

2020-2021 Annual Report



CLACKAMAS SOIL AND WATER
CONSERVATION DISTRICT
www.conservationdistrict.org

Good dirt. Clean water.

Conservation by the Numbers

Fiscal Year 2020-2021



Provided phone and email assistance to **683** Clackamas County residents



Sent invasive weed and oak information to **1,412** county residents



Completed **484** site visits including weed surveys and treatments



Connected with **1007** Facebook followers



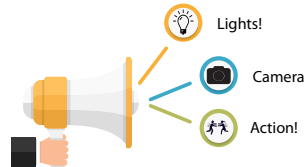
2,144 acres treated for invasive weeds



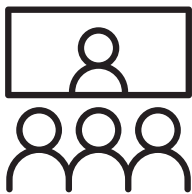
267 Subscribers to monthly newsletter



Partnered with **85** organizations



Produced **11** educational videos



Hosted or co-hosted **3** online workshops



Uploaded **62** posts on the District's website



22 conservation plans developed



25 Conservation Projects Completed



39,279 Weed observations tracked



Maintained **1,577** permissions to access

Message from the General Manager

I had the privilege of joining Clackamas Soil and Water Conservation District as the new General Manager in December. I was excited to bring my experience from the U.S Fish and Wildlife Service to work with District staff and grow already successful conservation programs for residents of Clackamas County.

You could say that my arrival into the position was in a year unlike any other and I would be hard tasked to find fulfillment. The Pacific Northwest experienced one of its most destructive wildfire seasons on record, the County was hit by a significant ice storm causing widespread damage, and an intense heat dome settled in the area shattering record high temperatures, all amid a global pandemic. This would make even the most dedicated individual feel overwhelmed and discouraged. Instead, I witnessed resilience and commitment from the people of Clackamas County, supported by a dedicated District staff, to power through one obstacle after another.

It was satisfying to work among staff determined to continue to achieve accomplishments while working remotely. They balanced home life commitments and maintained program delivery for community members.

Notables include:

- Development of video resources, in lieu of in-person workshops, delivering information on Best Management Practices for erosion control for agricultural operations, as well as manure and pasture management for horse owners, all to benefit water quality.
- Commitment to oak conservation as an active steering committee member of the Regional Oak Prairie Working Group.
- Expansion of the Septic Loan Program for failing systems that impact water quality.
- Investment in invasive species control and road improvements for our Eagle Creek Community Forest.

Conservation success does not occur in a vacuum and the District gains strength through a wide variety of partners. We became stronger this year by finishing the leasing process so the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service and Farm Services Agency can move into our new Conservation Resource Center.

We are fortunate to have strong support and leadership from our board. It is this support and the staff's passion that enabled us to find solutions to obstacles. We are here to make a difference in our community.

Chris Lapp



Conservation Planning Highlights



Heavy Use Areas

Technical assistance and grant funding allowed two small acreage landowners to complete equine [Heavy Use Areas](#) (HUAs) in the early summer of 2021.

Local, heavy clay soils and long, wet seasons result in soil compaction, muddy paddocks, and degraded pastures. Installing HUAs and using [good management](#) can prevent these problems. HUAs create firm, dry footing using compacted crushed aggregate, underlaid with non-woven geotextile. This creates a place to keep horses off pastures.

Rested winter pastures grow deep roots, reducing soil compaction and increasing rainwater infiltration. In spring, a rotational pasture grazing system can resume.



Busy Year

A global pandemic, fire, ice, and excessive heat increased requests for assistance this year. Extra time at home and damage to crops and property kept producers and land managers busy tackling problems with the assistance of the planning team.

Over 200 Clackamas residents took advantage of our services this year.

*“Committed to
Customer Service”*



Protecting Riparian Areas - One at a Time

The [Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program](#) (CREP) is active again in Clackamas County! CREP is a voluntary program that provides financial and technical assistance to restore riparian buffers.

[Riparian areas](#) are the interface between land and water. These areas provide critical habitat for wildlife and preserve cool water temperatures by providing shade, erosion control, filtration, and bank stabilization.

This year, 14.2 acres were protected by re-enrolling two landowners back into the program. Eight new landowners are enrolling so an additional 50 acres will be restored to a riparian forest in the coming year.

Conservation Planning Highlights



Icy Opportunity

The ice storm that hit in February 2021 left many people with damaged trees and without power. Many of those damaged trees were Oregon white oaks. As a result, we received many calls for help. We used this great opportunity to teach people about oak habitats. Happily, we even ended up with a new restoration project!

Restoring Habitat

Less than 10% of [Oregon white oak habitat](#) remains in the Willamette Valley, more than 95% on private lands. To reach properties with the best potential for restoration, we used the regional [Oakquest](#) mapping data.



We assisted 32 landowners and completed over 60 site visits. Work continued on 18 project sites accounting for over 243 acres in both rural and urban areas.

We thank the multiple funders that support our oak projects. Funded practices include 103.3 acres of weed control, 13.3 acres of thinning to provide more sunlight for oaks, 9.9 acres of native grass and wildflowers seeding, and 23.6 acres of oak tree and associated shrub plantings.

Irrigation Efficiency

Our water conservation efforts were supported this year by a National Assn. of Conservation Districts' grant and USDA [Conservation Implementation Strategy](#) (CIS) funds to reduce surface and groundwater depletion in the lower Pudding and Molalla River, Wilsonville/Sherwood, and Glad Tidings groundwater limited areas.

A project example is converting hand-line irrigation to a drip irrigation system in conjunction with soil health practices like cover cropping and reduced tillage.

Additionally, we enrolled folks in the [USDA Conservation Stewardship Program](#) designed to help those already practicing good conservation measures to continue.



WeedWise Program Highlights



Control on Urban Sites

Funding limitations threatened WeedWise's ongoing garlic mustard treatments on urban sites in [Lake Oswego](#). However, the city recognized the value of this work and awarded the

WeedWise team a Habitat Enhancement Program grant.

The project resulted in 119 sites with over 220 acres being treated. Garlic mustard was the focus but [oblong spurge](#) and [sulphur cinquefoil](#) were also controlled.

Added support from [Tryon Creek Watershed Council](#), [Oswego Lake Watershed Council](#), and [Oregon Parks and Recreation Department](#) made the project a success and an excellent example of collaboration to protect natural resources at a landscape scale.



Cooperative Weed Management Areas (CWMAs)

"Cooperative" is the keyword for these partnerships. CWMAs focus on improving the management of invasive weeds between nearly fifty organizations.

We manage the [4-County CWMA](#) and [Columbia Gorge CWMA](#).

"WeedWise is pulling for you!"



A Weed in the Wilderness

Since 2017, WeedWise has been assisting the [Oregon Department of Agriculture](#) with a remote infestation of [orange hawkweed](#) along the Burnt Lake Trail in the Mt. Hood Wilderness. This was the only [Class A noxious weed](#) known to the wilderness area, making it high a priority for treatment.

Reaching this 5.5-acre infestation was no easy task. It took 12 hours for staff and ODA Invasive Plant Specialist, Beth Myers-Shenai to drive, hike to, and treat this isolated patch of invasive weeds. The result of this partnership is a dramatically decreased population and density of this priority weed in our beautiful mountain meadows.

WeedWise Program Highlights



Opportunities Found

The COVID-19 closures in 2020 were disappointing, but in the upper Clackamas Watershed, they became an opportunity.

The Weedwise team took full advantage of the [Forest Service campground and trailhead](#) closures in the summer of 2020 to complete additional invasive weed surveys and treatments.

As a result, two large [false brome](#) populations were discovered and treated, preventing further spread. The plant was found spreading along the Collawash River in the Raab Campground, and along 5 miles of trail in the Fish Creek drainage.

Take that, false brome!



Community Science

Our success relies upon the cooperation of Clackamas County residents. We appreciate reports of new and priority noxious weeds using the [Oregon Invasive Species Hotline](#) or our new [Priority Weeds of Clackamas County project](#) on [iNaturalist](#).

Thanks to all community scientists!

Wildfire Response

The wildfires that ravaged Clackamas County in 2020 quickly shifted the activities of the WeedWise program. We were called upon to develop the noxious weed portion of the [Erosion Threat Assessment/Reduction Team Reports](#) for the Beachie Creek and Riverside Fires.

This planning effort helped to direct recovery activities within the burn area. The WeedWise program is actively participating in this ongoing effort to fight the encroachment of invasive weeds on impacted portions of the county, allowing these sensitive lands to recover.

This experience has increased our working knowledge of post-fire responses.



2020-2021 Financial Highlights



Partner Support Grants

This year the District awarded \$42,000 in partner support grants to eight watershed councils. These grants help cover operational and administrative costs essential for day-to-day operations.

Local watershed councils share District goals and values and make a significant positive impact on the local environment, economy, and community.

During the construction of the [Conservation Resource Center](#) and acquisition of the [Eagle Creek Community Forest](#), the District had to shift priorities and resources to maintain the high level of service we provide. With careful planning and a conservative spending approach, the District is on a trajectory to be able to once again fund the Watershed Council Grants at capacities more consistent with past allocations.

End of Year Financial Report

	General Fund	Conservation Fund	Conservation Loan Fund	Working Lands Legacy Fund	Building Reserve Fund
Additions	417,882		65,255		
Revenues	2,607,760	125,965	125,326	831	0
Total Revenues	3,025,642	125,965	190,581	831	0
Subtractions	2,046,384	235,187	123,844	0	17,408
Debt Service	565,386				
Total Expenditures	2,611,770	235,187	123,844	0	17,408
Balance	413,872	(109,222)	66,737	831	(17,408)
Other Sources					
Transfer In/Out	100,146	6,339	(106,485)	0	0
Net Change	514,018	(102,883)	(39,748)	831	(17,408)
Beginning Fund Balance	1,101,717	292,837	146,694	104,327	17,408
Ending Fund Balance	1,615,735	189,954	106,946	105,158	0

Audited Numbers for Fiscal Year Ending June 2021

2020-2021 Financial Highlights



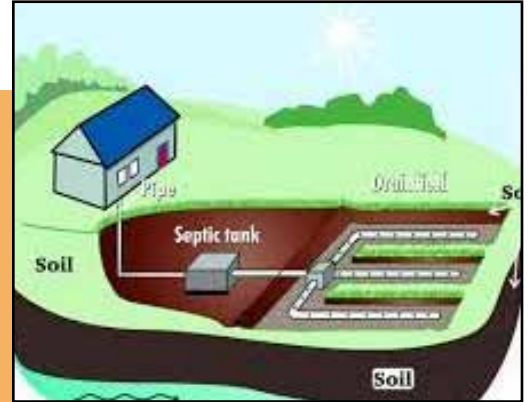
Building Reserve Fund

The Building Reserve Fund was created to save funds over several years for a permanent District office.

This fund was dissolved at the end of the Fiscal Year upon completion of the Conservation Resource Center.

Loans for Conservation

[Clean Water State Revolving Fund](#) (CWSRF) loans through the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) allowed the District to offer low or no-interest loans to landowners for implementing conservation practices.



This year, the District distributed the remaining available funds from DEQ, putting over \$200,000 on the ground for conservation practices in Clackamas County over the life of the loan. The District recoups funds through regular landowner repayments. Those funds may be used for future project loans or repayments to DEQ.

The District also completed another CWSRF loan of \$250,000, used specifically for the [repair or replacement of failing septic systems](#). Over fifteen loans to landowners directly promoted cleaner watersheds.

Backyard Habitat Certification

The District supports the [Backyard Habitat Certification Program](#) (BHCP) in Clackamas County. We assist with expenses associated with carrying out the program in Gladstone, Oregon City, and the unincorporated portions of the county.



Heather and Michael in Lake Oswego

In 2020-21, BHCP habitat technicians conducted 210 site assessments on newly enrolled properties (59 acres) and certified 58 properties (17 acres). Participants consisted of homeowners, local businesses like Queen Bee Flowers, schools such as Little House Preschool, parks such as Greentree and Rossman Park, community sites such as Milwaukie Historical Society Museum, and HOAs such as Vista Heights HOA.

Education and Outreach



Video Outreach

It was clear that in-person workshops were not possible this year. However, the need for education and outreach remained high, especially with so many people

staying home and wanting to work on their properties.

One solution was to produce videos that would reach folks in their homes, at a time convenient to them.

We partnered with the [Clackamas River Water Providers](#) and the [Oregon Department of Agriculture](#) to produce an erosion control series that highlights applicable practices from the construction industry.

Another series covered manure, pasture management, and heavy use areas. All videos are found on our [Vimeo](#) site.



Women Farmers Plant Undies

This year 14 women farmers in Clackamas County buried cotton underwear to learn about soil health.

Unfortunately, the anticipated “after” photos and data collection were interrupted by unprecedented wildfires in our county. Many local farmers were affected.

“Flexibility and Resilience—our words for this year.”



Our Online Footprint

Social media is a communication tool that helps us reach our widest possible audience. Research shows that most people engage in social media daily or multiple times a day.

Our social media posts reach people who have “liked” us, but also people who have never heard of our organization. It allows us to support and leverage our relationships with partners and colleagues within the District, state, and region, to regularly reach up to 10,000 viewers. This has been especially valuable in getting out timely information on wildfire and ice damage resources, as well as information about our many programs and services. Top posts this year focused on wildfire resources, septic system assistance, and ice storm information.

Highlights



Small Farm School

As luck would have it, the [2020 Small Farm School](#) event was scheduled for fall. This allowed time to develop a virtual event in light of the COVID -19 restrictions for safety.



Sessions were provided as webinars twice weekly on Tuesday and Thursday evenings (6:30 – 8:00 p.m.) from September through mid-November.

The event was successful and well-received among the 269 participants. A record-breaker for attendance!

Eighteen virtual sessions were offered and 17 scholarships or discounts were awarded to BIPOC *, Veterans, Rogue Farm Corps, Headwaters Farm, and students.

*Black, Indigenous, People of Color

Educational Resources

Offering information via articles, factsheets, and workshops was a top goal. Local newspapers, partnership efforts, and electronic events helped with the delivery. Hot topics: stream erosion, manure management, wildlife habitat, cover crops, septic system maintenance, and damaged tree care.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

District staff, with the support of board members and administrators, formed a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Team to examine the District's culture and programs to learn how to make our services more equitable to members of our community.



The team joined other local soil and water conservation districts to share resources and strategies for educating and raising awareness with our staff and board members. We are developing goals to continue our journey of understanding.

Together we will reach our potential for providing services to all who live in Clackamas County.

Conservation Initiatives Highlights



Molalla River Project

The [Molalla River Drinking Water Project](#) focused on identifying issues that affect Molalla River water quality, the source of drinking water for ~26,000 people.

Available data, along with public and agency input, was used to tell the story of Molalla River water quality and to assess where the investment of resources would provide the best improvement and protection of water quality.

Sediment, water temperature, harmful algal blooms, hazardous materials and spills, and bacteria (E. coli) were identified as the highest priority issues to address.

We may request future funding to fix problems in the watershed if enough landowners are willing to participate.



Lease space for USDA Partners

USDA [Natural Resources Conservation Service](#) and [Farm Service Agency](#) have leased the space to join us at the [Conservation Resource Center](#) in Beaver Creek.

We will again be a one-stop venue for conservation in Clackamas County.

“Incentives like WHCMP are critical for healthy habitat on private lands.”



Wildlife Tax Incentive Program

Along with neighboring Soil and Water Conservation Districts and the [Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife](#), we have coordinated efforts to make the [Wildlife Habitat Conservation Management Program](#) (WHCMP) tax deferrals available for new enrollments.

Landowners having acreage more suitable to habitat than to farming would also be able to manage for this important land use without fear of tax penalties. The tax deferral also would help offset the cost of long-term maintenance. This is an important tool we can use to protect vital [Oregon Conservation Strategy](#) habitats like oak prairies and associated woodlands on private lands providing public benefits.

Welcomes and Farewells

This year we welcomed a new General Manager to the District. Chris Lapp was chosen from a large pool of highly qualified candidates. He began his service at the District just in time for our budget development. It was with great determination and patience that he absorbed the details of the process and successfully delivered his first budget message after only three months on the job.

Chris spent 29 years with the US Fish and Wildlife Service at Wildlife Refuges across the western United States. His management experience and good nature are a great match for our District.

Welcome, Chris!



Also this year we welcomed Drew Donahue to our staff. As our Multi-County Riparian Technician, Drew works with landowners in Clackamas, Yamhill, and Marion Counties to promote, enroll, establish, and monitor riparian buffers under the USDA Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP). Before joining the District, Drew worked at the Confluence Environmental Center in Portland as an AmeriCorps member. There she was a riparian specialist working in collaboration with long-time District partner Johnson Creek Watershed Council. She has been a terrific addition to our team. Welcome, Drew!

It was with fond memories that we said goodbye to Eann Rains who retired from the Clackamas Soil and Water Conservation District this year. Eann held a wealth of District history as she finished her 13th year at Clackamas SWCD and overall 25 years of service to Oregon Soil and Water Conservation Districts. Eann ran the District's septic system program, equipment rental program, and was an instrumental member of the budget team. This barely covers the many other duties she faithfully undertook. We sorely miss her.



Also retiring this year was Doug Fenwick, our part-time Engineering Technician. Before he retired from the federal system, Doug was a civil engineering technician for the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service in Washington state. He retired in 2008 but loved the work so much that in 2012 he started working with us. Doug was instrumental in our large riparian restoration projects and assisted the conservation planners with many projects that required his expertise. We all miss Doug's broad knowledge of history and science, but especially his sense of humor.

Best wishes Eann and Doug, for a happy and healthy retirement!

As the growing season began, Conservation Specialist Matt VanWey left the District to become a full-time farmer. Matt joined his wife Jennifer to focus on their Quackenbush Farm, a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) operation in Eagle Creek. Produce and meat from their farm is sold at several local farmers' markets. Matt was at the District for 4.5 years and brought firsthand, small-farm expertise to our team. Good luck on your farm, Matt!



It was with great excitement that a lease was finally signed for the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service and the Farm Services Agency to join us in their new home at the Conservation Resource Center.

Welcome, USDA!

Board of Directors

Clackamas Soil and Water Conservation District

--Board of Directors--

Jeff Becker (Zone 3) Chair

Jesse Nelson (Zone 1) Vice Chair **Jim Johnson** (Zone 2)

Don Guttridge (Zone 5) Secretary **Joan Zuber** (Zone 4)

Roger Fantz (At-Large) Treasurer **Jan Lee** (At-Large)

--Associate Directors--

John Keith

PK Melethil

Anna Rankin

--Directors Emeritus--

Ron Oberg

Michael Weinberg

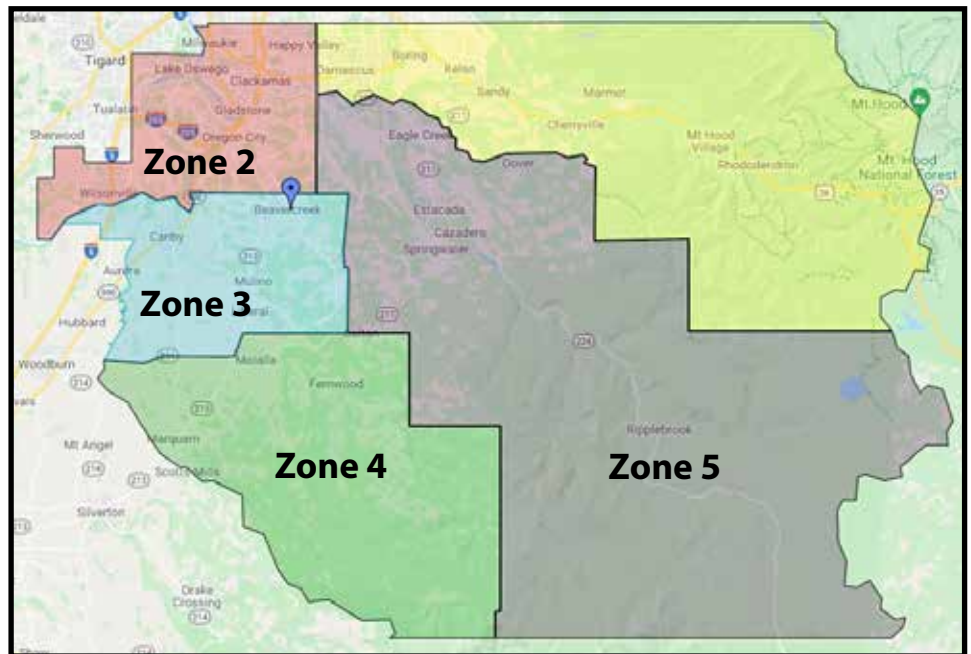
Message from the Chair

As we endure the continuing constraints and precautions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, I see uncertainty and concern transforming into resolve and direction. Through all the upheaval, our values and mission of the District remain intact.

A year of “fire and ice” serves to reinforce the significant resources the District can offer to those seeking answers and support in their soil and water conservation efforts.

The annual report allows us a chance to evaluate and applaud our effectiveness while recognizing the challenges and responsibilities that help define our work.

I continue to be impressed by the involvement of our many partners. The District continues these essential relationships that are so necessary to accomplish the tasks we face.



This report also gives me the opportunity to thank the staff and Board of Directors. The staff of CSWCD displays an inspiring skill set that so often exceeds any defined job description. They are all talented in so many ways. The Board continues to navigate leadership, oversight, and accountability to help the District reach both its goals and potential.

As our world evolves, the District repeatedly displays the flexibility to respond to changing needs and adapt to maintain our effectiveness.

District Staff

Chris Lapp - General Manager

Tami Guttridge - Office Administrator

Nathan Tucker - Fiscal Administrator

Drew Donahue - Multi-County Riparian Specialist

Eann Rains - Conservation Investments Program Coordinator

Lindsey Karr - WeedWise Specialist

Courtney Gattuso - WeedWise Specialist

Justin Cooley - WeedWise Specialist

Sam Leininger - WeedWise Program Manager

Clair Klock - Senior Resource Conservationist

Matt VanWey - Conservation Specialist

Scott Eden - Conservation Specialist

Nicole Ahr - Conservation Specialist

Jenne Reische - Conservation Planning Manager

Cathy McQueeney - Education and Outreach Specialist

Lisa Kilders - Education and Outreach Program Manager

Jason Faucera - Conservation Initiatives Manager





We see the District as a place where our communities, environments, and economy thrive together. Our mission is to help create that future. We provide technical service and support designed to help people use natural resources sustainably today and for future generations.

The Clackamas Soil and Water Conservation District prohibits discrimination against its customers, employees, and applicants for employment on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, sex, gender identity, religion, reprisal, and where applicable, political beliefs, marital status, familial or parental status, sexual orientation, or all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program, or protected genetic information in employment or in any program or activity conducted or funded by the District. The District is an Equal Opportunity Employer.