

History of Marion Soil and Water Conservation District

In response to public demand in Marion County, three conservation districts were organized under the Oregon Soil Conservation laws between 1947 and 1953. The districts had offices in Stayton, Silverton, and Mt. Angel. Public hearings were held to determine the needs and boundaries. The districts were organized to work cooperatively on problems associated with flood control, stream bank stabilization, weed control, improvement of fertility, and other problems affecting the best use of land and water resources within Marion County.

The three districts were then consolidated into the new Marion Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD) in September 1971.

Marion SWCD Today

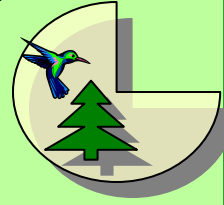
The Marion SWCD encompasses the majority of **Marion County, Oregon**. The district lies in the northern portion of the Willamette River Basin. Comprising the western half of the district is the fertile Willamette Valley, while the eastern portion contains rolling foothills and the forested Cascade Mountains.

The SWCD is operated by a board of elected directors who are local landowners and citizens with a commitment to the natural resources contained within the district. These board members are publicly elected to a four-year term and serve on a volunteer basis.

The staff of the Marion SWCD provides technical assistance and education to property owners regarding soil and water issues on their land. The district has no regulatory nature but is simply a source of advice and consultation for the public.

Natural Resource Stakeholders

If you eat food that is grown on the land, wear clothes made from plants that are grown in the soil, or swim, raft or ski our rivers, you are a natural resource stakeholder. A resource stakeholder is anyone who gets something of value from the land, air, water, wildlife, or other resources. We all depend on a **healthy environment**, so we are all natural resource stakeholders.



Marion SWCD Partners

The Marion SWCD has formed many strong **partnerships** with organizations and agencies in the area of natural resources. The district also works with several local municipalities and Marion County agencies. Our key partners include:

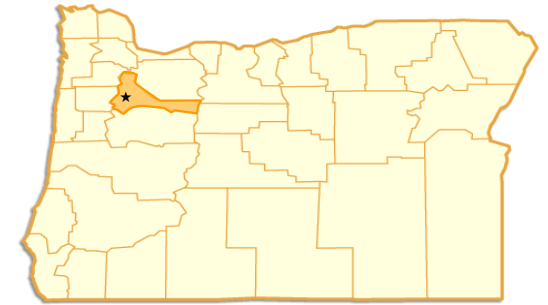
- **USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service**
- **Oregon Department of Agriculture**
- **Oregon Association of Conservation Districts**
- **Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board**
- **Oregon State University Extension Service**
- **USDA Farm Service Agency**
- **Marion County Public Works**

The Marion SWCD also cooperates with several **watershed councils** within its boundary. Watershed councils are locally-organized groups that are formed on an individual watershed basis at the request of the local community. Council members serve voluntarily without pay, and councils may consist of any number of voting members. Marion SWCD works with several local watershed councils and groups including:

- **North Santiam Watershed Council**
- **Mid-Willamette Watershed Alliance**
- **Claggett Creek Watershed Council**
- **Pringle Creek Watershed Council**
- **Mill Creek Watershed Council**

About Marion County

The county is located in the heart of the **Willamette Valley**, and the Willamette River was established as its western boundary in 1856. Salem, the county seat and the state capital, is one of the valley's oldest cities.



Area: 1,175 square miles
Population: 318,170 (2009 estimate)
Ave. Temperature: Jan. 39°F; July 66.3°F
Annual Precipitation: 40.35 inches
Principal Industries: Government, food processing, forest products, manufacturing, education, tourism, and agriculture.

Source: Marion County website

Marion County Agriculture

Marion County has the highest gross farm income of all of Oregon's 36 counties and also has the most diversified range of crops and farm products.

- *Gross Farm /Ranch Sales: \$604,058,000.*
- *Gross Sales: \$192 Million*
- *1st in State for Caneberries / Gross Sales: \$15 million*
- *Producer of more than 200 different crops (Christmas trees, flower bulbs, Marion berries, chicken eggs, hazelnuts and mink (pelts), and more!)*

Source: Oregon Agricultural Statistics Service, 2008

Do You Want to Get Involved?

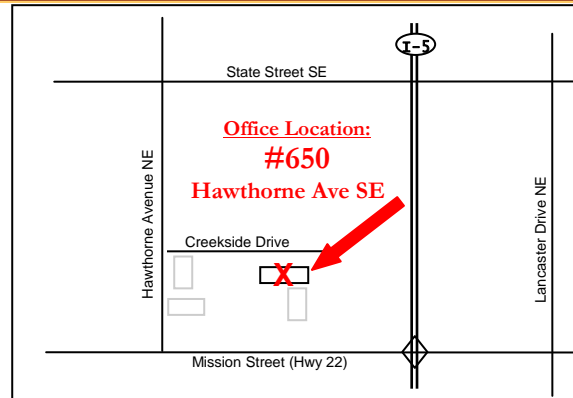
As a resident of Marion County you have the opportunity to take advantage of the many services the Marion SWCD offers. If you care about what Marion County looks like in the future and want to help take care of its land, water, wildlife, and other natural resources, consider **running for office** as a district director, **volunteering** as an associate director, **implementing** conservation on your land, **working** with neighbors in your watershed, **checking** our website for upcoming events, **participating** in Oregon Envirothon (a local and national high school competition), or helping with our water monitoring program.

Marion Soil and Water Conservation District Projects and Activities



- ◆ *Agricultural Water Quality Management Plan (SB1010)*
- ◆ *Backyard & Urban Conservation*
- ◆ *Landowner Assistance Program*
- ◆ *Riparian Area Enhancement*
- ◆ *Cropland Management*
- ◆ *Manure Management & Access Program*
- ◆ *Annual Native Plant Sale*
- ◆ *Invasive Weed /Species Identification & Surveying*
- ◆ *Water Quality and Quantity Monitoring*
- ◆ *Workshops and Field Tours*
- ◆ *Wildlife Habitat Improvement*
- ◆ *Grant Assistance and Cost Share Programs*
- ◆ *Natural Resource Education*
- ◆ *Monthly Public Board Meetings*

The Mission of the Marion Soil and Water Conservation District is to protect, conserve, and improve the quality of soil and water in Marion County through planning, technical assistance, and education.



Conservation Districts:

- ◆ are natural resource oriented, addressing issues on urban lands, forest lands, wildlife habitat areas, riparian zones, pastures and agricultural lands
- ◆ are legal subdivisions of state government
- ◆ function as local units
- ◆ are led by a locally-elected board of directors
- ◆ have governing boards reflecting diversity
- ◆ draw on state and federal agencies for technical and financial help
- ◆ work in partnership with other agencies and groups
- ◆ help local property owners gain access to assistance for addressing natural resource needs and issues
- ◆ are located throughout the state; Oregon has 45 Soil & Water Conservation Districts within its 36 counties.

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The Marion SWCD is an equal opportunity employer, providing services to the public without regard to race, religion, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, mental or physical disability, marital status, age, or other protected status or activity in accordance with applicable law.

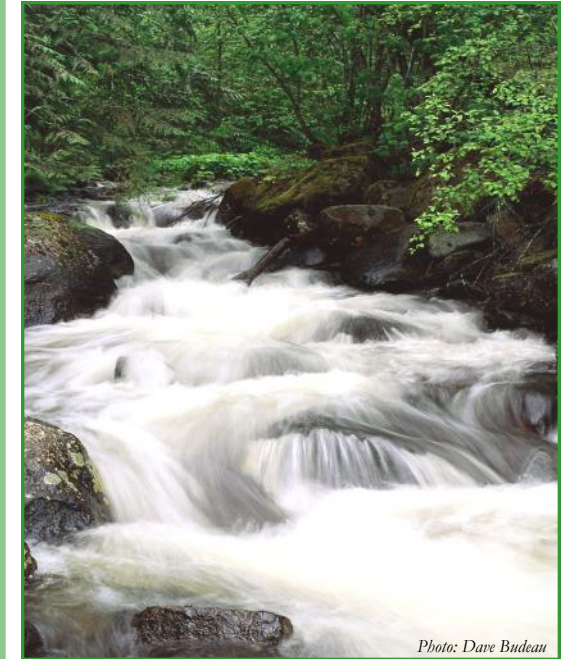


Photo: Dave Budeau

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