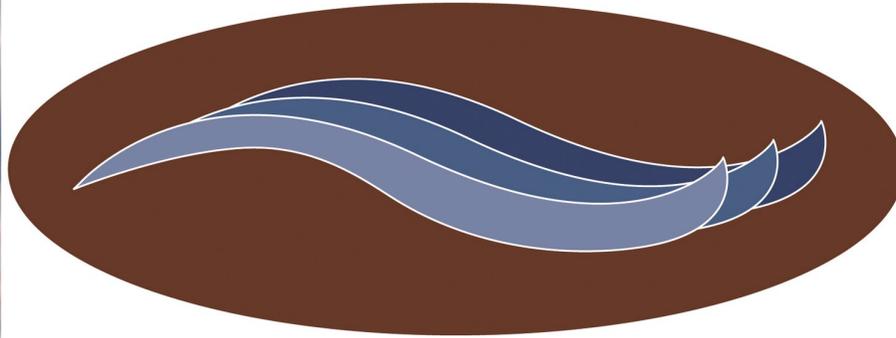


WEST MULTNOMAH



SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Stories of Stewardship

2013-2014

ANNUAL REPORT

“What people don’t understand, they won’t value. What they don’t value, they won’t protect. What they don’t protect, they will lose.” ~ Charles Jordan, former Portland City Commissioner/Parks

Our Board:

Kim Peterson, Zone 1

Jane Hartline, Zone 2

Chair

George Sowder, Zone 3

Brian Lightcap, Zone 4

Chair Emeritus

Terri Preeg Riggsby, Zone 5

Vice Chair

Shawn Looney

Director At-Large

Weston Miller, Treasurer

Director At-Large

Associate Director:

Bob Wiley, Sr.

District Manager’s Message

The summer season always reminds me of Oregon’s cornucopia of natural resources with lakes, rivers, mountains, and forests and our obligation to protect them.

Local, state and federal government agencies continue to struggle with budget and service cuts. Our District, like others, faces a reduction in funding from the US Dept. of Agriculture/ Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), which affects the number of on-the-ground projects we can accomplish with our public and private partners.

Our annual meeting is a chance to thank citizens and taxpayers for their support and participation, to recognize groups and individuals who contribute to conservation programs and to allow staff & board members to share news from Tryon Creek to Skyline to Sauvie Island.

The decades-long commitment to save Sturgeon Lake on Sauvie Island is finally realized with construction scheduled to begin next year! The two-phase project begins with replacement of failed culverts / fish barriers on Reeder Road crossing Dairy Creek to restore water flow and wildlife habitat connecting the Columbia River and Sturgeon Lake. Saving the lake is essential to the wetlands, sloughs and waterways of the 11,500-acre wildlife area for endangered migratory waterfowl and fish. Many public and private partners join in this effort. Please read more about the project in this report.

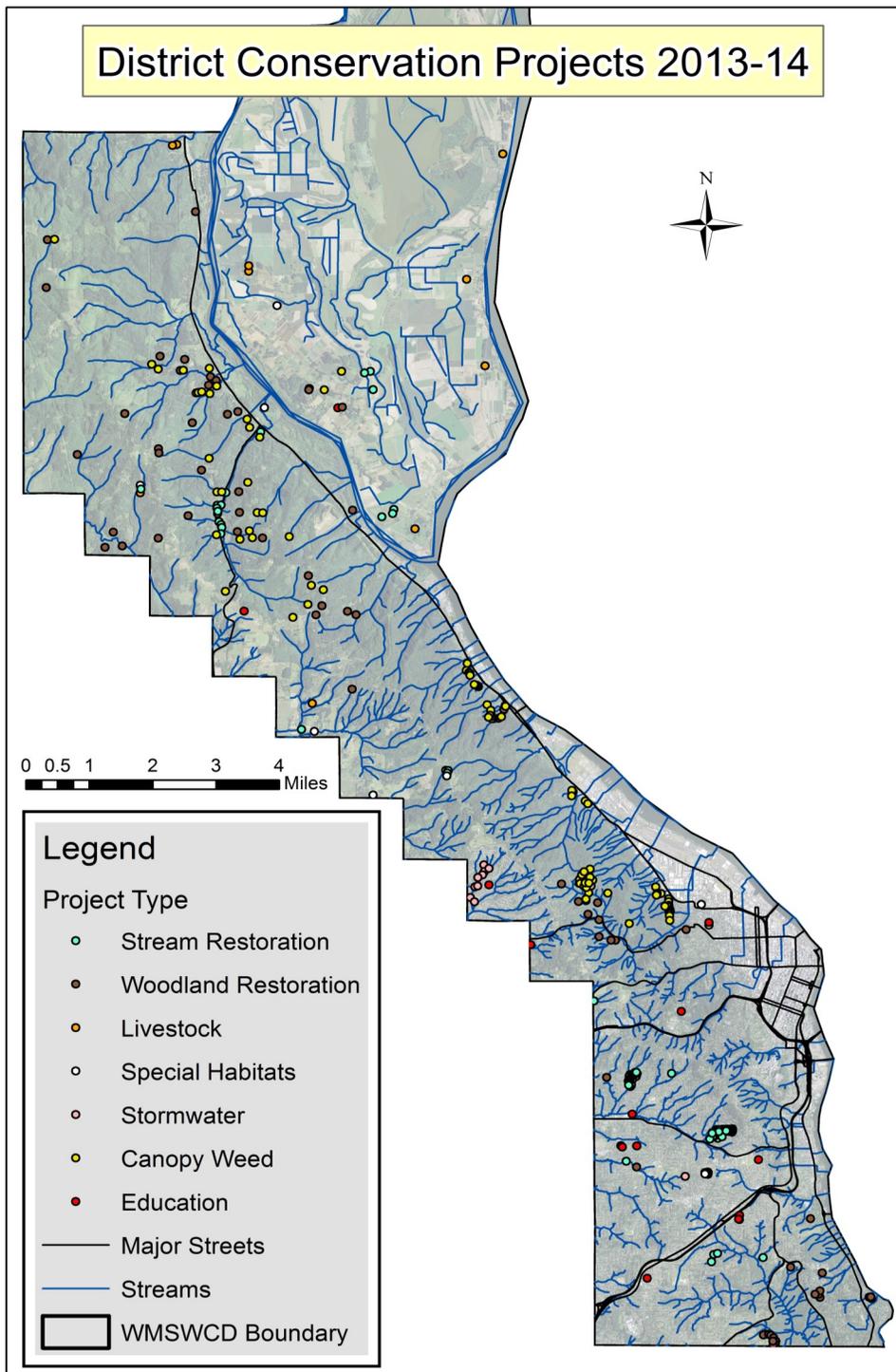
As Oregon and our local economy regain employment and increased tax revenues following a five-year downturn, the Conservation District enjoys a strong base of support and solid record of achievements in the community. To all who have made this possible, we offer our appreciation and pledge to partner with more constituents in the coming year.

Dick Springer

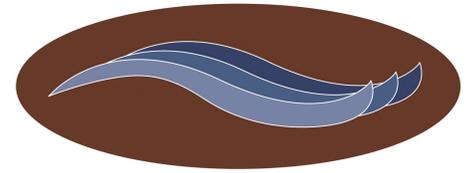


The District fiscal year 2013-2014 Financial Report is available at the Conservation District office. Due to the schedule of the yearly audit, figures were not ready by press time. However, any questions can be answered by contacting District Manager Dick Springer at 503.238.4775, ext. 106 or dick@wmswcd.org.

A Snapshot of District Conservation Projects



WEST MULTNOMAH



SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Our Staff:

Dick Springer,
District Manager

Michael Ahr,
Forest Conservationist

Michelle Delepine,
Conservation Technician

Scott Gall,
Rural Conservationist

Kammy Kern-Korot,
Senior Conservationist

Michele Levis,
Controller & Budget Officer

Carolyn Lindberg,
Communications Coordinator

Mary Logalbo,
Urban Conservationist

USDA/NRCS Staff:

John Gillilan,
Lower Willamette Basin Engineer

Urban Program Success

Over 114 acres were transformed by conservation practices, including invasive species management, native plant installation and erosion control, and used a variety of tools such as District technical assistance, cost share funding and landowner contributions. A total of 60 landowners were provided new conservation plans for their land or cost-share funding assistance to help implement the plans. District staff provided over 500 residents with direct technical advice regarding natural resource concerns at tabling events, workshops and through phone and email communications. Four pounds of meadowscaping seed was distributed for pollinator habitat projects and 11,555 native shrubs and trees were planted at priority restoration sites.

With a \$50,000 restoration budget for urban projects, the Conservation District could never achieve this level of success without the overwhelming volunteer hours and in-kind matching services provided by participating landowners and organizations. That participation more than doubled the capacity of this program!

Total Acres Impacted	125
Total Restoration Projects	23
New Plans Developed this Fiscal Year	19
Total Landowners Served with Conservation Plans or Cost Share Funds (Many plans serve multiple neighboring landowners)	60
Other Direct Technical Service Provided (Estimate, Workshops, Tabling, Phone/Emails)	520
Total Acres of On-the-Ground Projects being Implemented by District	114
Total Plants Installed (Plus 4 lbs. of seed)	11,555

Canopy Weed Highlights

A total of 5,232 trees were freed from invasive ivy and clematis this year making it the most successful year yet! This is the third year of a highly successful program that engages landowners surrounding Forest Park in long-term management of their canopy weeds through a one-time free treatment conducted by Forest Park Conservancy. This past year the Conservation District also partnered with the Linnton Neighborhood Association to reach landowners in a particularly infested area around the park and increase overall participation in conservation programs.



Over the years the Conservation District and Forest Park Conservancy have engaged multiple landowners in restoration projects encompassing over 10 acres of land, which is treated for a host of priority invasive species and planted with native trees and shrubs. This year 4 new conservation plans were created for landowners and 55 landowners gave us permission to treat their canopy weeds!

Continued...

In 2012 and 2013, we took the Canopy Weed Program to the **Holbrook Community** (near NW Morgan and Logie Trail Roads). The effort was a huge success as we helped 19 landowners who own more than 186 acres to clear the ivy from their trees! In addition, we found the program to be a great way to get to know local landowners. We've since worked on additional resource concerns and drafted full conservation plans for 9 of these properties.

Last year, we expanded the program to the **McCarthy Creek Watershed**. We had more than 30 landowners respond, and found canopy weeds on 25 of those properties covering 282 acres. We're proud to say that the tree ivy has been treated on all of those sites. We've begun to write stewardship plans for several of these properties and have created several new projects with the folks we've met.

In 2014-2015, we plan to continue this service in the McCarthy Watershed and Holbrook Community to assist anyone who may have missed out previously, especially interested landowners living between the two focus areas so we can connect them.

Sturgeon Lake Restoration

One of the Conservation District's highest priorities is the restoration of Sturgeon Lake on Sauvie Island, due to its environmental, cultural, and historic significance to the entire Pacific Northwest region. The lake is critical habitat for juvenile salmon and lamprey and to thousands of over-wintering birds and waterfowl. The lake and surrounding natural areas and beaches are visited by 800,000 people from the Portland metro area every year for recreation; hunting, fishing, kayaking and canoeing, hiking, birding and swimming.

The Sturgeon Lake basin is a 3,200 acre complex of large and small bodies of water between the Multnomah Channel and the Columbia River. The problem is that Sturgeon Lake is filling with sediment and we are in danger of losing this valuable resource if no restoration is completed. The Gilbert River used to flow the length of Sauvie Island, but in the 1930's the upstream connection to the lake was blocked by flood control levees. The lake was connected to the Columbia River at the south by Dairy Creek, which was relocated in 1989 to help restore tidal flow and reduce sedimentation in Sturgeon Lake. That connection was lost as the creek became plugged with debris and two culverts under Reeder Road began to fail. The project will replace a debris boom and install eddy control structures and a sand collection basin at the mouth of Dairy Creek to keep sediment from depositing there. In addition, Dairy Creek channel will be reconfigured to increase tidal flow to Sturgeon Lake and the two failing culverts will be replaced.

The \$7.5 million Sturgeon Lake Restoration Project will be managed primarily by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, which will cover \$5 million of the cost. Bonneville Power Administration has committed \$1 million dollars to the project and Multnomah County has agreed to replace the failing culverts. In addition, our grant application to Metro was approved and we wait to hear how much of the requested \$100,000 we will be awarded. The Conservation District has joined with the Oregon Wildlife Heritage Foundation on a campaign to raise an additional \$365,000 toward the massive project. You'll begin seeing more about this campaign in the coming months. The District continues to meet with other public and private entities to identify other funding sources and seek appropriate partnerships and support.



Stormwater Program Highlights

Conservation District staff is called consistently by West Hills landowners to help deal with steep slopes and soil drainage issues as well as severely eroding and sediment-laden streams. After brainstorming with experts and local partners, staff decided it was time to address this challenging water quality issue in a more direct way. The District was awarded an \$18,000 Department of Environmental Quality grant to create a master plan addressing nonpoint pollution source production within the Tualatin Basin along a headwater stream of Cedar Mill Creek which drains to the Rock Creek Watershed. The process to create the stormwater management master plan has included an interactive eco-charrette process, literature/resources review, on the ground field surveys, schematic designs, cost estimates and a host of online resources. Complimentary outreach, tours and trainings were offered to the Forest Heights Homeowner Association (HOA) residents in this focus area.

Through this program and another complimentary program offered by a SW Portland partner agency that is supported by the Conservation District, a series of helpful factsheets, videos, and other

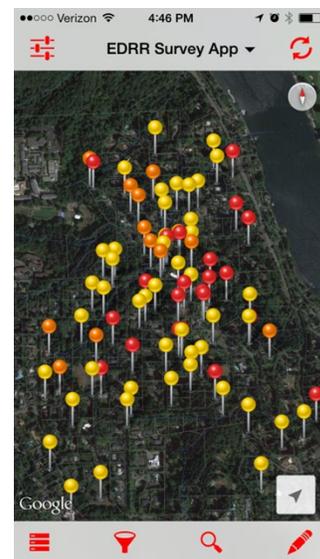
resources are now available to West Hills residents to better manage stormwater on their properties. Through this workshop series, three projects with recommended stormwater practices were installed on Conservation District landowner properties. Accompanying design and building sessions gave participating landowners real hands-on experience in installing these features as well as volunteer support in getting the work done on-the-ground!



Mobile Data Collection

The Conservation District is making leaps and bounds in the world of field data collection! This year, the Fulcrum app was used to create a mobile app for collecting early detection-rapid response data. This afforded staff and interns more time in the field to survey and control high priority invasive plants, while also collecting more resolute and higher quality data.

The Fulcrum app was also utilized by our intern Alex Stauch to build a customized app for locating and mapping declining Oregon white oak (*Quercus garryana*) in our District. This information is shared with the Oak Mapping Working Group to increase our understanding of using remote-sensing to locate remnant oak populations and also contributes to our own endeavor to map priority oak habitat in our District.



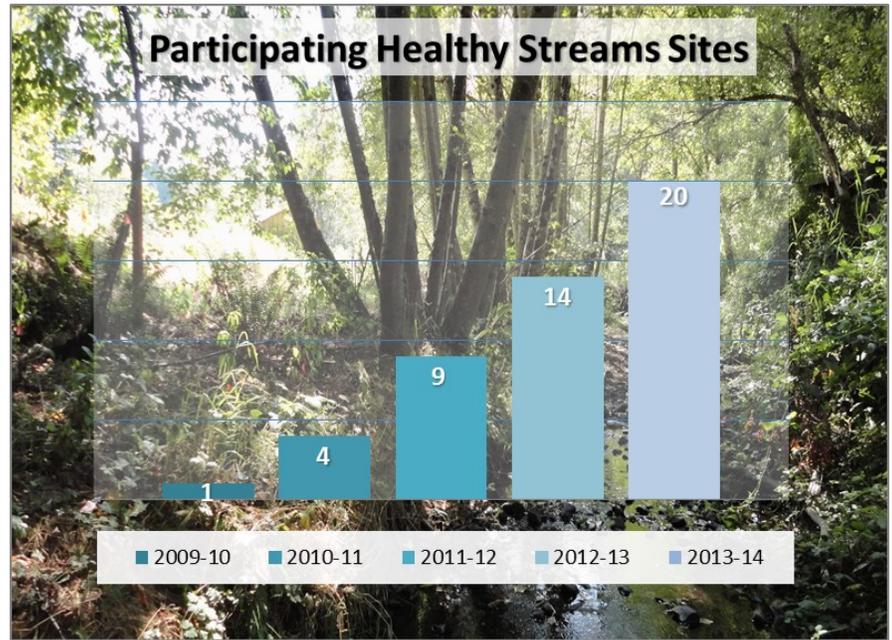
Healthy Streams Program

The Healthy Streams Program now encompasses 18 projects in four target watersheds, plus two related projects on Bronson Creek. Three new projects were planted this past winter on Sauvie Island and on McCarthy Creek, including the old mill and associated log pond site. The Island sites were contiguous or just across the Gilbert River (which serves as an irrigation canal and ditch) from existing projects. Project expansions occurred at Sauvie Island Stables, where horse riders now enjoy a beautified planting area along the trail and waterway, and at two McCarthy sites, along with two inter-plantings on the creek.

More than 22,000 feet of waterway (4 1/4 miles) has been planted with more than 38,000 plants since the Healthy Streams Program started. The Conservation District added 14,000 plants this year, 7,300 linear feet (1.4 miles) of stream, and eight acres of riparian habitat. Counting the new McCarthy Creek sites, we've completed restoration at 12 of our targeted properties in the middle and lower reach, including the Enyart wetlands at the mouth and the oldest project at the Native American Youth Association property, off of Highway 30. Improving riparian habitat on degraded stretches of McCarthy Creek is especially valuable since it is considered essential salmonid habitat.

A new twist to the program this year was the involvement of a youth crew from Cascade Education Corps to help with fall plantings of herbaceous plants and installation of fencing at one of our new McCarthy Creek locations. At Sauvie Island Stables, we hired the Columbia River Youth Corps for two days to install livestock exclusion fencing. The high-school students, their crew leader and the landowner installed 500 linear feet of fencing (paid for by the landowner and the District), gate posts and a gate along the Gilbert River, to protect horses and newly-installed riparian plants.

The Healthy Streams Program provides full funding for riparian restoration projects on mainstem targeted waterways, some of which bear salmon. The Conservation District and its contract crews prepare sites for planting by adding a broad array of native trees, shrubs and some herbaceous plants to shade the creeks and improve wildlife corridors and then control weeds and other competing vegetation until the new plants are free to grow. The benefits to landowners are many, including erosion control, improved aesthetics, wildlife appreciation, added privacy, noise buffering and less weed management. Targeted waterways include McCarthy and Rock Creeks and the Abbey and Gilbert Rivers. Fifty-percent cost-share funding may be available on other important streams.



EDRR Program: Opportunities, Challenges and Successes

Garlic Mustard



Once again, nearly all known garlic mustard infestations were controlled—a direct result of successful outreach efforts and high landowner engagement in the program. The density of the sites was down drastically from pre-control levels. The Conservation District expanded its survey efforts and, as a result, discovered a few previously uncontrolled patches; however, they were removed before they could infest any riparian corridors. A particular challenge this year was a flowering window that began three weeks earlier than in previous years.

- 60 new program participants
- 250 properties surveyed/750 acres
- 150 sites with confirmed infestations
- Near 100% participation in control of known garlic mustard
- 60% decline in acreage from last year

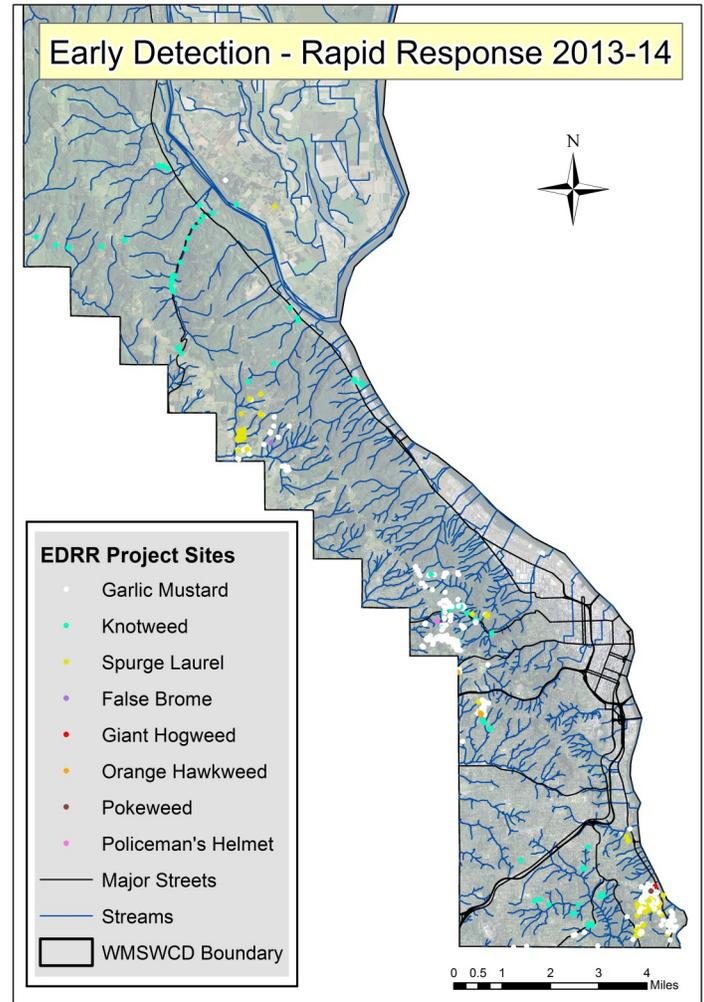
Other Weeds on the EDRR List

On Sauvie Island, **spurge laurel** was removed before it could infest adjacent oak woodlands. Follow-up work by Americorps Communication Conservation Corps members among Abbey Creek oak woodlands formerly dominated by spurge laurel.

Knotweed around McCarthy Creek declined significantly since the program's inception seven years ago and plant density declined at District sites that received initial control by Skyline Ridge Neighbors and Tryon Creek Watershed Council.

No new **pokeweed** was seen at isolated population in Riverview area. **Giant hogweed**, also once prevalent here, was reduced to a handful of stems. A large, isolated infestation of **orange hawkweed** discovered during field outreach was reduced by 99% after two consecutive treatments. No new seedlings were found at the only other known District location.

The only known **false brome** population was reduced by over 95% after one year of control. A high priority **policeman's helmet** population controlled along upper Balch Creek tributary. Only a few stems remain after the multi-year, multi-agency effort.



Forest Stewardship Planning

District Forest Conservationist Michael Ahr says one of his favorite services to provide to West Multnomah woodland owners is assistance in writing Stewardship Plans. These plans assess the current conditions of the woodland and provide a road map of management options to be carried out over the next 10 years. And he has been very busy over the past year.

- Last year, we completed seven Stewardship Plans that covered 156 acres
- Earlier this year, we surveyed an *additional 492 acres* that should result in eight more plans
- We also help implement the management recommendations! In the fall of 2013 and spring of 2014 we assisted landowners implementing conservation practices on more than 70 acres. These practices included:
 - Invasive weeds treated on 66 acres
 - Forest health thinning on more than five acres



Winkler Property - Feature Story

Karl and Kathleen Winkler began working with the conservation district in late winter 2013 to develop a plan to improve more than seven acres of land on Skyline Boulevard, in the Bronson Creek watershed. The Winklers were inspired by their neighbor's work with the Conservation District to improve oak savanna and riparian habitat. We secured \$9,000 from the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board in 2013 to pay for site preparation, 5,000 native plants, and installation.

The project has involved controlling an invasive weed infestation on the property and restoring most areas with native plants. With District guidance, the landowner prepared the site by cutting back and spraying more than two acres of Armenian blackberry. English hawthorne and feral orchard trees were removed from the unused uplands and planted with Oregon white oak savanna and mixed oak/Ponderosa pine, which the landowner will maintain. The landowner will store carbon in the form of wildlife brush piles. To enhance pollinator habitat, privacy and noise buffering along Skyline Boulevard, a native hedgerow was planted along the roadside. Pollinators will also benefit from other flowering plants installed throughout the project area.



The steep open slope below the owners' house was also planted with Oregon oak and other species to expand habitat and preserve the view of the Tualatin Valley. The landowners will protect both the neighbor's mature oak tree and their new oaks from the shade and competition by cutting or girdling these competing trees.

Approximately 1.5 acres of riparian area along 730 feet of Bronson Creek was planted with native plant species to better stabilize the slope, limit creek bank erosion and sedimentation, increase use of wood in the stream, increase native species diversity, and improve habitat function and value. Particular focus was paid to areas within 100 feet of the mainstem creek and two tributaries originating on the property, which makes a grand total of 1/4 mile of stream improved on this property.

Meadowscaping

The meadowscaping program, which aims to provide native pollinator friendly alternatives to lawns, offered a highly successful spring tour of demonstration sites with local botanical experts and landscape professionals. The tour resulted in new recommendations for landowners looking to install native bunch grasses and wildflowers in lieu of turf. Conservation District staff assisted two new landowners with meadowscaping plans and installations this year while continuing to monitor existing sites. One of the new sites, at Hillsdale United Church of Christ, engaged youth in growing and planting plugs from seed provided by the District.



Conservation District staff and meadowscaping partners were trained in a brand new Bee and Butterfly Citizen Scientist Monitoring protocol created by The Xerces Society to better assess the effectiveness of pollinator habitat installations. Numerous native bee groups are

using our installed pollinator habitats – even in the most urban sections of the District! In addition to our pollinator demonstration gardens, volunteers and contractors broke ground on a new demonstration garden in partnership with the Southwest Parent Child Collective (SWPCC) and Vermont Hills Community Garden. The area will be restored with organic gardening methods only and it will be used as a learning “playground” for children and parents of SWPCC. The District will also gain valuable information from gardeners about the efficacy of using organic methods to eradicate invasive weeds on site.

Sauvie Pond Project

The Sauvie Island Pond Project continued this year with a second field visit to nine ponds to assess conditions and opportunities. With the help of a botanist, entomologist, and wildlife biologist, we studied the presence of native and invasive plants, bank accessibility to wildlife, and the number of habitat features such as woody debris.

The Pond Project evolved to the planting stage at one site; Stephenson pond, which at 1 acre in size and up to 14 feet deep holds great potential for habitat improvement because it was surrounded by invasive reed canary grass (RCG). Turtles use the nearby irrigation canal, and there is potential for birds, frogs and salamanders to use the pond. Unfortunately, we also found invasive bullfrogs and non-native gambusia or mosquito fish.



We engaged the 5th grade class at Sauvie Island Academy to adopt a small area of the project where they helped clear RCG and plant bareroot trees and shrubs provided by the Conservation District. The class may also monitor plant survival and water quality to track changes over time. With District contract crews, we prepared the 1/3 acre planting area by mowing, spraying and scalping away RCG and installed 850 native trees and shrubs along 925 feet of pond shoreline.

Working Lands Effort - Fiscal Year 2013-14

This year, the Conservation District continued its targeted outreach campaign to all of its livestock and horse owners, while Healthy Streams continues to provide assistance to landowners directly along streams (see Healthy Streams Program), and our partnership with OSU Extension to reduced nitrogen use on Sauvie Island entered a new phase. We assisted landowners with improving manure storage to protect water quality, gave them advice on growing more grass and fewer weeds, protected riparian areas from grazing, and reduced mud and erosion on many properties.

This summer we continued our outreach campaign to livestock owners (started in 2012) by mailing to 39 property owners in Zone 3 (far NW corner of the county). As the fiscal year closed, we were already receiving calls and working toward conservation plans.

2014 marked the final year of the four year OSU Extension – Multnomah County Nitrate Project. We worked with a handful of the largest landowners on Sauvie Island to reduce fertilizer input through the timing of applications and introduction of cover crops. To date, OSU has worked with 12 landowners and impacted almost 4,000 acres. While this year was the final year of the initial project, 2015 will start a new “implementation” phase. OSU and the Conservation District have already finalized a contract to help landowners add more cover crop acres.

In addition, we continued the broader work of assisting landowners throughout the rural parts of our District.

Highlights include 187 attendees at workshops, conservation plans on 415 acres and over 12 acres of restoration work.

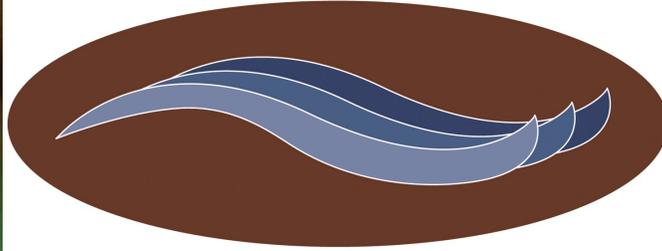
Outreach and Education Summary Table	TOTALS
Landowners contacted	149
Workshops/presentations	3
Total workshop/presentation attendees	187
Tours/demonstrations	1
Total attendees on tours/demonstrations	10
Landowners provided with technical assistance	107
On-site evaluations/on-site visits	74
Fund Applications submitted for landowner projects	2
WQ projects implemented	13
Total acres in implemented WQ projects	12.02
Conservation plans approved	10
Total acres in approved conservation plans	415



Urban Watershed Mentors

Twenty new volunteer leaders graduated from this past year’s Urban Watershed Mentor (UWM) program. Partner agencies, private consultants and District staff helped deliver 24 hours of field and classroom training to this year’s students. This year’s mentees worked on developing and implementing 10 conservation plans, all within our District, with mentor support from the Conservation District, Columbia Land Trust, Friends of Terwilliger and Tryon Creek Watershed Council. Many students have already volunteered to be mentors to the next wave of Urban Watershed Mentors, which furthers the program goal – to plan, implement and maintain more conservation work in our District!

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