

# Lakeview Soil and Water Conservation District



**2024-2025**

# Lakeview Soil and Water Conservation District

## 2024-2025 Annual Work Plan

*The mission of the Lakeview Soil and Water Conservation District "To provide technical assistance to individuals, groups, and other agencies for the purpose of managing and enhancing our natural resources, environment, and economy". The objectives listed below will be used to accomplish the mission of this District.*

### **Objective #1 Maintain Sound and Stable District Operations**

**For the public:** To conduct district business fairly, openly and respectfully in a non-discriminatory manner and within adopted plans, objectives, policies and legal guidelines. The staff will provide technical assistance and information resources to the public and partners, secure adequate, stable funding for district operations, maintain accountability, develop and maintain cooperative partnerships, and build capacity.

**For the district:** The employees and contractors of the district will:

- Maintain consistent and reliable correspondence with employees, board members, partners and the general public.
- Track district income and expenses according to generally accepted accounting principles.
- Complete payroll and payroll taxes.
- Track and reconcile grant funds, as well as report on these funds, as required by funders.
- Prepare quarterly agendas, minutes, and financial reports for board members to review and attend quarterly meetings.
- Take on additional duties upon direction of the board.
- Prepare and present the Annual Work Plan, Scope of Work, and Budgets to the board for review, revision and adoption.
- Staff will prepare for and conduct the annual financial review or audit in a timely manner and work with auditors providing requested documents.
- Staff and/or board members will strive to attend the Oregon Association of Conservation Districts (OACD) annual meeting, as well as trainings in natural resource disciplines concerning water quality/quantity and conservation issues.
- Staff will coordinate the annual meeting and any board and staff member trainings that are needed.
- Establish and maintain formal Memorandums of Understanding and Cooperative Agreements to clarify all financial and working relationships with other groups and agencies.

### **Objective #2 Promote Conservation of Natural Resources, Watershed Health and Water Quality/Quantity on Agricultural Lands**

**In General:**

Staff will write and monitor grants for interested landowners that re-establish and protect Lake County resource concerns and watershed health, provide technical assistance to landowners and grant applicants related to agricultural water quality/quantity and soil issues, assist in the permitting application process when needed, provide construction inspection, and follow-up for operation and maintenance in the application process and the grant writing process.

Staff will work with the Lake County Umbrella Watershed Council (LCUWC) and the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) to identify producer needs and concerns and assist with tasks related to natural resource conservation and water quality.

Staff will make contact with landowners and provide technical assistance relating to riparian restoration, weed eradication, irrigation efficiency, pasture management, manure management, cover crops, assist with conservation planning implementation and work with ODA on compliance visits when needed.

The Wildlife Biologist will continue to work with the Sage-Grouse conservation efforts. The biologist will continue to work with landowners, signing them up for the Candidate Conservation Agreement with Assurances (CCAA) program and creating site specific plans that will restore and/or enhancement their habitat.

Staff will provide communication to and advocacy support for landowners and habitats in Lake County that are impacted by proposed or existing legislation and/or media attention.

Staff will attend water, soil, ecological and conservation trainings.

District Manager will participate as a board member on the OACD board.

### **Specific Projects:**

#### **Active Projects**

Staff will continue work on a variety of projects throughout the district and assist NRCS with inventory on upland watershed projects. The following projects are active in the district:

The Upper Chewaucan SIA project is funded through OWEB and focused on monitoring specific stream reaches in the Upper Chewaucan watershed. Over 75% of this watershed burned between 2019-2021, so this project will aid in establishing baseline data of the system and the changes that have occurred.

The Upper Chewaucan Fish Passage project, funded by OWEB, works with a local landowner and the United States Forest Service (USFS) to replace an irrigation diversion, establish off-site water and build a stream crossing in South Creek.

The modernization of the Honey Creek infrastructure is ongoing, as work on the lower four irrigation diversions continues. This is an OWEB funded grant that involves three family ranches. The purpose of the project is to modernize irrigation structures to incorporate fish passage and screening. It is 10% complete.

The Maxwell Upper Cox Creek OWEB Technical Assistance grant is underway to replace an irrigation diversion on Bauers Creek with a new structure that incorporates fish passage and screening. This project is 10% complete.

### **Completed Projects**

Honey Creek Sage-Steppe FIP is a completed grant that addressed threats to sage grouse by removing encroaching juniper, treating decadent willow stands and development of two springs to improve livestock dispersment and utilization. Actions remaining for this grant are post implementation monitoring in years 2024 and 2026. Landowners and USFWS are partners on this project.

Twelvemile Creek Sage Grouse Conservation FIP is a completed grant working with a local landowner that addressed threats to sage grouse by removing encroaching juniper, treating decadent bitterbrush stands, fence construction and development of four springs to improve livestock dispersment and utilization. Actions remaining for this grant are post implementation monitoring in years 2024 and 2026.

Plush-Deboy Pasture Improvement FIP is a completed grant working with a local landowner that strived to improve rangeland pasture conditions within sage grouse habitat through fence construction and development of four springs to improve livestock dispersment and utilization. Actions remaining for this grant are post implementation monitoring in years 2024 and 2026.

Willow Creek Wet Meadow Enhancement is a completed grant working with two local landowners and USFWS to improve wet meadow/mesic conditions along Willow Creek in the Clover Flat area near Valley Falls. Actions for this grant included the pond and plug method to restore the native floodplain and viability of Willow Creek after catastrophic flooding damage that occurred in the 1960's. Fence construction was also completed to help the site recover post construction as well as to replace the previous riparian pastures used by the landowners. Post implementation monitoring will occur as the final action in 2023 and 2025.

Cogswell Creek was completed in the last biennium. It included a new irrigation diversion with fish screening and passage. The project also helped to replace a large culvert, which was a fish passage barrier, with a precast bridge. The project will continue to be monitored throughout the next biennium.

FWS Infrastructure Bill CCAA funds were used to help administer, manage and implement the Sage Grouse CCAA program in Lake County. Work is scheduled to be completed in 2023 remains as implementation of the CCAA program and ensuring all monitoring, development and implementation of the program persists.

The JJ Diversion project, funded by OWEB, worked with a local landowner to provide screening and passage for the Warner Sucker, which is an ESA listed species. This project is scheduled to be completed in 2023 and monitored over the next biennium.

## Potential Future Projects

The North Warner Rangeland Health Project grant proposal is anticipated to receive official funding this month and seeks to address threats to sage grouse by removing encroaching juniper, treating invasive annual grasses, fence construction and development of eleven springs to improve livestock dispersement and utilization. Landowners and partners involved include USFWS and two landowners.

The North Warner Clover Flat Fire Risk Reduction proposed project is on private lands adjacent to BLM land that are primarily covered under a Sage Grouse CCAA in which the Lakeview SWCD engages private landowners in 30-year voluntary conservation actions in exchange for certain assurances should sage grouse be listed under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). Lakeview SWCD, Lakeview BLM along with several local landowners propose to initiate a project that continues their efforts to implement identified conservation actions under their CCAA Site Specific Plans and ranch management plans that will reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfires, reduce hazardous fuel loads on the landscape, improve sage grouse habitat, as well as rangeland health and increasing resistant and resilient landscapes. This financial assistance will help remove 2,113 acres of juniper as part of a larger landscape scale project with the Lakeview BLM and Lakeview NRCS to reduce hazardous fuel loads and risk of catastrophic fires, as well as improve sage grouse habitat and sage-steppe ecosystem health. If awarded funds the spring of 2023, funds will be used for juniper treatment, post monitoring, project management and travel expenses over years 2023 through 2025.

The FWS Infrastructure BIL CCAA Funds project will be submitted spring of 2023 and will be used to help administer, manage and implement the Sage Grouse CCAA program in Lake County. This grant will cover capacity for year 2024 and possibly 2025.

The FWS Infrastructure BIL Sage-Steppe Landscape Scale Conservation project will be submitted spring of 2023 and will be a coordinated effort among Lakeview SWCD, USFWS, DSL, LCCWMA and the Sage Grouse Lakeview LIT. Actions for this grant will treat encroaching juniper and invasive annual grasses across ownerships for landscape scale conservation for sage grouse. Funding for this proposal will cover year 2024 and possibly 2025 with possible opportunities to receive additional funding in future years.

The BLM IRA Funds (SE Oregon Sage-Steppe Conservation Collaborative) project will be submitted in the spring of 2023 and will be a coordinated effort among Lakeview SWCD, USFWS, DSL, LCCWMA and the Lakeview Sage Grouse LIT. Actions for this grant will treat encroaching juniper and invasive annual grasses across ownerships for landscape scale conservation for sage grouse. Funding for this proposal will cover year 2024 and possibly 2025 with possible opportunities to receive additional funding in future years.

The OWEB OACSC Sage Grouse FIP Phase II 2.0 is part of the Oregon All Counties Candidate Conservation Agreements with Assurances Steering Committee (Partnership). The Partnership includes the following core partners: Crook County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD), Harney SWCD, Lakeview SWCD, Malheur County SWCD, Baker County's Powder Basin Watershed Council (PBWC), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), and private landowners

from each county. The Partnership's primary ecological outcome includes strategically planning and implementing conservation treatments on a landscape scale to restore Oregon's private rangeland sagebrush-steppe rangelands and to ultimately restore ecological health and increase sage-grouse populations. These potential funds would cover 3 biennia of funding starting in fall 2023 or winter 2024.

Staff is working towards obtaining funding for conservation work on the Chewaucan marshes, to include three landowners, ODFW, Intermountain West Joint Venture (IWJV) and the LCUWC. The staff plans to apply for Technical Assistance Funding to create a Reconnaissance Plan that would guide the application for funds to aid in implementation of the plan on the marshes. This work would likely include a focus on off-site water, riparian fencing, invasive species management and fish passage. The OWEB Small Grant program will be available again this biennium for developing off-site watering for livestock, irrigation efficiency, riparian fencing, stream restoration and stabilization, wetland enhancement, and juniper thinning.

### **Objective #3 Provide Conservation Education and Information**

The district will host an annual speech contest for seventh grade students in the district with the topics focused around agricultural and conservation practices.

The district's website will be revised and maintained. The site will better educate the public on what the district does and what it has to offer.

The district will continue to produce and support the production of informational and education video series regarding agriculture and conservation.

The district will provide support to youth agricultural education programs, like 4-H and FFA, through sponsorships and purchases of livestock at the county fair.

### **Objective #4 Promote Weed Awareness for Watershed Health**

The district supports the local Lake County Cooperative Weed Management Area (LCCWMA) meetings and events with participation.

### **Objective #5 NRCS Conservation Technical Assistance partnership**

Staff will support NRCS in their EQIP program, assist in conservation planning inventory on upland watershed projects, conservation planning development and implementation, Sage-Grouse Initiative status reviews, HEL determinations and local and basin Work Group meetings.

Staff will partner with the LCUWC, LCCWMA, Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife (ODFW), Ducks Unlimited (DU), USFW and BLM on riparian process and function issues, and water quality issues.

### **Objective #6 Fundraising**

Funding will be raised through writing grants for conservation and watershed health, providing the district with administration, project management, travel, pre and post-implementation fees.

The district will continue to seek other avenues of funding for administration and technical support from other public and/or private grant funding sources.

The district will promote the rental of the two no-till drills, rangeland drill, pivot track filler and aerator, as an additional service to the community and source of funding.

**Objective #8 Staff Trainings**

Staff will attend pertinent trainings related to implementation on agricultural practices, conservation planning, monitoring, office practices, procedures, QuickBooks etc.

**Board Members:**

Scott Warner – Chair

Clark Maxwell – Vice Chair

Mary Woodworth – Secretary/Treasurer

Phil Shullanberger

Tom Flynn

**Staff:**

Justin Ferrell – District Manager

Brandi St. Clair – Wildlife Biologist

Tanya Graham – Contracted Fiscal Admin

Tess Baker – Contracted Office Admin

Fara Brummer – Contracted Biologist

The Lakeview Soil and Water conservation District board of directors reviewed the July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2025 Work Plan and approved the plan at the June 21, 2023 board meeting.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date