

# West Multnomah Soil & Water Conservation District

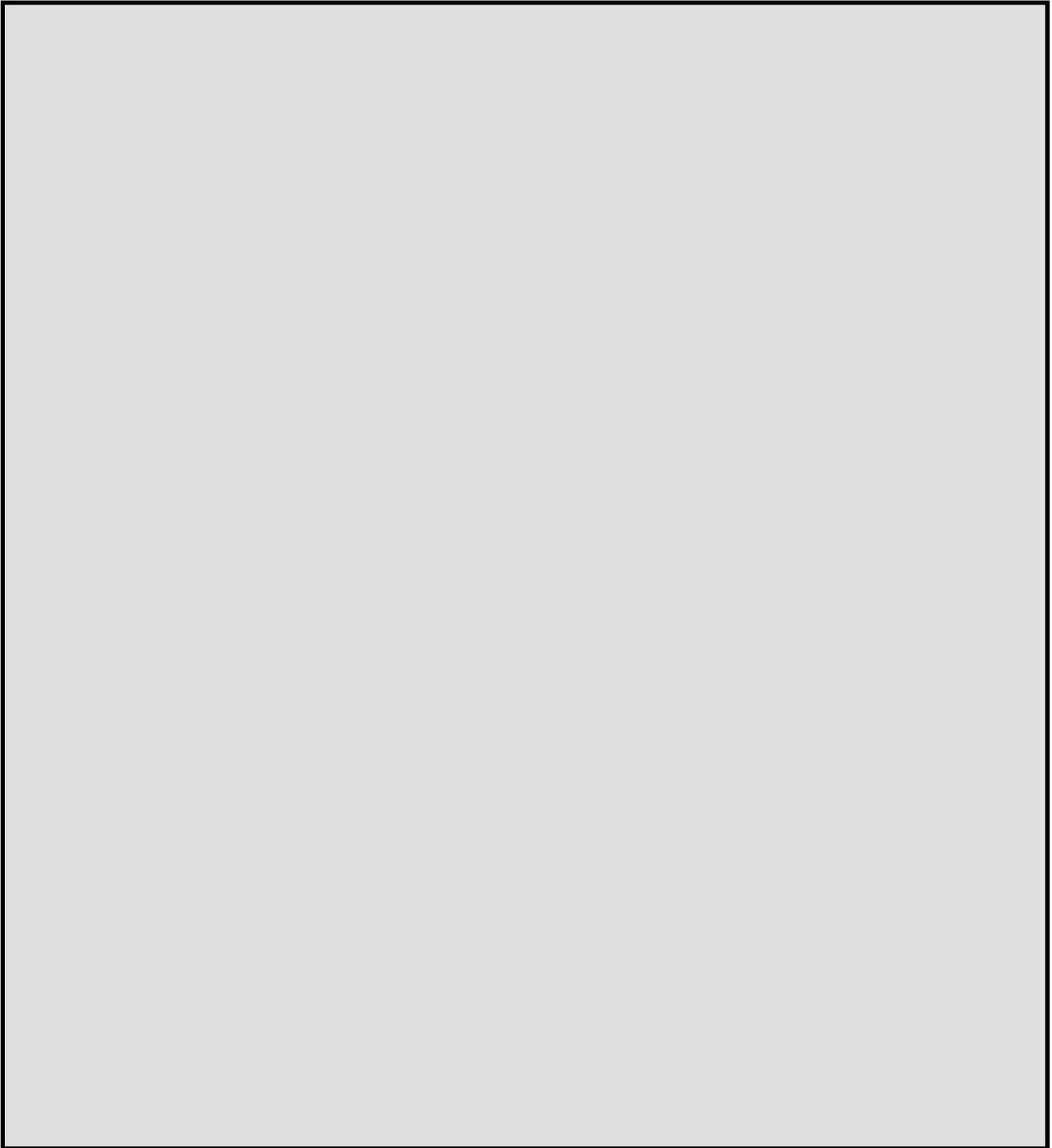
Long-Range Business Plan

2021-2025



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We provide resources, information, and expertise to inspire people to actively improve air and water quality, fish and wildlife habitat, and soil health.



**Table of Contents**

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**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY ..... 5**

**INTRODUCTION..... 5-6**

Public Participation ..... 5

Audience..... 5

History..... 6

Land Acknowledgement ..... 6

**EQUITY AND INCLUSION ..... 7-8**

Racial Equity Statement..... 7

Principles for the Advancement of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion..... 8

**WHO WE ARE AND GUIDES TO OUR BEHAVIOR ..... 8-9**

Mission ..... 8

Vision ..... 8

Guiding Values and Principles..... 8-9

**STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS, GOALS & TACTICS ..... 9-25**

Strategic Directions ..... 9

Strategic Direction Summaries, Goals & Tactics..... 10-25

**APPENDICES**

Appendix A: Acronyms used in this Business Plan..... 26

Appendix B: Organizational Chart & Zone Map ..... 27

Appendix C: Partnership Roles & Responsibilities ..... 28-29

Appendix D: Information Gathering Reports ..... 30-35

Appendix E: Evolving Success Criteria..... 36-37

Appendix F: Conservation Threats..... 38-39

Appendix G: Geographic Focus Areas..... 40

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

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[Summary forthcoming]

## INTRODUCTION

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This Long Range Business Plan (LRBP)<sup>1</sup> is a strategic planning document that guides the scope of the West Multnomah Soil & Water Conservation District's (the "District") conservation work, and the supporting financial sustainability and organizational health initiatives to implement this work, for the next 5 years (2021-2025). The plan is centered on diversity, equity, and inclusion. This LRBP will guide the development of the District's annual work plans and budget for fiscal years (July 1 through June 30) 2021-22, 2022-23, 2023-24, 2024-25 and 2025-26.

The District provides voluntary conservation services to people that live, work or otherwise have an interest in our geographic service territory<sup>2</sup>: that portion of Multnomah County west of the Willamette River, all of Sauvie Island including the Columbia County portion of Sauvie Island, and a portion of the Bonny Slope area of the north Tualatin Mountains in Washington County. The District provides resources, information, and expertise to inspire people to actively improve air and water quality, fish and wildlife habitat, and soil health. To accomplish our work we work collaboratively with those caring for and giving to the land including private landowners, tenants, schools, non-profit organizations, culturally specific organizations, neighborhood and other local community centers, and government agencies.

We do this work so that all people in our district are informed about and engage confidently in the long-term caring for and giving back to the land and everyone has the opportunity to connect or reconnect with the land, especially those who have been displaced from or deprived of land. We feel that people's engagement and connection to the land ensures clean water, clean air, healthy soil, and diverse habitats for thriving communities, fish, and wildlife.

### *Public Participation*

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To better inform this plan we reached out to community members, community leaders, program participants, organizational partners<sup>3</sup>, staff and board to gather a diversity of perspectives to consider in planning for our organization's future scope, financial sustainability and overall health with an aim of embedding equity and inclusion as a founding value in all that we do. After gathering initial input through interviews, surveys, and working sessions, we developed a diverse advisory committee comprised of partners, community members and community leaders to help shape the strategic directions, goals and tactics the plan will include to address input received. The findings from this effort, as well as the resulting criteria and priorities used to guide the development of this plan can be found in Appendices D-F.

### *Audience*

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The Plan is intended to be a living document that guides District staff and board<sup>2</sup> in their operations and helps ensure that policies, programs, services and decisions are beneficial to people. It will be a useful document for those interested in our work to track and hold us accountable to our operations and actions.

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<sup>1</sup> Appendix A includes a list of acronyms used in this plan

<sup>2</sup> Appendix B includes a staff and board organizational chart and zone map displaying District territory.

<sup>3</sup> Appendix C includes a list of current partners and their roles with the District

## History

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The District was established in 1944 to direct agricultural producers to soil conservation technical assistance resources, such as those provided by the federal Soil Conservation Service (which evolved into today's U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS)). Originally organized as the Sauvie Island Soil Conservation District, in 1975 we expanded to our current size along with the scope of our conservation work both in terms of the type of natural resource concerns we address but also in our geographic service territory -- to become the West Multnomah Soil & Water Conservation District. Voters within our service territory approved a permanent property tax levy in November 2006, ensuring a stable funding source for our work. Beginning in fiscal year 2007-2008, we grew our staff to provide conservation assistance and resources more broadly throughout our service area.

Key to our history is understanding our shared history with Black, Indigenous and other people of color that have been displaced from or denied ownership access to the land. As part of our 2019 celebration of our 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary as a soil and water conservation district, we released the paper *Whose Land is Our Land? Spatial exclusion, racial segregation, and the history of the lands of western Multnomah County* researched and written by Field Conservationist Intern Indi Namkoong. (See sidebar) Acknowledging this shared history sets the stage for deconstructing systemic and institutional racism so it does not enter our work going forward. Our Land Acknowledgement and our Racial Equity statements below remind us of this commitment to be antiracist in our work.

## Land Acknowledgement

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It is important to acknowledge the original Indigenous people of the land that falls within our service territory and to recognize that we have the opportunity to do our conservation work because of the sacrifices that were forced upon them. We honor the original Indigenous people by committing to work with their descendants and learn from their traditional ecological knowledge and relational world view of the land and all things living upon it.

*The West Multnomah Soil & Water Conservation District acknowledges the original people whose land we are utilizing today; the Clackamas Chinook, the Willamette Tumwater, the Wasco-Wishram, the Watlata, the Multnomah, and other Chinookan peoples, as well as the Tualatin Kalapuya, the Cayuse, the Molalla, the Yakama, and other tribes and bands of the Columbia and Willamette Rivers. It is important to acknowledge these original inhabitants of the land that falls within our geographic service territory now known as the City of Portland, Sauvie Island and the North Tualatin Mountains. We further recognize that we are here because of the land displacement, cultural erasure and the other sacrifices that were forced upon them. We also remind ourselves that we are guests of this land and must do our best to honor the original peoples through authentic cultural narratives and continued caring of, and giving to, the air, water, plants, animals and the ecosystems that make up this land community. To follow this acknowledgement with action, we will pursue impactful partnerships with Indigenous people, tribes and their sovereign governments, and inter-tribal organizations.*

## EQUITY AND INCLUSION

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### *Commitment*

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As summarized above, 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, Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) the District will increase our organization's overall strength. The District acknowledges that racism must be assertively rejected for long term change to take place. We understand that as we deepen our ability to understand and eliminate racism, we are better equipped to transform individual actions, systems and institutions to enhance equity outcomes for all. While the District leads with race, we recognize that many other forms of marginalization and oppression are perpetuated by dominate interactions of institutions, individuals, and culture operating amidst their historic contexts. We maintain an approach that recognizes that all oppressions are inter-connected. The District is committed to actions that lead to increased diversity, equity, inclusion outcomes for all.

### *Racial Equity Statement*

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**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.

### *Principles for the Advancement of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion*

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- **Inclusivity** -- The District is an inclusive organization that welcomes and engages all people in all facets of our organization, activities and programs.
- **Diversity** -- The Board and staff of the District, the contractors we hire and the people who benefit from our work reflect the demographics of our service area.
- **Engagement** -- The District meaningfully engages historically marginalized communities decision making, programs, and policy.

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- **Accountability:** The District works proactively and deliberately to understand and advance equity outcomes.
- **Focus --** The District will lead with racial inclusivity, diversity, equity and accountability actions and policies that result in positive outcomes for all.

### WHO WE ARE AND GUIDES TO OUR BEHAVIOR

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#### *Mission*

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We provide resources, information, and expertise to inspire people to actively improve air and water quality, fish and wildlife habitat, and soil health.

#### *Vision*

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All people in our district are informed about and confidently engaged in the long-term caring for and giving back to the land. Everyone has the opportunity to connect or reconnect with the land, especially those who have been displaced from or deprived of land. People's engagement and connection to the land ensures clean water, clean air, healthy soil, and diverse habitats for thriving communities, fish, and wildlife.

#### *Guiding Values*

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- Diversity, equity, and inclusion strengthen our work.
- Land, water and all living things and the ecosystems that support them have intrinsic value; if we take care of the land and resources, the land and resources will take care of us.
- Effective and lasting conservation is community-based, science-based, and adaptive to new knowledge.
- For our conservation work to be successful, people and communities must connect to and benefit from it.

#### *Guiding Principles*

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- **Integrity and Balance --** We act with integrity and operate with transparency; we encourage and support a healthy work-life balance for our board, staff and volunteers and work as members of a flexible, respectful, and responsive team.
- **Financial Accountability --** The public entrusts us with their funds. Our responsibility is to expend funds for the public good in an efficient and effective manner compliant with budget laws, subject to independent audit.
- **Timely Service --** We respond to requests for information and assistance in a timely and courteous manner; if we cannot provide direct assistance, we strive to find others who can.
- **Opportunity --** We engage people in conservation by sharing information, demonstrating practices and through direct involvement in projects.
- **Partnerships --** We form partnerships to leverage our resources and funds and to avoid duplicating efforts.
- **Conservation Planning --** We engage people and communities through deliberate processes that identify conservation opportunities that align with people's goals and objectives.

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- **Science Based** -- We address conservation problems methodically. We identify and analyze natural resource concerns before determining best solutions, as called for by conservation science including other ways of knowing like Traditional Ecological Knowledge.
- **Climate Change** – We work to reduce the threats to the health of all ecosystems, communities, and economies caused by climate change.
- **Relationship with the Land** -- We work so that all people have the opportunity to build positive relationships with the land.
- **Non-Regulatory** – We are a non-regulatory organization that encourages and provides incentives for voluntary conservation.
- **Non-Partisan** -- We maintain political neutrality and respect the privacy and individuality of people.

## STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS, GOALS & TACTICS

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Strategic Directions provide high-level overarching aims that the District must progress towards to realize its vision and fulfil its goals. Strategic Directions #1-3 – equity & inclusion, organizational health and financial sustainability – are considered foundational and necessary. Strategic Direction #4 – conservation information – intersects and supports all of the conservation scope strategic directions (#5-10) <sup>4</sup>.

Goals and tactics are nested under the Strategic Directions that they most closely align with and appear in priority order. Tactics – also listed in priority order -- provide well-defined targets and actions that illuminate the purpose of the goals and inform annual work planning elements. Goals and tactics that are new areas of work are highlighted in yellow. Those that require more development and capacity building before implementation are highlighted and italicized.

### *Strategic Directions*

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- 1) **Equity & Inclusion:** Embed equity and inclusion in all that we are and all that we do.
- 2) **Organizational Health:** Ensure we are welcoming, adaptable, supportive, effective, and sustainable in our practices
- 3) **Financial Sustainability:** Ensure we are financially sustainable.
- 4) **Sharing Conservation Information:** Share conservation information so people have the knowledge and confidence to take action.
- 5) **Water & Soil:** Protect and improve water quality and soil health.
- 6) **Habitats & Biodiversity:** Protect, enhance, and restore biodiversity, native landscapes, habitats, and ecological function.
- 7) **Working Farms, Forests & Gardens:** Enhance the long-term health and productivity of farms, forests, woodlands, and gardens.
- 8) **Climate Change:** Promote resilient environments and communities in the face of climate change.
- 9) **Relationships with the Land:** Enhance, support, and create opportunities for all people, especially those historically and presently displaced from and deprived of land, to foster mutually beneficial relationships with the land.
- 10) **Long-term Success:** Provide for the long-term continuous success of our conservation actions.

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<sup>4</sup> A cross-walk of the prioritized goals and tactics within specific geographic areas in the District is provided in Appendix G (to be developed).

*Goals & Tactics*

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**STRATEGIC DIRECTION 1 -- Embed equity and inclusion in all that we are and all that we do.**

- GOAL 1.1: Support, foster, and further grow staff, board, and partners' capacity to embed equity and inclusion.

TACTICS

- a. Support and uphold a committee comprised of staff and board directors devoted to diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) who review our policies and actions, seek and encourage staff/board trainings, and work towards continued growth by all those within the organization and those with which we partner.
- b. Provide annual trainings for board and staff on specific DEI topics are delivered and a DEI training plan for any new hires is developed
- c. Devote staff time to DEI work in annual work plans and all workplans are vetted for opportunities to support DEI through an equity lens review.
- d. *Build on the "Whose Land is Our Land" report through events that help share the history uncovered about race, place, and equity in Multnomah County.*
- e. *Host a DEI internship to help assess and inform our equity initiatives including staff/board trainings, partnership development, workplan development, DEI committee meetings, and analyzing 2020 census data.*
- f. *Provide or support at least two inclusivity and equity speaker topics or events per year.*

- GOAL 1.2 : Proactively implement decision-making strategies that lead to more equitable and inclusive outcomes.

TACTICS

- a. *Seek advice from diverse community leaders and members on how to best deliver our work by forming an advisory committee that provides biannual recommendations on our operations and workplans.*
- b. Use Equity Lens prior to all key decision points (i.e., policy change, hiring, hiring practices, employee wellness, organizational health, work plan and budget reviews, and delivery of conservation practices) in order to embed a system of checks and balances that incorporates DEI in every facet of the organization.
- c. Value and implement transparent and shared decision making through leadership team model and open, publicly accessible and welcoming board meetings.
- d. Develop and use land acknowledgements to understand the longstanding and tragic history that has brought the opportunity for us to work on the land, and to seek to understand our place within that history including our commitment to address the history.

- GOAL 1.3: Work to welcome, increase and maintain diversity within our board and staff, contractors we hire, and the people who benefit from our work to better reflect the diverse demographics of our service area.

TACTICS

- a. *Analyze results of the 2020 Census data to better understand the demographics of the district and use that information to inform strategies that focus on producing more equitable outcomes in the delivery of our services.*

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- b. Set board and staff recruitment and retention goals around demographic data findings to achieve a state where our board and staff, the contractors we hire, and the people who benefit from our work reflect the demographics of our service area.*
- c. Set up mechanisms, including anonymous platforms, to understand how those interacting with our organization feel about the interaction, with an emphasis on ensuring a welcoming and safe environment. (SD2)*

- GOAL 1.4: Ensure broader accessibility and remove barriers to access organizational resources and opportunities at every level of our organization.

TACTICS

- a. Complete website updates to ensure broader accessibility for all visitors and improve visibility of DEI-related work.*
- b. Keep abreast of current and emerging best practices that ensure equity in hiring and use them in our hiring process as appropriate and feasible.
- c. Ensure experiences (lived and professional) are valued criteria for any new hires and that clear expectations are set regarding how they will support and engage in our DEI work.
- d. Develop and incorporate equitable funding/cost-share models into the delivery of our programs.*

- GOAL 1.5: Foster a sense of belonging for all in the environmental sector. (SD 2)

TACTICS

- a. Showcase diverse partners, professionals, community members and community leaders sharing a diversity of perspectives in our field.
- b. Support and partner with green workforce development efforts to build coalitions and relationships that help further diversify the environmental field and allow for learning from one another along the way.

**STRATEGIC DIRECTION 2 -- Ensure we are welcoming, adaptable, supportive, viable, effective, and sustainable in our practices.**

- GOAL 2.1: Ensure the safety of our employees, volunteers, partners and others we work with.

TACTICS

- a. Affirm that safety is the district's number one priority for district operations, and all employees have a shared responsibility in ensuring a safe work environment.
- b. Establish a District Safety Committee consisting of 3 employees with at least one not representing district management.
- c. Hold monthly safety trainings and quarterly safety planning and incident review meetings.

- GOAL 2.2 Ensure staff and board have sufficient support as well as capacity to adapt.

TACTICS

- a. Identify and support annual board trainings (SD 1)
- b. Support the development and implementation of annual professional development plans for each staff member. (SD 1)

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- c. Provide an internship program that supports all listed SDs in various capacities and helps with overall staff capacity to monitor and maintain priority projects while supporting the continued flow of experience for conservation professionals throughout our entire field. (All Other SDs)
  - d. Value and provide staff flexibility in their scheduling and work load management.
  - e. Develop board position descriptions and advocacy and community engagement plans that ensure consistent messaging and reach target audiences (SD 1)
  - f. Encourage employee cross-training and/or project “showcases” in order to connect staff with the work happening across the district and to develop increased understanding and experience with each other’s work.
  - g. Identify internal or external resources that can serve as a back-up for priority work during a period of extended or desired absence of any staff member.
  - h. Recognize staff and board achievements, ideally in ways known to be appreciated by the individual being recognized, which may include verbal or written praise or other recognition.
- GOAL 2.3: Support and build on opportunities to foster a welcoming environment.

### TACTICS

- a. *Develop and support affinity groups that meet our needs. Address affinity group best practices; how to get started and implement affinity groups as desired; how to incorporate regional partnership opportunities.* (SD 1)
  - b. Make time and space for voluntary staff conversations and check-ins (on equity or otherwise). (SD 1)
  - c. Organize and support staff and board social gatherings to get to know one another and welcome one another outside of the work realm.
  - d. Dedicate time on board meeting agendas for Director/Associate Director check-ins.
  - e. *Develop and implement welcoming recruitment and onboarding procedures for those new to our organization (new Associate Directors, budget committee members, advisory committee members, volunteers, and staff).*
  - f. *Feature more images of staff, board, partners/people we work with in all publications (welcoming).*
  - g. *Create and maintain/update an “Internship Program” web page that showcases the internship and interns both while they worked with us and a few case-studies of where they are now. Be sure the many forms of diversity embodied by our interns are well represented.*
- GOAL 2.4: Identify and modify district processes that can be made more efficient and/or effective.

### TACTICS

- a. Identify and implement workflow auditing resources such as workflow mapping to help evaluate and manage staff workloads, including examination of applied business models such as task times, project oversight, role of partners and landowners; incorporate changes that lead to efficiencies in time and resources into workplans and job descriptions.
- b. Expand upon organizational chart to demonstrate staff position and administrative workflows to help keep things efficient.

## DRAFT -- DRAFT

- c. Identify and implement strategies to make administrative processes such as payments, contracting, and payroll more efficient.
- d. Identify potential new skills needed and obsolete skills that are no longer in staff positions based on updates to the long-range business plan in order to focus education, training, and mentoring of existing employees that would enable them to take on new key roles.

- GOAL 2.5: Ensure continuity of all district business and processes.

### TACTICS

- a. Maintain clear job descriptions including details such as organizational context, duties, essential areas of responsibility, minimum qualifications, core competencies, preferred knowledge skills and ability, desired interpersonal and professional attributes and work environment.
- b. Cross-train staff in respective specialized duties (or obtain outside resources to perform) to ensure uninterrupted services during emergencies or times of extended leave and effectively leverage employees to keep newly acquired skills fresh if they are used infrequently.
- c. Anticipate staff turnover in key positions (due to retirement or other announced departures) such as the District Manager, Controller, Office Manager and Senior Conservationist in order to plan for an orderly succession of responsibilities.
- d. Conduct an assessment of office needs and research office location alternatives (including cost comparisons) that would best serve those needs within two years of upcoming lease expiration/renewal dates.

- GOAL 2.6: Increase the environmental sustainability of our operations.

### TACTICS

- a. Identify and implement ways to make office and field supplies and office space more environmentally sustainable while being financially sustainable and efficient.
- b. Encourage staff actions that increase sustainability through modified individual actions and/or spearheading programmatic or operational measures (e.g. managing office compost wastes, recycling and sourcing materials).
- c. Create and support employee and contractor programs encouraging alternative forms of transportation and other ways to reduce carbon emissions from our activities.
- d. Examine and upgrade our fleet of vehicles and management thereof with a goal of decreasing our carbon footprint.
- e. Get involved with efforts to increase building sustainability measures (e.g. join tenant group to suggest improvement ideas to management).

## STRATEGIC DIRECTION 3 -- Ensure we are financially sustainable.

- GOAL 3.1: Remain fully compliant with local budget law, Oregon public contracting law, financial reporting and audit requirements, and all other laws and regulations pertaining to public entities.

### TACTICS

- a. Manage accounting and finances to maximize efficiency and effectiveness.

**DRAFT -- DRAFT**

- b. Manage development and filing of our budget, ensuring that all local, state, and federal standards and laws are met.
  - c. Manage budget development to ensure that the Budget Committee and public are fully engaged in a transparent process that holds us accountable.
  - d. Manage budget to ensure that authorized limits are not exceeded.
  - e. Report to board monthly financial results as compared to budgeted amounts, highlighting variances.
  - f. Manage annual audit, ensuring that government-wide and fund financial statements are in compliance with accounting standards without exception.
  - g. Support Board of Directors to ensure compliance with all public meeting laws and relevant Oregon Revised Statutes.
  - h. Manage contracts to ensure compliance with policies and all laws.
  - i. Manage human resources and benefits, ensuring compliance with all labor laws and regulations.
- **GOAL 3.2:** Use best practices for budgeting and long-term forecasting, working to enhance revenues, contain costs, and allocate resources strategically.

**TACTICS**

- a. Develop an annual budget that supports our mission, strategic goals, and annual work plans
- b. **Diversify the Budget Committee** to ensure a variety of perspectives are incorporated into the budget process.
- c. Use a financial sustainability lens to examine proposed budget changes and any post-budget adoption requests to better ensure funds are strategically utilized.
- d. Solicit, develop, and maintain support of and engagement with strategic partnerships to leverage our funds and operations while also generating a variety of funding sources.
- e. Look ahead to ensure we can weather financial threats or take advantage of financial opportunities as they arrive.
- f. Build sufficient long-term reserves to ensure resiliency during economic downturns and the capacity to support capital projects.

**STRATEGIC DIRECTION 4 -- Share conservation information so people have the knowledge and confidence to take action.**

- **GOAL 4.1:** Promote and conduct conservation assessments on non-governmental properties and provide guidance on voluntary conservation actions that can be taken to improve air and water quality, fish and wildlife habitat, and/or soil health, consistent with the objectives of the property owner or steward.

**TACTICS**

- a. Create 10-15 conservation plans annually for farms or forests.
- b. Promote and create conservation plans that encourage urban and suburban land stewards to work together to address shared conservation issues across habitat areas of 1 acre or greater.
- c. Encourage property owners who have hosted EDRR treatments to have a conservation plan developed for their property (for properties greater than 1 acre) or to enroll in the Backyard Habitat Certification Program.

**DRAFT -- DRAFT**

- d. Encourage property owners who are hosting Healthy Stream or Healthy Habitat projects on their property to have a conservation plan developed for their property.
- e. *Craft and share simplified messaging about our conservation planning services and partner offerings (i.e. Backyard Habitat Certification Program) targeting both current and underserved audiences (including renters) to increase planning access and participation throughout the district. (SD 1)*
- f. Provide technical assistance and planning at sites that wish to serve as educational demonstrations (e.g., private businesses, schools, community gardens, etc). (SD 9.1)

- *GOAL 4.2: Produce and promote understandable and easy-to-find educational materials about conservation and our services.*

**TACTICS**

- a. *Craft and implement a communications plan that includes sharing information about our services, soil and habitat health, and other relevant topics via Community Engagement Liaisons (CEL)-identified channels including radio stations, community newsletters, and social media, in CEL-identified languages.*
- b. Present conservation topics to the public at four to five partner-led conferences or events annually, including, for example, OSU Tree School, Oregon Zoo Education Center, Trillium Festival and Neighborhood Association events.

- *GOAL 4.3: Seek and support opportunities to learn and practice working with the land using Traditional Ecological Knowledge.*

**TACTICS**

- a. *Foster expansion and diversity of staff conservation knowledge by seeking and supporting Indigenous-mentored opportunities to learn and practice working with the land using Traditional Ecological Knowledge.*
- b. *Develop relationships with Indigenous community members, leaders and culturally specific organizations including partner Tribal advisory committee members to increase collaborative and respectful discussions about working with and giving back to the land.*

- *GOAL 4.4: Increase awareness among district farmers, foresters, other rural land managers, gardeners, backyard habitat providers, and students of the importance of healthy soil for people and ecosystems, and educate them about ways to impact contemporary conservation topics.*

**TACTICS**

- a. Host an annual event (i.e. Soil School) workshop with presentations on a broad range of topics related to priority contemporary conservation topics. Include expert speakers from multiple disciplines, including from local tribes. Offer translation services.
- b. *Consult CELs for other contemporary conservation topics and platforms/mediums relevant to their communities, and for broader outreach to promote our workshops to communities beyond those we already know.*

- *GOAL 4.5: Work with 4-County Cooperative Weed Management Area to soften the war on species narrative that underpins current messaging in invasive species control.*

**TACTICS**

- a. *Review priority weed list for early detection and rapid response and learn more about the origins of these plants (e.g., What are their medicinal qualities or their first food qualities*

**DRAFT -- DRAFT**

*to immigrant Indigenous communities and/or their naturalized use by other communities?).*

*b. Gain an understanding of the relationship Indigenous communities have with our target species, and discover if this understanding shifts our priority ranking of species to control or our tactics (i.e., use of herbicides) to control some EDRR species?*

*c. Develop and distribute education and outreach materials, as well as shared messaging used by partner organizations, that respond to expressed community concerns about the overly complex, xenophobic and colonial (i.e., elitist, alarmist) language used currently.*

- GOAL 4.6: Promote and support demonstrations of easy-to-implement conservation practices urban residents can adopt to improve water quality, soil health & enhance wildlife habitats. (SD 5)

**TACTICS**

- a. Provide annual funding and technical support for partner-led educational events like Stormwater Stars and Watershed 101 workshops that provide hands-on demonstrations of conservation practices.
- b. Support annually at least one high-value educational demonstration project or event such as the Tryon Creek Watershed Wide Event that provides hands-on demonstration, community engagement and public access.

- GOAL 4.7: Encourage collaboration, strengthen staff expertise, and promote adaptive management principles. (SD 10)

**TACTICS**

- a. Encourage staff participation in conservation-focused partner dialogs.
- b. Encourage staff participation in conservation and ecology focused conferences and other peer learning events annually.
- c. Seek, support and share data collection and mapping efforts that support conservation implementation and prioritization.

**STRATEGIC DIRECTION 5 -- Protect and improve water quality and soil health.**

- GOAL 5.1: Assist farms, livestock and horse operations, and ranches with comprehensively addressing water quality concerns based on Oregon Department of Agriculture's (ODA) agricultural water quality standards.

**TACTICS**

- a. Implement our conservation efforts while adhering to the ODA Agricultural Water Quality Management Plan including identifying focal areas and management concerns.
- b. Assist with manure management, livestock fencing, management of heavy use areas, stormwater management on agricultural buildings, and other practices aimed at addressing non-point source agricultural water quality pollution in the North Coast, Tualatin & Lower Willamette Agricultural Water Quality Management Area Plans. (SD5)
- c. Promote and support stream and waterway (vegetative) buffers and off-stream water for livestock to protect water quality (e.g. filter nutrients from fertilizer and manure and minimize erosion) and habitat on farmland (SD5).

**DRAFT -- DRAFT**

- GOAL 5.2: Encourage farms, forests and community gardens throughout the district to implement practices that conform to at least one of the four principles of soil health – maximize continuous living roots, minimize disturbance, maximize soil cover, and maximize biodiversity - thereby protecting viability and resilience on our productive lands while also ensuring that less pollution and sediment make it to our waterways.

TACTICS

- a. Improve soil health on farmland.
  - b. Improve soil health on community and school gardens.
  - c. Improve soil health on forestland.
  - d. Provide financial incentives to improve soil health through cost-share, grant funding, federal incentive payments (Natural Resources Conservation Service - NRCS), and other economic offsets including local working group continuing Soil Health Conservation Implementation Strategy (CIS), Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB), and/or ODA funding.
- GOAL 5.3: Maintain and widen riparian buffers on streams within priority watersheds and restore diverse native plant communities and habitat features (e.g., snags and down wood) within buffers to help filter sediment and other pollutants, control streamside erosion, and provide shade as well as important fish and wildlife habitat. (SD 5 & 10)

TACTICS

- a. Monitor, maintain and enhance (approximately 25) Healthy Streams Program projects, with particular emphasis on McCarthy Creek.
  - b. Add new riparian restoration projects in priority watersheds (Abby Creek, Balch Creek, Crapple Creek, McCarthy Creek, Rock Creek, Tryon Creek, and Sauvie Island), as landowner interest, staff capacity and resources allow, particularly where contiguous habitat will be added. Identify funding sources or partnerships that allow for expanded staff capacity and implementation of these riparian restoration efforts. (SD 5 & 10)
  - c. Plan and implement upland forest restoration practices within priority watersheds to protect and enhance small stream tributaries and drainages through the control of invasive species and planting of trees and understory vegetation.
  - d. Encourage landowners who wish to conserve or restore riparian habitats to enroll in the Riparian Lands Tax Incentive Program.
- GOAL 5.4: Serve as a convenor, active partner, and technical resource with key stakeholders, such as the City of Portland, Sauvie Island Drainage Improvement Company, moorage communities and community watershed committees, that directly impact water quality within the district.

TACTICS

- a. Facilitate a discussion with key stakeholders on stormwater permitting, policy and processes that emphasizes holistic sub-watershed issues in Portland's West Hills so as to identify opportunities that better protect and enhance water quality and ecosystem function, reduce local flooding, and respond to continued development and redevelopment.
- b. Facilitate a discussion with the Sauvie Island Drainage Improvement Company (SIDIC) on how to reduce nutrient loading in the SIDIC canal system, reduce erosion and loss to

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canal integrity and conveyence due to improper canal maintenance, and maintain and restore riparian habitats along SIDIC canals.

- c. Provide outreach, education, technical assistance and possibly cost-share, grant funding, federal incentive payments (via NRCS) to livestock operations, horse facilities , and forest landowners.
- d. Partner with Scappoose Bay Watershed Council to provide outreach, education, technical assistance and possibly cost-share, grant funding, federal incentive payments (via NRCS) to landowners – including the moorage community – in projects and practices along the Multnomah Channel that benefit water quality.
- e. Partner with and provide funding to the Watershed Resource Center to engage with homeowners, tenants, businesses and other organizations interested in implementing stormwater runoff projects (e.g., Stormwater Stars Program) that benefit water quality (and native habitat coverage) in our shared service area.
- f. Collaborate with City of Portland Bureau of Environmental Services (BES) staff and nonprofit partners, including watershed councils, on stormwater projects that intersect public and private jurisdictions to leverage funding and technical capacities (i.e., 1% for Green Project and Boones Ferry Crossing).

**STRATEGIC DIRECTION 6 -- Protect, enhance, and restore biodiversity, native landscapes, habitats, and ecological function.**

- GOAL 6.1: Maintain and increase native habitat coverage and connectivity throughout the district. (Goals 6.3-6.5, addressing lower Columbia River estuarine, Oregon White Oak and native pollinator habitats)

**TACTICS**

- a. Conserve, enhance, and restore priority habitats such as estuarine wetlands, oak prairie, and native insect habitat features to support connectivity and ecosystem functionality throughout and beyond the district.
- b. Collaborate and provide funding to key partnership initiatives focused on maintaining and increasing native habitat coverage and connectivity (as well as improving water quality) throughout the district such as the Backyard Habitat Certification Program, the Greater Forest Park Conservation Initiative, the West Willamette River Partnership and the Tryon Creek Watershed Council. (SD 5)
- c. Promote the adoption and maintenance of residential-scale nature-scaping, meadow-scaping, oak-scaping, rain garden and other urban habitat projects by making newly-created and existing educational resources more available to the public through awareness raising activities and accessibility measures including targeted outreach, translation of materials, workshops, events, simplified how-to guides, videos, and technical assistance. (SD4)
- d. Provide onsite planning advice to urban residents interested in forwarding urban habitats with an added emphasis on reaching those historically underserved through targeted outreach, tailored programming.
- e. Encourage forest management near headwater streams that would lead to older forests.
- f. Remove and replace invasive species with diverse native plant communities in priority habitats emphasized in the Regional Conservation Strategy including riparian and late-successional conifer forest habitats vulnerable to secondary waves of invasion (i.e. Canopy Weeds Program).

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- g. Participate in and support regional habitat connectivity coordination efforts such as The Intertwine Alliance’s Regional Connectivity Working Group and provide resources to help develop and implement regional strategies.

- GOAL 6.2: Prevent, slow or stop the loss of native habitats to biological invasions.

TACTICS

- a. Cooperate with, support, and provide as applicable technical and financial resources for regional surveys of Early Detection, Rapid Response (EDRR) invertebrate species such as gypsy moth, emerald ash borer, Asian longhorned beetle, Japanese beetle, spotted lanternfly, including eradication efforts when found.
- b. Review and update the EDRR priority weed list biannually prioritizing those we might prevent establishment of or eradicate within our district (SD 4.5)
- c. Survey for and eradicate when found EDRR plant species. Conduct follow-up restoration practices at priority sites.
- d. Cooperate with, support, and provide as applicable technical and financial resources to community science and related volunteer early detection survey efforts such as Weed Watchers and Forest Pest Detectores; including the moorage community for the early detection of EDRR aquatic invasive species.

- GOAL 6.3: Enhance, maintain, and protect wetland and Multnomah & Columbia River floodplain habitats including wet prairies for the benefit of water quality, amphibians, juvenile salmonids, waterfowl, turtles, and other fish and wildlife species.

TACTICS

- a. Conduct conservation planning to manage and steward the Sturgeon Lake Restoration Project.
- b. Conduct conservation planning to manage and steward the BPA-funded lower McCarthy Creek Restoration Project(s) and the 120-acre NRCS Wetland Reserve Easement site and the accompanying 10 acres of Healthy Streams/Healthy Habitats riparian and upland habitat.
- c. Work with partners to seek new and protect active projects that restore critical and unique floodplain and wetland projects along the Columbia River and Multnomah Channel consistent with the needs of identified priority species.

- GOAL 6.4: Conserve and restore Oregon white oak prairie, savanna, and woodland habitats.

TACTICS

- a. Identify quality oak habitat on private lands and conduct targeted education and outreach to the landowners that own these habitats. Develop and apply tools (e.g., right of first refusal agreements, easements) that secure habitat conservation and prevent the loss of these habitats to agricultural, non-oak forestry, and development – especially when properties are put up for sale.
- b. Promote the retention of mature Oregon white oak trees within neighborhoods, urban development and farms through education and outreach.
- c. Manage existing and future investments in newly-created oak savanna and associated hedgerows at the lower McCarthy Creek Wetland Reserve Easement site and support landowners with active, existing oak habitat restoration projects through financial and technical assistance.

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- d. Provide incentives for habitat restoration and enhancement such as cost-share, grant funding, federal incentive payments (NRCS), and other economic offsets to project costs. Work with new landowners to restore habitat through the planting of new Oregon white oak seedlings and enhance accompanying habitat in suitable locations, prioritizing large sites.
  - e. Co-lead a regional effort (with Clackamas Soil and Water Conservation District) to bring back a fully functional Wildlife Habitat Conservation and Management Program (a wildlife habitat tax deferral program of the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife) as a key incentive to conserving, enhancing, and restoring priority habitat such as Oregon white oak prairies and savanas.
  - f. Participate in and support regional oak habitat coordination efforts such as The Intertwine Alliance Oak Prairie Work Group and provide resources to help develop and implement regional strategies such as oak habitat mapping and oak habitat education and outreach.
- **GOAL 6.5: Protect and enhance regional pollinator, native insect, and plant biodiversity.**  
TACTICS
    - a. Implement pollinator habitat projects on farms, forests, gardens and neighborhoods.
    - b. Implement new understory seeding projects by converting bare ground and invasive monocultures into diverse forest understories.
    - c. **Integrate herbaceous plantings and bare ground into all habitat projects, where feasible and appropriate, to further enhance native insect habitat.**
    - d. Engage in partnerships that promote native insect habitat (e.g. The Oregon Bee Project) and support landowners enhancing pollinator and other native insect habitat on farms, forests and gardens.

**STRATEGIC DIRECTION 7 -- Enhance the long-term health and productivity of farms, forests, woodlands, and gardens.**

- **GOAL 7.1: Assist working forestlands to reduce competition in young forest stands and enhance diversity of merchantable forest tree species that generate forest products.**  
TACTICS
  - a. Plan 4 to 8 projects on 30 to 40 acres annually.
  - b. Assist in effective management of Douglas-fir and western redcedar forests while also educating landowners on the ecological benefits and economic opportunities of growing red alder, bigleaf maple, and other species.
  - c. Thin dense forests and release healthy trees by controlling competition
- **GOAL 7.2: Partner on efforts that ensure the long-term health of school and community gardens. (SD 9.1)**  
TACTICS
  - a. Provide direct planning assistance to school and community gardens.
  - b. **Work with other stakeholders to manage school and community gardens long-term.**
  - c. Provide technical and financial support for schools to incorporate environmental education programming into their lessons.

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- **GOAL 7.3: Assist farms, livestock operations, ranches and horse owners to maintain and enhance the productivity and long-term health of the land.**

**TACTICS**

- a. **Promote and share technical and funding resources (from OSU, ODA and NRCS) offered by partners to enhance productivity, marketing and access to markets for producers (e.g., ODA Specialty Crop Block Program, Farmer's Markets, etc).**
- b. **Promote on-farm irrigation, pest control and energy efficiency.**

**STRATEGIC DIRECTION 8 -- Promote resilient environments and communities in the face of climate change.**

- **GOAL 8.1: Address wildfire risk and landscape resiliency to wildfire.**

**TACTICS**

- a. Promote and advocate for the update and implementation of a wildfire risk reduction plan for Forest Park and surrounding neighborhoods that identifies and creates essential fuel breaks and key areas along the outer most areas of Forest Park that abut neighborhoods and residences such as Linnton.
- b. Partner with Oregon State University Extension, Oregon Department of Forestry, and Portland Fire & Rescue to deliver education and outreach to urban and rural neighborhoods abutting large areas of natural vegetation or open space on wildfire risk reduction including reducing wildfire fuels within 100-300' of homes with resources tailored to our local ecology (and on the benefits of native plants as well as species particularly impacted by climate change, amongst other topics). (SD 4)
- c. Partner with Portland Fire & Rescue, Oregon Department of Forestry, and Tualatin Valley Fire & Rescue to provide Home Risk Assessments and prioritize areas where fire risk reduction would have the greatest impacts and offer technical and financial assistance to residents who are implementing high priority actions.
- d. **Promote the creation of 1-2 more Firewise communities** like Linnton in neighborhoods facing threats from wildfire sourced within large areas of natural vegetation or open space.

- **GOAL 8.2: Help farms, working forests and community and school gardens adapt to climate change by encouraging conservation practices that support resilient environments and sequester carbon.**

**TACTICS**

- a. **Understand unfilled niches and needs we might address through proactive discussions with working land owners and key partners to ensure efforts are strategic and leveraged and better assure we reach a broader audience.**
- b. **Market our technical offerings** that lead to increased resilience, including building soil health, riparian and pollinator habitat plantings that increase biodiversity and sequester carbon, integrated pest management, active forest management, and irrigation efficiency.
- c. **Ensure all conservation plans and most technical requests include guidance on how land stewards can improve soil health and plant and protect trees and other vegetation adapted or appropriate for the site conditions** through the development of shared conservation guidance that can be used as a climate change response lens.

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- d. Develop partnerships with organizations committed to providing ecosystem service payments to landowners that sequester carbon and assist with relevant field measurements and conservation planning.
- e. Update relevant content on website and other publications to refer to climate change and facilitate actions that support a resilient environment.

▪ **GOAL 8.3: Increase community resiliency to climate change in the Northwest Industrial/Portland Harbor area.**

TACTICS

- a. Develop partnerships with stakeholder groups to identify priorities and assess needs, and work on both sides of the Willamette River by developing a coordinated initiative with the East Multnomah Soil & Water Conservation District.
- b. Promote actions that reduce the urban heat-island effect such as protecting mature urban trees, planting trees and other vegetation in areas with low canopy cover and high levels of impervious surface (including depaving and planting trees).
- c. Support urban planning/engineering strategies shown to be effective at improving air quality, reducing runoff, and creating urban native habitats.

▪ **GOAL 8.4: Increase internal capacity to understand and impact climate change**

TACTICS

- a. Support staff in attending at least one climate change-focused training event annually.
- b. Support staff in participating in strategic partnerships and collaborations that seek to impact climate change through conservation actions.

**STRATEGIC DIRECTION 9 -- Enhance, support, and create opportunities for all people, especially those historically and presently displaced from and deprived of land, to foster positive relationships with the land.**

GOAL 9.1: Support school and community gardens, especially in the most racially diverse neighborhoods in our district, as a place where students and families can nurture reciprocal relationships with the land. (SD 7.2)

TACTICS

- a. Collaborate with partners, including OSU Extension Farm to School Team, Portland Parks & Recreation, Portland Public Schools, and East Multnomah SWCD, to assess what niche we could fill or support to help ensure people's access to community and school gardens.
- b. Develop a comprehensive list of all schools in the district, assess demographic, socioeconomic and garden/environmental funding needs for each, and reach out to key partners or stakeholders, including Portland Public School District and East Multnomah SWCD, to develop an equitable decision-making framework for allocating funding.
- c. Secure necessary funding (based on findings from 1.a & b) from greater internal budget allocations and possibly external grant funding and develop a more stable funding model for school gardens so schools can plan their garden education program more long-term (SD 1).
- d. Develop welcoming garden signage for use at the school and community gardens we support translated into languages used in our district so families with English as a second

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*language will know that these are community spaces where they are welcome and invited to participate.*

- *GOAL 9.2: Assess and address opportunities that provide increased land access for cultural purposes and other local connections to the land.*

**TACTICS**

- a. *Work with HAKI Community Organization, immigrant community members, culturally specific organizations, landowners and other partners to understand how we might facilitate access to land to fulfill cultural needs and how we might connect willing landowners with community members seeking more local access.*
  - b. *Connect willing landowners with available acreage to those in need of access to lands to manage to harvest medicines and traditional foods with and for Indigenous groups.*
  - c. *Engage with local Tribes to learn more about what they see as cultural resources in our area. Discover the answers to the following questions: Are there tree species with significance that we should highlight more with landowners? What do they think of our oak prioritization work? Work with Tribal representative and experts to determine what practices, if any, local Tribal members may have for gathering of culturally significant food, medicines, and other materials and how we can facilitate access and or production of those on private land.*
  - d. *Develop relationships with culturally specific organizations, such as Wisdom of the Elders and Verde, to help understand and inform our role in this goal.*
  - e. *Integrate and collaborate on opportunities to address cultural needs through school and community garden efforts (SD 8.2 & Goal 9.1)*
- *GOAL 9.3: Support efforts that help all people see themselves in natural areas, demonstrate that these places are for them, and convey that all people can play a role in protecting and enhancing these areas.*

**TACTICS**

- a. *Support youth environmental education programs that connect diverse community members with natural areas and conservation actions (e.g., Friends of Tryon Creek, Jackson SUN, Ecology in Classrooms and Outdoors, Salmon Watch, Camp ELSO, etc.) (SD 1 & 4)*
- b. *Partner on local conservation and education events such as Tryon Creek's Watershed Wide and Trillium Festival events and Stormwater Stars that connect community members with conservation. (SD 1 & 4)*
- c. *Collaborate on outreach to Home Forward and other rental and low-income housing partners to let them know that our services and our partners (such as Backyard Habitat Certificatio Program) are available to help them manage their land (SD 1, 7 & 4)*
- d. *Reach out to the office's neighboring buisnesses to take them on "lunchtime learning" walks to engage and build relationships with these businesses and the diverse clients they serve.*

**STRATEGIC DIRECTION 10 -- Ensure the long-term success of our conservation actions.**

- GOAL 10.1: Promote actions people can take to maintain the benefits from conservation projects and resources that they can use to help manage their own lands for conservation value long-term.

TACTICS

- a. Strengthen partnership with OSU Extension and other organizations to educate landowners on forest, farm, and community garden conservation
  - b. Emphasize the actions that landowners can take on their own to manage weed species, enhance growth and vigor of their crop, and protect the water and soil
  - c. Work with Coalition for Clean Rivers, City of Portland, and other NGO partners to share messaging and resources that encourage and facilitate simple actions individuals can take to realize conservation benefits.
  - d. Learn from and build on efforts that facilitate long term care of conservation projects through staff and partner sharing, assessment of monitoring, and surveying conservation project participants.
  - e. Work with Backyard Habitat Certification Program (BHCP) to assess expansion to larger urban and suburban properties to provide interested owners and tenants with larger acreage access to BHCP's long-term incentives and check-ins that are currently only available to landowners that own an acre or less of land.
- GOAL 10.2: Monitor the effectiveness of our conservation projects and respond to findings with an adaptive management approach to conservation.

TACTICS

- a. Monitor and maintain annually the conservation values protected by the permanent conservation easements on private lands for the Sturgeon Lake Restoration Project.
- b. Strategically monitor restoration sites to track the successes and threats facing our projects, such as invasive species infestations, and deliver monitoring results to project managers promptly for use in adaptive management.
- c. Hold annually a tech staff meeting to debrief on monitoring findings and approaches to adapt site management.
- d. Participate in the Unified Monitoring Protocol for the Greater Forest Park Conservation Initiative (GFPCI) and report findings for compilation in the GFPCI Year Impact Report.
- e. Monitor stream temperature on Miller, McCarthy and Crabapple Creeks during the spring, summer and early fall months to better understand the impacts from conservation actions, roads, development, and climate change to inform our future conservation actions alongside other available data.

- *GOAL 10.3: Identify the types of long-term agreements we should use to secure conservation benefits from our projects and actions for the long-term, and the organizational capacity and infrastructure needed to use them.*

TACTICS

- a. *Conduct a survey of landowners to better understand project successes and failures and their willingness to enter into long term conservation agreements as a means to protect projects for the long term.*

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- b. Work with NRCS' Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) and look into starting a program inspired by CSP principles with its partners (i.e., awarding the best of the best and encouraging continued management/protection of the same).*
- c. Look into developing local carbon markets for soil building and forest conservation measures.*
- d. Research the types of long-term agreements – such as conservation easements – that are used, or could be used, to protect investments in conservation.*
- e. Identify priority focal areas and habitats that have properties of significant conservation value that would benefit from the use of long-term conservation agreements. Develop criteria for ranking prospective properties based on their conservation value for priority habitats such as wetlands, wet prairies, oak prairie, riparian and older conifer forest as well as their value in providing educational and management demonstration opportunity consistent with their conservation value.*
- f. Enter into 1 or 2 pilot long-term conservation agreements as a means to identify the partnerships and our administrative, legal, and monitoring capacity needed to enter into and enforce long term conservation agreements.*

## IMPLEMENTATION

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[Forthcoming]

APPENDICES

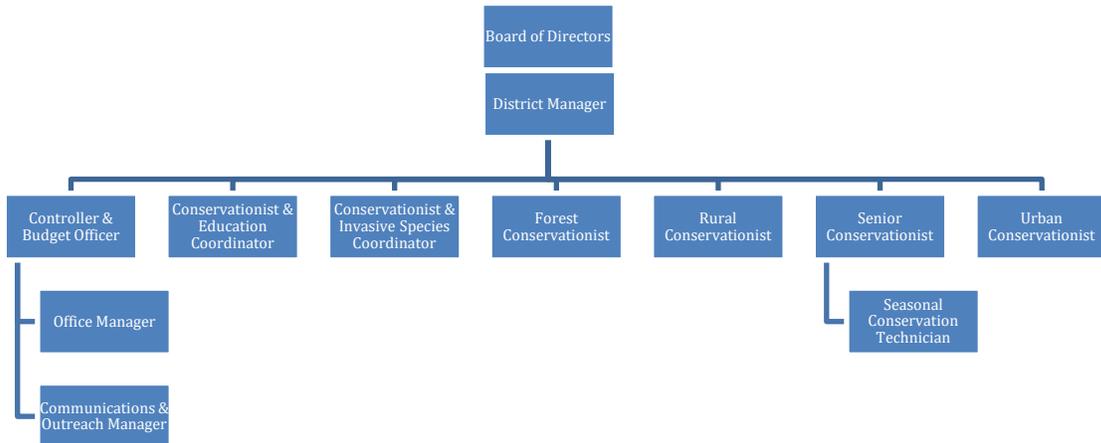
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Appendix A: Acronyms used in this Business Plan

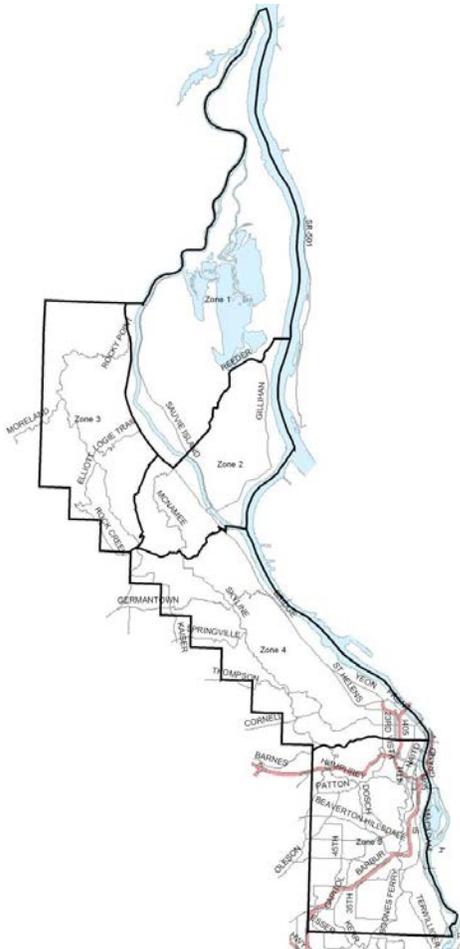
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<b>AWQMP</b>	Agriculture Water Quality Management Program
<b>BIPOC</b>	Black, Indigenous, and People of Color
<b>BMP</b>	Best Management Practices
<b>CWMA</b>	Cooperative Weed Management Area
<b>DEQ</b>	Department of Environmental Quality (Oregon)
<b>DSL</b>	Department of State Lands (Oregon)
<b>EQIP</b>	Environmental Quality Incentives Program
<b>ESA</b>	Endangered Species Act (Federal)
<b>EWP</b>	Emergency Watershed Protection Program
<b>FTE</b>	Full Time Equivalent Employee (2080 hours/year)
<b>GIS</b>	Geographic Information Systems
<b>HEL</b>	Highly Erodible Land
<b>LAC</b>	Local Advisory Committee
<b>LRBP</b>	Long Range Business Plan
<b>LMA</b>	Local Management Agency (Oregon SB1010)
<b>MOU</b>	Memorandum of Understanding
<b>NACD</b>	National Association of Conservation Districts
<b>NOAA</b>	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
<b>NMFS</b>	National Marine and Fisheries Service
<b>NWMP</b>	Northwest Weed Management Partnership
<b>NRCS</b>	Natural Resources Conservation Service (formerly SCS)
<b>OACD</b>	Oregon Association of Conservation Districts
<b>OAR</b>	Oregon Administrative Rule
<b>OCEAN</b>	Oregon Conservation Employees Association Network
<b>ODA</b>	Oregon Department of Agriculture
<b>OFRI</b>	Oregon Forest Resources Institute
<b>ORS</b>	Oregon Revised Statute
<b>OSU</b>	Oregon State University
<b>OSWB</b>	Oregon State Weed Board (ODA)
<b>OWEB</b>	Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board
<b>SCS</b>	Soil Conservation Service (currently NRCS)
<b>SDAO</b>	Special Districts Association of Oregon
<b>SB1010</b>	Agricultural Water Quality Management Act of 1993 (OR)
<b>SWCC</b>	Soil and Water Conservation Commission
<b>SWCD</b>	Soil and Water Conservation District
<b>USDA</b>	United States Department of Agriculture
<b>USFS</b>	United States Forest Service
<b>WRP</b>	Wetland Reserve Program

Appendix B: Staff & Board Org Chart and Zone Map



The current staff consists of nine full-time employees (one of which is seasonal) and two part-time employees. Additional seasonal employees (interns) are hired to assist with conservation and other projects, as needed. The District also relies on outside contractors and partners to fulfill some of its conservation work objectives. A board of seven directors governs the District with added input provided by appointed non-voting associate directors. Directors are elected by voters in the District’s service area at the November General Election, held during even-numbered years. The District’s service area is divided into the five zones described below.



- Zone 1:** The East limit is the middle of the Columbia and Willamette Rivers. South limit is the middle of the Multnomah Channel. West limit is south of the Gillihan/Reeder Road intersection- property lines on East side of Reeder Road. North of Gillihan/Reeder Road intersection- property lines on west side of Reeder Road (Includes Columbia County tip).
- Zone 2:** North limit is Multnomah/Columbia county line. West limit is middle of Multnomah Channel. East & South is Zone 1.
- Zone 3:** North and West limit is Multnomah County line. East limit is center of the Multnomah Channel. South limit is property lines on south side of Cornelius Pass Road.
- Zone 4:** North limit is Zone 3. East limit is center of Multnomah Channel & Willamette River. South limit is line of county sections 22-24 and 19 to the middle of Willamette River. West limit is Multnomah County line.
- Zone 5:** North limit is Zone 4. East limit is center of Willamette River. South & West limits are Multnomah County line.

## **Appendix C: Partnership Roles & Responsibilities**

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The District works with agencies and individuals as partners in efforts to achieve our vision. Various memorandums of agreement and/or understanding, working agreements, intergovernmental agreements and informal arrangements, formalize the partnerships. The District believes that our existing partners, which include non-profits, government organizations, private companies, community organizations, landowners and volunteers, and yet-to-be determined partners are crucial to us reaching our goals. Our work will only be successful if we are able to truly partner with communities, engage with respect, authentically listen – and have the commitment to share decision making, control and resources. We must further examine and prioritize working with partners that share our equity goals to further maximize impacts with underserved communities.

### ***Local Level***

Landowners, Renters, Producers, Schools, Community Organizations, General Public  
The general public uses the District as its primary point of contact for not only District programs and information, but those of the Oregon Department of Agriculture and the USDA's Natural Resource Conservation Service. Landowners, renters, schools, community organizations and agricultural and forest products producers can avail themselves of technical assistance with natural resource concerns and assistance in securing grant or loan funding for an array of natural resource conservation projects.

### **Culturally-Specific Organizations**

The District understands that it must further develop and support relationships with culturally-specific organizations. Culturally specific organizations are led and developed by the communities they serve. Through authentic and respectful partnerships with culturally specific organizations we are able to make more informed and impactful impacts in our equity and conservation efforts at large together with the communities we wish to serve.

### **Local Government**

The District works with a diverse group of key partners in local government agencies: City of Portland (Parks, BES, and Planning & Sustainability), Metro, Multnomah County, Clackamas County and Washington County.

### **OSU Extension Service**

The District maintains a working relationship with the Multnomah County office of Oregon State University Extension Service. The District welcomed the Oregon State University Extension Master Gardeners into our office in 2009, giving the hotline and 600 Master Gardener volunteers a presence in the county it had been lacking after falling victim to county budget cuts.

### **Other Local Partners**

The District partners with many other local groups that help us achieve our mission including: Linnton Neighborhood Association, Skyline Ridge Neighbors, Scappoose Bay Watershed Council, Backyard Habitat Certification Program, Tryon Creek Watershed Council, West Willamette Restoration Partnership, Forest Park Conservancy, Watershed

Resources Center and Depave. The District also works with the Sturgeon Lake Work Group including the Bonneville Power Administration, Ducks Unlimited, Oregon Dept. of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW), the Dept. of State Lands and scores of groups to fund the Save Sturgeon Lake restoration project. Specific groups on Sauvie Island (SI) that we work with regularly include: SI Community Association, SI Drainage Improvement Company and SI Grange. The District works closely with neighboring SWCDs, including Tualatin, Columbia, Clackamas and East Multnomah.

***Regional Level***

The District works with the following regional partners to better coordinate efforts and maximize impacts: Four County Cooperative Weed Management Area, Metro, Intertwine Alliance, Northwest Weed Management Partnership, SOLVE, and others.

***Advisory Committees***

Staff and board members have been involved in various Citizen Advisory and Technical Advisory Committees that are working on issues of importance to citizens in our service area. In addition, staff have continued to engage in Local Advisory Committees (LAC) made up of landowners, agricultural producers, and environmental representatives to develop an Agricultural Water Quality Management Area Plans. District staff participate in three local advisory committees: North Coast LAC, Lower Willamette LAC, and Tualatin LAC.

***State Level***

The Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) Natural Resources Division provides administrative oversight and partial administrative and technical support funding. The Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB), the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW), and Department of State Lands (responsible for navigable waters, submerged and submersible land plus leases for marinas, and moorages) provide funding. The Oregon Association of Conservation Districts (OACD) provides technical and administrative support to the District and is the main conservation district advocacy organization with the Oregon State administration and legislature. We coordinate with numerous state agencies to carry out our work including Oregon Invasive Species Council (OISC), Oregon Department of Forestry and others.

***National Level***

The national Natural Resource Conservation Services (NRCS) office provides funding of work agreements with the District.

***Tribes, Tribal Government and Inter-Tribal Organizations***

As we approach partnerships with Native American tribes, we do so with the understanding that they are sovereign nations and acknowledge indigenous community members as the original inhabitants of the land the District now aims to serve. We understand that partnering with the tribes, tribal organizations and tribal individuals is instrumental to better serving all of our constituents and reaching our conservation and equity goals.

## Appendix D: Information Gathering Reports

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### Long Range Business Plan Conservation Scope Information Gathering Report

May 12, 2020

**Background:** To better inform our Long Range Business Plan (LRBP) Update we reached out to community members, program participants, organizational partners, staff and board to gather a diversity of perspectives to consider in planning for our organization’s future scope, financial sustainability and overall health with an aim of embedding equity and inclusion as a founding value in all that we do. We gathered input through:

- 32 partner & community organization interviews
- 160 historically underserved community members were surveyed by 8 hired Community Engagement Liaisons (CELs) comprised of community leaders, translating as needed, within the following communities: Arabic, African American, Chinese, Latinx, Native American, Slavic, and Vietnamese.
- 183 online and in person surveys
- Staff and Board online surveys and follow-up discussions
- Partner and community meeting discussions

**Report Intent:** This report provides high-level summary findings key to the conservation scope discussion from these efforts, but more detailed reports on findings are available upon request (inquire with [Mary@wmswcd.org](mailto:Mary@wmswcd.org) ).

#### Report Content:

Partner Interviews	Page #2
Community Engagement Liaisons (CELs) Surveys	Page #3
Online & In Person Surveys	Page #4
Staff & Board Surveys	Page #5

#### Overarching Themes/Findings:

- Lack of awareness of our District and conservation issues at large is seen as the greatest threat as well as the top barrier to effectively getting our work done.
- The need for more conservation education and clarity/simplification of messaging was highlighted throughout.
- Clean water or water quality remains a top concern with across all datasets.
- Climate change, air quality, soil health and access to land have surfaced as priority issues to many surveyed in concert with identified opportunities to work on these issues and better meet prioritized historically underserved community members’ needs.
- Wildlife habitat and connectivity certainly ranked towards the top for partner interviews and online surveys, but the CELs surveys didn’t showcase wildlife as a key concern for community members responding.
- Cultural conflicts with our invasive species management philosophies and/or tools has surfaced in surveys and interviews alongside partner interviews finding invasive programing as critical to that stakeholder group.

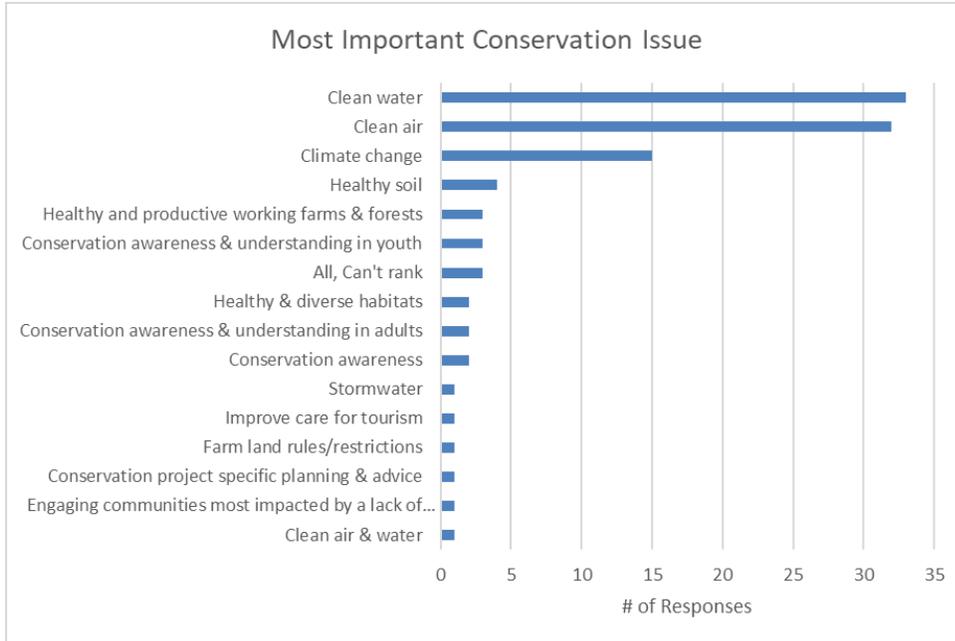
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- Increasing pressures of development and urbanization along with related concerns for wildlife habitat/connectivity and watershed health have been emphasized in the results.

**Interview Findings:** The following showcases the most frequently mentioned candid feedback we received in conducting 32 interviews with partners, program participants and other stakeholders to better understand what we do well, where we can improve, and what programs or areas of work we should prioritize over the next five years.

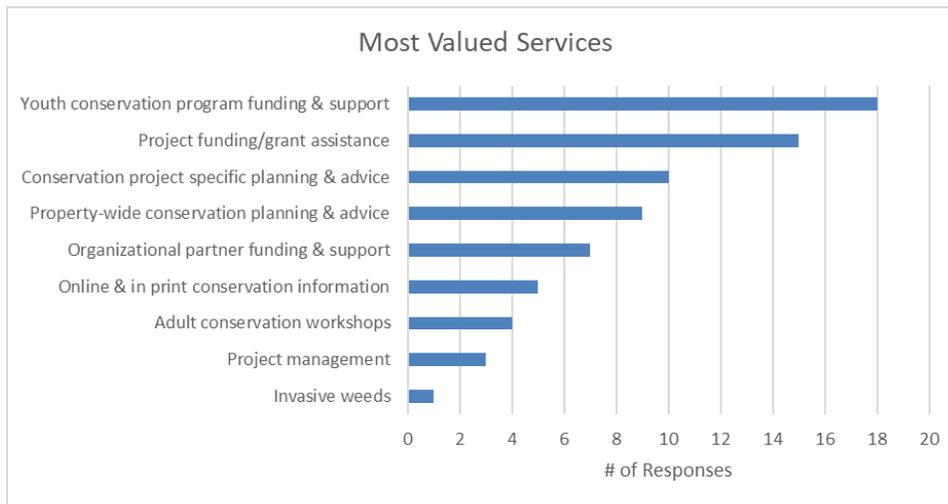
- What we do well (& multiple partners would like to see continued):
  - Convening & collaborating
  - Diversity, equity & inclusion
  - Customer support/responsive/technical advice
  - Conservation planning
  - Working with landowners
- Improvements:
  - Better outreach & communications around services/offerings
  - Increase/expand collaboration
  - Address climate change
  - More or sustained capacity, to do what we already do
- Conservation issues:
  - Most Mentioned: Education & outreach, watershed health & water quality, wildlife needs/habitat/connectivity
  - Frequently Mentioned: Climate change, invasive species
  - Next Most Mentioned: Diversity equity & inclusion, wildfire risk reduction & forest health
- Greatest threats:
  - Lack of education/awareness/information
  - Climate change
  - Development & urbanization
  - Capacity & lack of funding
- Most valued programs/services:
  - All of them, Youth Education & Support
  - EDRR Invasives
  - Canopy Weeds, Forest Health, Healthy Streams
- Top Barriers:
  - Awareness
  - Time
  - Funding
- Opportunities:
  - Outreach & communications
  - Collaboration & sharing
  - Upcoming events & school events
  - Forest resiliency & wildfire risk reduction
  - Diversity, equity & inclusion

**CELs Findings:** Historically underserved community members were surveyed by hired Community Engagement Liaisons (CELs) comprised of community leaders, translating as needed. The majority of those surveyed (93%) have had no interaction with the District prior to this survey despite 23% of those surveyed living within the District’s boundaries.



While clean water, clean air, climate change and soil were spotlighted when asked to rank conservation issues, the general ask for conservation issues of importance *access to natural areas and garden space* surfaced as a third ranking criteria amongst the aforementioned categories. The access issue also came out in CELs

reports regarding a desire to culturally connect, enjoy and work with land in a variety of ways including a desire from some to return to farming, foraging, parks access and community garden space.



Our funding and grant assistance rose to the top of general valued services question, but when asked to rank youth programming topped that.

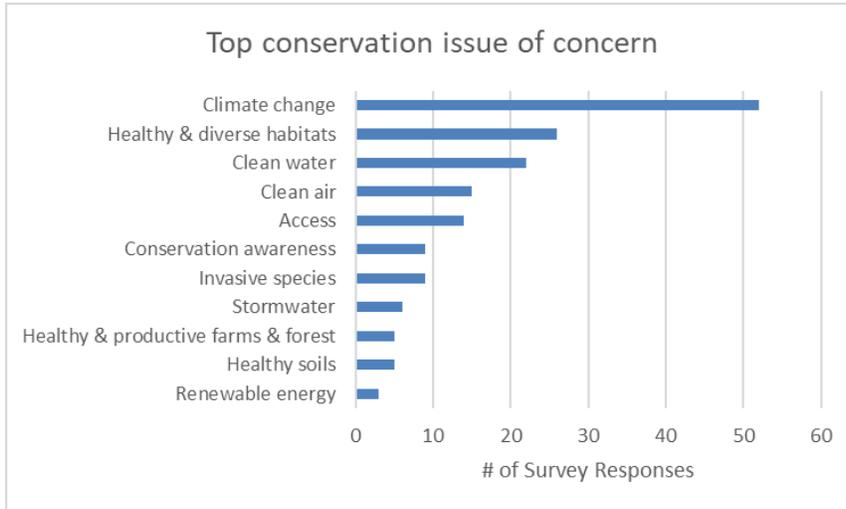
Insufficient

information/understanding of what we do and if our services are available was the top found barrier to them accessing our services with time, landownership, funding and language barriers also noted at relatively high levels.

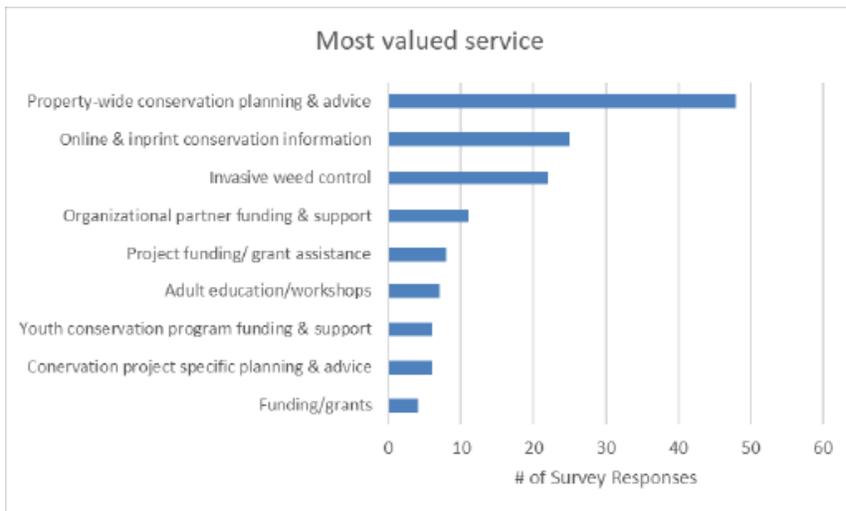
Opportunities to support cultural connection to land and its management were discussed. Cultural conflicts with our invasive species management philosophy & tools was highlighted.

Providing programming at predetermined community spaces (even if out of jurisdiction) was strongly encouraged.

**Online & In-Person Surveys:** The majority of those surveyed (89%) live within our District boundaries and 92% have heard of us before while 42% have received direct assistance from the District and 25% declared themselves to be a project/program partner.



Although clean water and invasive species topped the general conservation issues of concern question, when respondents had to rank issues climate change and healthy habitats rose to the top. Soils also took a marked drop in overall % when respondents were asked to rank. In addition to those listed, diversity, equity & inclusion (DEI), anthropogenic historical ecology, politics, preservation and urbanization, naturescaping in suburbs, moving tank farms, preservation of trees & urban forests, salmon populations, wildfire, and oak preservation were found written in answers.



For general valued service responses, the top picks were the same, but invasive weed control topped the list with online and inprint in

2<sup>nd</sup> place and property-wide conservation planning in 3<sup>rd</sup>. Write in responses for most valued services included community gardens, hedgerows, conservation, and raising awareness about conservation threats.

The responses to the barriers question (below) matches the top identified barriers from the CELs, but shows time and funding to be more significant barriers than were listed for the CELs.

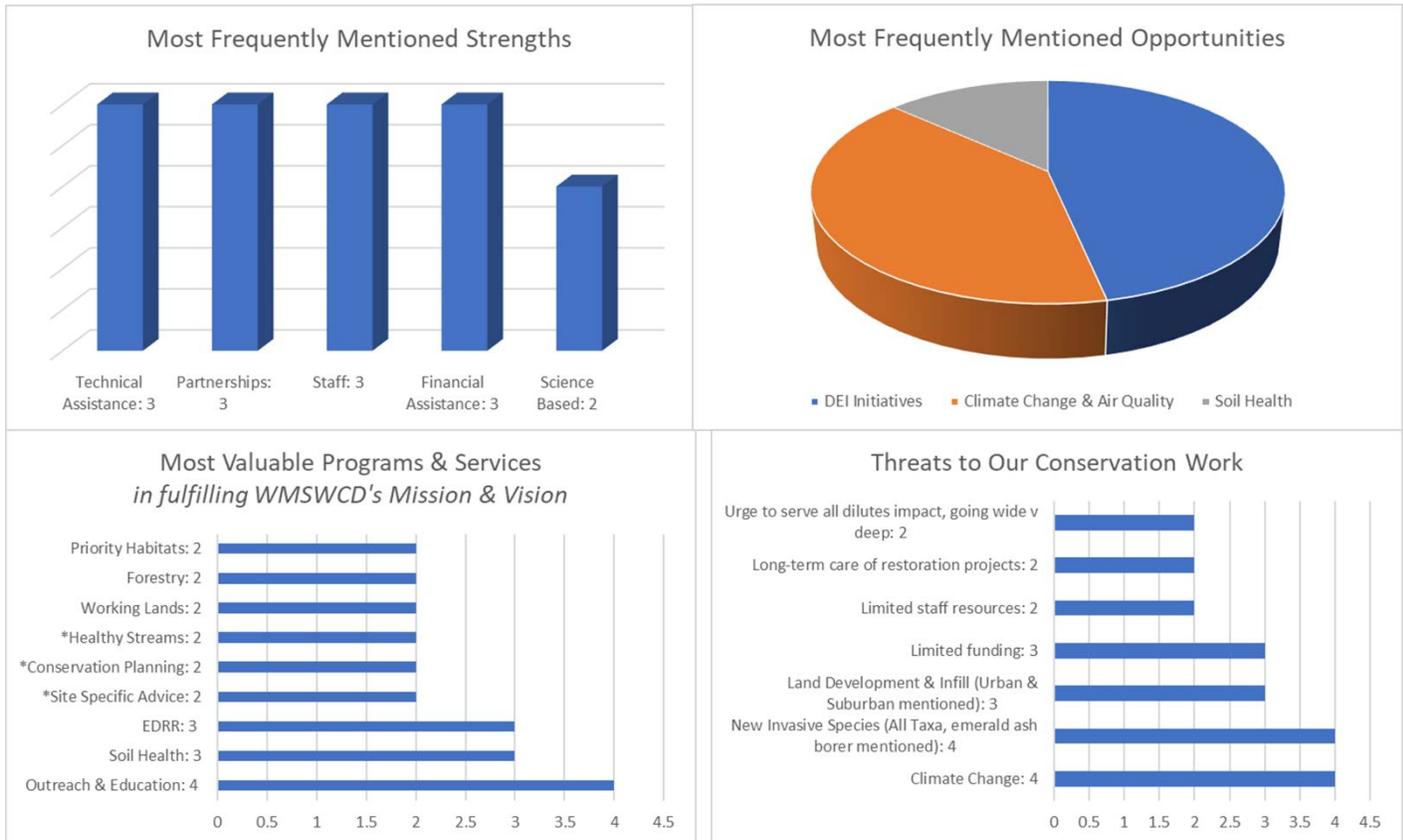
I don't know what you do	25.40%	32
I don't have enough time in my schedule	25.40%	32
I don't have extra funds to contribute to a project	22.22%	28
I'm not physically able to implement suggestions	8.73%	11
I don't own property, or it's too small to qualify for your assistance	13.49%	17
I don't have sufficient information on what services I might be eligible for	35.71%	45
I'm not comfortable working with government organizations	3.17%	4
Your information isn't available in my preferred language	1.59%	2
Other (please specify)	27.78%	35

“Other”  
barriers  
written in  
include

uncertainty, funding needs, confidence and need.

**Staff & Board Surveys:**

The following showcases graphic depiction of key staff survey results:



In addition to the staff survey results, depicted above, we collected answers on these same questions from our Board. We received 4 Board responses to this survey and are in close

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alignment with the staff findings. For our strengths, the Board responses highlighted our staff and partners as our top strengths. The Board highlighted our invasive species work, restoration and education work as most valuable. Increased and leveraged funding were most frequently listed as Board identified opportunities, however other particulars were mentioned including easements, diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) and becoming less siloed across urban/rural issues.

Lastly, for threats, two board members identified limited resources (funding and staff) as the biggest threat while the remaining respondents cited climate change and lack of landowner follow-through. Staff's flagging of climate change and development/urbanization as key threats to our conservation work is in close alignment with what we've heard from others.

## Appendix E: Evolving Success Criteria

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The following criteria was used by staff and board to inform the creation of this plan.

### **Preamble on Evolving Success Criteria for Effective & Informed Decision Making**

#### ***Why do we need evolving (continuously developed and adaptive) success criteria?***

- To define outcomes
- To facilitate decision making
- To ensure diversity, equity and inclusion is embedded as a foundational value

#### ***How will we use these criteria?***

- To examine and weigh the impact of difficult decision alternatives
- To provide guidance when a conversation or decision is stuck and it's unclear what might be the best path forward

#### ***Focal areas & foundational values defined:***

To ensure we are all grounded in how we define the three outcome focal areas and foundational values of diversity, equity and inclusion, definitions are provided below:

Conservation Scope: Our organizational mission, vision, and goals that determine what we do, why we do it and how we do it. This will be *affirmed or modified* as we move through the process. Conservation Scope also includes identifying specific initiatives and program areas that achieve our mission, vision and goals as determined through the LRBP update process.

Financial Sustainability: An organizational framework that ensures the long-term ability to successfully fulfill our mission while being a good steward of public funds through:

- a) Readily available financial resources to implement annual work plans
- b) Sufficient reserves to ensure resiliency during economic downturns and the capacity to support capital projects while maintaining our current staffing level

Organizational Health: An organization's ability to function effectively and efficiently, to cope adequately, to change appropriately, and to grow from within.<sup>1</sup>

#### Diversity, Equity & Inclusion:

Diversity encompasses a wide range of qualities and attributes within a person, group, or community. When we celebrate diversity, communities and workplaces become richer, drawing upon the variety of experiences, perspectives, and skills that people can contribute.<sup>2</sup>

Equity is the concept of treating everyone fairly by acknowledging everyone's unique situation and addressing systemic barriers. The aim of equity is to ensure that everyone has access to equal results and benefits.<sup>2</sup>

Inclusion: Acknowledging and valuing people's differences so as to enrich or shift social planning, decision making, and quality of life for everyone. In an inclusive society, we all have a sense of belonging, acceptance, and recognition as valued and contributing members of society.<sup>2</sup>

## Conservation Scope Evolving Success Criteria

*Given your examination of the following, how does this decision align with what we aim to accomplish as an organization:*

1. Aligns with our affirmed or modified mission
2. Aligns with our affirmed or modified vision
3. Aligns with our affirmed or modified goals
4. Results in long-term impactful conservation outcomes
5. Embeds equity and inclusion as foundational value in all that we are (our organizational makeup) and all that we do (our work)
6. Is responsive to community needs of communities in the District that we have prioritized
7. Allows us to fulfil a unique niche or unmet need with strategic partnerships leveraging our limited resources and expanding our overall reach
8. Effectively addresses identified priority ecosystem or conservation threats

Underlined terms will be further evaluated and refined as we move through the process:

#4: What “long-term impactful conservation outcomes” will we prioritize?

#6: What communities shall we prioritize?

#7: What makes partnerships “strategic” in addition to leveraging resources & expanding reach?

#8: What conservation threats do we wish to address? (*\*Critical question for the Board*)

1. Organizational Health Diagnostic & Development Corporation (Source: <https://www.organizationalhealth.com/publications/OHFinal.pdf>, 3/9/2020)
2. Nonprofit Association of Oregon, Equity & Inclusion Lens Guide, 2019. (Source: <https://nonprofitoregon.org/sites/default/files/NAO-Equity-Lens-Guide-2019.pdf>, 7/10/2020)

## Appendix F: Conservation Threats

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The following was prioritized list of conservation threats staff would like the District to address was crafted by after examining information gathering report results to help guide the creation of this plan.

### CONSERVATION THREATS WE CONTINUE TO PRIORITIZE

#### Overarching/Impacting Many Conservation Issues

Climate change (hits many other threats)  
Development, infill and urbanization (hits many other threats)  
Degraded working farms and forestlands  
Declining watershed health and functionality (hits many other threats)  
Addressing new invasive species (EDRR)  
Inadequate stormwater management (hits many other threats)  
Wildfire risks

#### Education/ Messaging /Outreach/Information Access (\*Most Mentioned Barrier and Threat)

Lack of adult education and engagement (conservation issues and what individuals can do about them)  
Lack of youth education and engagement (conservation issues and what individuals can do about them)  
Lack of trust in government and science

#### Social sustainability/Social component of conservation

Access (to farmable land, to community gardens, to harvest/forage and for enjoyment of local natural areas/features)  
Lack of diversity in the environmental field and our District's staff and leadership (DEI)  
Long-term management and follow-through

#### Water quality

Declining water quality

#### Wildlife habitat

Continued and expanding wildlife habitat degradation and loss of connectivity  
Rare and declining habitats and dependent species

#### Soil health

Economic viability of working farms and forestlands  
Declining soil health

### CONSERVATION THREATS WE WILL INCREASE IN PRIORITY

- 1) Lack of conservation education (the need to broaden our reach with an emphasis on connecting with communities that our District hasn't served/reached and expanding general awareness of conservation issues)
- 2) Climate change (the need to more clearly communicate how we already address this issue, and how we will continue to do so in our updated plan, but also a desire to work more proactively on addressing this threat)
- 3) The following historical conservation focal areas:
  - a. Water quality
  - b. Soil health

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- c. Habitats (Emphasis on rare and declining habitats and connectivity for plants, wildlife, and people)
- 4) Threats related to relevancy, equity, access, and disparities (focus on geography and communities) must be addressed by better understanding historically underserved communities and then responding to what we learn.
- 5) Development and urbanization (we have an interest in finding creative ways to “get in front” of and mitigate related threats)
- 6) Lack of incentives to motivate conservation action and decreasing partner capacities

### **NEW CONSERVATION THREATS WE WILL PRIORITIZE**

- 1) Disparities in the demographics of the communities we have largely/historically served
- 2) Disparities in environmental justice outcomes
- 3) Decreasing lands to work and people to work the land (i.e. farms/forests and farmers/foresters/ranchers to work the lands)
- 4) Lack of cultural connection with the land and no clear pathway to regain connection

### **CONSERVATION THREATS TO LOWER IN PRIORITY**

- 1) Lack of funding (Recognition of the possibly need to limit funding projects directly with our tax base if we add new focus areas and/or do not add additional, secure funding sources. This does not include or affect partner funding as a strategy for expanding our reach)
- 2) Controlling common invasive species as a stand-alone action (We will continue to do this as part of our more comprehensive restoration projects where we'll be replacing with diverse native habitat)
- 3) Lack of research – supporting information
- 4) Access to local natural areas/features

### **CONSERVATION THREATS FOR FUTURE CONSIDERATION**

***\*Might still consider support and/or partnership to help address some of these threats.***

- 1) Declining air quality
- 2) Toxins exposure and legacy (Linton tank farms, railroads/coal, and contaminated garden soil concerns)
- 3) Food insecurity
- 4) Declining water quantity
- 5) Increasing need for more transportation options/capacity (hits many other impacts)
- 6) Herbicide issues / public mistrust of herbicides

### **OTHER FEEDBACK CAPTURED TO BE ADDRESSED IN *HOW WE ROLL OUT THE PLAN AND/OR FOR INCLUSION IN OTHER PARTS OF THE PLAN***

Lack of awareness of WMSWCD (we are not widely known and strive to increase awareness of our services)

Communications that are overly complex (We strive to use clearer, simpler, less technical language for all public-facing products)

Lack of funding and capacity (for inclusion in Organizational Health section/discussions)

## **Appendix G: Geographic Focus Areas**

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The following provides a cross-walk of the prioritized goals and tactics within specific geographic areas in the District.

**[SECTION FORTHCOMING]**