

1984 Morrow Soil & Water Conservation District Annual Report

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SWCD receives citation from FFA



Alex Lindsay (Right) presents Chairman McElligott with a citation given by FFA.

The Morrow S.W.C.D. supports the Future Farmers of America annually by giving a cash award to the winning district soil judging team. The award is used for the teams expenses to go to the state finals.

Morrow S.W.C.D. received a cita-

tion from Future Farmers of America, Blue Mountain District as a token of appreciation for encouragement, cooperation and assistance given the FFA in helping to accomplish outstanding achievements in farming, leadership, citizenship and community welfare.

Water - who gets it?

Water - who gets it, and who doesn't - promises to be a big issue in this session of the Oregon Legislature, as lawmakers grapple with what could be up to 75 separate water-related issues.

The Morrow Soil & Water Conservation District also will debate water issues when it holds its annual meeting next Tuesday, March 12, at the Lexington Grange beginning at 6:30 p.m.

Perhaps the most pressing legislation for Eastern Oregon now before the legislature, is the Beneficial Use Bill, Minimum Streamflow Bill and Water Reporting Bill.

Beneficial Use (SB 286) would provide significant impact on existing vested water rights, a concern of every farmer or rancher who now has water rights.

The bill proposes to remove from the law the listing of those water uses that are important, including irrigation water use. The bill would redefine "beneficial use" to mean the use of water that is reasonable

and of benefit to the appropriator and at the same time consistent with the interests of the public in the best utilization of the water resources of this state.

Those following this legislation are concerned with how the "interests of the public" will be defined, and how the importance of water uses would be weighed accordingly.

Some members of the Legislative Committee on Water Policy are concerned that the lists of uses were

put there for a purpose and have meant something to the holders of existing water rights.

The minimum streamflow bill (SB 290) will require the Water Policy Review Board to adopt minimum flows as a "goal" to be reached, whether or not there is water available to meet the flow. In the meantime, the affected stream will be "withdrawn" and no further water rights may be applied for until these "goal" or "targeted flows" are met at some time in the future.

The bill further points out that

streamflows will become available "through abandonment or cancellation of water rights."

The water Reporting Bill (SB 288) would require that holders of water right certificates submit statements of use to the Water Resources Department at least once every five years. Sellers of real estate must inform purchasers as to water right certificate.

A serious consequence of the bill is that if an owner fails to report, "the Water Resources Director may initiate proceedings for the cancellation of the water right." Needless to say this could have serious consequences, for existing water right holders.

In addition, there have been eight other bills identified by the SWCD as having great impact on water use in Eastern Oregon, and the SWCD urges all those who could be affected to come to the annual meeting and discuss these issues before they become law.

Larry Nunn, water master for the Umatilla River, will be on hand at the meeting to answer any questions.

Weed district organized for Morrow County

With the support of the Morrow County Livestock Growers, the Morrow County Wheat Growers, Heppner-Morrow County Chamber of Commerce and local farmers and ranchers a Weed Control District has been organized for Morrow County. The district is a sub-division of the Morrow Soil and Water Conservation District. The weed policies and weed supervisor are governed by a five member Weed Advisory Board.

What does a Weed District do? First, a supervisor must be hired to carry out the responsibilities of the Weed District. The responsibilities of the district are to prevent the establishment and spread of noxious weeds within the county; implement the eradication of designated noxious weeds; encourage and assist in organizing weed control programs on private and public lands; cooperate with state, county and federal agencies; to develop chemical and biological weed control measures, conduct weed surveys and develop educational programs.

A weed classification for Morrow County has been established by the Weed Board and include "A" and "B" weeds. "A" weeds are any plant which is determined by the Weed Board and County Court to be injurious to public health, crops, livestock, land or other property. These weeds are not yet present or well established in the county and are in such small amounts that total eradication is possible. The following noxious weeds have been targeted by the Weed Advisory board for eradication within Morrow County:

Found within the county: Yellow Starthistle, Tansy Ragwort, Dalmatian and Yellow Toadflax, Spike Weed, Musk Thistle.

Not yet established: Skeleton Weed, Leafy Spurge, Mediterranean Sage.

It is the landowners responsibility to eradicate and control these weeds. The "B" weeds are defined as weeds of economic importance which occur in large enough infestations to make eradication impractical in most of Morrow County. However, these weeds may be upgraded to "A" weeds when eradication becomes economically feasible or when the economic threat becomes great enough to require total eradication. Morrow County has declared 19 weeds of economic importance.

Another important role of the weed District is to work with the landowner and implement a weed control management program. It is not practical to spray an area heavily infested with weeds and then forget it. An intensive range management and or reseeding program must be included or weeds will again invade the area.

Noxious weeds have become so thoroughly established and are spreading rapidly on state, county and federally owned lands that a weed control program must be continued for Morrow County. Your support and efforts as residents of Morrow County are urgently needed to make this program successful. If any "A" weeds or strange looking plants are seen, please contact the Weed District Supervisor of their nature and location by calling 676-5452.

No-till fallow possible as alternative

No-till chemical fallow perhaps someday will become a viable alternative to the conventional tillage program practiced today. Through a grant program from the Soil Conservation Service and Morrow Soil and Water Conservation District, a field trial was set up in the fall of 1982 on Jim Swanson's farm to evaluate the effectiveness of this concept.

The program was geared at monitoring moisture differences between no-till and conventional operations; and determining yield potentials under this program. Moisture was monitored using a neutron probe throughout the complete wheat-fal-

low rotation. Results essentially showed no significant differences in total moisture. The moisture was perhaps slightly nearer the surface in the no-till plot. A requirement for this to be true is that over 85 percent ground cover (residue) is necessary

to be maintained throughout the summer and early fall months of the summer-fallow period. This maintains a lower soil temperature and reduces the evaporational losses.

Yield data was collected this last crop year. Excellent yields were obtained where drill performance

was adequate. Yields of 70-75 bushels per acre were monitored on the no-till site and 60 bushel on the conventional site.

This program is being evaluated for a second season. It is anticipated that weed control will become less of

a problem than the initial year. Going into chemical fallow requires that the fields be relatively clean from grassy weed problems. The

economics of this program will be evaluated this coming season. Having to spray more than 3-4 times during the fallow period would limit the feasibility of this concept.

A bill for an act — when —

By DAVID CHILDS

Our land, anywhere and everywhere, is the watershed, and it is the primary source of quality and quantity of both surface and groundwater in the form we daily use.

It is therefore unlawful henceforth, in Oregon, to disturb or affect any drainage in any manner that will reduce the water holding capacity, the soil intake rate, or increase the velocity of water and thus damage, without a designated plan

for immediate mitigating action, designed to maintain the water holding capabilities of the watershed or drainage.

This law is established to maintain the viability of the lands of hte state and to bring to the attention of all users and doers: Those who build, move, cut, drive, fly, plant, graze, launch, drain, flood, float, drill, pan, store, walk, rest, ride, pack, cheer, view, ponder, worship, consume, plug-in, discard and inhabit the land; that anything we do has significant effect on water.

1984 13th Morrow SWCD Annual Meeting

Annual Meeting
Tuesday, March 12, 1985
Lexington Grange Hall

6:30 p.m. - Potluck Dinner
7:30 p.m. - Meeting

The public is cordially invited to meet the directors of the Morrow S.W.C.D. and participate in the program. The district will furnish the main dish and beverages. Those attending are asked to bring a salad or dessert.

Program

Slide presentation by David Childs of the Gilliam County Soil and Water Conservation District entitled, "Who Uses Our Water?" and, Larry Nunn, Umatilla Basin Water Master will answer questions about current water bills before the legislature.