YAMHILL SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

The Yamhill Soil and Water Conservation District (district) concluded its 66th year of operations on June 30, 2019. The Annual Report highlights several of the district’s programs and services and various accomplishments for the past year. It provides information on board and staff, and includes the financial report for fiscal year July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2019. We encourage readers to visit the district’s website (www.yamhillswcd.org) which provides additional information on district services, conservation programs, partnerships, and upcoming events.

**Board Leadership**

The district is governed by a seven-member board of directors. Board members are elected at the General Election and serve four-year terms. In January 2019, the Board welcomed Ximena Orrego as its newest member. She was elected in November to the Zone 1 position which covers the northwest corner of the county including Yamhill and Carlton. Ximena filled the position formally held by Gordon Dromgoole, who served on the district board for over 25 years. The board membership in 2019 included Barbara Boyer, Pat FitzGerald, Dave Cruickshank, Leo Krick, Gordon Cook, Sam Sweeney and Ximena Orrego. District officers included: Barbara Boyer, Chair; Dave Cruickshank, Vice-Chair; Leo Krick, Secretary; and Pat FitzGerald, Treasurer.

**District Services and Staffing**

The district is fortunate to have a dedicated team of employees with diverse experience, education, technical expertise, and administrative skills. Employees conduct outreach, develop grants, assist with conservation planning, and implement projects that support fish and wildlife habitat, water quality improvement, long-term land protection, and other conservation priorities. Conservation work is accomplished in partnership with farmers, woodland owners, rural landowners, community members, schools, federal, state and local agencies, volunteers, and other organizations. Employees’ responsibilities and areas of focus for 2018-2019 included the following.

**Larry Ojua** developed and managed the district budget and work plans, developed grant proposals, worked with board members on operations and policy issues, directed work associated with conservation easements and district-owned property, and represented the district in land-use hearings and various partnership efforts.

**Julie Lorenzen** administered numerous grants and organized community and outreach events including the Cruickshank Woodland Tour and the district’s annual meeting. Julie assisted with budget and audit preparations, and administered payroll, bookkeeping, and Native Plant Sale finances. Julie works closely with Jessica LaRue and Amanda Greene to plan board meetings, fulfill the district’s public records responsibilities, and produce the district’s website.

**Jessica LaRue** joined the district in January 2019. She managed the district volunteer program, provided staff and administrative support, coordinated event planning, and assisted with board meetings. Jessica assisted with the planning outreach events and the production of the district newsletter, Annual Report, and other publications. Jessica works closely with Sonya Wilkerson to coordinate volunteer and educational activities at Miller Woods.

**Sonya Wilkerson** worked closely with our dedicated volunteers to oversee Miller Woods operations and the native plant nursery. Sonya coordinated several events and activities with schools, volunteers, and other property users over the past year, including the October 2019 trail race to raise funds for the new restroom facility. She also assisted with several special events including the Native Plant Sale and Earth Day.

**Amanda Greene** continued as the webmaster and supported the district team with web updates and maintenance, online ordering features, the Native Plant Sale and other special projects. Don’t forget to check out the district website.

**Josh Togstad** coordinated stewardship work on the district-owned conservation lands including Miller Woods, Chegwyn Farm, Muddy Valley Habitat Reserve, and Yamhela Oak Conservation Overlook, and the Mt. Richmond property where the district holds a conservation easement. He worked with US Fish and Wildlife Service to implement stewardship and restoration projects, and coordinated efforts to secure funding for noxious weed management.

**Joel Donnelly** joined the district in June 2019 as Invasive Species Coordinator. He partnered with Yamhill County Public Works, and two interns to survey and inventory noxious weeds along county roads. The data will be used to develop integrated management plans targeting priority noxious weed species invading Yamhill County. Joel also implemented several noxious weed control projects for mouse-eared hawkweed, knotweed and other priority weeds.
Marie Vicksta coordinated the Agricultural Water Quality Management program and worked with landowners and operators to encourage implementation of voluntary conservation practices. She coordinated the district’s straw mulching and no-till drill programs to help landowners control erosion and protect water quality. Marie worked with NRCS and conservation partners to develop incentive programs for erosion control in the hazelnut industry. She also conducted annual conservation easement inspections and provided information at conservation outreach events.

Amie Loop-Frison continued to serve as lead on the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP), a USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service that provides financial incentives and technical assistance for oak and prairie restoration projects. RCPP leverages contributions from landowners and grantors, and complements habitat work being done by the district, tribes, and other conservation partners. Amie developed management plans for district-owned properties, coordinated project implementation, and assisted landowners interested in long-term land protection.

Conservation Programs, Projects, and Grants:
Providing conservation technical assistance and education programs to landowners and managers in the county continues to be a priority for the district. The district’s partnership with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Farm Service Agency (FSA), Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA), the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB), and our other conservation partners allows landowners access to a wide variety of services and resources. The district has been successful in securing project funding through competitive grants, USDA Farm Bill programs, local sources such as the Native Plant Sale, and other partnership agreements. Landowners and operators interested in water quality protection, wildlife habitat, stream restoration, and other conservation measures are encouraged to contact the district to discuss opportunities and sources of assistance.

Conservation Assistance for Hazelnut Growers
The district worked with NRCS and adjacent counties to develop a multi-county Conservation Implementation Strategy (CIS), focused on providing financial incentives for erosion control practices in hazelnut orchards. The CIS was approved in March 2019, and became effective for the new federal fiscal year that starts on October 1, 2019. The CIS provides financial incentives to hazelnut growers who apply conservation practices on their land. There are six primary practices financially incentivized through the CIS.

1) Conservation Cover: Provides from $68 to $91 per acre to establish permanent vegetation between rows.
2) Cover Crop: Provides from $50 to $67 per acre for winter erosion control.
3) Mulching: Provides from $181 to $242 per acre for winter erosion control.
4) Herbaceous Weed Treatment: Provides from $13 to $18 per acre for noxious weed control.
5) Field Border: Provides from $789 to $1,053 per acre for vegetative plantings that filter surface water at field edges.
6) Critical Area Planting: Provides from $463 to $618 to repair gully erosion and establish vegetation.

NRCS funds up to 75% cost-share for practice implementation, subject to limits described above. The district is offering an incentive bonus to cover an additional 25% of the costs to further incentivize erosion control practices in Yamhill County. If you are interested in these conservation opportunities, please contact the NRCS or district staff.

District Highlight - Native Plant Sale:
The district held its annual Native Plant Sale on March 1 and 2, 2019 at the Yamhill Valley Heritage Center. Over 900 people attended and more than 40,000 plants were sold. District staff and board members were available, along with many volunteers to answer questions and provide assistance. The Heritage Center provides a tremendous venue for the event, with ample space for shoppers to browse indoors, and plenty of parking. The district would like to thank the Heritage Center and the volunteers who helped make this a great event. We look forward to seeing you next year at the Native Plant Sale, scheduled for March 6 & 7, 2020 at the Heritage Center.

Straw Mulching and No-Till Drill:
The district implemented several straw mulching trials during 2018-2019 to demonstrate the effectiveness of mulching to control soil erosion. It also continued offering its no-till drill through an economical rental program for cover crop plantings, pasture renovations and other restoration projects. These practices can be funded under the new CIS Program mentioned in the previous section. For information on the rental program, straw mulching, and the Hazelnut CIS, check the district’s website, or simply contact the district at (503) 472-6403.
Miller Woods Highlights:
2018-2019 was a great year for Miller Woods. Through the collective efforts of volunteers, district staff and board members the district:

◊ Installed two new nursery pads.
◊ Received a grant from Oregon State Parks to repair foot bridges along the trail system.
◊ Designed and installed educational signs funded by a grant from the Siletz Tribal Charitable Fund.
◊ Organized a trail race at Miller Woods to support the restroom facility.

What’s Next at Miller Woods?
The focus for 2019-2020 is the completion of the restroom facility. A new septic system is installed, but additional funds are needed to complete the restroom building. This is a significant project that will require community support and grant funding. If you are interested in donating materials, labor or capital for the project, contact Larry Ojua, Executive Director, at (503) 376-7609 or by email at larry@yamhillswd.org.

Long-Term Land Protection:
The district continued to focus much of its attention this year on stewardship and restoration work at the Muddy Valley Habitat Reserve, the Yamhela Conservation Overlook, and the Mt. Richmond conservation property. Work included oak and prairie restoration, mowing and noxious weed control, and planting of native trees and shrubs.

The district also worked with landowners and fulfilled its obligations to monitor conservation easements on Mt. Richmond, Crown Hill Farm, Friedman-Walster, Rowland, and other conservation properties. Conservation easements help ensure lands remain available for future agricultural production, forestry, wildlife habitat, and other conservation purposes.

The district worked closely with The Nature Conservancy (TNC) this past year to complete a transfer of two conservation properties in Yamhill County. TNC acquired the Yamhill Oaks Preserve in 2008 and the Muddy Valley (Masonville) Preserve in 2010. These properties provide valuable oak and prairie habitats, including critical habitat needed for Fender’s blue butterfly.

The district and TNC finalized and completed the official transfer of the properties in January 2019. As part of the transfer, TNC also donated funds to establish a stewardship endowment to support long-term care of the properties.

Opportunities for Long-Term Land Protection
Yamhill County is fortunate to have landowners with a strong conservation ethic and interest in long-term protection. Through past donations, the district received ownership of Miller Woods and Chegwyn Farms. Both properties are now permanently protected as working farm and forest lands.

Interest in long-term protection of oak and prairie habitat, farm and forested working lands, and other natural areas continues to be of interest to many local landowners. For more information on long-term land protection, conservation planning, programs, services and partnership opportunities, please contact the district at 503-472-6403.
Conservation Programs, Projects, and Grants: (continued)

Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP):

The district entered the final year of a five-year conservation effort in a partnership with USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Polk Soil and Water Conservation District, Greater Yamhill Watershed Council, Trust for Public Land, the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, The Nature Conservancy, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife. The NRCS grant awarded $2,000,000 in 2014 for this five-year conservation incentive program.

The district continued implementing oak and upland prairie restoration projects within Yamhill and Polk counties on the 32 properties enrolled between 2015-2018, with ten additional contracts funded in 2019. The district is pursuing a five-year grant renewal to continue oak restoration work in Yamhill County.

Financial Report Fiscal Year 2018-2019

The district utilized funding from the local permanent rate limit, grants, contracts, fundraisers, and donations to deliver conservation services. The beginning balance for all funds on July 1, 2018 was $2,243,659. The ending fund balance on June 30, 2019 was $2,294,940. The balance includes over $1,000,000 of restricted funds dedicated and reserved for long-term stewardship purposes on protected conservation properties. All fund categories, except the Special Projects Fund ended the 2018-2019 fiscal year with positive ending balances. The Special Projects Funds ended the year with a negative balance due to pending grant receivables. District funds are audited annually by an independent auditor. The 2018 - 2019 financial audit was completed by Grove, Mueller and Swank, P.C. from Salem,

Table 1. Revenue and Expenditures for Yamhill SWCD, 2018 - 2019 fiscal year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fund</th>
<th>Beginning Balance July 1, 2018</th>
<th>Annual Revenues &amp; Transfers In</th>
<th>Annual Expenditures &amp; Transfers Out</th>
<th>Ending Balance June 30, 2019</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General Fund</td>
<td>$373,401</td>
<td>$357,419</td>
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<td>Special Projects Fund</td>
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<td>Miller Woods Fund</td>
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<td>Chegwyn Farm Fund</td>
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<td>Conservation Easement Fund</td>
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<td>Yamhela Property Fund</td>
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<td>Total</td>
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<td>$912,872</td>
<td>$861,591</td>
<td>$2,294,940</td>
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</table>

Contact Information:

Yamhill Soil and Water Conservation District
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Yamhill SWCD is an Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer