Curry Currents

Summer/Fall 2000 Volume 2, Issue 2

Editor's Note

This publication was produced & supported by grant funding from the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB).

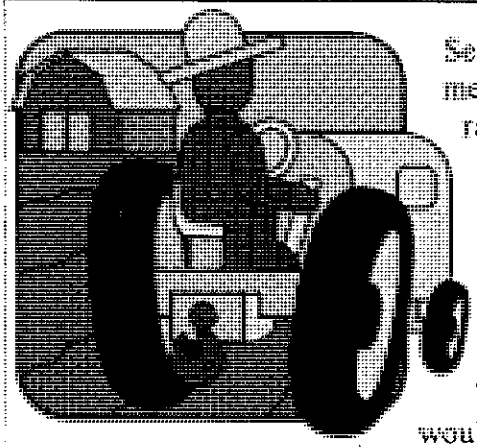
Each issue of *Curry Currents* has a theme. The theme for this issue is Senate Bill 1010.

SB 1010 was passed by the Oregon Legislature in 1993 to assist agricultural land owners in dealing with water quality regulations.

Lucie La Bonté
Editor

Curry County Begins SB 1010 Process For Agricultural Water Quality Plan

Linda Smith



Senate Bill 1010, which directs the Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) to work with farmers and ranchers to develop area-wide water quality management plans for all of the state's watersheds, is just beginning in Curry County. Douglas and Coos County have already been through the process. As the Oregon Department of Agriculture's regional representative Laura Tesler says, "I saved the best for last, and my last area to plan is Curry County. This is a true grassroots, bottom- up process, and I would encourage everyone to be involved. I am really excited about working with the newly formed Curry Local Advisory Committee and look forward to working with Curry County agricultural landowners to make a plan that will work for them, and that they advised the Department how to write".

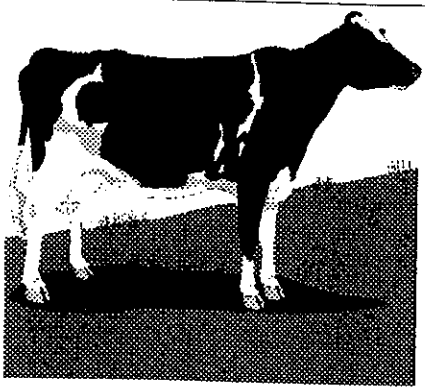
SWCD- Hires Outreach Coordinator

As the Local Management Agency (LMA), Curry Soil and Water Conservation District (Curry SWCD) has employed Linda Smith, as Outreach Coordinator, to work with Laura Tesler, ODA and the Curry SWCD to reach landowners. Linda is a long time resident of Langlois where she and her family operate a 400 acre ranch. SB 1010 educational moneys have been allotted to Curry SWCD to conduct educational workshops on a variety of topics, work with school children to educate them about agricultural issues, and provide support for the SB 1010 process.

Inside this Issue...

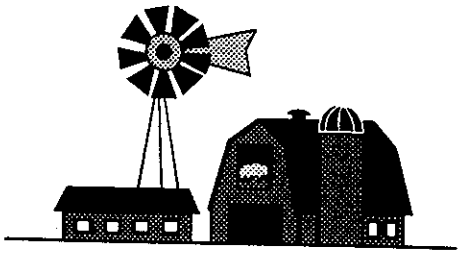
SB 1010 Meetings Held, Committee Formed

Linda Smith



Three informational meetings, one in Langlois, one in Gold Beach and one in Brookings, were held in July. The purpose of these meetings was to educate the public about SB 1010. The Curry SWCD Board of Directors, Mike Knapp, Earl Lang. Bob Pommarane, Keith Smith and Don Smith, worked with Oregon Department of Agriculture representative Laura Tesler to form a Curry Local Advisory Committee (Curry LAC). After interviews, surveys, many phone calls and suggestions from the various agricultural groups in the county, a committee has been formed. Committee members and what they represent are:

Becky Crockett, Brookings - Lily Bulb Growers and Cattle
Angie Dillingham, Gold Beach -Fisheries and Environmental Issues.
Jim Donaldson, Langlois - Nurseries, Cattle and Sheep.
Ted Fitzgerald, Brookings - Cattle.
George Fleming, Langlois – Environmental Issues and Small Woodlands
Joe Brown, Langlois - Sheep and Cattle.
Earl Lang, Langlois - Curry SWCD and Cattle.
Mike Knapp, Langlois -Sheep and Curry SWCD.
Robert McKenzie, Port Orford - Cranberries.
Bruce Follansbee, Gold Beach - Lower Rogue Watershed Council
Knute Anderson, Sixes - Cranberries.
Walt Schroeder, Gold Beach - Small Acreage Landowners.
Norm Yock, Brookings - Nurseries
Harry Harms, Harbor - Lilies.
Rick McKenzie, Langlois - Cattle, Sheep and Cranberries.



Laura Tesler, ODA and the Curry SWCD Board believe that this committee represents a well balanced, diverse mix of Curry County landowners who will be dedicated to creating a well thought out SB 1010 plan for Curry County.

Walt Schroeder Elected Chair - Monthly Meeting Set

Linda Smith

The first Curry Local Advisory Committee meeting was held on August 3rd. This was an organizational meeting and the number one priority was to elect a Chair. The committee was proud to elect long time Curry County Resident, former Oregon State Representative and former Oregon Extension Service Agent from Gold Beach, Walt Schroeder as Chairman of the Curry LAC. **The meetings will be held the 2nd Wednesday of every month, at 7 p.m. in the Firehall in Gold Beach, located behind City Hall**, with the possible exception of December. The public is welcome to attend.

If you have any questions, comments or suggestions please feel free to contact Linda Smith at 541-348-2652 or Laura Tesler at 541-396-3589. By calling, you can also get on an Interested Parties mailing list to receive minutes, agendas, and other notices of upcoming SB 1010 events. Watch the papers for more information on future meetings, tours and workshops.

Waiting For The Rain

Frank Burris - OSU Extension Watershed Management Agent

What do livestock grazing, cranberry farming, and lily bulb growing all have in common? If you guessed intensive agriculture, you would be right. In order for land to produce a commercially (spelled e-c-o-n-o-m-i-c-a-l-l-y) viable crop, whether it is livestock, cranberries, lilies, or some other crop, it must be supplemented with soil nutrients beyond the natural ability of the soil to provide nutrients from recycling, or breakdown of parent material. The addition of fertilizer or compost to soils, however, sometimes creates more problems than it solves. The instant availability of soil nutrients creates a very favorable environment for weeds and other plants, which compete with the crops that you are trying to grow. Additionally, dense stands of well-fed, nutritional plants become prime targets for insect pests and soil and plant pathogens. These unwanted carpetbaggers may, in turn, be dealt with by applying pesticides, fungicides, and herbicides.

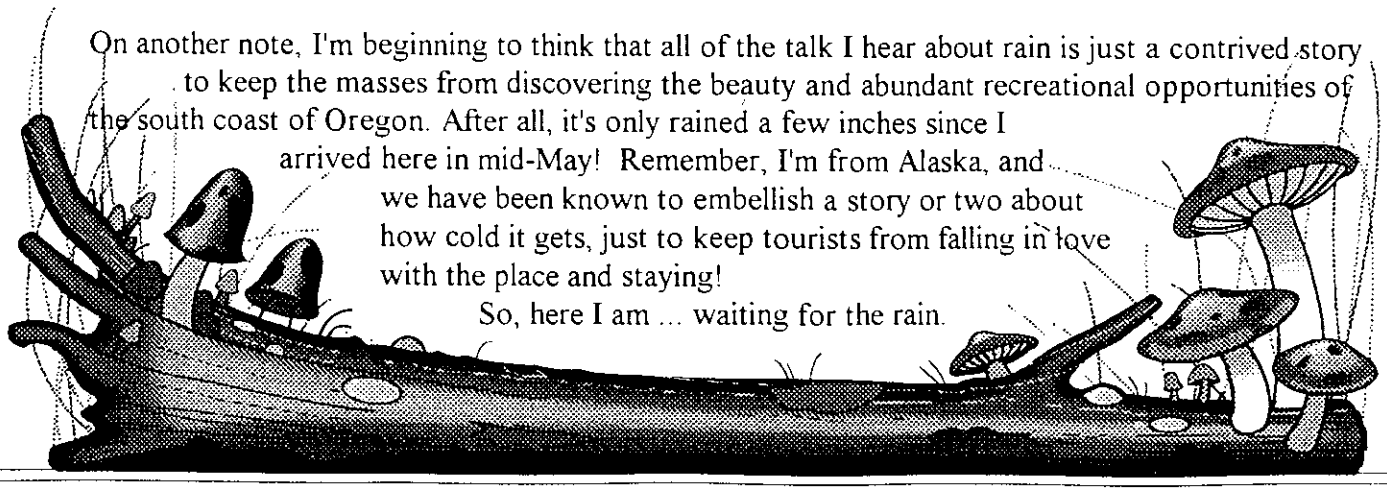
That's all O.K., and it works just fine, until the rains come. Any nutrients or 'cides that have not been incorporated into the soil, or broken down into inert forms could be washed into the nearest stream, which, given the nature of the Southern Oregon watersheds, probably contains salmon. Nutrients in small quantities are needed for proper functioning of aquatic systems, and actually encourage the growth of things that allow salmon to grow. However, large flushes of nutrient laden water can cause excessive algae growth, which reduces the dissolved oxygen content of the water. In extreme cases low oxygen levels can result in massive die-offs of salmonids, but more likely, it causes them to move to less suitable habitat, further crowding the fry that already occupy those habitats. Pesticides, herbicides, and fungicides drained into nearby streams can kill the organisms that salmonids feed or on, also causing them to either move or perish.

So, what's the good news? By building structures to slow down the flow of water from fields, a large proportion of the nutrients and 'cides can be removed from the water by microorganisms prior to it's entering fish bearing streams or rivers. These structures are called artificial, or created, wetlands, and if properly designed and constructed, are simple and inexpensive to build and maintain, and very effective at purifying agricultural or livestock run-off.

I am currently working with a livestock owner, Joe Brown of Brown Livestock LLC in Langlois, a cranberry farmer, Knute Anderson of Sea Wind Farms in Sixes, and Bruce Follansbee, Lower Rogue Watershed Coordinator, to determine if wetlands are needed to purify run-off from their fields. Water flow measurement and water quality sampling will begin in earnest once the fall rains begin. Harry Hoogesteger, South Coast Watersheds Coordinator, and I are currently developing a proposal for funding to collect initial water flow and quality data, and then construct wetlands if data indicates that they will benefit water quality. We have proposed adding an as yet unidentified site on a lily farm, so if you commercially grow lily bulbs and would like to be included in this innovative program, please call Frank Burris at 247-6672 or 800-356-3986, or Harry Hoogesteger at 247-2755.

On another note, I'm beginning to think that all of the talk I hear about rain is just a contrived story to keep the masses from discovering the beauty and abundant recreational opportunities of the south coast of Oregon. After all, it's only rained a few inches since I arrived here in mid-May! Remember, I'm from Alaska, and we have been known to embellish a story or two about how cold it gets, just to keep tourists from falling in love with the place and staying!

So, here I am ... waiting for the rain.



Developing Voluntary Farm Plans

Durin Leibelt - Watershed Technical Specialist

As a Watershed Technical Specialist for both Coos County and Curry County Soil & Water Conservation Districts, it is my responsibility to develop voluntary farm plans. A farm plan is a common sense approach to improving farm profitability while addressing environmental concerns. It is basically an organized, step-by-step guide for the landowner to follow. A farm plan inventories the resources on a farm, documenting the condition of the soil, water, animals, plants and air. It then describes how a landowner can implement practices to improve resources and meet their goals. Some of the goals of a farm plan include improving water quality and salmon habitat, conserving soil and other natural resources, producing more forage for livestock and earning greater profits.

Some practices to improve stream quality (lower temperature and contaminant levels) include; livestock fencing, filter strips, riparian buffers and nutrient management. For example, nutrient management is a basic practice that involves determining the amount of nutrients in the soil through testing and the amount of nutrients needed for optimum forage production. This practice benefits the landowner and the fish habitat because over application is avoided.

It is important to remember that developing a farm plan is a voluntary cooperative process. The plan reflects the landowner's objectives and the best science available to help reach those objectives. These plans are confidential between the landowner and SWCD.

If you are interested in developing a plan or for more information Durin can be reached at: 541-396-6879.

Watershed Council Meetings - Join US!

South Coast Coordinating Watershed Council

1st Thursday, 7 PM, Extension Service Building,Fairgrounds, Gold Beach or City Hall

Floras Creek Watershed Council

Quarterly - Blanco Middle School - Call for Dates

Chetco River Watershed Council

1st Wednesday, 7PM, 555 5th St. Forest Service Building,Brookings

Lower Rogue Watershed Council

2nd Thursday, 7PM, Extension Service Building,Gold Beach

Port Orford Watershed Council

3rd Wednesday, 7PM, City Hall

Elk /Sixes Watershed Council

Quarterly - Elk River Park - Call for Dates

Curry Local Advisory Committee - SB 1010

2nd Wednesday, 7PM, Gold Beach Firehall

Winchuck River, Euchre Creek & Hunter Creek/Pistol River are held on a bi-annual basis.

Contact the SWCD/Watershed office for information - (541)247-2755

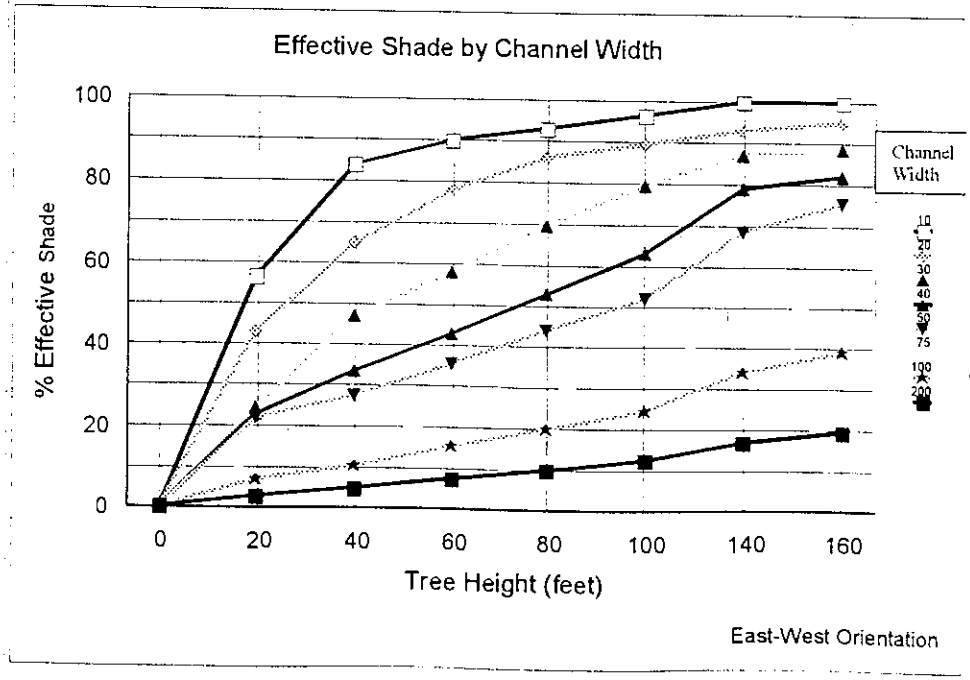
In Search For a Cool Pool - Cindy Ricks

During late July and early August, Curry County streams and rivers reach their peak temperatures. During warm afternoons while ranchers cut and bale hay, relatives and friends visit, and the County Fair comes to town, aquatic organisms seek cool, oxygenated water. Water quality, particularly water temperature, has been a focus of habitat restoration efforts under the Oregon Plan for Salmon and Watersheds. Warm water (above the optimum temperature of 64 degrees F) causes reduced feeding and stress in juvenile salmonids and reduces the amount of oxygen dissolved in the water. Since 1995, South Coast and Lower Rogue Watershed Councils have used modern continuous recording thermometers during the summer months to monitor daily minimum and maximum water temperatures. Volunteers and youth groups have assisted in sampling to refine our understanding of temperature and stream flow relations in local watersheds.

As the water surface is heated by solar radiation, water temperatures rise. Stream flow is measured as the volume of water (cubic feet) moving per second. Temperature rises more rapidly where less water flows and where the flow is slower. High heat transfer occurs wherever solar radiation heats bedrock, boulders and cobbles in the channel bed and banks. Shallower streams allow solar radiation to heat the channel bed. In wider streams, more surface area is exposed to heating. Solar radiation can be blocked by effective shade, provided by tree height, overhanging vegetation, and vegetation density as it relates to the width and orientation of a stream.

In Curry County, some streams are warmest high in the watershed. Along upstream sections of Chetco River and Hunter Creek, unshaded bedrock probably accounts for the warmer temperatures. Downstream, large tributaries help cool the mainstems. For example, one August afternoon on the Chetco, the mainstem above the South Fork Chetco was 74 degrees, but cooled by 1-2 degrees below the South Fork (contributing 17% of the stream flow at 67 degrees). Other streams such as Euchre Creek, increase in temperature downstream as they flow from more shaded sections through more exposed sections along agricultural and rural residential lands.

Summer stream flow is related to the drainage area of each watershed. Water use can decrease the available flow and increase the temperature. Along streams that transport large volumes of sediment, water may flow subsurface. Permeable layers of marine terraces along the lower agricultural lands of Floras Creek, Elk and Sixes Rivers also allow exchange between surface and subsurface flow. Tributaries and groundwater seeps providing cool water to pools are being documented and may be important for fish rearing in warm rivers.



Effective shade increases rapidly as narrow streams revegetate, as shown on the graph. Streams along some of our earliest riparian fencing and planting projects were monitored in summer 2000, and we expect the results to show decreasing water temperatures. Although riparian buffers along wide rivers cannot block all solar radiation, they provide other benefits such as filtering nutrients and sediment, aquatic insects, hiding cover and stable stream banks.

Wedderburn Ranch : Ranching and Fish Habitat Coexist

Bruce Follansbee

The Wedderburn Ranch is on the north bank of the Rogue River just outside Gold Beach. The original owner of the ranch was R.D. Hume, who began agricultural operations there around the 1870's. The ranch is currently undergoing a change of ownership and the new owners, the Tuttle family, are working to enhance fish and wildlife habitat values while maintaining the cattle grazing lease operation. The adjacent landowner, Dr. Reg Williams, is also working to improve fish habitat on the portion of Ranch Creek that flows through his land. The Lower Rogue Watershed Council is working with both landowners and the cattle grazing leasee, Mr. Fred Messerle, to make Wedderburn Ranch a demonstration project for the compatibility of cattle grazing with habitat enhancement.

The first phase of the project was to construct 16,000 feet of riparian fencing to limit cattle access to the creek channel. The New Zealand-style electric fencing was designed with several corridors to allow cattle access to water and movement from one side of the valley to the other. The corridors have spring gates at both ends so that one or both ends can be left open. The buffer within the fence is wide enough to allow planting riparian trees for shade, habitat, and bank stabilization. An existing electrified barbed wire fence will be replaced by the new owner. Wildlife can be severely injured if they become entangled in the barbed wire while being shocked by the electricity.

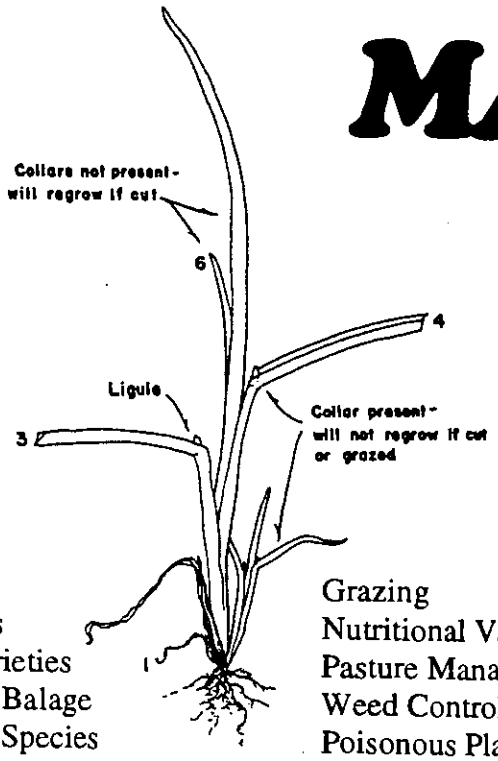
Two other project components to be completed this year are disabling a drain system in the valley floor and replacing a culvert blocking fish passage in the upper valley portion of the creek. The drainage system routes tributary streams across the valley to the main creek channel. Disabling the drainage system will cause water to flow across two sections of the valley floor. This action is being taken to allow more water to percolate into the valley floor and be stored for release during the dry summer months. The increase in surface water will restore a degraded wetland and will also cause some reduction in forage production.

The existing culvert was installed where a ranch road crossed the main creek to provide vehicle access from one side of the valley to the other. Unfortunately, the culvert has a two foot drop from the outlet to the stream surface, which prevents fish from migrating upstream. The replacement culvert will be much larger and inset into the streambed to aid migrating fish. A second culvert blocking migration of some adult and all juvenile fish is scheduled for replacement in summer 2001. A double culvert under the county highway was already replaced with fish friendly culverts by the Curry County Road Department a couple of years ago.

The next phase of the project is planting trees in the creek buffer areas next winter. The riparian trees will include: Sitka spruce, black cottonwood, Oregon ash, western red cedar and grand fir. Willows are expected to voluntarily seed in on the disturbed portions of the stream banks in spring 2001 – if willows do not voluntarily seed in, then they will be planted as well.

The activities for next year include: surveying all roads on the ranch; fencing cattle out of some portions of the tributary streams; and looking for other opportunities to improve wildlife and bird habitat that are compatible with cattle grazing. The roads are surveyed to determine if culverts are adequately sized for 50 year storms and to determine if the roads are producing sediment that reaches the creeks. The tributary creeks will be fenced in such a way that the fencing also serves as pasture cross-fencing, which will allow better grazing management on the smaller pastures. Over several years these habitat enhancement activities will substantially improve habitat conditions for fish and wildlife while maintaining the viability of the cattle grazing operation.

FORAGE & PASTURE MANAGEMENT



- ***10 Week Course Sept 11 – Nov 13, 2000***
- ***Blanco Middle School, Langlois***

Grasses
Legumes
New Varieties
Hay and Balage
Unusual Species
Forages on Internet

Grazing
Nutritional Value
Pasture Management
Weed Control
Poisonous Plants
and much more!

This will be a practical course on forages, grazing, pasture, hay and silage. We'll cover plant growth, nutritional value, grazing techniques, soil tests, and hay storage. You will learn how to identify the different types of grasses and legumes. We will discuss new forage varieties, pasture renovation, intensive grazing, unusual forages, poisonous plants, economic tips, etc. This will be a relaxed class, with lots of active discussion and sharing of ideas. Open to all producers — dairymen, ranchers with beef cattle, sheep, horses, goats, llamas, or any stock on pasture — beginner or veteran graziers, veterinarians, feed suppliers, and anyone else interested in forages. Coffee will be provided.

Time and Place:	Monday evenings 6:00–9:00 pm Blanco Middle School First class begins on Sept 11
Cost:	$75.00
How to Register:	Mail in registration form below
For Further Information:	call ***Cecil Ashdown,*** Curry SWCD 8 AM–noon Mon-Fri voice: 541-247-2755 fax: 541-247-0408 email: curswcd@harborside.com or the instructor, ***Woody Lane*** voice: 541-440-1926

About the Instructor:

Woody Lane has taught many popular forage and nutrition courses at community colleges and workshops. He has a Ph.D. in livestock nutrition from Cornell University and has worked with ranchers throughout the United States, Canada, and New Zealand. He was the Extension Sheep and Beef Cattle Nutrition Specialist in Wisconsin for many years. He moved to Oregon in 1990 and runs his own livestock consulting business in Roseburg.

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Mail-in Registation Form

Name

Street/Ranch Address

City State Zip

☎ Telephone Number Email

Send in your registration in advance! Reserve a place for yourself. Space is limited.

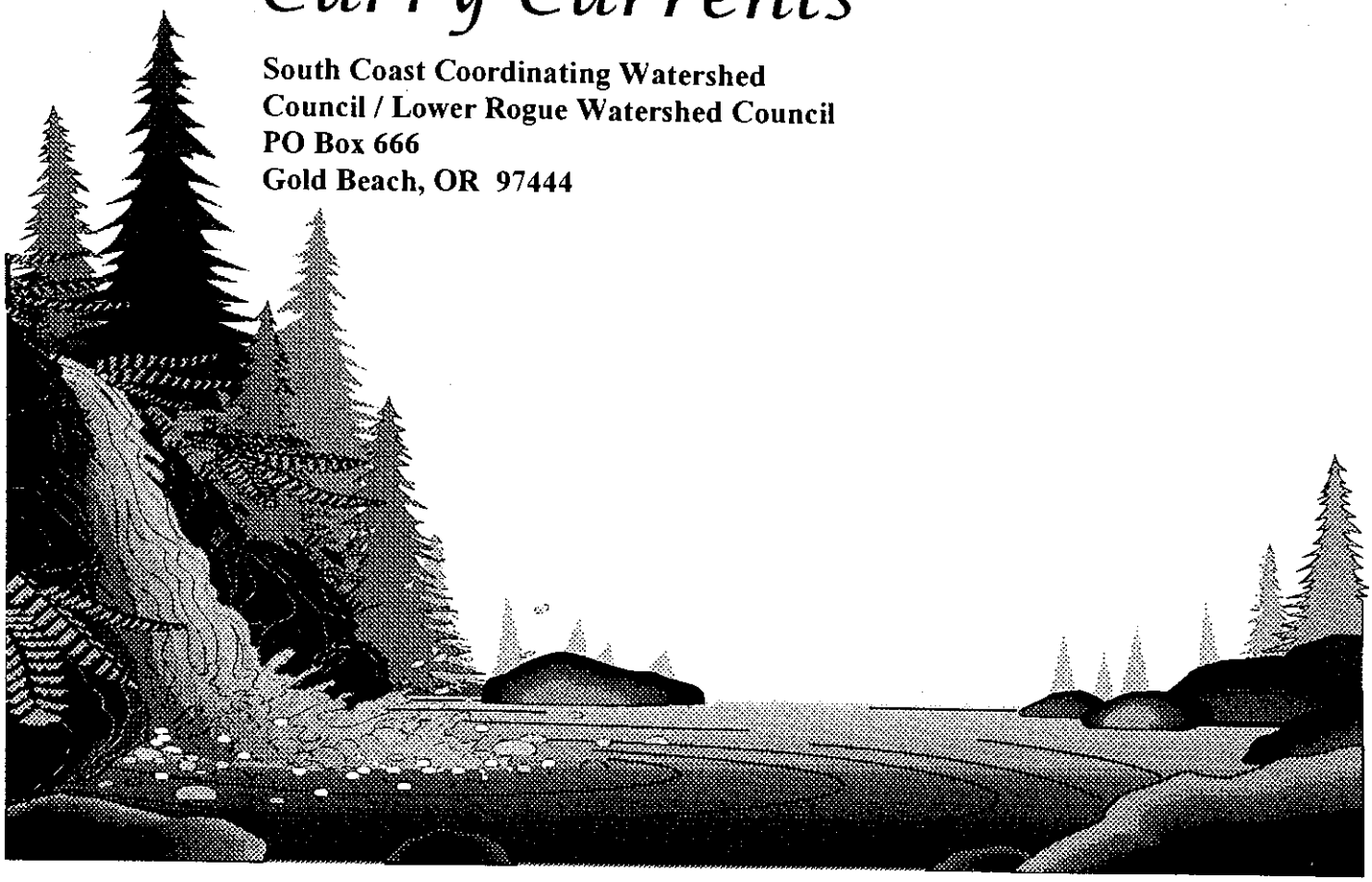
Make a $75 check payable to: Curry SWCD

Mail this to: Curry SWCD
P.O. Box 666
Gold Beach, OR 97444

This course is sponsored by the Curry Soil and Water Conservation District and the Oregon Department of Agriculture through the SB1010 program

Curry Currents

South Coast Coordinating Watershed Council / Lower Rogue Watershed Council
PO Box 666
Gold Beach, OR 97444



Who We Are

Curry County Soil and Water Conservation District: (541) 247-2755
Michael Knapp - Chairman, Earl Lang -Vice Chairman, - Don Smith Secretary/Treasurer,
Keith Smith - Director, Bob Pommarane - Director, Cecil Ashdown - Administrator, Linda Smith - Outreach
Oregon State University Extension (541) 247-6672 or 800-356-3986
Frank Burris - Watershed Management Agent
South Coast Coordinating Watershed Council: (541) 247-2755
Lucie La Bonte'- Chair, John Wilson.- Vice-Chair, Harry Hoogesteger - Coordinator,
Cindy Ricks -Monitoring Coordinator,
Mike Maguire - Project Manager for the Watershed Assessments
Lower Rogue Watershed Council: (541) 247-2755
John Lighty - Chair, Bruce Follansbee - Coordinator ,Cindy Ricks -Monitoring Coordinator
Chetco Watershed Council: (541) 247-2755
Ted Freeman - Chair, Pat McVay - Vice Chair, Angie Dillingham - Secretary, Marie Hansen - Treasurer
Port Orford Watershed Council: (541) 247-2755
John Leuthe - Chair
Elk/Sixes Watershed Council: (541) 247-2755
Joe Marsh - Chair
Floras Creek: (541) 247-2755
Joe Brown - Chair
Hunter Creek/Pistol River Council, Winchuck River Council, Euchre Creek Watershed Council