
**Upper Willamette
Soil and Water Conservation District**

NEIGHBORHOOD SUSTAINABILITY ENGAGEMENT REPORT

**Prepared by: Alai Community Consulting (ACC)
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INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW:

The Upper Willamette Soil & Water Conservation District (UWSWCD) is a public conservation service agency based in Eugene with a publicly elected Board of Directors. It serves eastern and central Lane County, extending as far east as Blue River and Oakridge and as far west as Veneta. In 2020, the district acquired a tax base through a voter-approved tax levy, providing a new revenue source to expand programming and services related to natural resource conservation within Lane County.

In their 2020-2025 strategic plan, the Upper Willamette Soil and Water Conservation District identified eight key “programs, problems, strategies, capabilities, and needs” to be addressed as they relate to their 5-year mission and vision:



The district has contracted partners to conduct engagement processes related to Farm, Food and Soil, and Forest Health Resilience to find out from the community what exists and what can be potentially developed. Partners have offered the district key recommendations based on stakeholder engagement.

In April 2024, UWSWCD asked Alai Community Consulting (ACC) to partner with the district to conduct a community engagement process on Neighborhood Sustainability. For UWSWCD purposes, neighborhood sustainability interests include but are not limited to:

- Urban water quality and water conservation, including reduced use of pesticides
- Urban greenspace and natural area habitat restoration, enhancement, and access
- “Naturescaping” for pollinators and other wildlife in backyard or commonly owned spaces
- Community gardens and sustainable urban food production
- Urban forestry, tree canopy, shade equity, and urban heat island mitigation efforts

In this report, ACC will present findings and recommendations derived from an extensive stakeholder engagement process for the district to consider as they implement programs, staffing positions, partnerships/collaborations and funding opportunities as part of their Neighborhood Sustainability strategy. Through a combination of one-on-one interviews and facilitated discussions, ACC gathered community feedback on priority areas such as water conservation, urban greenspace, naturescaping, urban forestry, and sustainable food production. The insights gathered by community engagement processes are pivotal to the UWSWCD’s vision for neighborhood sustainability. The recommendations in this report will guide the district as it allocates funding and resources, ensuring that future programs and collaborations are designed to meet the unique needs of Lane County’s urban and rural communities. This collaborative effort underscores the district’s commitment to fostering resilient, environmentally conscious neighborhoods while advancing collaboration, community well-being and ecological stewardship.

METHODOLOGY

The community engagement process was designed to gain a comprehensive understanding of the current landscape of services and programs available within the Upper Willamette Soil and Water Conservation District boundaries. The purpose was to identify existing gaps, barriers, and challenges that may be hindering access or effectiveness. Through this process, stakeholders also sought to explore potential areas for growth and improvement, uncovering new opportunities to enhance community support, service delivery, and overall well-being. This initiative aimed to gather input from a diverse range of voices to ensure that the future development of programs, staffing, and funding/granting opportunities align with the needs and aspirations of the community.

About Alaí Community Consulting:

ACC's team facilitates organizational transformations and community engagement in the non-profit sector, government, higher education, arts, and cultural initiatives, emergency preparedness and response, and social, climate, and environmental justice organizations. Our multilingual, cross-cultural, team specializes in our capacity to engage and co-create with historically under-served communities. We are currently proud to lead community engagement for the Northwest Environmental Justice Center (NWEJC), a resource funded by the Environmental Protection Agency to support environmental justice communities: rural, tribal, low-income, and people of color communities who are actively addressing the impact of climate change and environmental degradation in their everyday lives. NWEJC is a partner in this project providing funding for multiple reporting strategies, including this report, a one-pager, and a StoryMap.



Our Approach:

At ACC, we prioritize individuals' stories and lived experiences. Our approach creates space for people to express themselves fully and authentically. We recognize that individuals are the foremost experts on their own experiences, and this insight is the most valuable factor in informing our recommendations and guiding our work. In this engagement process, we asked previously scripted questions, and tailored and changed questions depending on the context, individual, and the organization. We also believe that time is a valuable resource, especially when participating in the engagement processes like this one, when resources are available, ACC likes to incentivize people to share their time and effort, therefore we offered a gift card to the first 15 people who participated in the interviews and the Zoom engagement event, as well as the first 3 people to arrive at our in-person event at UWSWD's office.

THE INTERVIEWS:

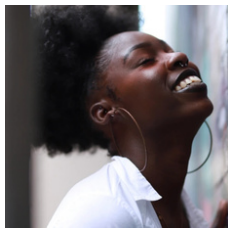
From May 2024 to September 2024, ACC conducted a total of 23 interview conversations with organizations, businesses, and individuals in the district working or interested in a variety of issues related to Neighborhood Sustainability. The interviews aimed to gather insights to inform the district on how to better serve the community by utilizing the 2020 tax base to create and support programs, staffing opportunities, and/or grant opportunities.

Jared Pruch assisted with generating the script and interview questions for this engagement process based on his knowledge and participation in the previous engagement processes. The full list of questions and script read at each interview can be found in Appendices A and B.

Interview Participants Profiles

The list of participants was generated in part by Jared Pruch, Grants Manager at the District, and partly by Dr. Alai Reyes-Santos. During the interviews, we also asked participants to refer other potential interviewees for the engagement process and contact them to interview with us.

These are profiles of organizations and businesses engaged:



Aimée Okotie-Oyekan, Business Owner

Environmental, Community Planning and Creative Consulting.

Interdisciplinary Environmentalist I am a British-Nigerian creative, scholar, and activist addressing environmental injustice through art, education, and advocacy. I approach issues of social inequality by framing them as intertwined with environmental injustices. I use these framings to shape applied work with communities, contributing wholistic, systems-thinking approaches that steer projects in new and exciting directions with positive impacts and learning experiences for those involved.



Be Your Best Cottage Grove

Addressing Health through Collective Action

Social determinants of health are the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work, and age. These circumstances are shaped by the distribution of resources at global, national, and local levels.



Beyond Toxics

We envision a society where everyone has equitable access to healthy food and clean air and water, and underserved communities are included in decision making processes that affect them.

Together, we move beyond the damaging environmental practices of the past and collectively work to support and maintain ecological resilience and balance.



BRING Recycling

BRING is one of the nation's oldest non-profit recyclers. Since 1971, we have encouraged people to rethink what they use and what they throw away. We help our community keep useful items out of the landfill, find ways to use less stuff, reuse as many things as possible, and recycle the rest. Through our retail outlet and education programs, we fulfill our mission to provide vision, leadership, and tools for living well on the planet we share.



The Calapooia Food Alliance

The Calapooia Food Alliance is a nonprofit organization that consists of three program areas: community garden, Thursday Market, and Munch Night. Our community garden provides fresh and affordable produce for the local community and educates about gardening, nature, and cooking. Our Thursday Market offers a weekly market for local producers to sell their goods and connect with the community. Our Munch Night provides a monthly community gathering to share food, music, and conversation. Join us in our mission to promote sustainable living and community engagement.



The Clean Rivers Coalition

The Clean Rivers Coalition is comprised of over 60 partners, including local municipalities, state and federal agencies, watershed councils, soil & water conservation districts, and water-related nonprofits. The coalition works within communities and across stakeholders to deliver water awareness and behavior change campaign in an equitable, inclusive, and culturally appropriate manner that reaches and benefits diverse populations.



The City of Eugene

The City of Eugene provides a variety of services and information to Eugene residents. Through the city's stormwater program, the city aims to implement a public education and outreach strategies that provide stormwater information and education to homeowners, renters, school children, City and other agency staff and the general public about water quality problems in our community, the importance of protecting local waterways, and ways everyone can contribute. We conduct education and outreach using key values and motives that resonate with citizens and that encourage "right-action." In addition, continue to educate commercial and industrial business owners about best management practices that can help prevent and reduce water quality impacts to the public stormwater system and local receiving waters.



Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development

The Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD) is a small state agency. We work in partnership with local governments, and state and federal agencies, to address the land use needs of the public, communities, regions, and the state. The Land Conservation and Development Commission (LCDC) provides policy direction for the land use planning program and oversees DLCD operations.



Eco-System Solutions

At Eco-System Solutions, we're committed to providing customized executive business solutions and project development services tailored to your goals and budget. Our mission is to empower environmental organizations and businesses with strategic expertise, innovative solutions, and cost-effective strategies to drive meaningful impact. With a focus on sustainability, efficiency, and environmental stewardship, we aim to be the premier partner for those looking to make a positive difference in the world.



Farm on 42nd

Farm on 42nd participates in a complex ecosystem on an urban lot in Springfield, Oregon. We grow food for our community, habitat for native pollinators, and hold space for the paradoxes of modern life.



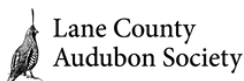
Friends of Trees

Since 1989 Friends of Trees has planted 950,000+ trees and native shrubs in neighborhoods and natural areas in six counties across two states. We've done this through engaging tens of thousands of community members, and while implementing and growing programming that aims to do this work inclusively and equitably. We plant trees, and so much more;



Lane County Public Health and Human Services

Our mission is to promote and protect the long-term health and well-being of individuals, families and our community. Our vision is optimal health for all people in Lane County.



Lane County Audubon Society

Lane County Audubon Society is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the conservation of and education about our natural environment, with a primary focus on birds and other wildlife and their habitats. Our organization is dedicated to equity, diversity and inclusion.



The Long Tom Watershed Council

The Long Tom Watershed Council is a unique and friendly local organization and a recognized leader in science and community-based watershed protection and restoration. LTWC was founded in 1998 by a diverse group of stakeholders including farmers, foresters, anglers, businesses, scientists, and conservationists who responded to the opportunity to act locally and cooperatively to address land and water issues under the Oregon Plan for Salmon and Watersheds. Since that time, we have worked across traditional boundaries to complete many education and restoration projects that document and improve local water quality and fish and wildlife habitat, and have developed and partially implemented a watershed Action Plan. The dedication and talents of those involved with our work have helped the Council achieve a designation as one of the top-ranked watershed councils in the state and inclusion in the Model Watershed Program by Meyer Memorial Trust and Bonneville Environmental Foundation.

Lost Valley Educational Center



Lost Valley Educational Center is a 501(c)3 non-profit located in Dexter, Oregon, 20 minutes east of Eugene. We take a holistic approach to sustainability education, engaging students in ecological, social, and personal growth. Lost Valley is also a community land trust and intentional community that provides affordable housing and access to land for ecological living and rural community development. The community uses a system of governance that is inspired by Sociocracy, and seeks to build a culture of inclusion, equity, non-violent communication, and authentic expression, while achieving the mission of the non-profit. The community is comprised of resident staff, other renters, and volunteers. Since 1989, Lost Valley has been a place for experiential learning through participation in community development, formalized educational programs, and volunteer opportunities.



Morganic Roots

Morganic Roots is a locally owned Firm by naturalist Eugene native Arnold E Morgan Jr. as a boy he worked countless hours with his father's landscape business, and from there he has transitioned into a more organic and sustainable approach with his work. With a business degree from the University of Puerto Rico, ethical business decisions, good heart and a green thumb Morganic Roots was developed. On his journey he has also received a certificate in both horticulture, permaculture design and advance permaculture design focusing on climate resilience from Oregon State University.



The Eugene Springfield NAACP

The Eugene Springfield NAACP is unit #1119 of the over 2,200 NAACP branches across the country. Since 1976, the Eugene/Springfield NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People) has served as a source of cohesion for our local communities of color. In Lane County, our primary activities include implementation of education programs, public awareness events, community building, and coalition work towards cultural inclusion. Additionally, the Eugene/Springfield NAACP provides support to other regional offices. Their Annie Mims Community Garden is located at the Redeemer Lutheran Church.



Northwest Youth Corps (NYC)

Northwest Youth Corps (NYC) provides a challenging education and job-training experience that helps youth and young adults from diverse backgrounds develop the skills they need to lead full and productive lives. As part of NYC's workforce development initiatives, our crews work with partner organizations to complete conservation and natural resource projects within the Eugene-Springfield area. Our grant funded crews such as our Urban Community Forestry and Community Wildfire Protection Corps, provide essential service work free of charge within targeted areas of our community.

Plaza de Nuestra Comunidad



Plaza de Nuestra Comunidad supports the lives of Latinx and immigrant community members by creating a safe space that fosters leadership, education, wellness, and connection. We are a bilingual and multicultural agency that offers the following wraparound services: community gardens and assistance for farmers; case management; mental health therapist; support for small businesses; educational classes for adults, youth, and families; treatment for individuals struggling with addiction; and more

River Mist Gardens



Nestled along the Calapooia River in the heart of Historic Brownsville the River Mist Gardens await you. Our venue offers many choices to make your wedding or gala uniquely your own. We have open fields, woodlands, small hideaways, large green lawns, river views, and unique garden structures. Use some or all of these to perfect your palette of originality, fun, or elegance. We can accommodate your small or large event. Our venue offers paths through a blend of natural native landscape transforming into more groomed and structured gardens.

Our gardens change with the seasons to give you just the right background for your very special event. You will find many diverse and lovely settings for beautiful photography, catering preparation areas, outlets for water and power, and plenty of event parking on site.

University of Oregon - Office of Sustainability



UO Office Of Sustainability: Our mission is to lead the integration of sustainability into the University of Oregon's operations, curriculum, co-curriculum, research and engagement with the community. We accomplish this through a number of programs and partnerships that:

- Provide strategic advice, information and resources to faculty, staff and students working to integrate sustainability practices and policies into their programming;
- Develop policies that promote environmentally-sensitive behavior by campus users and responsible development and stewardship of campus assets;
- Create, implement and manage innovative programs and events, in partnership with other campus units whenever possible;
- Establish metrics and track institutional sustainability performance;
- Share the University's sustainability story and encourage the campus community to support the growth and success of sustainable practices.



University of Oregon's Urban Farm

The University of Oregon's Urban Farm is a model for alternative urban land use where people grow food, work together, take care of the land, and build community. Throughout its 45-year history, the Urban Farm has been a place and a process, one that integrates biological, ecological, economic and social concerns.



Upper Willamette Stewardship Network

The Upper Willamette Stewardship Network is a partnership launched in 2018, comprised of four watershed councils, a land trust, and a conservation nonprofit. We work together to share information, resources, and achieve advancements in conservation across our region. Through this collaborative effort, network members work to improve and expand programming, increase our collective cost effectiveness, eliminate the duplication of efforts, and achieve long-term organizational stability. This is all in service to our shared commitment to the region's land & water resources and its communities.



Whiteaker Community Market

The Whiteaker Community Market cultivates a gathering place that is inclusive, diverse, and vibrant. We support emerging local makers and growers through creating economic opportunity that is centered around increasing quality of life in the Whiteaker neighborhood.



Willamalane Park and Recreation District

Willamalane Park and Recreation District maintains and operates recreation facilities, community centers, pools, parks, trails, and natural areas in Springfield. In addition, the district provides recreational activities, volunteer opportunities, childcare, and recreational activities that are accessible to people of all ages and abilities. Created by voters in 1944, Willamalane is a special tax district, separate from the City of Springfield, governed by a five-member, elected board of directors and managed by an executive director. In 2022, Willamalane earned CAPRA accreditation, which signifies that the organization's overall quality of operations, management, and service to the community are aligned with industry best practices.



Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation

The Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation is an international nonprofit organization that protects the natural world through the conservation of invertebrates and their habitats. As a science-based organization, we both conduct our own research and rely upon the most up-to-date information to guide our conservation work. Our key program areas are: pollinator conservation, endangered species conservation, and reducing pesticide use and impacts.

INTERVIEWS KEY THEMES AND INSIGHTS

The interview process revealed several key themes and insights providing valuable perspectives on the current state of services, programs, and opportunities within the District. Through in-depth conversations with stakeholders, participants, and community leaders, a clearer picture emerged of the strengths, challenges, and needs in the community. These insights highlight both the existing barriers and areas where growth and opportunities can drive meaningful improvements. The following highlight the learning on the different areas of interest on Neighborhood Sustainability for the district.

1

Urban water quality and water conservation, including reduced use of pesticides

Key Learnings:

- The Long Tom Watershed Council focuses on improving water quality through green stormwater infrastructure, impervious surface removal, and native plant installation in urban areas. Their Urban Waters and Wildlife program targets commercial, industrial, and community spaces like churches and schools for these improvements. They also participate in the Pesticide Stewardship Partnership, monitoring pesticide levels in both urban and agricultural areas.
- The City of Eugene's stormwater management program educates residents and businesses on reducing runoff and pollutants. They publish an annual newsletter mailed to all Eugene residents, have many resources listed on their webpage: www.happyriver.org, and participate in outreach events. Effectively communicating the importance of river health and the way to achieve that can be challenging. Partnerships can be beneficial to expanding knowledge and reach.
- Beyond Toxics advocates for reducing pesticide use in parks to protect children's health and water quality. They've worked with Springfield's Willamalane Parks District to transition Dorris Ranch to organic practices, which is significant given its location along the Willamette River.
- The Xerces Society, although a national organization, supports initiatives like Bee City USA, helping local governments and campuses reduce pesticide use and create pollinator-friendly spaces. They also work on conservation biological control, using native insects for pest management instead of chemicals.
- The Audobon Society educate about water conservation. Each participant providing data about this in terms of drip irrigation installed, water barrels, etc. Their programs encourage the elimination of turf grass, as it creates runoff and excess water use and they collect data on this. Additionally, they educate about pesticides, particularly the danger of insecticides to aquatic organisms and pollinators. Each participant is providing data about use of pesticides.

Opportunities:

- Several interviewees mentioned the need for better community and business education and outreach on the use of pesticides. This includes engaging with landscaping businesses, especially Latino-owned ones, about sustainable practices. There's also a recognized need for more funding and research on green stormwater infrastructure efficacy.
- A key insight is the importance of collaborative efforts. The Lane Pollution Prevention Coalition brings together multiple agencies to coordinate educational outreach on water quality issues. Similarly, the Clean Rivers Coalition works at a statewide level to promote consistent messaging on environmental topics.

2

Urban greenspace and natural area habitat restoration, enhancement and access

We talked to individuals who are working on ongoing efforts in natural area restoration, enhancing pollinator habitats and increasing access to green spaces. Participants working on these efforts also highlighted the importance of having access and selection of appropriate tree species to plant and providing accessible education on tree maintenance to homeowners and the broader community.

Key Learnings:

- Friends of Trees focuses on urban forestry and tree canopy enhancement, particularly in areas identified as lacking tree equity. They engage volunteers in planting and caring for trees in public spaces and private yards, emphasizing native and climate-resilient species. Their work has been shown to reduce heat-related deaths in urban areas.
- The Long Tom Watershed Council focuses on stream restoration, culvert replacements, and reconnecting side channels. They also do upland work involving oak and prairie restoration, often partnering with private landowners.
- Beyond Toxics is involved in efforts to preserve and enhance urban green spaces, particularly in underserved areas. They've advocated for maintaining natural areas in parks, such as opposing the conversion of natural wetlands into artificial turf sports complexes.
- The City of Eugene is working on park renovations with cultural and historical significance, particularly for the Black community. This involves co-designing welcoming and inclusive park spaces that honor the legacies of Eugene's pioneering Black families while addressing past displacement issues.
- Plaza de Nuestra Comunidad manages community gardens that serve as important green spaces, especially for apartment dwellers and those without private yards. These gardens provide safe, chemical-free outdoor areas for Latino and immigrant community members to grow food and spend time together.
- Habitat restoration for pollinators is a growing concern. The Audubon Society launched a "Habitat Haven" program in 2024 with the help of the UWSWCD, to help homeowners convert their properties into pollinator-friendly spaces using native plants and water conservation techniques with the goal of protecting biodiversity.

- Environmental Justice is an important consideration in urban green space initiatives. Some interviewees highlighted the need to focus on underserved communities and address issues like shade equity and urban heat island effects.
- Equity and Access: There's a growing emphasis on ensuring equitable access to green spaces. In Eugene, efforts are being made to co-design inclusive park spaces that honor the contributions of historically marginalized communities, particularly the Black community.
- The NAACP Eugene-Springfield branch, for instance, is actively involved in creating community gardens, seeing them as a way to promote food security and community engagement.
- In Springfield, there's a recognized need for more community gardens, with plans to develop new spaces like the one near Tyson Park.
- The University of Oregon's Urban Farm is developing a new urban farm site focused on education and engagement around food production. This initiative could serve as a model for other urban agriculture projects in the area.
- The University of Oregon's Office of Sustainability is working to restore campus natural areas, including the Millrace that runs through campus and the Willamette River Natural Area (WRNA), which shares a border with the planned new Urban Farm Riverside.

Opportunities:

- Increasing outreach and education about the benefits of urban green spaces
- Addressing environmental justice concerns in green space planning
- Several interviewees highlighted the importance of equitable access to green spaces. This includes considerations of environmental justice, ensuring that underserved communities have equal opportunities to enjoy and benefit from natural areas
- The multifaceted approach to urban greenspace enhancement, combining ecological restoration with community engagement and cultural preservation. There's a growing recognition of the need to address historical inequities in green space access and to involve diverse communities in the planning and maintenance of these areas.
- Challenges include securing long-term funding for maintenance, balancing different community needs and desires for green spaces, and ensuring that restoration efforts don't lead to gentrification or further displacement of vulnerable populations.



“Naturescaping” for pollinators and other wildlife in backyard or commonly owned spaces

There's a growing recognition of the importance of transforming urban and suburban landscapes to support pollinators and other wildlife, especially because pollinators are vital to food supply and have declined 40% in the last 50 years. Through our conversations, we found out that various organizations approaching this goal from different angles but with shared objectives.

Key Learnings:

- The Xerces Society is at the forefront of pollinator conservation efforts throughout the United States. They promote naturescaping through their Bee City USA program, which encourages local governments and campuses to create pollinator-friendly habitats. They emphasize the importance of providing food resources, nesting sites, and protection from pesticides for bees and butterflies through policies and working with government agencies.
- Friends of Trees incorporates native pollinator plants in their urban forestry work. They not only plant trees but also include native shrubs and pollinator-friendly plants in their projects, contributing to urban biodiversity.
- Beyond Toxics advocates for reducing pesticide use in public spaces and promotes the creation of pollinator habitats. They've worked on projects to transform areas into more natural, wildlife-friendly spaces, emphasizing the importance of native plants for local ecosystems.
- Plaza de Nuestra Comunidad, while primarily focused on community gardens, incorporates native pollinator patches in some of their gardens. They plant species that serve multiple purposes - as food and medicine for humans and as habitat for pollinators.
- The Long Tom Watershed Council includes naturescaping elements in their urban waters and wildlife program. While their focus is on water quality improvement, they incorporate native plants and habitat enhancement in their green stormwater infrastructure projects.
- The Audubon Society's Habitat Haven program encourages homeowners to convert their properties into pollinator-friendly spaces using native plants and plants that act as natural pest repellent.

Opportunities:

- Education is crucial: Many organizations emphasize the need for public education about the benefits of naturescaping and how to implement it in various settings.
- Multi-functional spaces: There's a trend towards creating spaces that serve multiple purposes - supporting wildlife, improving water quality, and providing human benefits like food production or aesthetic value.
- Native plant emphasis: The use of native plants is consistently highlighted as essential for supporting local wildlife and creating resilient ecosystems.
- Community involvement: Engaging volunteers and community members in planting and maintaining naturescaped areas is seen as key to long-term success and broader adoption of these practices.
- Challenges: Barriers include the need for ongoing maintenance, potential conflicts with traditional landscaping preferences, and the need for more widespread availability of native plants.
- Policy support: Some organizations are working to influence local policies to support and encourage naturescaping practices in both public and private spaces.

Community gardens and urban agriculture are seen as vital components of sustainable, resilient, and equitable food systems in urban areas. They offer multiple benefits beyond just food production, contributing to community health, environmental education, and social cohesion. Participants working and interested in food production highlighted the importance for the district to continue supporting urban agriculture, community gardens, and local food production. One of the ways that this can be achieved is through providing resources and funding for small and beginning farmers, especially from underrepresented groups.

Key Learnings:

- Community gardens and sustainable urban food production were prominent themes in several interviews, revealing a rich landscape of initiatives and insights:
- Plaza de Nuestra Comunidad operates community gardens that primarily serve Latino families and immigrant community members. These gardens provide access to culturally appropriate foods, offer a safe space for families to gather, and promote sustainable gardening practices. They've expanded their program to include a farmer training program, helping community members transition from gardeners to small-scale farmers.
- The School Garden Project, mentioned by Sonya Carlson, focuses on creating and supporting gardens in educational settings. These gardens serve as outdoor classrooms, teaching students about sustainable food production and connecting them to the source of their food.
- Christina Bentrup runs a small urban farm in Springfield that follows organic principles. She has a contract with the local food bank to provide fresh produce to low-income communities, demonstrating how urban agriculture can contribute to food security. Christina also emphasizes the importance of pollinator habitats and soil protection in urban farming.
- Friends of Trees, while primarily focused on urban forestry, includes fruit trees in their planting programs, contributing to urban food production.
- BRING Recycling, for example, offers workshops on creating planter boxes from reused materials and conducts educational programs for K-12 students on topics like "follow the food," which encourages understanding of where food comes from and promotes home gardening.
- Cultural Relevance: There's recognition of the importance of culturally relevant food production. Some community garden programs are growing plants that are culturally important to diverse communities, including herbs and vegetables specific to different ethnic cuisines.
- Food Security: Community gardens and urban agriculture initiatives are seen as ways to address food insecurity. Organizations like Food for Lane County are key partners in these efforts, working to ensure that locally grown food reaches those who need it most.
- Christina Bentrup, who runs a small urban farm in Springfield, mentioned collaborating with food banks to provide fresh produce to low-income communities. However, she noted that some city policies in Springfield actually discourage urban agriculture.

Opportunities:

- Food security and equity: Community gardens and urban agriculture play a crucial role in improving access to fresh, healthy food, especially for low-income and culturally diverse communities.
- Educational opportunities: Gardens serve as powerful educational tools, teaching people of all ages about sustainable food production, nutrition, and environmental stewardship.
- Cultural relevance: Programs that allow people to grow culturally significant foods are particularly impactful, fostering community connections and preserving traditions.
- Economic opportunities: Some programs, like Plaza de Nuestra Comunidad's farmer training, are creating pathways for community members to develop small businesses in agriculture. Additionally, small farmers highlighted the need for supporting initiatives for beginning farmers and urban agriculture
- Multifunctional spaces: Community gardens often serve multiple purposes beyond food production, including as social gathering spaces, pollinator habitats, and green spaces in urban areas.
- Challenges: Barriers include limited access to land, especially in urban areas, lack of long-term land security, and the need for ongoing support and resources for gardeners.
- Policy needs: There's a call for more supportive urban agriculture policies and increased investment in community garden infrastructure.
- Sustainability focus: Many programs emphasize organic practices, soil health, and water conservation, aligning urban food production with broader environmental goals.

5 Urban forestry, tree canopy, shade equity, and urban heat island mitigation efforts

Urban forestry is seen as a critical component of sustainable urban development, with growing recognition of its role in addressing climate change, public health, and social equity. However, challenges remain in terms of funding, policy support, and ensuring equitable distribution of tree canopy across all communities. People mentioned the importance and need for urban forestry programs to address heat islands, shade equity, and climate resilience, especially in the Springfield area. Tree canopy and shade equity are recognized as important factors in combating urban heat islands. Multiple interview participants noted that there is a particular concern in Springfield, which has a lower tree canopy cover compared to Eugene, highlighting the need and prioritization for targeted urban forestry initiatives in places like the City of Springfield and West Eugene.

Key Learnings:

- Friends of Trees is a key player in urban forestry efforts in the Eugene-Springfield area. They focus on increasing tree canopy, particularly in areas identified as lacking tree equity. Their work has been shown to reduce heat-related deaths in urban areas, demonstrating the direct impact of urban forestry on public health. They prioritize planting in Justice 40 areas and other underserved neighborhoods.
- Beyond Toxics advocates for increased tree canopy, especially in underserved areas. They've highlighted the disparity in tree cover between different parts of Eugene and Springfield, emphasizing the environmental justice aspects of urban forestry. They've also worked to protect existing trees, particularly in areas facing development pressures.

- The City of Eugene is working on integrating urban forestry into broader community development efforts. They're focusing on increasing tree canopy in areas identified as urban heat islands and in neighborhoods with historically less green infrastructure.
- In Cottage Grove, there's recognition of the need for improved urban forestry efforts, especially after recent ice storms caused significant tree loss. The lack of a dedicated parks and recreation district has hindered systematic urban forestry efforts in the area.

Opportunities:

- Investments: Ian Appow, an urban forestry expert, highlighted the need for more investment in urban forestry programs. He noted that newcomers from fire-prone regions are often more willing to invest in fire prevention and urban forestry measures than long-time residents.
- Health impacts: Urban forestry is increasingly recognized for its role in public health, particularly in mitigating heat-related illnesses and deaths.
- Equity focus: There's a strong emphasis on addressing disparities in tree canopy cover between different neighborhoods, with a focus on increasing trees in underserved areas.
- Climate resilience: Urban forests are seen as a key strategy for climate adaptation, helping to reduce urban heat island effects and improve air quality.
- Multi-benefit approach: Trees are valued not just for aesthetics, but for their multiple benefits including air purification, stormwater management, and habitat creation.
- Community engagement: Successful urban forestry programs often involve community members in planting and tree care, fostering a sense of ownership and stewardship.
- Policy needs: There's a call for stronger policies to protect existing trees and promote new plantings, especially in areas facing development pressures.
- Funding challenges: Many interviewees highlighted the need for sustained funding for tree planting and, crucially, long-term maintenance.
- Education: There's an ongoing need to educate residents about the benefits of trees and proper tree care practices.
- Species selection: Climate change is influencing the selection of tree species, with a focus on those that can withstand future climate conditions.
- Interdepartmental collaboration: Effective urban forestry often requires coordination between various city departments and community organizations. Developing programs that bridge urban and traditional forestry was highlighted as a benefit to the greater community.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT, COLLABORATION AND POTENTIAL PARTNERSHIPS

The participants that we interviewed are deeply rooted in community engagement and care about serving according to the community's needs. These organizations also value partnerships and collaboration with one another. During the interviews, some participants highlighted the importance of community engagement and collaboration with the District, highlighting the importance and value of building relationships and partnerships with diverse community organizations, neighborhood groups, tribal nations, and local governments to further neighborhood sustainability efforts.





Diverse Partnerships

Many organizations, like Friends of Trees, emphasized the value of working with a wide range of partners, including neighborhood associations, local governments, utilities, and other community groups, and encourage the district to continue to build and strengthen their relationships in the community. This multi-stakeholder approach allows for more comprehensive and effective implementation of neighborhood sustainability initiatives in the community by supporting programs that already exist.



Targeted Outreach

Interviewees highlighted that engaging the community effectively requires tailoring messages and approaches to different audiences. For example, Kathy Eva highlighted the challenge of making stormwater management relevant to residents, suggesting the need for creative communication strategies. Additionally, others mentioned that translating educational materials to different languages has created interest in their programming from the multilingual community, and are looking for more support to translate materials to involve the immigrant community to increase representation in initiatives happening around the district.



Youth Engagement:

We spoke to several organizations, like the Long Tom Watershed Council, the University of Oregon, and the Northwest Youth Corps among others, who prioritize programs that connect young people with nature and environmental issues and highlighted the importance of involving youth in initiatives to increase awareness of neighborhood sustainability, especially in schools. Some people mentioned that educators and administrators could benefit from education on the benefits of creating partnerships in the community especially with community gardens and that the district could be a key partner to help facilitate this engagement. This focus on youth can help build long-term community investment in sustainability.



Advocacy

Interviewees highlighted that successful initiatives often demand sustained effort, continuous engagement, and collaboration with a diverse range of stakeholders. By fostering trust and open dialogue, persistent engagement with both communities and government officials not only promotes the adoption of essential standards but also ensures these measures are understood, supported, and implemented effectively for lasting impact.



Education and Skill-Building:

Many organizations prioritize education and skill-building to empower community members and raise awareness. These efforts span a range of initiatives, from K-12 programs to adult workshops on sustainable practices. Programs include hands-on learning opportunities, such as correct recycling methods, birding workshops, and more, equipping participants with practical skills to foster environmental awareness and stewardship across all ages.



Leveraging Local Resources:

Successful engagement often involves utilizing and enhancing existing community assets, such as repurposing materials for community gardens or working with local businesses on sustainability initiatives.



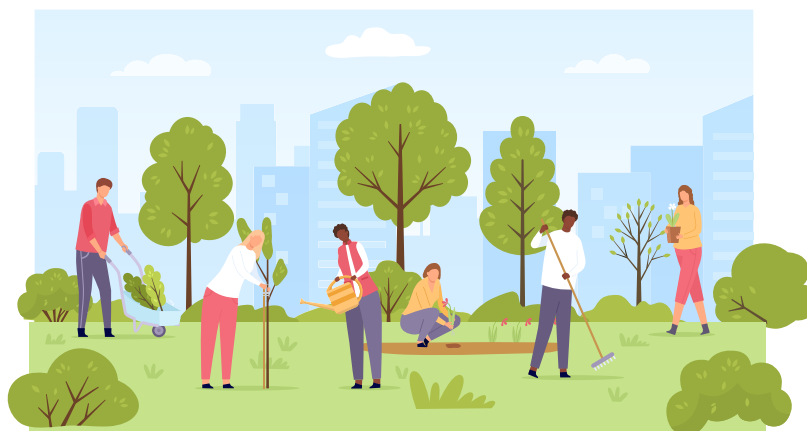
Resident Engagement:

Several organizations are actively working to engage residents in creating and maintaining urban green spaces. The Long Tom Watershed Council, for example, focuses on stream restoration, culvert replacements, and oak and prairie restoration, often partnering with private landowners and local communities.

Potential Partnerships:

Several community members and organizations recognized the district as a valuable partner for advancing shared sustainability goals in areas like urban greening, habitat restoration, water quality, local food systems, and environmental education. There was broad interest in deepening collaborative relationships.

- Eric Adams from Willamalane Park and Recreation District expressed interest in partnering with the district on joint projects to leverage the district's technical expertise and grant funding to achieve common goals.
- Eva Krukowski expressed interest in collaborating more with the district, especially around their public meetings and council. She saw opportunities to work together on environmental justice initiatives.
- Teresa Roark aimed to strengthen partnerships with organizations like the district that are working on sustainability initiatives related to transportation, housing, and climate change adaptation.
- Gatlin Fasone Alshuyukh from Plaza was very interested in collaborating with the district to support their community garden programs, sustainable urban food production efforts, and environmental education activities.
- Barbara Bryson hoped to partner with the district, seeing them as a model for sustainable neighborhood development. She was open to collaborating on native plant outreach and pollinator garden initiatives.
- Sarah mentioned the Watershed Council already partners with the district on pesticide monitoring. She was open to exploring expanded collaborations aligned with their mutual interests.
- The University of Oregon staff working in the Urban Farm and UO Sustainability department are also interested in partnering with the district to find ways to involve students in the work that the district is doing. They'd like to explore how to 1) create opportunities for students to learn from local government 2) create a pipeline of future opportunities for students 3) support the district and their partners on their goals through student internships. Harper from the UO Urban Farm expressed that the students have a variety of knowledge from GIS mapping, design and other software to help the district and their partners with their work while earning University credit, since many students require internships to complete their degrees.



ZOOM ENGAGEMENT: INSIGHTS AND THEMES

On August 2nd, 2024, ACC co-hosted a Zoom event with Jared Purch. A total of 19 people participated in the engagement, representing community members, culturally specific organizations, nonprofits, and universities. The Zoom engagement created a shared space for individuals to learn more about UWSWCD, share insights on priorities and needs, and make connections across the county.

The Zoom event began with a welcome and introductions, allowing participants to get acquainted with one another. This was followed by an introduction to UWSWCD, where Jared expressed gratitude and outlined the district's goals based on the input from the event. Attendees then shared their hopes for the district. The main activity involved breakout groups, where participants selected their group based on their interests: urban greenspace and water, community spaces, or urban heat and forestry. Each group, facilitated by an ACC team member, discussed ongoing projects, future interests, and opportunities for greater resources and engagements. Afterward, the breakout groups reported back to the larger group for a collaborative discussion. The event concluded with participants sharing a word or phrase of gratitude that reflected their key takeaways from the session. Words of gratitude included: hope, community, resilience, and corazón (heart).

1

Urban Greenspace and Water

Key Learnings:

A significant concern was the impact on rivers and lack of adequate funding for water conservation efforts. Participants underscored the need for equitable access to urban greenspaces and expressed desire for greater community involvement in maintaining these areas. They also called for support in tree planting, emphasizing the need for healthy tree canopies and shade equity in urban areas like Springfield.

Opportunities:

- Expanding Funding for Conservation Work: Seek projects to support water conservation and urban greenspace projects that ensure long-term sustainability.
- Tree planting and Maintenance Programs: Establish an initiative to plant and maintain trees in underserved areas, focusing on shade equity and healthy urban canopies.
- Community-Led Greenspace Maintenance: Support programs that empower communities to maintain urban greenspaces through training, funding, and volunteer opportunities, with a focus on equitable access.

2

Food and Sustainability

Key Learnings:

Food sovereignty and community gardens were prioritized as essential components of neighborhood sustainability. Participants envisioned “food forests” that combine edible foods, flowers, and herbs, creating sustainable spaces that provide food while fostering community. There was a desire to challenge the status quo of city components and policies to plant fruit trees along sidewalks, and to encourage more thoughtful, sustainable urban planting.

Opportunities:

- Fund “Food Forest” and Community Garden Projects: Support current and pilot food sovereignty programs that incorporate fruit trees, herbs, edible foods, and flowers, blending food production with community-building.
- Community Garden Expansion: Partner with local organizations to expand community garden spaces to include culturally specific foods, particularly in low-income areas providing resources and land access.

3

Environmental Education and Accessibility

Key Learnings:

Participants highlighted the importance of environmental education, particularly regarding tree care, water conservation, and sustainable land practices. There was a call for more accessible information and resources, especially resources that were culturally specific and for low-income and underserved communities. Some suggested creating navigators or community programs that could help residents connect with available resources, including grant funding or technical assistance opportunities.

Opportunities:

- Tree Care and Water Conservation Workshop: Fund workshop and educational programs on tree care, water conservation, and sustainable land practices, targeting schools, local businesses, and homeowners.
- Culturally Specific Education: Invest in educational materials that are culturally relevant and translated, making them accessible to non-English speakers and underrepresented groups.

4

Collaboration and Funding Gaps

Key Learnings:

There was widespread agreement on the need for greater collaboration across initiatives. Participants highlighted the overlap in their work, stressing the value of sharing knowledge, resources, and networks. However, they also noted persistent challenges, particularly regarding funding for staffing and project maintenance. While grant funding often supports initiation of projects, there is frequently no funding to continue them beyond the grant timeline.

Opportunities:

- Form Collaborative Networks: Establish a formal network of local organization, business, and stakeholders to share knowledge, resources, and project opportunities related to sustainability and conservation within the District.
- Multi-Year Grants That Support Capacity: Support multi-year projects that support long-term project maintenance, staffing, and capacity. Include flexible funding opportunities that include staff and operational support, ensuring sustainability beyond initial project implementation.

5 Community Engagement and Opportunities

Key Learnings:

Participants expressed enthusiasm for the resources available through UWSWCD, recognizing the importance of building relationships and fostering community through partnerships. Many saw volunteer opportunities and collaboration as a key for expanding sustainability efforts.

Opportunities:

- Uplift Volunteer Programs: Expand and uplift project volunteer opportunities by building stronger relationships with local schools, nonprofits, and community groups.
- Develop Partnership Models: Create strategic partnerships with organizations in the District to co-develop and co-implement projects that align with the district's goals.

6 Equity and Inclusion

Key Learnings:

Equity emerged as a theme throughout the discussions, with participants advocating for more investment in underserved communities and addressing the disparities in access to greenspaces. They emphasized the need for culturally specific programs and scholarships to support underrepresented groups, particularly in environmental and land stewardship initiatives.

Opportunities:

- Invest in Underserved Communities: Direct UWSWCD resources to support environmental projects in underserved communities, focusing on equitable access to greenspaces, tree planting, and environmental education. Fund organizations whose work may not seem to be environmental at first glance, while still have an impact on soil and water health, and overall neighborhood sustainability, such as CBOs organized around immigrant health, Indigenous and Black spiritual practices and traditional ecological knowledge, Asian American arts and culture, etc.
- Address Greenspace Disparities: Ensure that low-income neighborhoods receive priority in tree planting, urban greenspace development, and community garden projects, working to close the green equity gap.

This collaborative dialogue not only shed light on the diverse needs of the community but also generated ideas for moving forward. Participants left the engagement feeling hopeful, with an energized sense of shared commitment to advancing sustainable, equitable, and resilient neighborhoods through the District.

IN PERSON ENGAGEMENT

Key Learnings and Opportunities:

From that conversation, specific priorities emerged as shared concerns

- Broad engagement is crucial: There is a strong need to involve non-landowners in sustainability and conservation activities to broaden impact.
- Community agriculture is highly valued: Urban agricultural projects and culturally-specific community gardens (e.g., Black, Latinx, and Indigenous Mesoamerican initiatives) are key areas of interest, as they support both local food systems and cultural heritage.
- Intergenerational education is essential: Education initiatives focused on soil, water, habitat health, and hands-on sustainability skills are important for empowering future generations and preserving local ecosystems.
- Inclusivity in conservation definitions: Openness to diverse conservation perspectives, especially from communities of color, enriches approaches to environmental health.
- Climate change impacts: Addressing both the physical and mental health impacts of climate change is a growing priority.
- Revitalization through cultural practices: Habitat restoration initiatives, including the use of cultural fire practices and planting of indigenous foods, hold potential for ecological and cultural renewal.
- Access to resources: Affordable access to seeds, plants, and culturally relevant materials is necessary to foster inclusivity in sustainability practices.
- Rental property challenges: Support for renters interested in gardening can help expand access to sustainable practices at home.
- Creative partnerships: Collaborating on projects like reimagining the Millrace waterway opens new avenues for sustainable urban design.
- Representation and accessibility: Diversifying staff and contractors, and providing information in multiple languages, can help increase accessibility for communities of color.

Opportunities:

- Education Programs: Develop intergenerational and experiential learning programs that focus on sustainability skills and habitat health, integrating diverse perspectives on conservation.
- Community-Specific Initiatives: Expand support for culturally-specific agricultural and gardening projects, with a focus on community gardens for Black, Latinx, and Indigenous communities.
- Affordable Resource Distribution: Provide free or affordable access to seeds, plants, and other resources, prioritizing culturally significant species.
- Support for Renters: Create support systems for renters who want to engage in home gardening, possibly through partnerships with property owners.
- Increased Representation: Work with community-based organizations to connect and fund minority habitat restoration specialists and restoration businesses serving underserved communities.
- Language Accessibility: Offer programs, information, and resources in Spanish and other languages commonly spoken within the community to broaden participation.
- Health and Climate Programs: Develop initiatives addressing climate change's impact on mental and physical health, incorporating restorative practices to reduce urban heat and address drought challenges.
- Community Gatherings with the District: we heard positive feedback about the Zoom and in-person engagements with the district. People enjoyed networking and getting to know one another. There is enough interest from the community to gather and share space and resources with one another.
 - Format Example: Environmental Justice Communities and Allies Coffee Hour (with an emphasis on Environmental Justice communities and those wishing to partner with them). These could be at the District or an organization's or communities' home base to build relationships.

FUNDING AND GRANTMAKING

Grants are a primary funding source for many environmental and sustainability-focused organizations. However, we also heard that relying heavily on grants can create challenges, as funding is often project-specific and may not cover ongoing operational costs.

Additionally, membership models are used by some organizations, like the NAACP, which offers individual memberships for \$30 per year and corporate memberships for \$5,000 annually. This approach can provide a more stable funding base, but may require significant outreach and relationship-building efforts.

We heard multiple occasions about the importance of funding projects, technical assistance and organizations to successfully implement their work. Most participants, especially those working for non-governmental organizations and small business owners, mentioned that the lack of access to funding is one of the main barriers limiting their work and impact.

Some participants mentioned that there is a need for funding urban green infrastructure, tree planting, habitat restoration and some organizations are struggling to find capacity to implement their programs and community outreach efforts due to funding restraints.

Opportunities:

- **Unrestricted Grants:** Grants and direct investments to community groups already doing the work is crucial. Participants greatly benefit from having access to unrestricted and project funds to continue and/or expand their programming. They highlighted that the most beneficial grants are those that are accessible (with a streamlined application process) and upfronted.
- **Accessible grantmaking:** Individuals testified on the importance of having access to funding that is upfronted, accessible to be able to implement, and expand their programs and impact in the community.
- **Ongoing funding opportunities:** Non-governmental organizations highlighted that one-time funding limits their ability to create a greater impact in the community, they mentioned that secured and ongoing funding opportunities would ease a burden and allow them to focus on the work and impact



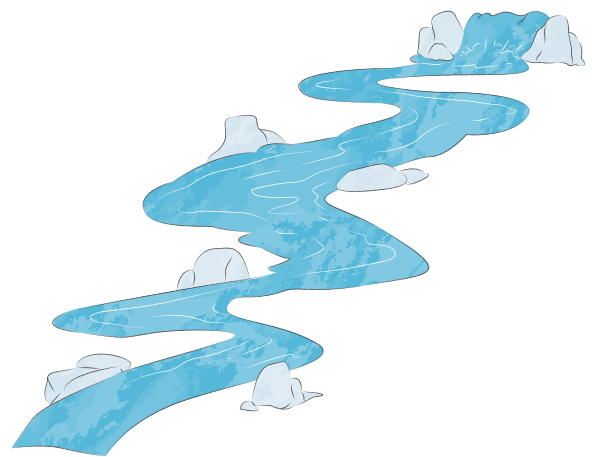
TESTIMONIES OF IMPACT

The District's funding for local organizations and programs is already making a tangible difference in the community. These investments are empowering initiatives like urban farming and biodiversity conservation, which are enhancing access to fresh food and creating greener, more sustainable spaces. With support from these grants, organizations are seeing immediate results, from expanding food production to protecting biodiversity in urban neighborhoods, demonstrating the lasting, positive impact of the District's commitment to community health and sustainability.

Chirstina Benrup, a small business owner and Mave Sowles, who leads the Audubon Society chapter in Eugene have received a farmer grant from the Lane Community Health Council via the District to implement their programs and enable new initiatives. They expressed their gratitude and relief to have access to funding to be able to have a greater impact in the community. Christina Bentrup highlighted that the \$10,000 pilot grant she received from the district was "crucial" for expanding her urban farm operation and increasing local food production.

Maeve Sowles from the Audubon Society mentioned they applied for funding from the district to launch a new "Habitat Haven" program focused on protecting biodiversity, through installing native plants and water features to support pollinators in urban areas, enabling them to get a new community-based conservation initiative off the ground and has already impacted 40 households in the Eugene area. They both believe that access to funding can create a great impact in the community to increase sustainable green spaces in neighborhoods.

“...investments are empowering initiatives that enhance access to fresh food and create greener, more sustainable spaces in the community.”



POTENTIAL STAFFING RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on our analysis of the neighborhood sustainability conversations, here are some potential staff position recommendations for the Upper Willamette Soil and Water Conservation District to consider:

Neighborhood Sustainability Community Outreach Coordinator

Several organizations highlighted challenges in building trust and effectively engaging underserved communities on sustainability initiatives. A dedicated outreach coordinator could help the district strengthen relationships, increase participation, and ensure programming is relevant to diverse neighborhoods.

Urban Agriculture and Food Systems Specialist

There was significant interest in supporting urban farms, community gardens, and sustainable local food production. A specialist in this area could administer grant programs, provide technical assistance to urban growers, and develop training opportunities.

Habitat Restoration Coordinator

Natural area restoration, pollinator habitat enhancement, and improving access to green spaces emerged as priorities. A coordinator could oversee habitat restoration projects, engage volunteers, and collaborate with partners like the Audubon Society.

Urban Forestry Manager

Urban forestry programs focused on increasing tree canopy, shade equity, and climate resilience were frequently discussed. A dedicated urban forestry manager could implement tree planting initiatives, develop maintenance programs, develop partnership with other key agencies, and pursue funding opportunities.

Environmental Education Specialist

The need for community education on sustainable practices like water conservation, pesticide reduction, and natural landscaping was noted. An education specialist could develop accessible and multilingual curricula, conduct workshops, and create resources for residents and youth programs.

While existing staff likely cover some of these responsibilities, dedicated positions in these areas could allow the district to significantly expand its neighborhood sustainability efforts through enhanced community engagement, technical assistance, project implementation, and educational programming.

CLOSING

This report summarizes ACC's findings on neighborhood sustainability to enhance the Upper Willamette Soil & Water District's programming in eastern and central Lane County, Oregon. From May to September of 2024, ACC conducted interviews, a Zoom event and an in-person coffee hour with various stakeholders to gather insights on community needs and to inform programing, staffing, and grant allocations.

The engagement process highlighted the necessity of robust partnerships among diverse organizations and government entities. Key themes from the interviews included the importance of urban water quality, habitat restoration, and access to green spaces. This report identified gaps in funding across the county and several staffing recommendations were made to enhance sustainability efforts.

Overall, the collaborative dialogue fostered a sense of commitment to advancing sustainable, resilient neighborhoods through the district's initiatives and the active participation of community stakeholders. The report underscores the importance of equity and inclusion, advocating for investments in underserved communities and targeted programs to address disparities in access to greenspaces.



APPENDICES

Appendix A: Interview Script

Introduction / framing

The Upper Willamette Soil & Water Conservation District is a public conservation service agency that has a publicly elected Board of Directors and is based in Eugene. We serve eastern and central Lane County (as far east as Blue River and Oakridge, and as far west as Veneta). While the District has been around for many decades, we just recently acquired a tax base (in 2020) which has provided us with a new revenue source to do more programming here in Lane County.

We are interested in a variety of conservation issues, including local food and farms, watershed restoration, forest health and wildfire resilience, and neighborhood sustainability. As an “SWCD,” our primary mission relates to clean water and healthy soils. People can learn more about our organization at our website, <https://uwsxcd.org/> or by reviewing our current strategic plan, at <https://uwsxcd.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/UWSW-Strategic-Plan-WEB-8-27-20.pdf>

Since receiving a tax base in 2020, we have started doing a series of community and stakeholder engagement processes to understand the “landscape” of services, programs and organizations that exist in our community, so that the District can develop programs, funding opportunities, and staffing that fill gaps or build on existing programs (rather than duplicating programs that already exist). Our previous engagement reports can be viewed on our website.

[Your organization / program] was suggested as a potential interview participant for our Neighborhood Sustainability engagement process. Through this process, we will be interviewing around 30 community organizations and also doing some “listening sessions” to hear directly from residents. For UWSWCD purposes, neighborhood sustainability interests include but are not limited to:

- Urban water quality and water conservation, including reduced use of pesticides
- Urban greenspace and natural area habitat restoration, enhancement and access
- “Naturescaping” for pollinators and other wildlife in backyard or commonly owned spaces
- Community gardens and sustainable urban food production
- Urban forestry, tree canopy, shade equity and urban heat island mitigation efforts

As we get into the interview, we’re particularly interested in hearing about any of [your organization / program]’s work that relates to these interests. The outcome of this process will be a report to the District about potential programs, funding opportunities, or staff positions they could develop as part of the Neighborhood Sustainability strategy.

Appendix B: Interview Questions:

1. Tell us a bit about [Your organization / program]. What programs do you manage / coordinate? Who are your clients, and where do you work?
2. What organizations do you collaborate or partner with most often?
3. Are there organizations you would like to collaborate with more, or organizations you've found it challenging to collaborate or partner with?
4. What are your current goals and priorities for your organization or program? Could be short term, long term, or both.
5. What barriers do you face that are limiting your work / impact?
6. What are your organization / program's strengths or assets - what are you most proud of?
7. Where do you see gaps in your programming or funding?
8. What is your funding model and current sources of funding (if applicable)?
9. What changes are you seeing in your industry / field? How has your work been changing?
10. Is there anything you'd like to share about your organization's short or long term goals and priorities, that might be helpful for the District to understand as they think about developing programming or funding for neighborhood sustain

Appendix C: Interview Participants

Organization	Interviewee	Title
Long Tom Watershed Council: Urban Waters & Wildlife Partnership	Sarah Whitney	Urban Waters & Wildlife Program manager
Clean Rivers Coalition	Kathy Eva	Stormwater Information Specialist
BRING Recycling	Sonya Carlson	Executive Director
Willamalane Parks and Rec	Eric Adams	Planning, Parks & Facilities Director
NAACP Environmental & Climate Justice Committee	Eric Richardson	NAACP Environmental & Climate Justice Liaison
Friends of Trees	Erik Burke	Eugene-Springfield Director
Upper Willamette Stewardship Network	Haley Case-Scott	Tribal Liaison
Northwest Youth Corps	Sarah Worthington	Community Wildfire Protection Corps Director
Xerces Society	Aimee Code	Pesticide Program Director
Beyond Toxics	Lisa Arkin	Executive Director
Beyond Toxics	Raevyn Thompson	Environmental and Climate Justice Organizer
Beyond Toxics	Arjorie Arberry-Baribeault	West Eugene Community Organizer
Plaza de Nuestra Comunidad (Community Garden Program / Plaza de Nuestra Comunidad)	Gatlin Fasone	Organic Garden Program Manager
Lane County Audubon Society	Maeve Sowles	President
Lane County Audubon Society	Barbara Bryson	Board Member
University of Oregon - campus facilities	Emily Eng	Director of Campus Planning
Lane County (Public Works, Public Health)	Teresa Roark	Environmental Justice Sr. Coordinator at Lane County Health and Human Services
Aimee Okotie-Oyekan	Aimee Okotie- Oyekan	Small Business Owner
Department of Land Conservation and Development	Eva Krukowski	Conservation Planner
Be Your Best Cottage Grove	Samantha Duncan	Lead Facilitator
Farm on 42nd	Christina Bentrup	Small Business Owner / Farmer
UO Office of Sustainability	Sarah Stoeckl	Associate Director
Urban Farm	Harper Keeler	Director of the Urban Farm Program
Morganic Roots	JR Morgan	Owner
ECO System Solutions	Ian Appow	Owner

Appendix D: Zoom Participants

Organization	Participant
Plaza de Nuestra Comunidad (Community Garden Program)	Luz Fandino
Lane County Audubon Society	Debbie Schlenoff
Lane County Audubon Society	Cecelia Hagen
Be Your Best Cottage Grove	Samantha Duncan
Farm on 42nd	Christina Bentrup
Urban Farm (University of Oregon)	Harper Parker
Whitaker Community Market	Genevieve Schaack
ECO-System Solutions LLC Evolving Community Opportunities	Ian Appow
River Mist Gardens, Brownsville (business)	Dee and Kathleen Swayze, Proprietors
Wildlife Rehabilitation Council	Katie McInni
Audobon Society	Debbie Schlenoff
Calapooia Food Alliance	Peggy Purkerson
	Kate Swayze
Bohio Cibanani	Ana Lara
UWSWD	Dave Downing
Farmer	Al Hrynyshyn
Clean Rivers Coalition	Kathy Eva
Lost Valley Education Center	TheoLeannaGlenn

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to everyone who contributed their time and insights to this report. Thank you to those who participated in interviews, attended our Zoom and in-person events, and provided valuable feedback and corrections. Your input has been invaluable in shaping and refining this work, and we deeply appreciate your commitment to making this project a success.



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