



WEST MULTNOMAH
Soil & Water Conservation District

Year of Synergy

2017 - 2018



Message from Jim Cathcart, District Manager

There simply is not enough space in this year's annual report to detail all the work your West Multnomah Soil & Water Conservation District is accomplishing. Instead, we offer a glimpse of our conservation efforts, all made possible thanks to the willing participation of landowners and partner organizations who share our goals – healthy soil, clean water, and diverse habitats. We share two examples of projects taken from start to finish, one featuring a landowner family (the Hockensmiths), and the



other a partner organization (Scappoose Bay Watershed Council). Also featured is our Board Chair, Terri Preeg Riggsby. Terri exemplifies the Board's commitment through conservation; it is not about sitting on a Board of Directors, but something innate in each Board Director and Associate Director's DNA.

This year's report itemizes our accomplishments, portrays geographically where this work occurs, and summarizes our 2017-2018 financials. We also list the recipients of this year's Government Partner of the Year, Non-Profit Partner of the Year, and Green Award – each recognizing exemplary accomplishment in conservation.

I am a firm believer that each and every act of conservation makes a difference. Did you know that we work cooperatively with the Sauvie Island Drainage Improvement Company; or that we work with a private contractor that is willing to install and maintain basking rafts for Sauvie Island turtles? We do. Did you know we are working cooperatively with a private landowner and the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service to restore and enhance the wetland/upland habitats of McCarthy Creek as it enters the Multnomah Channel? We are. Or that 73 residents cooperated with us so we could rescue 5,350 trees on their properties through our canopy weeds program. Or that we have expanded our work with culturally responsive partners such as Verde and Wisdom of the Elders. It all adds up to fulfilling our mission – to conserve and protect soil and water resources for people, wildlife, and the environment.

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

Ari DeMarco
Seasonal Conservation Technician

Scott Gall
Rural Conservationist

Kammy Kern-Korot
Senior Conservationist

Michele Levis
Controller and Budget Officer

Mary Logalbo
Urban Conservationist

Renee Magyar
Communications & Outreach Manager

Randi Razalenti
Office Manager

Laura Taylor
Conservationist & Education Coordinator

Communications Coordinator Carolyn Myers Lindberg Retires

Effective the end of September 2018, Carolyn Myers Lindberg entered a well-deserved retirement after 10 years of service to West Multnomah Soil & Water Conservation District. Carolyn is a champion of the District's conservation work and steadfastly stood behind our professional natural resource conservationists, advocating, supporting, showcasing, and lauding the work they do. Thank you Carolyn!



Featured Conservation Program – Hockensmith Restoration Project

Maryellen Hockensmith and her family own nearly 80 acres in the Abbey Creek Watershed, and West Multnomah Soil & Water Conservation District (WMSWCD) has been fortunate to work with Maryellen on a number of land and forest restoration projects.

Beginning in 2016, WMSWCD treated about 2 acres of blackberry, with follow-up treatments in 2017. As part of that project, around 4,000 trees and shrubs were planted along Abbey Creek to replace the blackberry and add long-term shade to cool the water in the creek. In the fall of 2017, conservation staff Michael Ahr and Laura Taylor worked on a large section of the forested acreage to thin the stand and treat invasive weeds. Much of the area was logged a few decades ago and many of the conifer plantings after harvest did not succeed. Several Douglas-fir persist, but they've struggled to achieve optimal growth due to a great deal of bigleaf maple and red alder that grew in more quickly. In other areas of the acreage, only bigleaf maple and invasive blackberry existed. Maple and alder trees were cut or girdled on almost 15 acres of the forest where they were occupying more space than desired. This year, blackberry was treated with herbicide on 21 acres of the property and then the dead canes were cut. Next year, we will follow up with additional blackberry control, and in February 2019, plant around 2,100 shade tolerant conifers.

In addition to all the work Maryellen is doing in her forest, she has partnered with us on pollinator habitat restoration and monitoring in a seasonal wet meadow in a different area of her property. Blackberry was organically removed from the forest margins of the meadow, and native flowers were planted in clusters to provide nectar and pollen sources for bees and other pollinators. Volunteer community scientists have visited the meadow for the past two years to collect data on pollinator diversity and abundance as part of our Community Science Pollinator Monitoring Program.

During the course of restoration work, a few pockets of high priority species like garlic mustard (*Alliaria petiolata*) and false brome (*Brachypodium sylvaticum*) were found. The District's Early Detection-Rapid Response (EDRR) program has helped provide control measures for these plants for the past few years. These efforts appear to have contained these invasive species

before they could spread prolifically across the restored areas, but annual spot checks and treatments continue.

Now that the blackberry and EDRR weeds are being controlled in large areas of the forest floor, there are expanses of shady bare ground in need of revegetation by native forest shrubs and herbaceous plants. This made Maryellen's project a perfect fit for some experimental forest understory seeding trials we have started developing. This summer we collected baseline data on current vegetation and soil conditions. Experimental plots will be seeded in the fall of 2018 and then monitored for plant establishment success next summer. The lessons we glean from these trials will help inform native plant providers about what species are most practical to produce at wholesale quantities, and will allow us to more successfully restore forest understory at greater scales in the future.

Much of this work has been funded by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) as well as the District and landowner contributions. We're thankful for all of the contracted vegetation management we've received from Native Ecosystems Northwest, Sound Native Plants, and Amaral Nursery.



Featured Board Member – Terri Preeg Riggsby

Picture this: a young communications and journalism professional arrives in Portland from the Washington, D.C. beltway and a stint in Haiti. She soon finds herself amidst the splendor of big firs and the lushness of diverse native hardwoods and understory forbs and shrubs at Tryon Creek State Natural Area. At this very moment, her inner conservation being comes to light, and she has never looked back. Meet Terri Preeg Riggsby.



Today, Terri is a practicing conservationist, a watershed specialist, and a volunteer for her community. She wears many hats: executive director and board member at-large for the Tryon Creek Watershed Council; chair and Zone 5 director (southwest Portland) for the West Multnomah Soil & Water Conservation District, volunteer for her son's school, and first vice president for the Oregon Association of Conservation Districts. Terri is active in her political party, serves as an alternate on Metro's Policy Advisory Committee, and she still manages to protect her time with family, friends, and nature.

Terri's first impression of Tryon Creek was profound, if not transformative. In her words, she "instantly fell in love". But Terri soon learned that while Tryon Creek appeared clean and perfect, it also faced many threats – lack of fish passage underneath road crossings, invasive weeds, storm water runoff, and pollution. She was spurred to action and joined the Tryon Creek Watershed Council, for 12 years serving as the Council's chair. This was a formative time for the council. The public's perception was that the 4200-acre Tryon Creek watershed and the Tryon Creek State Natural Area, a 700-acre subsection of the watershed owned and managed by the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department, were one and the same. In fact, about 83% of this unique urban watershed, which spans two cities (Portland, Lake Oswego) and two counties (Multnomah, Clackamas), falls outside the natural area and is primarily owned by residents, schools, and businesses.





Under Terri's leadership, the Council took on the task of educating the public about the watershed, while bringing people and resources together to restore, protect, and improve its ecological health and function.

While chairing the Council, Terri exercised her other talents as energy management specialist, staffer at the Portland Development Commission, performance auditor for the Oregon Secretary of State, preschool administrator, campaign manager, and communications coordinator for Hayhurst Elementary Odyssey Program. Along the way Terri also went on to get a Master of Public Administration through the Mark O. Hatfield School of Government, Portland State University.

Reviewing Terri's resume may lead one to the false conclusion that she does not get her hands dirty. She does, and often. Terri began her work with the Council by pulling ivy, which she continues today. But the allure of Tryon Creek, and the intricate work of bringing together diverse perspectives and stakeholders to find solutions to the environmental, transportation, housing, and economic issues facing watersheds pulled Terri beyond invasive species management. She had the drive and opportunity to apply her broad skills, interests, and strengths to the unique challenges facing this urban watershed.

Terri's two decades of passionate investment in Tryon Creek got an affirming vote from nature. A recently published peer reviewed scientific **paper** by the US Fish and Wildlife Service and the City of Portland showed that the characteristics of coastal cutthroat trout in Tryon Creek were similar to healthy trout populations in remote coastal drainages not influenced by urbanization. With big ticket fish passage enabling culvert removal projects next on the Council's "to do" list – such as the Highway 43 culvert replacement project – it won't be long before the same can be said for salmon and steelhead. Thank you Terri!

Featured Non-Profit Partner: Scappoose Bay Watershed Council

West Multnomah Soil & Water Conservation District works with many public and private organizations to achieve on-the-ground results, but for the past 4 years, the Scappoose Bay Watershed Council (SBWC) has been one of our strongest and most effective partners.

Coordinator Pat Welle began her work at the Watershed Council in August 2014, and quickly accepted our invitation to work on a variety of joint projects, beginning with water quality monitoring in District streams.

Pat continues to be involved with many District events like Rural Living Field Day and a stream clean-up on McCarthy Creek, as well as workshops with the floating home community. She helped us develop a written guide for the moorage community called *Living on the Water*, and helped launch a community science water quality monitoring program with residents at Multnomah Channel moorages. These projects have increased engagement and awareness of natural resource stewardship for those who live at the water's edge, and has also provided some valuable new data.



In 2016, our collaboration extended to a new resource guide project, the *Sauvie Island and Multnomah Channel Bottomlands Conservation Opportunities: A Resource for Landowners and Land Managers*. This project is a 3-year effort to catalogue known plant and wildlife species on the island; summarize soils, hydrology, plant communities and other natural resources; collect and prepare related maps and historical information; share conservation efforts of other individuals and organizations; and identify further opportunities for conversation. The intent is to inform and inspire those who work on the land and recreate in the study area to do even more to improve and protect habitats and to sustain natural resources for the benefit of people, wildlife, and our cultural heritage. We extend our deep appreciation to Pat for her patience and perseverance in keeping this project moving forward.

In keeping with our goal of seizing opportunities and serving key partners on Sauvie Island and in the Multnomah Channel Bottomlands, we pursued a small grant from the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality to develop an operations and maintenance plan for the Sauvie Island Drainage Improvement Company (SIDIC). Pat jumped in with an organized and respectful approach to research and identify best management practices that can optimize operations and minimize erosion of adjacent lands. This plan is being developed in close coordination with staff and board at SIDIC to ensure the plan is useful and appropriately scaled. It is scheduled to be completed by the end of January 2019.

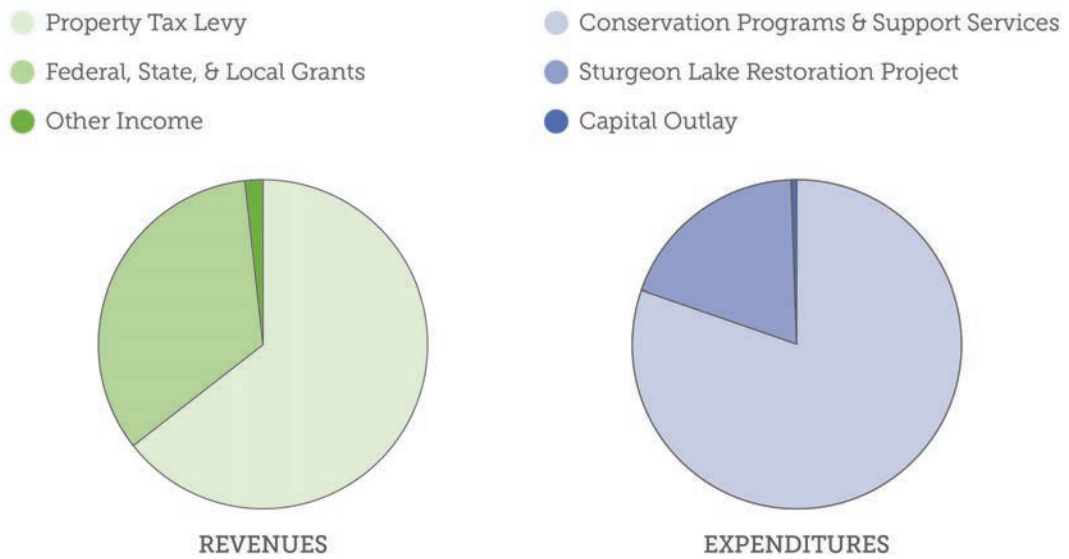
We also wish to express appreciation for the supportive efforts of SBWC's Watershed Technician, Amber Kester. Amber partnered with us to co-sponsor and plan a weed watchers workshop, and together we also spearheaded a release of biocontrol agents to manage populations of invasive purple loosestrife in Scappoose Bay. Amber manages the SBWC native plant nursery, and at each sale she makes sure that the District is well represented and has opportunities to participate. Through all her hard work and long hours, she maintains a helpful, positive attitude.

Both Pat and Amber have greatly contributed to collaborative efforts between our two organizations, and have helped us better serve our shared constituencies and better protect our region's natural resources. For these reasons, the SBWC is receiving our Fiscal Year 2017-2018 Non-Profit Partner of the Year Award. We are grateful for their talent and partnership, and look forward to doing more good work together in the coming years!

Financial Summary

Statement of Revenues, Expenditures and Changes in Fund Balances - Governmental Funds For the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 2018

Revenues:	
Property Tax Levy	\$ 1,532,969
Federal, State & Local Grants	814,052
Other Income	<u>36,048</u>
Total Revenues	<u>2,383,069</u>
Expenditures:	
Current:	
Conservation Programs & Support Services	1,708,894
Sturgeon Lake Restoration Project	411,032
Capital Outlay	<u>7,200</u>
Total Expenditures	<u>2,127,126</u>
Change in Fund Balances	<u>255,943</u>
Fund Balance, Beginning of Year	<u>1,029,973</u>
Fund Balance, End of Year	<u>\$ 1,285,916</u>



Balance Sheet - Governmental Funds
June 30, 2018

Assets:

Cash and Investments	\$ 1,285,127
Accounts Receivable and Prepaid Expenses	80,154
Property Taxes Receivable	<u>78,727</u>
Total Assets	<u><u>1,444,008</u></u>

Liabilities:

Accounts Payable	<u>94,369</u>
Total Liabilities	<u>94,369</u>

Deferred Inflows of Resources:

Deferred Property Tax Revenue	<u>63,723</u>
Total Deferred Inflows of Resources	<u>63,723</u>

Fund Balances:

Assigned for Sturgeon Lake Project	276,140
Unassigned	<u>1,009,776</u>
Total Fund Balances	<u>1,285,916</u>
Total Liabilities, Deferred Inflows of Resources and Fund Balances	<u><u>\$ 1,444,008</u></u>

The audit of our fiscal year 2017-2018 financial statements was in process at press time. The District fiscal year 2017-2018 Audit Report will be available at the District office before December 31, 2018.





Annual Awardees

Pat Welle and Amber Kester, Scappoose Bay Watershed Council,
Non-Profit Partner of the Year

Janelle St. Pierre, Portland Parks & Recreation,
Government Partner of the Year

Hilary Hunt and Lorena O'Neill, SW Watershed Resource Center,
Green Award

WMSWCD Racial Equity Statement

Vision

The West Multnomah Soil & Water Conservation District is a culturally inclusive organization that welcomes and engages people of color in all facets of our organization, activities and programs. The Board and staff of the District, the customers we serve, the contractors we hire and the people who benefit from our work resemble the racial diversity found within our service territory. The District reaches out to communities of color to determine their conservation priorities for the purpose of enhancing livability through healthy soil, clean water and diverse habitats. We willingly share with others our experiences in pursuing racial equity.

Need

Our District has taken the initiative to review the history of racial disparity in Oregon, and how this history persists in the form of unconscious biases and cultural barriers that contribute to disparities in how we work, whom we work with and whom we serve. We recognize that gaining the perspectives of, and working with, communities of color will increase our organization's overall strength. By working proactively and deliberately to be equitable and inclusive, we will be more successful in our work.

Accountability

We will hold ourselves accountable to racial equity by addressing disparities when found, and by developing, implementing, tracking and reporting on Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Time-Bound racial equity goals. Priorities include fully understanding the demographics of the communities we serve, developing new and lasting partnerships with communities of color and organizations that represent them, and recruitment and retention of persons of color on our Board, staff and supporting committees.

Statement Of Non-Discrimination

West Multnomah Soil & Water Conservation District does not discriminate based on any class or identity including age, color, disability, gender identity or expression, genetic information, marital status, national origin, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, and veteran status. The District is an equal opportunity employer and service provider. The District makes reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities and special needs to provide access to district events, materials and services. If you have requests for accommodations or complaints about discrimination, harassment, inequitable treatment and being denied access to district events, materials and services, or for any questions at all, please contact us at our email info@wmswcd.org or call 503.238.4775.

Breaking Down The Numbers



32 conservation plans completed



36,254 linear feet of streams/banks enhanced



\$299,282 to on-the-ground projects



2,570 people served at outreach events



824 landowners served



25 acres cropland improved through soil health practices



46 acres treated for invasive plants



74 restoration sites monitored



257 acres of native habitat enhanced



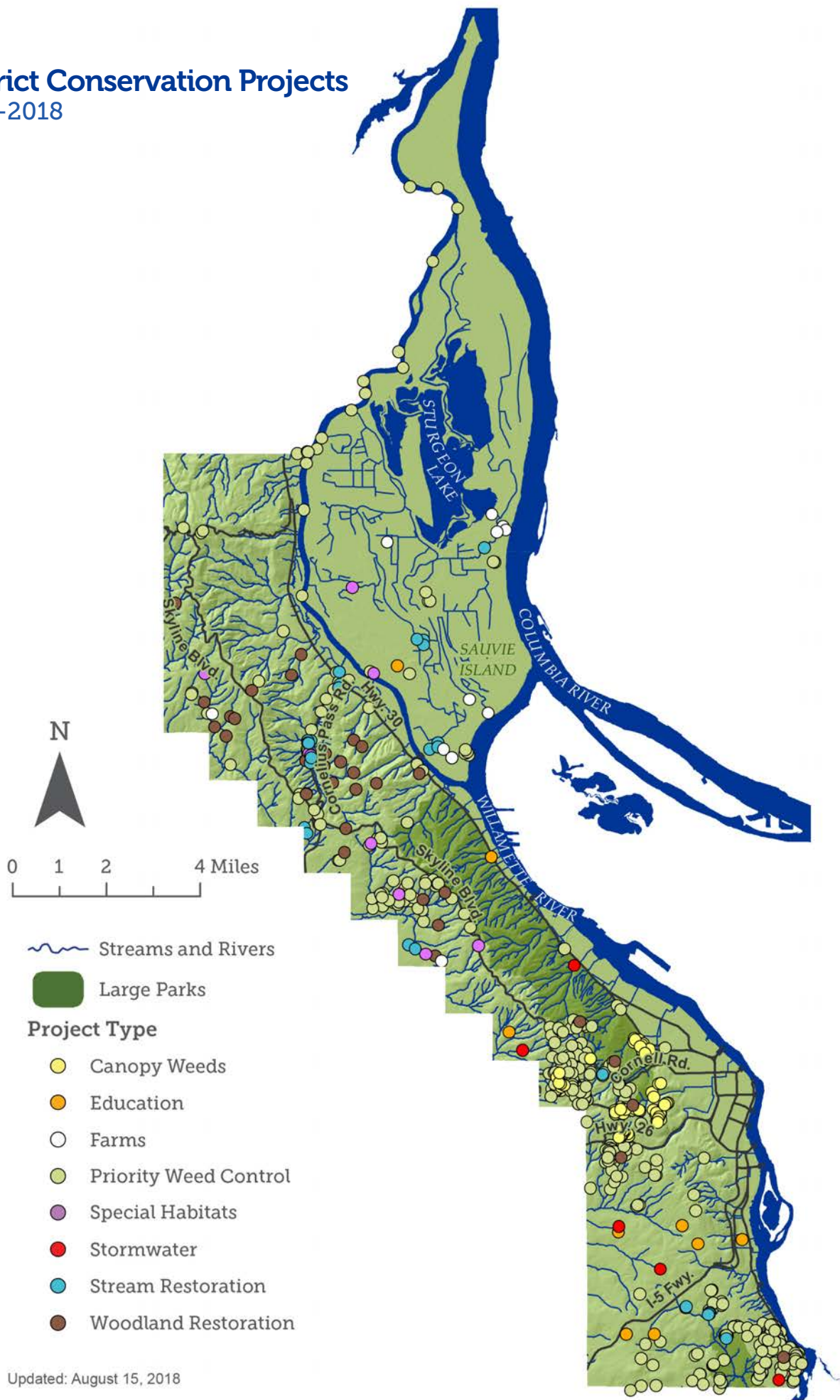
2,452 people served by educational opportunities



30,985 native plants installed

District Conservation Projects

2017-2018



Updated: August 15, 2018



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front cover: View of the Multnomah Channel from the Wapato Access Greenway, Sauvie Island

back cover: Farm on Sauvie Island

All photos by Erica J. Mitchell