

## **National History**

In 1935, President Franklin D. Roosevelt addressed the problems of soil erosion in the nation by establishing the Soil Conservation Service within the United States Department of Agriculture, through the Soil Conservation Act. The Soil Conservation Service was charged with developing a program to conserve and enhance the nation's soil and water resources. At first, it was thought the federal government, through the Soil Conservation Service, could manage the whole program, but during the initial two years it learned the task needed local support and direction. The Soil Conservation Service needed farmer's help and cooperation to put together an effective program. In 1937, President Roosevelt asked all state governors to promote legislation to allow the formation of soil conservation districts. This began a partnership that exists today.

## **Oregon History**

Oregon first passed soil conservation district legislation in 1939, and organized what was then called the Oregon Soil Conservation Committee. This committee, now called the Soil and Water Conservation Commission, was given the responsibility to provide direction and assistance to individual districts, as they formed, and help coordinate their efforts. The first district formed in Oregon was the South Tillamook Soil Conservation District, organized officially on February 10, 1940. Since then, many other districts have formed, consolidated with other districts, redefined their boundaries, and now are represented in every county of the state. Today there are 45 districts in Oregon, with Douglas, Grant, Josephine, Lake, Lane, and Multnomah Counties having two districts each, and Baker County four.

Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD) in Oregon are, by law, subdivisions of state government, but are also municipal corporations. Prior to 1963 conservation districts were soil conservation districts. In 1963 the legislature added water to the name. Each of Oregon's 45 SWCD's is governed by a five or seven member Board of Directors. Each director is elected on the Oregon General Election ballot and serves a four year term. The directors oversee the activities and responsibilities as given in the duties and authorities of the director positions and the SWCD boards described in ORS 568.210 through 568.933.

## **Local History**

In response to public demand in Marion County, three conservation Districts were organized under the Oregon Soil Conservation laws between 1947 and 1953. The three conservation Districts had offices in Stayton, Silverton, and Mt. Angel, respectively. Public hearings were held to determine the needs and boundaries. The Santiam SWCD hearing was held in Aumsville on May 29, 1947; Silver Creek on April 23, 1948; and Mt. Angel on March 16, 1953. The Districts were organized to work cooperatively on problems associated with flood control, riverbank stabilization, weed control, improvement of fertility and other problems affecting the best use of land and water resources within Marion County.

After lengthy deliberation, the three Districts decided to consolidate and on September 10, 1971, a certificate of organization was issued by the Secretary of State for the new Marion Soil and Water Conservation District.