



**Budget Message for Fiscal Year 2021-2022**  
**East Multnomah Soil and Water Conservation District**  
**Dan Mitten, Budget Officer**

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**1.0 Introduction**

This Budget Message is presented at the first Budget Committee meeting and is intended to explain the proposed budget, describe important features within the budget document, and outline any significant changes in the EMSWCD’s financial position. As the new Executive Director for the EMSWCD, I want to also note that while the budget process can be daunting, it truly reflects the most tangible manifestation of “walking our talk.” As you review where we recommend these dollars be invested, it is my hope that you will see clearly that our mission of helping people care for land and water is reflected in our budget as much as in the passion and hard work of the staff. And, just as our district is diverse, so are our many programs and offerings. As we work toward operationalizing the equity lens through which we are now viewing our work – and launching climate change efforts – our current and future budgets will reflect a growing commitment to that as well. – **Nancy J. Hamilton, Executive Director**

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 EMSWCD. The rate limit is a maximum of 10 cents per \$1,000 of assessed value. By law this rate cannot increase. This secure funding source has enabled EMSWCD to better pursue our mission, “to help people care for land and water.”

As a taxing district, EMSWCD 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 EMSWCD 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 in May, the budget is presented for adoption at the June EMSWCD Board meeting.



The Budget Message, the accompanying worksheets, and supporting data are provided to the Budget Committee and public for their review. These documents will be available for review by request or on the District website: <http://emswcd.org/about/organizational-resources/budgets-reports-and-plans/>. Should you not have internet access and would like to request your copy by phone, please call 503-222-7645. As the budget is revised, the older drafts will be replaced with the most recent draft.

The budget includes a General Fund and three special funds. All funds have a Resources and Expenditures and/or 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 2021-2022 budget include:

- General Fund Capital expenses are increasing slightly from \$92,800 in the adopted FY 2020-2021 budget to \$104,400 proposed in FY 2021-2022 due to capital improvement needs at the Main Office and Headwaters Farm. Specific improvements include:
  - Main Williams Office:
    - Breakroom remodel and conference room technology upgrade.
    - Main interior staircase repair and step replacement. Repair, maintain, and stain first level wooden floors.
  - Headwaters Farm:
    - Equipment Shed landing improvements and additional farm signage.
- Total General Fund personnel services costs are increasing by 7.85% from \$2,417,507 in the adopted FY 2020-2021 budget to \$2,607,175 in the proposed FY 2021-2022 budget mostly due to annual wage and benefit adjustments, as well as an increase in benefit eligibility for part-time or temporary employees.
- Total General Fund materials and services costs are increasing by 25.7% from \$1,462,768 in the adopted FY 2020-2021 budget to \$1,838,763 in the proposed FY 2021-2022 budget mostly due to a proposed increase in contracted professional services. Major items included in these services include, but are not limited to, equity-related initiatives, beginning efforts towards climate change efforts, strategic planning and facilitation, website audit and refresh, and funds proposed to continue a multi-year Demonstration Project at Mount Hood Community College.
- The General Fund Contingency fund is being increased from \$350,000 in the adopted FY 2020-2021 budget to \$400,000 in the proposed FY 2021-2022 budget. This increase is in response to the continued global pandemic, unforeseen circumstances related to it as well as the unpredictable unknowns in an envisioned return to adapted “normal” operations. This is in line with a continuing strategy to ensure the EMSWCD is prepared to take advantage of unpredictable opportunities, meet unforeseen increases in costs, and adapt to uncertainties related to unforeseen catastrophic events (e.g. storms, floods, drought and fire).
- The Special Funds Grants Fund is proposing \$50,000 for new grants under the Equity-Focused Strategic Opportunity Grants mechanism. These proposed funds and opportunities are to aid in the advancement of equity, diversity and inclusion related to EMSWCD’s mission and programmatic goals.



Due to the 2018 CPI Geographic Revision, the Portland area CPI (Portland-Salem CPI-U) had been discontinued. In FY 2019-2020 EMSWCD's Board adopted the CPI-W West-Size A index in its salary & wage schedule adjustments to account for inflation.

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

## **2.0 Components of the Budget**

### **2.1 Resources**

"New" resources (i.e., funding sources) include a combination of property tax revenues, state/federal/local grants, contract income, fund balance interest, rental income, and income from EMSWCD's annual native plant sale. The aforementioned may also include Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB) small grants on behalf of landowners in the district.

Other, "existing" resources are derived from the beginning fund balance, which includes a combination of intentionally unallocated monies ("ending fund balance"), unexpected tax revenues, unspent contingency, and unspent program monies, all from the previous fiscal year.

For most of the above funding sources, the exact amount that will be received is unknown at this time and is estimated based on past experience and the most current information available.

### **2.2 Expenditures/Requirements**

Budgeted expenditures (i.e., anticipated costs) are grouped and tracked by fund. Each fund is described below.

### **2.3 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 EMSWCD and its programs, as well as those activities not associated with a special grant commitment. The unappropriated ending fund balance includes the allocated carryover of funds from FY 2020-2021 for meeting FY 2021-2022's costs until the tax revenue is available.

The General Fund budget includes a line for contingency. The purpose of this funding line is: a) to take advantage of unpredictable opportunities; b) to cover unforeseen expenses; and c) 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 EMSWCD's programs.

### **2.4 Special Funds**

#### **2.4.1 Land Conservation Fund**

EMSWCD 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. EMSWCD is therefore pursuing land conservation through a variety of avenues. Resources budgeted in this fund are primarily for the purchase of easements, development rights, or real property with high agricultural and/or conservation value. The fund can also be used for



extraordinary easement enforcement costs. EMSWCD 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 projects. In keeping with EMSWCD's philosophy of voluntary conservation action, all our land conservation work will be on a voluntary (willing seller, willing buyer) basis.

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

#### **2.4.2 Grants Fund**

The Grants Fund (formerly called the "Projects and Cost-share Fund") contains resources set aside to support conservation and environmental education projects. These projects include on-the-ground installation of conservation practices as well as outreach and educational efforts in support of EMSWCD'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, as identified below.

- Partners in Conservation (PIC): Annual competitive grants for conservation and environmental education projects undertaken by partners.
- Small Project and Community Events (SPACE): Grants for smaller conservation and education projects (under \$2,000). SPACE grants are provided on a monthly basis throughout each fiscal year.
- Cooperative Landowner Incentive Program (CLIP): A cost-share program that provides financial assistance to landowners who are installing conservation practices such as fencing, manure storage sheds, erosion control measures, bioswales, and planting trees and shrubs for wildlife habitat.
- Strategic Conservation Partnership (SPA): Under a five-year agreement with the three watershed councils operating within the EMSWCD service area, EMSWCD provides funding not to exceed \$100,000 per year per council for work to achieve mutual goals.
- Equity-focused Strategic Opportunity Grants (EFSOG) - PROPOSED: Grants to support community organizations and initiatives helping to advance equity, diversity and inclusion related to EMSWCD's mission and programmatic goals. These grants are made as needed when opportunities are identified.
- Strategic Conservation Investments (SCI): SCI enables EMSWCD to provide grants to partners for priority projects or to help out in urgent or time sensitive situations. These projects are typically not envisioned or planned for during the fiscal year. There are usually no specific regular funds allocated to this grant program. However should an SCI opportunity arise, monies from other grant programs, or from the contingency line item with the adoption of a Board resolution, may be used.

Additional grant projects are budgeted for in the General Fund under the program responsible for the work. Dollars to support the Grants Fund will be transferred from the General Fund.

#### **2.4.3 Partner Grants Management Fund**

This Fund is used to hold grants made to the EMSWCD on behalf of partners. This is how OWEB small grants are configured. Funds budgeted here are not a net cost to the EMSWCD. The sum budgeted for this year is an estimate based on past experience intended to cover grants received on behalf of partners in FY21-22.



### **3.0 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 EMSWCD again levy at the full rate.

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

#### **3.1 Finance and Operations**

The Finance and Operation's budget supports and oversees all of EMSWCD's work. Finance and Operations provides administrative support, web services, fleet & facilities management, financial oversight and report preparations, budget development and monitoring, 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 that cross all programs, telecommunications, and most costs associated with our Headquarters office.

#### **3.2 Rural Lands Program**

The Rural Lands Program protects natural resources by providing property owners/managers of working lands with technical, resource, labor, and financial assistance to help them identify opportunities for conservation and install conservation practices on their land. The primary focus is improving water quality, increasing irrigation efficiency, improving soil health, reducing erosion, and restoring native habitat including controlling invasive species.

#### **3.3 Urban Lands Program**

The Urban Lands Program works primarily on residential, institutional, and business/industrial lands within the Urban Growth Boundary of EMSWCD. Program services include public workshops (e.g., Naturescaping, Rain Gardens, etc.), technical and financial assistance, annual events (Native Plant Sale, etc.) community projects with partners, and large-scale demonstration projects. The primary goals of the program are to reduce soil and water pollution by reducing the volume and rate of stormwater runoff, reducing water consumption by urban residents, and to improve climate resiliency and natural habitat in the urban area.

#### **3.4 Conservation Legacy Program**

The Conservation Legacy Program supports on-the-ground conservation projects and conservation education by providing financial assistance to landowners, partner organizations, and community groups, through various grants programs. And the Land Legacy program uses conservation easements and land acquisition (to be held by EMSWCD or by partners) to ensure farmland is protected for current and future generations of farmers, to protect priority natural areas, and to provide urban access to nature opportunities for marginalized urban communities.

#### **3.5 Headwaters Farm Program**

The Headwaters Farm hosts the Headwaters Incubator Program (HIP), which provides land, water, infrastructure, training and other support for qualified individuals wanting to start a sustainable agricultural business who would otherwise not be able to do so. The HIP program started in the 2013 growing season, and after ramping up with new cohorts every year, the program has been operating at or near capacity for the last few years. At the conclusion of the 2020 growing season, four cohorts of farmers had graduated from HIP having completed five years in the program.



## 4.0 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
- SPECIAL FUNDS: Land Conservation Fund: Resources and Requirements (Form LB 10)
- SPECIAL FUNDS: Grants Fund (formerly called Projects and Cost Share Program): Resources and Requirements (Form LB 10)
- SPECIAL FUNDS: Partner Grants Management Fund: Resources and Requirements (Form LB 10)