2020-2021 Annual Report

Jackson Soil & Water Conservation District

To conserve, protect, and enhance natural resources for the economic, environmental, and quality of life benefits to the residents of Jackson County.

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Manager's Message

What a year! A Year that saw us deal with dramatic health concerns of COVID-19 and the tragedies of two devastating fires. But, it was also a year that revealed how well the people of Jackson County can come together to help our neighbors, or friends, and those we may never meet. Moreover, it was a year that showcased how District staff can adjust to new, and dynamic circumstances and work with our partners, and our clients to get some great natural resource stewardship projects completed or initiated.

Both the Obenchain and Almeda fires presented new realities that demanded immediate and time sensitive responses. These responses required some tough decisions to put current projects on hold while dealing with the pressures that these fires put on our landscape. I am grateful and honored that all District staff, including Paul DeMaggio, Clint Nichols, Kora Mousseaux, Jenna Sanford, Meghan Montgomery, Trevor Morris, Karelia Ver Eecke and Markie Germer rose to the occasion and did a great job.

While working on projects related to the two fires, staff was instrumental in initiating or continuing to work on projects funded by the Districts Conservation Assistance Program (CAP). This funding covers projects in five categories, including: Small Acts of Conservation, Incentive Program, Education and Community Conservation, Focus Area, and Cooperative Conservation Projects. These funds also helped secure financial and technical assistance resources from other agencies.

Additionally, work continued in the focus area with irrigation improvement projects and the continuation of the Hopkins canal project as the District works with the Medford Irrigation District and the Rogue River Valley Irrigation District on the Joint Systems Canal project.

I welcome you to review the following pages to capture some of the many projects and activities that were completed this past year.

Sincerely,

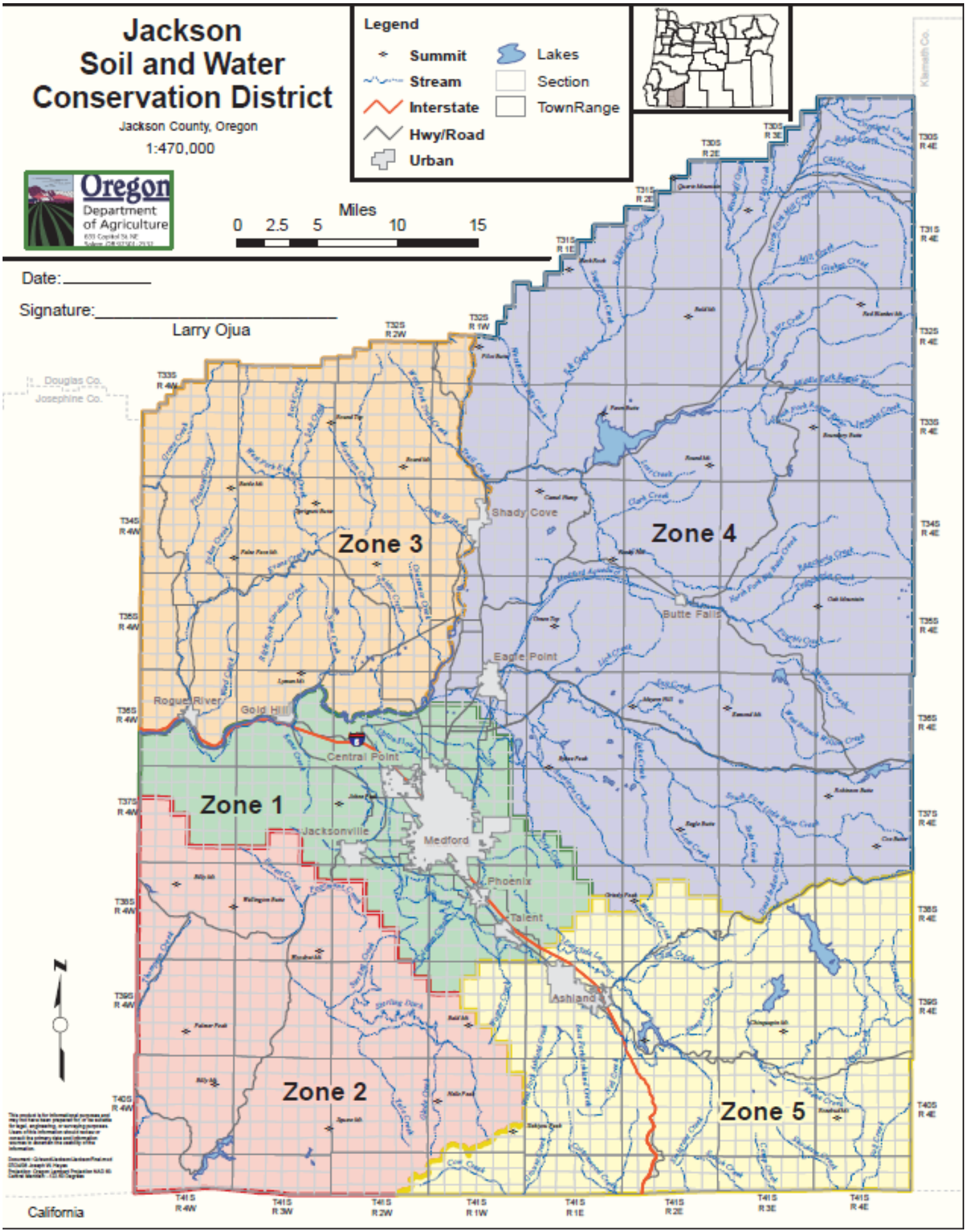
Randy White

District Manager

Financial Report

2020-2021 Fiscal Year Ending June 30th 2021

Receipts	
Property Taxes	$1,129,772
Oregon Department of Agriculture	$68,735
Tours, Workshops, & Classes Tuition	$0
Interest	$11,505
Grant Revenue	$57,257
Lease Revenue	$29,255
Miscellaneous	$139
Total Receipts	**$1,296,663**
Disbursements	
Personnel Services	$712,339
Materials & Services	$472,133
Capital Outlay	$ 17,991
Total Disbursements	**$1,202,463**
Excess of Receipts Over Disbursements	$94,200
Net Changes in Fund Balances (Cash Basis)	$94,200
Fund Balances (Cash Basis)	
Net Position (Cash Basis)	
Beginning of Year	$1,283,996
End of Year	$1,378,196


Jackson
Soil and Water
Conservation District
Jackson County, Oregon
1:470,000
Oregon
Department
of Agriculture
Legend
Summit
Stream
Interstate
Hwy/Road
Urban
Lakes
Section
TownRange
Miles
0 2.5 5 10 15
Date:_____
Signature:_____
Larry Ojua
Douglas Co.
Josephine Co.
Klamath Co.
Zone 1
Zone 2
Zone 3
Zone 4
Zone 5
Shady Cove
Butte Falls
Eagle Point
Rogue River
Gold Hill
Central Point
Jacksonville
Medford
Phoenix
Talent
Ashland
California

About Our District

Who we are & what we do.

Our Relationships

Collaborative working relationships are what makes our work possible. We work with partners on the local level including non-profits, schools, cities, the county, irrigation districts, businesses, and landowners; and partners on the state and federal levels including the Bureau of Land Management, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Oregon State University Extension Services, Oregon Department of Environmental Quality, Oregon Department of Agriculture, and Oregon Department of Forestry.

Current projects include:

- Implementing and managing the Oregon Agricultural Water Quality Management Act
- Little Butte Creek Watershed Agricultural Focus Area—soil and water quality improvements
- The Middle Rogue Pesticide Stewardship Partnership with Oregon Department of Environmental Quality—1 of 10 locations throughout the state monitoring in-stream pesticide levels.
- And many more small-scale community-level projects, from backyard rain gardens to supporting farm-to-school garden programs.

How We Work

The Jackson Soil and Water Conservation District maintains an actively involved elected board, employs a professional staff, and uses volunteers, natural resource experts, partner organizations including nonprofits and federal, state, and local agencies to improve natural resource stewardship. Our work is achieved through technical & financial assistance programs; partnerships; workshops and outreach efforts; and opportunities as they present themselves. The Jackson Soil and Water Conservation District employs a District Manager, an Administrative Specialist, an Office Assistant & Natural Resource Technician, a Soil & Water Conservation Engineer, a Forest & Riparian Resource Conservationist, a Community Water Resource Conservationist, an Agricultural Resource Conservationist, a Stewardship Monitoring Coordinator, and an Education & Outreach Coordinator. Our varied backgrounds and individual program visions allow for well-rounded and diverse approaches to natural resources conservation.

Measure No. 15-67

In 2006, the voters of Jackson County approved a permanent tax rate limit of $0.05 per every $1,000 assessed value of Jackson County property. The rate limit began fiscal year 2007-2008 and provides the District the financial capacity to meet the needs of the growing population of Jackson County. Our District customers include rural and urban private landowners, educational institutions and non-profits, and municipalities. With the financial support of Measure No. 15-67, we have been able to expand staffing, create more effective partnerships, and better meet the needs of Jackson County to conserve natural resources for cultural, economic, and ecological needs.

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Board of Directors

2020-2021 Fiscal Year

Stan Dean
Chairman, At Large

Gordon Jones
Zone 1

Barbara Niedermeyer
Vice-Chairwoman, Zone 2

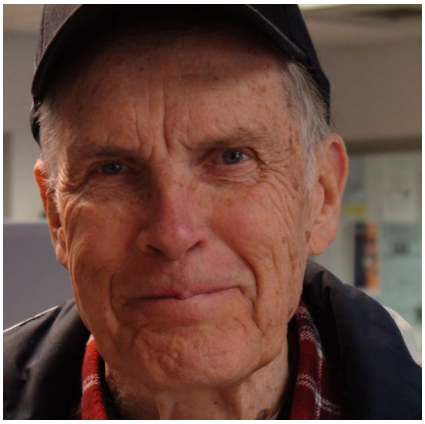
Nicky Webb-Smith
Zone 3

Don Hamann
Zone 4

Ron Hillers
Zone 5

Juanita Wright
Director Emeritus

Pam Hilillers
Associate Director



Allan Campbell
At Large

Staff

2020-2021 Fiscal Year

Randy White
District Manager

Markie Germer
Administrative Specialist

Paul DeMaggio
Soil & Water Conservation Engineer

Clint Nichols
Forest & Riparian Resource Conservationist

Kora Mousseaux
Community Water Resource Conservationist

Jenna Sanford
Stewardship Monitoring Coordinator

Karelia Ver Eecke
Education & Outreach Coordinator

Trevor Morris
Office Assistant
Natural Resource Technician

Meghan Montgomery
Agricultural Resource Conservationist

Conservation Assistance Program

Grants for Conservation & Education

Jackson Soil & Water Conservation District is primarily a source of technical assistance for landowners interested in conserving natural resources. In order to better facilitate this goal we offer a small grant program, called the Conservation Assistance Program (CAP). This program allows us to leverage our technical assistance with local financial support for projects related to natural resource conservation and education.

Our Conservation Assistance Program is divided into four distinct funding pools:

Focus Area Projects
In 2013, JSWCD selected the Little Butte Creek watershed as our Focus Area, and will continue to work in this watershed through 2022. Within the Little Butte Creek watershed Focus Area, JSWCD funds irrigation projects that improve the efficiency of flood irrigation practices and the conversion of flood irrigation practices to pressurized systems. JSWCD also funds riparian restoration projects within the Lower Antelope Creek sub-watershed.
Funding amount: Up to $50,000

Strategic Implementation Areas (SIAs)
The Oregon Department of Agriculture chooses SIAs after discussions with regional partners and review of local information including water quality data. The development and management of SIAs ensures that landowners and communities comply with agricultural water quality regulations, a state mandated bill passed in 1993. Our current SIA is located in the Applegate Watershed and is one of the first of its kind in Oregon to work across county boundaries, in both Jackson and Josephine Counties and with three partners - JSWCD, TRSWCD and the APWC.
Funding amount: Up to $125,000

Cooperative Conservation Projects
Cooperative Conservation Projects improve natural resource conservation on a landscape - scale—across multiple properties or within a single larger property. This program allows our District to fund large-scale natural resource conservation projects on land outside JSWCD priority areas (Focus Area or SIA). For a project to qualify for funding from this program, the project must either 1) involve more than one landowner, preferably contiguous landowners, or 2) be eligible for funding from other granting organizations and agencies, such as OWEB, Oregon Water Resources Dept. (OWRD), or others.
Funding amount: Up to $50,000

Snapshot

- **$170,980.01** in District Funds were budgeted to support Jackson County residents in their stewardship goals.
- **Nine applications** were approved for funding through our grant programs.
- **$136,987.61** in District Funds were allocated toward local conservation projects.
- **$75,513.24** were directly spent on Almeda & Obenchain Wildfire recovery efforts.

Conservation Assistance Program

Grants for Conservation & Education

Education & Community Conservation Program

Education & Community Conservation grants are awarded to partners, organizations, cities, and private landowners for the implementation, creation, or continuation of community natural resource conservation education programs, demonstrations, or features. Any project with the ultimate goal of providing educational materials or opportunities to members of the public may apply for funds from this pool.

Funding amount: Up to $10,000

District Incentive Programs

This program funds specific types of projects with incentives to the landowner. These incentives have set amounts; i.e. per acre, per square foot, or a flat rate per project. JSWCD develops new incentive programs as need and interest arises, either from a resource concern JSWCD identifies or from landowner interest in particular types of projects. This program streamlines the granting process to put good stewardship on the ground without the typical delays caused by the more laborious grant writing and grant approval processes. These programs also speed up the planning process and decrease the paperwork burden to save time for both JSWCD staff and the landowner. Other agencies can use these programs to assist landowners they otherwise could not serve by referring them to JSWCD and these programs (the Riparian Restoration Rebate Program, for example, has allowed the Freshwater Trust and Rogue River Watershed Council to find assistance for landowners they otherwise could not help).

Funding amount: Varies by program

Small Acts of Conservation

Projects not eligible for funding from other JSWCD programs may apply for funding from the Small Acts of Conservation program. Typically, this program funds smaller projects with only one landowner and limited benefit to natural resource conservation. Projects funded in this program do not fall within our priority areas such as our Focus Area and SIA, do not fit in an incentive program, and do not qualify for, or would not rank highly in, other organization's grant programs.

Funding amounts: Up to $10,000

District Funded Stewardship Projects & Programs

Highlight: Southern Oregon Regional Envirothon

Southern Oregon Regional Envirothon

The Southern Oregon Regional Envirothon is a hands-on environmental problem-solving competition for high school students held throughout the United States and Canada. Each year, teams from states and provinces across the US and Canada compete to become champions worthy of competing at the North American Envirothon held each year in a different location.

This regional competition will make it easier for teachers to coordinate schedules, build projects into their ongoing curricula, and eliminate, the cost of competing for local families. Additionally, a local competition that is also locally developed will help expand area youths' knowledge-base of our local resources and the careers centered around them.

Mission

SORE's mission is accomplished by developing in young people an understanding of the principles and practices of natural resources management and ecology through assessing and interpreting complex natural resource management decisions. Students involved with this challenging exploration of our region's natural resources will adapt and expand their new-found knowledge and skills to their communities through effective communication, real-world skills applications, and critical thinking with a collaborative approach. The following goals and objectives will be used as a guide to help develop effective curricula, educational resources, and testing scenarios.

Goals

1. To promote a desire to learn more about the natural environment in middle and high school students throughout Southern Oregon, while equipping students with the knowledge and skills needed to apply the basic principles and practices of natural resources management and ecology to complex environmental and social issues.

2. To promote stewardship of natural resources, while encouraging the development of critical thinking in cooperative problem-solving and decision-making settings to work toward a balance of quality of life and quality of the environment.

3. To provide students with experiences in environmentally-oriented activities, enabling them to become environmentally and socially aware action-oriented individuals.

4. To provide students with opportunities to connect with local natural resources professionals.

District Funded Stewardship Projects & Programs

Highlight: Medford A & N

Medford A & N was awarded a CAP grant to improve water quality and irrigation efficiency on their 51 irrigated acres of horse pasture and hay fields. Historically, the property was painstakingly flood irrigated by their dedicated ranch manager. However, even done well, the flood irrigation system caused unwanted erosion and troublesome mud, was inefficient and contributed to water quality issues. With the completion of the Hopkins Canal Piping Project, this property was eligible for pressurized irrigation system upgrades. With guidance from our Soil & Water Conservation Engineer, Paul DeMaggio, the ranch had successfully upgraded all irrigation systems on their property by mid-2020.

The project is a prime example of the leveraging capacity our CAP grant program provides to local producers working to improve their land management practices. This project provides economic benefits and aesthetics to the landowners and ecological benefits by reducing water pollution through run-off and reducing unintended water waste—a common by-product of flood irrigation systems.

Snapshot

- **51 acres converted from contour flood irrigation** to a mix of center pivots, linear move, pods and big gun sprinklers
- **64% of project costs** funded by grants
- Majority of grant funds provided by **Oregon Natural Resources Conservation Service & Oregon Department of Environmental Quality**

Wildfire Recovery

Assisting Landowners & Rehabilitating Landscapes

The Labor Day Fires of 2020 will be remembered in Oregon as one of the most destructive wildfire seasons in history. Statewide, 11 wildfires started on or around Labor Day, burned more than 700,000 acres, destroyed more than 4000 structures, and claimed 5 lives. While the causes of some of these fires is still officially unknown, it is suspected that all were human caused, either intentionally or through negligence. In Jackson County, the Almeda Drive and South Obenchain Fires devastated several communities and displaced thousands of families, many of them low-income. The natural resources affected by these fires include devastated riparian areas, impaired water quality affecting municipal drinking water and aquatic life, destroyed oak habitats which were already compromised by land conversion and conifer encroachment, and loss of conifer habitat and timber forest land.

Snapshot

- Almeda Damages
  3,000 structures, 3,200 acres burned
- South Obenchain Damages
  90 structures, 32,671 acres burned
- **$72,683** in CAP funds and **$83,333** in OWEB Fire Response funds
- **59 properties assessed** for post-wildfire recovery needs
- **254 acres reseeded** with rangeland and wildlife forage
- **9 acres mulched** with weed free straw to reduce erosion risk
- **109 acres of post-wildfire forestry work**, including hazard tree removal, fuels reduction, and erosion control
- **30 acres of herbicide treatment** to stop blackberry regrowth in riparian areas

Wildfire Recovery

Assisting Landowners & Rehabilitating Landscapes

Jackson Soil & Water Conservation District quickly set to work helping landowners recover from these disastrous wildfires. We initially focused on erosion as our largest concern, particularly near streams and other waterways and in bulldozed fire control lines created during the fire. We purchased seed and straw and made these resources available for free to landowners who could use this on their fire-affected properties.

The Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board made $83,333 in grant funds available to each of the Labor Day Fires. While the Rogue River Watershed Council took the lead in the Almeda Drive Fire recovery efforts, the District stepped up to aid in South Obenchain Fire recovery. We focused on forestry work and noxious weed control. Our forestry work included removing hazard trees left by the fire, using downed trees to stop erosion above streams and other waterways, cleaning up fallen trees during firefighting operations, and creating defensible space in homes affected by the fire.

Dense stands of blackberry drove fire behavior in riparian areas, and in the weeks after the fire we saw blackberry regrowth threatening the future of these sensitive ecosystems. We used professional herbicide contractors to treat this blackberry regrowth in the spring of 2021, focusing on Reese Creek and its tributaries. We plan to do additional blackberry treatment in the fall of 2021.

Monitoring

Antelope Creek Water Quality Monitoring

Throughout the irrigation season we monitor the water quality and quantity of Antelope Creek for multiple indicators, including *E. coli*, total phosphorous, temperature, and stream flow.

These data are used to evaluate stream health and track changes related to the RRVID Hopkins Canal Piping Project and associated irrigation conversion projects.

The piping project was completed in 2019, piping over three miles of open irrigation canal. The ultimate goals of the project include: saving water in-stream for fish habitat, improvement of irrigation practices through replacement or conversion of out of date or inefficient irrigation systems, and improved conveyance of irrigation water to Agate Lake, ultimately improving service for all RRVID patrons, in addition to providing pressurized irrigation water to over 700 acres of land east of White City, OR.

Our Antelope Creek water quality monitoring program has been in place since 2017, tracking water quality parameters before, during, and after project implementation. We are excited to see that *E. coli* levels in the water have dropped significantly following project implementation, with nearly half of the samples falling below the benchmark of 406 MPN/100mL. For the other parameters, it is too early and there are too many other variables to see evident trends at this time. However, there is a noticeable decrease in flow at one sampling location between 2017-2018 years and 2019-2020 years. This can likely be attributed to the large number of acres that switched from flood irrigation to drip irrigation as well as the installation of the new Hopkins Canal Pipeline which occurred early 2019. This conversion led to more efficient water use, which means less post-irrigation run-off flowing back into Antelope Creek, and therefore less pollutant run-off, including phosphorous and *E. coli.*

Snapshot

- **Significant decrease in overall *E. coli* concentrations in 2020** compared to previous 3 years.
- **Decreased irrigation run-off** due to improved irrigation efficiency.
- Overall, **decreased inputs of total phosphorous and *E. coli*** due to modernized irrigation practices and a piped main canal.

Monitoring will continue here until at least 2022. After five years of monitoring and three years post-piping, we hope to have more discernible trends become evident in the data. Until then, we are at the very least happy to have less *E. coli* bacteria in the water system and more efficient irrigation for producers.

Monitoring

Middle Rogue Pesticid e Stewardsh ip Program

The Middle Rogue Pesticide Stewardship Partnership (MRPSP) was established in 2014 as part of the Oregon Department of Agriculture's statewide effort to monitor water quality, particularly in connection to agricultural practices. Each year the MRPSP team collects water samples, which are analyzed by the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality. The results are used to inform outreach and education efforts as they relate to water quality and pesticide use; assess the use of chemicals of greatest concern; and to develop communication tools and strategies to reach MRPSP's constituents. MRPSP's stakeholders include agricultural applicators; state and county agencies; irrigation districts; landscape contractors; public and private forestry managers; urban residents; and municipalities. The goal of the MRPSP is to reduce the frequency of detection and concentrations of pesticides within the monitored watersheds.

Monitoring

In 2020 the MRPSP collected water samples from four tributaries of Bear Creek: Jackson Creek, Lone Pine Creek, Payne Creek, and Wagner Creek (Figure 1). In response to the Almeda fire and associated recovery efforts, additional sampling events took place on Bear Creek at three different locations (Figure 1). Water samples were collected February to November.

Results & Interpretation

During the regular 2020 sampling season, the MRPSP detected seventeen chemicals in four watersheds, for a total of 146 detections. Of those seventeen chemicals, most were detected infrequently and at less than 10% of the aquatic life benchmark.

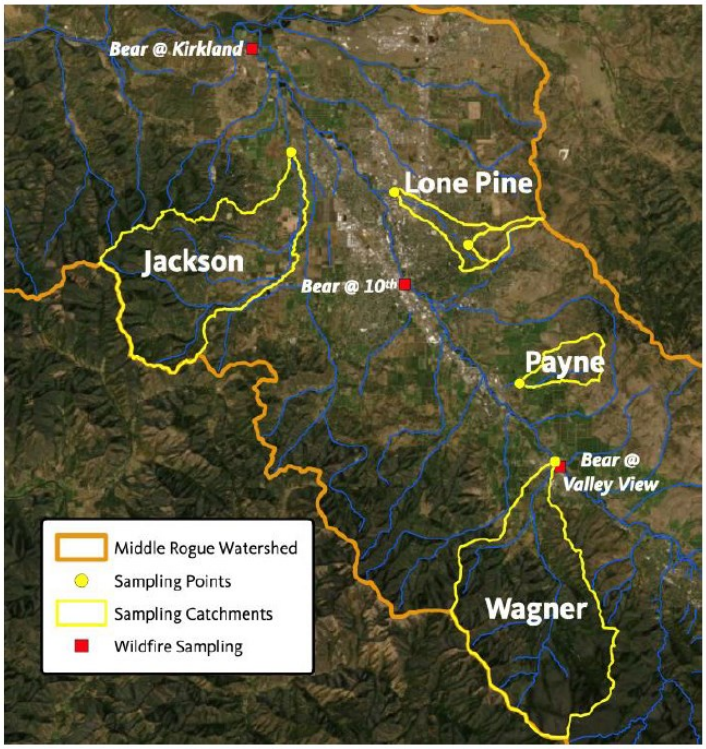


Figure 1: 2020 MRPSP sampling locations. Regular sampling occurred on 12 dates February-November. Wildfire response samples were collected in October and November.

There were *no* detections of oxyfluorfen during the 2020 sampling season. This reduction may be the result of MRPSP reconnaissance sampling and targeted outreach to landowners near Jackson Creek in 2019. Oxyfluorfen will remain a pesticide of concern until two years have elapsed without significant detections.

Of the four sampling watersheds, our newest, Lone Pine Creek accounted for 100% of benchmark exceedances, 89% of all chemical detections, and 40% of all samples collected in 2020. These rates highlight Lone Pine Creek as an important watershed within which to better understand land-use and pesticide application as they relate to water quality.

Monitoring

Middle Rogue Pesticid e Stewardsh ip Program

Conclusion

As our dataset continues to grow, MRPSP partners have been able to identify the pesticides most common and of greatest concern in the Bear Creek Watershed, and in doing so are working to develop communication materials and strategies for the users of those chemicals. The intention of pesticide monitoring is that applicators, the general public, and research scientists will better understand how and why certain pesticides accumulate and move through our local watersheds. The MRPSP will continue to offer education, technical assistance, and incentives for the adoption of scientifically-based, best management practices to ensure appropriate pest control while reducing or eliminating pesticide contamination of surface waters.

Table 1: MRPSP pesticides of interest based on 2020 data

Compound	Selected Trade Names	# of Detections	Detection Frequency (%)	Aquatic Life Benchmark (µg/L)	Number of Benchmark Exceedances
Imidacloprid	*Admire, Gaucho*	**11**	**17**	**0.01**	**11**
Metsulfuron-Methyl	*Escort, Ally*	**21**	**32**	**0.36**	**2**
Diuron	*Karmex, Direx, Kovar*	**23**	**35**	**2.4**	**0**
Oxyfluorfen	*Goal, Goaltender, Galigan*	**0**	**0**	**0.29**	**0**

For more information on the Middle Rogue Pesticide Stewardship Partnership Contact:

Kora Mousseaux: kora.mousseaux@jswcd.org, 541-423-6181

Gordon Jones: gordon.jones@oregonstate.edu, 5341-776-7373

Community Resource

Low-Cost Equipment Rental Program

Our District is proud to be able to offer a low-cost farm and conservation equipment rental program to residents of Jackson County. Our equipment aids land managers in Jackson County in maintaining productive, healthy lands. To use our equipment, one must be a resident of Jackson County and use the equipment only on property within Jackson County. A small deposit is required and rental fees vary depending on equipment type and length of use.

Landowners currently under a Planning Agreement with the District have priority over those without a plan, on a first-come first-served basis. Contact Trevor Morris, our Office Assistant & Natural Resources Technician for more information.

Available Equipment

- Flail Mower
- Ring Roller (6'8 and 4')
- Pasture Harrow & Spike Tooth Harrow
- No-Till Drill Seeder (2)
    - "*Dew Drop*" and standard size
- Soil Auger
- Soil Moisture Step Probe

Snapshot

- **19 landowners** rented equipment
- **All rentals** combined, our rental program helped to treat or manage **160 total acres**
- **143 acres drill-seeded**
    - 40 acres the largest contiguous area
    - 0.5 acres the smallest contiguous area

Community Resource

Community Planting for a Fire-wise Adapted Community

Helping a community reduce the risk of wildfire while restoring riparian ecosystems.

Like many streams in Jackson County, Himalayan blackberry (Rubus armeniacus) and other invasive species had encroached upon the riparian area of Jackson Creek. The aggressive growth had prevented a healthy understory from establishing, limiting the health of the ecosystem. As native riparian vegetation naturally ages and dies, this blackberry hedge prevented new native trees and shrubs from recruiting. This near monoculture did not provide the same ecosystem benefits, such as shade for Jackson Creek, erosion control, and bird habitat. It also presented a large wildfire threat to the Jackson Oaks Neighborhood Association, other community associations within the Twin Creeks development, and adjacent rural residential properties. The dead canes under the actively growing canopy promoted aggressive fire spread, extended flame lengths, and the creation of fire brands.

In winter of 2019, Twin Creeks Development LLC and Fire District 3 addressed the wildfire concerns by removing the blackberry hedges. In order to maintain this work in the short term, stakeholders needed to eradicate the regrowth of blackberry. In the long term, stakeholders needed to establish competing vegetation and institute a regular maintenance plan. Based on a satellite images and a visual assessment of the area post-project, we estimated needing to replant 1.2 acres of riparian area. With a massive turnout from Boy Scout Troop 7, the Middle Rogue Steelheaers, and local community members, we planted 760 native trees and shrubs in a single afternoon. These plants, in addition to the existing native vegetation, will restore riparian ecosystem function on this section of Jackson Creek while also reducing wildfire risk to the Twin Creeks communities.

In addition to removing invasive species and planting native vegetation, we restored a walking path so residents can walk near the creek for wildlife viewing.

Snapshot

- November 14 2020
  - 378 volunteer planting hours totaling $10,937 in in-kind match
  - 760 native trees and shrubs planted to restore the riparian buffer on Jackson Creek
  - 853' bark walking path for the community to enjoy
  - Partnership between Jackson SWCD, Southern Oregon land Conservancy, Fire District 3, Boy Scout Troop 7, Twin Creeks Development LLC, Jackson Oaks Neighborhood Association, and Middle Rogue Steelheaders.

Community Resource

Realtor Classes

Since 2018, we have partnered with the Rogue Valley Association of Realtors to bring natural resource management education to our local realtors through the Earth Track series. The Earth Track series is one of the education tracks provided to Realtors for continued professional development.

Upon completion of each year's annual offering of Earth Track classes, realtors are more confident in speaking with their buying and selling clients about natural resource management and decision-making processes.

Each year's class offerings are developed around local, current issues, questions from realtors, and resource concerns as seen through the District's lens. These class series cover both urban and rural sectors, as the realtors show properties in both land uses.

Classes taught this year covered the following topics: residential water conservation and stormwater management; hemp and cannabis; grazing and pasture management; mud and manure management; agricultural irrigation; and wildfire.

Snapshot

- **Provided classes covering:**
  - Residential Water Conservation & Stormwater Management
  - Hemp & Cannabis
  - Grazing & Pasture Management
  - Mud & Manure Management
  - Agricultural Irrigation
  - Wildfire

ROGUE VALLEY ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®

Looking Forward

Hemp & C an nabi s Reso u r c es

Hemp and Cannabis: Promoting Soil Health

Since hemp was made federally legal under the 2018 Federal Farm Bill, Jackson and Josephine counties witnessed a rapid explosion and then decline in hemp cultivation. The growth of this industry in our area has caused significant and lasting impact on soil health, water quality, and farm viability due to lack of experience about production, market fluctuations, and widespread unlicensed cultivation and violation of water rights. However, there is also a robust community of skilled and responsible hemp and cannabis growers in our region who, along with natural resource professionals and research support from OSU Extension, can help inform and support responsible, sustainable cultivation of this crop.

Supporting natural resource stewardship in this industry is challenging, but JSWCD has provided technical assistance to 10 hemp and marijuana producers over the past year. We have also provided technical information to growers through OSU Extension's monthly Hemp Forums, as well as participating in the Jackson County Marijuana Advisory Committee meetings and providing support to Oregon Water Resources Department to help safeguard our water resources.

In the coming year, we will be piloting a Soil Health Rebate Program, which will support winter cover cropping and soil testing on current or former hemp fields to help build soil health and improve crop production.

For more information on hemp and marijuana cultivation in Jackson County, and how we are supporting responsible cultivation, contact Meghan Montgomery: meghan.montgomery@jswcd.org.

Notes

Jackson Soil & Water Conservation District

Est. 1966

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Central Point OR 97502
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Turning natural resource concerns into opportunities.

Follow us on Facebook & Instagram