



**WEST MULTNOMAH**  
Soil & Water Conservation District

**Our Year of Growth**  
2015 - 2016

## Message from Jim Cathcart, District Manager

Let me introduce myself to those of you I haven't had a chance to meet. My name is Jim Cathcart and it is an honor to serve as the District Manager for the West Multnomah Soil & Water Conservation District. I am a forester by education, a natural resource policy and management specialist by experience and a naturalist at heart. I feel blessed to have the opportunity to be part of this great collaborative – Board, staff, landowners, businesses, non-profit organizations, government agencies and others – that defines the essence of the West Multnomah Soil & Water Conservation District. Our collective work is ensuring livability through healthy soil, clean water and diverse habitats.



We present the District's 2015-16 Annual Report with a hearty thanks to Dick Springer, my predecessor who retired

in December of 2015. Through Dick's leadership, the District is on solid footing with excellent staff and a secure budget to fulfill our mission to **conserve and protect soil and water resources for people, wildlife, and the environment.**

Instead of a comprehensive summary of everything we did during fiscal year 2015-16, we are featuring highlights of our work over the course of several Annual Reports by rotating our featured areas of emphasis from year to year. I invite you to visit our website – [wmswcd.org](http://wmswcd.org) – for the larger picture.

I want to remind you of our core work: conservation planning, soil health, early detection and rapid response efforts against priority invasive plants, habitat restoration, forest conservation, healthy streams, school & community gardens, and storm-water management. Some highlights: 1) *13.5 acres of garlic mustard was treated on 239 sites*, 2) *servicing as a catalyst to ensure that the Oregon Department of Agriculture understood constituent concerns about the Asian Gypsy Moth Eradication project*, 3) *our first Community Science Program to monitor pollinators at native plant restoration projects in partnership with the Xerces Society and volunteers*, 4) *expanded support for the Greater Forest Park Conservation Initiative by securing Oregon Department of Forestry grants*, 5) *partnering with*

*the Scappoose Bay Watershed Council to reach out to the moorage community and identify salmon habitat restoration opportunities, and 6) progress on our signature project with the US Army Corps of Engineers to restore Sturgeon Lake.*

The District took important steps this year to implement Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in all our work. The Board formed a standing Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Committee consisting of selected Board and staff after participating in an assessment and training process offered through The Intertwine Alliance by the Coalition for Communities of Color and Portland State University. A dedicated equity and inclusion internship – filled by Danielle Jones – led to expanded partnerships, a productive launch of the District's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee, and a framework for developing a District Racial Equity Statement.

*The District fiscal year 2015-2016 Financial Report is available at the Conservation District office. Due to the schedule of the yearly audit, figures were not ready by press time. For more information and audit details, contact District Manager Jim Cathcart at 503.238.4775, ext. 106 or jim@wmswcd.org.*

### Board of Directors

Terri Preeg Riggsby,  
*Chair, Director, Zone 5*

Shawn Looney,  
*Vice-chair, Director, At-large*

Brian Lightcap,  
*Secretary, Director, Zone 4*

Weston Miller,  
*Treasurer, Director, At-large*

Jane Hartline  
*Director, Zone 2*

Kim Peterson  
*Director Zone 1*

George Sowder  
*Director, Zone 3*

*Associate Directors:*

Finlay Anderson

Jan Hamer

Susan Weedall

Bob Wiley, Sr.

### Staff

Jim Cathcart  
*District Manager*

Michael Ahr  
*Forest Conservationist*

Michelle Delepine  
*Invasive Species Program Coordinator*

Scott Gall  
*Rural Conservationist*

Kammy Kern-Korot  
*Senior Conservationist*

Michele Levis  
*Controller and Budget Officer*

Carolyn Myers Lindberg  
*Communications Coordinator*

Mary Logalbo  
*Urban Conservationist*

Randi Razalenti  
*Office Manager*

Laura Taylor  
*Conservation Technician/  
Education Coordinator*

## Featured Conservation Program – Soil Health

Since the fall of 2014, West Multnomah Soil & Water Conservation District's Soil Health Program has provided an incentive for farmers in the District to try using cover crops in their rotation schedules. Cover crops are just one part of an overall soil health strategy that follows four basic principles:

1. Keep it covered,
2. Limit disturbance,
3. Keep a living root in the soil, and
4. Diversify to benefit microorganisms.

Building soil health can increase soil fertility, reduce erosion, limit the need for pesticides by providing habitat for predators of pests, and improve water infiltration and the ability of soil to hold onto that water. In most farming situations, cover crops are the easiest and most cost effective way to achieve all four goals.

The Soil Health Program set-up is simple; after the District and farmer agree on a conservation plan, the Conservation District provides farmers with cover crop seed. Twelve farms on Sauvie Island have planted nearly 100 acres since the start of the program. The farms vary widely in size and manage

everything from cattle to orchards and certified organic food products. Most of the cover crops have been planted in the fall – between September 15th and October 15th for best results – with the most popular mixes including cereal oats and ryes, clover, and vetch. The Conservation District works with Oregon State Extension to find the species that best fit each operation.

Beginning in 2015, a new soil health partnership emerged with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), which approved a Clackamas and Multnomah Counties Soil Health Conservation Implementation Strategy. With the NRCS as a partner, farmers in the District have access to additional resources to expand soil building practices. The partnership will also increase access to more farmers and additional practices beyond cover crops. The Conservation District will host a farmer lunch in the fall to talk about these programs and encourage farmers to participate. Look for an announcement on our website and join your neighbors in building healthier soils.

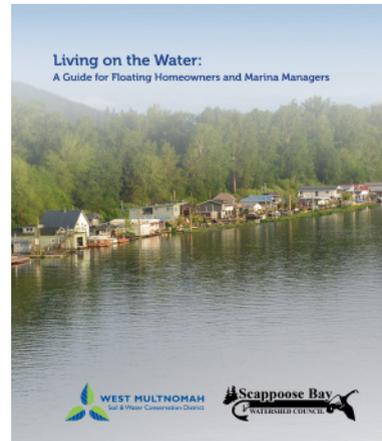
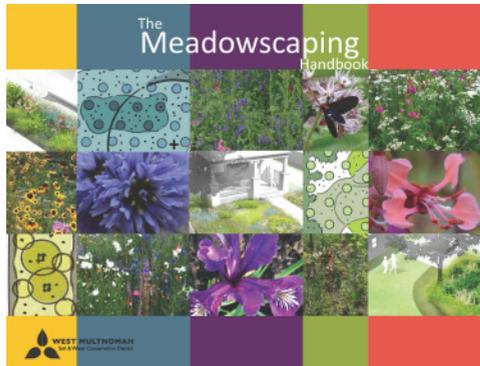
*For more information on soil and District soil health programs, contact **Scott Gall** at 503-238-4775, ext. 105; [scott@wmswcd.org](mailto:scott@wmswcd.org).*

*Cover crops on Sauvie Island  
photo courtesy of WMSWCD*



## Featured Publications

West Multnomah Soil & Water Conservation District published two special guides last year, *The Meadowscaping Handbook: Designing, Planting and Managing an Urban Meadow* and *Living on the Water: A Guide for Floating Homeowners and Marina Managers*. Both guides include valuable information compiled in a format not currently available to homeowners and land managers. Hard copies of the guides are available free of charge or may be downloaded from our website.



## The Meadowscaping Handbook

*The Meadowscaping Handbook* is a compilation of the knowledge and experience of members of the Pacific Northwest Urban Meadowsapting (PNUM) working group, regional ecologists, and landscape professionals. It's designed as a "how-to" publication to help gardeners, landscape professionals and ecologists in the Willamette Valley plan, design, plant and maintain native plant meadows on small urban plots.

Meadowsapting, an alternative to managing a turf grass lawn (a monoculture), uses a diversity of native prairie plants that are adapted to the local climate and soil conditions as well as to the needs of native wildlife. Deep-rooted, drought resistant plants offer habitat and forage for birds, pollinators, and beneficial insects, while improving water infiltration, filtering runoff and storing carbon.

## Living on the Water

The Conservation District partnered with the Scappoose Bay Watershed Council to produce a guide for the floating home community in and around Multnomah County. *Living on the Water* gives homeowners and marina managers effective and practical ideas for handling issues unique to this community. Topics include safety, construction, repair, and maintenance; activities that aim to protect property and water quality, in particular. The guide contains information on how to enhance aquatic and terrestrial habitat, live with and enjoy wildlife, and manage invasive plant and animal species. Finally, a summary of applicable regulations and useful resources are included specific to the needs and interests of floating home communities.

The guide, created with input from marina managers, owners and residents, was developed in response to requests from the floating home community following outreach by the Conservation District in 2013. The District's goal is to encourage practices that enhance the experience of living on the water while improving water quality and plant and wildlife habitat, particularly for native species. An additional goal is to build relationships with and among moorage community members.

*Multnomah Channel*  
photo courtesy of Katherine K. Stember



## Featured Board Member – Jane Hartline

West Multnomah Soil & Water Conservation District board member Jane Hartline describes herself as “a friend to turtles, frogs and other wildlife and a dreaded enemy of ivy, reed canary grass and other invasive species.”

Jane began her connection to the Conservation District in the early 1980s when she served two terms on the board. Two decades later she returned to the board, serving 6 years as board president representing Zone 2, which covers the southern half of Sauvie Island (where she lives) and parts of the west hills.

Jane spent 29 years as Marketing Manager of the Oregon Zoo and retired so that she would have more time to get directly involved in local conservation. She founded and directs the Sauvie Island Habitat Partnership which works with conservation agencies, non-profits and private landowners to improve conditions for wildlife on the island. Partnership projects



include turtle, amphibian, osprey, oak and aquatic plant surveys, construction of turtle basking rafts, pond habitat creation, education, mapping, and many other activities.

Instead of working out at a gym, Jane gets her exercise battling invasive species. She and a small but intrepid crew of weed warriors have battled ivy and other invasive species on Sauvie Island and along Highway 30 at Linnton every Tuesday morning for more than three years. Jane has learned a lot about invasive weeds through the District’s Early Detection-Rapid Response program and is a tremendous asset to the invasive removal effort.

Jane helped organize of the Harborton Frog Shuttle, through which more than 80 volunteers transport a population of more than 1,000 native red-legged frogs across busy Highway 30 and back each December through March.

She took advantage of the District’s Healthy Streams program to restore native habitat along her stretch of the Gilbert River by establishing several planting “plots,” including one with forbs and herbaceous plants for pollinators, so that others could see how these plantings would impact their access to the canal and be maintained over time. Jane was involved in the

Pollinator Community Science Monitoring program and attended District trainings to learn more about the various pollinators that visit native plants in our restoration projects. She also sought District technical advice on pasture management and rotational grazing on her sheep farm.

Jane collaborated with the District to host a habitat workshop and pollinator monitoring training at her house. She regularly attends District workshops and helped write a District factsheet on farming around oaks, under the umbrella of the Healthy Habitats program. She also assisted with community science oak mapping on the Island and along Highway 30.

Jane lives on a 13-acre farm on Sauvie Island with her husband Mark, two dogs, a cat, a dozen sheep and a small flock of chickens. She uses her farm as a place to experiment on and showcase habitat conservation practices for various groups, including the Native Plant Society, the Hardy Plant Society and Master Gardeners, and she has hosted fundraising events for the Audubon Society and the Wetlands Conservancy. Jane is an avid gardener, birder and hiker and is a seasoned world traveler.

*Jane sampling stream invertebrates  
photo courtesy of Jane Hartline*



## Featured Cooperator – Hummingbird Hill

In 2013, West Multnomah Soil & Water Conservation District board member Jane Hartline met Carol Canning at a gathering in Linnton. They quickly bonded over their distaste of English ivy, in particular the ivy covering our forest floors and creeping up native trees in NW Portland. Carol, who lives on NW Riverview Drive, told Jane about all the ivy growing in the beautiful, mature forest on her property as well as her neighbors land in the area known as Hummingbird Hill. Jane promptly met with several of Carol's neighbors and taught them the best way to remove ivy from their trees, and the Hummingbird Hill Forest Restoration Project was born.

Carol and Jane worked with seven other neighbors for a total of 127 hours to remove ivy from trees. The impact was enormous, and the neighbors became even more ambitious about expanding the project to remove ivy that was growing on the ground and other invasive species, such as invasive blackberry. Tom Dee who is a professional biologist and a Hummingbird Hill resident was thinking big and beginning to talk more with neighbors who had not yet become engaged in the project. Tom worked with

District Forest Conservationist Michael Ahr to write a Metro Nature in Neighborhoods Restoration Grant, and they were rewarded with a \$25,000 grant for the project. The District has agreed to contribute more than \$14,000 to the project for weed control on 21 acres of forest. To enhance the restoration after blackberry and ivy is removed, 18,000 native shrubs and trees will be planted.

Most restoration projects require matching landowner financial contributions, but the volunteer work by landowners to prepare and improve the site is even more important to maintain success into the future. Along the way, volunteers and neighbors have continued to assist the project by keeping the ivy off the trees and hand pulling ivy in a few sensitive areas. Tom Dee is donating 40 hours of his time to help monitor the changes in vegetation which means that District staff don't have to spend time on this task. Tom and Carol are great points of contact to share information with the neighbors throughout the entire project. We're very thankful for all the input, coordination, and professional skills of the neighbors at Hummingbird Hill.

*Hummingbird Hill restoration area  
photo courtesy of WMSWCD*



## Breaking Down The Numbers



34 conservation plans completed



281 acres of native habitat enhanced



\$238,114 to on-the-ground projects



150,004 native plants installed



649 landowners served



28,261 linear feet of streams/banks enhanced



237 acres treated for invasive plants



3585 people served at outreach events





**WEST MULTNOMAH**  
Soil & Water Conservation District

2701 NW Vaughn Street

Suite 450

Portland, OR 97210

[wmswcd.org](http://wmswcd.org)

Phone: 503.238.4775

Fax: 503.326.3942

Email: [info@wmswcd.org](mailto:info@wmswcd.org)

*Front cover photo courtesy of Katherine K. Stember*

*Back cover photo courtesy of WMSWCD*