

POLK SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

2014-15 Fiscal Year Annual Report



Oak Savannah



Serving Polk County since 1966!

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About Polk Soil and Water Conservation District

The Polk SWCD is a local public source of information and education on natural resource use.

We provide a number of services to help with responsible land stewardship such as:

- **Technical Assistance** Through land management planning by developing farm, forestry, range, restoration, small acreage, wetland, and wildlife management plans. As well as, plant ID assistance, soil and water conservation workshop topics, invasive species controls, improvements and protection of wildlife habitat, and water quality projects.
- **Land Management** - Assistance in developing forestry, range, farm, wildlife, wetland, and small acreage management plans.
- **Funding Opportunities** Grants, government cost share programs, and coordinated efforts with other agencies are available to assist with best management practices, habitat restoration, and other natural resource conservation related projects.

Message from the District Manager– Karin Stutzman



As promised, fiscal year 2014-2015 has seen new partnerships forming for the Polk SWCD. A goal of ours is to provide soil and water conservation information without duplication, and partnering together helps spread the word to audiences across counties and organizations with the same concerns. For instance this past year, we, along with multiple partners, have been awarded five year program funding for oak savanna and upland prairie restoration through the Natural Resource

Conservation Service (NRCS). We held a series of listening sessions with commercial farmers facilitated by OSU Extension to help us understand current barriers in implementing conservation practices in commercial operations; rounding out the sessions with a debriefing of these concerns with ODA, OSU Extension specialists, the NRCS, farm credit services, watershed councils, and others. We presented at a two week OSU Extension small woodland manager training series and we are planning a winter series of workshops with neighboring entities including small acreage land use planning and native plant propagation. We are excited to continue to build ongoing, effective relationships with our partners in the years to come.

Message from the Chair– David Simmons



During the past year the Polk Soil and Water Conservation District has seen some real gains in conservation thanks to the hardworking and dedicated staff, and the partnerships they have created in the past couple of years. The District has filled the vacant positions on the Board and recruited two new Associate Directors. Karin Stutzman (formally Nembach) has been busy working with our neighboring Districts to implement Conservation Reserve Enhancement Projects (CREP) and the NRCS's Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP).

The District also hosted a workshop on "Waterway Regulations", held 5 commercial agriculture needs assessment meetings around the county, co-sponsored a pesticides container take-back program with DEQ/ODA, participated in an Agro-Forestry workshop and taught Salmon Watch with Marion SWCD.

The District board would like to thank all who donated time and energy to further the District's work. We welcome your comments or suggestions on the District's future.

Annual Work Plan

Every year Polk SWCD’s Board of Directors develop and adopt an annual work plan stating the general and specific goals that Polk SWCD should be accomplishing each year. Polk SWCD’s annual work plan was approved by our board April 9, 2014 for the 2014-2015 fiscal year.

The following are the general goals that Polk SWCD identified last year:

Technical

Goal: Offer technical assistance and conservation planning to resource owners and communities directed toward the conservation & wise use of Polk County natural resources, including agricultural water quality.

Objectives: Technical Private, Technical Public, Ag Water Quality

Educational

Goal: Provide education and outreach related to natural resource issues within Polk County.

Objectives: Youth Education, Partner Education, Adult Education

Operational

Goal: District operations will be effective, economical, and efficient to meet legal and grantor requirements.

Objectives: Fiscal Management Operations, Statutory Operations Requirements, General Operations

Financial Summary 2014-2015

All SWCD Funds:

Total Revenue: \$440,680.48

Total Expenses: \$370,338.38

Ending Balance: \$364,215.47*

*(includes unappropriated/contingency/savings/net income)

Polk SWCD’s 2014-15 budget is typically reviewed by a Budget Committee consisting of seven Directors and seven Members of the Public. The budget is presented in May and a Hearing is held in June. Contact Polk SWCD for more information on the committee or for information about becoming a budget committee member.

Budget Committee Members

SWCD Directors

David Simmons

Frank Pender

Chad Woods

Nathen Slaven

Jim Buckovic

Linda Marquardt-Sutton

Zone 4 Vacant

Public Members

Jim Castle

Tom Thomson

Phil Walker

Rudy White

Bernie Faber

Forest Peck (absent)

Clifford Baker (absent)



Intern Spotlight

The Polk SWCD was pleased to host 2 high school interns through Western Oregon University’s Upward Bound program. For 4 days a week for six weeks Santiago and Chris assisted staff with numerous projects. They both enjoyed the field work the most, including surveying for invasive species (pictured left) along Rickreall Creek, surveying for threatened and endangered species, pulling ivy, and helping maintain native plantings. They also had the opportunity to hone office skills and helped prepare for the Polk County Fair by developing outreach materials.

Chris: “I learned that working in the field yields a lot of surprises, so I always need to be prepared for the unexpected.”

Santiago: “I really enjoyed the atmosphere here at Polk SWCD; this was the best internship!”

We appreciate their hard work and demonstrated responsibility. **Thanks Chris and Santiago!!!**

Conservation Activities

Urban Riparian Restoration



Polk SWCD, in collaboration with the City of Dallas Parks, completed a grant funded by the *Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB)*. Staff and volunteers removed invasive species and restored native riparian vegetation along a 7 acre stretch of the Rickreall Creek.

CREP

Polk SWCD is once again assisting landowners enrolling in the *Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)*. CREP is a US Department of Agriculture program for cropland and pastureland along streams where a minimum of a 35 foot riparian buffer can be established. In addition to receiving an annual rental rate, the following conservation practices are eligible for cost share: invasive weed removal & maintenance, riparian buffers - native tree and shrub planting, fencing off livestock from waterways, and off-stream watering facilities.



Youth Outreach

This past year has been a great stepping stone for our youth outreach program, with our Youth Outreach Coordinator teaching 24 Macro invertebrate classes, reaching around 600 students. This coming year we are planning on expanding the number and variety of classes taught in order to reach more students. We already are on track for that goal and plan to exceed it, by working with other SWCD's, youth organizations, and schools. We also will be participating in the Salmon Watch Program with the Marion SWCD again this fall.



Oak Restoration



We have been touring the county's oak habitat most of this year! With traditional programs like small grants from OWEB and new programs like *Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)*, the landowner interest in critical oak habitat restoration has been very exciting. Oak habitat is severely limited in Oregon and any efforts to enhance or recreate the habitat many species are desperately lacking is important to the overall ecological health of the Willamette Valley; We are proud to say the Polk SWCD is helping to lead the cause for conservation and hope to visit more properties and find funding to allow landowners to do necessary restoration work.

Conservation Easements

Long term protection of land is critically important, and with pressures to convert the remaining habitat lands to production agriculture, the Polk SWCD has stepped up into the world of conservation easements. With land trust partners and advice from other agencies, the Polk SWCD has been approved to fund its first easement purchase. Upon successful closing of the transaction over 90 acres of excellent oak savanna and prairie will be preserved from future development, managed by the SWCD's staff to benefit threatened and endangered species as well as provide the public an opportunity to learn first hand what the early Oregon Valley settlers traveled to find.



Invasive Plants



The PSWCD Invasive Plant Program has completed a strong first year. Polk staff participated in several public education and outreach events including a

Luckiamute Watershed Council riparian restoration workshop, a Polk County Public Works (PCPW) pesticide container collection day, and the Polk County Fair. Partnerships have been developed with PCPW and Ash Creek Water Control District (ACWCD) to locate and eradicate Japanese knotweed from County roadsides and the ACWCD service area. To date, in-house applicators have completed 50 hours of spray work across four separate SWCD projects, completing three. Staff also worked with interns to survey portions of Rickreall Creek for invasive plant species.

Polk SWCD Board of Directors FY 2014-15

Polk SWCD is a subdivision of state government administered by seven locally elected directors, who serve without pay for four year terms. Five directors represent landowners from each of the geographic zones in the county and two at large directors represent the entire district. Directors meet monthly to administer the business of Polk SWCD. The Directors donate many volunteer hours on behalf of the residents of Polk County and toward protecting our Natural Resources.



Directors (left to right): Simmons, Crawford (inset), Gordon, Pender, McKibben (seated), Dalton and Woods.

Current Directors

David Simmons — Zone 2 / Chair
david.simmons@polkswcd.com

Chad Woods — At-Large / Vice Chair
chad.woods@polkswcd.com

Frank Pender — At-Large/ Secretary
frank.pender@polkswcd.com

John Dalton—Zone 4 / Treasurer
polkswcd.zone4director@gmail.com

Kelly Gordon—Zone 5
kgordonski@hotmail.com

David McKibben—Zone 3
polkswcd.zone3director@gmail.com

Matt Crawford—Zone 1
polkswcd.zone1director@gmail.com

Past Directors during FY 2014-15

Nathan Slaven— Zone 3

Linda Marquardt-Sutton — Zone 1

Jim Buckovic — Zone 5

Associate Directors for FY 14-15

Rachel Walker
Judy Beebe
Bodgan Caceu
Mel Chase
Lois Loop

Directors Emeriti FY 14-15

Tom Thomson
Jim Clawson
Brian Sparks
Terry Lamers
Don Duhrkopf
Claude White

Polk SWCD Staff

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Sawyer Finegan — Youth Outreach
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Tom Wilson — District Clerk
clerk@polkswcd.com Ext. 108

NRCS Staff

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Billy Burr — Accounting Specialist
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Lucas



Karin



Liz



Tom



Sawyer



Marc

Your local public source of information and education on natural resources and conservation in Polk County since 1966!