

## West Multnomah Soil & Water Conservation District

We help you with your land, whether you have woods, a garden, farm, stream or barn. Areas include invasive weeds, native plants, livestock management, stream and habitat restoration, wildlife and forestry. WMSWCD is a non-regulatory municipal agency, governed by an elected board of directors. We serve private landowners in our district, which covers over 80,000 acres in Multnomah County, west of the Willamette River, including all of Sauvie Island.

Conservation Districts were established by Congress after the 1930s devastation of the Dust Bowl. Each District may make its own decisions about the unique set of issues it faces. WMSWCD was established almost 70 years ago under the name Sauvie Island Soil Conservation District and we maintain a close relationship with Sauvie Island landowners and the issues and needs unique to this vital resource.

West Multnomah Soil & Water Conservation District prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, sex, national origin, disability, gender, marital status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information and political beliefs. The District is an equal opportunity employer.

Photo by Angie Moore.

Conserve and protect soil and water resources for people, wildlife and the environment.



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## Conservation Plans

Conservation plans are key to helping you conserve and enhance your property's natural resources. We work with landowners to craft a plan that is unique to their property's needs and those of the ecosystem. It's free of charge and voluntary; you make all the decisions and implement the plan. Conservation plans can increase your property value and save you money as your land becomes more productive.

## Farms

We provide free technical support for both organic and non-organic farms to reduce the use and cost of fertilizer, plant pollinator hedgerows, add cover crops to planting rotations, improve soil quality and production, decrease pests, improve irrigation and achieve organic certification. The District encourages locally grown products.

We also provide technical assistance to district residents who own or manage cattle, horses, sheep, llamas and other animals. We help you write conservation plans to improve land productivity and animal health. Issues include pasture, mud and manure management, over-winter areas for livestock, and building trails and watering facilities away from natural streams.

## Forestry

Many wooded areas in our District are too crowded with trees to maintain a healthy forest. There are many good reasons to thin forests and we can help you design a stewardship plan to restore health to your stand. We also offer free technical advice on how to control invasive weeds such as English ivy and Armenian blackberry, which can displace trees and native plants. You may also be interested in how to make your home and woods "fire-safe," enhancing wildlife habitat, maintaining forest roads and stream crossings, and increasing your land's profitability.

## Special Habitats

We help landowners protect, enhance and expand regionally significant habitats such as oak woodlands and savanna, meadow, wet prairie and other wetlands. The District is working with partners to map Oregon white oak across the region and educate the public about the value of this declining habitat. Work includes removing competing vegetation, restoring wetlands, increasing and monitoring pollinator habitat, controlling invasive weeds and planting native species.

## Healthy Streams

The Healthy Streams program provides funding and technical assistance for streamside restoration that protects soil, and improves water quality and habitat.

Target areas include canals and ditches on Sauvie Island and Rock, Abbey, and McCarthy creeks in the West Hills, which support valuable fish species. We remove invasive weeds and install native trees and shrubs. Benefits include decreased erosion and sedimentation, cooler water temperatures, improved property values, enhanced wildlife habitat, and lower maintenance over time.

## Invasive Weeds

Invasive weeds directly threaten our ecosystems by displacing native plants and the beneficial insects and wildlife that depend on them. Property values are also negatively affected. We help you manage invasive species, such as English ivy, holly and Armenian blackberry, which reduces erosion and enhances wildlife habitat, improves aesthetics and increases land productivity.

The Conservation District has an active "early detection, rapid response" (EDRR) program to locate and manage priority invasive weeds before they establish in our region. Species targeted by this program are capable of wide-ranging ecological and economic impact, which is why we want to control them early on.

## Education

WMSWCD helps fund elementary school field trips to outdoor education centers such as Tryon Creek State

Park and Sauvie Island Center. They provide students with hands-on experience in soil composition, organic gardening, clean watersheds, and native plants and animals. District staff also work with parents and school staff to incorporate edible and native habitat gardens into school landscapes and develop integrated curriculum that meets state benchmarks.

## Communications

We provide materials on a wide range of conservation topics and hold informative and engaging workshops throughout the year; some help outdoors for hands-on learning. We also provide printed educational materials, maintain a vital website and communicate regularly through social media.

## Native Plants

We provide technical advice and educational materials plants native to the Pacific Northwest, which are less expensive to maintain and use less water, fertilizers and pesticides. We identify the best native plants for your land so you can attract songbirds, bumble bees, butterflies and other beneficial bugs.

## Sturgeon Lake

Sturgeon Lake is one of the most important natural and biologically significant aquatic and wildlife habitats in the state. An 18-mile levee, built in 1949 to prevent

flooding, severely restricted natural water flow, increased sedimentation and negatively impacted aquatic habitat. We are working with a number of public / private agencies and non-profit organizations on a \$7.5 million project to save the lake. This involves replacing two failing culverts on Dairy Creek at Reeder Road, improving the Dairy Creek channel, and restoring water flow between the lake and the Columbia River.

Oregon Wildlife, a non-profit conservation group, joined WMSWCD in 2014 to raise funds for the project, launching the Save Sturgeon Lake campaign and website, [savesturgeonlake.org](http://savesturgeonlake.org).

## Urban Programs

We offer several programs to protect biodiversity and maintain or enhance natural resources in the District's urban areas, where a majority of our residents live. We focus on teaching

sustainable practices to lessen our impact on and use of natural resources. Urban programs include technical and financial assistance and conservation planning for priority projects over one acre, workshops and trainings, and stormwater management guidance. We also form strategic partnerships with public and private conservation organizations.

## Financial Help

Financial assistance may make the difference in finishing your conservation projects. We offer:

- FISH Grants (Financial Incentives for Sustainable Habitats): Supports projects by our partner organizations.
- Partner Funding Program: Provides capacity support to key partner organizations.
- Healthy Streams Program: Funds riparian restoration with landowners in target watersheds.
- Landowner Cost-Share Programs: Provides cost-share funds for priority conservation plans.
- Soil Health Program: Helps farmers and ranchers improve soil health to increase production, reduce fertilizer/pesticide inputs, and create more resilient farm operations.
- Working Lands Program: Helps ensure land stays in production while benefiting natural resources.
- School, Community and Demonstration Gardens: Supports school and community gardens.

Other federal, regional, state and local grants are also available to landowners and managers..