

THE CONSERVATIONIST

JACKSON SOIL AND WATER
CONSERVATION DISTRICT
NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2007

VOLUME 3, ISSUE 3

Dams and Farms: More in Common than You Might Think

By Jim Buck – U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Manager & FARRM Member

Have you seen the bumper sticker “Thank a Farmer When You Sit Down to Eat?” Well, I’d like to add “And Thank the Dam Guy Too.” Working for the Army Corps of Engineers, I’ve had the pleasure of being one of the local dam guys for the past 9 years. I manage Lost Creek and Applegate Dams and the more I think about dams and farms the more convinced I am at how closely linked they are by weather.

Before becoming a dam manager, I never paid much attention to the weather. Oh sure, I complained when it was too hot, too cold, too wet or too dry, but doesn’t everybody? When I became responsible for filling the reservoirs by May 1, reducing floods during the winter, dealing with droughts, and providing just the right amount of water for crops and towns and fish, paying close attention to the weather took on a whole new meaning. And 5 years ago when my wife, Jean, and I bought 15 irrigated acres near Eagle Point, the connection between farms and weather also became crystal clear.

We probably weren’t the first suburbanites to dream of owning some property in the country and enjoying restful, rural living. I had envisioned endless hours in the hammock with hardly a care on my mind. Five years later the hammock is still in the box and we’re doing the best we can to keep from getting farther behind. I wish the Rural Living Handbook had been available back then because we would have had a better idea of what we were getting into.

We receive our water from the Eagle Point Irrigation District (EPID). A year ago the district sent us a notice that due to the dry water forecast we would have to wait 28 days or more between water rotations instead of the traditional 14 days. With 5 years of experience irrigating our grass hay field, I knew that our green grass would be burnt brown by August. An unusually wet May bailed us out of that predicament.

The challenge for EPID is that the district relies almost entirely on the natural stream flow from Big Butte Creek and has very little water storage. Without reservoir water storage to supplement the natural flow, unusually dry conditions can result in EPID not meeting the total need for water. In the Rogue Basin, 75% of the annual precipitation occurs from November through March and only 2% occurs July through August when it is needed most by the farmers. Reservoirs like Lost Creek and Applegate store irrigation water (and water for fisheries) and can release that *(Continue on page 4)*

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Jackson Soil and Water Conservation District is your gateway to natural resource assistance. Board members and staff work with the Natural Resource Conservation Service to ensure educational and on-the-ground technical assistance opportunities take place which help the landowners of Jackson County.

Chair's Corner

By Charlie Boyer



WOW! Here it is time for the spring issue for *The Conservationist* and I feel like it should still be, like February! There have been a lot of things happening at the Jackson Soil and Water Conservation District since last November.

As you all know the voters in Jackson County passed our Permanent Tax Rate which will finance our conservation efforts into the future. These monies will help us hire some much needed expertise for our staff and help us better support landowners all across Jackson County as they plan and implement conservation and best management practices on their rural or urban lands.

We are currently in the throes of putting together an annual work plan and budget for next year. We have identified what the board, staff, and other

(Continued on page 5)

Thank You



As Jackson SWCD celebrates 40 years of service I want to thank everyone for helping to make it a wonderful and exhilarating place to work. Your participation and attendance at board and annual meetings, tours, workshops, etc. made the District what it is today.

I personally wish to thank so many of you for the gifts, good wishes, handshakes, and hugs presented to me when my retirement was announced during the annual dinner. It has been a great 37 (plus) years!

Love and Thanks,

Linda Town, Administrative Secretary

Jackson

Soil and Water Conservation District

Staff: Randy White, NRS/District Manager
Markie Germer, Bookkeeper/Office Assistant
Margaret Meierhenry, Newsletter Editor

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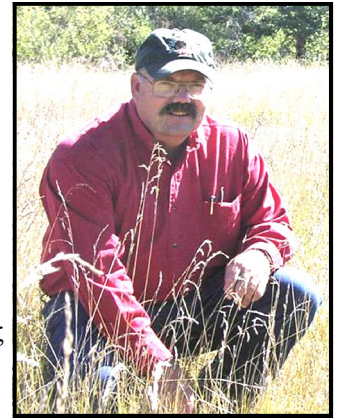
Please think of Jackson Soil and Water Conservation District (JSWCD) if you are interested in donating, gifting, granting, and/or bequeathing items, real or personal property, or monetary contributions for soil and water conservation efforts. Conservation Districts are political subdivisions of state government. IRS Code, **Section 17 0(c) (1)** states: Contributions or gifts to a state or any of its political subdivisions, i.e., conservation districts, are "charitable" contributions for tax purposes, and are, therefore, **tax deductible**. (See IRS Publication 526: Charitable Contributions).

Grants, donations, and some State funds help to implement, maintain, and/or support soil and water conservation efforts. Your help is greatly appreciated. Contact **(541) 734-3143 markie.germer@jswcd.org**

County Committee members:

LAA1 - Suzanne Ginet,
Chairperson
LAA3 - Lori Mefford,
Vice-chair
LAA2 - Mel Morris,
Member

Manager's Message
Randy White
JSWCD District Manager



Spring is finally here, and things are starting to grow. That includes the Jackson Soil and Water Conservation District. The following is a short list of what we have done since the last Manager's Message:

1. Our 10 week Forage Resource Management Class got under way with new participants. To date, seven classes have been held including: soils and fertilization; knowing your responsibilities as a rural landowner; plant physiology, morphology, and identification; plant ecology and grazing effects on pastures; Management Intensive Grazing; and nutritional requirements of grazing animals. Class participants have been on one tour and are starting to work on their own plans. We still have three more classes and two more tours to look forward to including: Pasture layout and design; more on Voison's Management Intensive Grazing; forage animal production systems and marketing; forage budgeting; fencing and watering facilities; and more landowner planning. We have one more local tour and a final tour to a diversified grass-fed livestock operation in Roseburg. If you are interested in participating in the next course contact Markie Germer at (541) 734-3143.
2. We have distributed all but 1800 of the second edition of our Rural Living Handbook.
3. The Districts Farm And Ranch Resource Management (FARRM) group elected officers in January. The new and/or returning officers are: President – Randy White, Vice-president – Ern Russell, Secretary – Martha Straube, and Treasurer – Marsha MacCormack. The group is planning four local tours and one annual tour. The annual tour is tentatively set for the Eel River area around Ferndale along the north coast of California. The tour will be focused on grass finishing operations and marketing of grass-fed animals. If you are interested in becoming a member of the group, please call Margaret Meierhenry at (541) 826-6649.
4. We had a fantastic annual meeting and celebration. See more about the night's events on page 6 & 7 of this newsletter.
5. We have six small grants that are helping Jackson County rural landowners with projects such as: irrigation water management, soil erosion and stream bank stabilization, and planting.
6. The District web site is continuing to grow with help from Ken Schiff of GuiGuy. Please check out the site at: www.jswcd.org.
7. Linda Town retired after 37+ years of service to the District. She will be missed, but we still have her as an Earth Team Volunteer with the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS).

Correction: In the 2006 Fall JSWCD Newsletter The Conservationist, incorrectly identified Keith Corp and Marsha MacCormack—Corp Ranch as winners of the Oregon Association of Conservation Districts State Wide—2006 Cooperator of the Year Award. It should have stated they were winners of the Oregon Association of Conservation Districts -Southwest Basin—2006 Cooperator of the Year Award. We regret the error and apologize for any confusion.

8. Markie Germer is our new Bookkeeper and Office Assistant. She started work with us in early March and is doing great.

9. We are working with our Service Center partners, Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) and Farm Service Agency (FSA), and making on-site visits to help "Landowners Turn Natural Resource Concerns Into Opportunities".

10. Margaret Meierhenry continues to do a great job on this newsletter. If you have any suggestions for future articles, please let us know.

We would like to hear from you,

Randy

Dams and Farms

(Continued from page 1)

water during the hot, dry part of the summer. At Lost Creek 35,000 acre-feet of storage has been set aside for irrigation and 26,000 acre feet at Applegate. Less than 25% of this water has been contracted for irrigation. Even though these are Corps of Engineers managed reservoirs, the Bureau of Reclamation is responsible for the irrigation contracts.

Just like seasons on the farm, managing dams and reservoirs follows a seasonal cycle tied to the weather. By the end of the dry summer and early fall, the water levels in Lost Creek and Applegate have been drawn down resulting in plenty of storage space for winter floods. Beginning in January at Lost Creek and February at Applegate, we slowly begin filling the reservoirs from their fall low water levels. This becomes a balancing act that weighs the need for continued flood reduction with the need for having stored water for the summer. In non-drought years, we plan to fill the reservoirs by May 1st. Then during the summer months, we “harvest” the stored



Lost Creek Dam

water and the lakes are gradually drawn down by releasing water for fish, irrigation and drinking water. By early fall the lake levels are low again and the seasonal cycle starts over.

And so when you stop to think about it, the management of dams and farms do share a number of things in common. Dams and farms are closely tied to the weather, they follow a seasonal cycle, a resource is harvested, and if we get too busy, they can keep us out of the hammock.



Applegate Dam

Check out the Jackson SWCD Website
www.jswcd.org

Learn about your District

- Power Point Presentation: “Who We Are and What We Do”
- Download the “Rural Living Handbook”
- View back issues of the JSWCD Newsletter – “The Conservationist”
- Connect with FARRM member sites
- Link to many resources
- **Read the Newsletter On-Line!**

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Chair's Corner (Continued from page 2)

interested parties feel are the key staff positions we need to fill first and what resource issues we need to focus our efforts on in the upcoming year. We invite you to stop by the office and become a part of the planning process and to attend the meetings and hearing on the budget.

Other big changes in the District have also taken place. First the Board would like to give a big thank you for the 37 (plus) years of service Linda Town gave to the District. She decided to retire in February so expect some rough spots as we all attempt to learn what she knew and did for all of us without a second thought. Also, Janet Mogel has moved on to other endeavors so the front desk has had major changes in a hurry. Linda and Janet have been replaced at the front desk by Markie Germer. Her background includes payroll as well as office assistant at a local mill for 11 years. She and her husband have two daughters and are expecting to be new grandparents in September. They have a small acreage in Eagle Point and appreciate rural concerns.

The Jackson SWCD Board welcomes a new member. Allan Campbell III was elected in November as a Director At Large replacing Monte Minchow. A big thank you goes to Monty for his service to the District for the past several years. Allan Campbell III is retired after working as a youth educator on natural resources and was an OSU Extension Forester for 23 years. He prefers a hands-on approach to improving natural resources, particularly forestlands, for long-term sustainable production.

Once again, I encourage each of you to become involved with us in designing and implementing a new future for the Jackson Soil and Water Conservation District. The foundation we build together today will serve as basis for what we will become as an organization in the future and how effective we will be in applying conservation on the ground while protecting our economic base and our overall quality of life.

Charlie

Thank you -- Thank you

We would like to recognize some special folks for their generosity in donating items to the Fred Straub Memorial Scholarship Fund Oral Auction. Last year Fred's cowboy hat symbolically jump started the bidding to get the fund going and was returned to the Straube Family. This year a redeemable gift card for a 'Resistol' cowboy hat was given to the winning bidder. A very **Special Thank You** goes to **Charlie and Pam Boyer** for this donation.

Other donors included:

Straube Family

Charlie Boyer—Long Mountain Land and Livestock

Wes Hartman—Farm Credit Services

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Jackson Soil and Water Conservation District Annual Meeting

In Salem, on the 17th day of October 1966, the Secretary of State of the State of Oregon certified that the Jackson Soil and Water Conservation District was “duly organized as a governmental subdivision of this State and a public body corporate and politic.” Thus began forty years of developing conservation plans and addressing natural resource concerns for the citizens of Jackson County. In 1966, the Sams Valley-Beagle SWCD and Rogue SWCD combined to form the new Jackson SWCD. The original supervisors, Elwood Abbott, Harlan Contrall, Lewis Conger, Pat Dugan, C.W. Jensen, George H. Jess, Jr., Joe H. Meyer, Donald M. Minear, John Ousterhout, Charles Stanley, Ernest C. Strickland, Ramsey Thompson, Ray Vogel, and Walter G. Kasworm were honored for their contribution and service.



Linda Town accepts a wall clock/plaque, to be on display in the office, from Charlie Boyer-2007 Chair. The names of the original supervisors when JSWCD was formed countywide in 1966 are engraved on the plaque.

Don Minear, then a local orchardist and dairyman, was elected as the first Chair of the new Jackson SWCD seven-member board in 1966.



Linda Town announced her retirement after being with the District for 37 plus years. She received the JSWCD Administrative Secretary Award plus numerous other awards for her service and dedication to the District. The Folks who make it work — Jackson SWCD Board Members and Staff, NRCS Staff and Southern Oregon RC& D Council helped Linda celebrate by holding some of the awards.



2007 is the first year for the Fred Straube Memorial Scholarship to be awarded to a student planning on majoring in agriculture in college. John Gladman and Thomas White, seniors at Crater High School each received a \$500 scholarship as well as receiving The Young Stewards Award along with Lisa Higgins. The Young Stewards Award recognizes young people who are practicing good land stewardship. Congratulations to all three winners. Martha Straube presented the awards. The evenings activities included an oral auction with donations going into the scholarship fund from items auctioned by C.W. Smith. Great participation by many people generating more money for scholarships.

Honoring and Celebrating Forty Years—1966-2007



The year 2007 is a new beginning for the District after successfully obtaining a tax rate limit in the November 2006 elections. Randy White, District Manager standing behind the “Five Cents for Soil and Water” poster used to ‘get out the vote’, presented Jackson County Commissioners C.W. Smith, Jack Walker, and Dave Gilmour with the Partners In Conservation Award. The Commissioners were very supportive of the ballot measure.



Partners In Conservation Award

Dalton and Ruth Straus of Straus Ranch were surprised and overwhelmed at being chosen for the Districts Conservationist of the Year Award. Dalton has been a lifelong resident of the valley and honored his father as in becoming a good steward of the state competition along with other

Dalton has been a lifelong resident of being the influencing force in his life land. The award will be entered in the district winners.



C.W. Smith auctioning items with proceeds of over \$2000 going into the Fred Straub Memorial Scholarship Fund.



2007 Conservationist of the Year Award Straus Ranch



Keynote speaker - Jim Buck
Rogue Basin Water Storage Management



Volunteer of the Year Award

Shawn Wonnacott, Marsha MacCormack, Margaret Meierhenry, and Ern Russell



The Crater FFA Alumni Association prepared the Tri tip BBQ and table decorations were grown and pots painted by Crater FFA horticulture students. Guests waiting to be served a delicious meal.

"Weed of Distinction"

Creeping Buttercup (*Ranunculus repens* L) will often invade irrigated pastures in southwest Oregon, by means of seed dispersal. It will quickly take over irrigated pastures as it is not normally consumed by livestock. The plant contains a toxic irritant that produces protoanemonin upon chewing by livestock, which causes severe gastrointestinal irritation and ulceration of skin. The highest concentration is when the plant is flowering. All types of livestock are susceptible, but cattle are most commonly affected and mortality may occur. The toxin is unstable, so presence in dry hay is not a problem.



USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database



Jim Stasz @ USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database

Areas that are overgrazed are most susceptible to invasion. Creeping Buttercup is a perennial and sets a lot of seeds. Spraying with herbicides (e.g. MCPA) while plants are actively growing is the most effective method of control. Contact your favorite farm/ranch supply dealer for more information on mechanical control.

Proper grazing management will help stop re-invasion. For help with grazing and pasture management, contact Jackson SWCD or Jackson County Extension.

Across the Fence



Helpful tidbits shared by FARRM members. This came from Margaret Meierhenry working with pasture management.

The other day I was moving the heifers into a new cell within the paddock, which also means moving the water trough and I congratulated myself on how easy it was to exchange the hoses. Last year we found the world of "quick connect" hose connections! Before it meant turning off the water at the barn faucet, changing connections and walking back to turn the water on again. **But**—they make quick connects with a Shut-off valve. Water flow stops automatically—no walking back to the barn! Other products maybe available, but Orbit (SunMate) makes a brass model (#58285) that works super.

Also, if you use a lot of flagging for your temporary electrical fencing, a box of 12 rolls are available in many colors and are available at Pacific Survey Supply & other farm supply centers. Enjoy the summer!

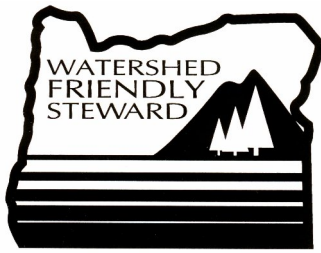


Charlie Boyer
11630 Agate Road
Eagle Point, Oregon
97524
541-826-9873
horseman@ccountry.net

**Pasture Management - Rural Land Planning - NEPA
Reviews - Hay &- Lamb Sales**



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Congratulations to Margaret Meierhenry and Ern Russell for receiving **Watershed Friendly Stewardship awards in 2007 from Jackson SWCD**. Margaret and Ern are each recognized for conscientiously managing their lands in a way that has a positive impact on the watersheds they live in.

Watershed Friendly Stewardship is a recognition program to honor the contributions of private landowners who help protect and enhance our watersheds. Many private landowners maintain a high standard of stewardship and management on their properties by minimizing erosion and the spread of weeds, by using irrigation wisely and by being careful with any pesticides or biological waste.

Watershed Friendly Stewardship awards are a way to say 'Thank you!' to these stewards who make good neighbors for both humans and the natural environment. It is also a subtle way to help educate the public about what good stewardship looks like. Good agricultural management does not have a negative impact on the environment. In fact it can even be used to resolve some environmental concerns such as weed proliferation and fire danger.

To get involved you can nominate a good steward. First check with the landowner/manager to make sure they are willing to participate (not everyone wants to be involved) and then forward their name to the Jackson Soil and Water Conservation District at 541-734-3143. They will schedule a site visit to talk with the landowner/manager and to look at the management to see if it meets the criteria for the award. For more details on the evaluation process, please go to the web site <http://pacrimrcd.org/Page.asp?NavID=297> for the brochure and the evaluation form (note the evaluation form will be filled out by Jackson SWCD).

Over 90 Watershed Friendly Stewards have been recognized in the 5 counties of southwestern Oregon since 2001. Those Watershed Friendly Stewards are doing an excellent job of managing more than 19,000 acres. The Watershed Friendly Stewardship program was created by the Southwest Oregon Resource Conservation and Development Council with support from a grant from the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board in 2001. The program won the Governor's Spirit of the Oregon Plan Leadership Award in that same year.

FARM AND RANCH RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

ATTENTION FARRM MEMBERS

- FARRM members now is the time to re-new your membership for the 2007-08 year! Dues are \$20/ranch
- Attend the Breakfast meeting and Pot-lucks to hear speakers sharing information on a variety of farming, ranching, and marketing possibilities.
- Enjoy the Educational opportunities— new ideas and networking that is offered— Be an active participant!!

Send your renewal to: M. Meierhenry 1520 Hammel Rd., Eagle Point, OR, 97524

— Today! —

The **FARRM** group will be traveling to Ferndale, CA for the Annual tour and Local tours will be on Friday evenings.. A tentative schedule includes:

- *June-Harry & David, Organic Composting & Use*
- *July-Large Horse Facility on Hwy 140*
- *August-Annual Tour- Grass-fed Beef /Dairy Operation*
- *September-GaryWest Smoked Meats*
- *October-Valley View Vineyard, Grape Harvest*

Stay tuned for more details!!!



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Links to the Past

Seven Oaks Farm History

By Doreen Bradshaw

When lightning killed 7 cows next to where Grandpa Bohnert was milking, he decided to move his family from Nebraska to Oregon. He settled near Central Point and raised six children, five of whom stayed in area and farmed.

His son John bought the first portion of what became Seven Oaks farm in 1934. The name Seven Oaks originated from a stagecoach stop located there in the late 1800's. The stagecoach remained near the railroad station when the railroad came through later. The area had orchards, a Filbert grove and a three-story mansion with extensive outbuildings. A tree-lined lane with native stone gas-lamp pillars, which still exist by the road today, as does the old log cabin, left from the stagecoach stop.

John moved his wife Edyth and daughters Marilyn and Doreen into a smaller house on the farm in 1938, where Doreen and husband Don still live. In 1940, the mansion burned, creating more available land. John was noted for his watermelons and sweet Spanish onions. He also grew sugar beet and clover seed, and helped develop "Talent Alfalfa". The farm had chickens and a Jersey milk cow whose cream was too thick to whip. A "Victory" garden grew during WWII when rationing was in effect. After the war, more land was available and Seven Oaks grew to its present 120 acres.

John started a purebred Hereford herd to utilize the clover thrasings and rained on alfalfa. Wood shavings from the many Rogue Valley sawmills made cheap corral bedding to keep the cows out of the winter mud. A fresh load of shavings turned sedate cows into silly, frisky calves. When the pastures were needed for row-crops, the cattle were moved to the agate desert.

Doreen and Don Bradshaw were married in 1956 and John brought them into the farming operation. (This gave John and Edyth a well-earned rest.) Don grew up on a Willamette Valley grass-seed farm and changed the operations in the Rogue Valley by direct combining the grass seed instead of baling and feeding the bales into stationary threshing machines. He also managed and marketed the Hereford herd, but changed to a commercial cow/calf operation using Simmental bulls when embryo transplant technology was impractical for a small herd. John and Don were also raising sweet corn commercially for fresh market, but the "bread and butter" crop was still onions. Don expanded the onion acreage and redid the sizing/grading equipment. Packed onions were shipped to the San Francisco Bay area markets using the same brokerage firm for forty years.



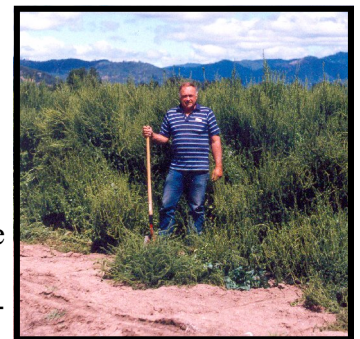
Marilyn and Doreen



John Bohnert

Over the years the farm was often a meeting place for 4-H and FFA members and for twenty-seven years has been open to valley-wide school visits each spring. Lori Bradshaw (Doreen and Don's daughter) married Jerry Mefford, an Illinois farm kid, and they joined the farming operation in 1988. They managed the cattle by emphasizing "club calf" sales.

Contract crops became a liability and the 65-year-old onion operation fell victim to less costly operations in Washington State and abroad. It was a bittersweet end to the farm's main source of income. Subdivisions were creeping closer, creating po-



Don in the sugar beet field

tential flooding from excess run-off, including other problems. The farm became divided when Highway 99 went from two to four lanes, the Interstate (I-5) was built, and a major sewerage trunk line and a power line came in, all creating problems. However, Seven Oaks Farm keeps changing to survive and how that is being done is the next chapter.

Editors Note: *The Seven Oaks History will continue in the Summer issue of The Conservationist. Seven Oaks Farm has adjusted to the changing times and direct markets their produce.*



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Medford, Oregon 97501
Telephone: (541) 734-3143
FAX: (541) 776-4295
On the web at: www.jswcd.org

If your mailing address has changed,
please call us at (541) 734--3143 or
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DO YOU WANT THE NEWSLETTER?

This could be your last chance to receive the Jackson SWCD Newsletter! We would like to hear from you as to whether you wish to continue receiving *The Conservationist*.

UP-DATE YOUR MAILING ADDRESS!

If you have changed your address the US Post Office will not forward certain pieces of mail. It is very important that we have your MAIL BOX address!

YOUR NAME MAY BE TAKEN OFF THE LIST IF WE DO NOT HEAR FROM YOU BEFORE JULY 1, 2007!

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PLEASE HELP US – HELP YOU!

E-MAIL NOTIFICATION OF NEWSLETTER



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(JSWCD NEWSLETTER)

ELECTRONICALLY RATHER THAN BY MAIL, PLEASE CONTACT MARGARET AT NEWSLETTER@JSWCD.ORG WITH YOUR E-MAIL ADDRESS.

← Mark Your Calendar →

JSWCD Board Meeting: May 16, 2007 7:30 pm
USCD Service Center Conference Room
FARRM Potluck/Meeting: May 24, 2007 6pm
Speaker: Randy White-Composting
USCD Service Center Conference Room
JSWCD Board Meeting: June 20, 2007 7:30 pm
June22-FARRM Tour-H & D Organic Composting