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2019-20 Annual Report and Winter Newsletter

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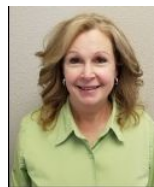
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Message from Meredith Hoffman, Interim District Manager

Gratitude! As the eight staff members journeyed through this pandemic year, the first thought is gratitude! Almost seamlessly, the staff transitioned to a work-from-home routine. Our productivity has increased, we are connecting and reconnecting more closely with farmers, ranchers, landowners, land managers, urbanites, partners, and communities with needs that the district can assist in.

It's true, we were challenged. We found that the pandemic, physical distancing, distance learning, essential workers, Black Lives Matter, calls for police accountability, and our work on the tragic wildfire situation in the district are our new normal.

The staff and board of the Soil & Water Conservation District under the leadership of Board Chair Terry Hsu weathered these challenges and the District, while in transition, is stronger and has more resources than it has ever had.

We transitioned to a remote work environment easily because those resources were

protocols for our employees. Also, we began discussing how we can address diversity, equity, and inclusion. On the ground conservation projects flourished and education programs have continued.

All staff take these changes seriously, and rely on the support of those who live, work, and recreate in the district, along with our partner organizations. This Annual Report highlights our work, as well as the financial report. As the year ends, and we reflect, we realize that we are well prepared for whatever challenges the new year brings.

We are Moving!

Marion SWCD recently purchased a new office building at 408 N. 3rd Avenue in Stayton, Oregon! The building is currently occupied by a tenant whose lease transferred over to us during the sale. The tenant is the accounting firm Boldt, Carlisle and Smith. Work remains to perform improvements to make the building exactly suit our needs. The plan is for Marion SWCD to occupy the building sometime in 2021.

The property consists of 0.15 acres of total land and a 3,308 SF office. The one story office building includes multiple office rooms and conference rooms with large windows and views of Mill Creek, which runs adjacent to the property! The district has worked with many landowners on conservation projects in Mill Creek.



Financial Audit

	<u>June 30, 2020</u>	<u>June 30, 2019</u>
General Fund Beginning Balance	\$ 1,087,572	\$ 1,294,629
Resources		
Marion County taxes	1,198,771	1,002,773
Income from other agencies	126,292	105,988
Interest income	26,573	31,451
Miscellaneous	<u>43,785</u>	<u>29,316</u>
Total resources	1,395,421	1,169,528
Requirements		
Personal services	637,770	672,617
Materials and services	665,963	652,145
Capital outlay	-	1,823
Transfers out	-	<u>50,000</u>
Total requirements	<u>1,303,733</u>	<u>1,376,585</u>
General Fund Ending Balance	<u>\$ 1,179,260</u>	<u>\$ 1,087,572</u>

Reserve Funds Beginning Balance	\$ 1,116,346	\$ 1,064,957
Resources		
Transfers in	-	50,000
Interest income	24,628	31,451
Total resources	24,628	81,451
Requirements		
Capital outlay	21,826	30,062
Reserve Funds Ending Balance	\$ 1,119,148	\$ 1,116,346

Conservation Grants FY 2019-2020

Marion SWCD Conservation Grant Programs	Landowner Assistance Program (LAP)*	Special Projects Grants (SPG)	Cover Crop Program	Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB) Small Grants*	Totals
Projects Completed	29	1	7	2 <small>(Marion SWCD sponsored)</small>	39

Grant Assistance Provided	\$172,558	\$7500	\$31,480	\$18,919	\$230,457
Landowner Contributions	\$760,116	\$12,500	NA	\$81,393	\$854,009
Total Conservation Investment	\$932,674	\$20,000	\$31,480	\$100,312	\$1,084,466

*Projects completed during the 2019-2020 Fiscal Year

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MARION SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Sales are online!

2021 NATIVE PLANT SALE

Order online January 5 through February 26

SALE

SCHOLARSHIP FUNDRAISER

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The Marion Soil and Water Conservation District is an equal opportunity employer, providing services to the public without regard to race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital or family status.

[Native Plant Information from Marion SWCD](#)

Customer Service via Grant Management

The Marion SWCD first heard about the need of a Grant Management System in early 2019. The Education Committee discussed the CLEAR grant process and the time it takes to receive a complete application, email the applicant about receiving application or request budget sheet and/or W9 forms, review the application, Nonprofit status check, correspondence, deadlines, grant award email, follow-up and filing and finally the report form. These processes were being done through excel, paper tracking and email correspondence by staff. The Education Committee asked that research be done and be brought back to the committee for consideration.

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[Salmon Watch Online : Click to Watch!](#)



Jenny Ammon: Education and Outreach Coordinator

September and October for the last 13 years have been dedicated to the appreciation and education of Salmon in the Pacific Northwest through Salmon Watch programming at Packsaddle Park. This year has brought challenge after challenge to the program side of Salmon Watch. In March, I had planned on contacting all of our Salmon Watch Volunteer Educators to host our annual training. As April came and we realized schools were not going to be back in session the idea of Salmon Watch happening in the fall became a far-fetched idea. In late spring of 2020, I reached out to the wonderful Nicholas Wagner with World Salmon Council to discuss how they were planning on handling fall outreach. As we discussed the next 6 months, we came to a larger conversation of how we could collaborate to provide educational content to students who would likely be utilizing computer-based learning.

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Diversity, Equity and Inclusion



Sarah Hamilton: Programming Specialist

In November of 2019 Marion SWCD formed a Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion committee in response to the newly updated Strategic Plan Goal 7.5: Build the capacity of board and staff to deliver diverse, equitable, and inclusive services.

The purpose of the DEI committee is to examine the way the district is representing our service area and allocating funds and technical assistance, identify gaps and strategies to better serve identified underserved communities, and improve the cultural competency of

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Cover Crops



Brandon Bishop: Ag Conservation Planner

The 2019-2020 fiscal year was about Soil!

Our efforts in soil health and conservation took a great stride forward with education and events. We hosted a Soil health workshop with topics ranging from soil mapping, cover cropping to soil and its most basic elements. Our goal was to educate landowners on the importance of soil basics and how conservation practices are beneficial. This was a well attended workshop with great reviews.

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Water Primrose Removal

Sarah Hamilton: Program Specialist

In 2019, Marion SWCD partnered with the North Santiam Watershed Council to manage water primrose (*Ludwigia* sp.) in the North Santiam River. Water primrose is a noxious invasive aquatic plant which grows in side-channels and shallows. It can choke irrigation ditches, create warm, anoxic conditions which kill fish and other aquatic animals, and prevent recreation like swimming, boating, and fishing.

This nasty invasive plant was first discovered in the North Santiam in late 2018. Treatments began in 2019 with a grant from the Oregon State Weed Board and continued this year with the receipt of another ODA Weed Board Grant.

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Plan for Your Land

Sarah Hamilton: Program Specialist

On January 16, 2020, the first of the 2020 Plan for Your Land classes was held at Broadway Commons in Salem, Oregon. This was our second year offering the free classes which educate landowners about soil, water, and wildlife conservation on their property. For each of the 4 3-hour classes we brought in local experts to speak about various aspects of conservation.

Partner organizations that contributed to the class include OSU Extension, Oregon Dept. of Fish & Wildlife, Oregon Dept. Of Agriculture, the Dept. of State Lands, as well as the City of Salem, North Santiam Watershed Council, Pudding River Watershed Council, Energy Trust of Oregon, Oregon Department of Forestry, and USDA-NRCS.

We also created site maps and conducted site visits for each of the 25 properties represented (the class was sold out). At the end of the 4-week class, landowners left with a completed conservation plan for their property, connections to technical assistance and funding sources for their projects, and a better understanding of landscape ecology and conservation.

While Marion SWCD hosted the class, the class outline was developed in 2018 through a

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each year to its planning and execution.

In 2021, the class is being offered online and is scheduled for Thursday evenings starting January 14th. For more information and to register, visit:

<https://virtualpfyl.eventbrite.com>

Taking Measure in the Mill Creek Focus Area: Our Most Successful Year.

Meredith Hoffman: Interim District Manager

Every two years the district is awarded an ODA grant of more than \$100,000.00 to get soil and water projects on the ground in a single watershed. So how do we measure success? We count the number of projects that were completed to solve the biggest problem in that watershed.

How are we doing? The good news is this is our most successful year and biennium ever. We have done more work, in more places than we have ever done before. In fact, to date in this biennium we have done almost four times the number projects that we had in the last three bienniums combined!

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An Oregon-grown campaign to raise public interest in soil health

Yes, folks are still soiling their undies in Marion County . . . last year, 10 women in Marion County took on the Soil Your Undies challenge. Those prominent farmers found out the importance of healthy soil in relation to crop production.



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