

# District News



WEST MULTNOMAH SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Vol. 1, Issue 1 — December 2007

## Free native plants and shrubs

Kammy Kern-Korot, West Multnomah SWCD

Did you know that West Multnomah Soil and Water Conservation District and its partner agencies can provide free native trees and shrubs, plus free planting, site preparation and maintenance?

Shelley Rayhawk of Abbey Creek Stables, and Rachael Brake and Grant Rolette of Rock Creek Road, initiated riparian restoration projects with the aid of this program. Activities at the sites included

Shelley Rayhawk, Abbey Creek Stables

the removal of invasive weeds, seeding with native grass, wetlands restoration, and planting nearly 20,000 trees and shrubs of more than 30 different species!

Rayhawk told us, "I really appreciate how considerate and competent the staff has been. It would have taken us forever (well, 5 or 10 years anyway) to save up the money to do this ourselves." Shelley is happy to show off the project and answer questions. In fact, she is so helpful that the District designated her a "Cooperator of the Year."

Rachael Brake appreciated the expertise and enthusiasm of the District staff who helped them. "We were really excited to see things planted and make these improvements to our property," she said.

Landowners on qualifying properties can enroll in a 15-year conservation contract to earn an annual amount, plus a signing bonus of \$100 per acre. The District can even cover the cost of establishing the conservation easement! Owners may qualify for certain tax benefits as well.

*(continued on page 6)*

## THE DISTRICT

OFFERS TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND CONSERVATION PLANNING TO LANDOWNERS ON RURAL LANDS TO HELP ADDRESS MOST NATURAL RESOURCE CONCERNS.

## West Multnomah Soil and Water Conservation District

### MISSION STATEMENT:

**"To sustain, protect, and develop soil and water resources; to help with the development of all natural resources in the West County through education; to develop and sustain a concern for protecting and caring for soil and water by creating a social interest and awareness."**

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# District News

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## Who are we?

The West Multnomah Soil and Water Conservation District includes all of Multnomah County west of the Willamette River and all of Sauvie Island, including the portion that is in Columbia County. The District was established in January 1944 as the Sauvie Island Soil Conservation District and has since expanded to its present area, changing its name in April 1975 to the West Multnomah Soil and Water Conservation District.



Wetland

## District Welcomes Dick Springer as District Manager

Former State Senator Dick Springer joins the team in January 2008, in the newly created position of District Manager for West Multnomah SWCD. The increase in District capacity and staff enabled by passage of Measure 26-82 allowed us to recruit a District Manager to facilitate and expand operations.

During sixteen years in the Oregon State Legislature, Springer served as Senate Majority Leader and as Chair of the Oregon Senate Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources, while representing areas of southwest and northwest Portland. He currently sits on the Board of Friends of the Columbia Gorge where he serves as the

Board Secretary, and previously served on the Board of the Johnson Creek Watershed Council. Springer is Portland-born, a graduate of Cleveland High School, Princeton University and the University of Oregon Law School. Springer's interest in West Multnomah SWCD includes family owned property on Sauvie Island.

In addition to seventeen years practicing law in private practice, Springer served in the US Navy, and was a Multnomah County Deputy District Attorney and Executive Director of a non-profit organization.



Rock Creek  
Photos by Sanjane Ceesay

## Two Northwest Service Academy (NWSA)-AmeriCorps Members join District staff

The District is proud to introduce two NWSA -AmeriCorps members who joined our staff in September, Sanjane Ceesay and Kate McQuillan.

Ceesay, who grew up in The Gambia, West Africa, graduated from the agricultural academy in Norway and earned a Bachelor of Science in Earth and Resource Science from the University of Michigan. He serves as the Education & Outreach Coordinator, helping to expand the District's community

outreach efforts, educational programs, workshops and participation with local schools.

McQuillan graduated from Mount Holyoke College and most recently worked with the Johnson Creek Watershed Council on Japanese Knotweed control. She coordinates the District's Invasive Species Control program. With her help, the District expects to expand control of invasive weeds like Japanese Knotweed.

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## Resources And People (RAP) Camp

Brian Lightcap and Sanjane Ceesay, West Multnomah SWCD

The RAP Camp has been in operation as a natural resource education camp for high school students since 1992. Currently held at Lake of the Woods in southwest Oregon, RAP camp teaches stream biology, hydrology, forest health and fire control management, ranch and pasture management, archeology, and presents noxious weeds issues.

Students gather information during the week-long camp and research solutions to a natural resource problem. Teams of students assume the roles of mayor, business persons, a landowner, a recreationist, and professional biologists, who attempt to reach consensus on the issue assigned to them. Presentations are made on the last day of camp.

The camp seeks to encourage students to pursue natural resource and environmental science careers by learning first-hand how natural resources are being managed and how to critically assess the issues we face

today. An average of 15 students from the Portland-Hillsboro area attend each year. Altogether, the camp teaches 55-60 students from all areas of the state each year and is a training ground for teacher education.

Participating teachers create curriculum they can take back to their classrooms. During their careers, each trained teacher can reach hundreds of students. Through a partnership with Southern Oregon University, teachers can earn graduate credit for the training. RAP Camp is supported by the Bureau of Land Management, the U.S. Forest Service, and the Klamath Indian Tribe.

The West Multnomah Soil and Water Conservation District is assisting with the expansion of the RAP Camp concept so it can reach more students throughout the region. For more information, call (503) 863-4404 or send email to [sanjane@westmultconserv.org](mailto:sanjane@westmultconserv.org).



“CLASSROOM LEARNING IS IMPORTANT, BUT WHO WANTS TO SPEND ALL THEIR TIME INDOORS? [RAP CAMP AND] ENVIROTHON OFFERS YOU AND YOUR TEACHER A CHANCE TO MOVE INTO THE GREAT OUTDOORS.”

## Oregon Envirothon Environmental Education Competition

Sanjane Ceesay, West Multnomah SWCD

The Envirothon is a hands-on environmental problem-solving competition for high school students in the U.S. and Canada. Student teams complete training and testing in four natural resource categories: aquatic ecology, soil and land use, forestry and wildlife, and one current environmental issue. Each team consists of three to five students.

The events are co-sponsored by the Marion Soil and Water Conservation District and the Oregon Forest Resources Institute, and conducted in partnership with local conservation districts, forestry associations, educators, and natural resource agencies. Annual competitions are held at

the local, regional, state, and/or provincial level. Winning teams from each state and province advance to the Canon Envirothon for the opportunity to receive recognition, scholarships and prizes.

In Portland Public Schools, only Lincoln High School has participated so far. West Multnomah SWCD is working to increase participation and bring this opportunity to more high schools and local school districts.

If you are interested in finding out more about Oregon Envirothon, or in helping to bring it to your child's high school, call (503) 863-4404 or email [sanjane@westmultconserv.org](mailto:sanjane@westmultconserv.org).



# District News

## Rain Gardens: Beautiful and Hard-Working

Candace Stoughton, East Multnomah SWCD  
Sanjane Ceesay, West Multnomah SWCD

What is a rain garden?

Rain Gardens are landscaping that helps soak up urban runoff.

Why are rain gardens important?

In most urban environments, rain falls on roofs, parking lots, and roads - areas where it can't soak into the ground naturally. Gradually, these impervious surfaces cause problems such as flooding, instream erosion, etc. As urban areas get bigger, the problems become bigger and more widespread.

To name a few problems:

- Unnaturally high flooding downstream
- Poor water quality and altered hydrology
- In-stream erosion that degrades habitat and can endanger infrastructure like bridges and sewer lines
- Negative impacts to water-based tourism and recreation like fishing, swimming, and boating.

Rain gardens are an infiltration technique where water from impervious surfaces is captured in a garden that features native plantings. The runoff has a chance to slowly filter into the ground, rather than running off into the storm sewer.

Rain gardens are a beautiful addition to your landscaping! They help protect water quality and restore natural hydrology. This in turn prevents downstream flooding and maintains natural stream flow. They also reduce non-point source pollution and therefore offer additional protection for our lakes and streams.

To help Oregonians learn how to build rain gardens in their yards, Oregon State University (OSU) Extension is working with East Multnomah Soil and Water Conservation District to develop a "how-to manual" on rain gardens.

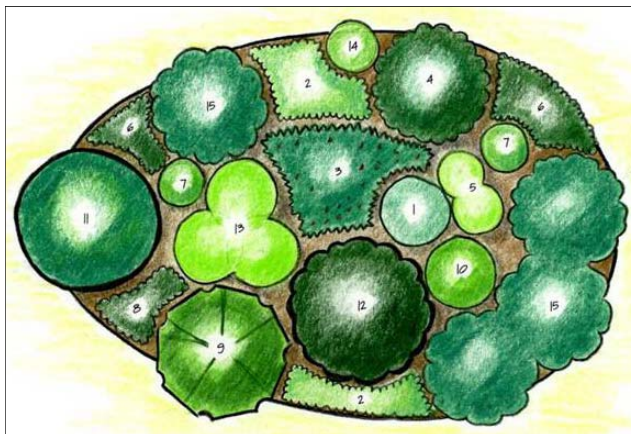
Under the direction of Dr. David Sandrock, Assistant Professor of the OSU Horticulture Department, landscape architecture students April Wright, Corey Petersen and Nicholas Andrew Boutin developed rain garden designs for the Willamette Valley, Eastern Oregon and the Oregon coast. Their designs will be included in the manual.

Until the manual is published, to learn more about rain gardens go to:  
<http://welcometherain.org/>.

RAIN GARDENS ARE A BEAUTIFUL ADDITION TO YOUR LANDSCAPING! THEY HELP PROTECT WATER QUALITY AND RESTORE NATURAL HYDROLOGY. THIS IN TURN PREVENTS DOWNSTREAM FLOODING AND MAINTAINS NATURAL STREAM FLOW.



From left: Corey Petersen, April Wright, Nicolas Andrew Boutin, and Dr. David Sandrock.



Sample design for a rain garden.

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## Putting Conservation on Your Lands: How to Get Started

Jill Rees, Public Affairs Specialist, USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in Oregon has released a new publication titled *Your Conservation Systems*. The booklet provides information about how to identify conservation strategies and improvements for your land. It includes:

- Planning and developing conservation measures
- Overview of more than 30 common conservation practices for Oregon
- How to seek technical and financial assistance

This information helps landowners and agricultural producers find measures that:

- improve production and aesthetics;
- protect water quality and quantity;
- promote high quality, productive soils;
- develop healthy plant and animal communities
- and more!

'Your Conservation Systems' is available at your local NRCS or Conservation District office. The content is also available online on the Oregon NRCS Web site under 'Conservation Planning' at: [www.or.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.or.nrcs.usda.gov).



Abbey Creek  
Photos by: Sanjane Ceesay

## Wildfire Hazards and Conservation Planning

Steve Fedje, District Conservationist, USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

Wildfire Hazard is one of our conservation planning "Resource Concerns" that probably does not get as much scrutiny as it should. While fires in California have recently heightened our awareness of the danger posed by wildfires, it is always our job as Conservation Planners to assess the condition of all recognized resource concerns.

The national Firewise Communities program is designed to reach homeowners and help protect people, property, and natural resources from the risk of wildfire— before a fire starts. The Firewise Communities website emphasizes personal and community responsibility in the design of safe homes

and landscaping.

The FEMA publication, *At Home in The Woods*, documents some of the best, most innovative fire mitigation practices currently underway in the wildland/urban interface.

Please check out the Firewise <http://www.firewise.org/> and FEMA <http://www.fema.gov/hazard/fire/> websites. Familiarize yourself with the risk factors associated with wildfires, and include recommendations in your conservation plans to reduce wildfire risk.

## Polinator Curriculum for Grades 3—6

Kathy Pendergrass, Plant Material Specialist, USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

I know some of you work with youth groups in various capacities. Here is a curriculum that could be fun and have great learning value to pass on to some of your educators. The curriculum can be found on the web at: <http://www.nappc.org/curriculum/>

WILDFIRE HAZARD IS ONE OF OUR CONSERVATION PLANNING "RESOURCE CONCERNS" THAT PROBABLY DOES NOT GET AS MUCH SCRUTINY AS IT SHOULD.

## WEST MULTNOMAH SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

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Visit us online at  
[www.westmultconserv.org](http://www.westmultconserv.org)

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### **Free native plants** (continued from front page)

If you think you might qualify, the District will do an initial site visit to discuss your objectives and help determine if your land qualifies. For more information, call the West Multnomah Soil and Water Conservation District at (503) 238-4775, email [kammy.kern-korot@or.nacdnet.net](mailto:kammy.kern-korot@or.nacdnet.net), or visit our website at [www.westmultconserv.org](http://www.westmultconserv.org).

### **Do you need help controlling Japanese Knotweed?**

*Kate McQuillan, West Multnomah SWCD*

West Multnomah SWCD has a new landowner service devoted to invasive weed control. Kate McQuillan is asking for help locating patches of Japanese Knotweed in the District, and for information regarding the control efforts landowners have used. If you have any information regarding Japanese Knotweed in Multnomah County west of the Willamette, including Sauvie Island, or if you would like to learn more about the District's efforts to control it, please contact Kate at (503) 863-6472 or by email at [kate.mcquillan@or.nacdnet.net](mailto:kate.mcquillan@or.nacdnet.net).

Your suggestions and submissions are welcome. Please help us make this newsletter as useful as possible. Send your ideas and suggestions to: [sanjane@westmultconserv.org](mailto:sanjane@westmultconserv.org)