

Coos Soil & Water Conservation District

Winter 2020 Newsletter



COOS SWCD

379 North Adams Street

Coquille, OR 97423

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The function of the Coos Soil and Water Conservation District (Coos SWCD) is to make technical, financial, and educational resources available to local landowners, to assist them in achieving their natural resource management and conservation goals. The SWCD helps agricultural landowners and managers plan and apply conservation practices that:

- conserve water or protect water quality
- maintain soil health and productivity
- enhance fish & wildlife habitat
- improve watershed function.

The SWCD is a non-regulatory, and entirely grant-funded local governmental agency which serves as a central hub of information and assistance for Coos County by helping landowners and land managers access available technical, financial, and educational resources from local, state, federal, and other sources. We can also help coordinate you with other state and federal agencies, as well as local environmental organizations, in order to provide you with a diverse array of options to meet your land management and natural resource goals.

The Coos Soil and Water Conservation District building is located at 379 North Adams Street in Coquille, Oregon. Our office is currently closed to the public due to Covid-19, however we are still available by appointment and continue to make free, on-site consultations. Office hours are 8:30am to 4:30pm, Monday through Friday. Call us at 541-396-6879 to talk with our friendly staff about farming practices, water quality, herbicides, or any agricultural needs that you may have or to schedule a site visit. Our services are available to all Coos County citizens, landowners, and natural resource professionals.

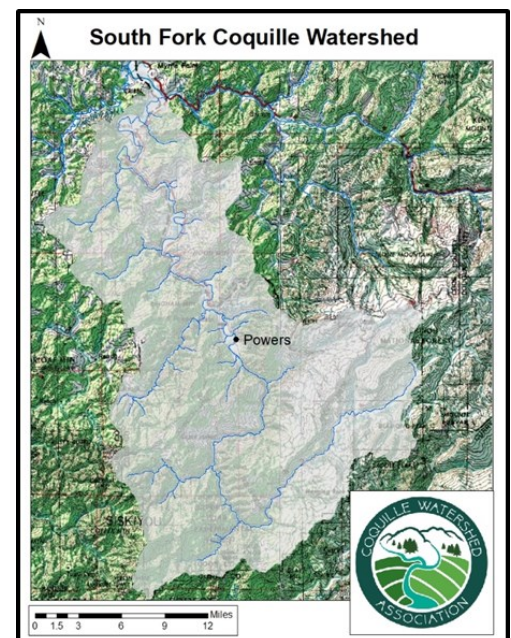
Do you live, work, or recreate in the South Fork Coquille Watershed?

If yes, we'd like to hear from you! The Coquille Watershed Association & the CoosSWCD are starting a new initiative to work with landowners on voluntary watershed enhancement efforts in the area. To inform our work, we would like to hear from you on what natural resources challenges or benefits you may experience as a resident or producer & what you hope this area looks like in the future. Your answers will help define current conditions and needs within the basin in regards to natural resources. **Please contact us if you would like to learn more and/or would be interested in participating in the survey.** Please know all answers will be kept confidential and anonymous.

Melaney Dunne, Director, Coquille Watershed Association.

Phone: 541-982-0147 **Website:** www.coquillewatershed.org

Email: director@coquillewatershed.org



The Coquille Watershed Association is a non-profit, community-driven organization that works collaboratively with landowners to promote healthy and resilient ecosystems and economies in the Coquille watershed basin (the 1,089 square miles that drain into the Coquille River). This project is a collaboration lead by the Watershed Association and the Coos Soil and Water Conservation District.

Need Help Deciding What To Do About Your Tidegate?

Tidegates are water control structures that allow freshwater to flow out into estuaries but prevent tidal/brackish water from moving upstream into developed areas. The use of dikes and tidegates has enabled framers and coastal communities to convert tidal wetlands into agricultural lands, and flood-prone lands into urban zones. These considerable changes in river-estuary and river-floodplain connectivity have had some unanticipated side effects. By allowing water to flow in only a single direction, tidegates alter the pulsed nature of upstream habitats; control upland flooding; change the velocity, turbulence, and pattern of freshwater discharge; block the mixing of waters of different temperatures; and increase upstream sedimentation. While these changes accommodate draining of the landscape for the uses noted above, they also affect production of resources important to the state of Coastal communities and the state of Oregon. Salmon, juvenile rockfish, juvenile Dungeness crab for example have a high affinity for rearing in locations now largely restricted for use due to tidegates.

If tidegates fail, agricultural lands, roads, businesses, and homes, upstream of tidegates become more vulnerable to tidal flooding and intense winter storms. As tidegates that were installed historically age and deteriorate, areas once managed by these gates are at risk of becoming tidally flooded wetlands and unmanageable.

No Action

Do Nothing

No up-front investment of funds is necessary, but, avoiding the problem entirely will eventually result in the failure of drainage or other infrastructure due to natural deterioration and deferred maintenance (i.e. collapsed culverts, breached levees, tidegate falls off, etc.), and this could result in:

- Impacts to neighboring properties or infrastructure
- Increased wetland acreage
- Changes in plant species community
- Decreased/loss of productivity of pasture land
- Loss of access to property due to tidal flooding

Independent Action

Replace tidegate on your own

Under this option, you are fully responsible for all project costs, but you also get to be the sole decision maker and project manager throughout the process. You are fully responsible for completing applicable permits and meeting legal requirements. Habitat enhancement and conservation practices generally need to be incorporated. You may be liable for impacts to neighbors or related infrastructure. Some technical assistance may be available to you through public entities such as Watershed Councils and Soil & Water Conservation Districts and Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife.

Collaborative Action

Replace the tidegate with help from a “conservation partner” such as a Watershed Council and/or Soil & Water Conservation District

This option relies on a broad partnership involving local, state, and federal organizations and agencies. The process of securing funding and completing permit requirements for replacing a tidegate can take several years. You will gain access to a wide variety of technical expertise, including a project manager who can help you navigate permits and regulatory requirements and keep the project moving. Under this option, grant dollars may be leveraged to cover project costs, but projects that benefit from public funding must be shown to provide a benefit to a public resource, such as fish & wildlife habitat or water quality. Funding is not guaranteed and is typically awarded through a competitive application process.

Coos and Curry Local Work Group Meeting



NRCS wants to hear from you!

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) provides innovative conservation solutions to restore, enhance and protect Oregon's working agricultural and forestry lands.

NRCS offers technical and financial assistance to private landowners and producers interested in preserving natural resources on the land. We invite your input to determine what resource concerns Coquille NRCS will address and where to focus our efforts within Coos and Curry counties. Based on your input, some resource concerns we may provide assistance in the future for include the following:

- ✓ Irrigation Efficiency
- ✓ Pasture Productivity
- ✓ Forest Health and Fuels Reduction
- ✓ Invasive Species Management
- ✓ Pollinator Habitat
- ✓ Soil Health



Natural Resources Conservation Service

www.or.nrcs.usda.gov

When:

1-4pm

January 20, 2021

via Zoom

Contact the Coquille NRCS office for more details and a meeting invitation.

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