



WEST MULTNOMAH

Soil & Water Conservation District

Winter 2017 Newsletter

Looking forward to
spring! After our
winter, who
wouldn't be?

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District Manager's Message

It is with great pleasure we bring you the Winter 2017 edition of West Multnomah Soil & Water Conservation District's electronic newsletter. This edition features articles on the Harborton frog shuttle, forest certification, the invasive Japanese beetle, tree planting, community stewardship, native plants and a timely article on salt interactions with soil. If there is a common theme, it is that the work and interests of your conservation district vary widely.

I like to practice explaining what Soil and Water Conservation Districts do. First, we are a family of local government entities that exist nation-wide; our origins began in the 1930's and 1940's as a result of the challenging issues associated with the Dust Bowl. We align more or less with county boundaries; Multnomah County is one of the few that is split between two Conservation Districts (East and West). West Multnomah's mission is to

conserve and protect soil and water resources for people, wildlife, and the environment. We are comprised of seven dedicated elected Board Members and 4 appointed Associate Board Members who voluntarily devote their time to this mission. The Board gets its work done through six natural resource conservationists supported by a complimentary staff in budgeting, communication and administration. I like to describe us as a team dedicated to securing livability through healthy soil, clean water and diverse habitats.



So, how is it we are able to do this? It begins with you; those of you who live within our service territory which is Multnomah County west of the Willamette River, all of Sauvie Island (including the Columbia County portion) and a small part of Washington County (part of the Bonny Slope area formerly in Multnomah County). You provide us with the public money we invest in needed conservation action in our neighborhoods, with businesses, inside industrial corridors, on rural farms and forests and on school properties. Our role is to provide technical and financial conservation assistance collaboratively. By that, I mean we help these entities succeed with their goals and objectives in ownership and operation. In return, they help us secure the many public conservation benefits provided by healthy natural urban environments and working private farms and forests.

Jim Cathcart

Harborton Frog Shuttle

By Communications Coordinator Carolyn Lindberg

Look out for native frogs - the Harborton frog shuttle is under way! This is the valiant community effort to help native red-legged frogs get from Forest Park (where they live) across Highway 30 to the Harborton Wetlands (where they breed) without getting squished by traffic.

Why do it? Because red-legged frogs are on the state's sensitive species list and this is the largest known population of red-legged frogs in the city of Portland. The Harborton Wetland is the only wetland of size along this stretch of river that used to have many breeding habitats. To get to the wetlands, frogs have to cross two small roads, two sets of railroad tracks and a really busy highway. Without this human help from December through March, thousands of these native creatures would be lost. Last year, volunteers transported some 850 frogs to the wetlands and about 1000 back up to the forest again.



Frogs tend to move when it's above 45° and raining, so when the conditions are right, volunteers don their rain gear and headlamps and drive to Harborton Drive in Linnton around dusk. The volunteers don't venture out onto Highway 30 but try to grab the frogs on Harborton Drive which sees much less traffic. Typically, the frogs move downhill in December and then back up in the spring but exact migration times are mostly determined by the frogs - sometimes they move early if temperatures are warm but often volunteers are still transporting at 9:00 pm. It's not hard work, but it takes time and careful handling. Volunteers have to make sure their hands are free from lotion or soap which might harm the frogs' skin. When they're in place, volunteers strap on head lamps and wait by a silt fence barrier until they spot the frogs. One by one, frogs are picked up carefully and placed in a 5-gallon bucket. When each person has a few frogs, they get in their car and shuttle the creatures about a mile down the road to the wetland. In the spring, the whole operation is repeated in reverse as the frogs need to get back to where they live in Forest Park.

So, if you're driving through Linnton on a warm evening and see lots of folks near Harborton Drive with headlamps and buckets...slow down and give them a thumbs up for saving our native frogs!

Japanese Beetle Detection

By District Manager Jim Cathcart

There is an old saying among Japanese beetles (*Popillia japonica*) – “Never be too busy that you don't stop to eat the roses.” Yes, Portland's iconic City of Roses faces a new threat from an old invasive fiend. The Oregon Department of Agriculture found 369 beetles in traps in the NW Thompson and NW 143rd Avenue area in 2016 (a smaller number were caught on Swan Island and near the Portland airport). These follow earlier detections in the late 1980s and in 2000 which were successfully controlled. Unfortunately, the recent detections are unprecedented in the number of beetles caught, suggesting a breeding population has been established.

The adult Japanese beetle is large (one-half to two-thirds of an inch) and metallic brown in color, with a metallic dark green head; its most distinctive marks are rows of five white spots along both edges of its abdomen as well as two larger white spots at the tip of the abdomen. Adult beetles are active flyers and can hitchhike to new locations in plant shipments. Adults breed and lay eggs in late summer in moist conditions like gardens, the grubs overwinter and the adult beetles emerge in May and



June. The Japanese beetle can cause serious damage to nurseries, seedbeds, orchards, field crops, landscape plants, and garden plants – over 200 plant species in all. The beetle is the single most devastating turf grass pest in parks, golf courses, and cemeteries.

Japanese beetle is a major invasive plant pest throughout the eastern half of the United States and is rated as Category 1 in Oregon– meaning the Japanese beetle is not known to be established but faces the risk of entry. Keeping the beetle population in check is important to protecting Oregon’s important agricultural, plant and nursery industries from quarantine regulations and reduces the pressure for land owners to use pesticides.

The Oregon Department of Agriculture proposes to eradicate the NW Thompson and NW 143rd population of beetles with one application in May of the granular pesticide *Acelepryn* (a low-risk insecticide targeting the beetle) and biocontrol (introducing natural enemies of the beetle). The pesticide is applied to lawns and irrigated landscapes using hand-held spreaders in the spring so it is available for consumption when larvae hatch in early fall 2017. Any reduction or elimination of adult beetles will not be seen until the summer of 2018 and adult beetle presence in 2017 does not indicate an ineffective treatment. The Oregon Department of Agriculture held affected community briefings in January and February and plan technical workshops in March.

You can join the force battling the Japanese beetle by keeping an eye out for adult beetles next summer and reporting to the Oregon Invasives Hotline -- either [on-line](#) or by calling 1-866-INVADER. For more information about the Japanese beetle and upcoming meetings visit the Portland Japanese Beetle [website](#).

Woodland Certification

By Forest Conservationist Michael Ahr

If you own a woodland, you might consider getting it certified this year. In a nutshell, forest certification shows that your forest is managed sustainably, and it carries some direct benefits to woodland owners.

For the past several years, we've worked with one of our landowners, Norm Dodge, to treat more than 20 acres of blackberry and thin his forest to a healthier tree density. While talking with Norm about doing more work in his forest, we realized that he might rank higher for potential funding if his forest was certified by one of the certification programs active in Oregon. You might benefit too.



More specifically, forest certification can mean that harvest units will be limited to a certain size, or that certain harmful chemicals will not be used. It can also mean certified landowners agree to replant new trees after a harvest, observe best management practices when operating near a stream or nesting site, and manage a forest with consideration for special habitats. All certification systems require up-to-date management plans.

In Oregon, most certified forests work with the American Tree Farm System or the Forest Stewardship Council. The District enthusiastically supports both certification programs. We have two staff members who are official inspectors for the American Tree Farm System, so it's a little easier for us to help landowners get certified under that program.

There are a number of benefits of certification:

- Better marketing opportunities for family woodland owners. You may not be able to sell your timber to certain mills that require certification numbers.
- Recognition as a forest steward. We're always blown away by how excited landowners are to get a "Tree Farm" sign that they can hang on their property after certification. They should be excited - they now have a quality management plan that will help them manage the woodland for years to come!
- Opportunities to network at local meetings and national woodland owner conventions
- Newsletters and other publications with great information on woodland management
- Certification may help landowners access funding opportunities to restore portions of their forest.

For several years we've helped landowners write management plans to certification standards and most landowners manage their land to those standards. We encourage landowners to consider this step - especially if you think you'll be selling logs in the future.

2017 Native Plant Sales

By Conservation Technician/Education Coordinator Laura Taylor

The following is a list of Portland Metro area native plant sales occurring in or near our district. Check with your local neighborhood organization, Soil & Water Conservation District, school, watershed council and grange to see if they are also selling native plants this spring.



Yamhill Soil & Water Conservation

District

Order online or purchase at the sale March 2-4th (9 am-6 pm, except 9 am-3 pm on the 4th)

11275 Durham Lane, McMinnville, OR (Yamhill Valley Heritage Center)

Plants costs \$0.70 - 5.00/each

Proceeds support Miller Woods, a 130-acre forested conservation property.

Friends of Baltimore Woods

Purchase and talk with native plant consultants at the March 25th sale (10 am-3 pm)

St. Johns Plaza, N. Philadelphia and Lombard, Portland, OR

Plants supplied by Bosky Dell and Scappoose Bay Watershed Council Nursery

Proceeds benefit Friends of Baltimore Woods

Tryon Creek Watershed Council

Purchase at their booth at the Tryon Creek State Park Trillium Festival on April 1-2nd

11321 SW Terwilliger Blvd, Portland, OR (Tryon Creek Nature Center)

Proceeds support the Tryon Creek Watershed Council.

Skyline Grange

Pre-order, or purchase at the sale on April 14-15th (9 am-5 pm)

11275 NW Skyline Blvd, Portland, OR (Skyline Grange)

The sale features over 80 species of native wildflowers, shrubs and trees. The bare root section features bare root fruit-bearing, shade and ornamental trees and ornamental shrubs. Proceeds support the Skyline Grange. For more information and to request a native plant pre-order form, email skylinegrange894@msn.com or call 503-708-1414.

Scappoose Bay Watershed Council

Purchase plants at the sale April 15th (9 am-3 pm)

33700 SE High School Way, Scappoose, OR (Behind Scappoose High School)

Plants cost ~ \$4-6/each.

Proceeds will benefit local restoration projects in the Scappoose Bay Watershed.

Audubon Society of Portland

Purchase at the sale on April 29-30th (10 am-5 pm)

5151 NW Cornell Road, Portland, OR (Audubon Society of Portland's main facility)
Over 200 species of Oregon native plants including some rare and specialty species. Sizes 4", 1 gal and 2 gal priced from \$4 to \$40 depending on size and species.
All proceeds support the maintenance and enhancement of trails, facilities and wildlife at the Audubon Society of Portland's 150 acre Nature Sanctuary.

Backyard Habitat Certification Program

Native plants available at steeply discounted prices. Must be enrolled in BHCP to participate. Visit the link to learn more and enroll. Sales occur every spring and fall and dates/locations are announced via the program's e-newsletter.

Tualatin Hills Parks & Recreation District

Purchase at the sale on April 29th (10 am-2 pm)
15655 SW Millikan Way, Beaverton, OR (Tualatin Hills Nature Center)
All proceeds support future park improvements and environmental education programs.

Washington County Small Woodlands Association

Sat. 3/11 (9 am – 3 pm)
Hillsboro Armory, 848 NE 28th, Hillsboro
All profits fund OSU Forestry scholarships

Columbia County Small Woodlands Association – Forestry & Ornamental Seedling Sale

Sat 3/11 (8:30 am – 1:30 pm)
Lawrence Oil (Pacific Pride), Hwy 30, St. Helens
Proceeds benefit local natural resources education

Urban Watershed Mentors Training

By Urban Conservationist Mary Logalbo

West Multnomah Soil & Water Conservation District and its partners will offer a training program this spring directed at interested volunteers, landscape professionals

and landowners to foster the creation of knowledgeable and engaged watershed leaders. Through a series of trainings (including online webinars, classroom presentations and field work) mentors learn natural area restoration “best management practices” focused on invasive species removal, wildlife enhancements, stormwater management options and native plant establishment from experienced environmental professionals and volunteer leaders.



Following the training, mentors are invited to help lead restoration work parties on existing restoration sites to build capacity, skills and community with land managers who are currently tasked with long term stewardship of their sites. As this network grows, more land conservation is enhanced and maintained through a community of engaged and knowledgeable stewards.

Please visit our [website](#) to view this year’s schedule and to sign up for the March 2017 training:

Tree Planting Video

By Communications Coordinator Carolyn Lindberg

It’s been awhile since we offered a how-to video so we thought it was time to come up with a new natural resource practice that we could easily demonstrate for our landowners. Our Forest Conservationist Michael Ahr suggested a video on how to plant a bare root tree seedling. We checked and there aren’t a lot of videos on this topic so we thought it would be helpful. The video was shot this past fall in the woods next to the Sauvie Island Grange by our office manager, Randi Razalenti, who is also a videographer (how did we get so lucky?).



This video is helpful for anyone wanting a tree near their home or in their woods: [Planting a tree seedling](#)

Effects of Salt on Soil

By Rural Conservationist Scott Gall

During our winter weather, the issue of using salt on snowy and icy roads has come up a lot, particularly concerning the environmental impact of salt. So what does salt do to our soil and water?

Salt can be a real problem for soil in arid regions with low precipitation and high evaporation rates. Salt can occur naturally through the breakdown of parent material (rock) or from certain fertilizers, runoff from other activities such as road de-icing and even from irrigation water. Even tiny amounts of salt in irrigation water become an issue if irrigation is the primary source of water for crops and precipitation is not sufficient to “flush out” the salt each year. Over time this leads to a buildup of salt in the soil rooting zone.



Salinization, or the accumulation of salt in soil, has a number of impacts. When salt is dissolved in water, it can lower the soil pH and create more alkaline (less-acidic) soil, thus changing the availability of soil nutrients. Soil with high salt can have osmotic effects on plants and create drought stress. Where salt accumulations are extreme, the physical property of the soil can be altered creating impermeable layers. If this layer is right at the surface, the entire soil surface may seal itself to water and lead to erosion problems during floods and high rainfall events.

Salt is typically not a major issue western Oregon thanks to the 40+ inches of rainfall we get each year. Most salt is soluble in water and rainfall washes the salt deep into the soil. Typically it's diluted enough in groundwater to never become an issue. However, in fields with poor drainage, salt accumulation could become a problem as it accumulates on top the soil. Additionally salt could be an issue in localized areas, such as near roadways, where salt is used as a deicer. Runoff following ice or snow storms could have detrimental effects on plants growing near that roadway. Finally, if salt makes it to streams or other water bodies, it has other detrimental effects on fish, amphibians and insects.

For more information on soil please contact Rural Conservationist Scott Gall, scott@wmswcd.org.

Connect SW PDX

By Urban Conservationist Mary Logalbo



The District and its partners are thrilled to launch Connect SW PDX, a project sponsored by Metro. Connect SW PDX links neighbors and partners through a story-telling campaign, on-the-ground restoration, community input meeting, neighborhood liaison training and door-to-door conversations.

We invite you to participate – please visit our [website](#) to learn more. Follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#); @wmswcd.org, #ConnectSWPDX.

Budget Committee Appointments & Elections

By Controller and Budget Officer Michele Levis

The budget committee is composed of our governing board (7 elected members) and an equal number of citizens appointed by the governing body. At our February board meeting, the board of directors filled four open positions on our fiscal year 2018 budget committee, reappointing two current citizen members, Patrick Willis and Edward Woods, and appointing two new citizen members, Rachel Dvorsky and Gillian Wildfire. Our two new members come with outstanding experience and skills.

Ms. Dvorsky studied environmental engineering and is a Civil Engineer who has managed civil works projects, primarily related to water resources including storm-water and wastewater. She has served as both board member and treasurer for various local organizations, where she assisted in preparing, reviewing and managing budgets.

Ms. Wildfire studied business and has a Master of Science degree in public policy and administration. She has experience with maintaining budgets as well as field conservation work and maintenance.

The first budget committee meeting will be April 12, 2017, and all members of the public are welcome and encouraged to attend.

Following successful reelection in November 2016, four of our directors took their Oath of Office at either the January or February board meeting: Jane Hartline, Kim Peterson, George Sowder, and Weston Miller. The Board of Directors is comprised of seven elected directors. Five directors represent the five zones of the District and the remaining two directors serve at-large. In addition, the board has four appointed Associate Directors. Elected Directors serve a term of four-years at which time the position is placed on the November General Election ballot.

Audubon Native Plant Database

This is such a cool tool, we just had to pass it along! The National Audubon Society [Native Plant Database](#) can tell you which shrubs, trees and flowers will attract certain song bird species to your property. Have fun with this!



Calendar of Events

Here are the events we will participate in or sponsor in the next couple of months; please check our website calendar for more information on these and other classes and workshops by our partners!

March 21/23/25: [Urban Watershed Mentors Training](#)

April 1 & 2: [Tryon Creek Watershed Council/Watershed Wide Event](#)

April 8: [Soil School](#), Saturday, April 8, PCC Rock Creek Event Center

Newsletter compiled by Communications Coordinator Carolyn Lindberg