

Jefferson County SWCD Board Minutes ~ Aug 25th, 2026

BOARD MEETING MINUTES

August 25th, 2026 - 12:00 pm

Held at COAREC ~ Madras, Oregon (Virtually Via Zoom)

Board Present:

Brad Klann (Zone 2)
Craig Weigand (Zone 3)
Gary Richards (at Large)

Board Absent:

Rob Galyen
Lloyd Forman
Curt Locke

Associate Board Present:

Scott Samsel
Alysia (via zoom)

Staff Present:

Kate Haarberg
Ellen Hammond
Ally Steinmetz (zoom)
Adam Haarberg
Amber Herman

Advisors/Partners:

Heather Miller – Or Fire Marshal
David Stuart – Confederated Tribes
Collin Cowsill – NUID
Steve Culman – OSU

Call to Order:

The August 25th meeting did not have a quorum of Directors. A meeting was held, but no motions were passed.

Heather Miller – Works with the Oregon Fire Marshal as a Fire Risk Reduction Specialist. She serves Jefferson, Deschutes and Crook Counties. She supports communities in wildfire resilience work and being fire adapted. Looking for ways to partner in Jefferson County. They will be updating the Community Wildfire protection Plan this year and looking for more partner involvement. Heather distributed a brochure “Living with Wildfire, Jefferson County’s Guide to Becoming Fire-Adapted”. She is interested in tracking the North Central Wildfire Group that Ellen convened.

DRC Cover Cropping Contracting Grant – Ellen reported that JCSWCD is written into a DRC Cover Cropping Grant as a contractor. Our involvement was unclear at the start of the grant, and DRC has had turnover in the Project Manager role of this grant as well. We have met with DRC to map out our role. We have found that there are two main objectives. First is to develop an official Water Bank in North Unit. Second objective is to figure out a way to help pay for Cover Cropping, especially for those participating in the Water Bank. DRC will be conducting extensive interviews with landowners over the course of winter. Our role is to compile existing sources of funding for cover cropping and what the requirements are and figure out potential funding sources for that, along with gathering information on cover crops in Jefferson County.

Project Update - Little Trout Creek Phase II - Adam reported that the 1.75-mile-long project is about halfway done and they are making good progress. Adam showed a picture of the dozer moving thousands of yards of dirt. The project’s goal is to connect almost two miles of stream to the flood plain. In-stream construction should be done the end of October. Trees and seeding to take place in the spring.

Seed Mix – Adam has been talking with a representative at Helena about a seed mix. They are working to put together a bulk order of a certain mix that would ultimately be a cost savings to landowners to buy from the bulk order.

SIA II Grant Update - Riparian Assessment project – As part of the SIA II grant we are tasked to conduct a riparian assessment. Ellen, Ally, Amber, and ODA staff are developing a method for identifying and

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prioritizing riparian needs without having to be on-site. While this is being piloted in the SIA, the goal is to have it applicable anywhere in Jefferson County.

Conservation Coordinator Job Announcement: The funding for this position hit a hiccup yesterday when we were notified that our PSP Grant would not be renewed for the 27-29 biennium. This grant has historically been a consistent part of the funding for this position. Kate will crunch numbers as Ellen continues to set her sights on future funding sources. It is still our belief that this position (at 75 to 80% FTE) should move forward since we have saved so much to have the overlap and training period with Ellen.

North Central SWCD's Wildfire Group – Ellen called together SWCD and WC staff from the surrounding six counties to see if they would be interested in collaborating on wildfire recovery and developing a plan to make our lands more resilient to wildfire. They are. The group is drafting a Statement of Need to distribute to policy makers and potential funders.

Staff Updates:

Ally: MDWC's Upper Willow Creek Habitat Enhancement TA grant was officially awarded by OWEB for \$138,893, including \$39,729 for salaries/wages/benefits and \$18,117 in indirect. MDWC supported Mid John Day WC's OWEB TA proposal for the Enchanted Rocks Preserve Watershed Assessment and Action Plan, and will play a larger role in that project if awarded. MDWC submitted a \$12,000 Roundhouse Foundation request for Jefferson County Youth Watershed Education and Stewardship. We will also begin looking closely at the SIA Restoration Grant cycle opening this winter to identify potential projects within the SIA.

Other work included helping develop a Riparian Assessment Protocol to prioritize restoration work, and a field day with ODA Rangeland Specialist Mark Porter looking at the Bench Fire, including the Campbell Creek corridor and an area treated with Rejuvra post-fire. Post-fire response is becoming a major area of coordination: MDWC participated in the North Central Wildfire meeting and will attend an ODF-organized meeting focused on aligning organizations around resources, expertise, and funding available to Jefferson County. The goal is to build a stronger network and toolbox for responding to landowner needs now and being better prepared for future fires.

Amber: Amber has been working alongside Ellen & Ally on the Riparian Assessment. She is also working on an OWEB NRCS TA grant that just opened. NRCS has a new Planner in the office named Jacob. The NRCS also is undergoing a reorganization plan that was just released. The main change is larger team structure. The new plan means our District Conservationist will now over see Jefferson, Deschutes and Crook County. This change will happen at the beginning of October.

Partner Check-in's

Collin Cowsill NUID: The district should be able to squeak by with the current water without reductions. Busy Fall/Winter maintenance projects scheduled.

Steve Culman OSU: OSU President recently visited and that went well. Steve mentioned wanting to continue the momentum of the Drought Resiliency Group with JCSWCD.

David Stuart: David finished his proposal to BPA for funding for two fiscal years which included Adam & Tom's project Upper Trout Creek project proposal for moving the road. It was moving ahead but then BPA said fisheries have accounting they still need to do before we can move forward with this project. He said the money is there but needs to be spent by end of FY 28. David hopes that fisheries have their stuff

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wrapped up by the end of September. David also met with NRCS about RCPP next year that is specific to the Tribes.

NEXT BOARD MEETING - set for Tue September 22, 2026, Location at COAREC
Adjourned 1:37