



WEST MULTNOMAH
Soil & Water Conservation District

2022-2023 Annual Report



In June 2021, the West Multnomah Soil & Water Conservation District Board of Directors adopted the District's updated 2021-2025 Long Range Business Plan.

The plan was the product of a comprehensive process which involved community outreach and surveys, partner interviews, equity lens reviews, external draft reviews, diverse community advisory committee input, and robust staff and board engagement. This process led to the new mission, vision, strategic directions, goals, tactics, and organizational values and principles. The plan guides the scope of the District's conservation work and the supporting financial sustainability and organizational health practices needed to implement this work. The plan also guides the development of the District's annual work plans and budget for five fiscal years (July 1 through June 30): 2021-22 (Year 1), 2022-23 (Year 2), 2023-24 (Year 3), 2024-25 (Year 4), and 2025-26 (Year 5). Following is a report on the District's progress and performance in Year 2.

View the full Long Range Business Plan at tinyurl.com/2021-2025-LRBP



I came to the West Multnomah Soil & Water Conservation District in the middle of this reporting period, and I am thrilled to be the new District Manager working with our dedicated, diverse, and expert team. My transition was facilitated by the institutional knowledge of interim co-managers, Controller Michele Levis and Senior Conservationist Kammy Kern-Korot. The District board and staff greatly appreciate Michele and Kammy's leadership and stability during this transition. I look forward to promoting the vision and work of our "small but mighty" District.



As I become familiar with the urban and rural communities of western Multnomah County, I realize how the impacts of climate change, such as hotter, drier summers and wildfire potential, are real and accelerating. This is especially true for the forests in the Tualatin Mountains in the northwest area of our district. I have learned of growing and underserved immigrant communities in the southwest urban area that are seeking accessible land to grow fresh produce. And, I have observed the increasing concern and response to the arrival in our neighboring county of the emerald ash borer, an extremely destructive, non-native forest pest.

These realities make relationships with our conservation communities and partners increasingly important. In this year's report, we highlight several of these relationships, including partnering with Portland Fire and Rescue's Firewise program to extend wildfire resilience information to landowners. We share about how we are using a U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service People's Garden grant to plan for and provide garden space to underserved community members in our urban neighborhoods who lack access to locally grown produce and land to grow crops. And, you'll read how we're collaborating with our local and federal partners to monitor for and slow the spread of the harmful emerald ash borer.

This past fiscal year, we continued to provide financial assistance to local organizations that amplify the conservation work of the District. We distributed almost \$200,000 to 13 organizations with a focus on conservation and equity issues. Activity by these organizations include culturally specific land-based education, increasing underserved communities' access to land, watershed health, regenerative community gardens, diverse "green" jobs development, habitat restoration, and more!

Our Board Director highlight this year is on George Sowder, Zone 3 Director, who has been an advocate for the District's forest conservation work since 1999. You will also find a financial summary, other program highlights, specific District accomplishments in the second year of our Long Range Business Plan, and a map of our project activity. We are excited to acknowledge this year's awardees in the categories of Rural Cooperator, Urban Cooperator, Government Partner, and West Multnomah Lifetime Achievement.

In partnership,
Lynn Barlow
DISTRICT MANAGER

Front cover (Clockwise from top) White-crowned sparrow; volunteers tending to the Front & Curry Community Herb Garden (photo by Friends of Portland Community Gardens); a mature Douglas-fir in a healthy conifer forest in the West Hills; Oregon grape. **Facing** Great Blue Heron in flight. **Above** Photo by WMSWCD. All photos throughout the report by P. Welle unless noted otherwise.

This report was printed on 100% post-consumer recycled paper.

Mission

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

Vision

Our vision is that all people in our district are informed 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.

Our Services

We are committed to working with all who live, work, and recreate in our district. We provide conservation information and technical assistance for farms, woodlands, organizations, schools, community centers, and private residences. Our specialties include conservation planning, invasive weed prevention and control, native plant restoration, livestock management, soil conservation, forestry assistance, and fish and wildlife habitat enhancement to create social, economic, and environmental benefits for all communities.

We serve Multnomah County west and north of the Willamette River, all of Sauvie Island, and a portion of the Bonny Slope region of the Tualatin Mountains in Washington County.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Statement Summary

The West Multnomah Soil & Water Conservation District believes all people deserve improved quality of life through healthy soil, clean water, and diverse habitats. We seek to welcome, engage, and better serve communities of color and other marginalized groups in all facets of our organization, activities, and programs. By working proactively and deliberately to be equitable and inclusive, we will be more successful in our work. Our goal is to become fully equitable and inclusive by holding ourselves accountable, utilizing an equity lens, addressing disparities, and sharing our experiences in this pursuit.

Our full racial equity statement can be found at: [Tinyurl.com/WMSWCD-Equity-Statement](https://tinyurl.com/WMSWCD-Equity-Statement)

A pair of deer enjoy a wetland restoration project site along the Multnomah Channel. Black-tailed deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*) on the right and possibly the threatened Columbian white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus leucurus*) or hybrid of the two on the left.



Indigenous community members, staff, and partners tour sites and share information about methods of land stewardship. **Left** Photo by WMSWCD. **Right** Photo by Michael Carlson.

Land Acknowledgement & Actions Taken to Honor this Commitment

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We acknowledge the original Indigenous 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 service areas now known as the City of Portland, Sauvie Island, and the Tualatin Mountains. We further recognize that we are here because of the land displacement, cultural erasure, and 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 pursue impactful partnerships with Indigenous people, tribes and their sovereign governments, and inter-tribal organizations.

Some actions we have taken following the land acknowledgement are ongoing. These are examples from Year 2:

- Provided funding and participated in a tour of Shwakuk Wetlands in NE Portland. District staff and partners learned how City of Portland Staff and Indigenous community members, including consultant Serina Fast Horse, have worked together to steward the land in a way that values Indigenous knowledge and community desires for the site.
- Supported two Wisdom of the Elders Workforce Development Internship field trips and work parties to WMSWCD project sites. This internship program provides environmental education, conservation and restoration training, and career pathways for Portland's Native American adults.
- Helped convene a collective of land care agencies and Indigenous community members and leaders to discuss how we might better integrate Indigenous ways of knowing into land care and support land access and (giving) "land back" to Indigenous peoples.

Board of Directors

- TERRI PREEG RIGGSBY, CHAIR Director, Zone 5
- GEORGE SOWDER, VICE-CHAIR Director, Zone 3
- SHAWN LOONEY, SECRETARY Director, At-large Position 2
- WESTON MILLER, TREASURER Director, At-large Position 1
- KIM PETERSON Director, Zone 1
- JANE HARTLINE Director, Zone 2
- BRIAN LIGHTCAP Director, Zone 4

Associate Directors

- JAN HAMER
- BOB WILEY, SR.

Staff

- MARTINA AVENDANO Conservation Technician
- LYNN BARLOW District Manager
- LORRIE CONWAY Budget & Fiscal Manager
- MICHELLE DELEPINE Conservationist & Invasive Species Program Coordinator
- JORDAN DELAWDER Field Conservation Intern, 2022
- ARI DEMARCO Field Conservationist
- SCOTT GALL Farm & Soil Conservationist
- MARA HALLORAN Field Conservation Intern, 2023
- KAMMY KERN-KOROT Senior Conservationist
- SHAHBAZ KHAN GIS & Field Conservation Intern, 2022; Conservation and GIS Technician
- MICHELE LEVIS Controller and Budget Officer
- MARY LOGALBO Urban Conservationist
- RENEE MAGYAR Communications & Outreach Manager
- RANDI RAZALENTI Office Manager
- ERICA SKADSEN GIS & Field Conservation Intern, 2023
- LAURA TAYLOR Forest Conservationist

Staffing Notes

Martina Avendano, formerly a Field Conservation Intern during the 2021 field season, rejoined the staff in a permanent position on July 8, 2022.

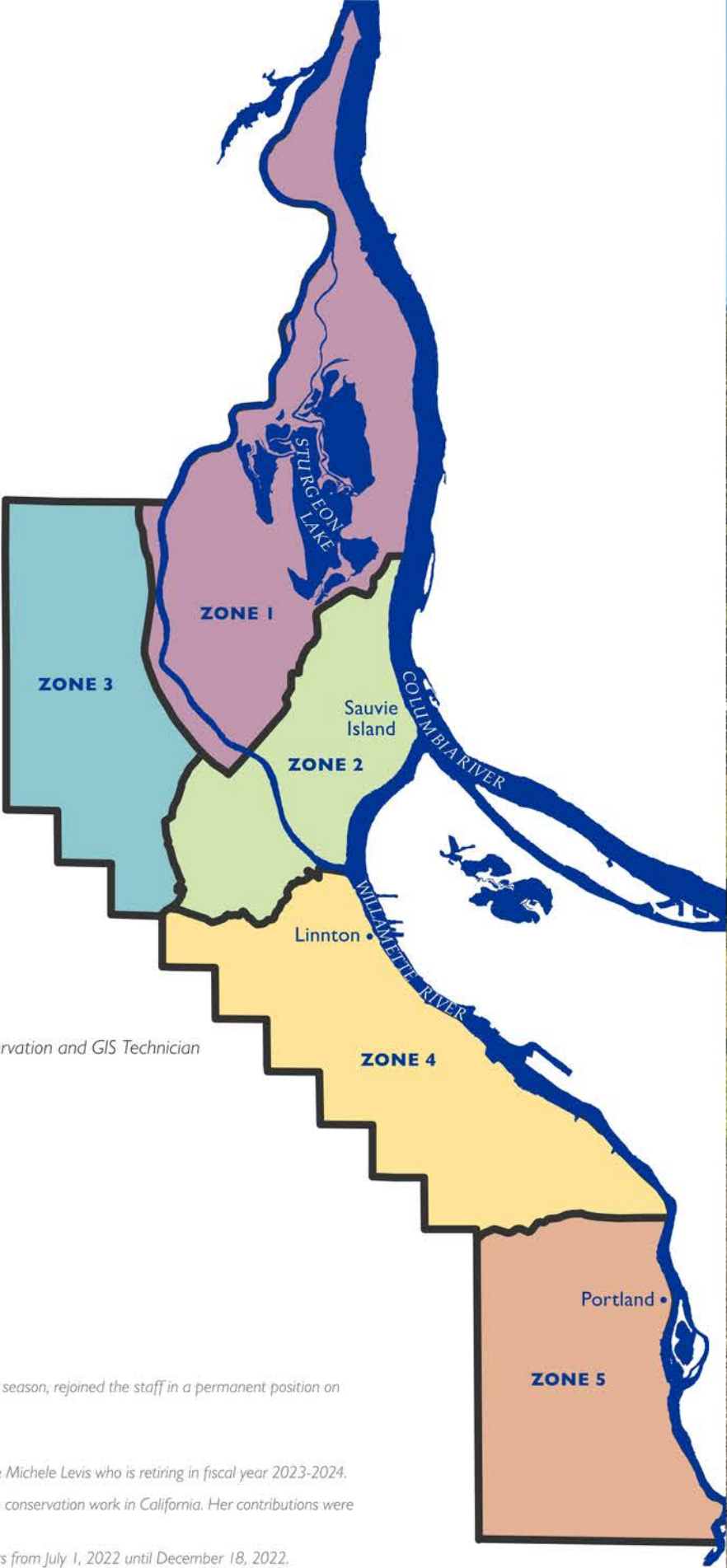
Lynn Barlow joined as District Manager on December 19, 2022.

Lorrie Conway joined as Budget & Fiscal Manager on April 3, 2023 to replace Michele Levis who is retiring in fiscal year 2023-2024.

Ari Demarco left her position with the District on October 31, 2022 to pursue conservation work in California. Her contributions were diverse and greatly appreciated.

Kammy Kern-Korot and Michele Levis served as Interim Co-District Managers from July 1, 2022 until December 18, 2022.

Shahbaz Khan began as an intern in the 2022 field season and was hired into a permanent position on September 1, 2022.



Facing A healthy stand of increasingly rare Oregon White Oak shades a barn and provides important wildlife habitat on a Sauvie Island farm. Photo by WMSWCD.

West Multnomah Communities Becoming Firewise

“Forest Park North & South, Skyline Ridge, Linnton, Forest Heights, and Thurman Bridge neighborhoods have all become Firewise communities.”

In partnership with City of Portland Fire

& Rescue (a.k.a. Portland Fire), we have engaged with neighborhood residents to reduce vulnerability to wildfire and to help their communities become “Firewise” communities. This included one-on-one education and outreach as well as on-site risk assessments of homes and structures by Kim Kosmas and the Portland Fire team to multiple northwest Portland neighborhoods. As a result of such outreach, Forest Park North & South, Skyline Ridge, Linnton, Forest Heights, and Thurman Bridge neighborhoods have all become Firewise communities. Others are part way along in the process.

As part of the Firewise USA program, community members and environmental specialists work collaboratively to assess the community’s risk and plan accordingly. Those communities then take appropriate measures to make the built environment more resistant to damage from wildfire. The program can be tailored for adoption by any community or neighborhood association that is committed to ensuring its residents maximum protection from wildland fire.

To complement the Linnton Firewise plan, Portland Fire worked with residents, along with the District, Portland Parks & Recreation, and Forest Park Conservancy, to conduct “fuels reduction” on private properties and adjacent park areas. This entails removing ladder fuels – plants that can cause wildfire to climb up into the tree canopy and cause major destruction – such as ivy and clematis; and brush fuels, like blackberry, in high priority areas.

As a result of Portland Fire’s increased familiarity with the fuels on the landscape and connections with residents, our staff developed a conservation plan with multiple landowners in Linnton whose properties abut Forest Park. Forest Park Conservancy Green Jobs crew members worked with staff to implement the recommendation in the conservation plan to remove high-fuel weeds. As a complement to this activity, Portland Fire coordinated with the Bureau of Transportation to ensure brush was cleared from a roadway that is linked to a critical emergency evacuation route in this same neighborhood.

In addition to the identified on-the-ground work needed, there are still many residents that can benefit from learning about the potential for wildfire in our area and how to prepare. In this vein, District staff and partners shared information at a free Wildfire Preparedness Weekend event in May at the World Forestry Center. Attendees learned from expert speakers, interactive exhibits, and hands-on demonstrations about how to take action around their homes, plan for evacuation, and get involved in minimizing the potential damage to our communities from wildfires, which are becoming increasingly severe. 🌱



Green Jobs crew members hard at work pulling ivy on properties next to Forest Park. Photo by WMSWCD.



PROJECT FEATURE

Growing Community Gardens

This year, we took steps to work towards our vision where “everyone has the opportunity to connect or reconnect with the land, especially those who have been displaced from or deprived of land.”

We put a special emphasis on supporting the creation and enhancement of community gardens since they are key spaces for nearby residents to nurture reciprocal relationships with the land and, yet, are severely lacking in some areas of our district.

Southwest Portland is one such area. HAKI Community Organization and Unite Oregon are seeing an unmet demand for land to grow fresh and culturally specific foods for the community members they serve, especially within the footprint of the West Portland Town Center plan. Neighborhood House, which operates the largest food pantry on Portland's west side, serves over 2,200 individuals monthly. It is looking for a place to grow fresh produce for the residents they serve in southwest Portland.

Fortunately, we have found local partners and funders interested in expanding community gardens. Funding comes in the form of a \$200,000 U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) People's Garden Grant to the district, as well as \$1 million committed by Portland Parks and Recreation. Funds will be used to secure additional SW Portland garden space, install new gardens, and engage the community in the new garden spaces. These projects will be developed in partnership with HAKI Community Organization, Unite Oregon, and Neighborhood House.

Friends of Portland Community Gardens (*Friends*) has been another invaluable resource in identifying garden needs and opportunities throughout the west side, since their mission closely aligns with this initiative. *Friends* is a volunteer-run organization that promotes opportunities for all Portland-area residents to grow healthy food and build community around gardening. After an initial scoping meeting with WMSWCD's staff, *Friends* reached out to managers of community gardens across urban Portland and at new Safe Rest Villages (transitional housing for Portlanders living on the streets) to learn their needs. *Friends* volunteers came back to us with a thoughtful inventory of unmet needs at existing community gardens and a robust proposal that included creating raised garden beds at multiple houseless shelters.

Making use of a modest community garden grant from the District, *Friends* accomplished a great deal last year. It supported Gabriel Community Orchard by supplying needed tools just in time for harvest. It improved the accessibility of the pathway at Kingsley Park Community Garden in Linnton and built mobile garden beds at River District Navigation Center and Multnomah Village Safe Rest houseless shelters. These innovative raised beds on wheels enable gardening in small, paved outdoor spaces and make use of wood from invasive juniper trees removed elsewhere for habitat restoration.

Friends volunteers also expanded communal herb beds and supplied herb and vegetable plant starts, to support the Produce for People (PFP) program, at Front & Curry Community Garden and others. PFP is a Portland Parks & Recreation program that connects gardeners to food banks and pantries to share their harvest, which has been a source of thousands of pounds of fresh produce in years past. Lastly, *Friends* volunteers provided mentoring and education for three new gardeners to assist them in planning and caring for their Front & Curry garden plots.

The District looks forward to expanding our partnership with *Friends*, HAKI Community Organization, Unite Oregon, and Neighborhood House and supporting the valuable work they do. 🌱

With funding from WMSWCD, volunteers and partner organizations install and improve community gardens. Photos by Friends of Portland Community Gardens





PROJECT FEATURE

Understanding and Reducing the Causes and Impacts of Urban Heat

It is a priority of the West Multnomah Soil & Water Conservation District to promote resilient environments and communities in the face of climate change. According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, "climate change and heat islands interact in important ways. In many areas of the U.S., ... warming trends are intensifying already higher temperatures... [and are] expected to worsen heat islands in the future."

Heat islands occur in urban areas that have more pavement and fewer trees than outlying areas. Buildings and roads absorb and re-emit the sun's heat more than natural landscapes do. These pockets of heat, or *heat islands*, are dangerous to wildlife and humans. Heat islands contribute to higher daytime temperatures, reduced nighttime cooling, impaired water quality, and higher air-pollution levels, which add to the stressors urban wildlife already experience and lead to heat-related deaths and illnesses in humans. In 2020, Portland State University (PSU) researchers determined that of 108 U.S. cities studied, Portland had the highest temperature discrepancy between its wealthy and poor neighborhoods. These hotter neighbor-

In a 2020 study, PSU determined that Portland had the highest temperature discrepancy between its wealthy and poor neighborhoods.

hoods not only have the highest proportion of low-income people, but also people of color (Hoffman et al., 2020).

In partnership with PSU's Institute for Sustainable Solutions (ISS), the Louis Stokes Alliance for Minority Participation (LSAMP) program coordinates climate resilience, disaster preparedness, and water resources internships for undergraduate students from historically excluded groups that are majoring in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) disciplines. This year, we hosted our second PSU ISS LSAMP Climate Change Intern to help us assess needs and priorities. Specifically, we wanted to identify what niche we might fill that aligns with our mission and supports communities disproportionately impacted by the urban heat-island effect in central downtown and Portland Harbor Superfund areas such as Linnton.

Araon Sierras, our 2022 LSAMP intern, facilitated discussion with staff at 10 government and community organizations. We learned about the resources they offer and what they see as unmet needs and how we might work in partnership with them. City of Portland Urban Forestry, Fire & Rescue, and Bureau of Environmental Services, for example, inform

and provide resources to communities to increase green infrastructure, build resiliency to wildfires, and fund green projects (pending proper planning). Portland Harbor Community Coalition, Urban Greenspaces Institute, and Blueprint Foundation, on the other hand, help community members improve their natural environment, voice their concerns through proper channels, join the green workforce sector, and understand policies impacting green infrastructure.

After meeting with relevant organizations, the following were determined to be the most needed and District mission-aligned niches we can fill to improve the environment of communities impacted by urban heat-islands:

- Support installation of community gardens with funding, planning, partnerships, and education
- Facilitate collaboration among agencies and land-owners to protect, enhance, and increase green spaces and tree cover
- Partner with local coalitions, community groups, and leaders working to ensure the Portland Harbor cleanup will allow for additional restoration efforts and assist planning for habitat restoration of adjacent areas
- Support green workforce efforts focused on reducing urban heat, such as the Connecting Canopies Arborist Pre-Apprenticeship Program, with funding, identification of work sites, and opportunities to work together in the field
- Collaborate with local communities and coalitions to develop culturally-specific educational materials and events focused on "urban greening"

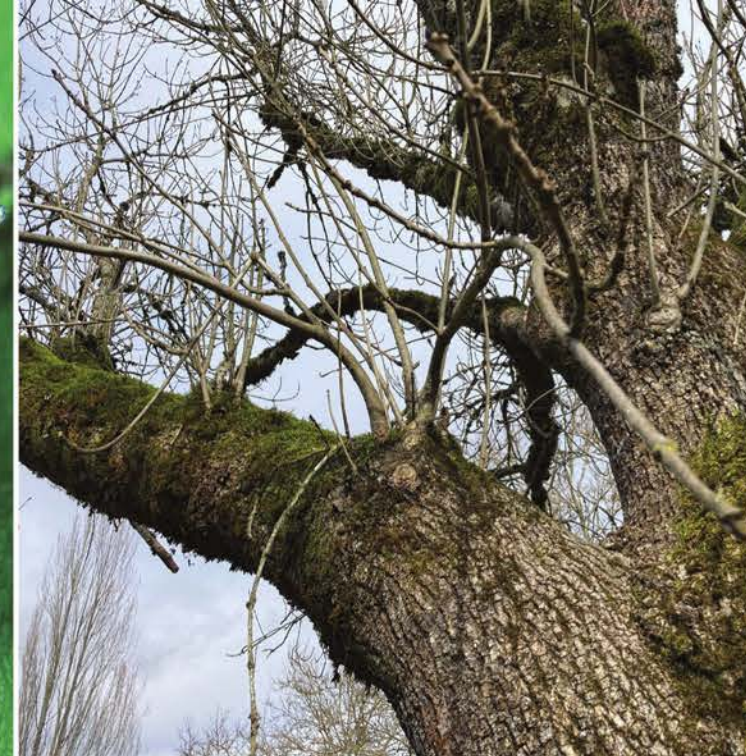
We also envision opportunities for the 10-year-old Stormwater Stars partnership (www.stormwaterstars.org) to better address urban heat. We can focus our hands-on workshop offerings in neighborhoods most impacted with the objective to decrease impervious surface, increase tree and garden coverage, and teach residents how to install such features. Our staff look forward to filling these priority niches, tapping newly identified resources, and deepening

Volunteers and neighbors work together to learn landscaping techniques that help manage stormwater. Photos courtesy of Stormwater Stars.



partnerships to build more resilient communities in the face of climate change. 🌱

Learn more about the Portland heat island study: (Voelkel et al., 2018). <https://www.mdpi.com/1660-4601/15/4/640> and (Hoffman et al., 2020) <https://www.mdpi.com/2225-1154/8/1/12>
And heat islands from EPA: <https://www.epa.gov/heatislands/climate-change-and-heat-islands>



Left Emerald ash borer adult with its wings open, showing its distinctive coppery red abdomen. Photo by David Cappaert, Michigan State University, Bugwood.org, CC BY-NC 3.0 **Right** EAB-infested ash tree with epicormic branching in response. Photo by WMSWCD.

NEWS *Slowing the spread of Emerald ash borer*

We regret to report that North America's most destructive forest pest, the emerald ash borer (EAB) (*Agrilus planipennis*) was discovered in Washington County, Oregon, in 2022 and has been slowly spreading. This non-native wood-boring beetle will devastate Oregon ash (*Fraxinus latifolia*), a critically important native tree in our riparian areas and forested wetlands. In some wetlands, there is no other native canopy-forming tree that grows in the same conditions.

Oregon has organized an impressive response to the arrival of EAB. The Oregon Emerald Ash Borer Task Force was formed with multiple sub-committees. The Oregon Departments of Forestry (ODF) and Agriculture (ODA) are taking the lead statewide, with on-the-ground involvement by many organizations at the local level. Our collective goal is to closely track where the beetle goes and **Slow Ash Mortality** ("SLAM"). Since our district is within 15 miles of the infestation, our staff is actively participating, especially in the arena of survey and monitoring.

What we are doing:

- Participating in monthly EAB task force meetings to share knowledge and resources .
- Checking for insects (every 2-3 weeks) at 8 traps we installed this spring in ash trees across the district. This is our 4th year using traps to look for newly arrived beetles. We work in tandem with our federal and state partners and neighboring jurisdictions / SWCDs.
- Monitoring ash trees on project sites and sharing data with colleagues via an ODA survey tool. Paying attention to dying ash tree canopies is important since it may mean an EAB infestation.
- Learning about the latest tactics being deployed in Washington County, including "trap trees," carefully selected insecticide, and parasitoid wasps that attack EAB.
- Asking everyone to map ash tree locations in Oregon at <https://www.inaturalist.org/projects/oregon-ash-survey-oregon>.
- Educating the public and advising landowners; let us know if you have questions or want to help! 🌱

UPDATE *Sturgeon Lake Restoration Project an ongoing success*



November 2023 marks the 5th anniversary of the completion of the Sturgeon Lake Restoration Project. Nearly 20 years in the making, the project restored the

Dairy Creek connection between the 3,000-acre floodplain-lake and the Columbia River, which had been clogged with debris in the major 1996 flood. Re-engineering 3,000 feet of channel and installing a bridge (now known as Bill's Crossing) at Reeder Road to fully span Dairy Creek have allowed fish access, daily tidal cycles, and water flow and circulation to and in the lake. By all measures, the project is a resounding success.

As part of the maintenance and monitoring plan created by the District and partners, the Columbia River Estuary Study Taskforce (CREST) and Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) survey and document changes to the banks and the bed of Dairy Creek. Data indicate stable conditions and no significant erosion or accumulation of sediment

that would impede flow. West Multnomah Soil & Water Conservation District's role has been to monitor priority aquatic and terrestrial invasive weeds along ~2,000 feet of Dairy Creek and around Sturgeon Lake—using both drone and kayak surveys. We also continue to monitor and control invasive weeds and add native plantings in the actively restored riparian zone of Dairy Creek. We re-planted 3,200 woody native plants, of 7 different species, in early 2023.

2023 data from the fish detector CREST and ODFW installed in 2020 continue to show Steelhead, Chinook, Coho and Sturgeon using Dairy Creek. It is especially exciting to see Sturgeon Lake's namesake fish returning to its waters. In fall 2023, a second device was installed a few hundred yards away to improve detection of fish and shed light on whether they are headed into or out of the lake. WMSWCD and partners are delighted by the significant positive outcomes of this project and will continue to monitor the many indicators of success and make any needed adaptations. 🌱

IN MEMORIAM

Remembering Dick Springer

We wish to recognize the contributions of a former District Manager, Richard "Dick" Springer, who passed away in April of 2023. Dick joined our staff and led a phase of growth after voters approved a tax base for the District in November 2006. The Sturgeon Lake Restoration Project was one of his priorities while he was on staff. He played an important role in relationship-building and public relations that led to critical project funding and an agreement with Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife for long term maintenance of the channel. He advocated for a partner funding program that now provides nearly \$200,000 to local partner organizations. These are just a few examples of Dick's accomplishments between 2006 and his retirement in 2015.



Status of Year 2 Performance Measures

Success Criteria	Year 2 Performance Measures	Project Specifics and Results	Status
Strategic Direction 1: Embed equity and inclusion in all that we are and all that we do.			
Internal staff and board diversification and capacity development.	Relationships developed with potential advisory committee members; Analysis of 2020 census and District demographic data completed.	Analysis of 2020 census and district demographic data is scheduled for completion by December of 2023. After this project is complete, the District will work with Portland State University Institute for Sustainable Solutions to recruit an intern to set up systems for internal staff and board demographic data collection and reporting.	 On Hold
Service benefits are increased for historically underserved communities.	Develop plans to address assessment findings. Complete website accessibility and other updates.	Staff determined the need for dedicated time to review programs with an equity lens towards addressing how service benefits might be more equitably distributed. Preliminary results of equity lens findings will be reflected in FY 2024 work plans and budgets. Website accessibility updates were completed.	 In Progress
Address any found disparities in our contracting, supplies, and/or procurements to ensure our expenditures are equitably distributed.	Evaluate the % of contracts and purchases from Diverse Suppliers registered through the State of Oregon Certification Office for Business Inclusion and Diversity (COBID) with respect to number and value awarded.	Contracted services, materials & supplies sourced from diverse supplier are now being tracked. Suppliers either hold State of Oregon Certification Office for Business Inclusion and Diversity (COBID) certifications or have self-reported with equivalent qualifications.	 Successful
Strategic Direction 2: Ensure we are welcoming, adaptable, supportive, viable, effective, and sustainable in our practices.			
Staff work-life balance	Create and evaluate realistic annual work plan; Ensure regular communication-feedback processes.	After many years of staffing stability, the District hired for 5 of 11 existing positions (a 45% turnover). The District will conduct a staff survey focused on organizational health, including topics like work-life balance and employee satisfaction, after all new staff are on board in September 2023. A significant revision of the employee handbook included a new leave policy aimed at empowering staff to manage work-life balance.	 In Progress
Safety	All incidents are reported in a timely manner with corrective and preventative action taken.	Corrective and preventative action taken to ensure staff safety this year includes monthly safety check-ins, annual earthquake drills, and quarterly office and vehicle hazard assessments.	 Successful
Efficiency and effectiveness	Maintain detailed job descriptions; Anticipate staff turnover and plan for an orderly succession of responsibilities; Identify and implement workflow auditing; Complete annual performance evaluations.	A new District Manager was hired December 2022, so performance evaluations will be moved to fall/winter 2023 (FY2024). Position descriptions were updated at time of new recruitments, including Conservation Technicians, District Manager, Budget and Fiscal Manager, Office Coordinator, and Outreach and Communications Coordinator (FY2024). New District Manager instituted regular check-ins with individual staff.	 Successful
Staff and board feel welcomed	Affinity group needs and potential partners are identified.	Reached out to neighboring soil and water conservation districts about affinity group opportunities and found others are interested. No groups have yet been formed.	 In Progress

Strategic Direction 3: Ensure we are financially sustainable.			
Remain fully compliant with all laws and regulations pertaining to public entities.	Independent audit of financial statements resulting in clean audit opinion and finding that District is in compliance with relevant laws and regulations.	The District remains compliant with budget laws and regulations. The independent audit for the 2022-2023 fiscal year will be completed by December 31, 2023.	 Successful
Use best practices for budgeting and forecasting, working to enhance revenues, contain costs, and allocate resources strategically.	Annually receive the Government Finance Officers Association's Distinguished Budget Presentation award.	The District received the Government Finance Officers Association's Distinguished Budget Presentation award for the third consecutive year.	 Successful
Strategic Direction 4: Share conservation information so people have the knowledge and confidence to take action.			
Understandable & culturally accessible	Complete CELs-guided communications plan.	The District worked with Community Engagement Liaisons (CELs) to develop more accessible marketing materials. CELs provided community-specific ideas for ways to better reach their communities.	 In Progress
Science-based credible information that includes other, non-dominant culture ways of knowing	10 conservation plans completed; Review feasibility of tribal liaison for board and/or staff.	The District worked with a tribal relations and Indigenous community engagement consultant to form a network with land-care organizations and Indigenous community members and leaders. The group is working collectively to support Indigenous land care and land access, and inform our work moving forward. Thirteen conservation plans were completed exceeding that component of this goal.	 In Progress
Strategic Direction 5: Protect and improve water quality and soil health.			
Cropland improved	30 acres per year	Staff advised 4 farm operators who indicated interest in soil-building. They signed agreements with the District, but did not seek reimbursement from the District's cover-crop cost-share program. Targeted outreach will be done in the coming fiscal year with the goal of adding more cover-crop acreage.	 Needs improvement/ Data not available
Stream length enhanced	Minimum 22,910 feet by Year 5	We maintained or enhanced 33,884 linear feet of riparian area: *~4 miles (20,668') of stream and pond shoreline at Healthy Streams & Special Habitats sites *3,000' on Dairy Creek (with 200' intensively re-planted) *~1/2 half mile (~2,640') along the Gilbert River (in year 2 of an OWEB small grant) * 7,556' along upper McCarthy Creek, a Rainbow Lake tributary, the Multnomah Channel, and surrounding a wetland complex	 Successful

Note: "Measures of Success" is the term used in the 2021-2025 Long Range Business Plan. We are now using "Performance Measures" to be consistent with our financial reporting.

Strategic Direction 6: Protect, enhance, and restore biodiversity, native landscapes, habitats, and ecological function.			
Nativehabitatsconserved,enhanced and/or restored	Secure 1 new priority habitat project.	In partnership with a private landowner and a duck hunting club, the District launched a new 6.5-acre project on Sauvie Island to enhance wetland habitat and plant more oaks and native shrubs. \$15,000 in grant funding was secured for this project through the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board. The District maintained and enhanced 52 acres of upland, wetland, and riparian habitat on Healthy Streams & Habitats sites and gave away more than 400 Oregon oak seedlings to 23 landowners. The District replanted an oak savanna restoration site that incurred damage by elk and a landslide on a steep slope. On Dairy Creek, the District maintained and replanted the 10-acres of riparian area restored as part of the Sturgeon Lake project. On a McCarthy Creek headwaters property, 0.7 acres were seeded with a diverse mix of native flowers for pollinators (in an area originally dominated by Armenian blackberry).	
Preventing and/or eliminating new invasive species threats	Annually survey at least 300 properties and respond to any detected priority Early Detection, Rapid Response (EDRR) species found quickly and collaboratively.	The District surveyed 3,900 acres for both aquatic and terrestrial target invasive plant species at over 350 sites. Of those acres surveyed, staff treated Early Detection-Rapid Response target species on the equivalent of 12.3 acres of area. Staff also monitored 8 different sites every 2 to 3 weeks from spring to fall for the invasive Emerald Ash Borer insect.	
Strategic Direction 7: Enhance the long-term health and productivity of farms, forests, woodlands, and gardens.			
Working forestlands and farms covered by conservation plans	Annually complete 6 conservation plans.	The District completed five farm and forest plans on a total of 152 acres. Two farm plans focused on soil health covered 86 acres, while three Forest Stewardship & Conservation Plans focused on forest health covered 66 acres. We didn't quite reach our goal of six plans due to limited capacity during staff and organizational transitions.	
School and community gardens receiving technical or financial assistance	Annually support 6 school and/or community gardens.	The District exceeded goals this year, supporting seven community gardens at Queer Affinity Safe Rest Village, Multnomah Village Safe Rest Village, River District Navigation Center, Kingsley Community Garden, Front & Curry Garden, Gabriel Orchards, and Jackson Middle School.	

Strategic Direction 8: Promote resilient environments and communities in the face of climate change.			
Wildfire risk reduction	Develop partnerships.	The District developed strong partnerships with Portland Fire & Rescue, Forest Park Conservancy, and neighbors in high wildfire-risk areas. We completed plans focused on wildfire risk reduction, implemented fuels-reduction work on priority Linnton Firewise projects, and provided outreach and information at an education event at the World Forestry Center.	
Reduce heat island impacts for those most vulnerable	Develop partnerships.	The District developed new partnerships and identified key niches for our climate change work. We hosted a Portland State University Institute for Sustainable Solutions Climate Change Intern who helped with this work and presented a poster showcasing these partnerships and the priority niches we intend to fill.	
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.			
People have ways to connect with the land	Implement school and community garden programming.	The District successfully implemented priority education nichefindingrecommendationstofundculturallyspecific and BIPOC-serving land-based education programs delivered through partner organizations. We actively reached out to and recruited new partners to apply, hosted an informational session, and revised our funding rubric to realize this goal.	
People have access to land	Facilitate and support land access for cultural benefits.	The District secured external funding to increase residents' access to garden space to grow culturally specific and fresh foods through a \$200,000 Peoples Garden Grant from U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service/Farm Service Agency. We continue to working actively with Unite Oregon & HAKI Community Organization.	
Strategic Direction 10: Ensure the long-term success of our conservation actions.			
Monitor restoration sites and respond to findings	Annually monitor all sites that require it to inform (adaptive) management and/or to meet reporting requirements or document success.	On 33 sites, the District monitored for native planting survival, weed pressure, quality of contractor work performed, and overall project success. 11 of the sites are served by our Forest Conservation services, and the other 22 by our Streams & Wetland services. Our monitoring methods now maximize limited staff time. We prioritize sites and types of data that will inform adaptive management or fulfill reporting or documentation requirements.	
Maintain and secure long-term agreements	2 total agreements held & maintained (Sturgeon Lake & McCarthy Creek).	The District completed a long-term Dairy Creek legal easement agreement for the Sturgeon Lake Restoration Project. With our key project partner, we clarified roles and responsibilities around easements within the Greater Forest Park Conservation Initiative. We continue to maintain and improve the habitat at a large project site on McCarthy Creek. On this project, over 4,000 total plants were installed this year, 15 acres were enhanced, and 4,000 linear feet of stream and pond were enhanced or maintained.	

The Numbers in Review



\$237,225
To on-the-ground projects



13
Conservation plans completed



183 acres
Of native habitat enhanced



83
Partners engaged



664
Residents and land managers served



524 people
Served at outreach events



1,229 people
Served by educational opportunities



29,867
Native plants installed

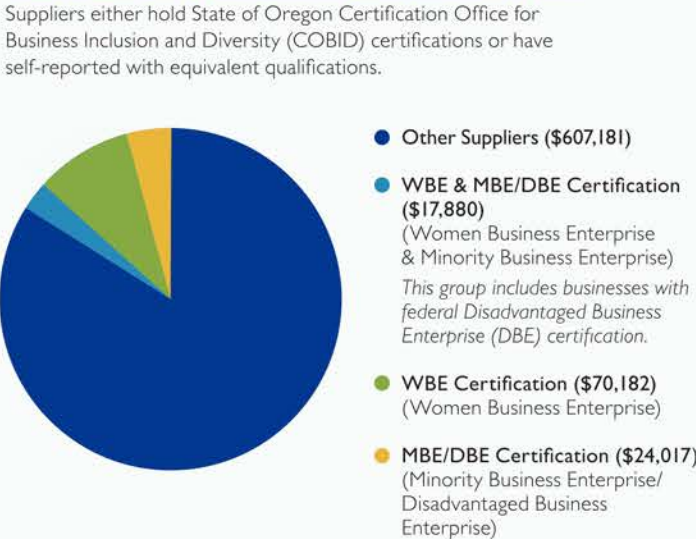


3,900 acres
Surveyed for priority invasive plants



\$196,300
In support of partner projects

Materials & Supplies sourced from Diverse Suppliers



Partners Funded in Year 2

	FY 23
Camp ELSO, Inc	6,500
Cascade Pacific RC&D, Inc.	4,500
Clackamas SWCD	7,500
Columbia Land Trust	30,500
Ecology in Classrooms & Outdoors NW	10,000
Forest Park Conservancy	30,000
Friends of Tryon Creek	9,800
Neighbors West-Northwest	33,000
Portland Harbor Community Coalition	4,500
Sauvie Island Center	10,000
Scappoose Bay Watershed Council	10,000
The Blueprint Foundation	11,000
Tryon Creek Watershed Council (TCWC)	29,000
TOTAL PARTNER SUPPORT	\$196,300

FEATURED BOARD MEMBER

George Sowder

George Sowder asks important questions of West Multnomah Soil & Water Conservation District (WMSWCD) and the future of conservation in our region.

George grew up in Bend, Oregon, and St. Paul, Minnesota. His father worked for the U.S. Forest Service, and the agency's model of managing forests for multiple uses, including ecosystem services, recreation, and timber supply, helped to shape George's values around how we use the land.

After moving to the forest in the Skyline neighborhood in 1971, George experienced the conversion of commercial forest into rural residential properties. He wanted to promote the ecological and economic health of the area and discovered that serving as a board member for WMSWCD was one way to do this.

When he joined the Board in 1999, the District was a far cry from its current configuration; there was only 1 staff member and a very limited budget to support its work. When George learned that the historic role of soil and water conservation districts was to help farmers conserve agricultural soils, he wondered how WMSWCD could serve his largely forested zone. George knew folks up on the ridge struggling to meet their economic needs

while supporting forest health and complying with the Forest Practices Act.

This awareness led George to advocate for the creation of a Forest Conservationist position on staff when the District received a tax base in 2006, which provided the means to increase our capacity to serve constituents. His vision was that the Forest Conservationist would work

with landowners to develop forest stewardship plans that meet legal requirements and contribute to wildlife habitat, watershed health, and sustainable forestry. Although the District was already providing some services to forest landowners, this vision came to full fruition in 2010 when the District hired its first Forest Conservationist, an important position that continues to this day. And, George was a

valuable member of the team that recruited and hired our new forest conservationist in 2022.

WMSWCD is still one of only a few soil and water conservation districts in Oregon with a forestry-focused staff member, despite the large number of small family-owned forests across the state. With 75 forest stewardship plans covering nearly 2,500 acres completed to date and more on the way, our Forestry Services are a lasting legacy of George's forward- and big-picture thinking. 🌲





WEST MULTNOMAH LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Kathy Pendergrass, Plant Materials Specialist for the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), has been a source of botanical expertise for Oregon soil and water conservation districts over the years. West Multnomah Soil & Water Conservation District has benefitted greatly from her patient instruction and trainings on plant identification and survey techniques, plus her many technical guides and plant keys. She helped us conduct field surveys, learn grasses and rare plants, and create the best seed and plant mixes for our sites—whether for wildlife, erosion control or livestock forage benefits.

Kathy’s career spans more than 32 years, including as botanist and ecologist for the U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, Fish and Wildlife Service and (18 years at) NRCS. Kathy has made those who worked with her into more expert and thoughtful conservationists. She is moving toward “retirement” soon but we expect to find her out in the prairies sharing wisdom and studying, appreciating, and conserving native plants—including at her “little house on the prairie” in Portland. It has been a distinct pleasure to have Kathy as a colleague and mentor, and to now recognize her lifetime of botanical achievements!



Friends of Portland Community Gardens

URBAN COOPERATOR AWARD

The **Friends of Portland Community Gardens** has done exemplary work in our District to support and expand community gardening. Members of this all-volunteer, non-profit organization thoroughly assessed existing and sought-after garden spots in our District to identify needs. Through the partnerships they built and the work they performed, they substantially increased garden access and functionality for a diverse group of residents. This included provision of ADA-accessible beds, new pathways, and needed tools. New gardens were built at houseless and transition shelters serving many people with the healing benefits of gardening and the health benefits of fresh food. Their ingenious design and work crafting juniper trees removed elsewhere for restoration into garden carts on wheels allows gardening in paved and limited spaces. Their industrious volunteers grew and delivered hundreds of organic spring and summer vegetable starts to community gardeners to grow out and donate across the city. Those gardeners then sent thousands of pounds of harvested produce to local food banks and kitchens serving residents in need.



GOVERNMENT PARTNER AWARD



Portland Fire and Rescue’s **Kim Kosmas** (above, left) has been critical to coordinating and implementing wildfire risk reduction efforts in our District. Kim and her team have conducted on-site door-to-door outreach and home assessments to help residents reduce the risk of wildfires. Portland Fire and Rescue has also been working with entire neighborhoods to help them become “Firewise Communities.” The District, Linnton Neighborhood, Portland Parks & Recreation, Portland Fire and Rescue, and Forest Park Conservancy have worked closely together to implement fuel reduction events that help remove ladder fuels such as ivy and clematis as well as brush fuels like blackberry in high priority areas. Kim and her team have been a force in getting people informed and engaged in wildfire risk reduction work in their neighborhoods.



RURAL COOPERATOR AWARD

Hans Koch has been working diligently to restore his forested property for the past five years. When he first moved onto the land up in the Tualatin Mountains, there were a few fields interspersed with young brushy forest dominated by invasive English hawthorn, holly, and Armenian blackberry. With a bit of support from West Multnomah Soil & Water Conservation District and USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, Hans has cleared away much of the invasive brush, thinned the trees to a more healthy spacing, and planted hundreds of native trees and pollinator-friendly shrubs. Hans does much of the planting and maintenance work himself, and is highly engaged with us to learn the best practices for success. His hard work is paying off with many of the first trees he planted in the fields now growing taller than him. We’re excited about his newest project to plant an oak savannah in another field on the property. 🌲

Financial Summary

Balance Sheet - Governmental Funds

JUNE 30, 2023

Assets	
Cash and Investments	\$ 1,690,844
Accounts Receivable	9,824
Property Taxes Receivable	51,196
Other current assets	2,673
TOTAL ASSETS	\$1,754,537
Liabilities	
Accounts Payable	\$ 72,590
TOTAL LIABILITIES	72,590
Deferred Inflows of Resources	
Deferred Property Tax Revenue	41,676
TOTAL DEFERRED INFLOWS OF RESOURCES	41,676
Fund Balance	
Assigned for Sturgeon Lake	93,576
Unassigned	1,546,695
TOTAL FUND BALANCE	1,640,271
TOTAL LIABILITIES, DEFERRED INFLOWS OF RESOURCES, AND FUND BALANCE	\$1,754,537

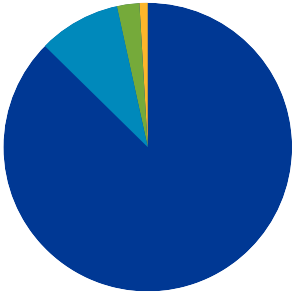
The audit of our fiscal year 2022-2023 financial statements was in process at press time. The above fund statements are not audited. The District fiscal year 2022-2023 Audit Report will be available at the Conservation District office before December 31, 2023.

Statement of Revenues, Expenditures and Changes in Fund Balances - Governmental Funds

FOR THE YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2023

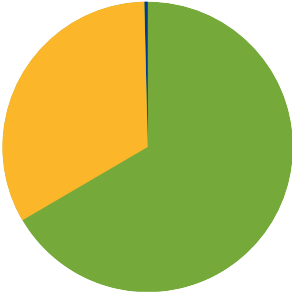
Revenues	
Property Tax Levy	\$ 2,044,132
Federal, State, and Local Grants	220,304
Interest Income	53,448
Other Income	21,237
TOTAL REVENUES	2,339,121
Expenditures	
Conservation and Support Personnel Services	1,453,165
Materials and Services	
Conservation Programs, Education, and Outreach	489,286
Operations	232,802
Total Materials and Services	722,088
Conservation and Support Personnel Services	9,687
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	2,184,940
Change in Fund Balance	154,181
Fund Balance, Beginning of Year	1,486,090
FUND BALANCE, END OF YEAR	\$1,640,271

Revenues



- Property tax levy \$2,044,132
- Federal, state, and local grants \$220,304
- Interest income \$53,448
- Other income \$21,237

Expenditures



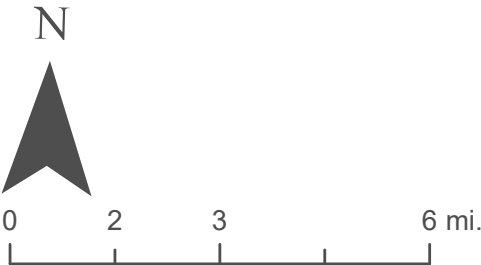
- Conservation and Support Personnel Services \$1,453,165
- Materials and Services \$722,088
- Capital Outlay \$9,687

Skipper and Common wood nymph (Cercyonis pegala) butterflies enjoy flower nectar on Bloomer's goldenbush (Ericameria bloomeri).

Osprey in flight

District Conservation Projects

2022–2023



PROJECT TYPE

- Canopy weed removal (10)
- Education and demonstration projects (9)
- Farmland conservation (5)
- Oak habitat restoration (9)
- Pollinator habitat enhancement (3)
- Stormwater improvement (6)
- Stream and pond restoration (24)
- Wetland restoration (8)
- Woodland restoration (25)
- Priority weed control (354)
- Streams and rivers
- Forest Park & Tryon Creek State Natural Area



Riparian forest along Multnomah Channel

PROJECT TYPE

DESCRIPTION

Canopy weed removal

Projects include sites where partners, with support from WMSWCD, have removed invasive ivy or clematis from trees.

Education and demonstration projects

Projects help schools and communities develop and care for edible and native habitat gardens and expand environmental education opportunities.

Farmland conservation

Projects may involve cover-cropping and other soil health practices that help farmers and livestock owners build healthy soil, promote beneficial pollinators and other wildlife, and conserve and protect water.

Oak habitat restoration

Projects aim to enhance or restore Oregon white oak woodlands and savanna, and can involve weed control; planting of oaks and associated trees, shrubs, grasses and wildflowers; wildlife habitat structures; and removal of competing Douglas fir.

Pollinator habitat enhancement

Projects include establishing native plant hedgerows and other habitat features that provide nectar, pollen, and nesting resources for native bees and other pollinators throughout the growing season.

Stormwater improvement

Projects include rain gardens, pavement removal, porous walkways, soil restoration, converting lawn to a diversity of native plants, erosion control, and detention basins. They contribute to watershed health by filtering pollutants and reducing the volume of water runoff and sediment in streams from storm events.

Stream and pond restoration

Projects include controlling invasive blackberry, reed canary grass, or other invasive weeds along streams and around ponds, and planting native trees, shrubs, and herbaceous plants to help shade streams, improve water quality, stem bank erosion, and improve habitat.

Wetland restoration

Projects involve significant wetland restoration, which may include earthmoving to improve hydrology, controlling weeds, and restoring native vegetation.

Woodland restoration

Projects may include treating invasive weeds, addressing erosion concerns, planting trees and shrubs on forested land, and thinning trees to reduce competition.

Priority weed control

Projects include sites where high priority invasive species such as garlic mustard and knotweed were found and controlled through the Early Detection Rapid Response (EDRR) program.

Back cover (Clockwise from top left) Gabriel Community Orchard members use harvest and pruning tools provided with support from Friends & a WMSWCD small grant (photo by Friends of Portland Community Gardens); Douglas spirea at WMSWCD wetland restoration site; chickadee bird box in bigleaf maple tree on Sauvie Island; local slug enjoys moisture on the leaves of an inside-out flower (*Vancouveria hexandra*) plant on a rainy day.



WEST MULTNOMAH
Soil & Water Conservation District

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