



Marion Soil and Water Conservation District (MSWCD)
Board of Directors December 3, 2025
Monthly meeting Minutes

06:36 PM – 08:26 PM Board Monthly Meeting

Facilitator: Chair Darin Olson

Recorded by: Brenda Sanchez

Approved Date: January 7th, 2026

Directors Record of Attendance		Associate Directors
At Large 1-Peggy Hart (Secretary-Treasurer)	Present	
At Large 2-Vacant	Vacant	
Zone 1-Noah Justice	Present	
Zone 2-Nik Ovchinnikov	Present	
Zone 3-Darin Olson (Chair)	Present	
Zone 4-Angela Plowhead (Vice-Chair)	Present	
Zone 5-Rochelle Koch	Present	
Staff		Guests
Brenda Sanchez		Jacob Rose – Natural Resources at PSU
Ivy Chapelle		– iMap Invasives
Sarah Hamilton		
Cesar Zamora		
Kassi Roosth		
Susan Ortiz		

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

Chair Olson Call to Order: 6:36 PM

A. Agenda Additions or Changes

No Agenda additions or changes.

B. Public Comment

No public comments.

C. Announcements

- Change to Oregon Ethics Law-Conflict of Interest as of January 1, 2026 -**
Sanchez provided an overview of recent changes to Oregon's government ethics law, noting that the definition of a conflict of interest now includes situations where household members receive direct financial benefit. She

clarified that, in this context, conflicts of interest specifically pertain to monetary gain.

1. District Snapshot

a. District Manager Monthly Report

Sanchez reviewed the following from her report:

- **Manager's Highlights**
 - Conducted 11 interviews and hired Kristen McApine as the new Urban Conservationist, scheduled to begin on December 15, 2025.
 - Attended the Bureau of Labor and Industries Employment Law Conference. Key sessions included "Engaging with Respect- Importance of Civil Conversation", HR Records Management 101, and Wage and Hour Law. Staff will receive a copy of the "Engaging with Respect - Importance of Civil Conversation" seminar materials for review.
- **Budget and Financial Operations**
 - Convened the first internal staff Budget Development Team meeting, which included invited specialists. The team reviewed the budget development timeline and process overview. Additional meetings will be scheduled prior to detailed budget discussions.
- **Administration & Operations**
 - Policy updates scheduled for Admin Committee review on December 12, 2025:
 - Completed draft revision of the District Manager position description and Delegation of Authority Policy.
 - Drafted a new Volunteer Background Check Policy and Procedures, incorporating feedback from the Education and Outreach (E&O) Committee and the Volunteer Program team.
 - Collaborated with Cogent IT to complete a cybersecurity insurance application. SDIS now offers this coverage; a meeting with the local insurance provider is scheduled for early December to review our options and costs. Additionally, a form was submitted for consideration of sexual harassment insurance, also newly offered by SDIS.
- **Program Updates**
 - Revised the "Landowner Permission Form" into the "Permission to Access Property Form", incorporating committee feedback. The updated form will be available online for easy submission.

- Partner Grant review team completed site visits and reviewed all applications. Capacity applications will be presented to the Admin Committee on December 12, 2025, with Board review scheduled for January. A total of 20 applications were received, requesting \$406,852.
- Winter Native Bare Root Sale opened on the Marion SWCD website on December 1, 2025.
- Developing an Emerald Ash Borer work plan to assist landowners as ash trees are impacted by infestation.
- Reviewed six CLEAR grant applications from the recent cycle; recommendations were submitted to the Board on December 3, 2025, marking a record number of applications for a single cycle.
- Facility Report
 - ADA Bathroom renovation is underway, with completion expected in early December.
 - Exterior lighting has been upgraded and is now operational, set on timers from 5:00–9:00 PM. New conference room can lights with dimmer switches have been installed. Emergency exterior lights were replaced with light-emitting diode (LED) wet-location fixtures and are functioning properly.

The Board also discussed historical versus current application review processes and the upcoming review of the Conservation Assistance Grant (CAG) application process. Chair Olson expressed appreciation to staff for successfully organizing and hosting the Annual Event.

2. Treasurers Report – October 2025

The Board reviewed the October financial report and discussed the following key points:

- Salary Expenses: Hart noted that salary expenditures are on target at 30%
- Special Projects Budget: Funds were transferred to accommodate applications currently under review, including:
 - Partner Grant Applications received but not yet awarded
 - CAG Grants funded and approved in October
- Tax Revenue: The District has received approximately \$500,000 in tax funds beginning in November

Action: Plowhead motioned that the Board **accepts as presented the October 2025 Treasurers Report**, 2nd by Hart. No further discussion. MOTION PASSED (Aye-6 [Plowhead, Ovchinnikov, Olson, Justice, Koch, Hart] Opposed-0).

3. Draft Board Meeting Minutes for November 5th, 2025

Hart reported that she reviewed the draft minutes and submitted edits. Sanchez presented Draft 2 and Draft 3 respectively with edits included. Treasurer noted that Chappelle has been drafting the minutes expertly.

- Amendment request: The presented minutes had the incorrect meeting date of November 11th, 2025. The amended date to be November 5th, 2025.

Action: Koch motioned that the Board **approves the November 5th, 2025, Board meeting minutes as edited and amended meeting date to be November 5th, 2025,** 2nd by Plowhead. No further discussion. MOTION PASSED (Aye-6 [Hart, Justice, Ovchinnikov, Olson, Plowhead, Koch] Opposed-0).

4. Audit Report - Fiscal Year 24-25

Sanchez presented and reviewed the fiscal year 2024-2025 financial Audit, which reported no material compliance issues. Key financial highlights included:

- Ending balance: \$2,411,505
- Reserves ending balance: \$661,127
- Total revenue: \$1,757,136
- Total expenditure: \$1,519,857

Hart continued the discussion regarding grant income from other agencies totaling \$115,000. Sanchez clarified that this amount reflects funding for Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA), Strategic Implementation Area (SIA), Pesticide Stewardship Partnership (PSP). She also confirmed that the audit will include revisions, specifically correcting Zone designations: Olson as Zone 4 and Plowhead as Zone 3.

Action: Hart motioned that the Board **approve the Fiscal Year 24-25 Audit Report,** 2nd by Koch. No further discussion. MOTION PASSED (Aye-6 [Hart, Justice, Ovchinnikov, Olson, Plowhead, Koch] Opposed-0).

5. Annual Meeting Resolution - February 4, 2026, at 6:00 PM

Sanchez proposed scheduling the Annual Meeting for February 4, 2026, at 6:00 PM. The purpose of this meeting, required by law, is for the District to provide the public with an opportunity to review the fiscal year's audit and annual report.

Action: Koch motioned that the Board **approve the Annual Meeting Resolution #2025-12-04 for February 4, 2026, at 6:00 PM,** 2nd by Ovchinnikov. No further discussion. MOTION PASSED (Aye-6 [Hart, Justice, Ovchinnikov, Olson, Plowhead, Koch] Opposed-0).

6. Oregon iMap Invasives Funding Request for 2026

Hamilton introduced Jacob Rose, representing Natural Resources at Portland State University, as the applicant for the iMap program. Olson proposed extending the grant cycle from one year to two years to provide applicants with an additional year of stable funding. Rose and Sanchez will collaborate to finalize invoicing details. (Jacob noted that drawing up a data sharing agreement will save fees, rather than using a simple invoice.)

Action: Olson motions for the Board to **approve the 2025-26 Oregon iMap Invasives & Oregon Flora Funding Request of \$5000, with the Board's amendment to also now authorize funding \$5000 for 2026-27; when a letter of request for 2026-27 is received from iMap, Brenda Sanchez is authorized to make the \$5000 payment,** 2nd by Plowhead. No further discussion. MOTION PASSED (Aye-6 [Hart, Justice, Ovchinnikov, Olson, Plowhead, Koch] Opposed-0).

7. Education & Outreach Committee

Hart presented six Conservation Learning Education and Resource (C.L.E.A.R.) Grant Program applications along with the committee's recommended actions. She noted that the only adjustments were made to the Community Roots School budget:

- Maintenance requests: The committee approved funding only for maintenance activities that have an educational component
- Previous unfunded hours – The applicant clarified that these referred to annual instructional hours for which funding had not been raised, not hours previously worked. Hart emphasized that the District does not fund retroactive expenses

Action: Olson motions for the Board to **approve the six presented Conservation Learning Education and Resource (C.L.E.A.R.) Grant Program Applications,** 2nd by Hart. No further discussion. MOTION PASSED (Aye-6 [Hart, Justice, Ovchinnikov, Olson, Plowhead, Koch] Opposed-0)

8. Natural Resource Committee

Zamora presented three requests for approval.

1. Smart Apply AirBlast Equipment Funding:

- a. Allocate \$25,000 from "New Projects and Programs Expenses".
- b. The program will assist landowners in purchasing LiDAR-based AirBlast smart sprayers during the current fiscal year, with a funding limit of \$5,000 per applicant, for a total of five applicants

- c. The request was prompted by the recent award of \$20,000 Special Projects Grant

Action: Koch motions for the Board to **approve the Smart Apply AirBlast equipment funding** 2nd by Plowhead. No further discussion. MOTION PASSED (Aye-6 [Hart, Justice, Ovchinnikov, Olson, Plowhead, Koch] Opposed-0)

2. Conservation Technology Rebate Program - Fiscal Year 2026-2027:

- a. The Natural Resources committee requested the District develop a Technology Rebate Program during the 2026–2027 fiscal year. This initiative is intended to anticipate future demand and ensure appropriate budgeting to best support applicants.

Action: Ovchinnikov motions for the Board to **authorize staff to develop the Conservation Technology Rebate Program during the 2026-2027 fiscal year** 2nd by Hart. No further discussion. MOTION PASSED (Aye-6 [Hart, Justice, Ovchinnikov, Olson, Plowhead, Koch] Opposed-0).

The Board continued discussions around the definition of new technologies and how that could apply to this program. Discussion focused on defining “emerging” or “newly applied” technologies or systems and how these align with the District’s existing grant programs. This would be for practices or technologies which are not new enough to qualify for SPG monies. It was noted that Conservation Assistance Grant (CAG) funds cannot be used to purchase equipment. Ortiz emphasized that this program will help streamline the application process, particularly during CAG reviews when staff resources are limited. Cesar confirmed that planners will adhere strictly to National Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) practices. The Board directs staff to look at models of other similar programs when developing this rebate program. Final payment will be contingent upon the District’s final site visit, scheduled 3–6 months after planting.

3. Pilot Permanent Vegetative Cover Program:

- a. Zamora reported that the committee reviewed prior feedback and developed this pilot program as a result for implementation in 2026.

Action: Koch motions for the Board to **approve the development of the Pilot (2-Year) Permanent Vegetative Cover Program** 2nd by Hart. No further discussion. MOTION PASSED (Aye-6 [Hart, Justice, Ovchinnikov, Olson, Plowhead, Koch] Opposed-0).

Directors advised the staff to increase their understanding of cover crop, conservation grass seed, and seed mixes information and knowledge to better serve

the applicants in project development. Justice noted that as a farmer he will need the educated technical assistance of staff when considering a new practice like this.

9. Easement Report

Sanchez displayed a PowerPoint presentation on her research results regarding conservation easement (on file). The Board discussed conservation easements, with Sanchez presenting on the topic and outlining key challenges including legal liability, enforcement obligations, and financial costs. After discussion, the Board agreed not to pursue a conservation easement program at this time. Instead, the District will focus on providing technical support and potentially funding to existing land trusts. No motion was required per Chair Olson.

10. Director Review of the Conservation Assistance Grant (CAG) Application Process

Chair Olson postponed the review of the CAG Application Process to February, encouraging Board Directors to complete their individual review so staff can incorporate feedback. The next CAG cycle is scheduled to begin in July 2026.

11. Regular Status Employee & Step Increase

Sanchez presented the Personnel Action Form for Kassi Roosth and recommended approval of her transition to regular status along with a step increase.

Action: Plowhead motioned that the Board **approve the Regular Status Employee and Step Increase**, 2nd by Hart. No further discussion. MOTION PASSED (Aye-6 [Hart, Justice, Ovchinnikov, Olson, Plowhead, Koch] Opposed-0).

12. Administrative Committee

The next committee meeting is scheduled for December 12th, 2025, at 9:30am.

Adjourn: Chair Olson adjourned the meeting at 8:26 PM



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