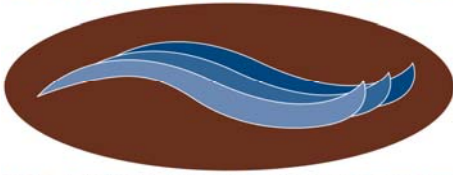


WEST MULTNOMAH



SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 9, 2009

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Grant Money Available for Sustainable Habitat Projects

The West Multnomah Soil & Water Conservation District (WMSWCD) has awarded a total of \$16,100 for area habitat projects...and announces that **additional funds are available** for projects that qualify for the FISH program; Financial Incentives for Sustainable Habitats.

Two more funding cycles are planned for the WMSWCD grant program which aims to award a total of \$50,000 by the end of June, 2009 to area landowners for conservation projects. Applications for the next cycle of funds will be accepted through the end of February and will again be accepted in late April for another cycle.

Grant monies awarded in November, 2008 are going toward 3 projects in west Multnomah county.

- **West Willamette Restoration Partnership (\$10,000), for the Backyard Habitat Certification Program**
- **McMahon Sauvie Island Farm (\$5,600), for a horse *Heavy Use Area***
- **Robert Martin (\$500) for a creek restoration project**

The West Willamette Restoration Partnership's **Backyard Habitat Certification Program** engages landowners in conservation practices, regardless of the size or setting of the property, helping remove aggressive and invasive weeds and planting native trees and shrubs. The program provides critical ground support and access to resources for invasive plant removal. With the FISH grant, the program's focus will expand to include wildlife stewardship and stormwater management. With each focus area, homeowners become certified, are educated and receive assistance with large-scale restoration efforts. Collectively, the program addresses watershed health, soil and water pollution prevention and public understanding of natural resource conservation.

Prior to this program, landowners with small backyards who lived adjacent to or within natural areas were provided with very little on the ground support when it came to invasive plant removal and restoration.

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Portland has a wealth of knowledgeable people and resources; the challenge is making these resources available, accessible and enjoyable for homeowners who want help.

The **McMahons horse farm** on Sauvie Island lacked a proper overwintering area for their horses. Roof runoff from their barn, coupled with the island's heavy clay soil created mud, manure, and animal health issues for the family and their five horses. In addition, a nearby canal that drains into the Columbia River is within 500 feet of the barn area which posed concerns about nutrients, bacteria and sediment entering the waterway.

FISH grant funds will be used for the installation of a "heavy use area," which will provide a well-drained & stable overwintering area for McMahan's horses. The heavy use area will allow the farm's pasture land to recover following the grazing season; as well as provide a confined area where proper manure management can be implemented over the rainy seasons. The District may showcase this project to other horse owners to demonstrate how heavy use areas should be utilized as part of a comprehensive conservation plan.

The McMahons are also working with the District to start a rotational grazing system as well as managing portions of their property for wildlife.

Private landowner Robert Martin initially contacted the Southwest Neighborhoods, Inc. (SWNI) about an encroachment of invasive species and streambank degradation on his 50 foot section of riparian corridor along Vermont Creek. He was advised to pursue restoration so he hired Native Canopy Landscape and Design to conduct a site visit and provide a bid.

With the \$500 FISH grant, he can leverage other funds for the restoration project, which will involve removing English Holly, English Ivy, European Hawthorn and Himalayan Blackberry, erosion control measures and native riparian plantings.

WMSWCD FISH Grant Coordinator, Mary Logalbo, as well as the SWNI Watershed Resource Coordinator, Jen Seamans Blatner, will provide further guidance to assist Mr. Martin secure other funds to purchase native plants for the final phase of the project. Mr. Martin has agreed to showcase his project to neighbors and neighborhood association about his experiences.

The mission of the West Multnomah Soil & Water Conservation District is: "To conserve and protect soil and water resources for people, wildlife and the environment."

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