



Jefferson County Soil and Water Conservation District

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June 2026

Let me know if you want to be ADDED or TAKEN OFF this email list or have something to add: ellen.hammond@jeffswcd.org

May 29, 10-11am Webinar: Breaking Vicious Wildfire Cycles: How Proactively Controlling Invasive Annual Grasses Can Lessen the Intensity and Speed of Wildfires in the West

Envu is sponsoring a webinar dedicated to long term wildfire mitigation. The session will feature summaries from recent trial work at Colorado State University, a new USG publication on breaking the invasive grass-fire cycle, and how innovative tools can support effective fine-fuels management to reduce wildfire risk. To reserve your spot: [Envu webinar registration](#).

June 18, 10am-noon, plus lunch ☺

COAREC Field Day

Central Oregon Ag Research and Extension Center

COAREC staff are excited to show you what they have been up to. Stay tuned!



June 18, lunch ☺ plus 1-3pm

Croplands Working Group

Central Oregon Ag Research and Extension Center

This diverse group was established 2 years ago to implement the Croplands Priority Tools in the Jefferson County Agricultural Drought Resiliency Plan. Those tools are:

- Optimize crop water use efficiency
- Identify additional cash crops
- Improve soil health
- Control annual weeds on unirrigated land

Our current emphasis is on finding funding for irrigation modernization and on research related to crops and water use. Let me know if you want to join the discussion on how it's going and how to move forward. In addition, the group is partnering with Jefferson County Weed control. We will meet at COAREC after their Field Day.

[NO SWCD Board Meeting in June](#)

June 25, morning

Kernza-CONNECT Conference

Central Oregon Ag Research and Extension Center



Interested in the potential of perennial grain crops in Central Oregon? Kernza (a trademarked variety of intermediate wheatgrass) is getting a lot of attention now. COAREC is hosting a multi-day national conference for Kernza researchers and other interested parties June 23-25th. On June 25th, there will be a field tour at COAREC, followed by lunch and a discussion of what Kernza buyers and distributors need from growers to develop a local source of Kernza. Contact [Steve Culman](mailto:steve.culman@oregonstate.edu) for more information (steve.culman@oregonstate.edu) or go to beav.es/Kernza-CON-nect.

More on next page!



The Virtual Fence workshop in Antelope was a great success. Almost 50 people attended, including 21 landowners from about 15 operations in Wasco, Sherman, and Jefferson Counties! Kudos to our partners Wasco County SWCD, OSU Extension-Prineville, and ODA for food, drinks, and connections to vendors! And, it was wonderful to see all the upgrades to the old Antelope School to make it a Community Center to be proud of.

As a result of the workshop, at least 3 landowners are meeting with Vence or Halter representatives to explore options on their ranches. We will have another workshop for ranchers next winter, and potentially also one near Madras for landowners interested in the use of virtual fence on irrigated lands. Stay tuned!

NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR LANDOWNERS!



The new **Regenerative Pilot Program** addresses whole-farm concerns through voluntary regenerative agriculture conservation plans. Bundled practices will be integrated into a single application. This program offers additional funding opportunities under EQIP or CSP. Primary practices include Conservation Crop Rotation, Cover Crop, Drainage Water Mgmt, Forage Harvest Mgmt, Forest Stand Improvement, Irrigation Water Mgmt, Nutrient Mgmt, Pest Mgmt Conservation System, Grazing Mgmt, Residue and Tillage Mgmt (No Till or Reduced), and others. The program also requires soil health testing. \$1.9 million is projected to be allocated to Jefferson County for 2026. For more information contact: [Amber Herman](#) or 541-699-6125 or see

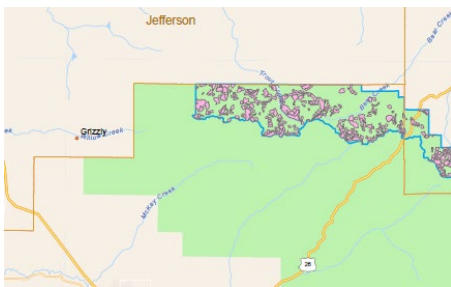
www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs-initiatives/regenerative-pilot-program.

American Farmland Trust has a [National Farm Viability Grant](#) opening June 8th. Grants of up to \$10,000 are available to farmers and ranchers. This is a highly competitive grant, and early applications have a better chance of being selected. Priority given to beginning, limited-resource, and veteran producers. Grants support projects that:



- Improve farm viability
- Expand access to, transfer, or permanently protect farmland
- Advance regenerative practices.

For assistance, email brighterfuture@farmland.org.



The Ochoco National Forest has completed scoping for a vegetation management project called the North Slope Vegetation Management Project. This project area includes approximately 54,000 acres of private land in southeast Jefferson County near the National Forest. Proposed projects include tree thinning, fuels reduction and associated supporting activities, with the aim to retain large, healthy, fire and drought resilient tree species that would have the best chance to survive wildfire events and establish conditions more similar to historic conditions. Practices may include range management and waterway restoration. The project is expected to last 3 years.

NRCS and the USFS will work in partnership with Oregon Department of Forestry, Jefferson SWCD, Middle Deschutes Watershed Council, other entities, and private landowners to apply targeted forest management practices across both public and private lands.

Contact Ben Walen at ODF (ben.m.walen@odf.oregon.gov) if you might be interested in participating and what management practices you would use on your property. There is no defined boundary to the planning area; your interest will help determine it!