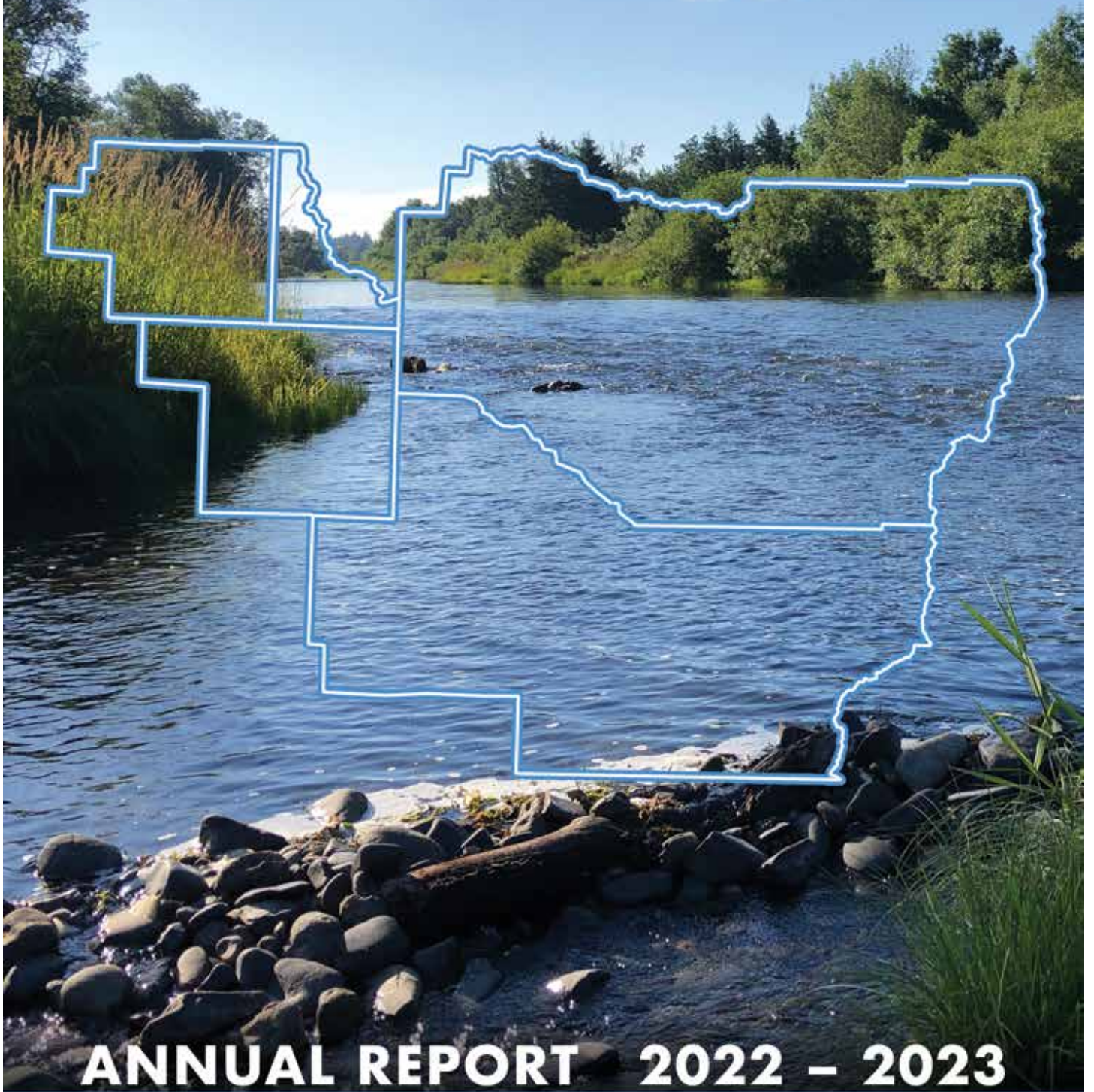




# UPPER WILLAMETTE

SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT



## ANNUAL REPORT 2022 – 2023

*The Upper Willamette Soil & Water Conservation District works to encourage and promote the responsible stewardship of our natural resources through conservation, restoration, and protection.*



## From Our Board Chair

The 2022-2023 Year for the UWSWCD was one of rapid growth and change and a step forward in the long-term direction of the District and our activities.

As you will see in this annual report, we continued to participate in and fund several existing successful programs and are building and developing new programs and skills which meet the wishes of you, our constituents. We have grown and are training our staff to ensure these programs work effectively. I think you will find the newest members of our technical and support team are top-notch, and great additions to your District.

Your Board of Directors has worked hard and diligently this year to create a model Soil & Water Conservation District that conducts business legally and fairly. Board members voluntarily serve on the various committees which oversee the District's operations. We take our role as stewards of the people's interests in clean water and healthy soils resources, both physical and financial, seriously and are proud to serve the public.

Thank you for your continued support, and for taking an interest in the Upper Willamette Soil & Water Conservation District. We are also grateful to our public and private partners in the conservation world as they help us fulfill our mission.

Please take the time to review this annual report, visit our wonderful website, and follow us on social media. Additionally, all UWSWCD Board and committee meetings are open to the public, and we invite your attendance and participation in your Conservation District. We also encourage you to consider taking a seat on our Board. It is a great public service and a way to experience grassroots democracy. We will have several open seats in November 2024, so consider getting involved!

**Al Hrynshyn**  
Board Chair

## From Our District Manager

### Our Continuing Transition

**The fiscal year 2022-23 saw continued change as the District moved forward with its tax-based structured funding.** During the year, the District welcomed additions to our technical staff. Alec Spencer joined us as a Conservation Restoration Specialist. Alec works as a project manager within the Pure Water Partners collaborative fire recovery program. Also, as part of the District's strategic plan, the District hired Jared Pruch as our Grants Management Specialist. With Jared's past experience in grant management/grant making, his skills fit perfectly with the District's goal of creating and implementing a grant program through the District to provide funding opportunities to constituents and conservation organizations within our District.

**On the operational side, during this last fiscal year our Management Staff** worked with our partnering organizations to develop and implement a short-term funding strategy based on the listening community meetings held during 2020 and 2021.

## Welcome to the 2022-2023 Annual Report of the Upper Willamette Soil & Water Conservation District.

The District provided resources through service contracts to Conservation organizations to assist in the continuation of the great conservation programs in existence within the District. The distribution of these resources fit in line with the District's strategic programs of environmental education, habitat restoration, farm, food, soils and partner collaboration. **Over \$875,000 has been allocated through these contracts.**

Moving forward, the District is working to develop and implement its long-term funding strategy through its District Grants program.

**Over the last fiscal year the District continued its active commitment to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice** by participating in multiple staff and board trainings. The District hired The Avarna Group to conduct DEIJ visioning sessions, listening sessions with the board and staff, and write a DEIJ plan. During this fiscal year, the board and staff met with The Avarna Group to participate in their facilitated DEIJ visioning sessions; the DEIJ formal statement and plan will be completed in the next fiscal year.

As we move forward, the District is dedicated to providing transparency of how we operate. The public is always welcome to join our monthly board meetings, or quarterly committee meetings either in person or virtually. Contact us at [admin@uwsxcd.org](mailto:admin@uwsxcd.org) for more information.

**Our goal continues to be to enhance and create conservation uplift throughout our District:** to continue to develop and implement our conservation programs, to fulfill our existing commitments, and to develop and foster new relationships to achieve common conservation goals with our partners and constituents within our District.

**Dave Downing**  
District Manager





### **Upper Willamette Stewardship Network Environmental Education Program**

The District provides support to the Upper Willamette Stewardship Network Environmental Education Program, coordinated through the Middle Fork Willamette Watershed Council, to expand and coordinate place-based education opportunities for students throughout the district and support the district in developing our Environmental Education grant-making program.

See [www.middleforkwillamette.org/learn/watershed-education-program/](http://www.middleforkwillamette.org/learn/watershed-education-program/)

### **Farmer's Market Grants**

The UWSWCD awarded seven Farmers Market Grants to local Farmer's Markets throughout our District. The seven applicants and awardees for the Fiscal Year 2022/2023 were: the Whitaker Community Market, the Oakridge Community Farmer's Market, Veneta's Downtown Farmer's Market, South Valley Farmer's Market, Lost Valley Farmer's Market, Lane County Farmer's Market, and the Spencer Creek Community Growers Market. These grants helped to increase community participation in market events, include more vendors, educate the public on conservation-related topics, and make healthy, fresh agricultural products accessible to all demographics of the county (e.g., matching funds from SNAP or other assistance programs).

One grant recipient noted: *"As an area that struggles with food access, the call for our farmers market to continue in the winter was very strong in our community. We weren't expecting to be a four-season market but it makes sense for up here, especially when winter weather conditions make it a treacherous drive for the many seniors that patronize the market. We were very grateful to be able to be able to include late winter markets through our grant this year."*

### **Holiday Farm Fire Post-Fire Watershed Restoration**

In this fiscal year, the UWSWCD continued to serve as an integral partner in the Pure Water Partners (PWP) program, primarily focused on post-fire watershed restoration. We dedicated three full-time staff, paid for by EWEB through the partnership, to manage and implement postfire restoration actions on McKenzie watershed fire-impacted private lands. We worked with our partners to plant over 150,000 native shrubs and trees (over 1 million trees and shrubs planted since 2020), slow and prevent soil erosion, reduce hazardous fire fuels, and treat invasive vegetation throughout the Holiday Farm Fire footprint to increase healthy habitat and protect water quality.

We also provided free soil sampling and analysis reports to grow home gardens for residents living in the Holiday Farm fire perimeter. We will continue this service in the next fiscal year.

### **District Grants in 2022 – 2023**

We provided more than \$700,000 in non-competitive grants to local conservation organizations and tribes to support projects such as prescribed and cultural burning, environmental education and outreach, floodplain restoration, oak habitat restoration, urban water quality, green infrastructure improvements, and collaboration, with a focus on Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice.

These grant funds also helped partners implement projects ranging from habitat restoration, water quality improvement, working farms and ranches, forest health and resilience, and natural resource education, across the District's geographic service area, spanning the watersheds of the Long Tom, Coast Fork Willamette, Middle Fork Willamette, and McKenzie Rivers.

### **Natural Resource and Environmental Education Grants**

The District is supporting a broad range of natural resource conservation programs and activities this year. Examples of programs receiving funding in 2022 – 2023 include:

*The Long Tom Watershed Council's Urban Waters & Wildlife Program*, focused on improving water quality and habitat value of Amazon Creek and other urban waterways in Eugene and Springfield.

*Coast Fork Willamette Watershed Council's Coast Fork Youth Conservation Crew*, which provides local youth with the opportunity to gain practical skills, work experience, and to learn land stewardship techniques while completing natural resource conservation projects.

*McKenzie River Trust's Fire Capacity & Tribal Lands Management partnership*, which supports Tribal and Indigenous-led partners in prescribed burning and land management practices that increase wildfire resiliency and benefit watershed restoration.

*Middle Fork Willamette Watershed Council's Salmon Watch Program*, which provides an opportunity for local middle and high school students to participate in both classroom and field-based learning experiences about salmon and watershed ecology.

*The McKenzie Firewood Program/Oakridge Community Firewood Program*, which conduct fuels reduction and restoration work and use the byproducts as the basis of a free firewood program in Blue River and Oakridge. We launched our short-term funding strategy for local partners and Tribal conservation projects.

As the District further develops our grant program, we are facilitating numerous stakeholder engagement processes to understand needs, opportunities and gaps to inform our strategy.



**UPPER WILLAMETTE**  
SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

**Board of Directors**

**Al Hrynshyn**

Chair, Zone 1 Director

**Andy Burke**

Zone 3 Director

**Ralph Perkins**

Vice-Chair, Zone 5 Director

**Mary Durfee Ph.D**

Zone 2 Director

**VACANT**

Zone 4 Director

**Chuck Arrera**

At Large 1 Director

**Karl Morgenstern**

Treasurer, At Large 2 Director

Associate Directors:

**Abel Kloster**

**Craig Marcus**

**Community Partners**

Coast Fork Willamette Watershed Council

Eugene Water and Electric Board (EWEB)

Friends of Buford Park

Lane County

Long Tom Watershed Council

McKenzie River Trust

McKenzie Watershed Council

Middle Fork Willamette Watershed Council

Mt. Pisgah Arboretum

Natural Resources Conservation Service  
(NRCS)

Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA)

Oregon Department  
of Fish and Wildlife (DFW)

Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF)

Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board  
(OWEB)

United States Department of Agriculture  
(USDA)

*Please see our website for  
a full list of our community partners.*

**Upper Willamette SWCD Staff**

**Dave Downing**

District Manager

**Lily Leitermann**

Conservation Programs Manager

**Victoria Fischella**

Conservation Technician

**Daniel Dietz**

Senior Restoration Specialist

**Meridith McClure**

Restoration Specialist

**Alec Spencer**

Restoration Specialist

**Clarissa Berndt**

Fiscal Manager

**Leslie Owens**

Administrative Specialist

**Jared Pruch**

Grant Management Specialist

**Cricket DeLoe**

Media & Outreach Specialist

**2022-2023 Financial Information \***

**Revenues**

Fiscal Year Beginning Balance	\$1,777,694.83
Federal Funding	\$68,658.34
State Funding	\$148,306.35
Service Contracts	\$274,449.10
Services	\$2,795.00
Tax Levy	\$2,452,428.85
Other Income	\$90,932.76

**TOTAL REVENUES \$4,815,265.23**

**Expenditures**

Personnel Services	\$713,300.05
Materials & Services	
Natural Resources	\$299,363.48
Partner Collaboration	\$67,351.87
Environmental Education	\$144,649.00
District Operations	\$181,956.74
Capital Outlay	\$11,197.99

**TOTAL EXPENDITURES \$1,417,819.13**

*\*Unaudited*

**Upper Willamette Soil & Water Conservation District**

3291 W 1st Avenue • Eugene, OR 97402

541.852.6680 • [www.UWSWCD.org](http://www.UWSWCD.org)

Our Board of Directors meets on the second Tuesday of each month.  
For more information, please visit our website.