

Umpqua Soil and Water Conservation District

5-Year Business Plan



2025 – 2030

Fostering cooperation for stewardship of natural
resources in the Lower Umpqua River Basin.

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Board of Directors

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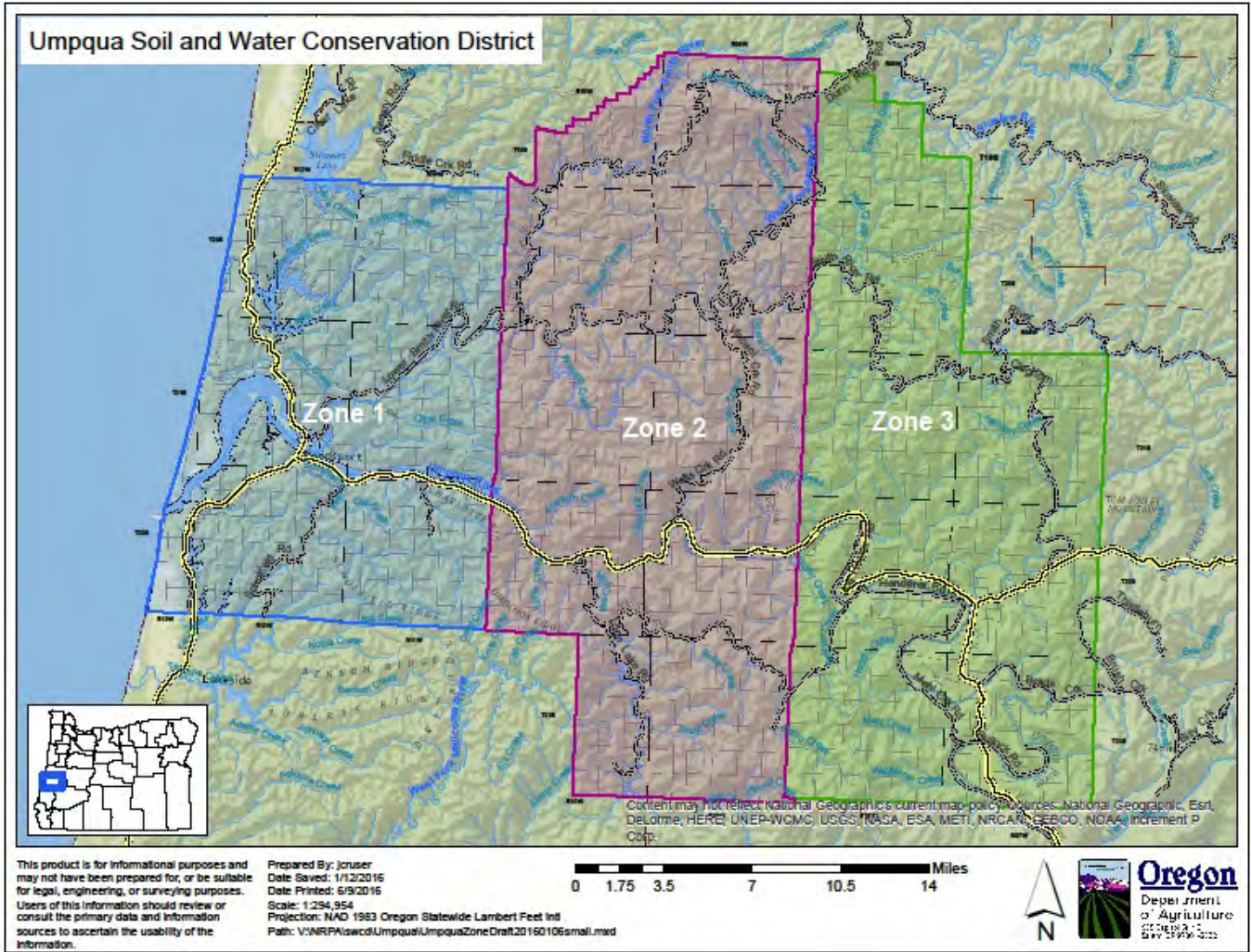
Monthly Meetings

Board Meetings are held on the 2nd
Thursday at 5:00 pm. The public is
invited.

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Map of District



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of the Umpqua Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) Business Plan (Plan) is to serve as a broad outline to guide its directors, employees, and partners to respond to natural resource concerns, internal and external practices, and other factors that influence strategies and action. The Plan provides a summary of the organization's structure, identifies key natural resource issues and priorities, and provides an overview of the services, programs, and assistance available to customers through the District. This Plan guides operations management and recruitment of new employees, partners, and associate directors. It is also used as the basis for developing annual work plans and funding requests.

The Plan provides information to county government, state and federal funding agencies, and various partners to support conservation programs within the District. The Umpqua SWCD prepared the Plan with the assistance of partners, particularly the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). This Plan has been formatted so it outlines both broad long-range and specific short-term strategic goals to benefit the District, our cooperators, constituents, and the community we serve.

The Umpqua Soil and Water Conservation District takes the lead in soil and water conservation throughout northwestern Douglas County by working with urban and rural property owners, operators, public officials, various state and federal agencies, and private organizations.

The District believes in the protection, conservation, and improvement of soil and water through our employees' and directors' abilities to plan, assist, and educate. It is our belief that concerns about water quality, water quantity, wetlands, soil erosion, and weed management be addressed while simultaneously respecting the rights of the private property owner and operator.

Public Participation

This Plan was prepared with input from:

- Information from public meetings
- Oregon Department of Agriculture
- Natural Resources Conservation Service
- Local Watershed Councils

Audience

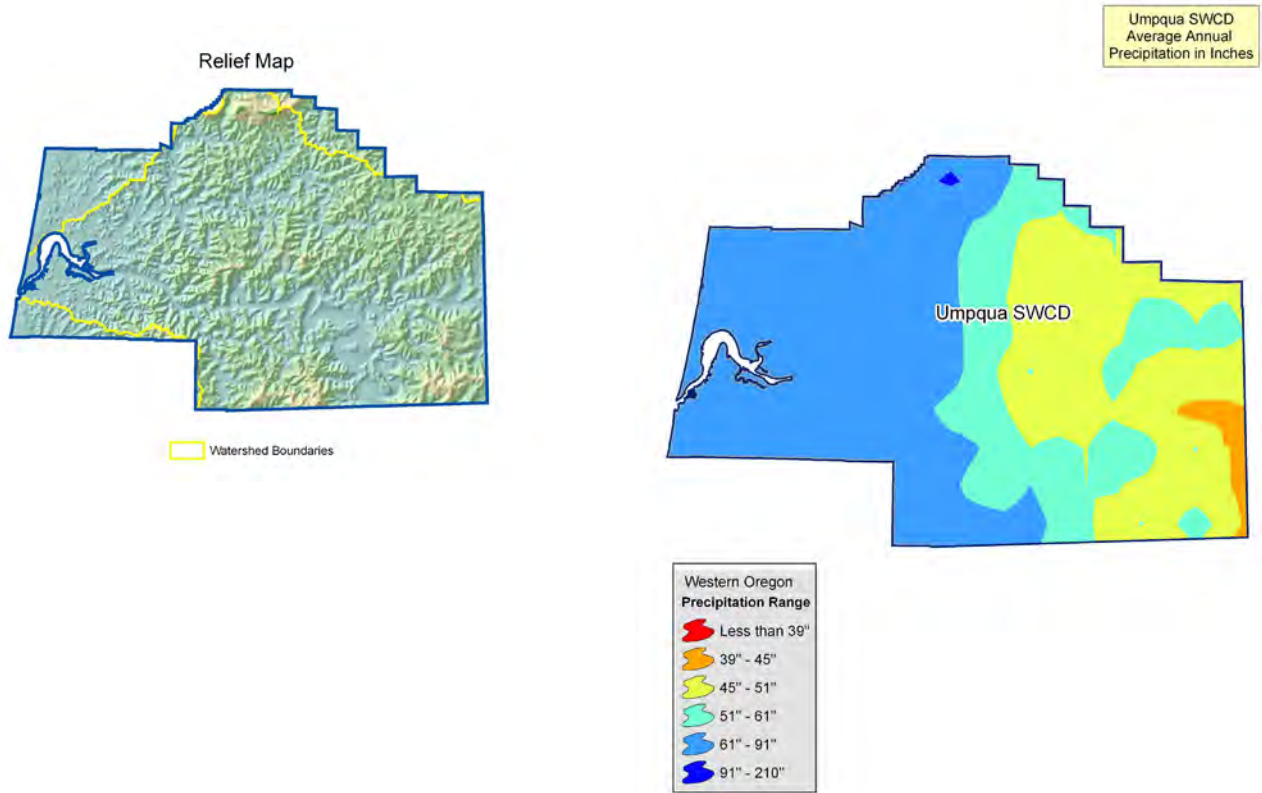
This Plan is intended for Northwestern Douglas County residents, Douglas County government officials, funding sources, legislators, and partner agencies.

GEOGRAPHY AND AGRICULTURE

Topography

Three Hydrologic Units, the Siuslaw, Umpqua and Coos sub-basins cover portions of the Umpqua SWCD. The Pacific Ocean marks the western boundary of the District and the east by a

north-south line about one mile east of Drain. Annual precipitation varies from over 61 inches in the west to over less than 45 inches along the District’s eastern boundary. Total population exceeds 5,000 with most people living in the communities of Reedsport, Scottsburg and Elkton.



Land Use

About 88 percent of the district is either private or public forestland. Much of the private forest is in industrial forest ownership. Other private lands include developed areas as well as residential homes and resort properties along highway 101. Farmland lies along the valley streams.

Private working lands total 71,490 acres with 48,060 acres of private woodlots (non-industrial forest) and 23,430 acres of agricultural land. Agricultural land is mostly pasture and hay. Other crops include beef cattle, sheep, goats, hogs, poultry, fruits, vegetables, wine grapes, and nursery stock. About 25,650 acres of other private lands includes urban, recreational and residential lands along Highway 101 and lower reach reaches of the Umpqua River.

Another 209,220 acres are managed as private industrial forest. About 294,340 acres are publicly owned and managed by the U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, or the State of Oregon.

According to the Census of Agriculture this area has approximately 181 farms. Sixty-two have 1-49.9 acres and one-hundred and twenty-four have 50-999 acres.

Land Cover/ Land Use	Ownership							
	Public		Private		Private-Industrial		Totals	%
	Acres	%	Acres	%	Acres	%		
Forest	294,340	49%	48,060	8%	209,220	35%	551,620	92%
Agricultural	0	0%	23,430	4%	0	0%	23,430	4%
Other Private Lands	0	0%	25,650	4%	0	0%	25,650	4%
Grand Totals	294,340	49%	97,140	16%	209,220	35%	600,700	100%

STRUCTURE AND GOVERNANCE

Enabling and Governing Legislation

The Umpqua SWCD is one of 45 conservation districts in Oregon. Conservation districts are defined in Oregon law as political subdivisions of state government. Umpqua SWCD is not a state agency. Rather it is classified as a municipal corporation, a form of local government, which is required to follow many of the same laws that govern state agencies and special districts. It is specifically governed by ORS 568.210 to 568.890 and ORS 568.900 to 568.933. See Appendix A for the specific powers and authorities granted to districts. Appendix B lists other statutes and administrative rules to which Umpqua SWCD is subject.

The Oregon Revised Statutes (ORS) that established and govern Oregon's SWCDs (except the federal tribal Tiicham Conservation District) was significantly revised by the 2009 Legislative Assembly under House Bill 2082. The origin of the House Bill was a collaborative effort among the Oregon Association of Conservation Districts, member Conservation Districts, and the Oregon Department of Agriculture. It was designed to address the evolving challenges and opportunities presented to today's SWCDs that were not envisioned when the Statute originated, and to eliminate antiquated provisions in the previous editions.

In addition to the general purpose of SWCDs under ORS 568.225 in the previous editions, the following was added: "**promote collaborative conservation efforts to protect and enhance healthy watershed functions, assist in the development of renewable energy and energy efficiency resources**".

History

The Umpqua SWCD was established in 1953 to direct agricultural producers to technical assistance resources, such as our partners the NRCS. Since 1953, NRCS and the Umpqua SWCD have partnered to plan and implement conservation practices on private lands in the basin.

History of Soil and Water Conservation Districts

In 1935, President Franklin D. Roosevelt addressed the problems of soil erosion in the nation by establishing the Soil Conservation Service (SCS) within the United States Department of Agriculture, through the Soil Conservation Act. The Soil Conservation Service was charged with developing a

program to conserve and enhance the nation's soil and water resources while providing food at a reasonable price. Within the first two years it became apparent that local leadership was needed to help coordinate the efforts of the federal conservation agencies and tie their programs to local erosion conditions and natural resource priorities. In 1937, President Roosevelt drafted the State Soil Conservation Districts law asking all governors to promote legislation that would implement the formation of soil conservation districts, creating a partnership that still exists today.

Oregon passed the Soil Conservation District Law in 1939 and organized what was then called the Soil Conservation Committee. This committee was given the responsibility to provide direction and assistance to individual districts as they formed and help coordinate their efforts. The first district formed in Oregon was the South Tillamook Soil Conservation District, organized officially on February 10, 1940. In March 1940, the USDA Soil Conservation Service (SCS) met with the Soil Conservation Committee and developed a partnership agreement. By 1946, the Soil Conservation Committee hired its first Executive Secretary and became a policy-making agency, and two years later they formed the Oregon Association of Soil Conservation Districts. In 1955 the Oregon Legislature changed the conservation district law to require directors be elected instead of appointed and changed the name of the Oregon Association of Soil Conservation Districts to the Oregon Association of Conservation Districts. By 1963 the Oregon Legislature added "Water" to the name of the Districts and the Committee. The Resource Conservation and Development project was also authorized at this time. On July 1, 1981 the Oregon Legislature merged the Soil and Water Conservation Committee with ODA and formed a Soil and Water Conservation Division, which became the administrative oversight entity for Soil and Water Conservation Districts. This name was changed to the Natural Resources Division in 1989. Since the formation of the first District in 1940, many other districts formed, consolidated, and redefined boundaries. Today there are 45 districts in Oregon, with Douglas, Grant, Josephine, Lake, Lane and Multnomah Counties having two districts each and Baker County four.

The districts were organized to work cooperatively with SCS on flood control, water storage, erosion, riverbank stabilization, terracing, weed control, improvement of fertility and field drainage. The solutions included the best management practices of tillage and residue management, grassed waterways, and tile drainage. Agronomic practices such as cover crops, forestry, sub-soiling, and pasture renovation were customary. Soil banks were established during the late 1950s and the 1960s.

Most of the practices were installed through funding and cost-share from the Agriculture Stabilization and Conservation Service (ASCS) and through the technical assistance of SCS. The ASCS was directed by a county committee which worked with the district boards to achieve the desired conservation.

In the 1970's conservation policy began to change. Congress directed the ASCS to no longer fund production practices such as the building of reservoirs and the installation of tile for drainage. Water quality became an important topic, and districts worked with the dairy and swine industry on Confined Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs).

The 1985 Farm Bill linked USDA financial assistance to conservation being applied to the land. New SCS standards were held to erosion control and wetlands could no longer be converted to farm land. SCS personnel had to determine where wetlands were located on farms and if the land was Highly Erodible Land (HEL). If land was HEL, a conservation plan was required. This placed a huge workload on the SCS employees; so in 1991, SCS determined that they would only serve those receiving USDA benefits related to the Food Security Act and the cost-share Agriculture Conservation Program (ACP).

In 1993 the SCS was renamed the Natural Resource Conservation Service, and the ASCS was renamed the Farm Service Agency.

The ACP was ended in 1996, and the new Farm Bill included the Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP), a multiple practice program. A reduction in funds in the new Farm Bill meant a reduction in cost-share practice implementation.

The 1997 Oregon Legislature addressed the issue of salmon listings and the effect of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) on the Oregon coast. The Oregon Plan for Salmon and Watersheds was created. Directions were given to the different agencies; and the Oregon Department of Agriculture became responsible for the implementation of Senate Bill 1010, which had been passed in 1993. Soil and Water Conservation Districts were asked to be the Local Management Agencies for regional SB 1010 plans which are now the Agriculture Water Quality Plans for Oregon basins. For the Umpqua Soil and Water Conservation District the local plan is the Umpqua Basin Agriculture Water Quality Plan which is overseen by the local advisory committee.

Leadership

Directors

A board of five directors governs the District. Directors are elected by the electorate of Northwestern Douglas County at the November General Election, which is held during even-numbered years. Director positions are elected in staggered terms to provide continuity on the board and maintain consistent operations. The Umpqua SWCD Board may appoint a person to fill a board vacancy between elections for the duration of that position's term. Three of the five positions are classified as zone positions and must meet the zone requirements and terms of office as specified in ORS 568.560 as follows:

“Zone directors must own or manage 10 or more acres of land in the district, be involved in the active management of that property, reside within the boundaries of the district, and be a registered voter.”

An individual may serve as a zone director in lieu of land ownership or management requirements if the individual resides within the zone that is represented, has served at least one year as an Umpqua SWCD Director or Associate Director and has a conservation plan approved by the Umpqua SWCD Board. The other two positions are at-large positions. To qualify for an at-large position, a person must reside in Western Douglas County and be a registered voter. No land ownership or management requirements are needed for an at-large position, which is also governed by ORS 568.560.

An individual director has power only when acting as a part of the Umpqua SWCD Board. Individual board members may be delegated authority or power to act on behalf of the Board in specific, limited tasks. This authority or power is granted through board action (resolution, motion, policy, etc.) and must be recorded in the meeting minutes.

The Umpqua SWCD Board works cooperatively as a unit to plan and oversee implementing Umpqua SWCD programs. As a representative of the Umpqua SWCD Board, opinions expressed publicly by individual board members should be consistent with established board policy, not the individual's personal agenda or opinions.

ORS 568.560 requires all SWCDs to select a Chair and Secretary from among its directors. Umpqua SWCD may elect other officers as desired.

The **Chair** is granted the responsibility to represent Umpqua SWCD with other districts, agencies, associations, partners, organizations, legislators, and property owners consistent with the policies, plans, and interests of Umpqua SWCD. The chair will also conduct regular and special meetings of the Board.

A **Vice-Chair** has been given the authority to act as the Chair in case of the absence or unavailability of the Chair.

The **Secretary** is the custodian of all Umpqua SWCD records, minutes, contracts, and other official documents.

Committees are an effective way for Umpqua SWCD to plan and implement Umpqua SWCD functions. They can be comprised of board members, associate directors, and Umpqua SWCD advisors, representatives of cooperating agencies and associations, or interested citizens. Currently the Umpqua SWCD does not have any standing committees.

The Umpqua SWCD does not have various **ad hoc committees**, which are charged with specific tasks over a specific time period. Ad hoc committees are then disbanded after the assigned task and/or timeframe is completed.

Associate Directors

Associate Directors are non-voting members of the District Board. They are appointed by the Directors to serve as advisors and representatives. Associate directorship offers a way to educate potential directors, broaden community input to the District, and expand District programs.

MISSION, VALUES, AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Mission

The mission of the Umpqua Soil and Water Conservation District is to protect, conserve and improve the quality of soil, water, and other natural resources in western Douglas County through planning, technical assistance, and education.

In carrying out our mission, the District works, coordinates, and cooperates with:

- Property owners and operators
- Citizens
- Public and private conservation organizations
- Agriculture groups
- Public agencies

Vision

The vision of the Umpqua SWCD is to:

- Be viewed as a leader in soil and water conservation efforts.
- Be known in urban and rural areas.
- Demonstrate accountability with the funds it receives.

- Have an active and informed board and a well-managed district office.
- Be respected for the quality and effectiveness of our services.
- Have a track record of measurable and demonstrated results.

Values

The values the District strives to meet:

- The stewardship of soil and water
- Quality customer service.
- Excellence and quality in all things.
- The economic importance of agriculture and natural resources.
- The respect, trust, confidence and confidentiality of all property owners/operators.
- Private property rights.
- The proper administration of district funds.
- The application of science and research.
- The decisions and knowledge of the property owners/operators.
- Managed use of natural resources.

Guiding Principles

Principles that guide the District's services, programs, and administrative operations are:

- Private landowners will solve their conservation and environment problems voluntarily if given incentives, technical assistance, and education.
- Private landowners have a right to maximize the economic profitability of their land. They also have a responsibility to use natural resources in a wise and responsible manner.
- Resource management is best achieved with a voluntary, locally-led, and holistic approach dealing with watersheds.
- Natural resource conservation efforts can be planned and implemented to sustain long-term healthy, economically viable, productive land uses.
- We have independent responsibilities, but we recognize our dependence on others to deliver programs successfully.
- We form partnerships dedicated to common principles, goals, and objectives. These partnerships ideally include communications, coordination, joint decision making when possible, mutual support, and shared leadership in collaborative efforts.
- We value the relationships with our partners who have common goals, while respecting the differences in mission, cultures, and targets.
- We recognize the need for appropriate regulation and that the best results will occur when an industry regulates and polices itself.
- We believe enduring conservation is achieved by the cooperative efforts of individuals, agencies, and organizations working together.
- We believe a locally led, watershed-based approach to resource management on private lands is key to conserving natural resources.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Umpqua SWCD works with agencies and individuals as partners in our efforts to achieve our vision. Various memorandums of agreement and/or understanding, working agreements, intergovernmental agreements and informal arrangements, formalize the partnerships. The agreements outline the responsibilities of each partner and identify the types of assistance, resources, and support each will provide to accomplish common conservation goals.

Local Level

Landowners, Producers, General Public

The General Public utilizes the Umpqua SWCD as its primary point of contact for all District programs as well as those of the Oregon Department of Agriculture and the USDA's Natural Resource Conservation Service. Landowners and agricultural producers can avail of technical assistance with natural resource concerns and assistance in securing grant or loan funding for an array of natural resource conservation projects.

Umpqua Soil and Water District

The District assists the general public with conservation planning, technical and financial assistance, farm bill program opportunities, and answers to conservation-related questions.

Provide land managers technical and financial assistance to implement improved pasture management and create better wildlife habitat.

- Treat invasive species allowing establishment of natives and productive pasture species
- Install cross fencing and livestock watering facilities to promote effective management of livestock through prescribed grazing
- Manage livestock to improve growth and vigor of pasture to promote sustainable permanent cover of desired vegetation and provide adequate feed and forage to livestock

Provide landowners technical and financial assistance to implement conservation measures to reduce delivery of nutrients, organics and sediment to surface waters through the reduction in surface water runoff to improve agriculture water quality.

- Improve health of riparian areas
- Improve growth and vigor of pasture to promote sustainable permanent cover of desired vegetation
- Installing alternative livestock watering facilities to protect stream corridors
- Improve irrigation system efficiency; reduces runoff and the amount of water withdrawn for irrigation purposes

Provide landowners with technical and financial assistance to manage wetlands, estuaries, in-stream riparian habitat and other contributing lands in ways that improve their ability to provide ecosystem services such as clean water and wildlife habitat.

- Improve and update water control devices (tidegates, dikes, etc.) to allow fish passage and beneficial control of water
- Improve in-stream riparian habitat to provide complexity for fish species and other in-stream dependent species
- Minimize contaminated runoff and sediment delivery from surrounding agricultural and forestry activities

- Improve habitat and for wildlife through restoration of healthy, diverse native vegetation.

OSU Extension Service

The District maintains a working relationship with the Douglas County office of Oregon State University Extension Service to provide information to landowners and producers to assist with their agriculture needs. The District partners with Douglas County OSU Extension extensively with the Livestock and Forages Program Specialist and Small Farms Program Coordinator to put on workshops, classes, presentations, and tours when possible.

County Government

The District maintains a working relationship with Douglas County Public Works.

Regional Level

USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS)

The District maintains a Cooperative Working Agreement with the NRCS to provide assistance with conservation planning and conservation practice implementation activities in Northwestern Douglas County. The District also from time to time enters into Contribution Agreements with NRCS to produce complete conservation plans. NRCS provides technical assistance to the District and directly to county landowners and producers. The District is served through NRCS offices in the city of Roseburg.

Local Advisory Committee

The Local Advisory Committee is made up of landowners, agricultural producers, and an environmental representative whose charge is to develop an Agricultural Water Quality Management Area Plan. The Plan is used to address agriculture water quality best management practices.

State Level

Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA)

The Oregon Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Division provides administrative oversight and partial administrative and technical support funding.

OWEB, DEQ, and other State Agencies

The Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB), the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), and other state agencies provide financial resources through grants for habitat restoration and water quality improvement projects.

Oregon Association of Conservation Districts

The OACD provides technical and administrative support to the District. It is also the main conservation district advocacy organization with the Oregon State administration and legislature.

National Level

USDA NRCS

The national NRCS offices provide work agreements with the District.

Revenue to the County Economy

The District applies for and receives grants from the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board. OWEB funds are used to hire the technical experts who design and implement projects. These people then hire field crews, and buy or contract goods and services they need to get the job done. According to a recent University of Oregon study, every \$1,000,000 of OWEB investments creates 15-24 jobs in the local community. In addition, on average, more than 90 cents out of every OWEB grant dollar supports local businesses, services and suppliers. OWEB total investments in Douglas County from 1999 to 2023 were \$33.11 million. The largest portion of the dollars awarded in Douglas County went to on-the-ground restoration and acquisition including projects to improve irrigation efficiency, fish passage, and upland conditions.

2023 Oregon Plan Accomplishments for the Umpqua Basin (Data from the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board):

The Umpqua Basin includes the North and South Umpqua Rivers which join to form the mainstem of the Umpqua River. Cow Creek is a major tributary of the South Umpqua and the Smith River, the basin's other major tributary, joins the Umpqua near its mouth. The headwaters of the North and South Umpqua Rivers are found in the Cascade Ecoregion, come together in the Umpqua Interior Foothills Ecoregion of the Klamath Mountains, and flow through the Coast Range on the way to Winchester Bay and the Pacific Ocean. The land use for much of the basin is forestry with some agricultural activities such as pastures, vineyards, orchards and row crops found in the narrow valleys and foothills in the central portion of the basin. Winchester Bay is an important shellfish area on the Oregon Coast. Most of the Umpqua watershed falls within Douglas County which is divided between two Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs), Umpqua on the coast and Douglas further inland. These districts coordinate local Oregon Plan work in this reporting basin along with the Partnership for the Umpqua Rivers (PUR) and the Smith River and Elk Creek Watershed Councils.

This section of the report describes work that was completed in the 2021-2023 biennium for the Oregon Plan, highlighting examples of significant or innovative partnerships, identifying priority areas, and providing some projects and monitoring results. Background information on the priorities discussed below can be found in the *Priorities Section* of the report.

Water Quality and Planning

The varying mineral composition of the Cascades, Klamath, and Coast ecoregions influence water quality. For example, the heavy rainfall associated with the Coast Range coupled with land uses that exacerbate erosion can cause streams to have high sediment loads that can choke gravel beds. Similar results can be expected in the upper reaches of the Umpqua Basin where unconsolidated ash and pumice deposits are located. Within the basin there are ten Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) ambient water quality monitoring sites assessed in the 2014 Oregon Water Quality Index Summary report. One site had *excellent* water quality, one was *good*, four were *fair*, and another four were *poor*. The majority of sites had *no trend detected* however three of the *poor* sites showed an *improving* trend. The 2014 DEQ's Umpqua Basin Status Report and Action Plan, which will be used to guide DEQ's actions for the next five years, discusses these results in addition to water quality data from other sources. The report discusses temperature and fine sediment as pollutant stressors that affect fish and other aquatic life throughout the basin. Oregon's 2010 Water Quality Assessment identified 177 individual temperature impaired waterbodies and

with five segments impaired for sedimentation in the Umpqua Basin. Macroinvertebrate sampling of Wadeable streams in the basin found that 47 percent of the 158 sites were in *most disturbed* condition, 16 percent were in *moderately disturbed* condition, and 35 percent were in *least disturbed* condition. Only two percent of Wadeable streams were recorded as exhibiting *enriched* condition. Macroinvertebrate population assessments showed that 52 percent of sites in the Umpqua Basin were dominated by macroinvertebrates with tolerances for high water temperatures. In addition, 57 percent of surveyed streams were dominated by macroinvertebrates with tolerance for high levels of fine sediment. There are Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) approved by EPA in 2007 for the North, South and main Umpqua Basins addressing temperature, dissolved oxygen, bacteria, aquatic weeds/algae, and biological criteria. One of four new potential Pesticide Stewardship Partnership (PSP) watersheds was initiated in the South Umpqua Basin and water quality monitoring and networking with local partners occurred in the biennium. In 2015, the Partnership will choose two new watersheds from the four potential candidates.

Within the Umpqua Reporting Basin, Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) established the Umpqua Agriculture Water Quality Management Area (AgWQMA). The AgWQMA has a management plan that details strategies to prevent and control water pollution from agricultural activities through education, management actions, compliance, and monitoring. The management area plan was reviewed in 2020. The ODA works closely with SWCDs to implement these management area plans.

Water Quality Program Focus Areas are cooperative efforts by local SWCDs whose purpose is to document effectiveness of the efforts to improve agriculture water quality.

Streamflow and Groundwater

The Oregon Departments of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) and Water Resources (OWRD) identified 23 areas in the Umpqua Reporting Basin as priorities for streamflow restoration in 2001. Most of the instream flow rights in the basin are held by OWRD for either *Anadromous and Resident Fish Rearing* or *Supporting Aquatic Life* and there is one in Crater Lake National Park for *Fire Protection*. OWRD is collaborating with the Partnership for the Umpqua Rivers to monitor streamflow and temperature in high priority restoration areas during the biennium. These data are being used to create a long-term database for use in evaluating restoration project effectiveness and delineating long-term environmental trends within the basin. Flow information is also used to monitor instream water rights and leases, which allows for the timely distribution of water supplies during times of shortage.

Fish, Wildlife, and habitat

The majority of this reporting basin has been ranked by ODFW's Compass project as *highly crucial* (ranks 1 and 2) including 95% of the perennial streams and 89% of the entire area. In 2006, they also identified ten Conservation Opportunity Areas (COAs) as part of the Oregon Conservation Strategy. There are 14 Northwest Forest Plan *Key Watersheds* in this basin that have high restoration or conservation priority. As part of the US Forest Service (USFS) Watershed Condition Classification, five watersheds were identified as priorities. The USFS selected several tributaries of the North Umpqua. Middle and Upper Steamboat Creek subwatersheds were selected because of their importance for steelhead and opportunities to restore aquatic connectivity, instream habitat, and resiliency to wildfire. Copeland Creek was selected because it contains high quality spawning and rearing habitat for spring Chinook and coho salmon and for the same opportunities. The Skillet Creek and Black Rock Fork subwatersheds were selected in the South Umpqua Basin for restoration because of the important biological, cultural, and recreational values they contain. Threatened coho, spring Chinook, and winter steelhead occupy these subwatersheds. The South Coast

including the Umpqua is identified as a *Priority Basin* by the Whole Watershed Restoration Initiative (WWRI). There are three WWRI *Focus Watersheds* in the Umpqua-Upper South Umpqua River, Jackson Creek, and Steamboat Creek. Steamboat Creek is further prioritized as a WWRI *Emphasis Area*.

Coho salmon were listed under the Endangered Species Act for the Oregon Coast ESU in 1998. In 2007 the Oregon Coast Coho Conservation Plan was completed and the most recent annual report: Oregon Coast Coho Conservation Plan 2023 Annual Report was completed in 2024.

Stream complexity and water quality were listed as the limiting factors for the four independent coho populations in the Umpqua Reporting Basin: Lower, Middle, North, and South Umpqua. Hatchery impacts were also listed for the North Umpqua population. In 2013 the number of observed spawners compared to the conservation goal ranged from 6% in the Middle Umpqua to 21% in the North Umpqua. Conservation goals are scaled to variable ocean survival.

Chinook, Winter Steelhead, and Cutthroat Trout Species Management Units (SMU) in the Umpqua stratum are viable according to the 2014 Coastal Multi-Species Conservation and Management Plan (CMP). The results for the Spring Chinook SMU-Umpqua Stratum were mixed. The North Umpqua population was *viable* and South Umpqua population was *not viable*. The viability for the Chum SMU was unknown for the Umpqua stratum. The percentage of hydrologic units with a high relative Salmonid Ecosystem Value (SEV) is approximately 50% for the Lower Umpqua population; 54% for the Middle Umpqua population, 38% for the North Umpqua population, and 48% for the South Umpqua population. All of the hydrologic units on the North Umpqua above Soda Springs Reservoir have a lower SEV which contributes to the lower percentage. The North Umpqua Basin, excluding the area above the reservoir, is identified as a Salmon Stronghold.

In 2024, the Umpqua basin's wild adult coho spawner abundance was below its historical average, a trend linked to the continuing effects of the 2020 Archie Creek Fire, drought conditions, warming rivers, and non-native predators. This contrasts with the generally strong or rebounding coho returns seen in many other coastal Oregon rivers.

Key Trends and Information

Below Average Abundance: The Umpqua was one of the few monitoring strata in the Oregon Coast Coho ESU where wild adult abundance in 2024 was below or slightly below the long-term average.

Fishery Closures and Restrictions: Due to these low returns, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) implemented strict measures. The Umpqua River had no wild coho fishery in 2024, and the closure is expected to continue into the 2025 season.

Impact of Environmental Factors: The low returns in the Umpqua Basin are largely attributed to the severe impacts of the 2020 Archie Creek wildfire, which decimated an entire hatchery coho generation and damaged habitat, along with ongoing issues like warm stream temperatures and predation.

Hatchery Fish: While the general Oregon Coast ESU had a low proportion of hatchery coho on spawning grounds (1% in 2024, well below average), specific details for the Umpqua basin show that the hatchery program is still in recovery from the fire's impacts. Angling for fin-clipped hatchery coho was open in the ocean fishery (Cape Falcon to Humbug Mountain) during specific windows.

Overall, while the wider Oregon coast natural (OCN) coho populations are robust and may even qualify for removal from the Endangered Species Act in coming years, the Umpqua basin remains a specific area of concern and active conservation due to localized stressors.

Umpqua Reporting Basin Investments:

Umpqua



Total OWEB funds invested, 2019-21 biennium: \$2,206,246

Total leveraged funds, 2019-2021 biennium: \$577,057

The Umpqua Basin includes the North and South Umpqua Rivers which join to form the mainstem of the Umpqua River. Cow Creek is a major tributary of the South Umpqua and the Smith River, the basin's other major tributary, joins the Umpqua near its mouth. The headwaters of the North and South Umpqua Rivers are found in the Cascade Ecoregion, come together in the Umpqua Interior Foothills Ecoregion of the Klamath Mountains, and flow through the Coast Range on the way to Winchester Bay and the Pacific Ocean. The land use for much of the basin is forestry with some agricultural activities such as pastures, vineyards, orchards, and row crops found in the narrow valleys and foothills in the central portion of the basin. Winchester Bay is an important shellfish area on the Oregon Coast.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Goal #1: Provide conservation planning, technical, and financial assistance to property owners and operators.

Objectives:

1. Develop conservation plans for property owners and managers.
2. Help implement the Umpqua Basin Agricultural Water Quality Management Area.
3. Establish new demonstration areas and sites.
4. Promote current and relevant Best Management Practices.
5. Assist applicants with grants.
6. Assist the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) with implementing Farm Bill conservation programs.
7. Assist with requests for information or services.

Goal #2: Deliver conservation education materials and workshops.

Objectives:

1. Identify district patrons by area, common needs, and age group (K-5th grade and their teachers, 6th-12th grade and their teachers, adult, agriculture producers, and natural resource partners).

2. Remain knowledgeable of natural resource concerns and solutions through continuing education opportunities for staff and board of directors.
3. Design and deliver information materials education programs, workshops, events and presentations tailored to meet the specific needs for students and their teachers, adults, agricultural producers, and natural resource partners.
4. Maintain and update the Umpqua SWCD website.
5. Produce and distribute a quarterly newsletter.
6. Produce and distribute an Annual Report to detail the accomplishments of the district.
7. Fundraise for large education projects.

Goal #3: Implement programs that assist constituents with natural resource concerns.

Objectives:

1. Develop and implement water quality monitoring programs.
2. Develop projects to implement best management practices to meet the goals of the Umpqua Basin Agricultural Water Quality Plan.
3. Identify and control noxious weeds in the Lower Umpqua River Basin.
4. Identify and seek funding from state and federal funding sources.
5. Assist NRCS in implanting Farm Bill programs.

Goal #4: Administer district operations in a responsible and fiscally sound manner.

Objectives:

1. Develop and implement board approved long range and annual work plans.
2. Develop and approve the Umpqua SWCD annual operating budget.
3. Complete financial audit per Oregon Revised Statute (ORS) 568, Section 297.425.
4. Conduct monthly staff, committee, and board meetings.
5. Provide orientation, development, and training for staff.
6. Develop needed administrative policies and processes.
7. Recruit and train Board members as needed.
8. Hold a properly noticed Annual Meeting.
9. Maintain a working relationship with agriculture organizations, watershed councils, cities, and county, state, and federal entities.
10. Perform legally sound personnel, fiscal, and contract management for most productive use of funds.

NATURAL RESOURCE CONCERNS AND OUTCOMES

A natural resource concern is a condition that does not meet agreed-to or established criteria for a quality, sustainable resource. The resource concerns described below are intended to give a picture of the natural resource problems in Western Douglas County and why they are important.

Top five natural resource concerns in Lower Umpqua River Basin:

1. Water quality
2. Water quantity
3. Wetlands
4. Soil erosion
5. Weed management

Areas of Special Concern

Particular places in the District with specific problems that may need special attention are:

- Urban/rural interface development
- Impaired urban streams
- Construction sites that lack erosion control measures
- Restoration and mitigation project sites that lack long-term maintenance and monitoring
- Storm water management
- Soil and water conservation education

Water Quality

Lower Umpqua River Basin water quality concerns:

- Low dissolved oxygen causing algae blooms.
- Safe water for agricultural, drinking and recreational use.
- Upstream winter storm turbidity.
- Effects of aquatic and terrestrial wildlife on water quality.
- Lack of baseline water quality data.

Trends

- Waterbodies classified as on the DEQ 303(d) water quality limited list.
- Discharge of pollutants into lakes, ponds, rivers and streams.
- Contamination of surface and ground water caused by various practices and sources.
- Improper operation of drainage and irrigation ditches.
- Inappropriate use of fertilizers and pesticides.

Strategies

- Help people understand how they affect water quality.
- Develop water quality monitoring programs.
- Develop and implement water quality improvement projects.
- Assist landowners in the implementation of NRCS Farm Bill programs.

Intended outcomes

- Cool, clean and clear water.

Water Quantity

Lower Umpqua River Basin water quantity concerns:

- Water quantity inflows, as it pertains to the percentage of overall Umpqua River flows, is negligible for the Lower Umpqua River Basin.

Wetlands

Lower Umpqua River Basin wetland concerns:

- Inefficient tidegates.
- Unintended effects due to improper maintenance and development practices.

Trends

- Loss of natural wetlands.
- Increase of invasive species.

Strategies

- Educate urban and rural citizens on wetlands and how they work.
- Continued participation in the Umpqua Estuary Restoration Partnership.

Intended outcomes

- Increase in properly functioning wetlands while maintaining agricultural and urban practices.

Soil Erosion

Lower Umpqua River Basin soil erosion concerns:

- Bare soil erosion during rainy seasons.
- Lack of healthy riparian vegetation or buffers.
- Improper application of riparian management practices.

Trends

- Increase turbidity in basin streams.
- Increase in noxious weed distribution.

Strategies

- Educate urban and rural citizens on the effect of erosion on soil health.
- Demonstrations of healthy riparian management practices.
- Development and implementation of projects to reduce soil erosion.

Intended outcomes

- Healthy streambanks.
- Reduction in soil erosion.

Weed Management

Lower Umpqua River Basin weed management concerns:

- Increase of noxious weeds.
- Contamination of crops by noxious weeds.
- Reduction of native plant diversity in estuaries, wetlands and riparian areas.

Trends

- Loss of native groundcover due to lack of noxious weed control.
- Increased economic loss due to contamination by noxious weeds.

- Uncontrolled spread of scotch broom and gorse.

Strategies

- Education of urban and rural citizens on noxious weed concerns.
- Develop and implement a district wide noxious weed program.
- Encourage planting of native plants.

Intended outcomes

- Control and reduction of noxious weeds.
- Reduction in economic loss due to noxious weed contamination.
- Diversity of native plants in estuaries, wetlands and riparian areas which increases food sources for aquatic and terrestrial wildlife.

District Programs

Landowner Assistance

Goal: To assist the landowners in Western Douglas County in the best utilization of their natural resources and improve soil health and water quality.

Program overview:

- Conservation Plans
- Soil testing
- Soil health
- Riparian restoration
- Farm Bill Programs
- Storm water runoff
- Erosion Control

Estuary Enhancement

Goal: To assist the landowner in maintaining agricultural production and improving wildlife habitat.

Program overview:

- Tidegates
- Wetland restoration
- Farmland/Forestry recovery

Noxious Weeds

Goal: The control of noxious weeds and the prevention of the introduction of new noxious species.

Program overview:

- Weed wrench rental
- Noxious weed eradication
- Coordination with the Douglas County Cooperative Weeds Management Area weed control program

Urban Gardens and Backyard Farming

Goal: To assist homeowners in urban areas to improve the utilization of their natural resources, improve urban wildlife habitat, and improve soil health and water quality.

Program overview:

- Rain gardens
- Nature scaping
- Backyard Farming
- Pollinators
- Soil testing

Education and Outreach

Goal: To provide the urban and rural population with information to make informed decisions about their natural resources.

Program overview:

- Landowner/Producer tours and workshops
- Tsalila Education Days

- Oregon STEM HUB Student Education - OSU Hatfield Marine Science Center

DISTRICT CAPACITY

Capacity

Staff

The current staff consists of 1 full time employees and 0 part time employees.

District Manager/Certified Conservation Planner – 1 FTE

Conservation Technician – Vacant

The District relies to some extent on outside contractors to fulfill some of its objectives.

Board of Directors

The Board of Directors consists of five members elected countywide by voters. The Board works on a volunteer basis to set policy, plan goals, and enact a yearly budget for the District. Individual Directors initiate and manage specific resource conservation projects through their involvement in watershed councils and non-profit organizations.

Volunteers

Volunteers occasionally work on specific tasks for the District, and not a large resource for accomplishing objectives.

Partnerships

The District relies on partnerships with other local agencies and non-profit institutions to further its natural resource conservation goals. They include:

- Partnership for the Umpqua Rivers
- Smith River Watershed Council
- Elk Creek Watershed Coalition
- Siuslaw Watershed Council
- Oregon State University Extension
- Oregon Climate and Agriculture Network

Facilities and Equipment

- Various office equipment along with soil and water monitoring and testing equipment

Funding

The District receives funding from the following sources

- Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board
- Bureau of Land Management RAC
- U.S. Forest Service

The current fiscal year's budget is included in Appendix C.

APPENDIXES

Appendix A: General Powers of Soil and Water Conservation District Directors

ORS 568.550(1). The board of directors of a soil and water conservation district has the following powers: [*Letters correspond to actual statute format.*]

- a. To secure surveys and investigations and do research relating to:
 - The character of soil erosion
 - The character of floodwater and sediment damage
 - All phases of the conservation, development, utilization and disposal of water
 - The preventive measures, control measures and improvements needed
- b. To conduct demonstrational projects on lands within the district upon obtaining the consent of the owner and occupier of such lands.
- c. To carry out preventive and control measures on lands within the district upon obtaining the consent of the owner and occupier of such lands.
- d. To enter into written agreements (*see specifics in 568.330[(d)][A]&[(B)]*)
- e. To obtain options upon and to acquire by purchase, exchange, lease, gift, grant, bequest or devise any property, real or personal or rights therein, (*see specifics in 568.330[e]*)
- f. To borrow money and to mortgage personal property of the district as security (*see specifics in ORS 568.330[ff]*)
- g. To issue general obligation bonds of the district as provided in ORS 568.803
- h. To make available, on such terms as the directors shall prescribe, to landowners or occupiers within the district, agricultural and engineering machinery and equipment, fertilizer, seeds and seedlings and other material or equipment.
- i. To construct, operate and maintain such structures as may be necessary or convenient for performance of any of the operations authorized in ORS 568.210 to 568.880 and 568.900 to ORS 568.933.
- j. To develop comprehensive plans and specifications for the conservation of soil resources and for the continued control of soil erosion within the district, and to publish such plans, specifications and information and bring them to the attention of owners and occupiers of the lands within the district.
- k. To take over, by purchase, lease or otherwise, and to administer, any soil conservation, erosion control or erosion prevention project, or combination thereof, located within district boundaries undertaken by the United States or any of its agencies, or by this state or any of its agencies.
- l. To manage, as agent of the United States or any of its agencies, or of this state or any of its agencies, any soil conservation, erosion control or erosion prevention project, or combination thereof, within district boundaries.
- m. To act as agent for the United States or any of its agencies, in connection with the acquisition, construction, operation or administration of any soil conservation, erosion control or erosion control project, or combination thereof, within district boundaries.
- n. To accept donations, gifts and contributions in money, services, materials, or otherwise from the United States or any of its agencies, or from this state or any of its agencies, and to use or expend such moneys, services, materials or other contributions in carrying on its operations.
- o. To sue and be sued in the name of the district, to have a seal, which shall be judicially noticed, to have perpetual succession unless terminated as provided by law, to make and execute contracts and other instruments necessary or convenient to the exercise of its powers, and to make, and from time to time amend or repeal, rules not consistent with ORS 568.210 to 568.808 and 568.900 to 568.933 to carry into effect its purposes and powers.

- p. To purchase liability or indemnity insurance, in such amounts and containing such terms and conditions as the board believes necessary for the protection of directors, officers and employees of the district against claims incurred in the performance of their duties.
- q. To place liens on real and personal property.
- r. To enter into written agreements with, coordinate activities with and provide assistance to landowners, managers and residents within the districts and federal, state and local governments, relating to natural resource issues, including but not limited to issues of:
 - Agriculture and forestry
 - Economic development based upon natural resources
 - Watershed management and ecosystem health
 - Invasive species
 - Alternate and renewable energy
 - Air Quality
 - Animal waste and nutrient management
 - Carbon sequestration
 - Access to market-based services and certification
 - Fuel reduction and wildfire planning and management
 - Preservation of agricultural, forestry and other lands
- s. To conduct outreach and conservation education activities.
- t. To provide financial assistance, including but not limited to loans and grants to implement activities and projects authorized under ORS 271.715 to 271.795, 569.210 to 568.808 or 568.900 to 568.933.
- u. To hold patents, trademarks and copyrights.
- v. To hold conservation easements under ORS 271.715 to 271.795.

ORS 568.550(2). As a condition to the extending of any benefits under ORS 568.210 to 568.808 or 568.900 to 568.933 to lands or the performance of work upon lands, the directors may require contributions in money, services, materials or otherwise to any operations conferring such benefits, and may require landowners or occupiers to enter into and perform such agreements or covenants as to the permanent use of such lands as will tend to prevent or control erosion thereon.

ORS 568.550(3). In order to avoid duplication of activities under subsection (1)(a) of this section, the department may call upon other state and federal agencies for assistance and cooperation in their fields in accordance with memoranda of understanding to be signed by all cooperating agencies.

ORS 568.550(4). A district may not adopt land use regulations under ORS chapter 197, 215 or 227. A district has the standing of an affected landowner to participate in the public process involving administrative rules, regulations, goals, guidelines, plans or other public body actions that may affect one or more properties within the district.

Appendix B: Statutes and Administrative Rules

The Umpqua SWCD is specifically governed by Oregon Revised Statutes (ORS) 568.210 through 568.890. In addition, the Umpqua SWCD is subject, but not limited to, the conditions of several statutes and administrative rules as follows:

- ORS 568.900 through 568.933 (Agricultural Water Quality Management)

- ORS 561.395 (Soil and Water Conservation Commission)
- ORS 561.400 (Natural Resources Division)
- ORS 44.320 (Oath of Office)
- Oregon Constitution, Article XV, Section 3 (Oath of Office)
- ORS 190.003 through 190.110 (Intergovernmental Cooperation)
- ORS 192.001 (Public Records Policy)
- ORS 192.005 through 192.190 (Custody and Maintenance Records)
- ORS 192.310 (Records and Reports)
- ORS 192.410 (Inspection of Public Records)
- ORS 192.610 through 192.710 (Public Meetings)
- ORS 198.010 through 198.955 (Special Districts)
- ORS 198.330 through 198.365 (Dissolution of Inactive Districts)
- ORS 198.410 through 198.440 (Recall)
- ORS 240.379 through 240.394 (Employment of Persons with Severe Disabilities)
- Title VII, Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Equal Opportunity Employment/Sexual Harassment/Discrimination) (Federal)
- Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (Hiring Persons with Disabilities) (Federal)
- ORS 244.010 through 244.4000 (Conflict of Interest)
- ORS 247.035 (Residency)
- ORS 294.305 through 294.565 (Local Budget) (required of districts with a tax levy)
- ORS 297.005 through 297.712 (Contracting)
- ORS 297.405 through 297.485 (Municipal Audits)
- ORS 542.750 (watershed Protection and Flood Prevention)
- ORS 659.010 through 659.990 (Employment Practices)
- ORS 659.405 (State Policy/Employment of Disabled Persons)
- OAR 839-07-550 through 839-07-656 (Sexual Harassment Prevention)

Appendix C: Acronyms used in this Business Plan

AWQMP	Agriculture Water Quality Management Program
BLM	Bureau of Land Management
BMP	Best Management Practices
CAFO	Confined Animal Feeding Operation
CREP	Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program
CRP	Conservation Reserve Program
CWMA	Cooperative Weed Management Area
DEQ	Department of Environmental Quality (Oregon)
DSL	Department of State Lands (Oregon)
EQIP	Environmental Quality Incentives Program
ESA	Endangered Species Act (Federal)
EWP	Emergency Watershed Protection Program
FSA	Farm Service Agency (formerly ASCS)
FTE	Full Time Equivalent Employee (2080 hrs/yr)
GIS	Geographic Information Systems
HEL	Highly Erodible Land
LAC	Local Advisory Committee
LMA	Local Management Agency (Oregon SB1010)
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding

NACD	National Association of Conservation Districts
NOAA	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NMFS	National Marine and Fisheries Service
NWMP	Northwest Weed Management Partnership
NRCS	Natural Resources Conservation Service (formerly SCS)
OACD	Oregon Association of Conservation Districts
OAR	Oregon Administrative Rule
OCEAN	Oregon Conservation Employees Association Network
ODA	Oregon Department of Agriculture
OFRI	Oregon Forest Resources Institute
ORS	Oregon Revised Statute
OSU	Oregon State University
OSWB	Oregon State Weed Board (ODA)
OWEB	Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board
RC&D	Resource Conservation and Development
RD	Rural Development (formerly Farmers Home Administration)
SCS	Soil Conservation Service (currently NRCS)
SDAO	Special Districts Association of Oregon
SB1010	Agricultural Water Quality Management Act of 1993 (OR)
SWCC	Soil and Water Conservation Commission
SWCD	Soil and Water Conservation District
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
USFS	United States Forest Service
WHIP	Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program
WRP	Wetland Reserve Program

Appendix D: Current Fiscal Year Budget

2025 - 2026 Umpqua Soil and Water Conservation District Budget:

Umpqua SWCD
2025-2026 Annual Budget

2025-2026 Draft	General Class	Project Class	Secured Total	Pending Total	Combined Total
Carry Frwrd Blnce	29,085.06	(10,776.50)	18,308.56	0.00	18,308.56
Income	212,286.51	65,222.84	277,509.35	48,510.00	326,019.35
Total Beg. Bal and Inc.	241,371.57	54,446.34	295,817.91	0.00	344,327.91
Expenditures	241,371.57	54,446.34	295,817.91	48,510.00	344,327.91
Ending Cash Blnce	(0.00)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Admin income	2,762.51	0.00	2,762.51	0.00	2,762.51
Grant Funds	202,324.00	65,222.84	267,546.84	48,510.00	316,056.84
Paid Time Off Reserve	7,200.00	0.00	7,200.00	0.00	7,200.00
Total Income	212,286.51	65,222.84	277,509.35	48,510.00	326,019.35
Reserved for Future Years	117,295.08	8,970.27	126,265.35	24,255.00	150,520.35
Admin Expense - Transfer to Gen	0.00	2,762.51	2,762.51	2,205.00	4,967.51
Contingency	7,000.00	0.00	7,000.00	0.00	7,000.00
Contract Services:					
Fiscal Provider	4,878.25	0.00	4,878.25	0.00	4,878.25
Other	10,945.39	17,000.00	27,945.39	19,600.00	47,545.39
Material and Supplies	0.00	13,702.24	13,702.24	0.00	13,702.24
Mileage	1,200.00	5,130.00	6,330.00	0.00	6,330.00
Operating Expenses:					
Advertising	250.00	0.00	250.00	0.00	250.00
Bank Fees	100.00	0.00	100.00	0.00	100.00
Dues, Fees and permits	1,025.00	0.00	1,025.00	0.00	1,025.00
Insurance	2,949.50	0.00	2,949.50	0.00	2,949.50
Office Supplies	3,350.00	0.00	3,350.00	0.00	3,350.00
Postage	1,250.00	0.00	1,250.00	0.00	1,250.00
PO Box Rental	150.00	0.00	150.00	0.00	150.00
Software Subscriptions	2,000.00	0.00	2,000.00	0.00	2,000.00
Storage Unit Rental	1,920.00	0.00	1,920.00	0.00	1,920.00
Telephone, Web Hosting	4,668.00	0.00	4,668.00	0.00	4,668.00
Payroll:					
Accued Wages/Benefits	3,503.95	0.00	3,503.95	2,450.00	5,953.95
District Manager	57,315.28	5,084.72	62,400.00	0.00	62,400.00
Health Insurance	8,266.64	733.36	9,000.00	0.00	9,000.00
Internet Stipend	275.56	24.44	300.00	0.00	300.00
Paid Time Off Accruals	6,671.98	528.02	7,200.00	0.00	7,200.00
Payroll Taxes	5,702.87	505.93	6,208.80	0.00	6,208.80
Workers Comp	54.07	4.85	58.92	0.00	58.92
Trainings	600.00	0.00	600.00	0.00	600.00
Total Expenses	241,371.57	54,446.34	295,817.91	48,510.00	344,327.91