# Marion Soil & Water Conservation District



Annual Report 2020-21



### Message from the District Manager

After the last couple years we've had, I'd like to start off this newsletter by looking ahead at some exciting developments with the District.

First, we have a new office! After 49 years of renting office space, Marion Soil & Water Conservation District became property owners in 2021. Our new office is a beautiful facility in downtown Stayton. We're busy doing what most new landowners do: some basic and necessary upgrades and landscaping. Stay tuned. We want to use this opportunity to demonstrate native plants in a commercial setting!

Second, we've worked through some challenging internal transitions and we're developing a strong team. We are looking at our programming, how to increase efficiency, and what we can do better. Next spring we'll begin a strategic visioning process to determine where we are succeeding and where we want to grow. We will be talking to our Board and inviting the public to engage with us to help develop a strategic vision.

And third but not last, we've been taking necessary steps to modernize our District. This includes upgrading technology, resources, policies, and work processes for our staff. While this isn't very exciting from the outside, the work is enabling us to process work more effectively and serve more people with the same resources. These much-needed upgrades are going into effect through the first quarter of 2022 and we anticipate transitioning fully from 2005 to 2022 by June 2022.

In closing, we encourage you to look us up, come by the office for some brochures or a chat, and join us in the exciting work of conservation in Marion County.

Thank you!

Amy Boyd

District Manager



Amy and her youngest child in Fields, OR

#### Your Marion Soil and Water Conservation District Team

**Directors: Brenda Sanchez** 

**Darin Olson** 

**Dave Budeau** 

**Kyle Ross** 

Rochelle Koch

Terry Hsu

Assoc. Directors: Dr. Chong Kee Tan

**Leland Hardy** 

Mark Fields

**Scott Walker** 



Marion County hops,

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. The action was called the Soil Conservation Act. It was originally thought that the Soil Conservation Service could manage the nation-wide program but during the initial two years of operation it became clear that the task needed local support and direction. The Soil Conservation Service needed farmer's help and cooperation to put together an effective program. So, in 1937, President Roosevelt asked all state governors to promote legislation to create soil conservation districts. This began a partnership that exists today.

Oregon passed soil conservation district legislation in 1939, organizing the Oregon Soil Conservation Committee. This committee is now called the Soil and Water Conservation Commission. Its responsibility is to provide direction and assistance to individual districts and help coordinate their efforts. The South Tillamook Soil Conservation District was the first district formed in Oregon. It was officially organized 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 while Baker County has four.

Within the boundaries of modern Marion SWCD, three conservation Districts initially organized between 1947 and 1953. The Santiam SWCD hearing was held in Aumsville on May 29, 1947; the Silver Creek on April 23, 1948 and Mt. Angel on March 16, 1953. The three conservation districts had offices in Stayton, Silverton and Mt. Angel. The Districts were organized to work on problems associated with flood control, riverbank stabilization, weed control, improvement of fertility and any other problems effecting the best use of land and water resources within Marion County.

In 1971, after lengthy deliberation, the three Districts decided to consolidate. A certificate of organization was issued by the Secretary of State on September 10, 1971 for the Marion Soil and Water Conservation District. In 2021 we celebrated 50 years as a unified soil and water conservation district!



	June 30, 2021	June 30, 2020
General Fund Beginning Balance	\$ 1,179,260	\$ 1,087,572
Revenues Marion County taxes Income from other agencies Interest income Miscellaneous Total resources	1,254,244 104,029 10,477 	1,198,771 126,292 26,573 43,785 1,395,421
Expenditures Personal services Materials and services Capital outlay Total requirements	633,279 663,904 9,937 1,307,120	637,770 665,963 1,303,733
Net transfers in	52,877	
General Fund Ending Balance	\$ 1,359,996	\$ 1,179,260
	June 30, 2021	June 30, 2020
Reserve Funds Beginning Balance	\$ 1,119,148	\$ 1,116,346
Revenues Interest income Total resources Expenditures Capital outlay	6,218 6,218 495,763	24,628 24,628 21,826
Net transfers out	52,877	
Reserve Funds Ending Balance	\$ 576,696	\$ 1,119,148



Lupine near river

# Major Program Areas Grants

Landowner Assistance Program (LAP)

**Special Projects** 

**CLEAR** (Education)

Stan Vistica Memorial Scholarship

# **Technical Assistance**

**Community Education** 

**Conservation Planning** 

Water Quality Monitoring

Native and Invasive Plant Programs

# Landowner Assistance Program Spotlight:

### **Cover Crops**

Cover Crops are one tool for improving water quality. They help retain soil and decrease runoff of pesticides, herbicides, and other pollutants into nearby waterways. They can also help with soil development as many cover crops can help fix nitrogen in the soil.

Interested in learning more about cover cropping and other conservation practices? Call us today at (503) 391-9927.





Vineyard after cover cropping.



The first Marion Soil and Water Conservation District directors.

# Marion SWCD Grants & Scholarship



Special Project Grants (SPG)



CLEAR (Education) Grants



Landowner Assistance Program (LAP) Grants



Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB) Small Grants



Marion SWCD Stan Vistica Memorial Scholarship

### Landowner Assistance Program Grant Report for 2020-21

The Landowner Assistance Program serves a wide variety of people, watersheds, and implements many types of conservation practices.

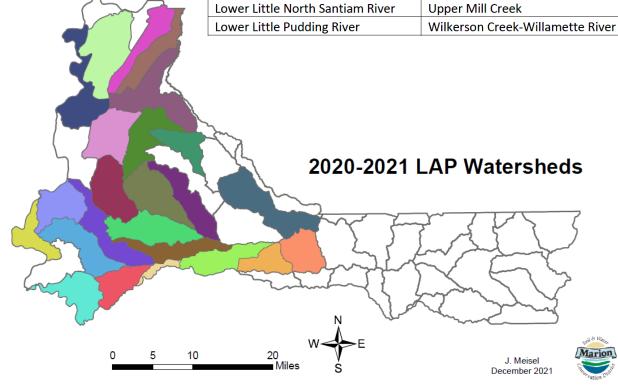
Grant funding is up to \$7,500 per year and requires applicant match of 50%

of the total project cost. Applications are received approximately 3 times per year and require a letter of interest and application in our funding website,

Numbers	Round 1	Round 2	Round 3	Totals
Applications	21	19	5	45
Acres	797	600	53	1450
Funds Requested	\$163,039.00	\$127,869.00	\$37,500.00	\$328,408.00
Landowner Contributions	\$392,537.00	\$679,659.71	\$74,469.00	\$1,146,665.71
Total Project Costs	\$555,576.00	\$807,528.71	\$111,969.00	\$1,475,073.71

Referrals	Round 1	Round 2	Round 3	Totals
Landowners	1	3	1	5
Previous Clients	8	3	2	13
Vendor Referral	4	5	2	11
Partner Organizations	6	4	0	10
Workshops & Classes	2	0	0	2
Cold Calls	0	4	0	4

Watershed Name	Watershed Name
Bear Branch-North Santiam River	Lower Mill Creek
Beaver Creek	Marion Creek-North Santiam River
Brandy Creek-Pudding River	McKinney Creek
Champoeg Creek	Middle Little North Santiam River
Croisan Creek-Willamette River	Mill Creek-Pudding River
Drift Creek	Morgan Creek-North Santiam River
Headwaters of Pudding River	Senecal Creek
Howell Prairie Creek-Pudding River	Stout Creek-North Santiam River
Lambert Slough-Willamette River	Upper Abiqua Creek
Lower Abiqua Creek	Upper Little Pudding River
Lower Little North Santiam River	Upper Mill Creek
Lower Little Pudding River	Wilkerson Creek-Willamette River





























Extension Service

We have a wide range of partners and serve year round education to youth and continuing learners throughout Marion SWCD's area. We appreciate our partners in so many ways!

2020/2021	Programs	Participants
July	2	35
August	9	241
September	0	0
October	2	25
November	4	276
December	2	30
January	5	229
February	8	203
March	7	1/75
April	4	150
May	12	287
June	14	488
Program Bins (check-	12	395
out program)		
Totals	81	2534



#### **Educational Programming**

- ⇒ First Fridays
- ⇒ Lunch and Learns
- ⇒ Conservation Podcasts
- ⇒ Salmon Watch
- ⇒ Agricultural-focused workshops
- ⇒ Urban-focused workshops
- ⇒ Home School Day
- ⇒ Saturday Markets
- ⇒ Program Bin in-class and check-out programming for local schools.

# Agricultural Conservation Planner Becky Pineda

Having roots in Marion County agriculture, I am excited to join Marion Soil and Water Conservation District as the Ag Conservation Planner. I grew up on a hobby farm that has been in my family for over a century, where we raised sheep and rabbits, and baled hay for ourselves and others.

I attended Linn-Benton Community College and Oregon State University. I earned a bachelor's degree in General Agriculture and a master's of science degree in Agricultural Education. While in college I was on the livestock judging team at LBCC and enjoyed taking courses in all aspects of agriculture, forestry, and natural resources. For the past 15 years I have been an agriculture teacher and FFA advisor in the county, and I look forward to continuing to work with the great agriculturists who have made Marion County the top agriculture county in the state!

Outside of work, my husband, son, and I are enjoying setting up our new small acreage. We have fun showing our Horned Dorset sheep and also plan to get back into showing rabbits in the near future. During the covid shutdown we added another type of critter – dairy goats – to our small operation and have started to make soaps and lotions from their milk. I have also started a 4-H club in Linn County to stay involved in ag education.

I look forward to helping you with your projects to keep Marion County an agricultural powerhouse long into the future!





Top: Becky at work, middle: Becky and family.





### CREP Update, by Drew Donahue (NRCS)

The Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) has been active in Marion County for more than 20 years. Currently there are 16 Marion County landowners currently enrolled in CREP. CREP is a voluntary program for agricultural landowners that provides financial and technical assistance to restore riparian buffers.

Riparian areas are the interface between land and water, where specific vegetation grows adjacent to waterways. Riparian buffers not only provide critical habitat for wildlife and endangered salmon, but they also cool water temperatures through shade, provide protection from erosion, and help filter out

Riparian area buffer from above.

unwanted sediment, pathogens, and chemicals from entering into the water.

This year we would like to highlight two landowners who re-enrolled in the program. Judy and Scott Chambers successfully removed over 2 acres of blackberry along Ryan Creek in 2008 and followed up by planting over 3,000 native trees and shrubs to replace the invasive blackberry. Their riparian forest is fully functional, and thriving despite the past climatic challenges like the 2021 ice storm and heatwave. Judy stated that they are "Starting to see small fish in the creek which once had salmon," and both have been thrilled to see the changes brought on by restoring their riparian forest. By reenrolling in the program, Judy and Scott will protect their riparian area for another 15 years.





Conservation Topics:
Conservation Planning
Developing an Action Plan
Project Permitting
Soils
Streamsides
Vegetation
Water Conservation
Wildfire
Wildlife Habitat
Woodlands
Working Lands

#### Plan for Your Land

#### by Sarah Hamilton

**PFYL**is a course developed by the North Santiam Watershed Council in partnership with Marion SWCD. 2021 was our 3<sup>rd</sup> year of offering the course, which teaches landowners about conservation and assists them in developing a long-term conservation plan for their property. Due to COVID-19, the course went online this year, with 4 3-hour online classes on Thursday evenings in January-February of 2021.

28 registrants representing 22 properties participated in the course to learn about soil, water, vegetation, riparian and forest ecosystems, wildlife habitat, and conservation on working lands. Each property received maps and information specific to their property and were encouraged to partner with the district and other organizations. They were offered site visits and technical assistance in developing their plans, and learned about funding sources and access.

In 2022, Plan for Your Land is returning to in-person classes with an online option! We will be gathering on Wednesday evenings in February at the Festhalle in Mt. Angel. This year, we will be working in the Pudding River Watershed. The North Santiam Watershed Council is also offering an associated separate full-day class for properties that were impacted by the 2020 wildfires.

Learn more about the 2022 Plan for Your Land course and register here:

https://plan\_for\_your\_land\_2022.eventbrite.com



# **Disaster Response**

# By Janice Calkins Office Administrator

This Annual Report reviews our fiscal year July 1, 2020, through June 30, 2021. The year will certainly go down in the history books, and it will not be easily forgotten! Covid-19 had changed the world. Board meetings and committee meetings have continued throughout the year, but now via the internet on Zoom.

September 2020 a fire engulfed the Santiam Canyon, the skies loomed red, and ash fell even at the office here in Salem. In February 2021, we saw another natural disaster: the ice storm which took out power, felled trees, and damaged many properties and farms. Then in June 2021 the heat dome event decimated crops and wilted people throughout the county.

The Soil and Water Conservation Districts were originally formed in the aftermath of the Dust Bowl of the 1930s. As demonstrated in the past, natural resource disasters do not deter us. Again in this past year, we have stepped up to help where we can, to advise on measures that can be taken to avoid soil erosion, to restore natural habitat, to protect the water and other natural resources. Our Board of Directors has made additional funds available to support free offerings of trees, shrubs, seed, and hay, as well as grants and programs to assist with post-fire, post-ice, and post-heat dome recovery. We encourage people to go to our website, <a href="www.marionswcd.net">www.marionswcd.net</a> to learn more about how we can assist them.

Thank you to our many partners for aiding our community: NRCS, FSA, Department of Forestry, FE-MA, EPA (Federal); Marion County Public Works; our local Watershed Councils (N. Santiam, Pudding River, Claggett Creek); and our local landowners. Special thanks to Rebecca McCoun, Executive Director for the North Santiam Watershed Council.



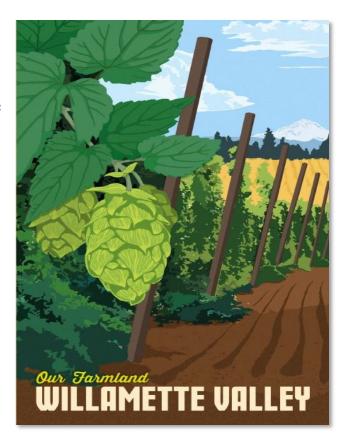


Active fire and after math.

# AG Water Quality Program Year in Review

#### By Mark Akimoff

It has been a busy year, bringing lots of change to the district. New faces in the organization, new office location and new projects in the Ag Water Quality program. We closed out Mill Creek Focus Area biennium work this year and moved into the headwaters of the Pudding River. In an ambitious move the district also took on a Strategic Implementation Area to assist the Oregon Department of Agriculture in helping ag producers comply with the Area Rules for Ag Water Quality. Below are some highlights of this past year's work around the district in the AG Water Quality arena.



#### Mill Creek Focus Area

The Mill Creek Focus area was closed out as biennium project this year. The second half of this project period was dominated by the Covid-19 pandemic and the difficulties surrounding that. Despite the challenges, work in this area remained highly productive. Illustrated below is the 278 acre cover crop project with Kuedell Farms. Some additional of the accomplishments from the past several years of work in the Mill Creek Watershed:

- ⇒ 475 Acres in Conservation Plans written for landowners.
- $\Rightarrow$  118 different landowners provided with one-on-one technical assistance.
- ⇒ 106 different landowners provided with informational resource materials by the district.
- ⇒ 187.64 acres in cover crops in Mill Creek, bringing our biennium total to 512.64, about 85% of our goal of 600 acres

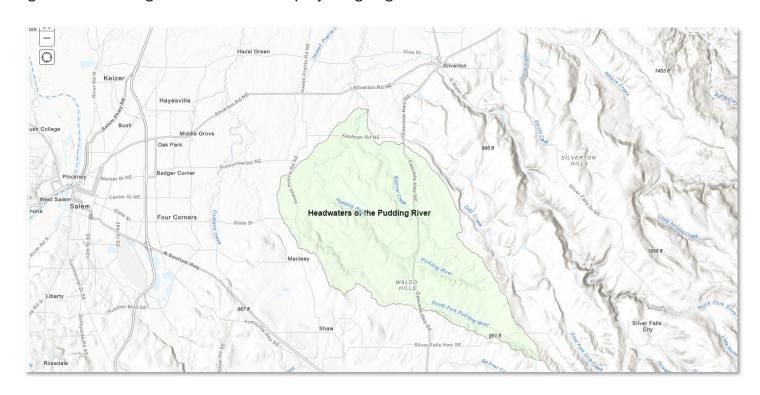


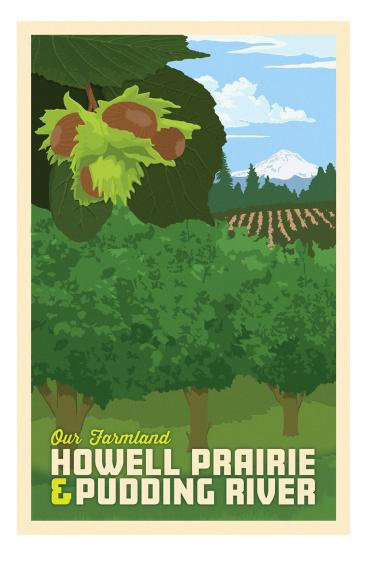




#### **Headwaters Pudding River Focus Area:**

We moved into a new watershed in June of this year, the Headwaters of the Pudding River Focus area. This 21,804 acre area where the Pudding River springs from the green-hued Waldo Hills is a patchwork of farm land and forested riparian habitat. Christmas trees and grass seed production dominate agricultural products in the upper watershed. As we move down stream hazelnuts, vine-yards and caneberries are major crops. The area we are working in covers over 71 miles of the perennial Pudding River channel with over 60 miles of intermittent tributaries and drainages connected to it. For the past several weeks we have been utilizing ARC GIS field map analysis tools to record data in the watershed. We are looking for areas where we can help farmers meet the goals of the ODA's Area Management Plan for the Molalla-Pudding-French Prairie-North Santiam watersheds. Once we have the areas identified we will develop milestones for bareground coverage and begin an outreach campaign to the local community to let them know about the services that we provide and hopefully get some on the ground conservation projects going.





#### Howell Prairie Creek/Pudding River Strategic Implementation Area:

This year the Marion SWCD also took on the ambitious task of working with the Oregon Department of Agriculture on a Strategic Implementation Area in the Howell Prairie Creek/ Pudding River Watershed. This is an initiative that is funded by ODA to concentrate technical and financial resources into a specific geographic area to address agricultural water quality concerns. The selected Strategic Implementation Area (SIA) includes 17,397 acres of the Howell Prairie Creek-Pudding River Watershed. The watershed is located 7 miles east of Salem and encompasses the Pudding River and 3 major tributaries: Howell Prairie Creek, Kraus Creek, and Walker Ditch. The SIA includes lands within the watershed upstream of the confluence with the Little Pudding River, including most of the town of Mt. Angel and a small sliver of Silverton. For this project ODA has identified properties we may be able to provide resources to. A campaign is underway to reach these property owners and provide them with the resources they need to reach compliance with AG Water Quality area rules. Part of this project involves a water quality monitoring plan. Working with local partners and other agencies such as DEQ and the ODFW we will submit a proposal to monitor for water quality parameters relative to the work we are doing in the watershed, such as sampling for turbidity to see if the best management practices we are implementing for erosion control are having a positive impact on water quality. This multi-year project runs through 2025.



Marion County meadowfoam

#### **Local Advisory Committee meeting:**

We hosted the Local Advisory Committee meeting for the Molalla-Pudding-French Prairie-North Santiam Ag Water Quality Management Area as part of our ongoing work with the Oregon Department of Agriculture to assist farmers with the AG WQ area rules. The mostly virtual meeting took place November 17<sup>th</sup>, 2021. Dan Goffin, the committee chair, presided over the meeting from our conference room at the Stayton office. Highlights of the meeting:

- ⇒ Updates by ODA on the AG Drainage Channel Maintenance program, a streamlined process for farmers to clean out ag drainage channels on farm land.
- ⇒ DEQ updates on the Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) for the Willamette basin were discussed. The focus was on Mercury pollution, which is coming from atmospheric sources, and being deposited on our soil. Erosion of the soil is causing mercury to enter waterways where it's being bioaccumulated by fish and posing a human health threat. Temperature of waterways was also discussed as the lack of trees along riparian areas is leading to increased temperatures that threaten salmon and other cold water fish species.
- ⇒ ODA is seeking to reduce runoff and erosion from Ag lands. The priority action for trying to slow the accumulation of mercury in our waterways is erosion reduction.
- ⇒ Marion SWCD presented on the close-out of the Mill Creek Focus Area, the new Focus Area as well as the SIA.
- ⇒ Clackamas SWCD presented on the Molalla River drinking water source protection plan and the Pudding River Focus area that they recently closed out.
- ⇒ Linn SWCD presented on fire impacts, the Bear Branch Focus Area and the Walker/Stout Creek.
- ⇒ Some great discussion from the LAC committee members and local farmers about how to reduce erosion from Ag lands as well as stormwater runoff from impervious surfaces as a possible source.



#### **Native Plant Activities**

By Jenny Meisel

#### **Native Plant Sale**

We conducted our first native plant sale with entirely online sales and drive-through pickup in 2021, and it went very smoothly! We filled 189 individual plant orders with an average total sale of \$82.00. Only a little over 200 plants were left unsold, and those were all donated to landowners affected by the Beachie Creek or Lionshead fires. Profits from our native plant sale fund two scholarships for students from Marion County studying natural resources at an Oregon college or university. Thanks to those who supported our 2021 Native Plant Sale and Scholarship Fundraiser!

### Planning and Planting Your Native Garden Workshop

This virtual workshop was a partnership among several different agencies and organizations: Marion, Polk, Yamhill, and Benton SWCD's, Luckiamute and North Santiam Watershed Councils, Master Gardeners, and the USDA Corvallis Plant Materials Center. 133 people attended this event! The workshop covered a number of topics: what is a native plant; assessing site conditions/plant selection process; where to get native plants; and plant-specific information. If you missed this workshop, you can view a recording on the Marion SWCD website (scroll to the bottom of the page): <a href="https://www.marionswcd.net/resources/native-plants/">https://www.marionswcd.net/resources/native-plants/</a>

#### First Friday presentation

Native Plants WORK: This presentation was given by Jenny Meisel, Marion SWCD Native and Invasive Plant Specialist, on February 5, 2021. Jenny discussed benefits of native plants, how to choose the right plant for the right place by knowing your site, and plants for different growing conditions: wet/sun, dry/sun, wet/shade, dry/shade.

Aside from our public events and outreach, we continue to promote the use of native plants every day on our website, <a href="https://www.marionswcd.net/resources/native-plants/">https://www.marionswcd.net/resources/native-plants/</a>, and during our visits with landowners to talk about their property and long-term conservation plans and needs.



Japanese knotweed

### **Invasive Plant Activities**

#### **Upland Knotweed Surveys and Treatments**

In 2020-2021 we expanded on the riparian knotweed control project that we have been conducting in partnership with the City of Salem for the past 4 years. Marion SWCD received a Watershed Protection and Preservation Grant from the City of Salem and contracted with Ash Creek Forest Management LLC to survey for and treat locations of upland knotweed in the City of Salem. We conducted a large outreach campaign, asking the public to report locations of knotweed around the city. For this project, the contractor treated 17 locations of upland knotweed in the city of Salem in September 2020. Many landowners were very happy to have assistance controlling this aggressive noxious weed. This was the first year in a planned multiyear project to control knotweed in the City of Salem.

#### Ludwigia/Water Primrose Control Phase 2:

Marion SWCD partnered with the North Santiam Watershed Council to continue the work that started in 2019 to control a newly discovered infestation of water primrose, an aggressive aquatic invasive plant. This was the second year of funding from the Oregon State Weed Board for control of water primrose in the North Santiam Watershed between Stayton and Mill City. This year's work focused on treatment in Lyons at Freres Ponds Park, John Neal County Park, and four additional infestations in sloughs and side channels along the river between Lyons and Stayton.

Ludwigia and the Willamette



# Erosion Threat Assessment/Reduction Team Report (ETART)

Shortly after the devastating wildfires in September 2020, Marion SWCD was asked to lead the botany/invasive species section of the ETART Report for the Beachie Creek Fire. This report "summarizes a rapid characterization of post-fire conditions resulting from the Beachie Creek Fire and identifies critical values potentially at risk from threats commonly associated with burned areas." The report was a collaborative effort among multiple state, federal, and local agencies and organizations. You can find the full report (190+ pages) here

The objectives for the Botany/Invasive Weeds section of the ETART Report were:

- ⇒ Evaluate fire impacts on vegetation resources on state and private lands.
- ⇒ Identify imminent post-wildfire threats and impacts on critical natural resources.
- ⇒ Provide recommendations to manage unacceptable risks caused by invasive plant infestations.
- ⇒ Determine and specify necessary treatments and associated monitoring activities.

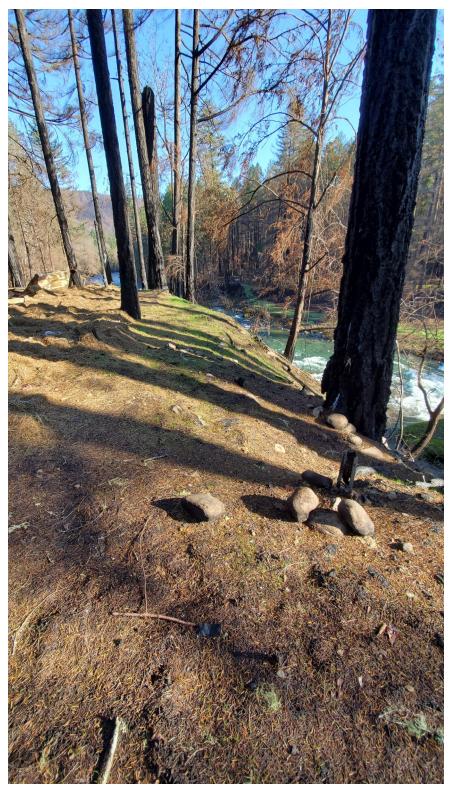
The ETART report calls for Early Detection/Rapid Response surveys to help prevent the spread of invasive plants on the following:

- ⇒ 433 acres of land at high risk of invasion by invasive plants.
- ⇒ 50 miles of trails and roads and several acres of lines and points disturbed by fire-fighting activities.

Recommendations from the report include:

- ⇒ An integrated pest management approach for treating invasive species in the fire area, using a combination of manual/mechanical, chemical, and biological controls.
- ⇒ Education and outreach efforts conducted in the communities affected by the fire to help residents learn how to identify and control the invasive species that pose the greatest threats.
- ⇒ Education on native plants to use after the fires to help build resilient native plant communities that can resist being taken over by invasive plants.

The Marion SWCD is currently partnering with the North Santiam Watershed Council and other agencies and organizations to carry out the recommendations in the ETART report. Assisting landowners with recovery and restoration efforts after fire continues to be a major focus of both the native and invasive plant programs at the Marion SWCD.

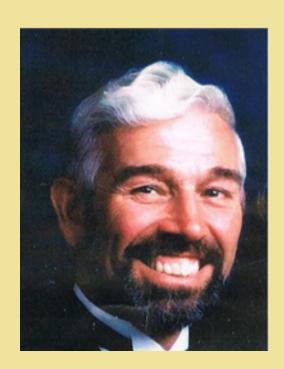


Burn area in the Santiam Canyon.

This work is made possible by the citizens of Marion County, the Directors, Associate Directors, staff, and partners who engage every day to build a better, stronger community.

# The Stan Vistica Memorial College Scholarship Fund

 Founded in honor and in recognition of an outstanding friend, conservationist, and former Board Director – Stan Vistica, to provide financial assistance to students pursuing a college degree in Environmental Sciences or in a field related to the Conservation of our nation's Natural Resources.



# 2022 Native Plant Sale

## Online Ordering Opens January 5, 2022!

Our Native Plant Sale and Scholarship Fundraiser will be an online-only sale again next year. There will not be any day-of sales in 2022. Online ordering Wednesday, January 5 morning to Monday, February 21 at 5:00 pm.

Pickup for plant orders will be at Bauman's Farm and Garden March 11 and 12, 2022.

Visit Marion SWCD's Native Plant Sale Webpage for more information about the plant sale and a link for online ordering.

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