



2018-2019

# ANNUAL REPORT

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**POLK**  **Soil & Water  
Conservation District**



# Community and Landowner Engagement

## Polk County Fair

Four staff members attended and worked a booth at the 2018 Polk County Fair, where various literature covering a wide variety of natural resource topics including ground water quality, soil health, wildlife habitat, and Oregon white oak habitat restoration was displayed and discussed with a wide variety of individuals. The fair booth also contained weekend long activities and interactive exhibits for children presented by OSU Master Gardeners, bee keepers, and nutritionists, and a representative from Chintimini Wildlife Center; including a worm composting bin, honey bee demonstration, pelt identification station, and a “soil your undies” take home experiment kit, etc.

## Tour of SWCD’s Jont Creek OWEB Restoration Grant Project

35 landowners attended the Jont Creek Pre-work Tour - a wetland restoration project that will include removing an old culvert, replacing it with a bridge to open 7 miles of fish passage and will create 5 acres of off channel marsh adjacent to active farm ground in the Luckiamute Watershed. Fish protected will include Chinook Salmon, cutthroat trout, Oregon Chubb. Partners in the project will include River Design Group, US Fish and Wildlife Service.

## Cultivating Newsletter

Cultivating has been published since the Fall of 2017 in partnership with the Polk Itemizer Observer and OSU Extension Polk County. The quarterly insert covers a broad range of topics written by the Polk SWCD and Extension staff and faculty, including: healthy farms, forests, food, and families sections. Look for it inside the I.O. or on-line Dec-Mar-June- Sept. We continue to broaden the reach of the magazine to include more areas of the county.



## Reaching Out to Landowners

- ♦ 14,000 copies of Cultivating Newsletter distributed quarterly
- ♦ Over 250 landowners attended district events!
- ♦ 12 educational workshops held with over 252 attendees



# Community and Landowner Engagement

Cont.

## Native Plant Sale

Each year our native plant sale reaches customers from all over our county, and some from neighboring counties. We focus on selling native bulbs and bare root shrubs and trees from local nurseries so that the genetic stock is hardy for our area. Proceeds from our sales go to support our conservation easements that permanently protect rare and declining Oregon white oak habitat.

## Polk County Local Work Group

Polk County Local Working Group meeting hosted by the District and NRCS was held and well attended; landowner and conservation partner input received from that meeting essentially echoed resource concerns that were previously identified by both the District and NRCS and will be used to guide the development of strategies going forward. Top priorities from 2018-2019 include structural and diverse forestry which comprises conifer mixed forest, oak and upland restoration, and erosion in orchards/vineyards. As well as incentive programs like Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) to support prevention of stream bank erosion along ag associated stream sides. Water quality and quantity remain high on the priority list for the District as well as noxious weed control.

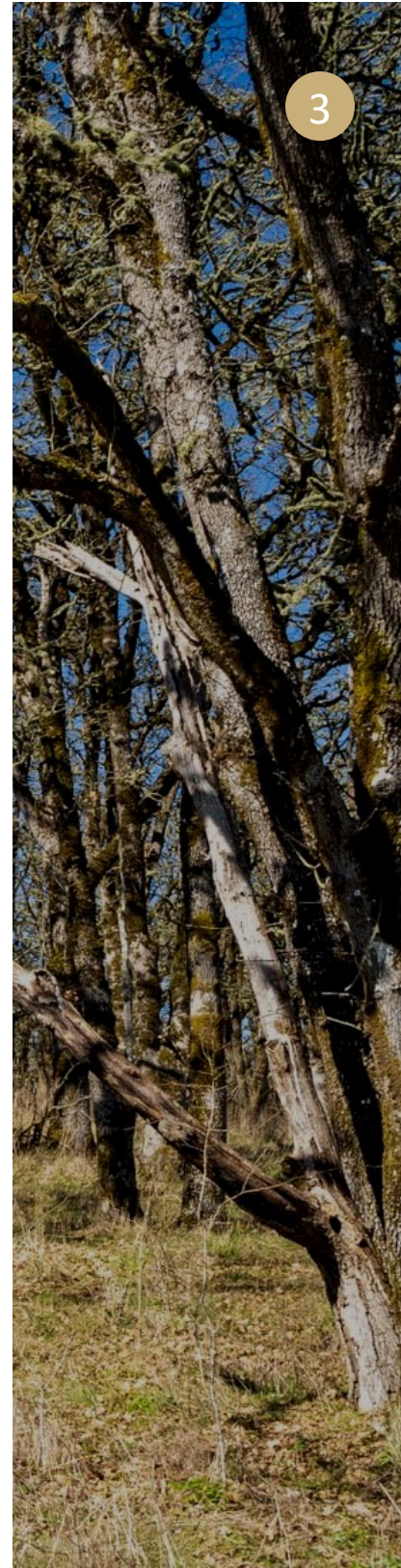
## Living on the Land Series

Two staff participated in OSU Extension's Living on the Land Series – making presentations on forest and riparian health (CREP).



## Salt Creek Land Owner Meeting

Salt Creek Watershed focused work continued through the lens of developing a long term, basin wide water quality monitoring study. More related outreach will continue to occur once new biennium begins along with OSU Water Resource Department's Derek Godwin.



## Reaching Out to Landowners

- ◆ Over 1,330 plants sold at the 2019 Native Plant Sale
- ◆ Over 25 farm visits completed

# Technical Assistance

One of the most important aspects of the District's work is to provide professional technical assistance to landowners and operators.

Activities we perform under this duty include consultations, on premises site visits for farms, ranches, forests, and small acreage; conservation planning, designing projects, grant writing for projects, implementing specific conservation practices involving soil erosion, invasive plant and animal species management, crop and manure management, and maintaining water quality.

We also work with the Department of Agriculture and assist with suggestions for improving land management practices on ODA ag water compliance visits. We also provide project management, inspection, and verification of project elements over the grants we are awarded.

During the 2018-2019 fiscal year we provided technical assistance in the areas of erosion control and soil sluffing, pasture management and stocking rates, rotational grazing, weed control and brush management, development of ponds for irrigation and enjoyment, off channel watering stations, other rainwater catchments, establishing pollinator gardens and orchards, identification of substances used on ag fields like "lime" for lowering PH in acidic fields; habitat restoration, general forestry, heavy use areas for livestock, manure storage and composting facilities, riparian plantings, and rainwater collection and storage.

## Staff Training

Attended NRCS soil erosion Conservation Innovation Grant development workshops on the prevention of soil erosion and utilization of cover crops in orchards.

## Assisting Landowners

- 💧 33 landowners provided with one-on-one assistance
- 💧 18 conservation plans written
- 💧 151.5 of acres included in conservation plans



# Partnerships

## Ag Water Quality Management Area Plans

District partners with 10 land managers and the Ag Water Quality Specialist from ODA in each of 2 plan areas, one that covers the Yamhill basin in the North portion of the county, and the Middle Willamette basin which covers mid Polk county down through Benton County. In this partnership the District provides support to review and contribute to revisions of the Area Plans, reporting progress and activities made related to milestones, outputs, and outcomes of rules agreed upon for land managers to follow voluntarily to promote the wise use of natural resources in Polk County.

## Collaborations with Natural Resource Managers

The District partners with other NRM's on a variety of projects. We formed the Salt Creek Collaborative in partnership with Commissioner Craig Pope, ODA, NRCS, Greater Yamhill Watershed Council, and OSU Water Resources Department faculty to research flooding concerns in the Salt Creek Watershed. Work continues.

We partnered with the Luckiamute Watershed Council on tours and ground water quality workshops and testing. As well as the council's technical advisory committee on issues surrounding riparian projects.

Planned the Polk County Fair both "Cultivating" along with OSU Extension faculty and Chintimini wildlife Center Staff. Planned multiple joint workshops with other SWCD's including Yamhill and Marion. Presented at the Living on the Land Series with OSU Extension Faculty on topics of forestry, riparian habitat, and oak woodlands.



## Partnerships

- ◆ 12 partner events or meetings attended by district
- ◆ 2 events hosted by SWCD for partners
- ◆ 60 attendees at events hosted by SWCD for partners





# Other Activities

## OSWB Grant

2019 OSWB grant was awarded and will be moving forward with further targeted EDRR surveys for *Ludwigia* at Baskett Slough.

## Native & Endangered Plant Grant

The district, in conjunction with USFWS, applied for and received grant money to reseed/establish native and endangered plant populations (Nelson's Checkermallow) within the Baskett Slough NWR. Planting activities began fall of 2019.

## TA Grant

Received NRCS TA grant to continue providing staff time for NRCS conservation planning and contracts to carry out 12 RCPP contracts that will go beyond the end of our current RCPP (Oct 2019) and for TA with our joint forest health and elk meadows initiative's going into 2020.

## Oregon White Oak Habitat Restoration Outreach

The district continues its Oregon White Oak habitat restoration outreach and is currently managing several restoration projects in various stages. We are developing a strategy along with NRCS, USFWS, ODFW, and CTGR to continue our work in restoring oak habitats and developing Elk meadows, roll out in 2020

## Large Woody Debris Placement Project

Pending receipt of appropriate permits, district began a large woody debris placement project within the Upper Rickreall Watershed with the intentions of improving habitat for anadromous fish that are trapped and transported above Aaron Mercer reservoir. Along with habitat improvements, the project aims to reduce sediment inputs, partially derived from the large forest fire in the area years ago.

## Grants Received

- ◆ OWEB Restoration Grants- \$107,000
- ◆ OWEB Small Grants - \$41,825.00
- ◆ Oregon State Weed Board Grants - \$19,990.00
- ◆ Oregon Dept of Ag Grants - \$78,488
- ◆ NRCS grants - \$61,560.00
- ◆ Contracted Services \$ \$10,305.00



# Successful Projects: Jont Creek

## Perched Culvert Replacement

- Work taking place over 2018-2020
- Fish Passage Repaired In 9 Miles of Stream
- Benefits Salmon and Steelhead, Important Feeding and Rearing Habitat
- Beneficial to Numerous ESA Listed and Oregon Conservation Strategy Species
- Flood Relief Benefits and Improved Access for Farming



## Marsh Development

- Creates Valuable Wetland Habitat for Migratory Birds
- Perennial Water Source for Wildlife
- Additional Habitat for Recently Delisted Oregon Chub
- Groundwater Recharge
- Water Quality Benefits





# Coming in 2019-2020

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- Acquisition of over 270 acres of upland oak and prairie at Smithfield Oaks Conservation Easement
  - Implementation of Jont Creek Restoration Grant \$108,000
  - Full time CREP Technician grant up from half time
  - Phase II of OSWB Ludwigia Control @ Baskett Sleugh
  - NRCS CIS grant awarded across three counties (Yamhill, Marion, Polk) to control soil erosion in orchards
  - Drinking Water Providers Workshop – Jan 2020
  - Partnership with OSU Water Resources Department for water quantity study in Salt Creek
  - Dryland Farming Tour – Sept 2019



***YOUR LOCAL SOURCE OF CONSERVATION INFORMATION AND  
EDUCATION IN POLK COUNTY, OREGON SINCE 1966!***

## Get in Touch

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