



# UMPQUA

## SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

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Newsletter – March 2024

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

## Soil Health Management 101 for Landowners

We had a wonderful morning on January 20<sup>th</sup> at the Soil Health Management workshop in Winchester Bay. For those of you who missed it, we look forward to seeing you next time! We are hopeful to be able to hold this workshop annually in Winchester Bay. Here's some of what we went over at this year's workshop:

- What is soil and why does it matter?
- The importance of soil testing. What is soil analysis?
- How to take soil samples and interpret soil analysis reports.
- Acting on soil test results to maximize return on effort.
- Soil condition, quality and structure.
- Best management practices on farms to increase fertility and reduce erosion
- Soil tillth best management practices which are critical for crop production and longevity of your land.
- Soil sustainability and how to use fertilizers to improve soil quality. Reasons for using and not using pesticides.
- Landscape management to maximize crop production goals.
- Erosion control practices.
- Agriculture water quality best management practices:
  - Pasture management.
  - Rotational grazing.
  - Heavy use protection areas.
  - Soil compaction: What causes it, how to fix it after the damage is done, and how to prevent it from happening in the first place.
  - Ways to prevent bacteria, excess sediment and nutrients from entering waterways.



Douglas County OSU Small Farms Program/Master Gardiner Coordinator Logan Bennett and Umpqua SWCD District Manager/Conservation Planner Rhonda Black presenting soil health information to a group of workshop attendees at the Winchester Bay Community Center on the beautiful Oregon Coast.

*Photo Credit: Cliff Glover*

Join us for a for a hands-on tour and workshop near Reedsport where we'll discuss soils, agriculture water quality, and demonstrate how to take soil samples for your farm and ranch, garden, and cropping systems.

Date to be announced.



## Natural Resources Conservation Service & Umpqua Soil and Water Conservation District Local Work Group Meeting



On January 24<sup>th</sup> the Douglas Natural Resources Conservation Service and Umpqua Soil and Water Conservation District held their annual Local Work Group meeting at the Port of Umpqua Annex Building in Reedsport.

NRCS & SWCD Local Work Group Meetings are a valuable part of the NRCS planning, and they provide an opportunity for Conservation organizations and land managers to be part of the collaborative effort to improve natural resources within Douglas County.

This is only one of many efforts to gather and coordinate NRCS programs with the local community. Most often, discussions center around “priority” natural resource concerns and updating the local NRCS long-range plan to match up with those concerns. NRCS programs are then refined to help the community address ongoing concerns.

In Douglas County, wildfire related issues have been at the top of the list and will continue to be, but what naturally comes along with wildfire issues, are forest health, water quality, wildlife habitat, and other concerns.

Given current economic and food availability (and price!) concerns, we dedicated additional time to discuss these topics, while continuing the discussion about other issues in the area. Currently, NRCS does not have many clients in the Reedsport area and desires to change that.

The public was invited to:

- Hear about and provide input on USDA programs and current projects.
- Discuss current Douglas County, Reedsport and surrounding areas natural resource and agricultural production issues.
- Connect with conservation partners, agricultural producers and forest owners.
- Strategize on future USDA program implementation in the Douglas County, specifically in the Reedsport area, related to local food production, and other opportunities.

NRCS (Roseburg) District Conservationist David Ferguson provided information about the history of NRCS, how SWCDs historically have been a part of the process and how they continue to assist NRCS, now and into the future. Farm Bill Programs were also discussed.

Umpqua SWCD District Manager/Conservation Planner Rhonda Black provided information describing activities the SWCD is involved in, including the many ways the district provides important technical assistance to landowners.

NRCS District Conservationist (Mid-Coast) Annie Marion described the Siuslaw Floodplain Reconnection Conservation Implementation Strategy, which includes the areas of Tahkenitch, Siltcoos, and Five-Mile.

NRCS Resource Conservationist Wallace Jennings described the Small Farms Local Foods Conservation Implementation Strategy.

The presentations were all followed by a discussion on Reedsport area natural resource and community needs including local food and fiber production with a focus on crops and pasture lands, tidegate and estuary needs including a discussion about aquatic barriers and managed wetlands, and forest and woodland health and disease.

If you weren't able to attend and would like to know the information discussed and want to watch the presentations, a recording of this meeting is available for viewing on YouTube on the district's YouTube channel: <http://www.youtube.com/@UmpquaSWCD>.

**Visit us at the Douglas Spring Livestock Conference at the Douglas County Fairgrounds on April 10<sup>th</sup>!**

For more information and to register, go to <https://douglascountylivestock.square.site/>.

## SERVICES

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)!**



**Join us and our partners for a post tide gate installation tour in the near future!**

### **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.

### **Soil Testing: Are You Prepared for Spring Planting? Do you know your soils pH?**

Spring is here! Contact the Umpqua Soil & Water Conservation District Office today to schedule your soil test for spring fertilizer and lime applications. Spring lime applications help to balance soil pH, allows essential nutrients to feed the grass, manages moss and weed problems, fortifies plants with calcium, and improves the performance of fertilizer.

Lime should never be applied to pastures or lawns 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.

## MEETINGS OF INTEREST

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

April 11<sup>th</sup>, May 9<sup>th</sup>, June 13<sup>th</sup>

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

Please email [rhonda@umpquasoilandwater.com](mailto:rhonda@umpquasoilandwater.com) to obtain meeting information and instructions for attending virtually.

## SMALL GRANTS PROGRAM

**Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board Small Grants are 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! Now is the time to start thinking about projects to implement in the Summer and Fall of 2024 and Spring 2025. You know your property better than anyone else. Look around and let us know what you need assistance with.**

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, Heavy Use Livestock Areas such as Hardened Livestock Feeding Areas, Improved Livestock Crossings, Livestock Access Roads, and More!

## 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](mailto: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.

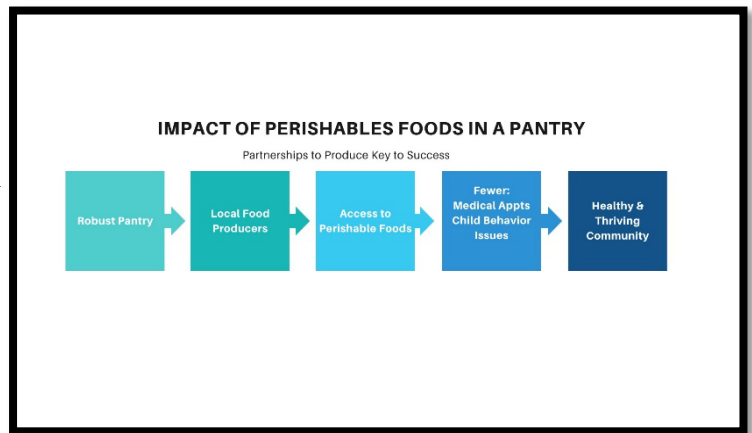


## Importance of Local Food Producers in Addressing Food Sparsity

### Local Food Producers Link to Food Security

*Susan Martin, Executive Director – The Reedsport Collective*

How did the Reedsport Food Pantry (RFP) increase their food distribution from 36,000 pounds in 2015 to 200,000 pounds in 2016 and every year since? By working with local food producers! Not only did RFP increase the amount of food, we increased the quality of food by bringing in more perishable foods.



Feeding America is the nation’s food bank who works with national food producers to secure charitable foods that travel down the pipeline to state food banks. State food banks work with state food producers, like Reser’s and Dave’s Killer Bread, to add to the charitable foods distributed in our state. Then the food travels to the local food pantry to be distributed into the community. The template to work with food producers should not stop at the pantry level.

Through the Oregon Food Bank’s Fresh Alliance program, unsellable perishable food is donated through food outlets like our local Safeway and McKay’s. These donations make up a large portion of the food we distribute and change the way our community eats. Seniors over 62 years and children 17 years and under make up 65% of the clients we serve. Fresh produce, dairy, and protein foods are critical to their good health. Nearly 75% of the food we distribute is perishable foods, but we need more perishable healthy foods for our community.

The Reedsport Food Pantry is currently purchasing produce and protein to supplement the amount of healthy foods offered at the community pantry and Project Brave Grab & Go for teens. We prefer to work with local food producers, but have found only one local resource. We consider local to be farms and ranches in our service area of Coastal Douglas County inland to Scottsburg. We currently partner with Fishpatrick’s tuna to provide locally caught, high-protein tuna to our clients. Owner, Patrick Roelle, holds a matching gift program donating up to ten cases of tuna. Customers buy one case and Patrick donates one case. Donating your product is one way to ensure our community has access to healthy foods, another way is to offer special pricing. RFP currently has grant dollars to purchase protein and produce. We are making purchases outside of our service area and prefer partnering with local food producers. Protein must be processed in a USDA approved facility. If you would like to discuss providing produce or protein to the Reedsport Food Pantry, please contact Susan Martin at [susanm@thereedsportcollective.org](mailto:susanm@thereedsportcollective.org)

## 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.

## MISSION STATEMENT

**“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.”**

## DIRECTOR RECRUITMENT

### Director Responsibilities:

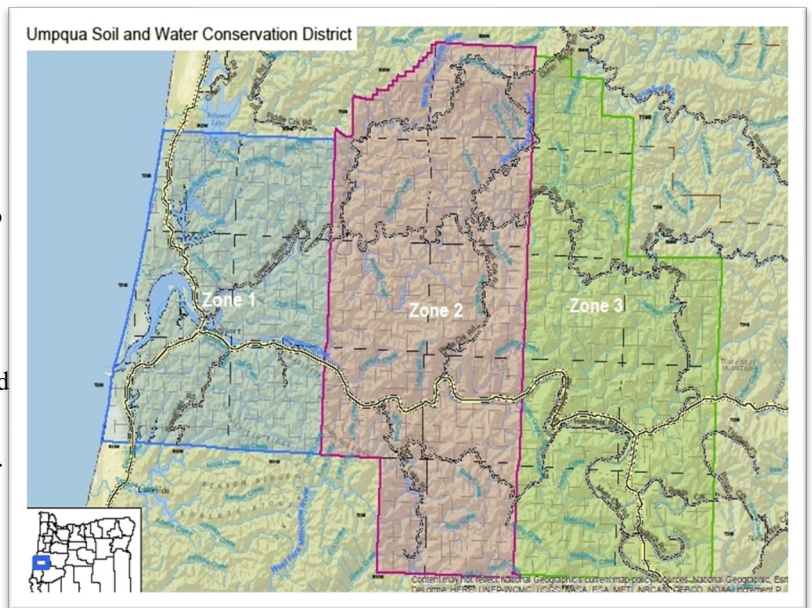
The Board of Directors set the direction of the District through the development and/or oversight of the strategic plan, biennial work plan, and District policies, with input from the District Manager and Staff. The Board and Staff enjoy a great working relationship that ensures natural resource stewardship 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](https://oregon.public.law/statutes/ors_568.550)



**The District is currently recruiting for the Zone 3 position to be appointed to the Umpqua SWCD Board of Directors.**

Zone Director qualifications:

- Must be a registered voter within the Umpqua SWCD boundary in Douglas County.
- Reside within the zone being represented within the District.
- Own or manage 10-acres of land within the zone represented, *or*
- Serve at least one year as a Director or Associate Director and have a District-approved conservation plan.

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

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

Please contact Umpqua SWCD if you are interested in becoming a Zone 3 Director!

**The District is currently recruiting for the At-Large 2 position to be appointed to the Umpqua SWCD Board of Directors.**

At-Large Director qualifications:

- Must be a registered voter within the Umpqua SWCD boundary in Douglas County.

Please contact Umpqua SWCD if you are interested in becoming an At-Large 2 Director!

## CONTACT INFORMATION

### **Umpqua Soil & Water Conservation District:**

Email: [rhonda@umpquasoilandwater.com](mailto:rhonda@umpquasoilandwater.com) , Telephone: (541) 662-1341

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