



## **Budget Message for Fiscal Year 2015-16**

### **East Multnomah Soil and Water Conservation District (EMSWCD)**

**Lissa Adams, Budget Officer**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

The East Multnomah Soil and Water Conservation District (EMSWCD) is a local unit of government managed by an elected Board of five Directors. In November 2004, the voters of the District approved the establishment of a permanent property tax rate limit for the East Multnomah SWCD. The rate limit is a maximum of 10 cents per \$1000 assessed value. By law this rate cannot increase. This secure funding source has enabled EMSWCD to better pursue our mission “to conserve and restore the natural resources of the district for current and future generations by making conservation technical, financial, and educational assistance available and meaningful to all residents and ensuring equitable distribution of benefits and responsibilities.”

As a taxing district, the East Multnomah SWCD is required to establish a Budget Committee, hold one or more public meetings for the review of the upcoming year’s budget, publish the budget in a newspaper of general circulation in the District, and hold a public budget hearing through the Multnomah County Tax Supervising and Conservation Commission (TSCC). In keeping with Oregon Local Budget Law for a district with a population of over 200,000, the East Multnomah SWCD Board of Directors serves as the Budget Committee. The Budget Committee is required to meet, review the budget, hear public comment and approve the budget. After the TSCC public hearing, the budget is presented for adoption at a District Board meeting.

This Budget Message is presented at the first Budget Committee meeting, and is intended to explain the proposed budget and outline any significant changes in the District’s financial position. The Budget Message and the accompanying worksheets and supporting data are provided to the Budget Committee and public for their review. These documents will be available for review at the District office throughout the budget development process. As the budget is revised, the older drafts will be replaced with the latest.

The budget includes a General Fund and three special funds. All funds have a Resources and Requirements section that must balance and include a variety of categories and line items specific to the needs of each fund. The structure of the budget is designed to meet the requirements of Oregon Local Budget Law.

Significant changes that are reflected in the proposed FY 2015-2016 budget include:

- General Fund Capital expenses are increasing from \$118,250 in the adopted FY 2014-2015 budget to \$160,400 proposed in FY 2015-2016 due to expenses associated with improving the Headwaters Farm buildings and infrastructure, and planned improvements to the District headquarters located at 5211 N Williams Ave.
- Total General Fund personnel services costs have increased approximately 5%, due to annual wage and benefit adjustments.
- Total General Fund materials and services costs have increased slightly (7%) mostly due to additional proposed demonstration projects in the Urban Lands (formerly Sustainable Urban Landscapes) Program.
- General Fund Contingency fund is increasing from \$200,000 in the adopted FY 2014-2015 budget to \$500,000 proposed in FY2015-2016 as part a strategic plan to ensure the District is prepared to meet unforeseen increases in cost and uncertainties due to global climate change (e.g., catastrophic storms, floods, drought and fire).

Please note that this budget is prepared on a modified accrual basis.

## **COMPONENTS OF THE BUDGET**

### **RESOURCES (The District's Funding Sources)**

District activities are funded using a combination of tax revenues and state, federal and local grants and contracts as well as interest, rent, workshop sponsoring organization fees (Naturescaping program) and the District's annual native plant sale. The District also typically receives several Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB) small grants on behalf of landowners in the District. The District may pursue additional funding through grants and contracts. For most of these funding sources, the amount that will be received is unknown at this time and is estimated based on past experience and the most current information available.

### **EXPENDITURES (Anticipated costs)**

Budgeted expenditures are grouped and tracked by fund. Each fund is described below.

#### **General Fund**

The purpose of the General Fund is to account for all activities which are not funded by specifically designated and restricted funds such as special funds or reserve funds.

Expenditure categories in the General Fund include personnel, materials and services, capital outlay, contingency, transfers, and unappropriated ending fund balance. The General Fund accounts for many of the normal expenses associated with operating the District and its programs, as well as those activities not associated with a special grant commitment. The unappropriated ending fund balance is the allocated carryover of funds from FY 2014-2015 for meeting FY 2015-2016's costs until the tax revenue is available.

The General Fund budget includes a line for contingency. The purpose of this line is: a) to have funding to cover unforeseen expenses, and b) to cover budgeted expenses if anticipated revenue (such as grant or contract income) is not received.

The General Fund resources and expenditures sheets are accompanied by worksheets detailing the budget expenses for each of the District's programs.

### **RESERVE FUND**

#### **Building Reserve Fund**

The Building Reserve Fund was used for the purchase of the District's new Headquarters. It is no longer needed and was dissolved in FY 2009-2010. Remaining funds were transferred to the general fund.

### **SPECIAL FUNDS**

#### **Land Conservation Fund**

The District is concerned about the future of agriculture in the District as well as the health and continued function of key ecosystem processes and access to nature for residents of the District. We are therefore pursuing land conservation through a variety

of avenues. Resources budgeted in this fund are for the purchase of easements, of development rights or purchase of property with high conservation value. The District intends to work with partners to accomplish our land conservation goals. By so doing, we can avoid administrative duplication and devote more funds directly to land conservation. In keeping with EMSWCD's philosophy of voluntary conservation action, all of our land conservation work will be on a voluntary (willing seller, willing buyer) basis.

For the first several years of the fund, little staff capacity was dedicated to land conservation, most of the work was accomplished by the Board's Land Conservation Committee and the Executive Director. The Fund to date has been used for several land conservation transactions. A full time staff position was added in the 2012-2013 FY; it is expected that this great increase in capacity will lead to a major acceleration in the pace of land conservation in FY 2015-2016 and beyond.

The Land Conservation Fund is made up of dollars transferred from the General Fund.

### **Projects and Cost Share Fund**

This fund contains resources set aside to support conservation projects. These projects include on-the-ground installation of conservation practices as well as outreach and educational efforts in support of the District's mission. With the intention of being flexible and responsive and at the same time ensuring accountability and the strategic investment of public funds, projects are funded through several mechanisms.

First the District has a cost share program that provides financial assistance to landowners who are installing such conservation practices as fencing, manure storage sheds, and trees and shrubs for wildlife habitat. This is called the "Conservation Landowner Incentive Program" or CLIP. Second, we have a competitive grants program for conservation projects undertaken by partners. This is called "Partners in Conservation" or PIC. Third, smaller projects (under \$1,500) may be funded through the "Small Project and Community Events" or SPACE program.

Finally, all of the District's program areas are involved with partner organizations in various types of project work. Where staff is involved in projects closely aligned with our core work, the District is sometimes called on to cover project costs. An amount is budgeted in the Strategic Conservation Investments line to support projects of this nature that are not specifically known at the time of budget development. Support for general operations of Watershed Councils located in the District as well as support for Outdoor School participation in the District are also included in this fund. Additional projects are budgeted for in the General Fund under the program responsible for the work.

Dollars to support this Fund will be transferred from the General Fund.

### **Agency Fund**

This fund is designed to be used for projects in which the District is simply the fiscal agent.

## **Partner Grants Management Fund**

This Fund is used to hold grants made to the District on behalf of partners. This is how OWEB small grants are configured. Funds budgeted here are not a net cost to the District. The sum budgeted for this year is an estimate based on past experience intended to cover grants received on behalf of partners in FY 14-15.

## **Debt Services Fund**

This fund was added for the 2008-2009 Fiscal year. It is not required by Local Budget Law but has been used to clearly set aside (unappropriated) funds toward early repayment of the building loan. The building loan was paid off completely in FY 11-12 and the remaining cash balance in this fund was transferred to the General Fund.

## **Budget Committee Approval – Tax Rate Levy or Amount of Total Tax**

Oregon law allows taxing districts to approve the budget by an amount (dollar figure) or rate. Prior to FY 2009-2010, EMSWCD levied an amount rather than a rate. Since FY2009-2010, the Budget Committee has decided to levy at the full rate. The Budget Officer recommends that the District again levy at the full rate.

## **PROGRAMS (General Fund)**

Funds are tracked by program as well as by fund; General Fund appropriations are made by program.

### Rural Lands program (formerly Conservation Technical Assistance program)

This program protects natural resources by providing property owners/managers with technical assistance to help them identify opportunities for conservation and install conservation practices on their land. The primary focus is water quality and soil conservation including invasive species management.

### Urban Lands program (formerly Sustainable Urban Landscapes program)

This program includes the Naturescaping program, the annual native plant sale and the District's Low Impact Development (stormwater) work. The primary goals of the program are to reduce soil and water pollution, reduce the volume and rate of storm water runoff, and reduce water consumption by urban residents.

### Land Legacy and Grants program (formerly Partner Assistance and Conservation Easements program)

This program supports on-the-ground conservation projects and conservation education by providing financial assistance to landowners, partner organizations, and community groups. It also uses conservation easements and land acquisition (to be held by EMSWCD or by partners) to further the District's mission.

### Headwaters Farm Incubator Program (HIP)

This program provides land, water, infrastructure and other support for qualified individuals wanting to start a sustainable agricultural business who would otherwise not

be able to do so. The program began operation in FY 2013-2014 at a small number of farms and will increase gradually.

#### Finance and Operations (formerly District Operations and Administration)

This budget center supports and oversees all of the District's work. Finance and Operations provides administrative support, web services, bookkeeping services, and supervision to the other program areas as well as support to the Board of Directors. The Finance and Operations budget contains a wide range of items such as contracted legal and other professional services, telecommunications and most costs associated with our Headquarters.

## **SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS**

This Budget Message is accompanied by the following:

- RESOURCES: General Fund: Resource Description (revenues) (Form LB 20)
- EXPENDITURE SUMMARY: By Fund, Organizational Unit, or Program (Form LB 30)
- DETAILED EXPENDITURES: General Fund: Expenditure Description (Form LB 31)
- DETAILED EXPENDITURES: An LB 31 worksheet for each program and for District operations & administration
- RESERVE FUND: Building Reserve Fund: Resources (income) and Requirements (expenses) (Form LB 11)
- SPECIAL FUNDS: Land Conservation Fund: Resources and Requirements (Form LB 10)
- SPECIAL FUNDS: Projects and Cost Share Program: Resources and Requirements (Form LB 10)
- SPECIAL FUNDS: Agency Fund: Resources and Requirements (Form LB 10)
- SPECIAL FUNDS: Debt Services Fund: : Resources and Requirements (Form LB 10)