



**Marion Soil and Water Conservation District (MSWCD)**  
**Board of Directors October 1, 2025**  
**Monthly meeting Minutes**

6:36 PM – 7:45 PM Board Monthly Meeting

Facilitator: Chair Olson

Recorded by: Brenda Sanchez

Approved: November 5, 2025

**Record of Attendance**

**Directors**

|                                             |                |
|---------------------------------------------|----------------|
| At Large 1-Peggy Hart (Secretary-Treasurer) | <i>Present</i> |
| At Large 2                                  | <i>Vacant</i>  |
| Zone 1-Noah Justice                         | <i>Present</i> |
| Zone 2-Nik Ovchinnikov                      | <i>Present</i> |
| Zone 3-Darin Olson (Chair)                  | <i>Present</i> |
| Zone 4-Angela Plowhead (Vice-Chair)         | <i>Present</i> |
| Zone 5-Rochelle Koch                        | <i>Present</i> |

**Associate Directors**

Leland Hardy

**Staff**

|                |                |
|----------------|----------------|
| Brenda Sanchez | <i>Present</i> |
| Ivy Chappelle  | <i>Present</i> |
| Susan Ortiz    | <i>Present</i> |

**Guests**

**Note:** All documents and materials displayed or referenced are retained in the Board of Directors Meeting file at the Marion Soil and Water Conservation District (Marion SWCD or District).

**Minutes**

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**Chair Olson Call to Order:** 6:36 PM

**Public Comment**

- No public comments.

**Announcements**

- No announcements.

**Agenda Additions or Changes**

- No additions or changes.

## 1. District Snapshot

Sanchez presented her monthly District Manager Report and shared some highlights:

- Introduction of newest staff member, Ivy Chappelle, who will be providing office support and assisting in accounts payable.
- The Annual Outreach Event Wednesday, November 12th, 2025, from 4:30 to 6:30pm, to highlight the Board of Directors and staff. Guests are asked to RSVP. This event is not the Annual Meeting, which will take place February 2026.
- Staff are preparing the Annual Report. Sanchez asked if directors would like to contribute a personal blurb.
- The MSWCD mural is complete. Additional green-scaping and a sitting bench will be installed.
- The ADA bathroom renovation has not begun, and currently waiting on permits.
- The District Managers Monthly Report was not completed due to a combination of priorities: the annual financial audit, a busy educational season with Salmon Watch and Outdoor School, bathroom renovation, onboarding of new staff, and staff absences.
  - Koch inquired about volunteer opportunities and asked to receive direct communication regarding volunteer opportunities in the future.

## 2. Treasurers Report June 2025

Hart presented the Treasurer's Report noting that August is the second month of the fiscal year, which is a good time to note the carryover. Sanchez amends the FY 25-26 Conservation Assistant Grants (CAG) Budget, the amount should be \$340,000 and is currently \$350,000. The amended \$10,000 was moved from CAG to Special Projects Grant.

**Action:** Plowhead motioned that the Board **accept the August 2025 Treasurers Report as amended**, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Ovchinnikov. No further discussion. MOTION PASSED (Aye-6 [Plowhead, Olson, Ovchinnikov, Justice, Koch, and Hart], Opposed-0).

## 3. United States Department Agriculture Services-Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS) Report.

Olson informed the Board that due to a federal government shutdown, NRCS staff are on furlough and are unable to attend the meeting tonight. Their absence impacts two of MSWCD's programs, the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCCP) and the Conservation Assistance Grant (CAG) program. Moving forward, NRCS partners will attend Board Meetings every other month,

#### 4. Conservation Assistant Grant (CAG) Review Committee

Ortiz presented a summary of Cycle 1 CAG applications. The committee reviewed 15 applications and recommends funding 12 projects for a total of \$119,691. Two projects were withdrawn and one was denied. Directors' comments:

- a. Koch asked Ortiz for clarification on the plastic removal element in the hemp project (20-26-005-Farming with Polyethylene Contamination-Phase 1). Ortiz explained that Oregon State University studies are underway to evaluate soil microbe breakdown of plastics. Training on site occurred in September, and another field day is planned for 2026.
- b. Olson brought up the one application that is not recommended for funding. Hart reviewed the application (20-26-008-Blue Meadow Habitat Restoration) and stated that plant density and cost were primary concerns. MSWCD visited the site and encouraged the applicant to re-design and re-apply.
- c. Plowhead requested more information about project (20-06-007). Ortiz noted that the project title is listed incorrectly on page four of the Grant Review Committee Meeting Minutes. The grant titled (20-26-005) is incorrect and should read (20-26-007). Hart added that the committee recommended cost-effective plant alternatives.
- d. Hart also discussed project (20-20-011-Cornett Forest Habitat Improvement), noting that Cooper's Hawk and raptors are currently present. Committee recommended reducing by the requested to \$1,709 for the raptor poles.

**Action:** Hart motioned that the Board **approve twelve (12) CAG Applications for funding as recommended**, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Plowhead. No further discussion. MOTION PASSED (Aye-6 [Plowhead, Olson, Ovchinnikov, Justice, Koch, and Hart], Opposed-0).

**Action:** Plowhead motioned that the Board **deny 20-26-008-Blue Meadow Habitat Restoration Application for funding as recommended**, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Justice. No further discussion. MOTION PASSED (Aye-6 [Plowhead, Olson, Ovchinnikov, Justice, Koch, and Hart], Opposed-0).

#### 5. Director Review of the CAG Application Process Update

Sanchez distributed a mock grant scenario to the Board, due by November 1, 2025. Ortiz explained all the information needed is in the packet provided. Applicants complete a two-step process: submit a Letter of Intent (LOI) and MSWCD will email the next steps on the application. After submission, Directors will receive a survey. Staff will analyze the results and report back.

## 6. Conservation Assistant Grant Program

- a. Olson shared data from awarded grants showing that participants using the Smart Sprayer saw 20-22% reductions in pesticide use, preventing over 8,000 pollutants per 12 acres. Drift was cut by 50-60%. Manufacturer technical support and training were noted as strong.
- b. Hart asks how future related funds for equipment should be handled. Olson stated that the Smart Sprayer aligns with the Pesticide Stewardship Partnership (PSP) goals, and he'd like to see it in our grant programs with a specific budget allocation. Sanchez noted that the Natural Resource Committee will discuss criteria for equipment requests in their next meeting. Ovchinnikov emphasized that Special Project Grants (SPG) serve to verify whether an innovation yields beneficial outcomes, and should not be used to fund the same item repeatedly. Olson adds that the SPG is designed to bridge the affordability gap for applicants to invest in technologies that may not be affordable without the grant. Hardy noted the SPG was intended to support emerging practices between trial and mainstream adoption.

## 7. Personnel Action-Promotions

Sanchez reviews the proposed promotions and pay rate changes for Ortiz from Grants Coordinator to Grants Specialist and Wilson from Administrative Assistant to Digital Systems & Multimedia Assistant. Olson notes the importance and necessity of cross-training for Ortiz's responsibilities. Sanchez confirms that Chappelle will be trained as backup in administrative duties that support the Grant Specialist.

**Action:** Hart motioned that the Board **approve the promotions and pay rate changes for Susan Ortiz and Tom Wilson as recommended**, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Justice. No further discussion. MOTION PASSED (Aye-6 [Plowhead, Olson, Ovchinnikov, Justice, Koch, and Hart], Opposed-0).

## 8. Education & Outreach Committee

- a) Hart reported that the Education & Outreach Committee met and recommends approving the grant request for Community Roots Outdoor Classroom.

**Action:** Hart motioned that the Board **approve the grant request for the Community Roots Outdoor Classroom as recommended**, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Koch. No further discussion. MOTION PASSED (Aye-6 [Plowhead, Olson, Ovchinnikov, Justice, Koch, and Hart], Opposed-0).

- b) Justices requested a correction to the 9/17/25 Education & Outreach Committee Meeting Minutes, as he was not present.

## 9. Salem Knotweed Treatment

Sanchez presented the 2025 Knotweed Control Contract for Services with Ash Creek Forest Management LLC, submitted by Hamilton. Sanchez confirmed that the project will take place on private land.

**Action:** Hart motioned that the Board **approve the 2025 Knotweed Control Contract for Services with Ash Creek Forest Management LLC and the authority for Sanchez to sign the contracted service agreement as recommended, 2<sup>nd</sup>** by Kosh. No further discussion. MOTION PASSED (Aye-6 [Plowhead, Olson, Ovchinnikov, Justice, Koch, and Hart], Opposed-0).

## 10. 2026 Drawdown of Detroit Dam

Olson noted that Brent Stevenson was unable to attend and suggests securing a guest speaker from the Army Corps of Engineers. Plowhead reported that the City of Salem recently stated that even small amounts of sediment would be damaging to their filtration system. Sanchez confirmed settlement buildup reduces flood control and increases river temperatures.

**Adjourn:** Chair Olson adjourned the meeting at 7:45 PM



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