



**UMPQUA SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
MONTHLY BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES**

February 12, 2026

Directors Present: Chair Nathan Baumgartner
Director Kate Baumgartner
Director Tom Black

Staff Present: District Manager/Conservation Planner Rhonda Black

Agencies Present: USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service District Conservationist
Bradley Stokes

Others Present: Fiscal Provider Tanya Graham

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER:

The Chair N. Baumgartner called the meeting to order at 5:04 p.m.

FISCAL PROVIDER REPORT:

Fiscal Provider Graham explained the financial reports for the month ending January 31, 2026.

Page 1 - The Balance Sheet. It shows total current assets of \$57,924.88 and total liabilities & Equity of \$57,924.88.

Page 2 - Check Register - General Checking - started the month with \$34,576.95 and ended the month with \$21,954.63. Savings with \$68.47.

Registers - Accounts Receivable, Accounts Payable.

Accounts receivable total funds submitted for payment were \$33,201.61 and accounts payable were \$0.00.

The Statement of Activity and Cash Flow Report – The top part of the report shows income and expenses which reflects the cash flow of funds coming in and going out of the district’s bank account. That is going to give the district a net ordinary income for each grant. In the next section will be the Admin Income and Admin Expense. That is the cash that’s not moving around physically, but transferring between the grants. It’s not moving out, it’s just moving between the grants, and that’s where “other income” happens, and when you put those together, you get your “net income”.

There are two categories:

1. General Category – Function of the district, what it does, for its primary purpose.
2. Project Program Category – Programs and projects the district is doing/working on that isn’t the district’s general function, but are added to the district. They aren’t capacity building.

Every column represents a funding source and/or grant.

Page 3 – Statement of Activity and Cash Flow Report – General Category:

So far this year the district has had \$76,060.24 of General income. So far this year the District has had \$46,501.55 of General expenses. The General net income for this year is \$30,045.78 and the General cash balance for this year is \$25,723.90.

Page 4 – Statement of Activity and Cash Flow Report – Project Program Category:

So far this year the District has had a total income of all Project Programs is \$8,411.11. With a total of Project expenses of \$4,906.81 leaving a net income so far this year of \$3,017.21 and negative cash balance of \$3,700.80. You might be wondering why you would have a negative figure there? That's because a lot of the times you can't request the funds from the granting agency until you have completed the grant work and submitted the final report, so you sit on those negative numbers until everything in the grant is complete and you receive those final grant funds from the granting agency.

Statement of Activity and Cash Flow Report - Total combined Total Income: \$84,471.35 and total combined Expenses: \$51,408.36. Leaving a net income of \$33,062.99 and leaving a combined cash balance of \$22,023.10 (actual cash balance in the bank) which matches your bank balance on page 1. The negative numbers at the bottom of the page represent grants where we need to get reimbursed for those funds. Once the projects are closed, we can get those monies reimbursed to the District.

Page 5 - Monthly Comparison – As of January 31st – Income: \$33,270.14 and total expenses: \$9,472.86. Net income of \$23,797.28 and a cash balance of \$22,023.10.

Page 6 through 9 – Reports that are due, PTO balances, and beginning of Individual Grant and/or funding source details.

Fiscal Provider Graham exited the meeting at 5:13 p.m.

APPROVAL OF BILLS & TREASURER'S REPORT FOR AUDIT

Chair N. Baumgartner made a motion, 2nd by Director K. Baumgartner to approve the bills and the January 2026 Treasurer's Report. The motion **unanimously passed** (N. Baumgartner, K. Baumgartner, T. Black).

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chair N. Baumgartner made a motion, 2nd by Director T. Black to approve the January 8, 2026 Business Meeting minutes. The motion **unanimously passed** (N. Baumgartner, K. Baumgartner, T. Black).

AGENCY & ORGANIZATION REPORTS

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service District Conservationist Bradley Stokes:

- *NRCS programmatic changes are underway by the NRCS Oregon State Conservationist Greg Becker. Mr. Becker leads Oregon's NRCS leadership team, overseeing conservation efforts, partnership expansion, and the implementation of Farm Bill.*
 - *The new changes could be beneficial to Reedsport.*
 - *Conservation Implementation Strategy (CIS) program is still intact.*
 - *Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), Local Foods, and Small Farmers & Ranchers programs are still available as well.*
- *Basin and State Level:*
 - *Big programs benefit Reedsport including:*
 - *Regenerative Pilot Program*

- *Five-year program*
- *Full farm assessment*
- *Operational needs and wants including forestry, pasture, and rangeland*
- *Soil tests required for the beginning and end of the period.*
- *SWCD District Manager/Conservation Planner is considered a “Qualified Individual” for this the soils program.*
 - *Bradley Stokes will get Wallace Jennings with NRCS going on the soil testing needs for the Qualified Individual.*
- *Potential to help folks in Reedsport*
- *Current applications:*
 - *158 program applications for this year and we’re processing those.*
 - *74 active contracts in Douglas County.*
- *Local Work Group (LWG) Meeting Planning:*
 - *Diminished staffing causing changes in paperwork which is taking 7-10 days to complete so it could take a longer time to get the paperwork through for the meeting.*
 - *April or May will work for potential meeting dates.*
 - *LWG is when we will be talking with the community about concerns, but this year it won’t be the bulk of the LWG meeting.*
 - *Basin Team Leader Heather Medina and State Conservationist Greg Becker indicated that NRCS might have both a Reedsport and Roseburg meeting.*
 - *Both the Umpqua SWCD District Manager/Conservation Planner and NRCS District Conservationist Bradley Stokes will lead the LWG meeting.*
 - *District Conservationist Stokes will discuss NRCS items and understands that Reedsport can be a tough area to gain traction for NRCS programs.*
 - *District Manager/Conservation Planner Black will discuss SWCD information, agriculture water quality, projects, and grant programs available.*
 - *It will take about 2.5 months to get all of the paperwork through for the specific venue for the LWG meeting.*
- *Regenerative Pilot Program (RPP) is available nationwide:*
 - *A lot is going to the program and it will be a really good thing.*

STAFF REPORT:

Conservation Technician/District Manager Rhonda Black:

February 12, 2026

- **OWEB:**
 - 2023-2025 District Operations Capacity Grant –
 - *First 6-month reporting for the SOW grant submitted January 15th.*
 - *Approved by ODA Regional Water Quality Program Specialist on January 16th.*
 - *Approved by ODA Grants Administrative Officer.*
 - *Approved by OWEB on January 26th.*
 - *Payment received for first six-months on February 6th for \$25,290.50.*
 - *ODA Letter of Compliance sent to Scottsburg landowner by ODA on January 28th.*
 - **OWEB Small Grants Program:**
 - **OWEB Small Grants Status:**
 - *Otter-Baumgartner Ranch Livestock Exclusion –*
 - *Monitoring report due July 31, 2027.*
 - *Elk Creek Riparian OWEB Small Grant –*
 - *Monitoring report due July 31, 2027.*

- *Providence Creek Runoff Management –*
 - *Monitoring reporting due April 8, 2027.*
- *Parent Ranch Livestock Exclusion Phase 1 –*
 - *Heavy use areas at the gates and elk jumps complete. Final payment made to landowner.*
 - *Completion reporting due: April 16, 2026.*
- *Costa Ranch Runoff Management –*
 - *Grant approved by OWEB on November 22, 2024 with \$15,000 for gutters, downspouts, drainage line, geotextile fabric, and gravel for the heavy use protection area. In contact with both Mr. Costa and the gravel hauler in an effort to prepare for stockpiling 18 ten-yard loads of gravel for the heavy use area at the barn. Once everything is determined, we can request the 60% OWEB advance to cover the cost of the gravel for this project with implementation to start occurring this summer. Landowner will prepare the site by grading for the heavy use area, trenching and installing the downspout drain lines, installing gutters and downspouts on the barn, and installing the piping for the livestock watering system.*
 - *Answered questions and provided information via email, text, and telephone.*
 - *End date: November 1, 2026.*
 - *Completion reporting due: December 31, 2026.*
- *Workshops/Classes –*
 - *Fruit tree pruning workshop held on Saturday, January 17, 2026 at the Elkton Community Education Center from 11:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. with 50 participants.*
 - *Oregon Agricultural Trust Farm & Ranch Management Workshop Series - March 5, 2026 at the Elkton Community Education Center Library from 11:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. (SWCD hosting), registration open at <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSd1ThO69sHt6ojVrjgjGNoiLqipmaWWhJgWv3dtGPrZKIRCLg/viewform>*
 - *Information sent as a press release to newspapers and radio, to email list, shared onto Facebook groups, on SWCD Facebook page, and on SWCD website.*
- *OWEB TA Grant:*
 - *Will be resubmitting grant. Possibly breaking it down into smaller, more manageable grants. For instance, one for the Scholfield Creek Head of Tide area (livestock exclusion fencing, riparian plantings, farm bridges, heavy use areas, and the tidegate on Scholfield Creek). Then another, possibly at a much later date, for the fish passage bridges on Providence Creek and Decker Point.*
 - *Met virtually with ODA to review grant on January 29th.*
 - *Emailed OWEB Regional Specialist to set up meeting to discuss grant on February 4th, but have not heard back, yet.*
- *BLM:*
 - *BLM Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination grant, “Umpqua Noxious Weed Control” for both contractor and myself. Matt Ruwaldt Consulting and Umpqua SWCD worked with BLM after project was approved by the BLM RAC for \$24,000 to provide requested updates to the BLM.*

- **PARTNERSHIPS:**

- Umpqua 7, Coos 4, Mid-Coast 3 OWEB Small Grant Teams –

- Umpqua 7 –

- Working with Lee Russell with Elk Creek Watershed Coalition.

- Elk Creek Watershed Coalition was recommended for funding for the Team Leader grant of \$20,000 for the biennium. Umpqua SWCD is supposed to be written in on the contracted services line to write brochures and fact sheets for the outreach. We will need an MOU, but do have an updated budget with each of our responsibilities hand-written in, so this is helpful.

- Coos 4 – No new news.

- Mid-Coast 3 –

- Partnership for the Umpqua Rivers –

- PUR meeting – Attended meeting, virtually, on January 23rd. Next meeting will be held on February 17th.

- Not sure when public tour of Glover site will occur.

- Glover Lands Estuary Enhancement Project – Landowner working on fencing and watering system installation.

- Providence Creek Area Updates:

- Providence Creek Tide Gates –

- In a holding pattern due to previous Port Commission decision to back out of project.

- Had a meeting with Porior Engineering on December 6th who felt that we could get the fish passage plan done while we're in limbo on the project. We will need to find funding to complete this portion of the project.

- Met with Port Manager on December 9th and discussed the fish passage plan. Since the MOU is still in place it was decided to go forward with finding funding to get the plan done so we would have some of the groundwork out of the way as the tide gate replacement project still needs to occur. The Port will provide a letter of support, possibly some in-kind match in the form of employee time toward the passage plan. Will contact engineer to follow-up with planning.

- Meeting with Port Manager on January 20th to find ways to move forward on project. Found the City Manager had contacted him to encourage movement forward on the project.

- Will be presenting information on tidedgates at the March 17th Port meeting.

- Leeds Island Park and Restoration Project –

- No new news. Ruwaldt Consulting is to contact the Reedsport City Manager to set up a meeting to discuss the project.

- A member of the Reedsport Parks and Beautification Committee contacted the landowner and found the landowner is still very interested in working with both the SWCD and City on this project.

- Douglas Weed Management Area – Attended meeting virtually on January 27th.

- DEQ Umpqua TMDL Implementation –

- Attended the virtual January 13th meeting. Next meeting scheduled for April 14th.

- Elk Creek Watershed Coalition –

- Attended virtual meeting on February 10th. Next meeting scheduled for March 10th.

- Forest Service –

- *Oregon Central Coast Forest Collaborative – Next meeting scheduled for February 26th.*
- *Hydro Breakfast Meeting – Next virtual meeting scheduled for March 5th.*
- *Oregon Agricultural Trust –*
 - *Assisting OAT with a farm and ranch financial planning management workshop series for agricultural producers on March 5th. See above heading for “workshops” for more information.*
- *Oregon Association of Conservation Districts (OACD) –*
 - *Attended OACD Workgroup-HR and Personnel Mtg#1 virtually on January 27th.*
- *Oregon Coastal Planning Meeting for Coastal Resilience –*
 - *Attended meeting virtually on February 4th. This was the inaugural meeting to discuss development of resilience action plans for both counties to introduce the planning process and involved parties, understand natural hazard threats, risks, vulnerabilities, and impacts specific to the South Coast, facilitate discussion between organizations, and discuss potential strategies to increase local resilience. This meant a variety of issues from fish and wildlife, to estuaries, to planning for hazards, and food insecurity, along with AgWQ practices to protect coastal areas and to provide for food.*
- *Oregon Conservation Education Association Network (OCEAN) –*
 - *CONNECT scheduled for March 31st through April 2nd in Seaside at the Seaside Civic and Convention Center.*
 - *Registration completed.*
 - *Lodging secured.*
 - *Annual OCEAN dues paid as part of conference registration.*
- *Oregon Coastal Zone Management Association – Attended meeting virtually on February 9th.*
- *Oregon Climate and Agriculture Network –*
 - *Received payment in the amount of \$1,300 for just about anything to do with soil health from a grant obtained by OrCAN for the soil health network regional leads.*
 - *Attended Soil Health Network Quarterly Check-in meeting on January 28th.*
 - *Reporting completed January 30th.*
- *Oregon Dunes Restoration Collaborative – The group is planning activities for 2026.*
- *Oregon Soil and Water Conservation Commission –*
 - *Umpqua SWCD will host their 2-day meeting in August 2026.*
- *Smith/Umpqua/Dunes Stewardship Group – No new news.*
- *Umpqua Oaks Partnership – Attended part of virtual annual meeting on February 4th.*
- *Umpqua Native Plant Partnership –*
 - *Planning a meeting with Morgan Fay regarding Glover Project Planting Plan.*
- *USDA/NRCS –*
 - *Met with NRCS on January 22nd at the Port of Umpqua Conference Room to discuss changes within NRCS and program changes.*
 - *Attended virtual Technology Transfer meeting on January 26th. NRCS is transitioning it’s Threatened and Endangered Species process to a new platform/process, and held a demonstration and Q&A session.*
 - *Attended the virtual Conservation Evaluation and Monitoring Activity (CEMA) 204 Adaptive Management for Soil Health on January 28th. The Soil Health Division completed the Conservation Evaluation and Monitoring Activity-CEMA 204 Adaptive Management for Soil Health, CEMA 204 is the evaluation and monitoring of soil health management strategies to inform conservation planning. This webinar provided overall details and guidance for the newly created CEMA 204 Adaptive Management for Soil Health.*

- *Assisting NRCS District Conservationist Stokes with the local workgroup meeting planned for 2026 in Reedsport.*
- **TRAININGS:**
 - *Attended SoilCon 2026 on February 12th which centered on the theme of Soil Health Successes and Failures, exploring which practices improve soil health, and which do not, which soil health indicators are helpful, and which are not. Very interesting.*
- **TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE:**
 - *Site visit – February 11th, visited Scholfield Creek Recreation Site with landowner for 1 fish barrier tidegate and channel work with approximately 4 culvert replacements for fish passage. Landowner requested assistance to replace tidegate with side-opening tidegate, channel restoration, riparian plantings, and culvert replacements for fish passage and to improve overall wildlife habitat. The location is directly across Scholfield Creek from the Leeds Island site. Will need assistance from engineer, consultant, and others. This is straightforward, but a big, very publicly visible project.*
 - *Reedsport – April 1st for soil test.*

Ongoing TA:

- *Otter Creek OWEB Small Grant –*
 - *In-process. AgWQ Farm Conservation Plan completed in December and approved by landowner in January.*
- *Otter Slough OWEB Small Grant –*
 - *In-process. Site visit completed February 4th, waiting for more information from landowner to complete the AgWQ Farm Conservation Plan, then the grant will be written.*
- *Clear Creek OWEB Small Grant –*
 - *In-process. Working with landowner. Site visit completed in November with follow-ups with landowner. AgWQ Farm Conservation Plan needs to be written, then the small grant will follow.*
- *Oar Creek – Will need to follow-up with landowner to determine if interested in small grant and to decide details of small grant. AgWQ Farm Conservation Plan needs to be written.*
- *Elk Creek Riparian Restoration Projects:*
 - *5 properties involved with this project, one of which is already being worked on through a small grant. Hoping to work with the City of Elkton on these projects, which will fit into their DEQ TMDL plan. This is a stretch of Elk Creek within the City limits of Elkton where there is little to no shade on the creek, and the riparian has been invaded by Armenian Blackberry and at least two different kinds of ivy, along with Reed Canary Grass.*
- *Providence Creek – Landowner called about fill and removal, levy repair, fencing, etc. Will follow up when Consultant is available.*
- *Possible in-stream work, riparian buffer and grant for project at Wild Azalea Vineyards.*
 - *Mailed list of neighboring landowners so contacts can be made for neighbors on Hanes Creek to include them in grant work. ODFW on-board with project. Have not heard back. Will follow-up.*
- *Ruwaldt Consulting – Met with Matt on January 28th to go over list of projects that we'll need to continue to work on and projects to begin working on this winter.*
- *Don Porior Engineering – Need to follow up with new information.*
- **ADMINISTRATION:**

- *Financial documents, statements, timesheets, etc. recorded, filed, and loaded into Google Drive for Fiscal Provider.*
- *Meeting information provided to Directors, and ODA WQ Specialist & Program Lead.*
- *Business Meeting notice provided to media, electronic notice list, website.*

DIRECTOR REPORTS:

None.

BUSINESS ITEMS

1. Recreational Immunity – Action Item

The District Manager explained “Recreational Immunity” and provided information from the Special District’s Association of Oregon.

Oregon's recreational immunity laws (ORS 105.682) protect public and private landowners, including SDAO members, from liability for injuries sustained on their land during free recreational use. Following a 2023 court decision that weakened these protections, SB 179 was passed in 2025 to permanently restore and strengthen immunity for trails, paths, and, significantly, improved, designed, or maintained, access ways.

Key Aspects of Recreational Immunity in Oregon (SDAO Context)

Purpose: Encourages districts to keep parks, trails, and open spaces open to the public for free.

Scope of Immunity: Covers recreational activities, including walking, running, and biking, even on improved trails or paths designed to access recreational areas.

Legal Changes: After *Fields v. City of Lincoln City* (2023) limited immunity, the 2024 legislature passed temporary fixes, which were made permanent by SB 179 in 2025.

Not Absolute: Immunity generally does not apply if a fee is charged for entry, or in cases of reckless or gross negligence.

SDAO Support: The Special Districts Association of Oregon strongly supported the 2025 legislation to protect local governments from costly lawsuits.

For special districts, this restored immunity is crucial for maintaining public access to trails and recreational facilities without high liability risks.

Senate Bill 179 - Opt-in Immunity for Special Districts:

<https://www.sdao.com/senate-bill-179-opt-in-immunity-for-special-districts>

Oregon’s trail-use immunity statute, ORS 105.668, offers targeted protection against negligence claims arising from the use of trails and similar structures located within public easements or unimproved rights of way by non-motorized users. Beginning January 1, 2026, Senate Bill 179 expands the authority to opt into this immunity to all local governments (including special districts), complementing the statute’s automatic coverage for certain large cities and related parties. This overview explains when the immunity applies, who can benefit, and why districts with any connection to trail use should evaluate opting in as a practical way to reduce liability exposure – without creating any new duty to build, improve, maintain, or allow public access.

Overview from the Special Districts Association of Oregon:

ORS 105.668 provides limited protection from lawsuits for personal injuries or property damage resulting from the use of a trail or other structure located within a public easement or unimproved right of way by users who are on foot, on an equine, or using a bicycle or other non-motorized conveyance. In those circumstances, users are barred from bringing a “private claim or right of action based on negligence.”

ORS 105.668(2) automatically extends this trail-use immunity to:

(a) cities with a population of 500,000 or more;

(b) officers, employees, or agents of such a city to the extent they are entitled to defense and indemnification under ORS 30.285;

(c) owners of lands abutting public easements or unimproved rights of way in cities with a population of 500,000 or more; or

(d) nonprofit corporations and their volunteers who work on the construction or maintenance of trails or the structures in a public easement or unimproved right of way in a city with a population of 500,000 or more.

Previously, only smaller cities and counties could “opt in” to this immunity by adopting an ordinance, resolution, rule, order, or other regulation. Beginning January 1, 2026, Senate Bill 179 extends this opt-in authority to all “local governments,” as defined in ORS 174.116, which includes special districts.

Although the ORS 105.668 immunity only applies in limited circumstances, all special districts should evaluate whether opting in would provide meaningful protection. Districts that manage or maintain trails, paths, stairs, bridges, or related structures located within public easements or unimproved rights of way should strongly consider opting in. For example, a park district that constructs and maintains trails situated within public easements granted by subdivision developers or homeowners associations would not be covered simply because the city has opted in. Similarly, an irrigation district that has granted (or consented to) easements allowing the public to walk or bike along ditch-rider roads located on property the district does not own would not be protected unless it separately opts in.

It is important to note that opting in does not create any new duty to construct, improve, or maintain trails or to allow public access. Rather, it may reduce liability exposure where public use already exists.

When applicable, ORS 105.668(3) offers significant protections, and in some respects is broader than the recreational immunity available under ORS 105.682 because (1) it applies to all users, not just those engaged in “recreational purposes”, and (2) it extends beyond the owner of the land where the injury occurred. In short, for most districts with no public access or exposure, the benefit may be minimal, but districts with any connection to trail use should consider opting in. Below is a sample resolution that your district may use (or adapt into an ordinance, rule, order, or regulation) when opting into the trail-use immunity.

Chair N. Baumgartner made a motion, 2nd by K. Baumgartner to approve Resolution 2026-01 opting to limit liability for certain claims arising from the use of public trails or structures in public easements and unimproved rights-of way pursuant to ORS 105.668. The motion **unanimously passed** (N. Baumgartner, K. Baumgartner, T. Black).

2. Part-Time Employee – Discussion

The District Manager described how it would be helpful for the District to hire a part-time employee.

Hire a part-time employee for up to 16-hours a month to assist District Manager/Conservation Planner with:

- Quarterly newsletter mailing (packaging & mailing)
- Outreach events

- Tsalila relief
- Other items as needed by the District Manager/Conservation Planner

Other items to consider:

- Hourly Pay
- Opportunity to group hours for part-time employee. For instance, zero hours for a month or two, but then group hours together for events and busy times.
- For Tsalila an option would be for the part-time person to work the mornings at the event while the DM/CP and a volunteer collect water bugs, then when the DM/CP and volunteer return from the stream, relieve the part-time person for the rest of the day. Each day would be approximately 4-hours, so approximately 12-hours for Tsalila, unless a volunteer(s) wouldn't be available, then it would be longer hours for the part-time person.
- For the newsletter it could take up to 16-hours to pick -up/package up/prepare the newsletter for mailing, and deliver to the post office.
- Events could be full 8-hour days, but happen intermittently. Benefits could be that having the part-time person attend these could free up the DM/CP's time for other duties, and it could open the opportunity for situations like Father's Day weekend when multiple events happen in different areas of the District so that the District could have a person at two different events at once.

Chair N. Baumgartner made a motion, 2nd by K. Baumgartner to approve the hiring of a part-time employee to assist the District Manager at \$20.00 per hour. The motion **unanimously passed** (N. Baumgartner, K. Baumgartner, T. Black).

3. Director Recruitment – Discussion

Discussion commenced regarding possible leads in Zone 2 and Zone 3.

Discussion about possible directors based upon spending one year as an associate director and having a conservation plan with the SWCD in lieu of the ten-acre land ownership requirement.

Discussion commenced regarding the Elkton area for zone 3 recruitment, and North Fork Smith River, Ash Valley, and Scottsburg for zone 2 recruitment with possible leads for both zones.

One of the biggest issues is that people are busy, but Umpqua SWCD meetings generally only last about an hour each month and are held virtually, so that could be helpful for people with busy schedules.

FUNDING COMMITTEE

Reports and follow up to items.
No new news.

The meeting was adjourned by Chair N. Baumgartner at 6:02 p.m.

NEXT MEETING DATE

The next business meeting for the Umpqua Soil and Water Conservation District is scheduled for March 12, 2026 at 5:00 p.m. by Go-To-Meeting teleconference and/or by computer, tablet or smartphone.

Respectfully submitted,

Rhonda Black
District Manager/Conservation Planner
Recorder