



# UMPQUA

## SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

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Newsletter – September 2024

Umpqua Soil and Water Conservation District is a non-regulatory agency here to help our community conserve natural resources through educational, financial and technical assistance. Since 1953 Umpqua Soil and Water Conservation District has been serving the residents of Northwestern Douglas County by partnering with landowners to empower them to be stewards and experts on their own land.

### NEWS

## Fall Farm Tour: Livestock Heavy Use Area & Rainwater Runoff Management

Umpqua Soil and Water Conservation District welcomes you to visit two Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board Small Grant Projects near Reedsport, Oregon.

Is winter mud an issue for you and your livestock on your farm or ranch? Do you have fields or pastures where livestock have access to the riparian areas along a creek or drainage channel? If so, join us for our free Agriculture Water Quality farm tour on Monday, November 11<sup>th</sup> from 3:00 p.m. until 5:00 p.m. near Reedsport where we'll visit two project sites at two adjacent small farms.

Project 1 is a rainwater management project which includes a livestock heavy use area. The producer's large barn roof produces an enormous volume of rainwater runoff causing mud issues at the livestock barn and surrounding area. To begin to address this issue the producer installed a 24'x84' heavy use area in 2011 with technical assistance from Umpqua SWCD, but without financial assistance. The producer approached Umpqua SWCD again in 2022 requesting technical assistance and it was determined that the current heavy use area was not of adequate size and was negatively impacted by the rooftop rainwater runoff along with other areas around the barn. Clearly, the rooftop water needed to be contained and piped away from the barn. Umpqua SWCD wrote a grant on behalf of the producer and submitted the grant to the OWEB Small Grant Program to fund materials, supplies, and contracted services for the installation of gutters and downspouts, purchase of gravel and geotextile fabric to extend the heavy use area, and drainage pipe and fittings for the project. The landowner provided 25% grant match in the form of landowner labor.

Project 2 is a riparian protection livestock exclusion fencing project with "elk jumps" incorporated into the fencing system. The producer contacted Umpqua SWCD requesting technical assistance in 2023. It was determined that the temporary electric fencing system was not adequate to protect the riparian area along the drainage channels that merge into Providence Creek and the increasingly growing elk herd population was not helping the situation as the elk



were damaging the electric fence and sometimes becoming entangled in the electric fence.



Umpqua SWCD wrote a grant on behalf of the producer and submitted the grant to the OWEB Small Grant Program to fund materials and supplies for the installation of livestock exclusion fencing and an elk jump structure. The elk jump structure is to provide wildlife corridor access and improve safety for the local elk herd while maintaining livestock in the field and, at the same time, preventing livestock from entering the drainage channels that empty into Providence Creek and the local estuary system. The forward-thinking producer added additional elk jump structures into the fencing system to provide more accesses for the elk. The landowner provided 25% grant match in the form of landowner labor.

Both of these Agriculture Water Quality projects help to reduce erosion, sediment and nutrients from entering Providence Creek and the Lower Umpqua River Estuary. More information about Oregon’s Agriculture Water Quality Management Plan for the Umpqua Basin can be found on the Oregon Department of Agriculture website at <https://www.oregon.gov/oda/programs/naturalresources/agwq/pages/agwqplans.aspx>.

From OWEB:

“The Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board Small Grant Program is an easy-to-engage-in, competitive grant program that awards up to \$15,000 for on-the-ground restoration projects principally carried out on private lands across Oregon. This program responds to a need for local decision-making about watershed restoration opportunities on a shorter timeframe than is available under OWEB’s regular grant program.

The Small Grant Program enables landowners across the state to contribute to the Oregon Plan for Salmon and Watersheds and the Oregon Conservation Strategy by committing *small acts of kindness* on their properties for the benefit of water quality, water quantity, and fish and wildlife. From planting native plants along stream sides to reducing sedimentation and erosion from upland farms and ranches, citizens everywhere can make a difference.”

The Small Grant program is made up of locally led region-specific Small Grant Teams. The Small Grant Team for the Umpqua Basin is the Umpqua 7 Small Grant Team. The Small Grant Team accepts grant applications during specific timelines, reviews Small Grant applications submitted to the OWEB for the Umpqua 7 area, and recommends the grants to OWEB for funding. OWEB follows-up by reviewing the grants as well.

Interested in learning more and having a fun afternoon checking out these two great projects? We welcome you to join us.

There are several ways to register for this event:

At Eventbrite using the link <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/umpqua-swcd-small-grant-projects-farm-tour-tickets-1045327822657> or by emailing [rhonda@umpquasoilandwater.com](mailto:rhonda@umpquasoilandwater.com) or by calling (541) 662-1341.

We look forward to visiting with you at the tour on November 11<sup>th</sup> from 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. Parking available at 2191 Ranch Road. Please use the restroom prior to arrival as there are no facilities on-site. Both these projects are located on farming/ranching operations where livestock are managed, plus this is a rain or shine event, so please dress and plan accordingly. In case of rain, most of Project 1 can be viewed from inside of the barn.

Both projects are in close proximity to one another. We’ll park at Project 1, view the project and then walk a short distance to Project 2. See you there!

Find the tour flyer on our website at <https://www.umpquasoilandwater.com/2024-11-11-small-grant-projects-farm-tour>

## Digging in: Taking Soil Samples in the Farm or Garden!

This was a great event! Umpqua SWCD’s District Manager/Conservation Planner Rhonda Black and OSU Small Farms/Master Gardener Program Coordinator Logan Bennett presented information about soil health while physically in the process of taking soil samples, explaining why to take soil samples and why to have soils tested, plus information about labs and lab analysis, and the different tools that can be used to take soil samples to a group of participants at the Elkton Community Education Center. Rhonda and Logan took samples at a variety of locations throughout the ECEC growing area with a few of the participants also taking samples at the fallow and market gardens, blueberry and heritage tree orchards, and in a large field representing a farm pasture or hayfield. Informational handouts were also provided to attendees.



Umpqua SWCD Residents:  
Soil tests are currently free to District residents and provide application rates for lime, nitrogen, phosphorous, potassium, and boron.

### Soil Testing: Are You Prepared for Fall? Do you know your soils pH?

Did you know lime can be applied in the Fall? It can, and it’s a great time to make the most of lime applications. Contact the Umpqua Soil & Water Conservation District Office today to schedule your soil test in preparation for Fall lime applications. Lime can take several months after application to break down and change your soil pH. The benefit of adding lime to your soil in fall is that freeze-thaw cycles, abundant rain, and for our area, sometimes snow, common during the fall and winter months will help break down the lime and start raising the soil’s pH. Lime should never be applied to pastures that are stressed or dormant, so please keep that in mind.

### Tsalila Education Days 2024

Tsalila Education Days celebrates 27-years of watershed and cultural resources youth education this September. The Tsalila event is a two-week event for third and fourth grade students from various school districts, from the coast and inland, held each year at the Umpqua Discovery Center in Reedsport. Umpqua Soil and Water Conservation District’s station is “The Bug Zone” where we teach 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students about benthic macroinvertebrates, commonly known as water bugs, along with water quality at this hands-on learning station.

We would like to thank our volunteers who helped us collect the water bugs and those volunteers who assisted us at the Tsalila event this year!

In addition, we’d like to thank volunteer Trevor Black who also designed the artwork for the presenters’ event apparel for this 2024 event. Trevor has been volunteering at the Tsalila event for over 10-years.

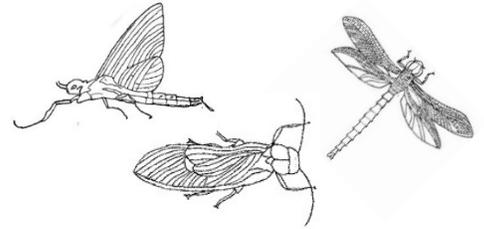
Thank you, Trevor!



# TSALILA



(sa-Lee-la)



Caddisfly Emerging Adult



SWCD District Manager Rhonda Black presenting information about water bugs: Life cycle, diet, identification, food for other wildlife, and how they are indicators of water quality.



Mayfly & Stonefly Nymphs



Caddisflies Larva Stage



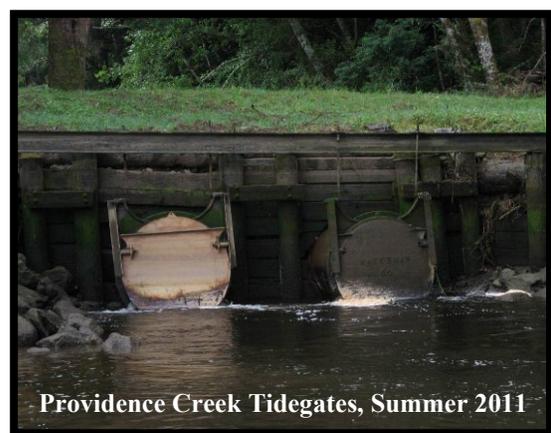
Dragonfly Nymph

## Providence Creek Tidegates Project Update

These tidegates, located at the end of Providence Creek right before it empties into the mainstem of the Umpqua River, have been in place for many years. It has been recognized that they are failing to allow adequate water downstream during high rain events, while at the same time leaking water upstream during high tide events. Additionally, no fish passage is provided, blocking off a large amount of fish habitat above the tidegates. This is the result of the gates being initially undersized, followed by several attempts at re-sleaving the leaking culverts and patching the levee they are attached to. The average lifespan of this particular style of tidegate is about 50 years and we are well beyond that. The best, and realistically only, option is to completely remove and replace these tidegates with modern tidegates. The tidegates are managed by the Port of Umpqua, and in January 2024 the Port of Umpqua and Umpqua SWCD both approved a Memorandum of Understanding to achieve this goal. We've been working closely ever since to fundraise for the design and surveying portion of the project. Once this is accomplished, we can go to a variety of grantors to raise project funds. This project will be completed using 100% grant funding. The tidegates will allow for more flow downstream, and at times will stay open longer, providing increased fish passage. As a result, we expect less flooding in the properties along Ranch Road and Providence Creek.



Tidegate affected farmland, Winter 2024



Providence Creek Tidegates, Summer 2011

Interested in replacing your tide gates that may be undersized or not working as well as you would like?

**Umpqua SWCD can assist you with your tide gate replacement project(s)!**



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

**Small Grants Program**

Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board Small Grants are available to District residents and producers for a variety of water quality/Ag WQ and habitat improvement projects through our Umpqua 7 Small Grant Team! Now is the time to start thinking about projects to implement in the Summer of 2025.

You know your property better than anyone else. Look around and let us know what you need assistance with. Contact the Umpqua Soil & Water Conservation District Office in order to begin the application process. Grants are available in amounts up to \$15,000.

Project Examples:

Livestock Exclusion Fencing, Off-Stream Watering Systems, Heavy Use Livestock Areas such as Hardened Livestock Feeding Areas, Improved Livestock Crossings, Manure Storage Facilities, and More!

**Farm Conservation Planning**

Farm Conservation Plans are documents developed jointly by Umpqua Soil & Water Conservation District and land managers. Farm Conservation Plans include actions that land managers can take to achieve their land use goals while protecting water and other natural resources. The planning process takes into consideration the size of the farm, type of soils, slope of the land, proximity to streams or water bodies, type of livestock or crops, and resources such as machinery, buildings and available finances.

Umpqua SWCD’s Conservation Planner looks at changes that can be made to improve farm productivity and reduce impacts on natural resources. Some examples include stream-side fencing, gutters and downspouts, composting manure, pasture management and renovation, weed management, creating sacrifice areas, cross fencing and pasture rotation of livestock. Our Farm Conservation Planner can offer technical assistance on questions such as what grasses to plant, how to build a fence and when to mow.

Once the land manager has decided which changes they’d like to make on their property, they work with our Conservation Planner to set a tentative implementation schedule. Revisions of the schedule and the plan can be made as the goals and needs of the land manager change.

Farm Conservation Plans can help land managers, who have livestock, to meet the requirements of the Oregon Department of Agriculture Umpqua Basin Agricultural Water Quality Area Plan. This document can be found by going to:

<https://www.oregon.gov/oda/shared/Documents/Publications/NaturalResources/UmpquaAWQMAreaPlan.pdf>

All aspects of Farm Conservation Planning services provided by Umpqua SWCD are free of charge and without obligation. Umpqua SWCD is a non-regulatory, non-enforcement agency.

**NEWSLETTER DELIVERY**

Would you like to receive this newsletter by email? Send us an email with “newsletter” in the subject line to [rhonda@umpquasoilandwater.com](mailto:rhonda@umpquasoilandwater.com) to let us know! If you are not yet receiving this newsletter and would like to, but don’t use email, call (541) 662-1341 and we’ll add you to our mailing list.

## MEETINGS OF INTEREST

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

October 17<sup>th</sup>, November 14<sup>th</sup>, December 12<sup>th</sup>

Meetings are generally held the 2nd Thursday of each month and held virtually.

Meeting information can be found on our website at <https://www.umpquasoilandwater.com/board-meetings>

## DIRECTOR RECRUITMENT

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

#### Zone Director qualifications:

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

Reside within the zone being represented within the District.

Own or manage 10-acres of land within the zone represented, or

Serve at least one year as a Director or Associate Director and have a District-approved conservation plan.

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

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

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

#### Director Responsibilities:

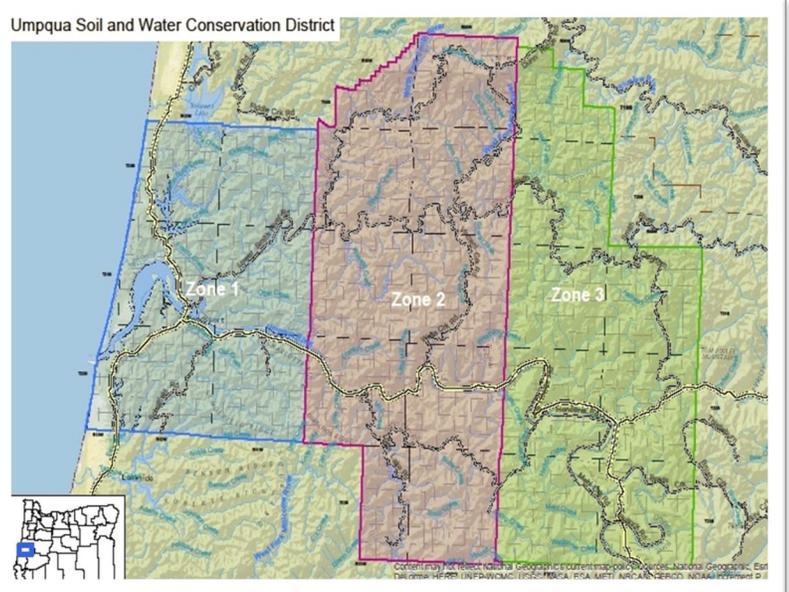
The Board of Directors set the direction of the District through the development and/or oversight of the strategic plan, biennial work plan, and District policies, with input from the District Manager and Staff. The Board and Staff enjoy a great working relationship that ensures natural resource stewardship programs and projects are available to all Douglas County citizens within the Umpqua Soil & Water Conservation District boundaries.

An individual Board member may only exercise their authority and responsibility of his or her position when the Board is in legal session and only as part of a specific Board action (e.g. resolution, motion, policy, etc.) and must be recorded in the public meetings minutes. Individual Board members may be given limited authority to act on behalf of the Board only when authorized by a specific Board action.

The responsibilities of the Board of Directors include but are not limited to the following tasks:

Approval and tracking of budgets, require and understand sufficient financial reports, oversight, employee performance reviews, approval and monitoring of annual work plan, strategic plan development and approval, represent interests of constituents, come to meetings informed and prepared, stay abreast of local conservation issues, promote the District's work to local landowners, local and state agencies, legislators, and other organizations.

In addition to the responsibilities listed above, the Directors, as a Board, have legal powers under ORS 568.550. To find out more go to: [https://oregon.public.law/statutes/ors\\_568.550](https://oregon.public.law/statutes/ors_568.550)



## MISSION STATEMENT

**“The mission of the locally led Umpqua Soil and Water Conservation District is to provide assistance to any individual, group, or agency in applying natural resource conservation practices for the wise use of their natural resources.”**

## CONTACT INFORMATION

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

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