

Committee members are reminded to disclose any actual or potential conflicts of interest prior to discussion of relevant agenda items.

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**Marion Soil and Water Conservation District (MSWCD)
Education and Outreach Committee Meeting Agenda **DRAFT****

DAY
September 8, 2026
10:00 AM to 11:30 AM

Our mission is to partner with people in support of thriving lands, clean water, and healthy habitats. We do this through planning, technical assistance, funding, and education.

This meeting will be held by video conference (Zoom), and by telephone.

Call In Number: 1-253-215-8782 | **Meeting ID:** 821 3239 7029 | **Passcode:** 465879

Staff Contact: Amy Zimmer | amy.zimmer@marionswcd.net

Agenda Changes and/or Additions	Chair
1. Public Comment	Chair 5 minutes
2. Approve April 13, 2026 Minutes Action	Chair 5 minutes
3. Abiqua School CLEAR Grant Request Action	Roosth 10 minutes
4. Community Roots School CLEAR Grant Request Action	Roosth 10 minutes
5. Partner Grant (PG) Evergreen Status Criteria with Rubric Action	Staff- Ortiz 20 minutes
6. Stan Vistica Scholarship Update Informational	Zimmer 10 minutes
7. Completed CLEAR Grants Project Spotlight Informational	Roosth 10 minutes

Meeting Adjourned – Chair

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Oregon residents can file a written grievance with the Marion SWCD regarding a violation of the Public Meetings Law within 30 days of the alleged violation. The grievance should include details about the alleged violation and be submitted to the Marion SWCD District Manager for review.



**Marion Soil and Water Conservation District (MSWCD)
Education and Outreach Committee Meeting Minutes 13 April, 2026**

DRAFT

9:46 AM to 10:25 AM

Facilitator: Amy Zimmer

Recorded by: Kassi Roosth

Approved: DATE

Committee Member Attendance

Peggy Hart (Committee Chair) - Director	absent
Noah Justice - Director	absent
Kassi Roosth – Staff	Present
Amy Zimmer – Staff	Present
Rochelle Koch – Director	Present

Staff

Guests

Name		Name
Sarah Hamilton	Present	
Kristen McAlpine	Present	
Brenda Sanchez	Present	

Note: All documents and materials displayed or referenced are retained in the Education and Outreach Committee Meeting file at the Marion Soil and Water Conservation District (Marion SWCD or District).

Minutes

Note: Roosth was nominated to serve as temporary chair for the meeting, since Hart was not present.

Call to Order-Chair: 9:46 AM

Announcements - None

Agenda Additions or Changes - None

- 1. Public Comment** – No Comments
- 2. Administrative Committee Meeting Minutes – February 17th, 2026**
Koch makes a motion to accept the draft E&O committee meeting minutes as presented from February 17th, 2026. Zimmer seconds. No further discussion.
MOTION PASSES (Aye-3 [Koch, Zimmer, and Roosth], Opposed-0).
- 3. Committee Meeting Dates and CLEAR Grant Deadlines**

Zimmer shared the proposed dates and times. Hamilton asked whether meetings would be held during the summer months. Roosth explained that committee meetings typically occur after the CLEAR grant cycles, which are not offered during the summer when school is not in session. Sanchez added that additional meetings could be scheduled if needed to address other items. Koch made a motion to approve the CLEAR grant deadlines and committee meeting dates as proposed. Zimmer seconds. No further discussion. MOTION PASSES (Aye-3 [Koch, Zimmer, and Roosth], Opposed-0).

4. District Education Grant Funding District Education Grant Funding:

Zimmer presented a summary document outlining considerations for structuring district education funding, based on discussion from the Partner Grant review meeting. The committee reviewed how funding should be divided among K-12, college-level, and adult education within CLEAR and Partner Grants.

Zimmer shared that the board had previously suggested limiting CLEAR grants to K-12 and directing Partner Grants toward non-K-12 audiences. The committee was asked to consider whether this structure should remain or be revised.

Staff referenced input from Hart (via email), who indicated that CLEAR grants should not be limited to K-12 and that additional clarity was needed on how adult education projects would be funded, particularly for applicants who may not qualify for Partner Grants.

Zimmer confirmed that both grant programs share the same eligibility requirements, including nonprofit organizations or individuals with a taxpayer identification number or Employer Identification Number.

Koch questioned whether it was necessary to maintain two separate grant categories or if education funding could be combined under one program. In response, Roosth explained that concerns had been raised about overlap between programs, including applicants accessing both funding sources due to different funding caps, and emphasized the need for clear distinctions to ensure equitable distribution.

Zimmer noted that the CLEAR grant application is more streamlined, while the Partner Grant process is more detailed and rigorous. Sanchez added that recent budget changes increased CLEAR grant funding to \$85,000 and reduced Partner Grant funding.

Koch suggested that education beyond K–12 could be included under CLEAR. Roosth agreed, recommending that all student-focused education—K–12 through college be grouped under CLEAR, with Partner Grants designated for adult education. Sanchez noted the importance of clearly defining “college” to include trade and technical pathways.

Koch moved to structure education funding so that CLEAR grants support all student-focused programs (K–12 through college, including trade and technical education), while Partner Grants are designated for adult education. Roosth seconds. No further discussion. MOTION PASSES (Aye-3 [Koch, Zimmer, and Roosth], Opposed-0).

5. FY '25-26 CLEAR Grant Report

Roosth presented the FY 2025–26 CLEAR Grant Report as an informational item. She provided an overview of how funds were allocated, noting that all available funds were fully utilized. The report summarized participation, project types, and funding distribution, including support for 1,581 students and adult learners across school groups, nonprofits, and community-based projects.

Roosth added that these projects are a direct extension of the district’s work, strengthening collaboration and partnerships with participating organizations and expanding the impact of district education and outreach efforts.

Koch expressed appreciation for the summary and the information provided.

6. CLEAR Grant Project Spotlight

Roosth presented a PowerPoint showcasing completed CLEAR grant projects from prior fiscal years. The presentation included photo examples of student and community-based learning activities such as watershed and field studies, natural resources and art integration, composting and sustainability projects, outdoor education programs, interpretive signage updates, and hands-on environmental stewardship activities across schools and community organizations.

Adjourn: Roosth adjourned the meeting at 10:25 AM



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Marion Soil and Water Conservation District Education and Outreach Committee Meeting – Agenda Item Brief

Agenda Item Name: CLEAR Grant Request: Abiqua School

Date: September 8th, 2026

Agenda Item Brief:

Abiqua School is requesting \$5,000 to support its Rooted in Learning Initiative. The project will transform an underutilized wooded area on campus into an outdoor learning space where students can learn through hands-on activities and connect classroom lessons with nature.

The project will serve approximately 230 students, primarily students in grades 5–8, ages 10–14. Students will use the trail for STEAM education, environmental studies, creative writing, art, and physical activity.

Funding Request: \$5,000

- \$2,000 – Trail materials (gravel, wood chips, edging)
- \$1,000 – Classroom seating
- \$1,000 – Outdoor magnetic chalkboard
- \$1,000 – Native plantings

Abiqua School will also provide approximately \$24,455.63 in in-kind contributions, including supplies and materials, contracted services, and equipment rental.

The project will create a lasting outdoor classroom that provides students with additional opportunities for experiential learning, environmental education, and creativity.

Requested Action: Recommend funding Abiqua School's \$5,000 CLEAR grant request.

Proposed By: Kassi Roosth



Marion Soil and Water Conservation District Education and Outreach Committee Meeting – Agenda Item Brief

Agenda Item Name: CLEAR Grant Request: Community Roots School

Date: September 8th, 2026

Agenda Item Brief:

Community Roots School is requesting \$5,195 to support its Outdoor Classroom program. The project will provide students with hands-on learning focused on practical land care, gardening, sustainability, and environmental stewardship.

The project will serve approximately 100 students in grades K–6. Students will participate weekly from September through June in hands-on activities including growing food, building healthy soil, creating compost, caring for native plants and pollinator areas, cooking, and traditional crafts.

Funding Request: \$5,195

- \$595 – Supplies and materials: Bulk potting soil and compost from Highway Fuel, wheelbarrow parts, hardware for deer fence repairs, and compostable consumables
- \$4,000 – Instructional costs: 160 hours at \$25 per hour
- \$600 – Transportation

Community Roots School will also provide approximately \$9,800 in in-kind contributions, including \$1,000 in supplies and materials and \$8,800 in instructional costs.

The program will give students consistent opportunities for experiential learning while developing practical skills and knowledge related to biodiversity, sustainability, conservation, and environmental stewardship.

Requested Action: Recommend funding the \$5195 CLEAR grant request from Community Roots School

Proposed By: Kassi Roosth



Marion Soil and Water Conservation District Committee Meeting – Agenda Item Brief

Title: Partner Grants - Evergreen Status Criteria

Proposed By: Marion SWCD Board

Requested Action: Recommend revisions to the Partner Grant Evergreen Status Criteria for Board consideration.

Summary

The Administrative Committee requested a framework outlining criteria for granting “Evergreen Status” to entities that are high-performing, low-risk, and meet the designated criteria. Evergreen Status would allow the Board to waive the five-year grant limitation for qualifying entities. The Board recommended all District Committees review how the status would apply to the Grant Limitation policy and revisions to the criteria.

Background / Policy Context

Evergreen Status is intended to identify high-performing, low-risk entities that meet designated criteria and may qualify for a Board waiver of the five-year grant limitation. Because some organizations may reach the five-year limit within three years, District Committees are being asked to review how the status should apply to Partner Grant opportunities and related scoring criteria.

Committee Discussion Questions

1. **Eligible Partner Grant Opportunities:** Should Evergreen Status apply to Capacity Grants, Regular Partner Grants, or all Partner Grants?
2. **Program History Criteria:** What should qualify an entity based on prior successful applications or years of successful participation? How many?
3. **Minimum Score for Board Recommendation:** Should the minimum score remain at the original 80% proposal or increase to 90%?
4. **Strategic Plan Alignment and Point Allocation:** Should Strategic Plan alignment increase to 25 points, and should the scoring categories be revised accordingly?

Scoring Category	Revised Points
Compliance and Timeliness	25
Financial Management	25
Application Quality	15
Alignment with Marion SWCD Strategic Plan	25
Primary Benefit to Marion County	10

Attachments: Partner Grant Evergreen Status Criteria

Attachment A: Partner Grant Evergreen Status Criteria **DRAFT**

Purpose. The purpose of this policy is to establish a clear and consistent process for prioritizing high-performing, low-risk entities for Partner Grant funding.

An Entity designated with “Evergreen Status” may have the five-year Rolling Max waived for Partner Grants.

Scope and definitions. “Evergreen Status” is a designation assigned to an entity and does not apply to an individual project application. Evergreen Status does not guarantee funding, and all standard eligibility requirements remain in effect.

Board confirms Evergreen Status designations prior to the opening of each Partner Grant application period for the applicable fiscal year.

The Board retains sole discretion to approve or deny any application, subject to available funding.

Minimum Eligibility Requirements (Must Meet All)

- **Eligibility:** Meets all baseline eligibility requirements for the Partner Grant program
- **Program History:** Grantee must have a history of at least **3 funded Partner Grant applications** through the District.
- **Good Standing:** No active compliance issues, repayment obligations, or unresolved monitoring findings with the grantor.
- **Performance on Deliverables:** Prior grant deliverables are substantially met on schedule, or schedule changes are proactively requested and approved before deadlines.
- **Responsiveness and Partnership:** Communicates promptly with staff, participates in required check-ins, and addresses feedback without repeated follow-up.
- **Timely Closeout:** All prior grants are closed out (or on track to close out) with required documentation submitted.

Evergreen Criteria and Scoring Rubric

The following criteria and scoring rubric shall be used to evaluate entities that satisfy all Minimum Eligibility Requirements and to ensure that desired criteria are met. Scores shall be assigned based on documented performance in the entity’s three most recent awarded Partner Grant applications and any applicable priority factors identified by the Board.

Criterion	Weight	Score Guidance (0-5) <i>Select the description that best fits</i>
Compliance and Timeliness <i>Required Criteria - must score 4 or higher to meet.</i>	30	0-1: More than two progress and/or final reports were repeatedly more than 10 business days late, or incomplete and required major revision; multiple amendments were required; communication was inconsistent or required repeated follow-up; or the entity demonstrated significant capacity gaps or administrative instability. 2-3: One to two progress and/or final reports were submitted more than 10 business days late or were incomplete and required minor revision; compliance was achieved with delays or required amendments; communication was required follow-up; and the entity demonstrated internal controls and administrative capacity with gaps. 4: Progress and final reports were consistently submitted within 10 days of due date; communication was timely with occasional follow-up; and the entity demonstrated adequate internal controls and administrative capacity with minor gaps. 5: Progress and final reports were all submitted on or before due date, were complete and required no revisions or follow-up; and amendments were obtained in advance; communication was prompt and responsive; and the entity demonstrated strong internal controls, stable leadership, and high administrative capacity.
Financial Management <i>Required Criteria - must score 4 or higher to meet.</i>	30	0-1: Significant noncompliance, repeated documentation issues, disallowed costs, or material financial concerns. 2-3: Moderate concerns. Isolated financial errors that were corrected. 4: Generally compliant. Accurate financial documentation and no repeated issues across the three most recent awarded applications. 5: Fully compliant. All required reports submitted on time, and financial management is consistently accurate, complete, and free of disallowed costs or material findings.

Application Quality <i>Required Criteria - must score 4 or higher to meet.</i>	15	0-1: Applications routinely required substantial revision or contained recurring deficiencies. 2-3: Applications required moderate revisions but no recurring deficiencies. 4: Applications were consistently complete at submission, with minimal revisions required. 5: Applications were consistently complete at submission, with no revisions required; provided a clear scope of request, attachments provided and complete, budget clear with no math errors.
Alignment with Marion SWCD Strategic Plan <i>(based on entity mission statement and current activities)</i>	15	0-1: Little alignment or alignment not demonstrated. 2-3: Partial alignment; connections are general or not fully developed. 4: Strong alignment with clear, specific connections to strategic plan. 5: Outstanding alignment; directly advances multiple priorities in the strategic plan.
Primary Benefit to Marion County	10	0-1: Limited or unclear benefit to Marion County or service area not primarily in-county. 2-3: Clear benefit to Marion County, but indirect, limited scale, or weak evidence. 4: Strong, direct benefit to Marion County with credible evidence of need/impact. 5: Exceptional, direct county benefit; impact is well documented and broadly applicable/reachable.
Total	100	Base score totals 100 points

Scoring Interpretation. A total score of 80 points or higher supports a staff recommendation for Evergreen Status, provided the entity meets all minimum prerequisites and scores a 4 or higher on all required criteria.

A score below 80 shall not preclude Board consideration, but any exception should be documented in the recommendation record.

Designation Process

1. **Staff Assessment:** Staff (Grants Specialist) score eligible entity using the rubric based on the 3 most recent Partner Grants (reports, reimbursements, monitoring, and application quality).

2. **Staff Recommendation:** Staff (Grants Specialist) prepare a short recommendation memo identifying entities that qualify for consideration, each Entity's rating, recommendation for Evergreen status, and any mitigating factors.
3. **Committee Review:** Admin Committee reviews recommendations in advance (to avoid making detailed performance decisions in a full Board meeting).
4. **Board Determination:** Board confirms Evergreen Status designations prior to each opening of the Partner Grant application period for the applicable fiscal year.

Duration, Renewal, and Revocation

- **Annual Verification:** Evergreen Status is reviewed at least annually to confirm continued good standing.
- **Revocation Triggers (non-exhaustive):** late or missing reports; repeated budget/documentation issues; material audit/monitoring findings; failure to meet deliverables without approved amendments; or other significant compliance concerns.
- **Corrective Pathway:** Status may be suspended for a cycle and reinstated after corrective actions are completed and performance improves.

Evergreen Status Considerations

- **Maintain Board Discretion:** Evergreen Status does not guarantee funding or a specific award amount.
- **Adjust future Criteria:** If Evergreen Status becomes too common, raise the threshold score and/or tighten required criteria.



Marion Soil and Water Conservation District Education and Outreach Committee Meeting – Agenda Item Brief

Agenda Item Name: Stan Vistica Scholarship Updates

Date: September 8th, 2026

Agenda Item Brief:

Stan Vistica Scholarship Review Process

The scholarship scoring rubric was updated this year to provide reviewers with clearer guidance for evaluating applications. The rubric assigns points in several areas, including the applicant's educational and career goals and demonstrated initiative, work experience, leadership, natural resource background and other interests. The updated rubric and definitions are intended to help reviewers apply the criteria consistently and transparently.

The Stan Vistica Scholarship Review Committee, a partnership between Marion SWCD staff (Kassi Roosth, Amy Zimmer, Sarah Hamilton), the City of Salem (Deborah Topp), and the City of Keizer (Stacey Perry, Jenny Ammon), completed the application review and scoring. Each applicant received a score based on the established criteria. The applicants with the highest overall scores were selected as the scholarship recipients.

2026 Stan Vistica Scholarship Recipients

Proceeds from the District's Native Plant Sale support four \$2,000 scholarships for college students pursuing degrees in natural resources or related fields. This year's scholarship recipients are:

Oto'ota-Mele Letisi

Degree: Bachelor of Science | **Major:** Energy and Environmental Policy | **Expected Graduation:** June 2030

Oto'ota-Mele's interest in environmental stewardship was inspired by her grandfather's dedication to caring for public green spaces and has grown through her studies in International Baccalaureate Environmental Systems and Societies and Chemistry. The scholarship will support her continued education in environmental science, conservation, and policy as she works toward a career in environmental policy analysis.

Marisol Rodriguez (Previous Recipient)

School: Linfield University | **Degree:** Bachelor of Applied Science | **Majors:** Biology/Biological Sciences and Environmental Science | **Expected Graduation:** June 2028

Marisol's passion for marine science began at a young age and has been strengthened through hands-on experiences, including studying glaciers in Alaska through the Inspiring

Girls Expedition program. She is pursuing biology and environmental science with plans to continue her education in oceanography or marine science, with the goal of conducting research and contributing to a greater understanding of marine systems.

Gerardo Romero Garibay

School: Chemeketa Community College | **Degree:** Doctor of Veterinary Medicine (planned pathway) | **Major:** Biology/Biological Sciences; Agriculture/Veterinary Preparatory Programs | **Expected Graduation:** June 2031

Gerardo's passion for animal health and conservation has grown through hands-on veterinary experiences and a lifelong appreciation for wildlife and natural spaces. He is pursuing biology with the goal of becoming a veterinarian specializing in veterinary dentistry and hopes to support wildlife rehabilitation and conservation by helping protect the healthy ecosystems animals depend on.

Nicole Varner

School: Oregon State University | **Degree:** Bachelor of Science | **Majors:** Animal Sciences and Agricultural Animal Breeding | **Expected Graduation:** Summer 2026

Nicole's passion for animal health and agriculture grew through raising and showing sheep and her involvement in 4-H and FFA. She is pursuing animal sciences and agricultural animal breeding and plans to attend veterinary school to become a large animal veterinarian, supporting the health of livestock and the sustainable agricultural communities that depend on healthy land and natural resources.

Stan Vistica Scholarship Essay Question Update

The scholarship review team also revised the essay prompt for future scholarship offerings beginning in 2027, to encourage applicants to better connect their experience, education and goals to conservation and natural resource stewardship.

Original Prompt:

"Describe your interest and/or background in natural resources."

Updated Prompt:

"The Marion Soil and Water Conservation District's mission is to support thriving lands, clean water, and healthy habitats. Describe how your education, experiences, and interests have prepared you to contribute to this mission. As relevant to your experience, include any involvement in conservation, natural resource management, or environmental stewardship, and explain how this scholarship will support your continued growth in these areas."



Marion Soil and Water Conservation District Education and Outreach Committee Meeting – Agenda Item Brief

Agenda Item Name: Four Completed CLEAR Grant Success Stories

Date: September 8th, 2026

Agenda Item Brief:

The Jane Goodall Environmental School: School Garden and Field Trips

Funds supported JGEMS students as they expanded their campus garden and native plant program. Students grew vegetables to donate to the Marion County Food Bank and native plants for local parks. Through service projects and partnerships with the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde's Native Nursery, the Oregon Zoo, and the Salem Parks Department, students gained hands-on experience in growing plants, restoring habitats, and conducting environmental research.



Photos show students studying soil temperature to support native seed germination, gaining hands-on experience at the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde Nursery, and working in the school garden.

Salem Environmental Education Outdoor School Program:

PAWS Outdoor School provided 413 Salem-Keizer students with hands-on learning at four local outdoor sites. Students learned about wildlife, water, plants, ecosystems, and conservation while working with local environmental experts. The program helped students build knowledge and a stronger connection to nature. Funds supported supplies and materials for the program.



Photo of student using loupe purchased from CLEAR grant to study an insect.

Aumsville Elementary Classroom Field Trips:

The “Ecosystems to Engineering” project gave students hands-on learning about salmon, ecosystems, and natural disasters. Students explored salmon habitat and conservation during an ODFW field trip and learned about tsunamis and engineering during a visit to OSU’s Wave Research Laboratory. These experiences helped connect classroom learning to real-world environmental issues in their community. Funds supported transportation and substitute teacher costs.



Photos of students at the OSU's Wave Research Laboratory and poster projects.

Redeemer Community Garden Composting Workshop

The workshop provided community gardeners with hands-on training in composting, soil health, and organic waste management. Eleven gardeners received vermicomposting bins and learned how to use them, along with in-place composting methods to improve soil health and garden productivity. English and Spanish instruction, with live translation, helped make the training accessible to a predominantly Spanish-speaking audience.



Photos of Cesar from Marion SWCD and Julia from Highway Fuel Company working with students in the garden to set up worm composting bins.