

Annual Report 2009 -2010



And the award goes to.....

This year Columbia SWCD won the 2010 Distinguished District Award. Columbia SWCD was selected by the Soil and Water Conservation Commission. This year, the Commission selected two winners, one with a tax base and one without.

Below is a quote from the presentation given by John Byers when presenting the award.

"Being in a wet part of the state, the Columbia SWCD's mission is to control erosion, prevent floodwater sediment damage, and as their mission statement reads, "to promote health, safety, and general welfare for the people of Columbia County and The State or Oregon.

In 2010, the Columbia SWCD has completed or maintained such projects as the Deer Island Wetland Restoration Project, while working with the Lower Columbia River Watershed Council, and NRCS.

They partnered with multiple landowners, the City of Clatskanie, the Public Utilities District, the watershed council, two federal agencies, and two state agencies to complete the Clatskanie River Cooperative Resource Management Plan, which addresses stream bank erosion along 8 miles of river.

And are most proud of the work they do with small landowners from farm to city because as they say, "natural resource protection starts right in your own backyard".

So, for outstanding performance and diligence in protecting natural resources in Columbia County, the Soil and Water Conservation Commission and the Oregon Department of Agriculture are proud to award the 2010 Distinguished District Award to the Columbia SWCD."



Bill Eagle, Board Secretary and Roger Brown, Board Director receiving the award from Dan Logan of the Tualatin SWCD at the OACD Conference in October.

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Columbia SWCD

2514 Sykes Road

St. Helens, OR 97051

503-397-4555

Who We Are and What We Do

The Columbia SWCD was created in 1946 and has been serving the citizens of Columbia County ever since!

Conservation Planning:

With the assistance of the NRCS, we can create a Conservation Plan for your property. These plans help conserve your natural resources while helping to maintain and improve productivity.

Weeds:

The Columbia SWCD is the county leader for weed control. We have numerous partners who assist us and are always happy to talk weeds with anyone!

Outreach and Education:

Whether it's talking to land-owners or school kids, we are always striving to spread the work of conservation. If

you'd like us to speak to your group, JUST ASK!

Technical Assistance:

The SWCD and it's board members have been at this for a LONG time! If you have a question, feel free to ask. If we don't know the answer, we have an extensive network of experts that can help us find it!

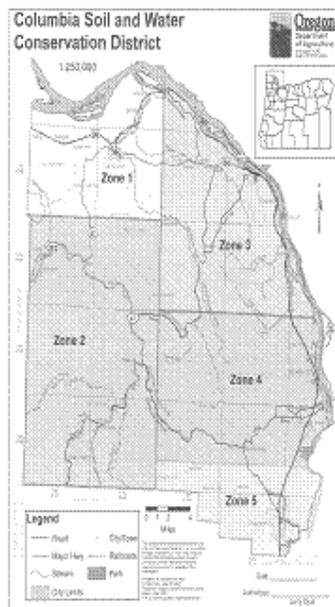
Board of Directors

The Columbia SWCD Board of Directors is made up of citizens and landowners of Columbia County. The county is broken up into 5 zones of which there are representatives for each.

There is a requirement that the director must own at least 10 acres of land to qualify.

In addition, the Board has 2 "at large" positions. These can come from anywhere in the county and there is NO land requirement. Directors serve four year terms and are elected just like any other government official.

The Board of Directors meets the third Wednesday of every month at 7:30 PM in our office.



- Zone 1**
Randy Bergman - Chair
 - Zone 2**
Jason Busch - Vice Chair
 - Zone 3**
Kay C. VanNatta - Treasurer
 - Zone 4**
Dave Freytag - Director
 - Zone 5**
Roger Brown - Director
 - At Large 1**
Bill Eagle - Secretary
 - At Large 2**
Lona Pierce - Director *
- * Newly elected - Term begins 01/01/11*

Meet the Staff



Kari Hollander
District Manager

Kari Hollander lives in Rainier, and has been with the district for over 4 years. No two days are the same at the district office and that is what makes it enjoyable for her. The landowners are wonderful to work with and the staff (District and NRCS) make a great team. Outside of the office she mentors young women; encouraging them to pursue their dreams, one on one and at conferences.



Tyler Joki
Resource
Conservationist

Tyler has been with the District since August of 2009. He has a BS and MS in Biology from Portland State University and a Graduate Certificate in River Restoration. Tyler handles the Technical Assistance aspects of the District's mission, as well as project coordination and landowner outreach. Tyler has served in both the Marine Corps and Coast Guard and is a die-hard Portland Trail Blazers fan.



Malysa Page
Office Assistant

Malysa has been with the District since April of 2009. A life long resident of Columbia County she is excited to be helping the members of her community to improve their land. Malysa handles the day to day operations in the office and enjoys doing education and outreach events. When not working, Malysa enjoys cooking, baking, reading and watching lots of sports.



Don Mehlhoff
NRCS District
Conservationist

Don has over 27 years with NRCS. He began working for the agency in North Dakota followed by several years in eastern Washington, northern Idaho and now Oregon. He has been a certified crop advisor since 1997 and is certified as a journeyman conservation planner with Oregon NRCS since 2000. Don and his family have resided in St. Helens since 2000 when he accepted the NRCS position here. "My favorite thing about working for NRCS is the opportunity to work with farmers, ranchers and forest operators. The chance to visit their farms, discuss their operations and their interest in conservation makes the job rewarding. I have typically learned more from them than I have probably provided in return."



Bill Bennett
Project
Coordinator

Bill is employed by the Lower Columbia River Estuary Partnership to help with the identification, design, and planning of habitat restoration projects in collaboration with the Scappoose Bay and the Lower Columbia River Watershed Councils. Bill works with the District to help find and write grants to get these projects accomplished. Bill and his wife just had their first baby in November.



Dan McLain
Weed Specialist

Dan McLain lives in Columbia county and has worked for the Conservation District for several years. He has done outreach with the local schools in the past and currently is the district's certified weed control technician. Each Spring he also teaches workshops at Hudson Park Elementary's outdoor school.

Financial Report

The annual audit will be available after 12/16/10 for review. Please contact Kari Hollander, 503-397-4555 x. 102 or kari.hollander@or.nacdn.net if you would like a copy.

The Future Home of The Columbia SWCD.....



Weeds

This year we have made great strides in our county battling invasive weeds. We've begun to implement various technologies to allow us to track our progress treating certain invasives in target areas, from Scappoose Creek up to the Clatskanie area slough complexes. We've treated Knotweed and Garlic Mustard over 26 miles in the Scappoose and Tide watersheds, and Purple Loosestrife and Yellow-flag Iris in the Clatskanie area and along the Columbia River.

Building on our partnerships with our local Watershed Councils and OSU Extension has also been critical to our success. From the knowledge and guidance of our local Extension agent, to the assistance with implementation from our Watershed Councils, we have strengthened our partnerships across Columbia County.

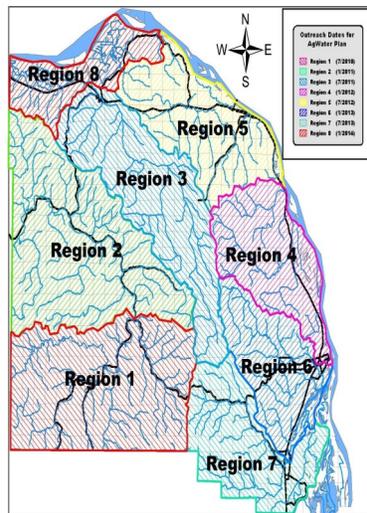
Over this next year we will continue to target the areas where we have had success and branch back out to cover the Upper Nehalem, bringing dollars into the county and managing our noxious invaders.



Outreach

We have continued to follow up our outreach with implementation of conservation practices referring landowners to NRCS or working on individual projects utilizing grant funding. We continue to work on several large-scale projects, as well as smaller single landowner practices.

Over this last year the District has developed a new approach on how we will conduct outreach. By targeting specific areas of our county and using a strategic approach we will be able to cover all of the rural areas of our county over a four year period. We will begin applying this approach going forward into the 2010-11 fiscal year.



Out and About



With the SWCD!

Kiwanis
Children's
Fair



Demonstrations
at Grant Watts

Scappoose
Sauerkraut
Festival

Scappoose Bay Watershed Council

In 2010, the Scappoose Bay Watershed Council continued its mission of supporting the Oregon Plan for Salmon and Watersheds by serving as a source of information about the watershed and by coordinating restoration and enhancement efforts among watershed stakeholders. The Council's activities in 2010 included restoration and enhancement of creeks and natural areas in Columbia County, data gathering, community involvement, fundraising, and partnering with watershed stakeholders. We are in the process of implementing our 5-year strategic plan (2008-2012). The following is a brief summary of the Council's activities:

Restoration and Enhancement:

- Obtained grant funding to design and implement a floodplain and wetland enhancement project along S. Scappoose Creek (in Dutch Canyon). This project is one of the high priority projects that was identified in a study conducted in 2008.
- Replacement two undersized culverts on Salmon Creek (a tributary to Milton Creek).
- Obtained funding for the restoration of the confluence of N. and S. Scappoose Creeks. There is significant erosion and the creek channels are degrading. Over 2/3 of the salmon in the watershed have to swim past this point, so this is an important project.
- Worked with a local citizens group to enhance Nob Hill Nature Park in St. Helens. We received a small grant to control invasive weeds and worked with a crew from Scappoose High School and Columbia River Youth Corps.
- Partnered with the Columbia Soil and Water Conservation District to identify and manage non-native invasive weeds including Japanese Knotweed and Garlic Mustard.

Community Involvement and Monitoring:

- Partnered with the Port of St. Helens, Columbia River PUD, St. Helens High School, and Scappoose High School to hold an Earth Day Event at the Scappoose Bay Marina.
- Continued a watershed-wide monitoring program which includes 30 sites. We are working with school groups, and community volunteers to monitor the sites for water quality and temperature. We are working with the City of Scappoose to test for bacteria (including E. coli) on select sites. We also continue to monitor upcoming and previously completed fish barrier correction projects. We are also partnering with the SWCD to conduct macroinvertebrate monitoring.
- Partnered with the BLM, Master Gardener volunteers, Columbia River Youth Corps (CRYC), and Scappoose High School to provide local landowners with over 1,700 native trees and shrubs to plant along streams and wetlands.
- Partnered with the Columbia SWCD to develop the Creek School Program to bring natural resourced based education to local citizens.

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Coordinator
Janelle St. Pierre



S. Scappoose Creek Before



S. Scappoose Creek After



Culvert on Salmon Creek

Upper Nehalem Watershed Council

The Upper Nehalem Watershed Council has been involved in and completed many projects this year. A few of them are highlighted below. They also did a lot of volunteer work, tours and outreach for students and landowners.

Elk Creek - Salmon Passage/Habitat/Riparian - McKee mainline

Objective: Project will restore salmon passage to 3.6 miles of Coho habitat and improve stream habitat and riparian conditions to 1600 feet of Elk Creek, a Coho bearing tributary of the East Fork Nehalem River. Weyerhaeuser Co. is providing 50% cost share for their materials & labor. Project is a priority for ODFW, ODOT and UNWC since 1996.

Partners: Weyerhaeuser Co., Columbia County, OWEB, ODFW, BLM.

Deliverables: Completed LWD placement (60 logs/ 5+ structures), riparian planting, and crossing installed – summer 2010.

Status: LWD – ODFW oversaw LWD placement. CZ Trail – Weyerhaeuser completed the McKee deed transfer to Columbia County for CZ trail 8-10. Bridge – Columbia County Rd. Department to assure abutments are made and bridge slabs placed before December 31st. Columbia County Road Department contracted with Pacific Construction Resources to finish the crossing by building up abutments and installing ODOT bridge slabs. Work to begin just after Thanksgiving and will be completed by 12-31-10.

Upper Nehalem Watershed Council (continued)

Walker Creek - Salmon Habitat

Contractor: Vinson Brothers

Objective: Walker Creek is part of the Nehalem River watershed and can be accessed from Beneke Creek Road, which connects with Highway 202 just west of the Hwy 202/103 junction near Jewell, OR. The Walker Creek project area begins at the mouth and continues upstream for approximately 5 miles. The Nehalem River watershed generally lacks adequate spawning, summer rearing, and winter refuge habitats for salmonids, particularly for the recently federally protected Coho salmon. The proposed restoration activities will aim to increase channel complexity and juvenile rearing habitat through the placement of large wood. Future recruitment of large wood will be addressed through riparian planting. Previous ODFW and council habitat surveys have identified the lack of adequate conifers leading to poor large wood recruitment.

Partners: Hampton Affiliates, OWEB, USFWS, ODFW.

Deliverables: completed LWD project – summer 2010, riparian winter 2010/11.



Having fun at the Salmon Festival



Elk Creek/Scappoose Vernonia Hwy
Salmon Passage



Elk Creek before LWD
Replacement



Elk Creek after
LWD
Replacement

Upper Nehalem Watershed Council (continued)

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Coordinator
 Maggie Peyton

Lower Columbia River Watershed Council

The Lower Columbia River Watershed Council has concentrated efforts, during 2010, on developing strategies to address erosion and flooding in the Clatskanie River; to identify fish passage barriers; to control invasive plant species; and to add complexity to streams through the addition of large wood.

The completion of a Habitat Survey set the stage for the council to develop projects that would target the limiting factors present in the watershed. The first project implemented has been a large wood placement on Fox Creek where over 100 pieces of wood were installed. This helps with the formation of deeper pools, increases the recruitment of spawning gravel, increases in-stream complexity, and provides over wintering habitat for juvenile salmonids. Similar projects are planned for the Clatskanie River and Merrill Creek.

The Council continues its efforts to address erosion and flooding in the lower Clatskanie River. Funding has been provided by the Lower Columbia River Estuary Partnership to initiate a study of the lower river hydraulics. This will provide the data needed to assist in the development of projects that improve fish and wildlife habitat while controlling erosion and minimizing flooding.

The Council has been actively involved in the FEMA levee certification process; providing information to agencies and assisting landowners and drainage districts in understanding the process and navigating the bureaucratic maze. We will continue to follow this process to mitigate its effects on restoration projects and other activities along waterways.

In cooperation with Clatsop County, local landowners, and Georgia-Pacific, the Council is participating in the development of the Westport Water Corridor. This involves five separate projects that relate to the local waterways. The Council will be concentrating efforts on restoration on Plympton Creek. This includes a proposal to restore the historic channel and enhance wetlands along Westport Slough between the Westport Ferry landing and the public boat ramp.

Lower Columbia River Watershed Council (continued)

As always, we continue to be on the front line in control of invasive weed species. The target weeds include Purple Loosestrife, Yellow Flag Iris and Knotweed Complex. The Council works closely with the Columbia SWCD to carry out a program of herbicide treatment and the use of available bio-control agents. Past treatment sites are monitored, and assistance and education is provided to landowners and land managers. This program allows staff to survey the watershed annually to spot new invaders and to respond to landowner needs. Giant Reed grass, Giant Hog Weed, Garlic Mustard and False Indigo are four species that have been sighted through annual surveys and are being treated before they reach an uncontrollable level.

Working together with landowners and land managers, the Columbia and Clatsop SWCD's, USDA NRCS and others continues to build the partnerships that the Council depends on to successfully develop and implement worthwhile projects and to help citizens preserve a healthy watershed.



Fox Creek Before



Fox Creek After



Bill Bennett doing a pebble count on Fox Creek



Coordinator
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