

West Multnomah Soil & Water Conservation District

Our Mission:

To conserve, protect and develop natural resources; to help with the development of all natural resources for the benefit of the people, wildlife and environment.



Sauvies Island - Dairy Creek

West Multnomah Soil & Water Conservation District
2115 SW Morrison, Rm 201
Portland, OR 97214



Tryon Creek

West Multnomah Soil & Water Conservation District

1999 Annual Report

West Multnomah Soil and Water Conservation District has a seven-member Board having as its primary responsibility the implementation of state statutes for natural resource conservation.

Board members are elected by voters of West Multnomah County and serve without pay. The Conservation District is divided into five zones. Five of the directors represent specific geographical zones, and are required to own or manage at least ten acres of land in that zone. Two additional directors serve at-large and reside in the District, but are not required to farm or own acreage in the District.



Tryon Creek

OUR DIRECTORS

Chairman: Brian Lightcap

Zone Directors: George Sowder, Joe Lukas (retiring), Elmer Peterson (deceased while in office), Dick Courter (retiring).

At Large Directors: Jere Retzer, Elizabeth Callison

DISTRICT GEOGRAPHY

Comprising slightly over 80,000 acres of land west of the Willamette River to the Washington and Clackamas County boundaries, West Multnomah SWCD includes unincorporated rural lands, the highly urbanized city of Portland, and agrarian Sauvies Island. The District geography encompasses the rocky southern spine of the Tualatin Mountain range. Numerous spring-fed streams originate in these steep and rocky heights. Rock Creek as well as Balch, Tryon, Miller, Saltzman and Stephens Creeks, the various tributaries of Fanno Creek, and the Gilbert River, Sturgeon and Virginia Lakes on Sauvies Island, the Multnomah Channel, and many smaller streams contribute to the wildlife diversity and beauty of the West District.

Financial Report

West Multnomah Soil & Water Conservation District
Receipts and Disbursements
July 1, 1998 through June 30, 1999

Receipts

State grants/distributions	
Oregon Dept. of Agriculture	\$9,753.00
Multnomah County	\$9,393.00
Interest and investments	\$3,101.00
Reimbursements calendars orders	\$1,596.00
Donations	\$70.00

Total Receipts \$23,913.00

Disbursements

Personal Services	
Salaries and wages	\$7,504.00
Payroll taxes	\$2,414.00
Material and Services	\$9,247.00
Furniture and equipment	\$55.00

Total Disbursements \$19,220.00

Challenges - 1999

DISTRICT CHALLENGES--STATE

Certain farming and urban development practices have increased the District's need to protect and restore its natural resource base. Many of the West Multnomah streams are listed by the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality as failing to meet minimum state standards for water quality.

From the West Multnomah District, only Sauvies Island was included in a new North Coast Basin Agricultural Water Quality Management Planning effort, initiated in 1998 and continued throughout 1999. This ODA-sponsored effort is intended to improve rural landowners' compliance with the state's minimum water quality standards. Sauvies Island contains approximately 30 percent of Multnomah County's agricultural land base. The island provides not only agricultural products, such as livestock, grains and berries, it also is home to a large wildlife refuge, remnant archeological resources, and many recreational opportunities for locals and adjacent city residents.

OUR DIRECTORS ARE PART OF THE WESTSIDE COMMUNITY

Individual directors of the West Multnomah SWCD were involved in several local and regional advisory committees, a watershed council, neighborhood associations, and professional organizations. Two directors have experience in stream enhancement coordination. They have brought together a complex mix of Multnomah County alternative-service workers, college and middle school students, scouts, neighborhood residents, and local college instructors. Our directors bring to their positions on the Board a wealth of local knowledge and a strong commitment to community service.

DISTRICT CHALLENGES--FEDERAL

West Multnomah SWCD directors recognize that greater efforts are needed to meet the challenges of the federal Clean Water Act and Endangered Species Act. There are a number of "mini-Superfund" sites listed in the Portland Harbor area along the west bank of the Willamette River. There are also a number of endangered fish and wildlife species, listed by the US Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service.

Giving due respect to the Governor's Healthy Streams Initiative and Oregon Plan for Salmon Recovery, both of which emphasize voluntary efforts, West Multnomah SWCD has tried to increase its support for education of jurisdictions, communities, and individual landowners. Though the SWCD has had a small financial base, it is working hard to augment its budget with state and federal funding for conservation. Members of the Board prepared applications to the state for funding for conservation project work such as watershed assessments, educational workshops, and environmental curriculum support for teachers.



*1997 Annual Meeting - Sauvies Island
Chairman Brian Lightcap, baker extraordinaire*

Projects - 1999

HYDROLOGICAL ASSISTANCE FOR LOCAL WATERSHED PLANNING

During 1999, West Multnomah SWCD published and distributed technical reports on the hydrology, earthquake hazard potential, and conservation potential of two watershed areas in urban southwest Portland. These survey Reports, Recommendations and their accompanying Priority Conservation Map were distributed widely, reviewed, and endorsed by neighborhood associations throughout Southwest Portland. The Report, Recommendations and Map also were submitted to the Portland Planning Commission and the Portland Bureau of Planning and Environmental Services, as well as to Metro's Departments of Growth Management and Greenspaces. The reports recommended measures for realistic and pro-active watershed planning, and provided a model for how to do it effectively in an urban environment.

STUDENT TRANSPORTATION TO LOCAL WATERSHED PROGRAM

West Multnomah SWCD provided an innovative bus transportation program for eight local schools, bringing primary and middle school children to watershed education classes in Tryon Creek State Park, which is in the District. With tight local school budgets and no public bus route to the state park, these children had a unique morning in the state park -- which included a hike along Tryon Creek as well as an indoor educational program.

HABITAT GARDENS FOR SCHOOLS

Two local schools were given seed funding through a program of the National Wildlife Foundation, to start Habitat Gardens on their grounds, to encourage hands on environmental education. The District hopes to expand its cooperative relationship with local schools and colleges. Both the school transportation program and the seed funding for school habitat gardens were funded through assistance to the District from Oregon Department of Agriculture.

TRYON CREEK EDUCATIONAL OUTREACH

The District produced an informational brochure for the Tryon Creek watershed, highlighting its salmon resources. The brochure was produced with educational funds from Oregon Department of Agriculture. Most of the production work for this brochure was done by volunteers.

DAIRY CREEK AND STURGEON LAKE

On Sauvies Island, the district temporarily wound down its involvement in a debris-clearing project for Dairy Creek. The Creek helps provide water circulation from the Willamette River into Sturgeon Lake. Sturgeon Lake is located within the Sauvies Island Wildlife Refuge, which is owned by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife. About seven years ago, the West Multnomah SWCD was given funds by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to plan and administer a mitigation project designed to keep the Dairy Creek channel clear. Without water circulation in and out, Sturgeon Lake would likely silt up completely within a short period. Sturgeon Lake is located within a state wildlife refuge, and the Creek project was operated under a cooperative agreement between Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, U.S Army Corps of Engineers and the Natural Resource Conservation Service.

TECHNICAL ADVICE FOR SMALL-ACREAGE FARMERS, GARDENERS

A watershed technical specialist, shared by West Multnomah SWCD and its three adjacent districts, visited granges, libraries and private landowners, and helped with personalized conservation planning. West Multnomah SWCD constituents also shared in services of a Naturescaping program which offered backyard landscaping workshops to enhance wildlife habitat and conserve water. Several Naturescaping workshops were offered in the West District during 1999, and were sponsored by East Multnomah SWCD and the City of Portland.

NATIVE PLANT WORKSHOP

A native plant salvage and transplanting workshop was initiated in 1999 by West Multnomah SWCD. Providing hands-on training, it helped landowners identify and transplant native plants away from areas being cleared for urban development. Several landowner groups and a local college have utilized this program, with another workshop planned for a larger neighborhood audience Saturday, July 22, 2000. The popular native plant workshop was funded through the Oregon Department of Agriculture.