

ANNUAL REPORT

2013-2014



Columbia Soil & Water Conservation District





**The Columbia Soil & Water
Conservation District**
35285 Millard Road, St. Helens, OR 97051

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CONTACT US



Phone: 503.397.4555

information@columbiaswcd.com

www.columbiaswcd.com

Hours: 8:30 am to 4:30 pm
Monday – Friday





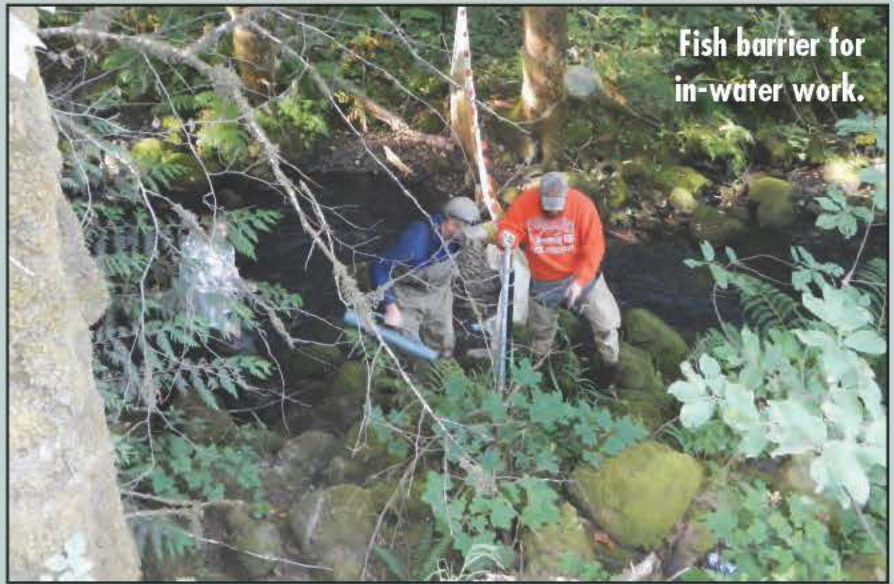
Large wood placement
SWCD and NRCS staff.

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

The SWCD's of Oregon were created gradually starting in 1939. To date, there are 45 districts serving Oregon. They are considered subdivisions of state government, but function as local units led by a locally elected board of directors.

District directors are elected on Oregon's general election ballot and serve terms of four years without pay. Directors are members of business, professional and agricultural communities who understand the ecological relationships of soil, water, plant, and animals.



Fish barrier for
in-water work.

CONSERVATION PLANNING

With the assistance of the Natural Resources Conservation Service (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!

Whether it's talking to landowners or school kids, we are always striving to spread the word about conservation. If you would like us to speak to your group, just ask!

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

The SWCD and its 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 who will.

OUR MISSION

Offering people of our community assistance to sustain local natural resources.

OUR GOALS

- Effective Natural Resource Management
- Local and Regional Conservation Partnerships
- Conservation Planning and Implementation
- Watershed Enhancement
- Invasive Species Identification and Control
- Informed Citizens and Public Representatives
- Fiscal Accountability
- Financial Assistance for Conservation Effects

LETTER FROM THE CHAIR 2014

I am very proud of the Columbia Soil and Water Conservation District and I am proud of what this district has done for all of the people in our county.

Prior to 2008, The Columbia SWCD had only one or two employees. They survived on grants and the people who worked for them had no benefits, other than those required by law.

The Columbia SWCD has had excellent employees, but has always had a difficult time keeping them. At a time when our future finances depended on gifts and grants, the District was in no position to make any guarantees or promises to people working for them. Our employees would no sooner become proficient at their job than they would leave for a job with better pay and benefits elsewhere.

It was with some reluctance that our SWCD Board of Directors decided to go for a tax base. We were warned that our nation was in a recession. We were told that the economy was bad and it was the wrong time to ask for money. We were also told that if we should fail in our funding attempts, we would be responsible for all election costs.

It was with a shaky hand that I signed as principal petitioner for the tax levy.

We let the public know that we wanted career employees. We told them that we wanted to give our people both good wages and benefits. We wanted our employees to remain working for us. We told the taxpayers that we were asking for pennies, but we expected to give them back dollars.

We were pleased when we learned that our tax levy election was a startling success. We received a substantial majority in almost every precinct.

In 2010, Columbia SWCD purchased the old Warren School. Prior to that, we were dependent on the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) for our office space. The NRCS served as our landlord, and our space was very limited. We did not have a meeting room and employees were crammed together. There was a question as to how long NRCS would have room to accommodate us. The District Board thought that it would be good dollars and sense for the Columbia SWCD to exchange places with the NRCS and become the landlord.

The District spent almost a year hunting for a place to either build or buy before they decided to purchase the 100-year-old Warren School from the Warren Grange. The old building was not handicap accessible, had inadequate lighting, heat, and very little if any insulation. We purchased the old building and the 2 acres of land that it sat upon.

This money also managed to stay in this county. The Warren Grange used the money to purchase a new kitchen at the Columbia County Fairgrounds.

The SWCD was required to do extensive remodeling in order to convert the old building into an acceptable modern office and meeting place. Thanks to the help of Al and Kannikar Petersen, co-owners of AKAAN Architecture, we were able to meet and, in some cases, exceed all county, state and Federal requirements to convert this old building into a modern energy-efficient office. We did not hire a "General Contractor".

Our architect, Al Petersen, helped us to subcontract each phase of our remodeling.

We made an effort to hire local contractors, and, when ever possible, use local and recycled materials.

We were very pleased with our completed building. We had an upper floor for office space and a lower floor that contained a meeting room, and a full kitchen.

Our then Chair, Randy Bergman, encouraged the Building Committee to consider putting in a kitchen that would meet commercial standards. He pointed out that a number of civic groups, including Home Extension, would be able to make good use of our facilities.

We now rent a portion of our building to the Natural Resources Conservation Service, and have adequate room for their staff as well as our own.

Our meeting room and kitchen is now available, at no charge, for any non-profit to use. This was our Board's intent. It is our way of saying "Thank you for supporting us."

The amounts vary, but each year, our Columbia Soil and Water Conservation District has managed to bring in millions of outside dollars and invest them back into our county.

We have done just as we promised. We have taken in pennies and given you back dollars.

I am so proud to be part of the Columbia SWCD.



Bill Eagle
Chair

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Bill Eagle". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETS THE 3RD WEDNESDAY OF EVERY MONTH AT 7:30 PM IN THE COLUMBIA SWCD OFFICE: 35285 MILLARD ROAD, ST. HELENS, OR 97051

The Columbia SWCD Board of Directors is made up of citizens and landowners of Columbia County. The county is broken up into five zones, of which there are representatives for each. The director must own at least 10 acres of land to qualify.

In addition, the Board has two "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.



RANDY BERGMAN
DIRECTOR
ZONE 1



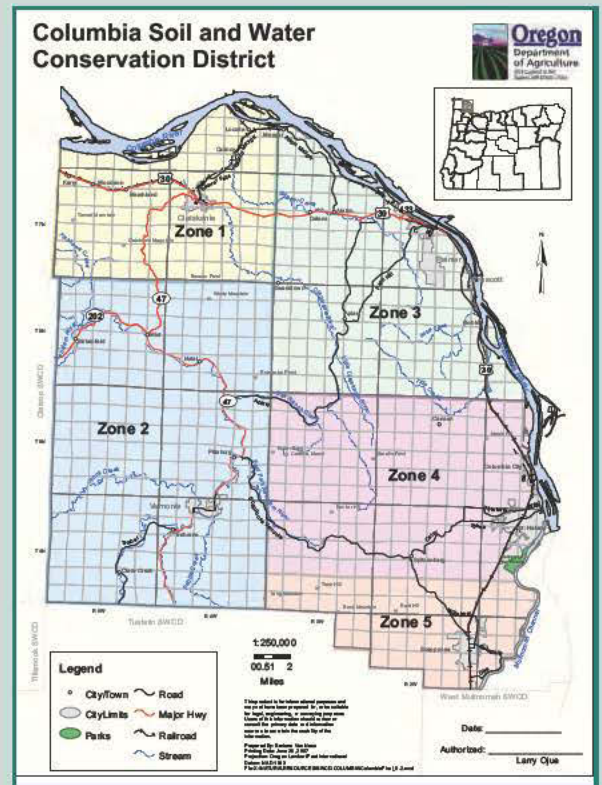
JASON BUSCH
VICE CHAIR
ZONE 2



KAY C. VANNATTA
TREASURER
ZONE 3



DAVE FREYTAG
DIRECTOR
ZONE 4



CRAIG ELLIS
DIRECTOR ZONE 5



BILL EAGLE
CHAIR
AT LARGE 1



LONA PIERCE
SECRETARY
AT LARGE 2

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS, VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT WWW.COLUMBIASWCD.COM

THE STAFF



KARI HOLLANDER,
District Manager

503.397.4555 x. 102 kari.hollander@columbiaswcd.com

Kari lives in Rainier, and has been with the district since September 2006. The ability to see a diamond in the rough is one of her greatest gifts, and to be a part of the growth of the Columbia SWCD has been great fun. The diversity of projects and people the district has the opportunity to work with make each day a new adventure and more enjoyable all the time. Outside of the office, she loves to travel, spend time with her kids, and takes time to mentor young women, encouraging them to pursue their dreams, one-on-one and at conferences in the US and abroad.



TYLER JOKI,
Resource Conservationist

503.397.4555 x. 104 tyler.joki@columbiaswcd.com

Tyler has been with the District since August 2009. He has a BS 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.



NATHAN HERR, Resource Conservationist

503.397.4555 x.101 nathan.herr@columbiaswcd.com

Nathan has been with the District since January 2012. He is a lifelong member of Columbia County. He has a BS in Environmental Science and a minor in Fisheries from Oregon State University. He handles Technical Assistance aspects of the District's mission, as well as is the lead on the ODA water quality program for Columbia County. In his spare time, Nathan enjoys being outdoors with his dogs and wife or out hunting and fishing as much as possible.



MALYSSA PAGE, Operations Administrator

503.397.4555 x. 100 malysa.page@columbiaswcd.com

Malysa has been with the District since April 2009. Up until a year ago, she was a lifelong resident of Columbia County. Malysa 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, watching lots of sports and playing with her adorable cat, Sharkie.

NATIONAL RESOURCE CONSERVATION SERVICE STAFF



DON MEHLHOFF, District Conservationist

503.397.4555 x. 105 don.mehlhoff@or.usda.gov

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."



DEE ROBINSON, Program Support Tech

503.397.4555 x. 106 dee.robinson@or.usda.gov

Dee began working for the Northwest Oregon RC&D Council in 1987, and was converted over to SCS/NRCS in 1989. Over the past 23 years, Dee has served in many different capacities, providing assistance to RC&D and the North Coast Basin NRCS. She and her husband, Vic, live in Forest Grove, where they also own and operate a music store, Vic's Guitar Cave. They enjoy music, reading, and the love of their life is their Australian Shepherd, Kapo.



BILL BENNETT, Field Restoration Ecologist

bennett@lcrep.org

Bill was 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 left us for a position on the East Coast working in the partnership program for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The Columbia SWCD misses him dearly, but also wishes him all the best in his new endeavor.



ROSLYN GRAY, P.E., North Coast Basin Engineer

Roslyn worked for Vermont NRCS for three years prior to joining Oregon NRCS in 2010. As a Northwest native, she is thrilled to assist Oregon farmers and foresters in their conservation efforts. Roslyn enjoys the breadth of field engineer responsibilities and spends her free time on the hiking trail, on a baking project, and on crafting a home with her husband and new baby boy.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS: Columbia County Conservation Practices

Practice Name	Amounts Installed	Number of Projects	Total Acres
Fish Passage	1 no	1	13
Stream Habitat Improvement	2000 ft	1	8
Wetland Restoration	34 ac	1	45
Rain Collection	1 no	1	35
Mud Prevention	0.02 ac	1	36
Planting	27.5 ac	3	59
Forest Management Plan - Written	12 no	12	1476.6
Brush Management	63.1 ac	3	170.2
Herbaceous Weed Control	58.7 ac	6	309.7
Conservation Crop Rotation	25.5 ac	1	27.5
Cover Crop	136 ac	4	151.6
Fence	3134 ft	4	101.5
Woody Residue Treatment	89.3 ac	8	1767.7
Stream Habitat Improvement and Management	8 ac	1	252.5
Irrigation Water Management	94 ac	5	98.8
Access Control	102.6 ac	2	102.6
Tree/Shrub Site Preparation	56.6 ac	7	242.7
Prescribed Grazing	22.5 ac	3	48.5
Nutrient Management	640.5 ac	18	640.5
Tree/Shrub Establishment	83.9 ac	10	437.3
Upland Wildlife Habitat Management	178.3 ac	5	336.3
Forest Stand Improvement	211.3 ac	14	2466.2
Fish and Wildlife Structure	3 no	1	49.7
Seasonal High Tunnel System for Crops	2160 sq ft	1	0.2
Reduce pesticide drift	230.1 ac	9	230.1
Harvest hay in a manner that allows wildlife to flush and escape	157.6 ac	13	157.6
Forest stand improvement for habitat and soil quality	60 ac	2	2436.1
Forest Wildlife Structures	20 ac	1	158.2
Stockpiling Forages to Extend the Grazing Season	170 ac	1	170
Managing Calving to Coincide with Forage Availability	215.8 ac	10	215.8
Recycle 100% of farm lubricants	23 no	23	2551.8
Locally grown and marketed farm products	1693.2 ac	40	1693.2
Hardwood Crop Tree Release	40 ac	1	158.2
Intensive Management of Rotational Grazing	72 ac	10	72
Conifer Crop Tree Release	193 ac	4	1011.6
Biological control of brush, weeds and invasive species	170 ac	1	170
Rotation of supplement and feeding areas	12.2 ac	2	12.2
Plant Tissue Testing and Analysis	457.1 ac	11	457.1
Apply controlled release nitrogen fertilizer	30.5 ac	5	30.5
High level Integrated Pest Management	15 ac	1	252.5
Land application of only treated manure	8.1 ac	1	8.1
Transition to Organic Cropping Systems	36.7 ac	1	36.7
On Farm Composting of Farm Organic Waste	170 ac	1	170
Irrigation pumping plant evaluation	11 no	11	457.1
CSWCD Subtotal		8	196 ac
NRCS Subtotal		253	19128.9 ac

Acres Worked On	19,324.90
Practices Implemented	261
SWCD and NRCS dollars brought into the county	\$1,229,621.98
Landowners Contacted or Provided with Technical Assistance	1365

FINANCES



What do Columbia County residents get for their tax dollars?

- Increased staff to address client inquiries
- Quicker turn around for field visits
- Ability to expand our program to include K-12 Education opportunities

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES PROVIDED TO THE COMMUNITY

- Review Land Development Service Applications and respond to field referral for many different land use issues
- Partner with Columbia County Roads Dept on bridge and culvert projects.
- Historic documents available for viewing
- Resource for drainage districts, improvement companies, and diking districts
- Partner with local school districts agriculture and natural resource programs.
- And much more...

BALANCE SHEET

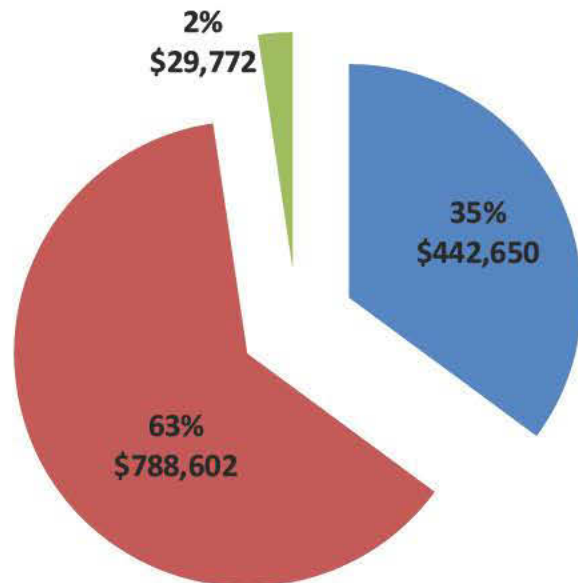
COLUMBIA SWCD Summary Balance Sheet As of June 30, 2014

	Jun 30, 14
ASSETS	
Current Assets	
Checking/Savings	141,320.18
Accounts Receivable	40,446.35
Other Current Assets	108,197.31
Total Current Assets	289,963.84
Fixed Assets	1,451,641.97
TOTAL ASSETS	1,741,605.81
LIABILITIES & EQUITY	
Liabilities	
Current Liabilities	
Accounts Payable	42,331.98
Credit Cards	7,155.45
Other Current Liabilities	744,754.31
Total Current Liabilities	794,241.74
Total Liabilities	794,241.74
Equity	947,364.07
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	1,741,605.81

*Audit available for review at the district office

RESOURCES 2013-2014

■ Tax Levy \$0.10/\$1000 ■ Grant funds ■ Other



THE MEETING ROOM



The Columbia SWCD meeting room accommodates groups up to 50 people with a fully equipped kitchen.

A charge of \$75 for private parties, free for community groups and non profits.

If you are interested in using the meeting space, please contact Malysa Page at 503.397.4555 x. 100 or Malysa.page@columbiaswcd.com

GET INVOLVED. VOLUNTEER.

“No one is more cherished in this world than someone who lightens the burden of another.” – unknown

Over two years ago, Crystalyn Bush walked through our doors looking to get involved in what the district and NRCS are doing in Columbia County. Being a recent college graduate with a degree in Natural Resources, she brought enthusiasm and fresh eyes to what we had going on, and was willing to work on anything. She has been an integral part of working on a county wide livestock inventory, she began writing

project spotlights for both the Columbia SWCD and the NRCS, highlighting some of our more prominent projects, as well as producing our district newsletter. Crystalyn brings an energy to the office that keeps everyone smiling and is a great asset to the Columbia SWCD. We would be at a loss without her.

Crystalyn is the nicest volunteer we have ever had, I wish she could be part of our staff.

Crystalyn is always willing to help with any and everything we throw at her. She has been a wonderful asset to the SWCD.



CRYSTALYN BUSH
SWCD VOLUNTEER

– Malysa Page

As a resident of the County, there are opportunities to participate in the Columbia County SWCD and take advantage of the many services we offer.

- Implement conservation practices on your land.
- Run for elected office as a District Director.
- Work with your neighbors in your watershed.
- Be a volunteer or Associate Director

If you are interested in volunteering at the Columbia SWCD, please contact Kari Olsen-Hollander at 503.397.4555 x. 102

"LOUISIANA SWAMP" PROJECT

The Louisiana Swamp is just one piece of important habitat that has been lost along the Lower Columbia River's system of freshwater tidal floodplains.

This summer, the Columbia County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) partnered with the Lower Columbia River Watershed Council (LCRWC), the Lower Columbia Estuary Partnership (LCEP), and several other conservation agencies to undertake an exciting restoration project in Clatskanie, OR. The area, called "Louisiana Swamp," is a 45 acre property adjacent to the Westport Slough.

Historically, this area was a freshwater marsh boasting a healthy wetland ecosystem that included several species of salmon. The property was also naturally bisected by Tandy Creek which is known to contain coho, Chinook and steelhead salmon populations.

In more recent years Louisiana Swamp, owned by the Lower Columbia River Tree Farm LLC and managed by Greenwood Resources, Inc., has lost a lot of its ecological function and value. In the 1930s the Department of War (now the Army Corps of Engineers) installed levees throughout the area to facilitate conversion of the land to agriculture. In the 1950s, Louisiana Swamp was cleared, floodgates were installed, and Tandy Creek was rechannelized through the property in an effort to convert it to pastureland. Despite these modifications to the land, Louisiana Swamp turned out to be unsuitable for grazing. The levees were poorly built, resulting in

periodic flooding and a high groundwater table. At the time this project was identified, the tide gates were no longer functional and reed canary grass had taken over most of the pastureland.

The artificial changes to Louisiana Swamp resulted in a lack of floodplain connectivity, homogenization of habitat, and a loss of native species. The Louisiana Swamp is just one piece of

important habitat that has been lost along the Lower Columbia River's system of freshwater tidal floodplains as a result of diking, filling, and installation of flood control structures. Managers estimate that around 70% of natural scrub-shrub habitat in the area has been lost since the early to mid 1900s, mainly to clear the way for agriculture. When the land manager, Rick Stonex, approached the SWCD for help with the property, the agency saw an opportunity to restore a crucial piece of habitat back to a natural and

ecologically productive state.

The Louisiana Swamp project presented a great opportunity for conservation agencies to partner together to achieve a common goal. The LCRWC submitted an application for funds to the Lower Columbia River Estuary Partnership in February 2013. Funding for the project came from LCEP and an OWEB grant. LCRWC con-

[CONTINUED TO PAGE 12](#)





**“Louisiana Swamp”
Clatskanie, Oregon**

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11

tributed labor and GreenWood Resources Inc. contributed some of the materials for the large wood placement, and also agreed to perform future monitoring of the site. U.S. Fish and Wildlife handled all federal permitting for the project and the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife performed fish salvage.

In addition to the predicted ecological benefits of this project, there were economic advantages for the local community as well. The project was designed by Lower Columbia Engineering and implemented by a local construction company, Kynsi Construction. All of the large wood purchased for use in restoring in-stream habitat came from Columbia County and all of the native plants were purchased in Vancouver, Wash.

The restoration plan included the elimination of the two failing tidal gates that disconnected 35 acres of the property from the other 10, as well as from Westport Slough, and prevented fish passage. The plan also called for the restoration of Tandy Creek to its original state, reconnection of floodplains, creation

of off-channel habitat, improvement of in-stream habitat with large wood placements, and restoration of the native plant community. Agency workers believed that all of these actions would result in improved rearing and refuge habitat for juvenile salmon as well as quality habitat for many other wildlife species, including waterfowl, neotropical and songbirds, beavers, reptiles, amphibians, and deer.

The project was completed in the summer of 2013, with the exception of the planting phase. Managers state that there are approximately 30,000 trees as well as an abundance of herbaceous plants that still need to be planted. With the natural hydrology of the site restored, faulty tidal gates removed, and landowners who are committed to the project's future success, Louisiana Swamp is expected to become a sanctuary for many wildlife species struggling to survive in a landscape dominated by human manipulation.

KNOTWEED AWARENESS

INVASIVE WEEDS – Excerpt from “Eradication of Japanese Knotweed Plants”, Written by **David Beaulieu**

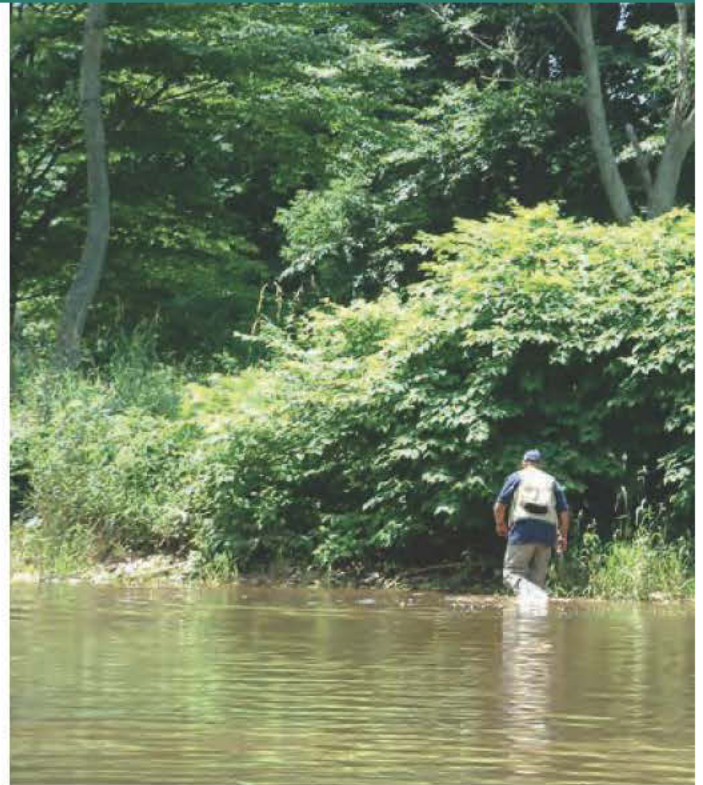
The subject of this article is the eradication or control of one of the world’s most invasive plants, Japanese knotweed. These noxious weeds go by many other names, including *Polygonum cuspidatum* (one of its scientific names). But no matter what you call them, these indomitable plants deserve the title of “killer bamboo.”

This invasive species is not a killer of people, but of landscaping hopes and gardening dreams. Having wreaked havoc in lawn and garden across both North America and the UK, Japanese knotweed has caught the attention of stewards of the land. And if you yourself have ever attempted the eradication of this noxious weed, you already know of its Godzilla-like qualities.

Japanese knotweed plants were introduced from Japan first into the U.K., then into North America in the 19th century as, believe it or not, a landscaping ornamental (alas, there is no accounting for tastes!). Japanese knotweed soon spread like wildfire, a mad killer taking on a life of its own, independent of its human sponsors. A common habitat for Japanese knotweed

is sunny, moist areas, including riverbanks, roadsides and, yes, your lawn and garden. Japanese knotweed is often spread via landfill: all it takes is one fragment of one root, furtively submerged within a pile of fill dumped onto an unsuspecting yard and, next thing you know, a burgeoning menace is gaining a toehold. Before you know it, all other plants are crowded out by this highly successful competitor for landscaping space, resulting in a monoculture.

Fortunately, Japanese knotweed is not inclined to invade forested areas. Rather, Japanese knotweed typically takes advantage of areas disturbed by humans, areas affording not only ample sunlight but also friable soil for its invasive roots. If you already have a patch of Japanese knotweed at the edge of the woods on your property, whatever you do, do not begin clearing the wooded land until you have completed the eradication of this killer bamboo. You’ll only invite it to spread, if you clear land adjacent to the currently infested area. Eradication of an entrenched stand of Japanese knotweed, however, is easier said than done....



The Columbia SWCD each year surveys and treats known knotweed patches in August and September. Your help in notifying us of Knotweed on or near your property will help us continue to manage the control the spread of it in Columbia County.

**IF YOU SEE IT LET US KNOW.
WE CAN BE REACHED AT 503-397-4555**

LCRWC ANNUAL REPORT

OCTOBER 2014

MARGARET MAGRUDER

Lower Columbia River
Watershed Council Coordinator
503.728.2945
Magruder@clatskanie.com

The year 2013-14 has been a year of change for the Lower Columbia River Watershed Council.



We have had changes in staff, in Council members and most significantly changes in the granting procedures used by the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board.

Long time Council members Larry Hurley and Vera Roth resigned from the Council. Colton Cooley represented Weyerhaeuser until he was transferred. Ray DiPasquale, Roger Kitchen, Chip Bubl and Dan Mclain joined the Council, representing local government, agriculture, education, and an at-large seat, and former member Henry Franzoni rejoined us, now representing Tribal stakeholders.

Bill Bennett, our Restoration Ecologist, whom we shared with the Columbia SWCD and Scappoose Bay WC, resigned, so we are now in the process of hiring someone to fill that position. Luckily, Bill's efforts had the Clatskanie River culvert projects designed and funded before he left, so we were able to proceed with the replacement of two fish passage barriers on the upper Clatskanie River.

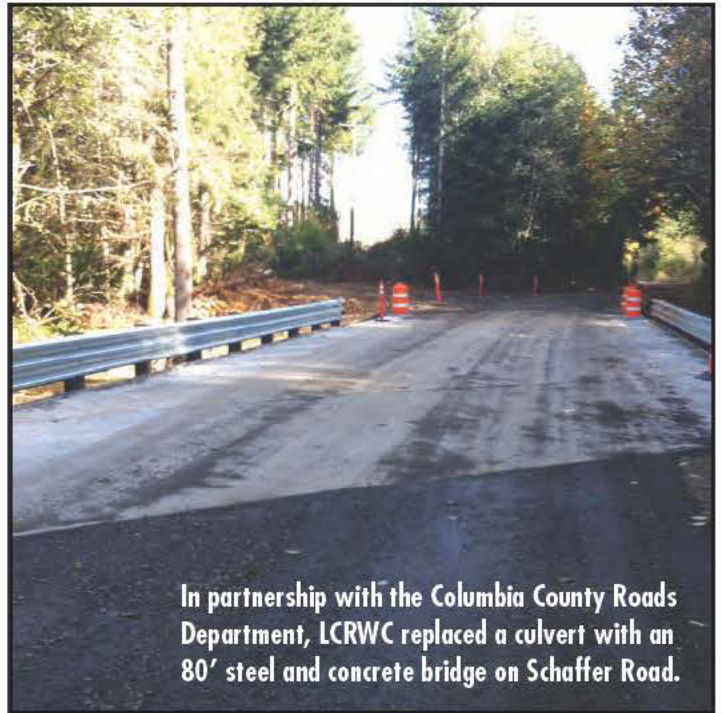
One of these replacements on Schaffer Road was a

partnership with the Columbia County Road Department, where we replaced a culvert with an 80' steel and concrete bridge. We partnered with Weyerhaeuser to replace an undersized culvert with a 30' arched bottomless culvert on a logging road crossing. These projects improved fish passage to over 5 miles of habitat.

Over 44,000 native plants were installed on the Louisiana Swamp wetland enhancement project during the winter of 2014, along with the removal of non-native plants, including the reed canary grass and blackberry. The landowner, Lower Columbia Tree Farm, will continue to perform maintenance activities to control invasive plant species.

Planning, design and funding efforts for future projects on the schedule for next year and beyond include a dike breach at Bat Water Station and a floodplain enhancement on private property at the head of tide on the Clatskanie River. The Bat Water Station project entails reconnection of 26-acres of tidal floodplain, restoration of 1,000 lineal feet of off-channel habitat, and enhancement of the native plant community. The Clatskanie floodplain project proposes to restore 23-acres of floodplain along the Clatskanie River, increase connectivity between the Clatskanie River mainstem, and restore the native plant community.

The Council has been a participant in the Chum reintroduction study. Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife has targeted the Clatskanie River as a potential location for Chum reintroduction. Twenty pair have been out-planted into



In partnership with the Columbia County Roads Department, LCRWC replaced a culvert with an 80' steel and concrete bridge on Schaffer Road.

Clatskanie-area watershed drainages.

Outreach to the community has been achieved through several presentations to community groups, news articles and tours. Topics included the Louisiana Swamp, Kloppman Large wood projects, and Columbia River Toxics.

Changes at OWEB include changes in the eligibility requirements for Council Support funds. This has required the Council to make several amendments to our governing documents. There are also changes in submission of work plans and other council documents, from a hard-copy based system to an electronic-submission process.

One thing that has not changed is our continued mission to keep the needs of our constituents in the forefront as we work to create a balance in the economic, environmental and cultural needs of our watershed.



LCRWC partnered with Weyerhaeuser to replace an undersized culvert with a 30' arched, bottomless culvert. Both projects improved fish passage to over 5 miles of habitat.

Natural Resources Conservation Service



DON MEHLHOFF

NRCS District Conservationist
don.mehlhoff@or.usda.gov
(503) 397-4555 ext. 105

According to the 2007 Census of Agriculture, only 17,092 acres of Columbia County are considered harvested cropland. This number undoubtedly continues to decline as these lands are converted for

industrial, residential, natural areas, wetland mitigation banks and other purposes.

The reason I mention this is to show that the US Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA-NRCS) approaches for addressing natural resource concerns in the county are changing along with the face of the county. Just a few years ago, NRCS had very little to offer, in the form of programs, our private forest owners, who by

far make up the most populous operations on the most common land use in the county.

The other type of operation that was overlooked, but is becoming more prevalent, is the small market garden growers. They market their local produce at farmers markets, roadside stands, restaurants and other various venues. Recently, I met with one of these growers and we have de-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 16



Dart Creek Farms in St. Helens partnered with the National Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) and Columbia Soil and Water Conservation District (CSWCD) for a heavy use pad to protect heavily used areas. They can reduce soil erosion, improve water quality and improve aesthetics around the farm.



Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB) small grant manure storage facility in Vernonia.

NRCS helps America's farmers, ranchers and forest landowners conserve the nation's soil, water, air and other natural resources.

All programs are voluntary and offer science-based solutions that benefit both the landowner and the environment.

For more information on this service visit www.nrcs.usda.gov

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 15

cided to have an informal meeting this fall with some of these operators. The meeting will help NRCS and Columbia SWCD recognize the resource issues common to their type of operation and identify ways we can help.

Some of the changes mentioned above are identified in the types of practices below that were completed, mostly through USDA Farm Bill program assistance in fiscal year 2014 (Oct. 1 – Sept. 30).

PRACTICES IMPLEMENTED IN 2014

- Cover Crop – 143 acres
- Herbaceous Weed Control – 94 acres
- Fence – 3134 feet,
- Brush Management – 60 acres
- Forest Management Plans – 6
- Forest Stand Improvement – 221 acres
- Tree and Shrub Establishment – 81 acres
- Tree/Shrub Site Preparation – 57 acres
- Forest Slash Treatment – 72 acres
- Season High Tunnel – 1 (2160 sq.ft.)
- Irrigation Water Management – 57 acres
- Fish and Wildlife Structures – 3
- Upland Wildlife Habitat Management – 1570 acres
- Access Control – 103 acres

PROGRAMS OFFERED IN 2014

Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) – NRCS has assisted on

10 existing CREP contracts in the county. This program pays an annual rental payment for marginal pastureland that is planted to trees and shrubs along streams and rivers. Most of the CREP acres are in the Birkenfeld area, about 396 total acres of riparian forest buffers.

Conservation Stewardship Program (CStP) – NRCS has developed 18 CStP contracts in the county that cover 5,885 acres of cropland, pastureland and forestland. The CStP program offers annual stewardship payments to agricultural and forest owners who maintain good natural resource stewardship on their property and implement various enhancement practices.

WETLAND RESERVE PROGRAM (WRP)

Columbia County has two permanent WRP easements that cover 436 acres. The WRP program offers to purchase easements on agricultural lands to restore wetland values on the property using various conservation practices.

ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY INCENTIVES PROGRAM (EQIP)

EQIP is our most popular conservation program. It provides financial assistance to agricultural and forestry operations to address natural resource problems. Most of the practices implemented above in 2014

were completed using EQIP. At this time NRCS has 33 active EQIP contracts. 154 contracts have been completed in the last several years.

At this time NRCS in Columbia County has two conservation implementation strategies using EQIP funds.

The first is Columbia County Forest Diversity Initiative. Through this initiative forest operators in the target area (Rainier, Goble, Clatskanie Area) are offered financial assistance to implement practices that improve forest diversity.

The second is Columbian white-tailed Deer Habitat Improvement. This initiative concentrates efforts to improve grassland habitat for the recovery efforts of the endangered Columbian white-tailed deer. Practices that improve the deer's grazing, browse and cover will be promoted on farmland within the Columbia River floodplains in the Clatskanie and Rainier areas.

NRCS and the Columbia SWCD are always looking for input from operators identifying what natural resources are most important to them and what practices will solve those issues.

Two conservation strategies we are currently considering for the future include creation of pollinator habitat, and as mentioned earlier, small market garden assistance.

LIVING ON THE LAND: CHICKENS

Nathan Herr, Conservation Specialist at Columbia Soil and Water Conservation District, reviews the simple steps to own and care for chickens



NATHAN HERR

Nathan.herr@columbiaswcd.com
(503) 397-4555 ext. 101

Keeping chickens at home has become a quick, easy and fulfilling hobby that anyone with a backyard can do. The main reason for keeping chickens is, of course, for the farm fresh eggs. However, chickens also provide a natural way to fertilize your lawn and a good way to dispose of your leftover meal scraps. Additionally, owning chickens provides peace of mind about where your eggs come from, how the birds are treated and kept, and the quality of the eggs you are feeding your family.

Owning and keeping chickens requires just a few simple steps.

CHECK WITH CITY ORDINANCES

First of all, check with your local city ordinances to ensure that owning chickens is legal. Contrary to popular belief, there is no need to have a rooster with your chickens. Roosters are used as a flock

guardian, protecting their harem of hens from any perceived threat. They also fertilize eggs, which is not necessary unless you are trying to breed. Hens will still lay eggs without a rooster in your flock. If you live within the city and would like to own a rooster, check your city ordinances as most cities disallow roosters within city limits.

CHICKENS ARE A FLOCK ANIMAL

Having at least two chickens will keep your birds happy and provide you with 4-8 eggs a week depending on the type of chicken you select. Like any animal, chickens have three basic needs: food, water, and shelter. Chickens eat a variety of things: table scraps, they free range on grasses, but the conventional way to feed them is through grain based feeds from feed stores. Any of these types of feeds work, the bigger issue is making sure your chickens get enough food. Making sure that your chickens have access to fresh feed and water at all time is imperative.

COOPS, CHICKEN TRACTORS AND SHELTERS

As for shelter, the biggest concern is making sure your shelter is keeping the chickens safe from predators. There are several types of shelters: conventional coops, chicken tractors, or simply a spot to keep out of the rain in your shed. In the shelter the chickens will need nesting boxes. They are 1 foot by 1 foot boxes that the chickens can climb into to lay their eggs.

Once these steps are taken, you can enjoy having chickens. You can get chicks usually at your local feed store in the spring time, or online at anytime. After the chicks grow up (about 6 months) they should start laying eggs!

If you have any questions, contact Nathan Herr, 503-397-4555 x101, to set up a site visit with him to discuss any of your chicken or conservation needs.

Vernonia Outdoor School

Each September the Columbia SWCD and the upper Nehalem Watershed Council teach at Vernonia's 6th grade outdoor school.

Topics focus on Native Plants, wildlife, and pollinators.

We look forward every year to meeting the new 6th graders helping to build their interest in the natural resources around them.

Students make mason bee houses to take home.



OREGON ENVIROTHON COMPETITION

The Columbia SWCD encourages local high schools to build teams and compete in the Oregon Envirothon Competition.

St. Helens High School has sent two teams and ranked very well and we would love to see more team representing Columbia County in the coming years.

For more information go to the <http://oregonenvirothon.org/> for training for teachers and coaches, plus materials available to make preparing easy.

If you want to support an envirothon team at one of the high schools, let us know here at the SWCD. We will get you connected with the local teachers sending teams. Sponsors are always welcome.



THIS YEAR'S COMPETITION WILL BE FRIDAY MAY 8TH, 2015, AT THE OREGON GARDENS

Rainier / Clatskanie Career Technical Education (CTE)

The Rainier and Clatskanie School Districts received a \$342,000 grant from the Oregon Department of Education to build a career technical education program in both high schools.

The Rainier junior and senior high schools will focus mainly on agriculture, watershed restoration and native plants. They used some of the funds to improve an existing greenhouse and outdoor nursery area.

The Clatskanie junior and senior high schools have a major focus of forestry in addition to watershed restoration.

Students at this campus will be involved in all aspects of the forest industry, from planting, harvesting, and milling it into lumber. Some of the funds on this campus were used to purchase a portable saw mill and a new table saw.

Stimpson Lumber is the mentoring sponsor for the forestry program and the Columbia SWCD is in partnership with both campuses for watershed restoration, native plants, and other agricultural related programs.

The program kicked off this summer with a for-credit summer course lasting four weeks in July and August.

The students and the teaching staff were connected with other agency partners, including the Bureau of Land Management, Northwest Oregon Restoration Partnership (NORP), Oregon NRCS, and Yamhill SWCD (Miller Woods). And the NRCS STEPS BOOK was used as a guide as they planned out the greenhouse and nursery space on campus.

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ST. HELENS GREENHOUSE

The SWCD is always excited about getting kids involved in conservation. So when the natural resource teacher at St. Helens High School approached them about restoring their old greenhouse, they jumped on board right away.

At the time, the greenhouse was being used as storage for the metal class. Seeing the potential for a valuable project, the SWCD met with school personnel to discuss the details of how to restore and operate a greenhouse at the school. The administration agreed to find new storage for the shop materials and to allow half-time science teacher, Allison Prehn, to oversee the program through her horticulture classes.

The SWCD applied for and received a small grant from OWEB that funded materials needed to refurbish the greenhouse, labor costs for assistance from the Scappoose Bay Watershed Council, and materials for implementation of a rainwater harvest collection system. Crow Water Systems volunteered their time to install the rainwater system.

School personnel removed the items being stored in the greenhouse. SWCD staff and members of the Columbia River Youth Corps. restored the structure to its original condition by replacing the roof and performing other needed repairs.

According to Ms. Prehn, the current plan is for members of the CRYC to collect the native plant seeds which will then be grown at the greenhouse by St. Helens High School students. When the plants have had time to germinate and grow, they will be transferred back to the CRYC campus where members will care for them until they are sold to be used in restoration projects or by watershed councils.

Proceeds from these sales will go to the high school to support continuation of the greenhouse program.

Ms. Prehn says that she is hoping to start using the greenhouse in her horticulture classes next year when it is fully operational.

She is excited to use the greenhouse as a way of providing students with a more interactive learning experience and a chance to "get their hands dirty." She notes that some students are not well suited to typical classroom instruction. "These are the kids I am especially excited to get out there," she says.

She also notes that many students have expressed interest in the program and in her extending the horticulture curriculum. She and the SWCD are excited for the future of the program and the potential benefits both to local students and conservation efforts.



Rainier CTE week-by-week

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 19

WEEK ONE



Kicked off with a field trip to Miller Woods run by the Yamhill SWCD. The students toured the facilities along with Julie Crape, Rainier CTE teacher and Annie Montgomery, program administrator. They were able to ask questions of Clay Wesson with Yamhill SWCD about running a native plant nursery, and enjoyed a beautiful day away from school.

WEEK TWO



Cut down a sacred tree, took cuttings, and berry picking with BLM guests. Kurt Heckerroth, with BLM, and Celeste Lebo, the coordinator for the Northwest Oregon Restoration Partnership (NORP), came out and taught the students how to properly collect native seeds while taking a nature walk on Rainier School District's 7 miles of trails on the 280-acre property, pointing out all the native plants and trees they have to collect only a few steps from the greenhouse.

WEEK THREE

Discussed watershed health and estuaries, watched videos of local restoration work in Oregon, and installed irrigation system along with the maintenance crew.

WEEK FOUR



Week four was a labor intensive week, and the results were amazing! Rhododendron cuttings, last of the blackberry removal put in compost pile, and cleaning up the site of trash and other debris.

CLATSKANIE CTE



The Forestry program for Clatskanie junior and senior high schools with new table saw and new portable saw mill that will be used by CTE students.



Geo-caching: A high tech scavenger hunt

Geo-caching is a game in which participants search for a hidden item using given GPS coordinates.

Players can use any number of different technologies (smartphones, GPS, Google maps) to assist them in navigating to the hidden cache. Then it is up to the player to search the area more closely. Items can be hidden under rocks, in trees, in bushes... anywhere the hider can reach.

It's a great game for those who enjoy exploring the outdoors as well as those who are more tech-minded.

It's these qualities of the game that made the SWCD think of geocaching as a great outreach opportunity for kids.

The program was started in the summer of 2013. The SWCD went to local elementary and middle schools to drop off game cards containing GPS locations of 12 items they had hidden; 6 in the north part of the county and 6 in the south.

Items were placed on either public lands or private lands where the landowner had been

contacted and agreed to be involved.

To increase the educational value of the game, each of the cache items contained information about the natural setting in which it was located (i.e. riparian area, wetland). Traveling to these areas in search of geocaches meant that participants also learned about the existence of public parks, outdoor recreational opportunities, and natural resources in their communities.

Kids who participated filled out the game cards by putting a symbol of the item they found next to the corresponding GPS coordinates. If students found 6 or more of the geo-caches before the end of the summer they could turn in their completed game cards for a chance to win a prize.

All students who turned in their cards by the August 30 deadline received gift bags.

Two second prize winners received kid binoculars and "Birds, Nests and Eggs," a book that helps kids identify and learn about different birds.

The grand prize winner was

Aubrey Sorensen, a 4th grader at Hudson Park Elementary School in Rainier. She won an annual family pass to the Oregon Zoo, OMSI, and the World Forestry Center.

Her mother says she took Aubrey, a friend, and her friend's mother out geocaching together.

Aubrey loved searching for the geocache items and spending time outdoors. Her mother says she was extremely excited when she found out she had won the grand prize and will definitely be participating again.

In the coming years the SWCD hopes to expand this program by designing more advanced searches for older students and are in the process of seeking donations from companies like Trimble, Garmin, and REI for future year's prizes.

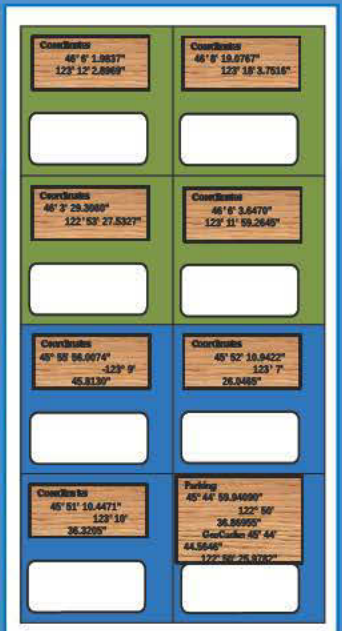
The SWCD encourages anyone who is interested to get involved in geocaching. There are thousands of geocaches stashed throughout our community, enough to keep an enthusiast busy for a long time.

Geo-caching is a free real-world outdoor treasure hunt game in which participants search for a hidden item using given GPS coordinates.

Players try to locate hidden containers, called geocaches, using a any number of different technologies (smartphones, GPS, Google maps)

Players will be given the coordinates of these locations around Columbia County, and will go hunting for these strategically located geocaches.

Items can be hidden under rocks, in trees, in bushes... anywhere the hider can reach.



The game card contains 12 locations: To qualify for the drawing, you must complete 6 of the SAME color-coded boxes.

Name: wetlands **Symbol:**

- Land that is always covered with water or is soaking wet.
- Provide food and shelter for fish.
- Hold water during floods.

How wetlands work

New Zealand Wetland

Example of information found in a geocache box.

FROM THE MANAGER

Partners and Change

Change. partnership. change. partnership. change. partnership. Two words we hear over and over around every corner. Between technology, economy, science, sociology, and political motivations change is not something we can avoid and partnerships are not only becoming required by funders and program managers, but it is also a sure fire way to maneuver through the change around us.

A quote I pull out of my bag of motivation from time to time to stay focused on the process of change and partnerships is spoken by one of America's great innovators and businessmen of the 20th century Henry Ford, "Coming together is a beginning, keeping together is progress, working together is success." Those words are just as true today as they were when Ford first spoke them. This is a concept that rural America has always known and they survive because they understand it. I believe this gives rural communities like our own Columbia County a greater advantage to the "new" concept of partnerships. We know our neighbors, our community leaders are one of us, and the greater good is more often than not the goal in all we do. We can sit down with different perspectives and approaches to a problem with respect for each other's experience and knowledge outside of our own, and even if it grows heated a compromise can often be reached, and things greater than ourselves accomplished.

I am not going to say it is always peaches and cream, but when emergencies arise we know who is good at what and can form a team to get things done quickly and efficiently. And that word "change" that I mentioned earlier; when it causes tighter budgets, greater regulation and paperwork, we as a community have

begun to move into the later phrase of Ford's quote "Working together is success."

Agencies are not only talking to agencies, but recognizing each other's strengths and finding opportunities to collaborate on projects they have typically run solo with. They are looking within the county for services that may already exist that could tie into current projects and programs, and even crossing bridges into areas like education where real world experience can add to the strength of teachers and administrators as they prepare our youth to live in that world. I see a lot of success around us in Columbia County.

As technology, new rules, and ever growing regulation are changing, Columbia County can be proud to know that the heart that settled this area in the 1800's is still flowing; seeing opportunities not problems, and bringing neighbors, friends, and family alongside to make things happen. It is an honor to work with many in our community that are multi-generation residents of Columbia County, and have been privileged to have them share photos and knowledge of the area that files, paperwork, and reports cannot come close to touching.

I am proud to say the Columbia SWCD is a part of these growing partnerships and I look forward to many more successes we can all sing praises about in Columbia County.

Kari Olsen-Hollander,
District Manager

2015 DATES



TO REMEMBER

NOB HILL NATURE PARK SPRING WORK PARTY
Saturday, April 4

RURAL LIVING FIELD DAY
Sauvie Island Saturday, August 22

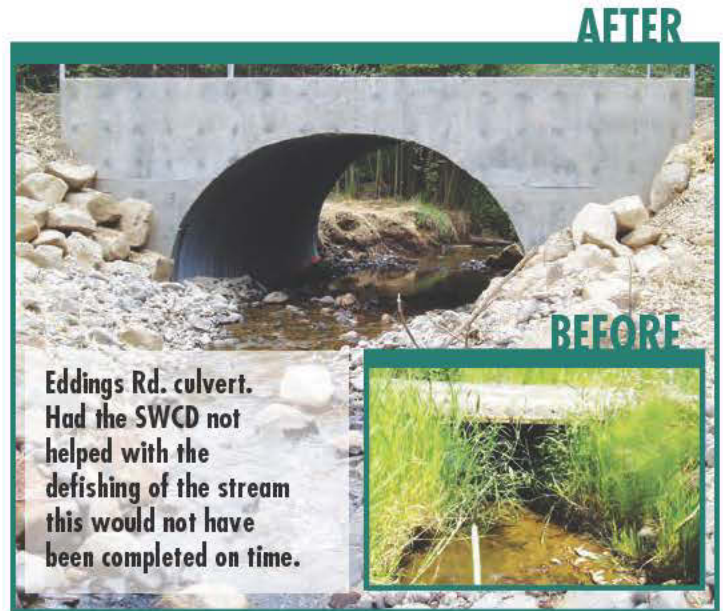
NOB HILL NATURE PARK FALL WORK PARTY
Saturday, November 7

FROM OUR PARTNERS

A thank you from the Columbia County Roads Department

Columbia County Road Department has found the Columbia Soil Water Conservation District as a useful partnership for resources and information on any project related to working within a watershed in Columbia County. From maintenance to culverts or replacement of a bridge, the resources and staff experience they have available for the Road Department has made my job more efficient. From helping with fish salvage on Eilertson Creek to taking the lead on the replacement on a large fish barrier on Schaffer Road, working with SWCD is a pleasure and we look forward to building a larger relationship that both agencies can build upon.

Tristan Wood
Engineering Project Coordinator
Columbia County Roads Dept.



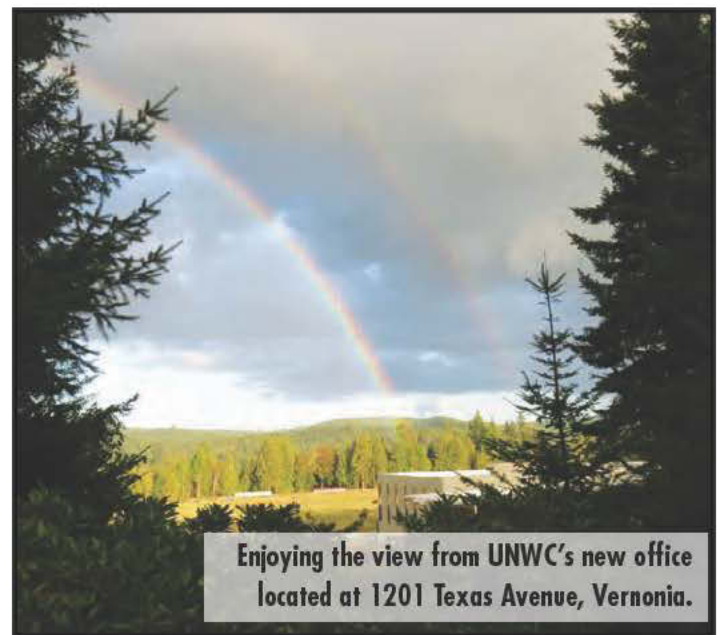
Upper Nehalem Watershed Council

From here we overlook the lovely new campus of the Vernonia School – certified LEED Platinum and GREEN GLOBES, and our brand new commercial greenhouse. UNWC is comforted in knowing that we have grown to be a viable part of the service based learning experience happening here – ranging from reforestation, water quality monitoring, native plant production, watershed assessment, internships, salmon watch and sustainability events.

Quietly reminiscing over 18 years of service to the Nehalem watershed community as Coho salmon return to their native spawning grounds, renewing the ancient ritual we hold dear. Looking back over the years, much has been accomplished to improve Nehalem watershed health and native salmon population recovery by dedicated UNWC volunteers, members, stakeholders, partners, landowners, staff and technical advisors.

These accomplishments were built on abiding trust, sound science, ample resource acquisition, pioneering perseverance and community good will. Looking forward, there is much yet to be accomplished to raise the triple bottom line of the local ecology, economy and society.

We look forward to accomplishing many more projects to assure salmon access, rebuild aquatic habitat, reconnect floodplains, reforest riparian areas, decommission roads, collect



data, monitor effectiveness and continue to build productive relationships.

A time for celebration draws near as we look forward to gathering together with Columbia SWCD and our North Coast friends and neighbors in 2016 for milestone anniversaries. All are welcome!

Maggie Peyton,
UNWC Executive Director

THANK YOU

Thank you to our Partners and many local contractors that we have had the pleasure of working with this year.

Lower Columbia River Watershed Council
Scappoose Bay Watershed Council
Upper Nehalem Watershed Council
Lower Columbia Estuary Partnership
Columbia River Youth Corp.
Rainier School District #13
St Helens School District #502
Clatskanie School District #6
Vernonia School District #47J
Columbia County Roads Department
Columbia County Land Development Services
Clatsop Soil and Water Conservation District
West Multnomah Soil and Water Conservation District
Tualatin Soil and Water Conservation District
Georgia Pacific - Wauna
Bureau of Land Management
Cowlitz Tribe
Oregon NRCS
Oregon Department of Forestry
Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife
Oregon Department Of Agriculture
Department of Environmental Quality
Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board
NW Oregon RC&D
Army Corps of Engineers
Department of State Lands