



## East Multnomah Soil and Water Conservation District Announces 2014 Strategic Conservation Initiative Grants

***For Immediate Release***  
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<http://emswcd.org/>

The **East Multnomah Soil and Water Conservation District (EMSWCD)** is pleased to announce recent awards through its Strategic Conservation Investment (SCI) grants. SCI grants were established to support projects and partnerships that advance priority natural resource issues identified by the EMSWCD Board of Directors. At the September 8, 2014 meeting of the EMSWCD Board, SCI grants were approved for four organizations.

### **Outdoor School**

#### *Multnomah Education Service District*

A grant of up to \$215,000 was awarded to support school districts within the EMSWCD service area that participate in at least three days of Outdoor School. The Multnomah Education Service District operates Outdoor School for most school districts in Multnomah County.

The Outdoor School program that was once a hallmark of the Portland metro's educational system has been at risk of closing its doors since 2011 due to budget cuts. EMSWCD has joined with other local entities to provide funding while supporters of Outdoor School seek long-term solutions to the program funding challenges. "Many local residents have come forward to let us know about the positive impact that Outdoor School has had on their lives. Outdoor School helps engage, educate and motivate the next generation of conservationists. Maintaining this program for future generations should be an obvious choice for all of us given Oregon's natural heritage and multitude of outdoor recreational activities. Moreover, no other program can reach as many students from underserved communities," said Jay Udelhoven, Executive Director of EMSWCD. Guaranteeing the participation of Portland Public School's large student population supports the Outdoor School infrastructure and is critical to maintaining the program.



## Watershed Councils

The EMSWCD continues to support the three Watershed Councils that operate within the District boundaries. Watershed Councils are grassroots community groups comprised of citizens who want to help protect, restore and enhance the local watershed where they live, work and play. The Councils are locally organized, voluntary and non-regulatory organizations, and are intended to be broadly representative of the stakeholders and communities in their respective areas.

### *Columbia Slough Watershed Council:*

A grant of \$25,000 was awarded for general support of watershed restoration activities, education and outreach, and Council operations. The Columbia Slough is a remnant of lakes and historic wetlands in the floodplain of the Columbia River. It contains vital habitat spaces and over 150,000 people live, work and play in its watershed, and as such it is vital that this important natural area is conserved and restored. The Columbia Slough Watershed Council's mission is to connect the community with their watershed, which they achieve through three core program areas: Education (primarily Slough School for grades K-12); Community Outreach, Events, and Recreation; and Stewardship (stewardship, monitoring, and restoration).

### *Johnson Creek Watershed Council:*

A grant of \$25,000 was awarded for general support of watershed restoration activities, education and outreach, and council operations. The mission of the JCWC is to promote restoration and stewardship of a healthy Johnson Creek Watershed through sound science and community engagement. Johnson Creek flows through a mix of rural and urban areas and is home to a wide variety of threatened and native fish, amphibians, birds and other wildlife.

### *Sandy River Basin Watershed Council:*

A grant of \$25,000 was awarded for general support of watershed restoration activities, education and outreach, and council operations. The Sandy River and its tributaries run through wild, scenic areas and developed areas that are home to thousands of residents and businesses, and provide essential habitat for ESA-listed salmon and steelhead trout.

The historical relationship between the District and Watershed Councils along with the close alignment of their missions has guided past EMSWCD Board decisions to provide general support. The Watershed Councils work on the same core priorities as the District – watershed health, habitat restoration, environmental education and stewardship. Each Council is dedicated to the restoration of their respective watershed, working with local communities and partnering with the District and other organizations to further their goals.

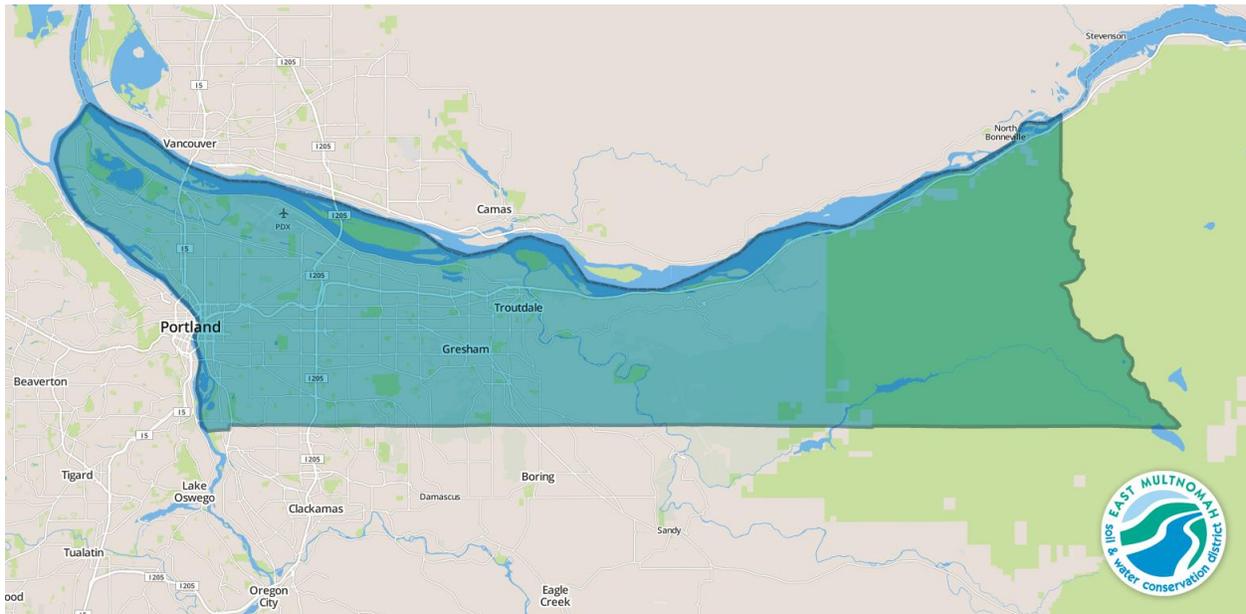


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The East Multnomah Soil and Water Conservation District (EMSWCD) is a unit of local government whose mission is to conserve and restore the natural resources for current and future generations by making conservation technical, financial, and educational assistance available to all residents and ensuring equitable distribution of benefits and responsibilities. They are led by an elected board of five directors. They work entirely on a voluntary, non-regulatory basis. All of the District's work is geared toward keeping water clean, conserving water and keeping soil healthy.

Contact Suzanne Easton, our Grants Specialist, with any questions about the SCI grants at [Suzanne@emswcd.org](mailto:Suzanne@emswcd.org) or (503) 935-5370. Learn more about us at <http://emswcd.org>



*The EMSWCD service area includes all Multnomah County east of the Willamette River.*