



CLACKAMAS SOIL AND WATER
CONSERVATION
DISTRICT

Celebrating 50 Years of Conservation



A Message from our District Manager

On behalf of the Directors and staff of the Clackamas Soil and Water Conservation District, I am pleased to present our FY23/24 Annual Report (July 1, 2023-June 30, 2024).

This year marked the 50th anniversary of Clackamas Soil and Water Conservation District. Beginning as a grassroots effort across the United States to protect topsoil from erosion in the 1930s, Districts have offered solid conservation programs dedicated to improving soil and local waterways. As you read this report, you will see how far we have come since the Dust Bowl days.

Clackamas SWCD is diverse in its services and specialties, ranging from an Equipment Rental Program offering agricultural equipment to a county-wide septic repair and replacement program. In addition, our commitment to conservation planning and invasive species management evolves with the challenges in an ever-changing landscape.

FY23/24 marked the official implementation of our strategic plan. Ours is not just a plan document that sits on a shelf, but rather a living document. The plan will drive our budget formulation; annual work plans; staff development and performance; and the Board of Directors governance. It will guide us to have meaningful and equitable engagement with our partners and the community.

The year had emotional highs and lows, from the sudden loss of our Board Chair to receiving the SDAO Outstanding Special District Program of the Year Award. The level of support provided by staff and directors, as well as by stakeholders and partners, through it all has been heartwarming.

I hope you find this report informative, and if we inspire you to use our services, please let us know.

Respectfully,

Chris Lapp

Remembering Board Chair, Jeff Becker

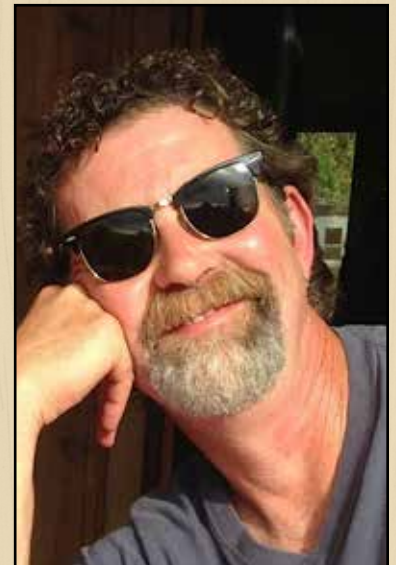
In this year of celebratory activities for our 50th Anniversary, we pause to remember our beloved Board Chair, Jeff Becker. Jeff passed away in April but left a legacy of leadership, progress, and compassion for everyone who knew him.

Jeff served on the District's budget committee in 2012, was appointed Associate Board Member in 2013, and was appointed to fill the vacant District Zone 3 position in 2014. Two years later, Jeff was asked to take on the board chair role. He worked hard to understand the District's programs and partnerships and took a deep interest in the needs and expertise of the staff.

Jeff was instrumental in co-leading the development of the District's Strategic Plan. He felt it was central to the District's success that staff and the Board work in unison to align the District's work to be successful and impactful in the coming years. He brought a commitment to equity, accountability, and adaptability as Chair of the Board of Directors.

Before his passing, Jeff poignantly observed, "During my time with the District, I've gotten to see how dedicated our staff is to their work. Their commitment and expertise make me feel proud of our organization. Our staff and board take every opportunity to learn and grow our understanding of conservation issues. We haven't been stagnant, that's for sure."

The final words we received from Jeff were to "Carry On." In honor of our beloved leader, we will carry on.



50 Years of Conservation

On March 22, 1974, the North and the South Clackamas Soil and Water Conservation Districts joined to form what we know today as the Clackamas Soil and Water Conservation District.

This milestone was celebrated with a year of activities leading up to a community event worthy of a 50th Anniversary. The showpiece of the day was Claudia Chinook, who drew the attention of passersby as only a 29-foot long, 14-foot tall salmon can!



Visitors were kept busy with mini-seminars, live raptors, hot dogs, frozen treats, partner displays, button-making, and a display of rental farm equipment.

We are truly thankful for the support of county residents and look forward to 50 more years of conservation!

Tracking the Emerald Ash Borer

To help track the spread of the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB), Clackamas SWCD started a Community Science Program. Our team trained participants to spot signs of EAB infestations, and Clackamas River Water Providers taught basic insect identification. The training wrapped up with a demonstration on how to set up monitoring traps.

A total of 16 traps were placed in Beavercreek, Eagle Creek, Lake Oswego, Molalla, Milwaukie, Wilsonville, and Oregon City. A big thanks to everyone who helped, including 13 volunteers, 5 students from Clackamas Community College, and 3 city staff members!



A New Website is on the Horizon!



With our strategic plan in place, the District started working on a new website. To handle this big project, we asked for proposals and received 43 responses!

After careful thought, we chose The Beauty Shop Studio to create the site. Stay tuned for the big reveal in spring 2025!



15 Years of Weed Control

In February, the WeedWise program celebrated 15 years of Service in Clackamas County!

We have worked with thousands to protect Clackamas County from some of the most damaging invasive weed.

Many thanks to all those who have been a part of this journey. Our work wouldn't be possible without the support of our staff, friends, partners, and cooperating landowners.



Equipment Rental Takes Off

This year our Equipment Rental Program was busier than ever. With the addition of another no-till drill last year, we doubled the opportunities for land owners to plant seeds while minimizing (or reducing) soil disturbance.

2023-24 rentals and acres:

No-till drills	874 acres
Narrow drill	109 acres
Harrow	15 acres
Manure spreader	11 acres

Find out more about the [Equipment Rental Program](#) on our website.

Septic Grant Helps 36 Families

Beginning July 1, 2023, our septic program held \$800,000 in grant funding from the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) through the Federal 2021 American Rescue Plan. These funds were provided to help pay for septic system repairs and connections to existing municipal sewer lines for qualified residents. Qualification was based on the income of the property owner/household. Applicants with higher incomes were offered a partial grant and/or no-interest loan.

The funds were quickly allocated and by September there was no more grant money to offer. The District worked with DEQ and in December 2023, DEQ gave us an additional \$400,000, increasing our total award to \$1,200,000. We helped 36 families with an average project cost of \$30,800.

One sewer connection and 35 projects repairing or replacing existing septic systems were accepted. All funds were obligated by the deadline. As you can see the need is great and the participants are grateful for the assistance.

Shop Renovation Adds Staff Space



This year a large shop building, that was part of the original property, was renovated to provide space for our farm and field staff at the Conservation Resource Center (CRC).

The project included office and storage space at the south end of the building. Staff space includes a small meeting room, four cubicles, plus an open work area. The new space is convenient for our busy field people and access to program supplies.

Ongoing Countywide Weed Control

This year, support from state and federal agencies, the Portland Water Bureau, and District funding helped the WeedWise program combat noxious weeds across private, state, and federal lands. Key efforts included Lolo Pass hawkweed control, post-fire treatments in the Sandy and Clackamas Basins, and work with the Clackamas River Invasive Species Partnership. The Bureau of Land Management contributed to policeman's helmet control on the Salmon River, knotweed management in the Sandy River, and fire recovery efforts.



Garlic mustard control was a priority in the Lower Willamette, with new work in Oregon City and Beavercreek. In the Molalla-Pudding area, new infestations at Wagon Wheel and Freyrer Parks signal its continued spread despite ongoing efforts.



Oregon White Oak Habitat

The District began working on restoring oak habitats in 2011. Since then, we've completed 26 oak projects, covering 286 acres.

These projects happen because of a great partnership. Our staff provide planning and technical help, while the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service gives funding.

The USDA has renewed the funding program through 2026, with \$75,826 available each year to support this work!



Working with YOU

This year, our Conservation Planning team continued their important work. They helped 242 people solve problems, plan projects, and become better at managing their land.

The Education and Outreach team supported this work by hosting field days about soil health and sending postcards to farmers about our vineyard drill. This special tool is narrow enough to fit between rows and seed ground cover that helps reduce erosion and improve soil health.

Riparian Restoration Videos and Workbook

It was a great year for people with streams on their property! In spring 2024, the District released a 4-part Riparian Restoration video series and a Streamside Planting and Maintenance Workbook.



The workbook guides you step-by-step, from analyzing your site to taking care of it for several years. It also includes helpful links to tools like the Web Soil Survey, iNaturalist, and the Pacific Northwest Pest Management Handbook.

The Riparian Restoration video series is a perfect match for the workbook. These four videos show each step of streamside restoration, including site preparation, planting, and maintenance.

Great Support for Local Partnership

The Clackamas River Invasive Species Partnership (CRISP), founded in 2014 by the Clackamas River Basin Council, Clackamas Soil and Water Conservation District, and Metro, has grown to include 14 organizations working together to tackle invasive plant issues and protect the Clackamas River Watershed.



This year, CRISP received a major boost with \$540,000 from Portland General Electric's Clackamas Habitat Fund, ensuring six more years of partnership activities. Additionally, Metro contributed \$105,000, with the potential for \$70,000 more over the next two years to further support CRISP's efforts in the watershed.

Plaza Redesign

The current landscaping around the building and plaza does not reflect our conservation values or the Conservation Resource Center's role in demonstration and education. To address this, the District selected Studio Wild Landscape Architecture, LLC through a Request for Proposals process to collaborate on a redesign.

The project will enhance the site's ecological value, highlight conservation principles promoted by the Soil and Water Conservation District, and inspire the public with demonstration features. Planned improvements include incorporating



Firewise design, rain gardens, year-round pollinator plantings, and "leave the leaves" maintenance practices to enrich soil and habitat. The redesign will also make the plaza more inviting and accessible for staff and visitors.



Anniversary Celebration

This summer, 204 amazing people joined us to celebrate the District's 50th Anniversary. We're so thankful for everyone who came and for all the support we've received over the past 50 years.

Want to know more about what we do? Sign up for our [Monthly Wrap-up!](#)



Conservation Screen Time

This year we added eight videos to our Clackamas SWCD Vimeo Channel lineup. The view count for our videos is 464 this year.

On our website, we had heavy traffic with 69,362 views with May being our busiest month! Our CSWCD Monthly newsletter has 419 subscribers, and our open rate is 55%. A very successful number!

Facebook followers numbered 1,533 with 75% being women. Our Nextdoor posts reach 171,225.

Finally, posts on our new Instagram account reach 5,100. Follow us and stay connected!

Continued Help for Wildfire Restoration

As part of a Resource Conservation Partnership led by Sustainable Northwest (SNW), the District is helping forestland owners recover from the 2020 wildfires. We work with these land-owners to plan for restoring their land, apply for funding, and complete their projects.

After the 2020 wildfires, we reached out to many landowners and built a relationship with them. These relationships helped us find interested landowners and quickly submit 13 project applications by the first deadline. All 13 projects were approved and funded in the first round!



District Honored for Wildfire Work

Clackamas SWCD was honored by Special District Association of Oregon for the 2024 Outstanding Special District Program of the Year award. This award was given in



recognition of the District's comprehensive and ongoing Climate Change and Wildfire Program.

Board Members Guttridge and Zuber were on hand for the festivities as were Staff McQueeney and District Manager Lapp.



Forest Thinning Continues



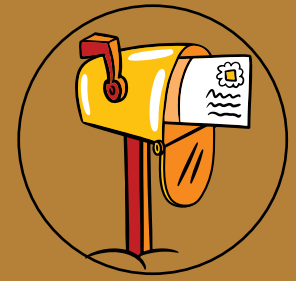
This year 67 acres of pre-commercial thinning and limbing to improve forest stand health and reduce fuel loads took place at our Eagle Creek Community Forest. A Clackamas River Basin Council Landscape Scale Restoration Grant funded the project.

This grant required a 1:1 match from the District. Our match included ten cords of firewood generated from the thinning project that was delivered to the Estacada food bank.

Showcasing the District

Forest Edge Winery came to us for assistance in developing a management plan while working toward a conservation easement for their property. Their commitment to conservation made this winery the perfect partner to help us celebrate our anniversary.

Wine bottle tags sharing the District's mission appeared on every bottle this year. And for every bottle purchased, we set aside \$20 for conservation projects.

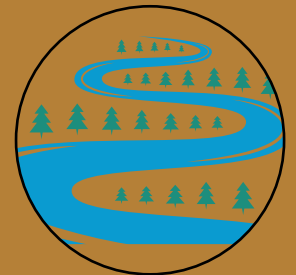


Conservation in the Mail

To help people learn about invasive weeds in Clackamas County, we used the U.S. Mail to send out 2,414 mailers this year.

The WeedWise program focuses on the most harmful weeds, but we also helped **255** landowners with other weed problems through emails, phone calls, and visits to their land.

This year, 1,791 landowners gave us permission to work on their property. This allowed us to treat invasive weeds on 921 sites, covering a total of 13,782 acres!



Riparian Restoration

In June, 29 people from 10 local watersheds attended our 2-day Riparian Workshop Series.

Participants learned about site analysis, site preparation, restoration design, plant installation, and maintenance.

This event was a collaboration between 3 District staff, 7 Watershed Councils, and Backyard Habitat Certification staff who worked together to present and to lead break out sessions.

Coming and Going

We said goodbye to Conservation Planner Nicole Ahr this year. Nicole was a kind and professional conservationist, and we wish her the best in her new home in Corvallis!

We also welcomed some new faces to our team. Sierra Bloomer and Brendan Fordyce joined as WeedWise Specialists. Sierra now leads activities with the Mount Hood Partners, and Brendan coordinates the 4- County Weed Management Area and the Columbia Gorge Weed Management



Area.

Brendan Addis joined our Conservation Planning Department to take over oak and wildlife habitat projects. Mike Hensley also joined as a Forest Conservation Planner, focusing on forest restoration after the 2020 Labor Day Wildfires.

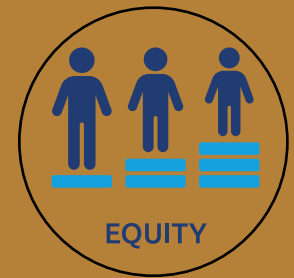


Thanks to a grant from the U.S. Forest Service, we hired two seasonal WeedWise Technicians, Hayden Jorde and Makayla Hartness. They'll be with us through fall 2024, and we hope to see them back next spring!



Staff

Brendan Addis Conservation Specialist	Mike Hensley Conservation Forester
Nicole Ahr Conservation Specialist	Hayden Jorde Seasonal WeedWise Technican
Suzi Cloutier Conservation Specialist	Lisa Kilders Education /Outreach Manager
Justin Cooley WeedWise Specialist	Chris Lapp District Manager
Jordan DeLawder Conservation Specialist	Sam Leininger WeedWise Program Manager
Drew Donahue Conservation Specialist	Gus Liszka Maintenance/Equip. Rental Program
Scott Eden Conservation Specialist	Monte Mattsson WeedWise Specialist
Jason Faucera Land Management Manager	Cathy McQueeney Education /Outreach Specialist
Brendan Fordyce WeedWise Specialist	Heather Nielsen Conservation Investments Coord.
Tami Guttridge Office Administrator	Jenne Reische Conservation Planning Manager
Makayla Hartness Seasonal WeedWise Technician	Nathan Tucker Fiscal Administrator



Becoming a Better District

The journey to become more aware of equity issues in our District includes educating ourselves. To that end, District staff are participating in Oregon's Farm and Ranch Equity & Anti-Racism Program offered by Oregon State University.

Monthly lessons provide an opportunity for us to join Oregon farmers, ranchers, and other agricultural service providers to learn about and address issues of equity within the District, our programs, and our community.



New Tool Saves Time

This year, the WeedWise team used a new tool to quickly mark new locations of invasive weeds.

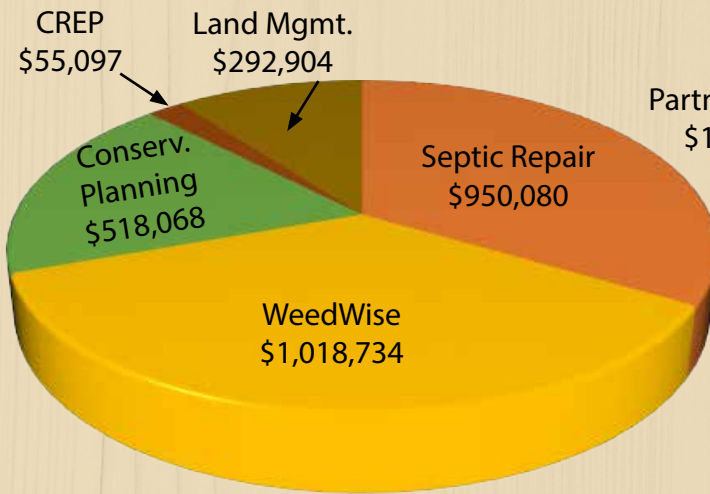
QuickCapture is an app that works with the Arc GIS system our team uses to map weeds. With just a couple of clicks, they can mark the location and move on to the next one.

This year, there were 3,796 new weed sightings, compared to 1,602 sightings last year.

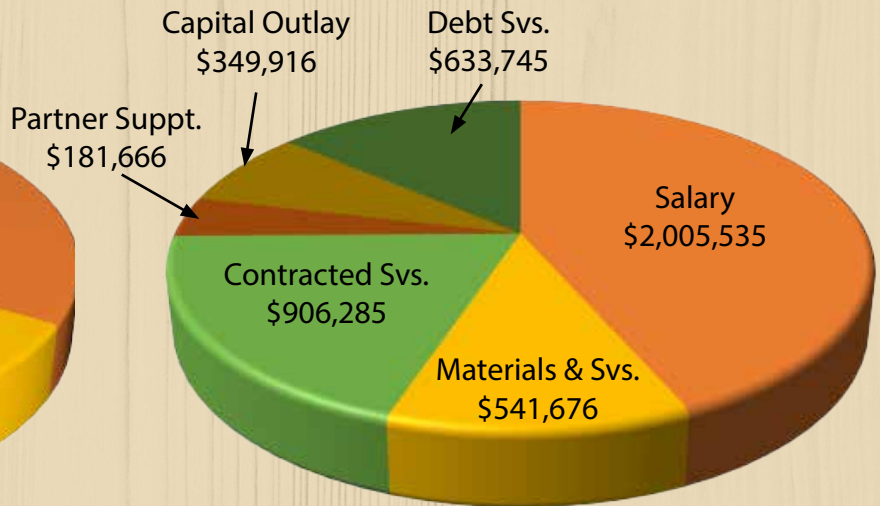
This app made a big difference!

Finanacial Summary FY 23-24

Technical Assistance and On-the-Ground Funding



General Fund Allocation



Audited numbers

Fiscal Year 2023-2024	General Fund	Conservation Grant Fund	Conservation Loan Fund*	Working Lands Legacy Fund	Compulsory Maintenance Reserve Fund**
Total Revenue	4,434,783	957,466	206,661	5,485	-
Total Expenditure	4,386,168	610,112	195,738	--	--
Transfer In/(Out)	(287,793)	287,793	--	--	--
Beginning Fund Balance	2,546,044	76,316	41,001	142,875	--
Ending Fund Balance	2,306,866	711,463	51,924	148,360	--

* Revenues in the loans fund represent balance payments from borrowers and draws from the Clean Water State Revolving Fund.

**created but not funded in FY 23-24

Board of Directors



Jan Lee, Roger Fantz, Joan Zuber, Jim Johnson, Jeff Becker, Don Guttridge

Jesse Nelson Vice Chair	Zone 1
Jim Johnson	Zone 2
Jeff Becker Chair	Zone 3
Joan Zuber	Zone 4
Don Guttridge Secretary	Zone 5
Roger Fantz Treasurer	At-Large
Jan Lee	At-Large

PK Melethil	Associate Director
Ron Oberg	Director Emeritus
Michael Weinberg	Director Emeritus