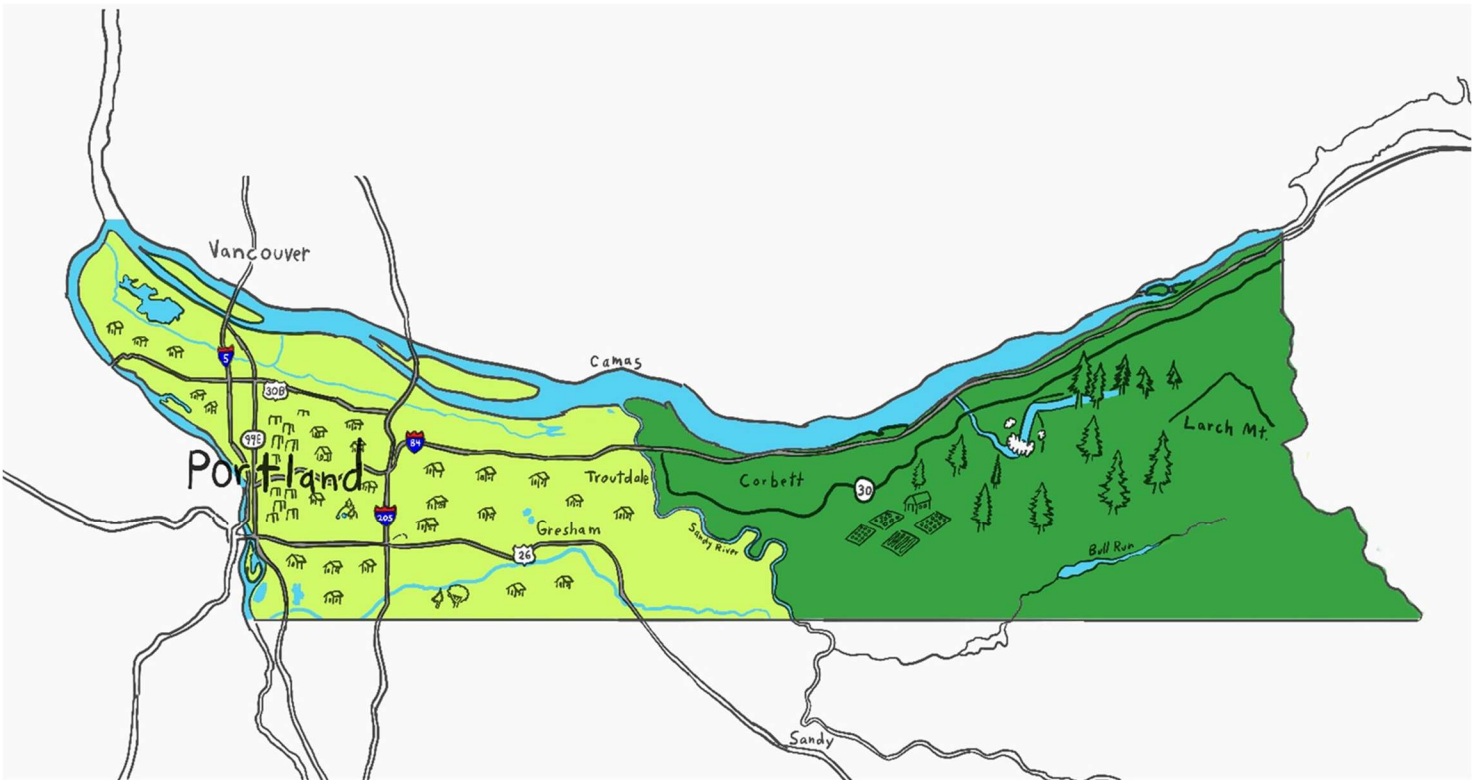




ANNUAL WORK PLAN 2023-2024

East Multnomah Soil & Water Conservation District



Helping people care for land and water since 1950.

June 27, 2023

Version 1.2



**East Multnomah Soil & Water Conservation District
Annual Work Plan for Fiscal Year 2023-2024
June 27, 2023
Version 1.2**

This plan was approved by the Board of Directors of the
East Multnomah Soil and Water Conservation District on 7/5/2023.

This plan will be available for download in PDF format from:
<http://emswcd.org/about/documents/emswcd-organizational/planning-documents/>

For more information about this plan or to receive a hardcopy, please contact:

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Cover image: Illustration of EMSWCD Boundaries, by Jon Wagner.

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1. Message from the Executive Director

I began crafting my message for this year's Annual Work Plan and recognized that much of what I noted last year rings true again for the year we are just about to embark on. And, some things will be changing.

Since EMSWCD was established in 1950, things have changed a lot in our region. We have become much more urbanized, the climate crisis and its impact on soil and water health shows up in devastating ways more profoundly each year – from fires and drought to record-breaking temperatures and flooding, to name just the most obvious.

The conservation work that EMSWCD engages in with farmers, urban dwellers and everyone in between helps strengthen where we live to better withstand hotter temperatures and keep streams and rivers cool to protect wildlife, fish, and people.

During the last fiscal year, we spent many months working on a new strategic plan for EMSWCD that is intended to guide our work for the next five years. We continue to place our mission of helping people care for soil and water at the center of all we do. And, we identified two core additional priorities that will serve as key lenses through which we consider what to work on moving forward. Those two priorities are: 1) Equity and Inclusion; 2) Climate resilience. This additional focus helps us become more strategic in what we do and how we do it. The first opportunity to bring this to bear was in developing our FY23-24 Budget. We reviewed everything through those lenses and identified for the board of directors which programs and projects moved various priorities forward. That reframing of our budget is now informing our work plan at the team and the district level for the next fiscal year.

Importantly, our strategic planning work made clear to us that we need to bring additional resources to our outreach and communications efforts, which are considerable and will grow in the coming years. As a result, we created a new team we are calling the Community Outreach and Engagement team. In addition to providing support to other teams at EMSWCD, they will collaboratively focus on some key new initiatives, including updating our website and identifying new strategies for doing outreach and receiving feedback from our partners and constituents.

Next, we moved our Land Legacy program and our Headwaters Farm program into our Rural Lands team to increase their collaboration and information sharing around complementary stakeholders and soil and water health goals.

Our Urban Lands team will continue to expand its work in the green infrastructure space, as well as in the development of new and more varied workshops that respond to the great feedback we get from our various stakeholders. As always, we look forward to meeting the next fiscal year with excitement and passion for EMSWCD, ensuring that it continues its legacy of providing value to the taxpayers who entrust us with these dollars.

Nancy J Hamilton
Executive Director

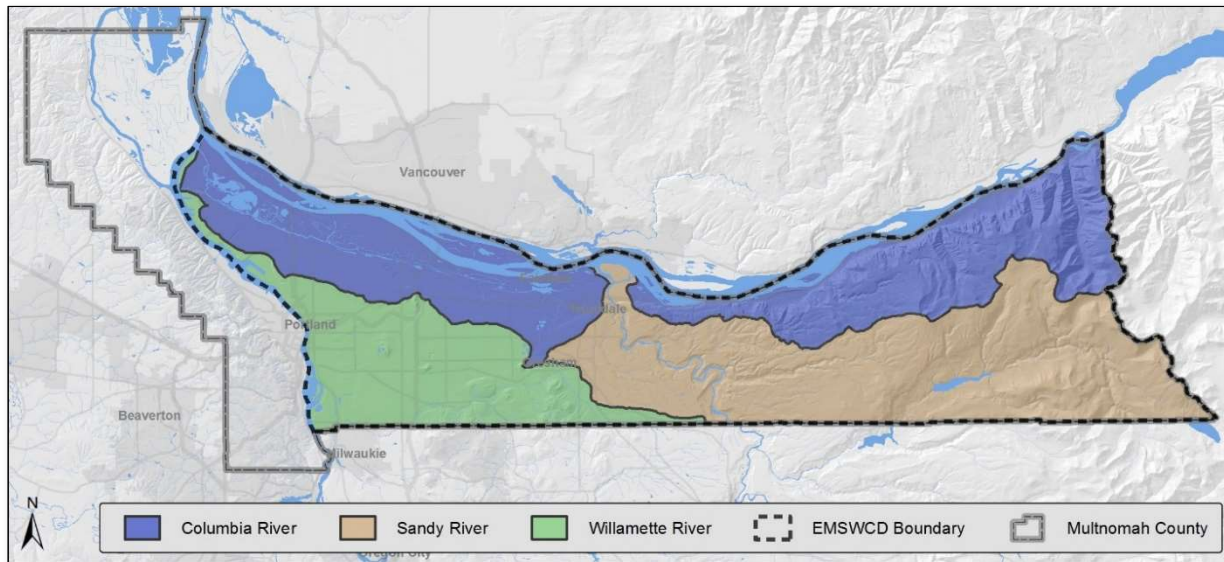




2. Introduction and EMSWCD Overview

The EMSWCD serves approximately 675,000 residents who live and manage land east of the Willamette River in Multnomah County, Oregon. The EMSWCD geographic service area encompasses an area of approximately 230,000 acres and includes portions of three major watersheds – Columbia River, Sandy River, and Willamette River — all of which contribute to the Greater Columbia River Basin (see Map 1).

Map 1: Major Watersheds of the EMSWCD



This EMSWCD FY23-24 Annual Work Plan outlines the activities EMSWCD will undertake from July 1, 2023 through June 30, 2024. The plan will help inform the EMSWCD staff, the EMSWCD Board of Directors, partners and public about how, when, and where planned activities will take place. The annual work plan will be submitted to the Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) for review and comment as part of the application process for Soil and Water Conservation District Support Grants.

2.1 Organizational Vision, Mission, and Strategic Priorities

EMSWCD has identified the following vision, mission, and three main components and priorities for the organization:

The EMSWCD Vision: ***Our lands and waters are healthy and sustain farms, forests, wildlife, and communities.***

The EMSWCD Mission: ***We help people care for land and water.***

There are three main components: ***Soil & Water Health, Climate Action, Equity & Inclusion.***

Framing and Strategic Priorities:

1. ***Agriculture & Working Lands***
2. ***Natural Spaces***
3. ***Urban and Built Environments***



2.2 Equity Statement

At the East Multnomah Soil and Water Conservation District (EMSWCD) we understand that conservation and social justice are interconnected, and that we have much to learn about the history and implications of this relationship. We cannot authentically and effectively advance our mission of helping people care for land and water without also caring for people. Everyone deserves a healthy environment and should have a voice in shaping what that means for their community. Throughout American history, Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color (BIPOC) have been forcibly removed from and denied access to land. They have experienced significantly greater impacts from contaminated water and soils, polluted air, flooding, fire, and the increasing effects of climate change. Until everyone has equitable access to a safe and healthy environment, dismantling racism must be central to our work.

At EMSWCD, we know it is our responsibility to make the organization and our work more equitable. By investing in efforts that foster diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice, we endeavor to create more effective and enduring conservation benefits for all.

Equity Commitments

If we are not actively fighting racism, we are perpetuating it with our silence and inaction. We must be anti-racist. EMSWCD commits to:

- Incorporating diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice into all aspects of our work.
- Developing and maintaining an inclusive working environment where everyone feels welcome and respected, and where staff and Board reflect the diverse communities we serve.
- Engaging and building meaningful relationships with historically marginalized stakeholders and diverse local communities.
- Working with communities to evaluate the full range of impacts and benefits of our programs and adjust accordingly.
- Continuing to learn and apply equity tools, knowledge, and community feedback with intention and humility.
- Providing bold equity leadership within the local, regional, and state conservation community.
- Listening, learning, and speaking out against injustice when we encounter it in our work.
- Within our work, acknowledging where we have privilege and using it to amplify the voices of BIPOC and other marginalized communities.
- When exercising our authority as a conservation district, identifying and working to dismantle programs, policies, and approaches that have, or may have, a disproportionate negative impact on historically disadvantaged communities.
- Admitting our mistakes, seeking to repair the damage, and moving forward.

We have a long journey ahead of us to meet these commitments, but we are dedicated to pursuing this work with urgency and perseverance. We vow to hold ourselves accountable and welcome our communities to do the same.

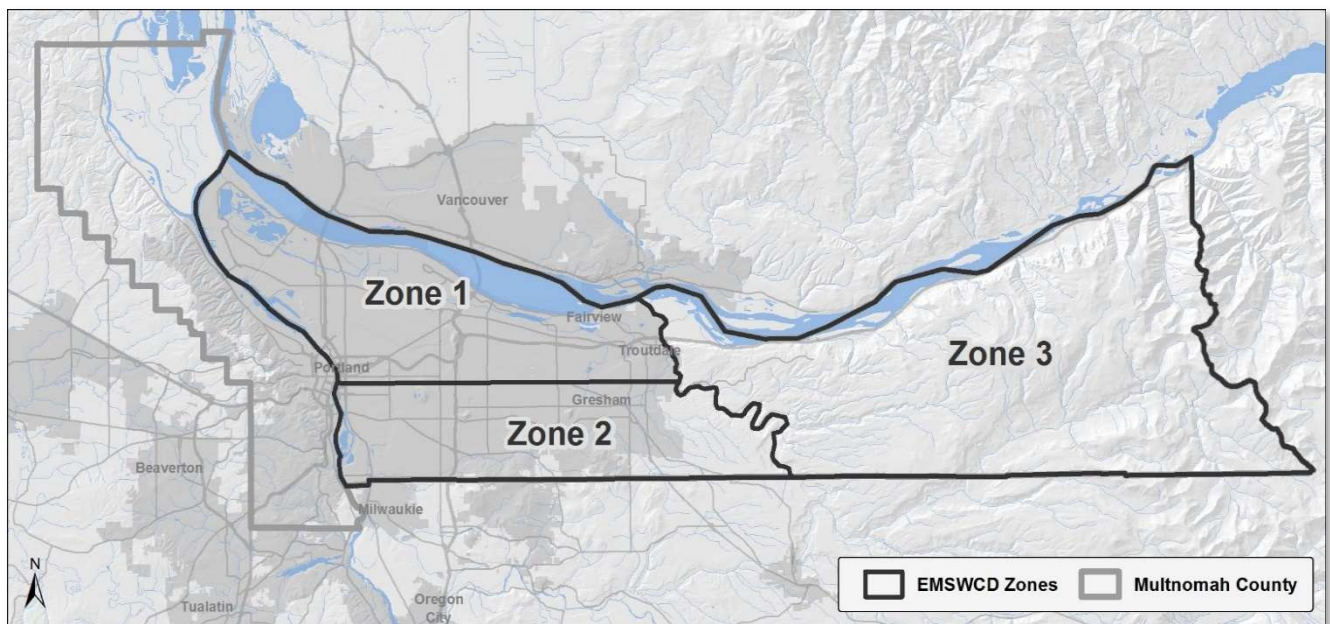


2.3 Board of Directors and Committees

The EMSWCD Board of Directors is the governing body of EMSWCD. As the governing body, it is the Board's responsibility to set policy; adopt the budget; set programs and strategic priorities; hire and supervise the Executive Director; and oversee the management of the EMSWCD's affairs to ensure legal compliance and fiscal responsibility.

Board directors are elected in the November General Election held in even numbered years and serve four-year terms. At the start of FY23-24, the EMSWCD Board members will be composed of three zone Directors (see Map 2), and two at-large Directors. The Board normally meets once per month during the fiscal year. The schedule of meetings is given in Table 1 below. Details of Board meetings can be found on the EMSWCD website: <https://emswcd.org/about/board/meetings/>

Map 2: District Zones



All Board members serve on at least one of the four standing committees during this period: 1) Budget Committee; 2) Land Legacy Committee; 3) Personnel Committee; and 4) PIC Committee.

Board member committee assignments, as well as the months each committee is expected to meet, are shown in Table 1. All Board and committee meetings are open to the public. Details of each meeting are made available on the EMSWCD website: <https://emswcd.org/about/committees/>



Table 1: Board of Directors Positions, Committees and Meetings Schedule

EMSWCD Board			EMSWCD Committees			
Members	Positions	Officers	Budget	Land Legacy	Personnel	PIC
Joe Rossi	Director - Zone 1		X	X		
Laura Masterson	Director - Zone 2	Secretary	X	X	Chair	
Mike Guebert	Director - Zone 3	Vice-Chair	X	Chair	X	
Jim Carlson	Director - At-Large 1	Treasurer	X	X	X	
Jasmine Zimmer-Stucky	Director - At-Large 2	Chair	X	X	X	

Meeting Schedule*		Board	Budget	Land Legacy	Personnel	PIC
FY23-24	2023	July	5	31	10	TBD
		August	7			
		September	6	25		
		October	2		16	
		November	6	27		
		December	4			
	2024	January	3	22	17	
		February	5			
		March	4	25		
		April	1		15	
		May	6	29		
		June	3			

* This schedule is subject to change, please check the EMSWCD website for meeting dates throughout the year.

2.4 Staff and Programs

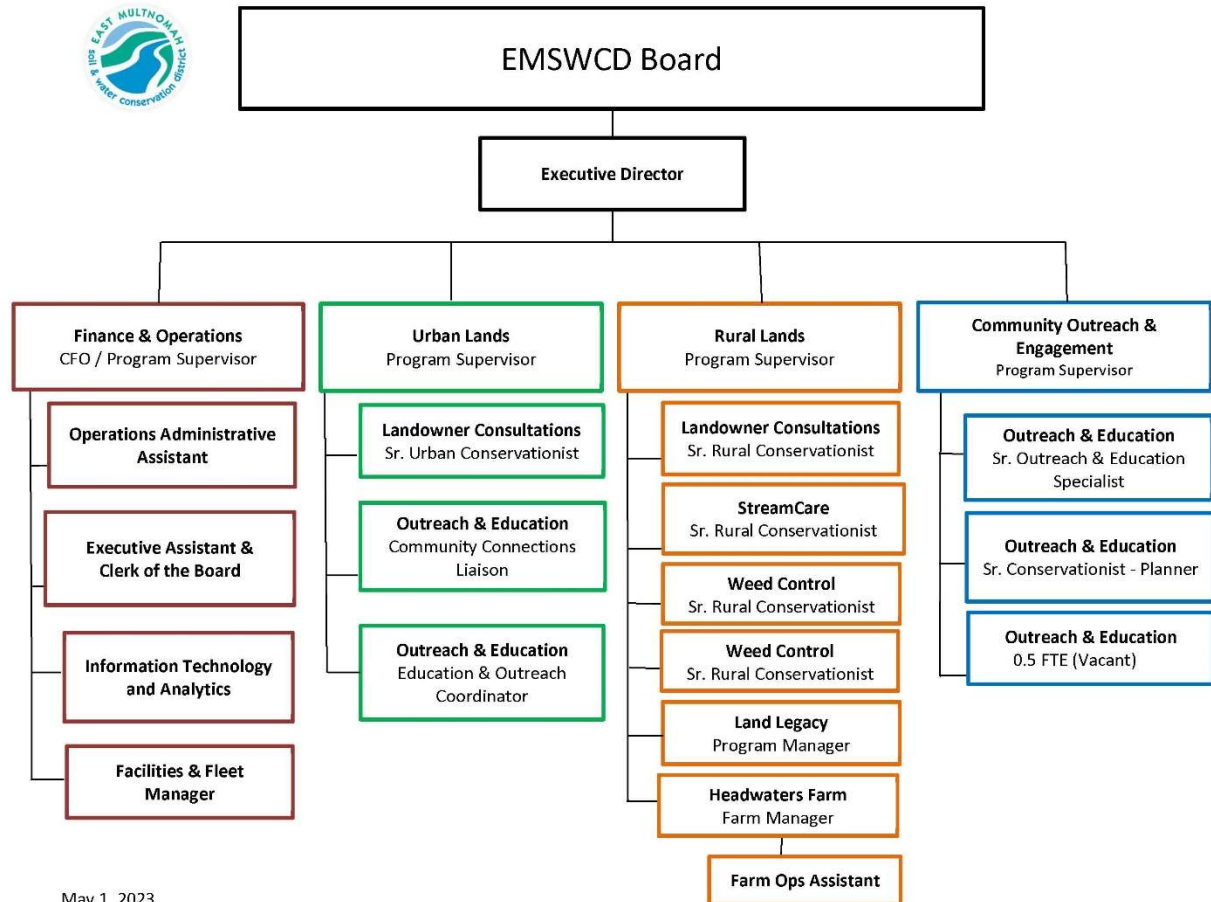
The daily operations of EMSWCD are led by its Executive Director and implemented by 21.5 staff. EMSWCD's Executive Director, Nancy Hamilton, is now in the third year of her tenure here.

The Board of Directors collectively serves as the supervisor for the Executive Director, who is in turn responsible for all EMSWCD operations, including supervising staff, managing budgets, developing long range plans, representing EMSWCD to the public and partner organizations, and providing information, advice, and support to the Board of Directors and staff.

During the next Fiscal Year, EMSWCD operations will be organized into four programmatic units, including a new program and eliminating/consolidating the Conservation Legacy program: 1) Urban Lands; 2) Rural Lands; 3) Finance and Operations; 4) newly formed Community Outreach and Engagement. The bulk of this work plan is organized according to these programmatic units (Sections 5 – 8). An organizational chart for EMSWCD is given in Figure 1.



Figure 1: EMSWCD Organizational Chart



3. Budget

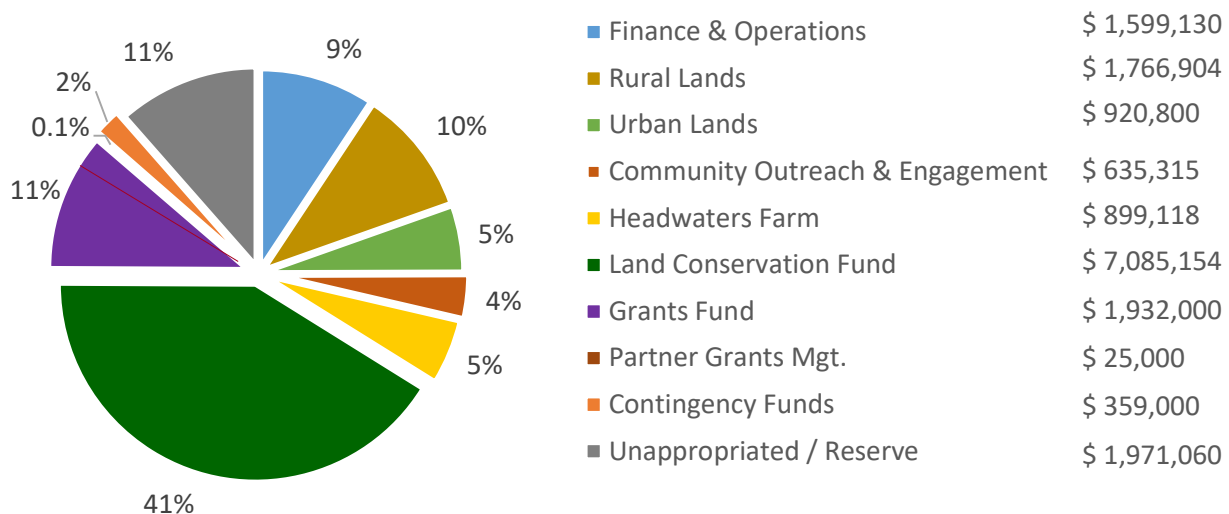
The total EMSWCD FY23-24 budget is \$17.1 million (see Table 2 and Figure 2), which matches funding sources of \$17.1 million (see Table 3 and Figure 3). For this fiscal year \$5,821,267 is appropriated for direct operational expenditures by the EMSWCD programs. \$9,042,154 is allocated in special funds for land purchases and grants to external entities, and an additional \$359,000 is held for unforeseen contingencies. The unappropriated funds held in reserve for FY23-24 is \$1,971,060. The detailed budget adopted for FY23-24 by Board of Directors is available on the EMSWCD website.



Table 2: FY 23-24 Budget

Category		Purpose	Budgeted Amount
Operations	Finance & Operations	Staffing, facilities, and operations	\$1,599,130
	Rural Lands	Staffing, contracting, and operations	\$1,766,904
	Urban Lands	Staffing, contracting and operations	\$920,800
	Community Outreach & Engagement	Staffing, communications, and operations	\$635,315
	Headwaters Farm	Farm-specific staff and operations	\$899,118
Sub-total Operations			\$5,821,267
Capital, Grants, and Contingency/Unappropriated	Land Conservation Fund	Acquisitions	\$7,085,154
	Grants Fund	External grants	\$1,932,000
	Partner Grants	Pass through funds	\$25,000
	Contingency Funds	Unanticipated costs	\$359,000
	Unappropriated Funds	Funds held in reserve	\$1,971,060
Sub-total Grants, Funds and Reserves			\$11,372,214
Total EMSWCD Budget			\$17,193,481

Figure 2: FY23-24 Budget



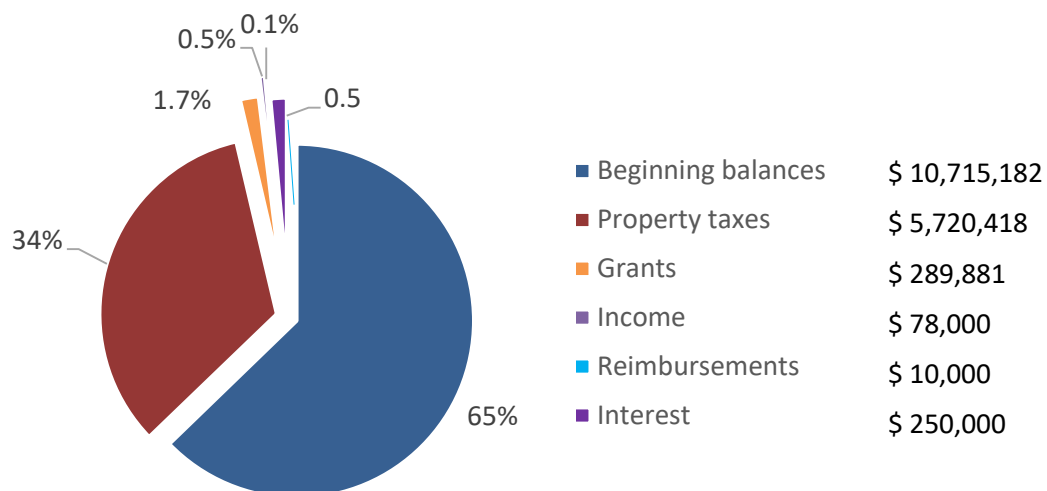


The largest source of new revenue for the organization is from the permanent property tax base. EMSWCD's permanent property tax rate limit of \$0.1000 per \$1,000, which was approved by voters in 2005, is estimated to generate nearly \$5.7 million in FY23-24. The anticipated revenues from property taxes for FY23-24, accounts for 33.5% of total funding sources. The special capital funds and general fund carry-over from the previous fiscal year represent the largest source of available funding at \$10.7 million.

Table 3: FY23-24 Funding Sources

Source	Purpose	Sub-totals	Funding Totals
Beginning balances	General Fund carry-over from FY22-23	\$3,822,463	
	Land Conservation Fund carry-over from FY22-23	\$6,385,154	
	Grants Fund carry-over from FY22-23	\$507,565	\$10,715,182
Property taxes	FY23-24 levied taxes estimated to be received	\$5,720,418	\$5,720,418
Grants	ODA Administrative Grant	\$26,372	
	ODA Water Quality Funding	\$61,535	
	PDX Water Bureau Habitat Restoration Funding	\$50,000	
	Partner grants pass-through (anticipated)	\$25,000	
	USFS Gorge Grant	\$15,000	
	USDA Land-Capital Access Pilot Project	\$136,974	\$289,881
Income	Native plant sales	\$50,000	
	Farm lease payments	\$28,000	\$78,000
Reimbursements	Headwaters Farm-related activities	\$10,000	\$10,000
Interest	General Fund interest on bank/investment accounts	\$75,000	
	Land Conservation Fund interest	\$150,000	
	Grants Fund interest	\$25,000	\$250,000

Figure 3: FY23-24 Funding Sources





4. District-wide Strategic Framework

In the last fiscal year, we completed our strategic plan, which will guide our work for the next five years. Our core framework continues to place soil and water health as the centerpiece of all we do. However, given the increasing impact that climate change is having on everything, including water, drought, temperatures, what grows well in the PNW, and how our urban core can leverage green infrastructure to mitigate heat islands, etc., we have added climate change responses to our districtwide areas of focus. Finally, as we had already begun prior to this last year, we continue to place equity and inclusion as a key lens through which we consider all that we do. On this front, in FY22-23 EMSWCD continues to use our goals from our Equity Action Plan, which are:

- Goal 1: Meaningfully and authentically engage Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC), and other marginalized groups.
- Goal 2: Recruit, train, retain, and support a diverse staff and Board.
- Goal 3: Provide equitable programs and services.
- Goal 4: Allocate resources in a way that advances racial equity.

4.1 Strategic Planning

- EMSWCD completed a comprehensive strategic planning process in the last fiscal year. That plan identified three core principles that will guide our work for the next five years.
- We are focused on helping people in efforts for soil and water health.
- We recognize that equity and inclusion are key lenses through which we consider what we do and how we do it moving forward.
- We know that climate change has an enormous impact on soil and water health as droughts, flooding, heat and cold become more severe. Our work must reflect this understanding and responsiveness to these changes.
- The framing and strategic priorities identified in the plan are Agriculture & Working Lands, Natural Spaces, Urban and Built Environments.

4.2 Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

At EMSWCD, we know it is our responsibility to make the organization and our work more equitable. A history of marginalization and systemic disenfranchisement of low-income people and people of color has resulted in generational disparities and requires investments that provide greater access to land, nature, and a healthier environment.

We also know that climate change effects are far-reaching and impact communities disproportionately. Everyone deserves a healthy environment and should have a voice in shaping what that means for their community. Healthy human habitat is inextricably interwoven with a healthy environment. Until everyone has equitable access to a safe and healthy environment, dismantling racism must be central to our work.

EMSWCD's Equity Team (an internal team that includes representatives from each program area) is charged with helping to elevate EMSWCD's awareness, understanding, sensitivity and response to the equity concerns of our constituents. The EMSWCD Equity Team advocates for and promotes access, inclusion and equity within the organization and encourages staff's equity understanding through educational programs and skill-building opportunities.



In 2022, an internal working group completed the district's first Five-Year Equity Action Plan and prioritized actions for implementation through designated teams. Implementation of the Equity Action Plan is being tracked by the Equity Team who monitors and regularly reports on progress helping the organization stay accountable to its commitments.

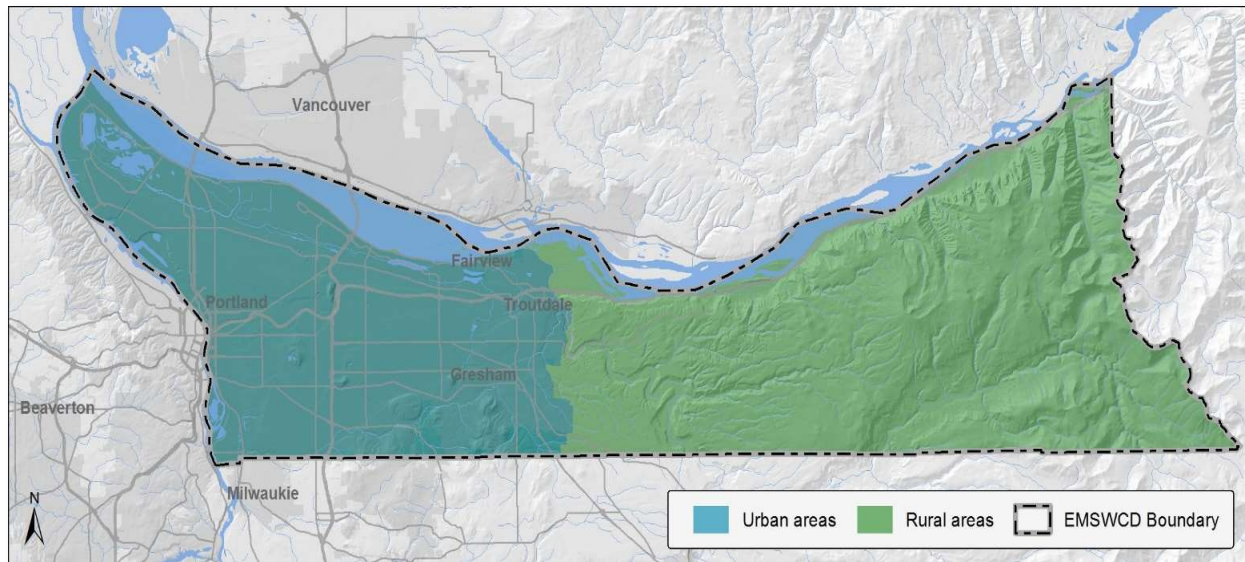
The Equity Team's key activities for the 2023-24 fiscal year:

Annual Activities and Deliverables (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion)
Promote greater understanding of equity and provide learning opportunities for staff.
Support staff DEI activities including Equity Action Plan implementation.
Operationalize Equity Team Charter. Review annually; update as needed.
Promote EMSWCD-wide equity literacy through cooperatively developing educational programs and activities with staff and management.
Onboard and offboard Equity Team members.
Manage Equity Team budget; oversee contracts.
Support new staff DEI onboarding; review and update materials and information shared with new team members.
Support hiring committees by reviewing hiring documents (job announcements, job descriptions) and processes to help identify and prevent potential inequities/biases.
Participate in review of Equity Focused Strategic Opportunity Grant proposals.
Review progress and report to All Staff on the implementation of the Equity Action Plan.
Define and develop a plan for annual equity audits and complete the first Equity Audit.



5. Urban Lands

The Urban Lands Program focuses its efforts east of the Willamette River and west of the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) in Multnomah County (see Map 3), Oregon. The program works to foster a stewardship ethic in the urban landscape by encouraging residents, businesses, and communities to incorporate resource conservation and pollution prevention into everyday life. The urban area of Multnomah County is one of the most diverse and populated regions of the state. The Urban Lands program places emphasis on ensuring EMSWCD's programming is accessible to all who live, work, and play in EMSWCD.



Map 3: Urban and Rural Areas of EMSWCD

To contribute to achieving EMSWCD's Strategic Priorities, listed in Section 2.1, the following program goals have been established for the Urban Lands Program for 2019-2024:

- 1. Decrease urban stormwater runoff by reducing impervious surfaces and retaining stormwater on-site.**
- 2. Reduce the use of synthetic landscaping chemicals & products.**
- 3. Reduce the area of lawn and other high-water-use ornamental plants.**
- 4. Increase the use of urban landscape water conservation methods and tools.**
- 5. Increase the number of native plants and area of green infrastructure within the urban growth boundary.**
- 6. Increase public understanding of water quality, water, and natural habitat conservation concerns, and inspire action to address those concerns.**

These goals are pursued through the implementation of the following strategies:

- Outreach and education
- Technical and financial assistance
- Partnership projects and regional campaigns
- Demonstration projects
- Monitoring and evaluation



Sections 5.1 – 5.5 below provide a summary of each of these strategies, along with tables of the activities planned for FY23-24.

The Urban Lands Program FY23-24 budget is \$920,800 and includes the following four FTE (full-time-equivalent) staff:

- Urban Lands Program Supervisor
- Senior Conservationist (technical assistance)
- Conservation Specialist – Community Connections Liaison (outreach and education)
- Conservation Technician (outreach and education)

In addition to the above positions, the Urban Lands Program utilizes 5-6 contracted workshop presenters/educators and partners with numerous entities.

5.1 Outreach and Education

Urban Lands Program outreach and education efforts aim to increase awareness and public understanding of water quality, water conservation, and natural habitat concerns, and to inspire action to address those concerns. The program uses a variety of outreach and educational tools and techniques to bring conservation issues to the forefront of this diverse and populous area of the state.

Throughout the COVID-19 stay-at-home orders/recommendations, the Urban Lands outreach and education activities shifted to an online platform rather than in-person workshops, presentations, events, and community meetings. This method has allowed constituents to attend both live and pre-recorded webinars from the comfort of their own home. Overwhelmingly positive feedback has been shared by people who cannot attend in-person classes due to factors including transportation, schedules, physical mobility, etc. While the Urban Lands program plans to continue offering online webinars, they will also coordinate with community partners to offer more in-person learning and engagement opportunities this coming year. The program will also continue to engage with community hosts who play a crucial partnership role by reaching out to their constituents to promote EMSWCD offerings.

For up-to-date descriptions of each Urban Lands workshop, please visit our website:
<https://emswcd.org/workshops-and-events/upcoming-workshops/workshop-descriptions/>.

Activities and deliverables related to Urban Lands outreach and education efforts in FY23-24 are given in the table below.

Annual Activities and Deliverables (Outreach and Education)
Outreach
Update and maintain Urban Lands web content and assist with the planning for upcoming website improvement and redesign.
Coordinate with partners to develop workshops and outreach materials that engage diverse audiences.
Identify how Urban Lands offerings are, and can, address the impacts of climate change and the potential ways to incorporate them into outreach and programming.
Identify how Urban Lands offerings can center Equity, Inclusion, and Access and adjust outreach and programming as necessary.
Design and produce educational and promotional materials, as needed.
Engage 12 new and existing community leaders/groups/organizations in priority areas.



Table at community events with literature about EMSWCD programs and events.
Attend 6 community meetings to promote EMSWCD workshops and introduce the public to the benefits of sustainable landscaping and/or green infrastructure practices.
Education
Adult Conservation presentations (1-hour): 10/year; 200 participants
Adult Conservation Workshops (1-2.5hours): 50/year; 1200 participants
Events
Host a Native Plant Sale with a goal to reach 1000 participants/customers; and sell at least 10,000 bare-root trees and shrubs.
“Planting with Partners” events – teaming with community partners and volunteers to get trees and native shrubs planted in underserved communities - with a goal of having 3-5 partner planting events/yr.

5.2 Technical and Financial Assistance

The Urban Lands Program provides technical assistance to landowners and managers to help them identify and pursue opportunities for implementing resource conservation practices on their land. Technical assistance addresses stormwater management, green infrastructure, invasive plant management, water conservation, and habitat restoration. Technical consultations may result in site-level conservation plans being developed. Plans for specific conservation measures may also be eligible for and result in financial assistance. This assistance is often in the form of cost-share, where EMSWCD contributes a portion of funding for the implementation of conservation practices on the ground. Cost-share funding is implemented through EMSWCDs *Cooperative Landowner Incentive Program* (CLIP) grant program. Urban Lands also provides technical assistance as needed to EMSWCD grant recipients to assist in developing and implementing grant-funded projects.

Specific activities and deliverables related to Urban Lands technical and financial assistance in FY23-24 are given in the table below.

Annual Activities and Deliverables (Technical and Financial Assistance)
Provide technical consultations and site visits to residential, commercial, and industrial landowners. 100/year, 25/quarter.
Provide technical consultations and site visits to Grants Program applicants and/or projects. 10 consults/year.
Identify how Urban Lands technical assistance offerings can be more equitable, inclusive, and accessible, and adjust content and delivery as necessary.
Identify how Urban Lands technical assistance can incorporate climate change considerations into our offerings and adjust content and delivery as necessary.
Work with local jurisdictions to encourage the adoption and implementation of green infrastructure, as well as sustainable and restorative land management practices.
Work with 3 large land managers to build relationships, encourage sustainable land management practices, and promote EMSWCD services.
Cooperative Landowner Incentive Program
Explore alternative mechanisms to assist with urban conservation project implementation.
Provide cost-share assistance for rain gardens, habitat restoration, and other practices. 3-5 projects/year.

5.3 Partnerships

Numerous local, state, and national organizations undertake natural resource conservation activities in the Portland metro area. Key to working within such a diverse and populated area as Portland is to



engage partners and participate in regional, multi-organizational projects and campaigns. These engagement efforts multiply the reach and magnitude of change that the Urban Lands Program can achieve.

Specific activities and deliverables related to Urban Lands Program participation in partnership projects and regional collaborations in FY23-24 are given in the table below.

Annual Activities and Deliverables (Partnerships and Regional Campaigns)
Help promote IPM web tool (Solve Pest Problems) through participation in OSU project teams.
Work with and promote community organizations and not-for-profits that increase green infrastructure and improve natural resources.
Promote water conservation and work with and support other water conservation groups and initiatives.

5.4 Demonstration Projects

The Urban Lands Program utilizes demonstration projects to educate others about conservation and to inspire similar efforts throughout the region and beyond.

Conservation Corner: The EMSWCD office, affectionately known as “Conservation Corner”, serves as an example and training center to demonstrate the various tools advocated by the Urban Lands Program. Some of the many techniques demonstrated on-site include naturescaping, rain gardens, green roofs, pervious pavement, and more.

Large-Scale Demonstration Projects: In collaboration with a broad array of partners, the Urban Lands Program continues to pursue implementation of large-scale demonstration projects. While aimed at significantly improving natural resource conditions at specific sites on a meaningful scale, these projects are also meant to educate others about conservation and serve to catalyze similar efforts elsewhere.

The Mount Hood Community College (MHCC) *Clean Water Retrofit* is an ongoing partnership between EMSWCD, MHCC, the City of Gresham and others, to address the natural resource concerns on the MHCC campus. This partnership works to improve stormwater management, while establishing and restoring native habitat and other green infrastructure. It engages students and the community while serving as a demonstration of best practices. This partnership is expected to continue through FY23-24.

Demonstration project activities for Urban Lands staff for FY23-24 are identified in the table below.

Annual Activities & Deliverables (Demonstration Projects)
Implement the Conservation Corner outreach plan to enhance the visibility and educational value of the site. Provide tours, improve demonstrations on site, etc.
Oversee maintenance and improvements to Conservation Corner landscape, green infrastructure (pervious pavement, roofs, walls, etc.), and Green Streets installations.
Participate in the MHCC Clean Water Retrofit Steering committee.
Work with partners to guide and implement top priority projects identified in the MHCC assessment.
Scope potential new large-scale, multi-partner projects.



5.5 Monitoring and Evaluation

The Urban Lands program will be utilizing existing, and exploring new, indicators that are tracked over time to monitor programmatic progress. Included will be measures related to demographics, outputs of the program (e.g. workshop attendance, self-reported behavior/actions, number of native plants sold/planted, stormwater managed/treated, impervious surface removed, etc.) as well as reviewing the results of partner tracking efforts of the resources that the program is ultimately aiming to protect (e.g. water quality, water use, urban tree canopy, pervious surface area, etc.).

Activities related to monitoring and evaluation in FY23-24 are included in the table below:

Annual Activities and Deliverables (Monitoring and Evaluation)
Meet with partners, assess partner monitoring efforts, studies, and findings.
Identify relevant regional monitoring and evaluation efforts as they pertain to Urban Lands programmatic goals.
Identify how Urban Lands offerings can be more equitable, inclusive, and accessible, and adjust content and delivery as necessary.
Identify how Urban Lands program can incorporate climate change considerations into our offerings and adjust content and delivery as necessary.
Explore, develop, incorporate, and implement new program monitoring and evaluation metrics.
Collect and analyze data to support urban lands program evaluation.

6. Rural Lands

The Rural Lands Program focuses on the portions of EMSWCD that are outside of the urban area. The program provides technical information and financial assistance to help public and private landowners protect natural resources on their land, provides a business incubator for beginning farmers, and protects working farmland and properties that possess significant natural resources and/or access to nature opportunities.

The following program goals have been established for the Rural Lands Program for 2019-2024:

- 1. Decrease erosion from working lands in the rural part of the district to prevent sediment and bacteria from entering waterways.**
- 2. Improve the efficiency of irrigation on working lands.**
- 3. Increase stream shading to protect water temperature and improve riparian habitat in priority watersheds.**
- 4. Understand water quality baseline levels and trends over time in priority watersheds.**
- 5. Reduce the impacts of ecosystem altering weeds species on natural habitats in the rural part of the district, focusing on protecting high value native forest and riparian areas.**
- 6. Limit invasive species pressure on natural regeneration of native forest in areas burnt by the 2017 Eagle Creek fire.**
- 7. Increase awareness among landowners and managers about protecting and improving water quality, water quantity, soil health, riparian health, natural habitats, and reducing populations of invasive weeds.**

These goals are pursued through implementation for the following strategies:



- Technical and financial assistance
- StreamCare (riparian revegetation)
- Outreach and education
- Water quality monitoring
- Noxious weed control
- Headwaters Farm Incubator Program
- Land Legacy Program

Sections 6.1 – 6.7 below provide a summary of each of these strategies, along with a listing of the activities planned for FY23-24.

The Rural Lands Program team consists of nine positions:

- Rural Lands Program Supervisor
- StreamCare implementation
- Conservation technical assistance
- 2 positions focused on noxious weed control
- Land Legacy Program Manager
- Headwaters Incubator Program Manager
- Headwaters Operations Assistant

The Rural Lands Program FY23-24 budget is \$1,766,904 and funds all but the two Headwaters positions. These two positions are funded through the Headwater Incubator Program budget, which is \$899,118 for FY23-24.

6.1 Technical and Financial Assistance

The Rural Lands program provides agricultural landowners technical assistance to help them conserve and minimize impacts on soil and water resources. This might include design of practices to reduce erosion, improve irrigation efficiency, compost or store manure, and exclude livestock from riparian areas. Technical consultations may result in site level conservation plans being developed. Plans for specific conservation measures may result in financial assistance where EMSWCD, or another funder, contributes a portion of funding for the implementation of conservation practices on the ground.

Specific activities planned for Rural Lands technical and financial assistance for FY23-24 are included in the table below.

Annual Activities and Deliverables (Technical and Financial Assistance)
<i>Landowners Consultations</i>
Conduct 20 site visits including first-time site visits with 5 landowners.
Develop 5 technical recommendations and/or conservation plans that include recommendations to address erosion and/or water quality.
Assist 3 landowners with cost share applications.
Partner with NRCS to promote and deliver cost share assistance.

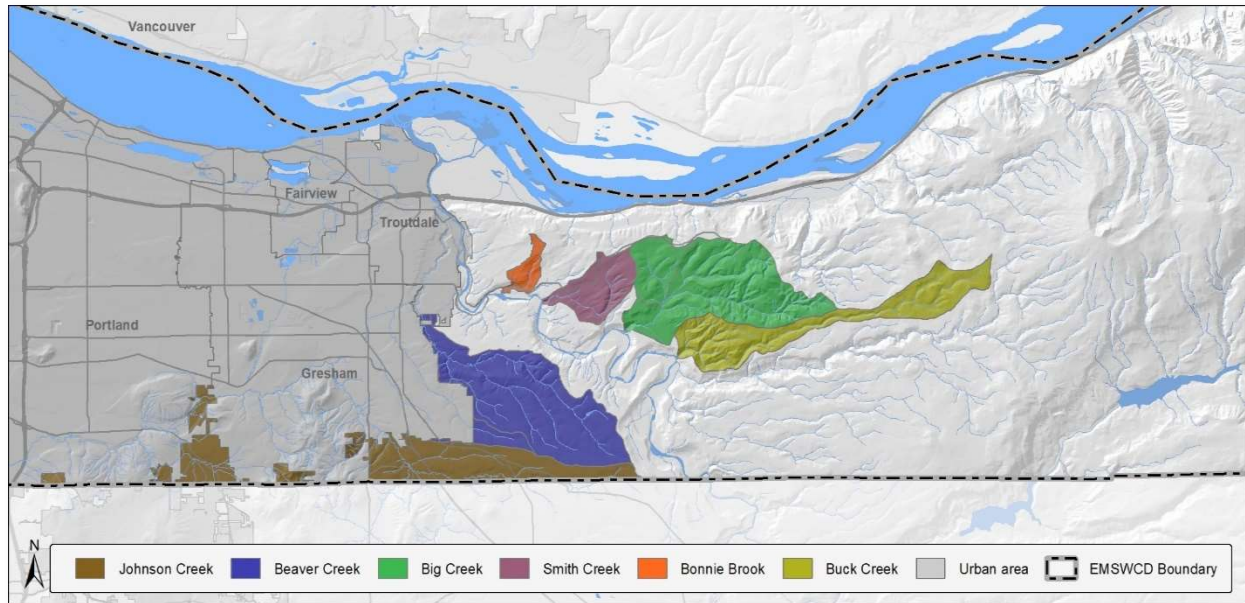
6.2 StreamCare

The EMSWCD established the StreamCare (riparian re-vegetation) program in 2008. The program's purpose is to establish native riparian vegetation along streams to increase shade, thereby preventing



solar heating of the stream and reducing stream temperatures. Streamside vegetation also prevents stream bank erosion, provides a source of woody debris for the stream system, and filters surface runoff entering the stream. StreamCare work is ongoing in the Johnson Creek, Beaver Creek, Big Creek, Smith Creek, Bonnie Brook and Buck Creek watersheds. (see Map 4)

Map 4: StreamCare Watersheds



The focus on the majority of StreamCare sites is to reduce weed pressure, plant native trees and shrubs, and maintain the sites to promote the growth of the planted native trees and shrubs. Sites are evaluated after five years to determine if weed pressure is reduced to the point that the planted trees and shrubs will be able to survive without additional maintenance. If weed pressure is still too high, the agreement is extended. If not, the site is ready to graduate, and a site visit is scheduled with the landowner to walk through the StreamCare area and provide outreach materials, including a list of plants on their site and a native plant identification guide. Specific activities planned for the StreamCare program for FY23-24 are included in the table below.

Annual Activities and Deliverables (StreamCare)	
Site restoration and maintenance	
Maintain the existing, planted StreamCare areas to ensure good rates of plant survival.	
An additional 10 acres planted in FY23-24.	
Coordinate contracted labor crews for site preparation, weed control, and planting.	
Manage wholesale plant orders, delivery, and storage.	
StreamCare sites that reach the five-year mark will be evaluated to determine if the site is ready to graduate or if the landowner agreement should be extended.	
For landowners that are graduating from StreamCare, offer an exit site visit.	
Monitoring and evaluation	
Maintain GPS and GIS data; maintain StreamCare “database” to track and compile deliverables.	



6.3 Outreach and Education

The Rural Lands program conducts outreach to raise awareness regarding water, soil, and natural habitat quality and quantity issues and related EMSWCD service offerings. A major component of this work is increasing the understanding of the impact, both positive and negative, private property owners can have on water quality and quantity. With agricultural landowners and managers, outreach helps increase awareness about and implementation of the Agricultural Water Quality Plans in the area. A portion of the outreach conducted uses other topics, like pollinators or wildlife, to attract interest and engage landowners in conservation. Specific outreach activities planned for FY23-24 are provided in the table below.

Annual Activities and Deliverables (Outreach)
Use mailings, advertisements, web and social media to promote conservation, outreach events and program offerings.
Coordinate three workshops to provide conservation education and program information.
Continue to evaluate outreach methods and materials to identify needed changes to improve access.
Continue to identify opportunities to engage and build relationships with rural BIPOC community members and groups.

6.4 Water Quality Monitoring

EMSWCD monitors water quality in some streams and collaborates with multiple entities to establish baseline conditions and monitor progress over time.

According to the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), both Johnson and Beaver Creeks have water quality impairments for temperature and fecal bacteria. In addition, Johnson Creek is listed for legacy pesticides. DEQ uses total suspended solids as a surrogate measure for legacy pesticides. Water quality monitoring will continue to document trends in both creeks. All water quality monitoring will be coordinated with partners to prevent duplication and allow for combined data analysis.

The Rural Lands Program will also monitor water temperature in Big and Smith Creeks. The Sandy River does not meet the State of Oregon's standard for temperature, and DEQ pointed to the need for increased shading of the tributaries in the TMDL (total maximum daily load). Big and Smith Creeks are both tributaries to the Sandy River, but temperature data was not collected as part of the development of the TMDL. Continuous temperature loggers were installed for the first-time during summer 2016. This monitoring will continue in Big and Smith Creeks during the summer of 2023. Specific monitoring activities planned for FY23-24 are identified in the table below.

Annual Activities and Deliverables (Water Quality Monitoring)
Collect monthly samples in upper Beaver and Johnson Creeks. This will include laboratory analysis for fecal bacteria, total suspended solids, total phosphorous, and nitrate. Submit data to DEQ for trend analysis.
Install continuous temperature loggers in multiple locations in Beaver, Johnson, Big, and Smith creeks each April. Remove temperature loggers in the fall.
Analyze and report on water quality data in collaboration with other partners' monitoring efforts.

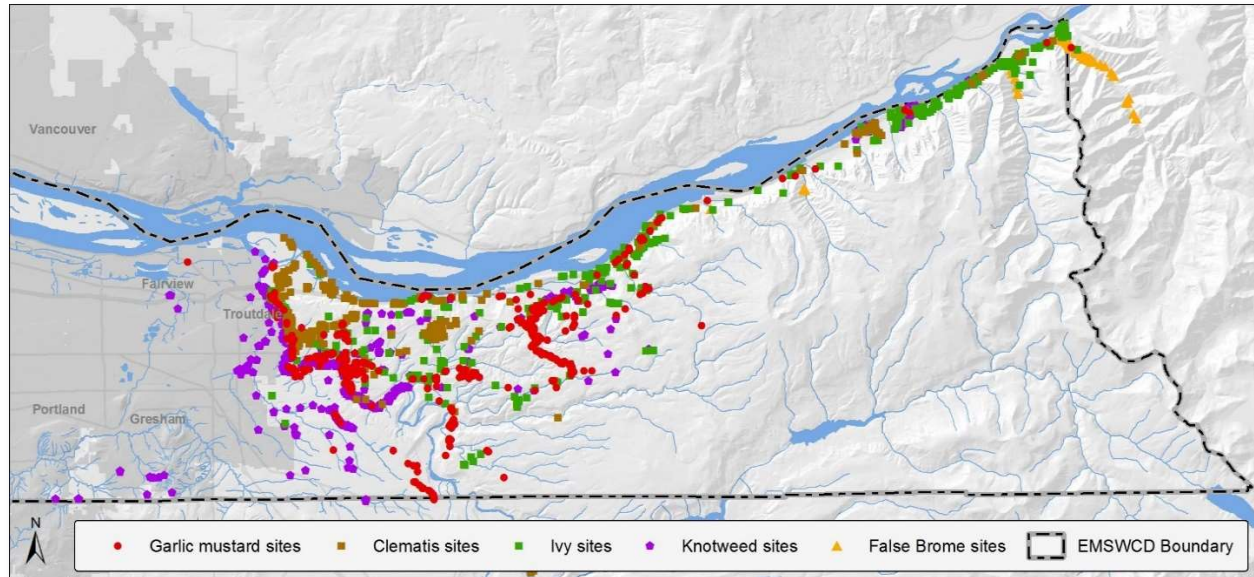
6.5 Weed Control

The spread of invasive noxious weed species can cause serious and nearly irreparable harm to natural ecosystems. To help address this problem, EMSWCD has created an invasive weed control program.



EMSWCD works with a wide range of partners to create and implement geographically explicit strategies for targeted weed species. Generally, EMSWCD’s approach to weed control has been to target the most ecologically damaging species in which there is a good probability of successful, localized eradication or regional containment. EMSWCD’s weed control efforts are generally undertaken in the Sandy River watershed and the Columbia River Gorge (see Map 5).

Map 5: EMSWCD Weed Control Locations



Working with the two local Cooperative Weed Management Areas active in the EMSWCD service area, likely future invasive weed threats are regularly identified to use an Early Detection and Rapid Response (EDRR) approach to prevent infestations. Staff survey for these weeds and respond to reported sightings to verify the identification and work with the landowners on any needed control.

In addition, weeds were identified that present a current threat to riparian areas and intact, native forests in the Sandy River watershed and the Columbia River Gorge. Target species include garlic mustard, knotweed, false brome, spurge laurel, English ivy, and old man’s beard. A variety of control methods are used based on a strategic, integrated pest management approach customized to the biology of each target species. EMSWCD staff survey for new infestations and monitor existing infestations to ensure control efforts are successful. Contracted crews are used to assist with control work.

During the summer and fall of 2017, the Eagle Creek fire burned in the Columbia River Gorge. Most of the burned area is owned by Oregon State Parks and the U.S. Forest Service within the Columbia Gorge National Scenic Area. EMSWCD has entered into agreements with both entities to continue to control invasive weeds in the burn area that will impact the natural regeneration of forest.

Specific weed control program activities planned for FY23-24 are indicated in the table that follows.



Annual Activities and Deliverables (Weeds)
<i>Early detection and rapid response</i>
Verify, assess, and perform necessary control for all reports of species from the Early Detection & Rapid Response list.
<i>Control priority weeds</i>
Control 50% of known riparian knotweed infestations annually.
Annually control all accessible false brome infestations (acreage unknown due to Eagle Creek fire) to prevent establishment in the rural areas of the district.
Survey for new false brome populations along plausible vectors.
Control 20% of known infested acreage of spurge laurel annually, where access has been granted by the landowner.
Monitor/control existing ivy and clematis project sites in natural areas east of the Sandy River corridor. Maintain all sites undergoing post ivy/clematis infestation re-vegetation.
Annually control all known infestations of garlic mustard outside the containment zone a minimum of 2 times.
Survey outlying areas for spread of garlic mustard.
<i>Eagle Creek Fire response</i>
In collaboration with partners, undertake weed control in priority areas.
<i>Regional coordination</i>
Provide technical assistance with weed identification and control methods.
Participate in both the 4-county and Columbia Gorge Cooperative Weed Management Areas.
<i>Monitoring and evaluation</i>
Maintain weed location information in GIS, including abundance information for the target species.
Evaluate the need to alter the garlic mustard containment zone.

6.6 Headwaters Incubator Program

The EMSWCD works to maintain healthy, productive agricultural lands by promoting a sustainable agricultural economy and fostering a stewardship ethic. To this end, EMSWCD established the Headwaters Incubator Program (HIP) in 2013 at Headwaters Farm, a 60-acre property located outside of Gresham, Oregon (see Map 6).

HIP seeks to address the dwindling number of skilled, knowledgeable, and prepared beginning farmers and ensure that local farmland stays in production and is well-stewarded. To facilitate this, HIP leases land, equipment, infrastructure, and other agricultural resources to individuals who have farming experience but who lack a clear path to launching a viable farm business. HIP collaborates with Oregon State Extension Service, Rogue Farm Corps, Friends of Family Farmers, Oregon Tilth and others to offer educational opportunities for incubator farmers.



Map 6: Headwaters Farm



The Headwaters Incubator Program has the following program goals and objectives:

1. **Maintain and improve the natural resources at Headwaters Farm to support sustainable agriculture.**
2. **Facilitate the establishment of viable new farm businesses, that are good stewards of land.**
 - i. HIP attracts a quality applicant pool of at least 10 applicants a year.
 - ii. HIP graduates at least one or more farmers each year.
 - iii. 30% of HIP graduates operate within the district and 80% serve EMSWCD constituents.



3. **Increase the visibility of conservation farming practices.**
4. **Headwaters Farm facilities, infrastructure and equipment supports the HIP program and EMSWCD's mission.**

The strategies and actions pursued to realize these goals follow below.

6.6.1 Maintain and improve the natural resources

Conservation farming, including USDA-NRCS agricultural best management practices, is being applied at Headwaters Farm to maintain and improve soil health for use in agriculture, protect onsite and downstream natural resources, and demonstrate the connection between viable farm businesses and proper resource management. Various activities in FY23-24 will continue to build on existing conservation farming efforts, which are given in the table below.

Annual Activities and Deliverables (Natural Resources Management)
Conservation Planning Approach
Plan, implement and monitor a suite of practices that promote good stewardship, including: organic practices, cover cropping, nutrient management, integrated pest management, reduced and appropriately timed tillage, drip irrigation, soil compaction alleviation, among others.
Soil Health Improvements
Cover crop or silage tarp farmable areas of Headwaters Farm if not in production or being “stale-bedded” for nutsedge and other invasive weed management.
Soil samples taken for all fields in October, both in production or not, to help determine fertility needs and document change over time.
Manage invasive weeds.
Apply on-farm generated compost to fallowed fields.
Erosion and Stormwater Management
Install native plants and improve vegetative cover within a primary stormwater basin.
Irrigation efficiency
Work with incubator farmers to encourage appropriate irrigation amounts and methods.
Natural Habitat
Maintain existing pollinator habitat and hedgerows.
Infill plantings in existing pollinator hedgerows, as needed.

6.6.2 Headwaters Incubator Program

Now in its eleventh season, the Headwaters Incubator Program has grown into an established resource for new farmer development in the region. Since inception in 2013, HIP has grown steadily by adding new farm businesses while graduating participants after five years. For the 2023 season there are 11 farm businesses consisting of 13 farmers participating in HIP. One farm business is expected to graduate at the end of the 2023 season.

While the HIP program is part of the Rural Lands Program, HIP has its own budget. The Headwaters Farm Incubator Program's (HIP) FY23-24 budget is \$899,118 and includes the following 2.5 FTE (full-time-equivalent) staff:



- One FTE Headwaters Farm Program Manager
- One FTE Headwaters Farm Operations Assistant
- 0.5 FTE Headwaters Farm Facility Manager

Recruiting farmers into HIP is accomplished via an outreach campaign focused on engaging prospective farmers, program partners, and the public. These outreach activities will be used to target at least ten applicants for the 2024 growing season, of which new operations will be accepted into HIP during FY23-24. Besides the number of qualified applicants, the amount of farmland and capacity of facilities, attrition rate, and early graduations are other factors that impact the number of new farms that will be accepted into the incubator program for the 2024 season.

EMSWCD seeks to retain a majority of program graduates within the district. To achieve the full potential of HIP, successful placement of HIP graduates onto suitable land will need to occur to ensure they continue to grow their fledgling farm businesses away from Headwaters Farm. To effectively manage this transition, farmers nearing graduation (year three and beyond) work with EMSWCD staff and HIP partners to explore viable long-term options for obtaining farmland that is suitable for their operations, either through purchase or lease. Specific projects and activities related to the Headwaters Incubator Program planned for FY23-24 are given on the table below.

Annual Activities and Deliverables (HIP)
HIP Program
Update the Farmer's Manual.
Provide a shared market booth at the Portland State University Farmers Market.
HIP Farmer recruitment and retention
Obtain at least 10 HIP applicants for the 2024 growing season.
HIP Farmer Support and Training
Meet with each farm business mid-season and at the conclusion of the calendar year.
Conduct a new farmer orientation.
Tractor safety and operation training.
BCS farmer operation trainings.
Individualized nutrient management trainings to any interested HIP Farm.
Provide free access to Changing Hands Workshop series.
Provide free access to Rogue Farm Corps' Portland Chapter workshops.
Provide free access for up to five HIP farmers to Rogue Farm Corps' Farm Launch Program.
Provide free access to the Oregon Small Farms Conference.
Provide free access to Small Farm School.
Offer entry-level personalized farm business management supports to newer incubator farmers in years 1-2 (offered by Geoffrey Van at Rogue Farm Corps).
Offer free advanced-level personalized farm business management supports to incubator farmers in years 3-5 (offered by Tanya Murry at Oregon Tilth).
Offer free soil health and production support (offered by Jen Aron of Blue Raven Farm).
Maintain a Community Board with information provided by each farm and farmer.
HIP Graduate Support
Work with graduating farmers to identify best landing options for their farm businesses.



Maintain ongoing relationship with HIP graduates and connect them to various support services.
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Conduct survey of HIP graduates.

6.6.3 Outreach and Education

The conservation farming practices at Headwaters Farm offers a unique opportunity to demonstrate good land stewardship. Site tours of Headwaters Farm are offered and undertaken throughout the year. Conservation farming practices are also promoted through articles, the EMSWCD website, and social media outlets. EMSWCD anticipates the acquisition of an electric tractor during FY23-24, which will be a strong focal point of outreach.

In addition to the promotion of USDA-NRCS conservation agriculture practices, much of the outreach on Headwaters Farm and the incubator program geared toward the general public will be focused on connecting constituents to the broad suite of EMSWCD's services and to generate enthusiasm for and understanding of conservation. Outreach activities planned for FY23-24 are included in the table below.

Headwaters Farm staff will work closely with the new Community Outreach and Education team to conduct the following activities:

Annual Activities and Deliverables (Outreach and Education)
Highlight and promote key conservation efforts by keeping an active social media presence and updating the HIP page on the EMSWCD website regularly.
Lead tours at Headwaters Farm for prospective farmers, program partners, and the general public.
Host a small farm innovative tool workshop.
Work with a consultant to develop and implement a broad HIP marketing campaign.
Explore the opportunities, challenges, and needs for HIP to serve as an effective launchpad for career farmworkers.
Finalize and promote the new informational signage for the Dianna Pope Natural Area.

6.6.4 Headwaters Facilities, Infrastructure and Equipment

Headwaters Farm continues to be improved to best accommodate incubator farmers and enable the efficient management of the HIP program. Farm infrastructure and other site improvements that are planned for FY23-24 are indicated in the table below.

Annual Activities and Deliverables (Facilities, Infrastructure and Equipment)
Permit, procure, and set up a new farm office.
Remove the current farm office from Headwaters Farm and decommission the septic system.
Conduct driveway maintenance throughout the farm to address potholes and improper road drainage.
Procure a roller-crimper.
Procure a Soletac E70N electric tractor.
Conduct maintenance of farm vehicles and equipment.
Conduct facilities, road and path safety inspections and address issues that arise.



6.7 Land Legacy Program

The Land Legacy Program focuses on protecting working farmland and properties that possess significant natural resources and/or access to nature opportunities. Working farmland is the principal priority and focus of the program at this time, as there no other organizations currently working to protect this important resource in the EMSWCD service area. Conservation interests (fee-simple interest, easement interest) can be acquired, retained, and managed over the long-term directly by EMSWCD, or property interests can be acquired and transferred to partner agencies, other organizations or private landowners for long-term management.

EMSWCD has established specific goals for the Land Legacy Program. From 2019-2024, the Land Legacy Program will:

- Protect agricultural land east of the Urban Growth Boundary, excluding the urban reserve.
- Complete **approximately 15 farmland transactions** (fee acquisitions, working farmland easement acquisitions, or disposition of properties subject to a working farmland easement).
- **One to three transactions will help provide access for beginning farmers.**
- Complete transactions that address farmland access inequities by providing access for individuals from communities that have been negatively impacted by racial discrimination and/or dispossession.
- Farmland protection will incorporate when possible agricultural practice improvements, affordability measures and, productivity requirements.
- **Help partners protect one to two urban farms and community gardens projects** through financial and technical assistance.
- Protect priority habitats in the district by helping partners protect areas identified in conservation-related plans.
- **Fund approximately one to two natural area transactions.**
- **Assist partners in establishing new parks and natural areas** in underserved communities.
- **Fund approximately one to two access to nature land transactions.**

The EMSWCD Land Conservation Fund is a dedicated fund for the purchase, management and stewardship of district working farmland conservation easements and fee-simple interests, and for assisting partners in the acquisition related costs of conservation interests. For FY24-25, \$7,085,154 is available in the Land Conservation Fund to support Land Legacy Program conservation projects (this amount is not net of commitments for land transactions in progress).

6.7.1 Working Farmland Protection

Acquisition work for FY23-24 will continue to prioritize the acquisition of working farmland easements where possible, while recognizing that valuation issues require resolution in order to increase interest in this option. Fee acquisition opportunities will also be given strong consideration when properties are at a threat of conversion to non-agricultural use and/or access opportunities may be created. Opportunities to advance more secure tenure for farmers from communities that have experienced racial discrimination and/or dispossession will remain a programmatic focus (via existing or possible new EMSWCD holdings and partnership projects). The goal is 3 transactions for FY23-24. More specific details on the working farmland protection activities for FY23-24 are in the table below.



Annual Activities and Deliverables (Working Farmland Protection)
Reactively evaluate opportunities and pursue where appropriate; bring compelling farmland conservation opportunities to the LLC/Board for consideration as capacity permits.
Purchase of a new farm property.
Continue co-creation of farm access equity strategies with community. May entail continuing Advisory Group and/or other strategies.
If there is another project lead/distributed and feasible workload, assist to a limited extent in creating on-demand Farm Succession Planning resources.

6.7.2 Agricultural Land Stewardship

EMSWCD agricultural property interests are managed in such a way as to protect and enhance EMSWCD's investment and mission related outcomes. Current easement interests include Oxbow Farm, the Foltz property and the 322nd Ave Farm property. Properties EMSWCD holds in fee (exclusive of Headwaters Farm) are the Gordon Creek Farm, Mainstem Farm and Big Creek Farm. Agricultural Management Plans are held on the Oxbow, 322nd Ave. and Mainstem Farms. Stewardship activities planned for FY23-24 are included in the table below.

Annual Activities and Deliverables (Agricultural Land Stewardship)
Working farmland easement interests monitored and managed.
Agricultural / Habitat management plans monitored and managed.
Mainstem agricultural management plan updated.
Big Creek Farm Improvements - roof drainage implemented, options for field stormwater management identified.
322nd Erosion Improvements plan developed and advanced.
Fee lands managed and monitored, including leases.

6.7.3 Natural Habitat Protection

Over the next five years, the EMSWCD has committed to protecting priority habitats in the district by helping partners protect areas identified in conservation-related plans (including, but not limited to, acquisition, protection, and restoration plans). FY23-24 activities related to natural habitat protection are identified in the table below.

Annual Activities and Deliverables (Natural Resource Lands Protection)
Support partner protection efforts financially with partner entity in the lead, as opportunities arise.
Close out Nestwood project.

6.7.4 Natural Area Stewardship

EMSWCD currently owns and manages one natural area, the Dianna Pope Natural Area (DPNA) located at Headwaters Farm. A five-year site conservation plan for the DPNA was adopted by the board in FY17-18. EMSWCD also undertakes the management of natural areas associated with conservation easement interests, including undertaking restoration activities on the forested natural area of Oxbow Farm and within the riparian and adjacent areas on the Foltz property. The riparian restoration on the District owned Gordon Creek and Mainstem properties are included as part of the StreamCare Program (See Section 6.2). Activities related to natural area stewardship planned for FY23-24 are included in the table below.



Annual Activities and Deliverables (Natural Area Stewardship / DPNA)
Undertake weed control and plant maintenance, in-fill planting where required, in the DPNA and the Oxbow and Foltz Natural Areas.
Conduct regular wildlife surveys in DPNA, install and analyze wildlife camera footage as desired.

6.7.5 New Park and Natural Area Establishment

Over the next five years, EMSWCD is committed to helping partners establish new parks and natural areas in underserved communities within the district. FY23-24 activities related to new park and natural area establishment to facilitate access to nature are included in the table below.

Annual Activities and Deliverables (Access to Nature)
Support partner protection efforts financially with partner entity in the lead, especially those targeted to park deficient and/or under-served communities.
Close out Nestwood Project.

7. Community Outreach and Engagement

Community Outreach and Engagement is integral to EMSWCD's ability to build relationships and deepen trust with our partners and constituencies. This new team will develop and implement communication and outreach strategies that increase public awareness of the District and ensure that people in our district connect with our mission, find our programs and resources accessible and relevant, and benefit from our investments. The team will work across all the District's programs supporting partnerships and engagement with residents, nonprofit organizations, landowners, and land managers to improve soil health and water quality, preserve farmland, reduce climate impacts, support more sustainable agriculture, provide outdoor and garden education programs, and restore fish and wildlife habitat.

Despite strong team efforts, our communications and outreach has been siloed, not readily accessible, and not reaching many we need to reach. We've created a single team, placing staff members with the background, skills and experience needed to advance our Community Outreach and Engagement efforts. Together they have the responsibility and resources to develop a district-wide strategic approach to our communications activities that will benefit all our program areas. Deep knowledge of our urban and rural communities on this team will inform their strategies and approach.

Together with staff from each Program Area, the Community Outreach and Engagement Team will help design, lead and implement outreach and engagement activities for the District that are creative, relevant and compelling.

The Community Outreach and Engagement Program FY23-24 budget is \$635,315 and includes the following 3.5 FTE (full-time-equivalent) staff.:

- Community Outreach and Engagement Program Supervisor
- Senior Conservationist (planner)
- Senior Outreach & Education Specialist
- 0.5 FTE Outreach & Education position (currently not defined and vacant)

7.1 Inventory and Planning

First-year activities for this new team include taking stock and gaining an overall understanding of the organization's past efforts related to our community engagement and outreach efforts and activities.



The team will work across the organization to compile outreach and engagement plans from each individual team and program area; inventory resources and activities already planned and/or underway and assess the district's relevant strengths, weaknesses and opportunities. With the help of an outside contractor, the team will develop a communications plan and editorial calendar and strategy.

Annual Activities and Deliverables (Inventory and Planning)
With the help of an outside contractor, develop a Strategic Communications Plan for EMSWCD.
Review the organization's past efforts related to our community engagement and outreach efforts and activities.
Compile outreach and engagement plans from each individual team and program area.
Inventory resources and activities already planned and/or underway.
Recommend communications strategies and tactics, with guidance on specific communications channels and tools.

7.2 Program Area Outreach and Engagement Support

Increase the visibility of programs and resources that are available to residents by supporting the promotion of educational workshops, presentations, community events, email outreach, social media, EMSWCD's website and direct mail communications.

Special initiatives this year include assisting with the design and implementation of a robust and strategic outreach program in partnerships with the Land Legacy Program Manager using the results of a landowner survey, developing a campaign for promoting the Headwaters Incubator Program as well as ongoing outreach for CLIP, StreamCare and outreach for the Urban Lands and Grants programs.

The team will also support program evaluation to better measure the success/impact of program activities/offerings. This includes continued support for the Urban Lands workshop evaluation efforts and expanding the evaluation plan to support additional UL program areas as needed.

Annual Activities and Deliverables (Outreach and Engagement Support)
Coordinate and support workshops, presentations, tabling at community and other events for urban and rural residents.
Design and implement outreach using direct mail, advertising, email outreach, social media and website communications in partnership with Program Area Teams.
Work with the Land Legacy Program Manager to design and implement a robust and strategic outreach program for agricultural land conservation.
Design and execute an outreach and marketing campaign promoting the Headwaters Incubator Program and recruitment of new participants.
Update and implement PIC Grant Program outreach plan.
Support community, staff, and Board members engagement in updating Grant Program Goals.
Continue to identify opportunities to engage and build relationships with rural BIPOC community members and groups.
Conduct an annual outreach campaign to recruit eligible landowners for the StreamCare program.



7.3 Communications Standards and Practices

The core Community Outreach and Engagement Team will work in partnership with an expanded team across the organization to establish systems and standards that will guide outreach and communication with internal and external audiences.

Together, this extended team will establish an editorial calendar, web and social media guidelines and protocols for all team members. The team will consider refreshing branding and identify guidelines as part of the strategic communications planning. The team will also focus on decision-making, QA/QC and workflow processes.

Annual Activities and Deliverables (Communications Standards and Practices)
Establish an organization-wide editorial calendar in partnership with Program Area Teams.
Establish web and social media guidelines and protocols for all team members.
Review brand and identify guidelines as part of the strategic communications planning; update if needed.
Establish internal decision-making and communication processes and expectations.
Establish QA/QC and workflow processes.

7.4 Systems and Infrastructure

In partnership with Finance and Operations, the Community Outreach and Engagement Team will be integral members of the project team responsible for developing and implementing new collaboration tools such as a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system and developing a new website for the District. Both of these projects will benefit from the earlier inventory and planning work which will inform our brand, voice, editorial and design standards.

Annual Activities and Deliverables (Systems and Infrastructure)
Work with F&O Team to plan for and implement a CRM for EMSWCD.
Learn to use and promote the CRM within the organization.
Work with F&O Team on designing and creating a new website for the District.
Establish intake and workflow systems for tracking project timelines and deliverables.

7.5 Equity and Access

This new team will help fulfill the District's Equity Action Plan and our goals of developing trust with our constituents and working in partnership with organizations and individuals. By understanding the barriers to access and centering the needs of people with low incomes, communities of color, and other historically marginalized communities, we will better serve all our constituents.

Developing and using standards for accessibility in our events, online and print publications, presentation materials and other outreach and engagement activities and products will be central to the work of this team.



Annual Activities and Deliverables (Equity and Access)
Help develop and update EMSWCD standards for accessibility in our events, online and print publications, presentation materials and other outreach and engagement activities.
Support Program Areas and other EMSWCD initiatives to provide programming and information in other languages.
Support Spanish-language initiatives across Program Areas.
Engage community members and partners to evaluate outreach methods and materials and identify needed changes to improve access across the district.

7.6 Grants

The Grants Program provides funding to nonprofit and community-based organizations, schools and educational institutions, and tribal governments for activities that are aligned with EMSWCD’s mission, and strategic plan. EMSWCD established the following six goals for the Grants Program from 2019-2024.

1. **Complement other EMSWCD program efforts in water quality, soil health, habitat restoration and sustainable agriculture.**
2. **Increase environmental literacy of EMSWCD residents.**
3. **Increase capacity and strengthen organizational structures needed to advance equitable conservation outcomes.**
4. **Establish and support sustainable school and community gardens throughout the urban areas of the EMSWCD service area.**
5. **Increase the urban tree canopy and support a sustainable urban forest.**
6. **Increase conservation benefits for communities and populations experiencing disparities in environmental health, environmental education, and natural amenities.**

To realize these goals, EMSWCD administers a variety of competitive and non-competitive grant types. The Grants Program is directly responsible for management and administration of Partners in Conservation grants and Small Projects and Community Events grants; provides administrative support for Strategic Partnership Agreement grants; and advice to the Cooperative Landowner Incentive Program. Starting in FY22-23, the Grant Program began providing management and administrative support for Equity-Focused Strategic Opportunities Grants designed to advance the district’s equity goals. Further details on each of these grant programs, as well as the funding amounts associated with each grant type, are given below in sections 7.6.2 to 7.6.6.

7.6.1 Outreach and Engagement

The Community Outreach & Engagement Team will support the Grants Program in outreach efforts that reflect a commitment to serving and reaching EMSWCD’s diverse communities. The Grant Program will continue to identify and support new applicants and grantees by breaking down barriers and providing one-on-one technical assistance. Ongoing engagement with grantees and other community-based organizations will help guide improvements in and the future direction of the grant program. FY23-24 activities related to the Grants Program outreach and engagement are included in the table below.



Annual Activities and Deliverables (Outreach and Engagement)
Update and implement PIC Grant Program outreach plan.
Engage with community, staff and Board members to develop a new set of five-year Grant Program Goals.

7.6.2 Partners in Conservation

Partners in Conservation (PIC) grants provide funding to support conservation projects and educational efforts. Total funding available for PIC for FY23-24 is \$1,200,000 of which \$950,000 is for new awards this fiscal, and the balance for outstanding payment on grants awarded in previous cycles. The Board directed \$1,050,000 for new awards in the FY 23-24 budget including \$100,000 in funding received through a non-competitive grant agreement with NRCS's People's Garden initiative. The minimum grant award for an individual PIC grant is \$5,000 while the maximum grant award was reduced in the 2023 PIC cycle to \$70,000 based on feedback from the grant review committee. PIC grants support projects that are up to two years in duration.

The PIC grant application, award, and implementation process is administered on an annual cycle, beginning in December of each year. The PIC Grant Review Committee, which consists of members of the EMSWCD Board and external stakeholders, is responsible for reviewing the PIC grant applications and making recommendations to the EMSWCD Board. The Board makes the final decision on the grants awarded. During FY23-24, EMSWCD will administer 24 new PIC funding agreements for projects approved by the Board.

Specific activities and deliverables associated with the PIC grants in FY23-24 are included in the table below.

Annual Activities and Deliverables (PIC Grants)
<i>Administer PIC Grant Program</i>
Update PIC grant application and supporting materials, receive applications. Recruit Grant Review Committee members.
Conduct due diligence, prepare for and host Grant Review Committee meeting, make recommendations to the Board for PIC grant awards.
Contract with grantees for approximately 20 PIC awards.
Ensure compliance with NRCS funding from Our People's Garden initiative.
<i>Update PIC to reflect new Strategic Plan priorities</i>
Revise PIC application questions to reflect new Strategic Plan priorities including equity and climate action.
Update PIC scoring rubric for PIC Grant Committee review process.
Ensure funding for grants that increase conservation benefits for communities and populations experiencing disparities in environmental health, environmental education, and natural amenities.
Ensure funding for grants that are led, designed by or primarily benefit Black, Indigenous or other communities of color, low-income communities, or other historically marginalized groups.
Ensure funding for grants that build resilience to climate change impacts, mitigate climate change through carbon sequestration or reducing emissions, and/or educate the public about climate change.

7.6.3 Small Projects and Community Events

Small Projects and Community Events (SPACE) grants are increased slightly to provide up to \$2,500 per grant to support conservation projects, community learning and events that promote conservation. Total funding available for FY23-24 is \$102,000. The types of projects and events that are eligible for



SPACE grants include on-the-ground restoration and conservation projects, pollution prevention, education of youth and/or adults, and community events focused on improving the public's understanding of natural resource conservation, climate change and sustainable agricultural practices.

The SPACE grant application, award, and implementation process is administered on a monthly cycle, administered through an online grant management platform, ZoomGrants.

Specific activities and deliverables associated with the SPACE grants in FY23-24 are given in the table below.

Annual Activities and Deliverables (SPACE Grants)
Fund projects that address restoration of urban habitat, stormwater management, water quality, and other on-the-ground conservation needs.
Fund projects that upgrade and/or maintain community and school gardens.
Fund projects that contain an educational component: hands-on involvement of students or volunteers; work skills training (restoration, gardening, sustainable agriculture); and/or demonstration/interpretive elements.
Fund community events focused on conservation and/or agricultural issues that reach significant numbers of EMSWCD residents.
Recommend SPACE program updates or changes aligned with direction set by district's new Strategic Plan.

7.6.4 Strategic Partnership Agreements

In June of 2016, EMSWCD entered into a five-year Strategic Partnership Agreement (SPA) with the three watershed councils operating within the EMSWCD's service area (Columbia Slough Watershed Council, Johnson Creek Watershed Council, and Sandy River Watershed Council). EMSWCD had supported the watershed councils in the past through both PIC and SPACE grants, as well as regular line-item grants to support their operations. Through this agreement, EMSWCD provides general operating support and funding that supports the overall strength and impact of the watershed councils within our district. SPA's FY23-24 budget is \$205,000. With the dissolution of the Sandy Basin Watershed Council in 2021, funding is available this year for only two of the three watershed councils under this agreement and is budgeted at \$170,000 in FY23-24 with the balance going towards prior outstanding commitments.

Annual Activities and Deliverables (SPA Grants)
Support SPA partners; administer individual agreements: reimbursements, reporting and electronic files.
Recommend SPA program updates or changes aligned with direction set by district's new Strategic Plan.

7.6.5 Equity Focused Strategic Opportunity Grants

Strategic Conservation Investment Equity Focused Grants are uniquely positioned within EMSWCD's grants program to support organizations helping to advance EMSWCD's strategic goals by addressing economic and environmental disparities in areas such as access to land, access to nature, environmental education, or environmental health, and where barriers to current funding programs exist. Funding available for Equity Focused Grants is budgeted at \$75,000 in FY23-24. The Grant Program Manager will support the administration of these new grants in partnership with individual project managers.



Annual Activities and Deliverables (Equity-Focused Opportunity Grants)
Recommend pilot program guidelines to Board of Directors for approval.
Support development of project proposals; administer individual agreements: reimbursements, reporting and electronic files.

7.6.6 Cooperative Landowner Incentive Program

Cooperative Landowner Incentive Program (CLIP) grants provide financial cost-share assistance to private landowners and land managers who are receiving technical assistance from EMSWCD. Total funding available for FY23-24 is \$200,000 for new awards and \$50,000 for existing prior awards. CLIP normally provides up to 75% cost-share to assist with the costs of installing EMSWCD-approved conservation practices that address issues such as soil erosion or water quality. The CLIP grant application, award, and implementation process is managed by the Rural Lands Program and Urban Lands Program. Refer to the Technical Assistance sections 5.2 and 6.1 for further information.

8. Finance and Operations

The Finance and Operations Program oversees administrative functions that cut across all EMSWCD programs and activities. The major functional areas of the Program include:

- Budget and Finance
- Contract Management
- Board and Committee Management
- Human Resources/Personnel Coordination & Recordkeeping
- Facilities, Fleet and Equipment Management
- Information Technology
- Office Administration

The Finance and Operations Program FY23-24 budget is \$1,599,130 which includes funding for the following 5.5 FTEs:

- Executive Director;
- Chief of Finance and Operations (CFO);
- Operations Administrative Assistant;
- Facilities Manager (0.5 FTE);
- Information Technology & Analyst Specialist;
- Executive Assistant

Sections 8.1 – 8.7 below provide further explanation and a summary of planned activities for FY23-24.

8.1 Budget and Financial Management

The CFO coordinates budget preparation, tracks and reports expenditures, oversees annual audits, manages EMSWCD's bank accounts and investments, oversees procurement and contracting, and develops and oversees all office and operations related safety protocols and guidelines.

A financial audit for FY22-23 will start soon after the end of the fiscal year and is anticipated to be completed by November 2023. Budget discussions for fiscal year FY24-25 will likely begin in January 2023 by evaluating program success during the first six months of the performance period. A draft



budget is prepared by staff in January and February. Budget Committee meetings generally take place in March and April. With oversight and guidance provided by The Tax Supervising and Conservation Commission (TSCC), EMSWCD staff will work with the EMSWCD Budget Committee to prepare the budget for approval in May 2024 and adoption in June 2024, ahead of implementation beginning for the next fiscal year in July 2024.

Annual Activities and Deliverables (Budget and Finance)
Complete FY22-23 budget audit.
Track FY22-24 budget and produce budget to actual reports.
Develop FY24-25 budget.
Review policies and recommend changes as needed.
Review and monitor EMSWCD contractual agreements.
Review bookkeeping & payroll processes, implement improvements as needed.
Coordinate and oversee Williams Office building modifications project.
Aid in budgetary planning and impact related to operationalized strategic plan initiatives.
Monitor payroll, time off, cash flows, bank accounts, transfers.
Develop bank reconciliation reports with bookkeeper for Treasurer review.

8.2 Board and Committee Management

EMSWCD Board and committee meetings are public forums within which policies, major strategies and actions, and budgets are determined. The Finance and Operations program serves the needs of the Board members, committee members, the Executive Director and the public in preparing and hosting effective Board and committee meetings. The Executive Assistant serves as the “clerk” for the Board of Directors and committees, and in doing so helps to schedule and coordinate the implementation of all public meetings.

Annual Activities and Deliverables (Board and Committee Management)
Schedule, notice, prepare logistics, create in-person and virtual meeting environments, distribute materials for, and host 12 Board of Directors meetings.
Take and prepare minutes and maintain all records for 12 Board of Directors meetings.
Schedule, notice, prepare logistics, distribute materials for, and help organize approximately 16 committee meetings.
Take and prepare minutes, and maintain all records for, approximately 16 committee meetings.
Provide direct support and assistance to the Executive Director, and indirect support to the Board of Directors.
Assist in the creation of the Annual Report E-Zine.

8.3 Human Resources/Personnel Coordination & Recordkeeping

The Finance and Operations Program maintains a human resource & personnel system, procedures, and elements to service 21.5 full-time and part-time staff to help ensure staff can effectively carry out their public duties.



Program goals for human resources include:

- 1. Promote equity and embrace the diversity of humanity of our workplace.**
- 2. Recruit, develop and retain a professional, diverse, and responsive workforce.**

The Chief of Finance & Operations along with the Operations Administrative Assistant serves as EMSWCD's HR/personnel representative, and in so doing maintains personnel records, enrolls, monitors, and explains employee benefits, coordinates with hiring managers regarding vacancies, and responds to public inquiries regarding positions, in collaboration with the Executive Director and external HR partner. The specific human resources/personnel management activities and deliverables for FY23-24 are identified in the table below.

Annual Activities and Deliverables (HR/Personnel)
Review health and other insurance benefits to determine if changes or enhancements are needed for upcoming fiscal year.
Communicate and coordinate annual open-enrollment duties with CFO and staff.
Research personnel-related issues such as state and federal employment law information/changes that might affect EMSWCD.
Provide support to contracted HR service/partner as requested.
Maintain confidential personnel files.
Assist with the recruitment and hiring process for new staff as requested.
Onboard new staff members upon hire and assist with offboarding departing staff.
Assist CFO & Bookkeeper on payables and payroll processes.

8.4 Facilities, Fleet, and Equipment Management

EMSWCD owns and/or operates several facilities, vehicles, and equipment as part of its daily operations. These items are maintained in a safe, functional, and effective condition. The major facilities owned and managed by EMSWCD include: 1) the headquarters office located at N. Williams Avenue in Portland, Oregon; 2) Headwaters Farm located on Orient Drive in Gresham, Oregon; and 3) additional agricultural properties acquired through the Land Legacy Program. Most of the staff are based at the headquarters office, which consists of a large, restored house, nature scaped yard, and includes several 'green' features (i.e., pervious pavement, rain gardens, and eco-roof) that attract tours throughout the year. Headwaters Farm is the site used for the Headwaters Incubator Program (HIP), the management of which is addressed in Section 6.6 of this plan. The farm properties managed under the Land Legacy Program are addressed in Section 6.7.

The Facilities Manager oversees the general condition, maintenance, and repair of EMSWCD owned buildings and other infrastructure, vehicles, and equipment. For minor issues, the Facilities Manager may undertake maintenance and repair activities themselves. Many tasks, however, will be contracted out due to the timing, scale, or technical nature of the issue. There are numerous daily, weekly, and monthly routine activities related to facilities, fleet, and equipment management.

There are several upgrade projects anticipated for the headquarters office this year which include virtual meeting spaces, technology upgrades, smaller meeting rooms, some first-floor and second-floor redesigns. The significant Facilities, Fleet, and Equipment Management tasks and projects planned for FY23-24 are listed below.



Annual Activities and Deliverables (Facilities, Fleet and Equipment)
<i>Facilities</i>
Assist with office upgrade projects as they occur.
General maintenance of building and facilities at Williams Ave. Headquarters office.
Stripping and curb stop repaint of District Headquarters' parking lot.
General maintenance of buildings, equipment, and facilities at Headwaters Farm.
Assist in other capital projects and planning as needed at Headwaters Farm.
<i>Fleet and Equipment</i>
Ensure electric vehicles and charging stations are maintained and operating efficiently.
General maintenance of two district owned trucks.

8.5 Information Technology Management

EMSWCD owns and operates the standard office and field-related information technology (IT) tools and systems necessary to complete its mission. The goal of IT management is to ensure that staff, Board members, and committee members have access to and are proficient in using highly functional IT systems and equipment.

IT responsibilities are shared between the Finance and Operations staff and supported by a contracted IT service provider. In collaboration with one another, they acquire and maintain EMSWCD-owned phones, computers, tablets, projectors, recording and other devices, maintain the local office network and related infrastructure and hardware, and purchase and maintain various software solutions being used. Significant IT related projects and activities for FY23-24 are identified in the table below.

Annual Activities and Deliverables (Information Technology)
Conduct IT support to ensure properly functioning equipment and timely troubleshooting of technology problems.
Liaise with contracted IT Services to maintain EMSWCD network, security, and ability to work both remotely and in the office.
Maintain office network and ensure connectivity, including maintaining staff connections to office network and files via secure VPN, internet and internal network/Wi-Fi stability and speed, and all related hardware and software.
Research and implement cost effective technology improvements and upgrades to the conference room(s) as meetings become conducted in-office.
Research and implement a solution to increase file storage space on the company drive.
Purchase and set up scheduled replacement computers for staff as needed. Work to repurpose and maintain older computers as possible to extend their lifecycle and conserve resources.
Assess IT infrastructure and equipment upgrades and needs, and purchase and implement as deemed cost effective and necessary.

8.6 Information Technology and Analytics

Throughout FY23-24, the Information Technology and Analytic Specialist will meet the day-to-day needs of EMSWCD programs through efforts such as: website development and maintenance; assisting with print, digital and online media creation, editing and outreach; direct physical mailers and digital mailers; campaign and activity/event analysis and metrics; and maintaining and further developing EMSWCD's branding identity and guidelines.



The Information Technology and Analytic Specialist implements or assists regularly with activities related to EMSWCD campaigning and outward-facing media, including website communications, social media outreach (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn), developing graphic materials and templates for public informational purposes such as brochures and postcards, newspaper/news media coverage, articles, and advertisements, and capturing and reporting on analytics of campaigns and events. Major IT and Analytic Specialist projects and activities for FY23-24 are identified in the table below.

Annual Activities and Deliverables (IT and Analytics)
Collect and analyze information on advertising, website and social media analytics, other campaign activities and costs, and on overall effectiveness of program campaigns.
Develop, revise, maintain and add content to the website.
Assess potential contractors to work with on a website audit, and work with one or more to assess, improve and/or redesign the website.
Assist in setup, design, data migration, rollout, and staff training/use of organizational CRM system to organize and track staff contacts and activities, and facilitate further collaboration between staff, programs and constituents.
Manage social media platforms and assist in outreach to drive traffic to EMSWCD website, encourage event participation and promote conservation practices.
Coordinate and conduct media outreach in collaboration with program staff.
Track direct outcomes of program campaigns, action-driven website content (traffic, downloads, registrations, etc.). Develop and maintain analytic tools and metric collection for events including the plant sale and other campaigns.
Manage and respond to any potential crises and events affecting work, staff and/or IT infrastructure.

8.7 Office Administration

General office administration and operations are overseen by the CFO and Operations Administrative Assistant with assistance by other Finance and Operations staff. Office administration related projects and activities for FY23-24 are identified in the table below.

Annual Activities and Deliverables (Office Administration)
General office support and public reception (when the location is reopened to the public).
Answer emails and telephone messages from the public, and respond to requests for information.
Ensure the records management in accordance with Oregon public records law.
Establish and maintain public access to Board and Committee information.
Provide assistance as needed to all staff working remotely and at workplace.
Assist with research & cost comparisons for vendors and equipment to maintain cost effectiveness and quality.
Coordinate materials for meetings, training sessions, and other activities of the organization.
Assist other programs with events operational support as necessary.