

Committee members are reminded to disclose any actual or potential conflicts of interest prior to discussion of relevant agenda items.

**DRAFT**



## Marion Soil and Water Conservation District (MSWCD) Natural Resources Committee Meeting Agenda **DRAFT**

**Wednesday  
December 17<sup>th</sup>, 2025  
9:00 AM to 9:30 AM**

*Our mission is to partner with people in support of thriving lands, clean water, and healthy habitats. We do this through planning, technical assistance, funding, and education.*

This meeting will be held by video conference (Zoom), and by telephone.

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83817827407?pwd=WWRIZlArTUF2Sk9QeXFvU3ZSRFZLZz09>

**Call In Number:** 1-253-215-8782 | **Meeting ID:** 838 1782 7407 | **Passcode:** 507254

**Staff Contact:** Cesar Zamora | [cesar.zamora@marionswcd.net](mailto:cesar.zamora@marionswcd.net)

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Agenda Changes and/or Additions	Chair
1. Public Comment	Chair 5 minutes
2. Board Updates on Committee Recommendations	Chair 5 minutes
3. 10-15-2025 Minutes Action-Approval	Chair 5 minutes
4. Schedule Next Natural Resources Committee Meeting Discussion	Chair 5 minutes
5.	
6.	
7.	
8.	

**Meeting Adjourned – Chair**

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Oregon residents can file a written grievance with the Marion SWCD regarding a violation of the Public Meetings Law within 30 days of the alleged violation. The grievance should include details about the alleged violation and be submitted to the Marion SWCD District Manager for review.



**Marion Soil and Water Conservation District (MSWCD)**  
**Natural Resources Committee Meeting Minutes DATE, 2025 DRAFT**

01:01 PM to 02:32 PM

Facilitator: Cesar Zamora

Recorded by: Chelsea Blank

Approved: TBD

**Committee Member Attendance**

Cesar Zamora (Committee Chair) - Staff	Present
Rochelle Koch - Director	Present
Nik Ovchinnikov - Director	Present
Chelsea Blank - Staff	Present
Leland Hardy - Associate Director	Present

**Staff**

Name  
Becky Pineda  
Susan Ortiz  
Sarah Hamilton  
Ivy Chappelle

**Guests**

Peggy Hart

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

**Minutes**

**Call to Order-Chair:** 01:01 PM

**Announcements** - None

**Agenda Additions or Changes** - None

- 1. Public Comment** - No Comments
- 2. Board Updates on Committee Recommendations**  
No committee meeting was held in September, so there was nothing to recommend to the Board.
- 3. Natural Resources Committee Meeting Minutes - August 13, 2025**  
Sanchez recommended to change Koch and Hardy recorded as 'abstained' to 'absent' in previous minutes.

**Action:** Ovchinnikov motioned to approve the meeting minutes with the suggested changes for August 13, 2025, Natural Resource Committee meeting,

**2<sup>nd</sup> by Zamora. No further discussion. MOTION PASSED (Aye-5 [Zamora, Ovchinnikov, Koch, Hardy, and Blank], Opposed-0).**

#### **4. Permanent Vegetation Cover Pilot Program**

Zamora presented the flow chart for application, planning and granting process for the proposed PVC pilot program. Aspects include checking a site for proper preparation before planting, site conditions, job sheets based on NRCS practice standards, technical assistance, Board approval of each grant application and completion site visit after planting.

Staff is asking the NR committee for feedback on this outline and flow of work. Koch wanted clarification on the committee's opinions about when payments should be made throughout the project. Zamora noted that discussion was on whether to provide a two payment or three payment system.

Ovchinnikov asked about how much time will lapse between planting and the completion site visit, Zamora said it would be between 2-6 months.

Sanchez suggested that option A or option B as presented in the flow chart is best. Ovchinnikov and Koch agreed that option A is preferred. Option A is to pay 50% at planting and 50% at survival check.

They then changed their preference to a three-payment system which is option B: 25% upon grant approval, 50% upon planting, and 25% at survival check.

Zamora said that it likely depends on how many site visits should be required, which requires more staff capacity.

Ovchinnikov suggested option C based on that feedback from staff. Peggy Hart entered at 1:15 pm as a guest.

Hart asked if there is no match requirement for this program to which Zamora confirmed that is correct. She wanted to clarify if this program means that the District funds 100% of the project. Zamora confirmed that there is a funding limit that still applies.

The committee discussed what will happen if the applicant ends up not completing the project, which there is no repercussions in place, consistent with the rest of the District grant programs.

Discussion continued about whether Board approval will be required for each application. Ortiz mentioned that the Cover Crop pilot program initially required Board approval while it was still a pilot program but eventually transferred to just staff approval. This presented structure is more similar to the CAG approval system for the duration of the pilot period. Koch preferred to grant the Board approval authority since it is a new program. Ovchinnikov agreed.

Sanchez clarified that these applications will not go through a review committee, but will directly go to the Board for approval, similar to the Partner Grant review process. This will help to streamline the approval process and reduce burdens on the Board members.

**Action: Zamora motioned to recommend to the Board to adopt the Conservation Cover Program as a two year pilot program, using Option C as presented for the payment schedule. Additionally, for the first year of the pilot program, the Board will review the applications. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Koch. No further discussion. MOTION PASSED (Aye-5 [Zamora, Ovchinnikov, Koch, Hardy, and Blank], Opposed-0).**

Peggy Hart enters at 1:15 pm as a guest.

## **5. Director CAG Review Process Outcome**

Ortiz asked committee for feedback, questions, and preferences as part of the mock CAG Director review process that will help in developing a survey to be sent to the Board members. Ortiz mentioned that the staff created an extensive list of potential application questions to consider all of the concerns of the Board and wanted to ensure that the current questions will be helpful to the application process presented to the Board.

Ortiz asked the committee members on the Board to send feedback to her over the next week so she can sort through them and develop a survey. Ovchinnikov said that he is planning to get this done next week and will have more feedback at that time. Hart requested a space for comments at the end of the application. She also suggested providing other examples of LOIs that only include necessary information.

The committee discussed whether there have been complaints of confusion over the LOI asking for unnecessary information and technical difficulties with the LOI page. They also discussed technical difficulties using Foundant.

Sanchez reiterated that the intent of this practice is to walk through the actual application process and provide feedback on all of those elements, specifically if the information requested runs the risk of conflict of interest. The survey being developed by staff is meant to make this easier for the Directors to provide feedback.

**Action: None needed, just discussion.**

## **6. Landowner Permission Form**

Ortiz gave background on the Landowner Permission to Access property form, which is based on the OWEB agreement that requires obtaining landowner consent before accessing any private property and to notify landowners that the District may turn information from the land into public record. OWEB and ODA did not provide additional guidance on this form, although it's similar to what the conservation districts in California use.

Ortiz presented the questions provided to the committee regarding the Landowner Permission form as it has become a barrier or concern for landowners from receiving District services. However, it is considered best practice.

Questions to the committee include: when the form should be required, duration options be removed or changed, how property access should be communicated with landowners, how to communicate public record laws, and whether it's clear enough for landowners to understand.

Sanchez clarified that this form is based on the District using OWEB funds and thus having this as a requirement, but it is not part of the District's policy separate from OWEB.

Koch suggested that we should have permission to access a property and when we provide funds as well as for a year after a project is completed.

Ortiz suggested that instead of a permission form for technical assistance visits, we opt out of this form but include an advisory note on a business card about public records.

Hardy and Ovchinnikov stated the importance of trust between District staff and landowners and that there needs to be emphasis on the non-regulatory ability of the district.

The committee discussed public record notification and protection of sensitive information within the District with the exception of illegal requests of the District that would potentially then need to become public record. Everything done within the District is considered public record and the District needs to provide any information to someone requesting it.

OWEB funding includes everything through our ODA grants. This form doesn't include requesting permission from a land leaser, which would be important to include.

Hart asked if staff ever go on a property without a landowner or leaser accompanying them, to which Zamora, Blank, and Hamilton responded with yes and no depending on the landowner and situation.

Sanchez suggested removing the 'indefinite' option from the duration consent section, different duration options according to the program, and if the form is needed each visit until a grant is awarded.

Sanchez asked how to approach the form when staff make site visits at apartment complexes where the owners are not able to sign the form. Hardy suggests that the representative of the project can grant permission to the property. The committee discussed the questions: does this form include only individual homeowners or also urban properties? Hart suggests using a different form with just the cooperator consent required.

**Action: None, just discussion.**

## 7. Airblast Funding

The District recently awarded two Special Project Grants for air blast equipment. There has been a third request for funding for this same equipment, and the staff would like to get feedback on how we go forward funding projects like this, when it's not eligible for SPG funding anymore.

Hardy suggested putting a cap on the amount of these projects we fund, but it is beneficial for the District to fund these projects to increase participation in this technology.

Koch asked if it's the best use of District funds. Hart shared concerns of using too much CAG funds on these requests. She also shared that Olson's idea was to have a separate line item for this technology in the budget because it's a very beneficial tool to use for reducing pesticide use. Zamora agreed that the benefits of this tool is worth the District funding this in the future.

Sanchez mentioned that a practice code for this as a CAG project would be the Integrated Pest Management code, although the CAG policy doesn't allow for the purchase of equipment. Sanchez found resources for conservation technology grants as examples of grant programs that we could potentially develop in the future. She suggested that the SPG policy could be adjusted to include equipment like this and other conservation technology purchases.

The committee discussed how the approval process would theoretically work, what types of equipment will the District limit funding for, and where the funds would be moved in the budget. Ortiz stated that the SPG policy limits only two of the same equipment to be awarded under that grant.

Ovchinnikov preferred leaving the remaining SPG funds in this fiscal year's budget for new projects, and possibly add a line item for this technology with an award maximum.

Hart and Sanchez discussed the possibility of using funds from the 'Conservation Project' line item in the budget to fund this air blast request, although there will need to be parameters in place to follow, such as a rebate program to fund conservation technology projects.

Ovchinnikov suggested setting aside \$20-\$25k and allowing for up to five applicants per year for this technology.

**Action: Zamora motioned to recommend to the Board that staff develop a technology rebate program for next fiscal year. Koch 2<sup>nd</sup>. Hardy moved to amend the motion to specify 'new technology'. Discussion on the amendment: Koch asked for clarification on 'new technology'. No second for recommended amendment. All in favor of the motion as proposed by Zamora and none opposed. MOTION PASSED (Aye-5 [Zamora, Ovchinnikov, Koch, Hardy, and Blank], Opposed-0)**

**Zamora made a motion to recommend to the Board to approve \$25k out of Conservation Grant line item to assist landowners to fund lidar based Airblast smart sprayers for the current fiscal year. Koch 2nd. Sanchez opened discussion for how much we should limit per request. Ovchinnikov suggested an amendment of \$5000 for five total applicants.**

**Ovchinnikov made a motion to amend with the rebate amounts as stated. Koch 2<sup>nd</sup>. All in favor of amendment, none opposed. Zamora made a motion to approve the full motion with the amendment to include \$5000 maximum award for a total of five applicants and a \$25,000 budget maximum. All in favor, none opposed. MOTION PASSED (Aye-5 [Zamora, Ovchinnikov, Koch, Hardy, and Blank], Opposed-0).**

**Adjourn:** Chair Zamora adjourned the meeting at 02:32 PM



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