock Crossings and Livestock Access Roads, and More!

DIRECTOR RECRUITMENT

Director Responsibilities:

The Board of Directors set the direction of the District through the development and/or oversight of the strategic plan, biennial work plan, and District policies, with input from the District Manager and Staff. The Board and Staff enjoy a great working relationship that ensures natural resource stewardship programs and projects are available to all Douglas County citizens within the Umpqua Soil & Water Conservation District boundaries.

An individual Board member may only exercise their authority and responsibility of his or her position when the Board is in legal session and only as part of a specific Board action (e.g. resolution, motion, policy, etc.) and must be recorded in the public meetings minutes. Individual Board members may be given limited authority to act on behalf of the Board only when authorized by a specific Board action.



The responsibilities of the Board of Directors include but are not limited to the following tasks: Approval and tracking of budgets, require and understand sufficient financial reports, oversight, employee performance reviews, approval and monitoring of annual work plan, strategic plan development and approval, represent Interests of Constituents, come to meetings informed and prepared, stay abreast of local conservation issues, promote the District's work to local landowners, local and state agencies, legislators, and other organizations.

In addition to the responsibilities listed above, the Directors, as a Board, have legal powers under ORS 568.550. To find out more go to: https://oregon.public.law/statutes/ors_568.550

The District is currently recruiting for the following position for appointment to the Umpqua SWCD Board of Directors: Zone 3.

A person wishing to become a Zone Director must be a registered voter within the District boundaries along with satisfying one of the following:

- Actively manage 10 or more acres in the zone that is being represented and reside within the boundaries of the district, or
- Reside within the zone that is being represented and actively managing 10 or more acres within the boundaries of the district, or
- Reside within the zone, serving at least one year in a SWCD At Large position or in a SWCD associate director position, and having a conservation plan that is approved by the district. This eligibility option does not include a requirement of active management of 10 acres or more.

An interactive map of the District and zones can be found at:

<https://geo.maps.arcgis.com/apps/instant/lookup/index.html?appid=31b2f5ae9d494ecfbf7ff2608061a63f>

MEETINGS OF INTEREST

Umpqua Soil and Water Conservation District Board of Director's Meetings

October 19, November 9th, and December 14th.

Our meetings are held the 2nd Thursday of each month and held virtually.

Please email rhonda@umpquasoilandwater.com to obtain meeting information and instructions for attending virtually.

NEWSLETTER DELIVERY

Would you like to receive this newsletter by email? Send us an email with "newsletter" in the subject line to rhonda@umpquasoilandwater.com to let us know! If you are not yet receiving this newsletter and would like to, but don't use email, call (541) 662-1341 and we'll add you to our mailing list.

CONTACT INFORMATION

How to contact Umpqua Soil & Water Conservation District:

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MISSION

“The mission of the locally led Umpqua Soil and Water Conservation District is to provide assistance to any individual, group, or agency in applying natural resource conservation practices for the wise use of their natural resources.”