



Thurston
Conservation
District



EST 1948

2024
Annual Report



Staff visited Wolf Haven International to learn about their conservation efforts and how that intersects with our work.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

2	Message from our Leadership
3	Recognition of Partners
4	2024 Community Award Recipients
5	2024 Natural Resource Conservation Highlights
7	Resilient Communities, Ready for the Future
8	Growing Communities Through Community Gardens
9	The Power of Voluntary Conservation
10	Discovering the Magic of Hedgerows
11	Engineering the Future of Salmon on the Skookumchuck
13	2024 Community & Youth Education Highlights
15	Grower's Conference Highlight
16	Collaborative Research to Support Oregon spotted frog
17	Investing in the Future of Conservation
18	Conservation & Education Center Update
19	New Staff in 2024
20	2024 Budget Overview
21	Board of Supervisors
22	Staff Information

The mission of Thurston Conservation District is to educate and assist the citizens of Thurston County in the management of natural resources for the benefit of present and future generations, inspiring voluntary, incentive-based conservation practices.



Thurston
Conservation District

MESSAGE FROM OUR LEADERSHIP

**TJ Johnson, Board
of Supervisors Chair**



We celebrated tremendous successes in 2024 and are excited about what the future brings to Thurston Conservation District!

Most notably, in partnership with our community members, we secured critical local Rates and Charges funding to further target the unique conservation needs of Thurston County. These allow TCD to target programs and services most needed by our community members. In addition, for every \$1 collected through Rates and Charges, TCD brings \$10 of competitive state and federal funds to our area! Prior to securing Rates and Charges funding, TCD completed a thorough audit of its financial practices in partnership with the Washington State Auditor's Office. The audit resulted in no findings, demonstrating our ongoing commitment to ensuring that TCD uses public resources wisely, and in accordance with all applicable state laws and best financial practices.

**Sarah Moorehead,
Executive Director**



We celebrated completion of another phase of our largest restoration project to date! We completed the in-water construction of 56 large wood structures to create salmon habitat along 2.5 miles of the Skookumchuck River, in partnership with Riverbend Ranch! This project, made possible through the Chehalis Basin Strategy, is just the beginning of large-scale restoration possibilities for aquatic species in the Chehalis Basin.

Looking into 2025, TCD will remediate 120 acres of invasive weeds, plant 112 acres of riparian buffer, and install of livestock exclusion fence and restricted cattle ford infrastructure. We are so grateful for our passionate land stewards, like the Jensen Family, who live and breath conservation and agriculture and demonstrate how they work together to ensure a thriving future for both people and the planet!

We also reached new audiences, with new partners, as we began the development of a South Thurston Community Wildfire Protection Plan. This plan pulls together all stakeholders in the region to discuss how we can prepare, mitigate, and recover from the devastating impacts of wildfire. These conversations have provided valuable insights to all who interface with the landscape when faced with natural disasters, from emergency management and fire authorities, to rural homeowner's associations and small cities, to farmers and ranchers, conservation organizations, and more. In the future, TCD will be looking for investments from Washington State to support wildfire preparedness efforts and support the implementation of this plan to help our community defend against wildfire.

Still, there is important work to do: continuing to advocate for and diversify the funding sources to support on the ground conservation, secure a site for our Conservation and Education Center, and reimagine how our efforts can shape the future of Thurston County's natural resources through long-range strategic planning.

We couldn't have done all of this meaningful work without our dedicated and expert staffing team, or the leadership of our passionate Board of Supervisors. This year was truly a demonstration of excellence in community service and conservation implementation. We are excited for another year of engaging our community in locally led conservation!

THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS

American Farmland Trust
Anchor QEA
Billy Frank Jr. Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge
Blue Coast Engineering
Bounty for Families
Capitol Land Trust
Center for Natural Lands Management
Chehalis Basin Partnership
Chehalis Basin Education Consortium
City of Lacey
City of Olympia
City of Tenino
City of Tumwater
City of Yelm
Community Farmland Trust
Confederated Tribes of the Chehalis
Creekside Conservancy
Dawkins Charitable Trust
Department of Defense
Ecostudies Institute
Farm Service Agency
Grays Harbor Conservation District
Green Diamond Resource Company
Griffin School District
GRuB
JBLM Sentinel Landscape Partnership
Joint Base Lewis McChord
Lewis Conservation District
Mason Conservation District
National Association of Conservation
Districts
Native Plant Salvage
Natural Resources Conservation Service
Natural Systems Design
Natural Waters Design, LLC
Nisqually Community Garden
Nisqually Indian Tribe
Nisqually Reach Nature Center
Nisqually River Council
Nisqually River Education Project
Nisqually Stream Stewards
NOAA Bay Watershed Education and Training
North Thurston Public Schools
Northwest Ag Business Center
Northwest Youth Corps
NOVA Middle School
Office of the Chehalis Basin
Olympia Coalition for Ecosystems
Preservation
Olympia School District
Pacific Education Institute
Pacific Shellfish Institute

Partners for Fish & Wildlife (USFW)
Pierce Conservation District
Pierce County
Puget Sound Conservation District Caucus
Puget Sound Estuarium
Puget Sound Partnership
Puget Sound Restoration Fund
QWG Applied Geology, LLC
Rainier School District
Resilient Veterans
Sentinel Landscape Partnership
South Puget Sound Salmon Enhancement Group
Squaxin Island Tribe
Taylor Shellfish
The Evergreen State College
Thurston Climate Action Team
Thurston County
Thurston County Ag Advisory Committee
Thurston County Environmental Health
Thurston County Fairgrounds
Thurston County Farm Bureau
Thurston County Master Gardeners
Thurston EcoNet
Thurston Economic Development Council
Thurston Regional Planning Council
Timberland Regional Libraries
Trout Unlimited
Tumwater School District
US Department of Agriculture
US Fish and Wildlife Service
Veterans Conservation Corps
WA Association of Conservation Districts
WA Conservation Corps
WA Conservation Society
WA Department of Ecology
WA Department of Health
WA Department of Veterans Affairs
WA Federation of State Employees
WA State Conservation Commission
WA State Department of Natural
Resources
Washington Farmland Trust
Waterfall Engineering, LLC
WET Science Center
WSDA
WSU Extension Thurston County
Yelm Community Schools



2024 COMMUNITY AWARD RECIPIENTS

Doug Rushton Conservation Legacy Award - Nelson Ranch

Nelson Ranch is one of the oldest ranches in the county still owned by the original family. For five generations, the Nelsons have practiced sustainable farming and provided the community with wholesome family events and a locally grown product. As leaders in conservation, they believe in being responsible stewards of the land and using sustainable and humane practices with their cattle. Thanks to the Nelson Family for their dedication and leadership.

Producer of the Year - Helsing Junction Farms

This 50-acre certified organic vegetable farm produces a tremendous amount of food for our region. Owners Jessica and Angie are highly collaborative, energetic and enthusiastic farmers – willing to put a lot of time, money and effort into conservation. In 2024 they implemented a 500' hedgerow with TCD to create beneficial pollinator habitat, reduce soil erosion and support their crop rotations, and provide shade for their farm staff – adding the human health element to resource conservation. Stewardship and community resilience is at the forefront of their business model.

Land Steward of the Year - Michelle Boderck

Michelle has converted a grass field to a healthy prairie habitat that is full of great species for local pollinators! The field was previously dominated by pasture grasses, dandelions, and other invasive weeds. Now it is packed full of a nice balance of native bunchgrasses, established prairie perennials, and prairie annuals. She used her experience working in prairie restoration to make this positive impact, and even got it certified as a wildlife habitat. She is a passionate and dedicated steward of her land.

Partner of the Year - Dan Calvert, JBLM Sentinel Landscape Partnership

Dan has transformed our Sentinel Landscape Partnership into a collaborative powerhouse for conservation in this region, pulling together a multitude of federal, state and local partners to unlock millions of dollars of funding for organizational capacity and conservation. He has a unique ability to convene, collaborate and organize complex programs and processes to make them accessible to small organizations and local land stewards.

Volunteer of the Year - Rebecca Bingaman

Rebecca has been a dedicated volunteer at the Native Plant Festival and Sale for several years. She selflessly steps in to assist wherever needed and stays on the job through rain, wind, or frosty temperatures. Rebecca also supported TCD in connecting with the local realtor community in an effort to reduce farmland loss. She's a role model for the community of how to take an active role in furthering conservation efforts.

Educator of the Year - Jane Rizika

Jane has put an incredible amount of effort into connecting her students to their local environment. Jane creates her own conservation-focused learning opportunities, finding ways to incorporate different South Sound GREEN lessons throughout the school year and even engaging other TCD staff in lessons! This directly aligns with TCD's mission of educating and inspiring the next generation to students towards the management of local natural resources.

Student Leader of the Year - Lily Morgan

Lily worked hard on a conservation project at Burfoot Park in Olympia, where she and almost 80 volunteers cleared an acre of prolific English ivy and replanted native species in its place. Lily worked together with TCD and the IvyBeGone team to develop a plan for invasive removal and executed it within a year! She's made an incredible impact and displays fantastic work ethic and community-building skills!

2024 NATURAL RESOURCE CONSERVATION HIGHLIGHTS

Thurston Conservation District's Strategic and Annual Plans help direct the work that we engage in and the kinds of programs, support and services we offer. These plans, contributed to by community members, partner organizations, our volunteer Board of Supervisors and staff are the guide from which we do all kinds of exciting work. In our current plan, we focus on six specific areas of Natural Resource Conservation:

- **Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation**
- **Local Food Production and Consumption**
- **Producer Support and Preservation of Working Lands**
- **Protect and Restore Ecosystems**
- **Soil Conservation and Health**
- **Water Quality and Quantity**

Under these areas, specific goals and actions help us measure if we're engaging in the areas our community needs and indicates where more funding, work or collaboration may be needed.

On the next page are shared stand-out metrics accomplished in these areas in 2024. You'll find detailed project and program highlights in the pages that follow.



Left, planting a marine shoreline to support erosion control and foster a natural shoreline. Right, increased planting along the Chehalis River to support riparian habitat.

2024 NATURAL RESOURCE CONSERVATION HIGHLIGHTS



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT - SOIL & NUTRIENT TESTING

We completed **250 individual soil tests with interpretive reports in 2024**. These included 5 tests for fruit trees, 1 test for Christmas trees, 4 tests for berries, 34 tests for pastures, 145 tests for vegetable gardens, 21 tests for lawns, 37 tests for cut flowers, and 3 tests for hay. There were an additional 10 nutrient tests for compost, forage, or manure lagoons.

PROJECT HIGHLIGHT - IMPLEMENTED BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES HELP FARMS

When working with local farms, we help connect them with funding and resources to improve their operation. **In 2024 we implement six on-farm Best Management Practices (BMPs)** that will support farms while also positively impacting shared natural resources. These included: waste storage facilities (pictured above, left and center), fencing, heavy use areas for livestock (pictured above, right), and livestock watering pipelines.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT - EQUIPMENT RENTALS

Our Tool and Equipment Rental Program includes Poultry Processing Equipment, Nutrient Spreaders, a No-Till Drill, and hand tools such as weed wrenches. In 2024 we saw 115 Poultry Unit rentals, 24 Tool Rentals, and 23 Nutrient Spreader Rentals. Sharing this equipment increases access to these supports to further access to local food, responsible nutrient management, and appropriate invasive control.



PROJECT HIGHLIGHT - SHORELINE RESTORATION REPORT FROM CREW MEMBER GHADER ALRASHID



'In October 2024, the crew took on steep slopes and learned how to work with ropes to safely plant native trees and shrubs on steep inclines above a bulkhead removal project in Zangle Cove. They also picked up essential skills in pruning, ensuring that newly planted and existing vegetation grows strong and has the best shot at survival. The team worked to thoroughly pull invasive English ivy from the soil to prevent competition for nutrients. This habitat restoration effort allows the opportunity for native plants to flourish, creating food and shelter for our wildlife and preserving the natural beauty and health of our environment.'

The crew also began planting at another bulkhead removal project site along Eld Inlet and will continue restoring coastal areas along Puget Sound. Every plant we install, invasive we remove, and skill we learn is a step toward a healthier ecosystem!"

436

Individual site visits
with community
members

250

Soil tests conducted for
community members -
150% above our goal

6

On-farm projects
constructed to support
local farmers

162

Rentals of Tools
and Equipment

9,900+

Native plants installed
to support habitat
restoration

13+

Acres planted in
native plants to
support habitat

CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION & MITIGATION

RESILIENT COMMUNITIES, READY FOR THE FUTURE

In 2024, wildfire resilience became a hot topic in Thurston County. As we see hotter and drier summers, our fire risk will inevitably increase. Despite living on the “wet side” of the state, 30-40% of the fires in Washington now occur west of the Cascades. Many residents are excited to take steps to protect their homes but aren’t sure what needs to be done. To prepare residents, mitigate property damage, and protect livelihoods in a wildfire event, Thurston Conservation District supports the programs Wildfire Ready Neighbors and Firewise USA. The goal is to create collaborative, resilient communities who are ready for whatever the future holds.



After Thurston Conservation District launched Wildfire Ready Neighbors in Thurston County in 2023, community members have signed up for the free, voluntary program to receive recommendations on how to lower their ignition potential and create defensible space on their property. **In 2024, Wildfire Mitigation Specialists from TCD assessed 34 properties, bringing the total to almost 90 Wildfire Ready Neighbors in Thurston County.**



But it's not only individuals who want to harden their properties. **Thurston Conservation District assisted two communities in establishing their Firewise USA status in 2024.** These sites have worked hard to build leadership teams, receive community-wide risk assessments, and develop multi-year action plans.

Our collaboration with others about fire doesn't stop at the county line or even the Cascade Mountain range. This year, our cross-state collaboration with Okanogan Conservation District (OCD) supported the work we do here in Thurston County. In November, a team from TCD visited the largest, most fire-prone county in our state to learn more about their fire preparation and response, including the renewal process of their Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP). This guidance would soon play an important role in developing the first CWPP in Thurston County in 2025.

TCD relies heavily on collaboration with partners and cooperators. Collaborative efforts such as these, in conjunction with free programs like WRN and Firewise USA, are creating resilient communities that are ready for the future.



TCD would like to thank Craig Nelson, OCD Executive Director, and Eli Loftis, Forest Health & Air Quality Program Lead, for their expertise and guidance

LOCAL FOOD PRODUCTION & CONSUMPTION

GROWING COMMUNITIES THROUGH COMMUNITY GARDENS



In 2024, TCD expanded our collaboration with the City of Olympia to support the creation of new community gardens. In partnership with GRuB and the YMCA, TCD completed the construction of gardens at all three of the City's Tiny House Villages (THV). These communities support our un-housed neighbor's as they're navigating a path forward. The addition of gardens makes these spaces greener, more beautiful, and offers a therapeutic and nutritional support for residents.

When designing the gardens, we took into account unique features and requirements. This meant ensuring a garden included domed trellises to increase shade for residents, relying on railing boxes due to heavy shade and space availability, and problem solving ways of keeping pet waste out of garden areas. All the gardens were equipped with irrigation and saw fruitful seasons.

Throughout the growing season, our partners at the YMCA offered classes for residents to increase use and enjoyment of the spaces. These included things like canning green beans and rock painting. In the fall, with our partners, we held Harvest Dinners for each THV community to celebrate the season, showcase how to use the fresh produce, and enjoy a meal together.

2025 begins a five-year contract with the City of Olympia to further this work and build more community gardens.



GRuB

THE POWER OF VOLUNTARY CONSERVATION

Voluntary conservation is the bread of butter of what all Conservation Districts do. At Thurston CD, sometimes that means engaging community members through specific programs that can benefit them and our local landscape. An example of this is **The Voluntary Stewardship Program (VSP)**. VSP supports collaboration with agricultural landowners to practice farm-friendly options for protecting some of our more fragile natural resources — or “critical areas” — in places where agricultural activity is practiced. Rather than leading with regulations and enforcement, VSP uses financial incentives to voluntarily engage agricultural landowners with actions that protect critical areas and plan for the successful future of their agricultural practices. VSP is a statewide program and is enacted county by county. Thurston Conservation District is the technical service provider for Thurston County.

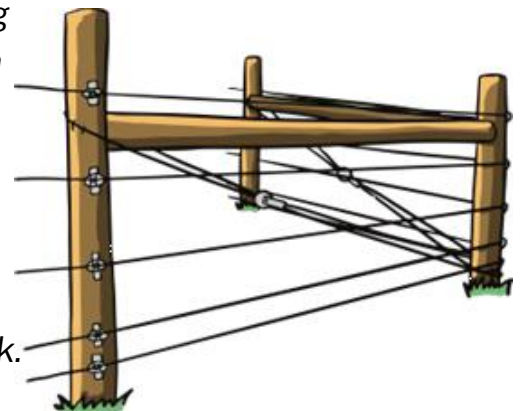


VSP is a great example of a conservation program that is flexible enough to support the diversity of size, scale and variety of farms in Thurston County. Through this program, all enrollees are able to see the positive impact of their efforts for the community at large.



Keith, a VSP participant in Rochester, shared the tangible impact of the projects that have resulted from his engagement with VSP and the Thurston Conservation District:

‘A lot of my neighbors are unaware of how easily the river could change its path during a big flood. The additional tree planting could be all it takes to prevent several neighbors and my farm from becoming casualties of a future channel change on the mighty Chehalis River. So many times in my life, my brothers and I would plant trees along the river when erosion would start. It is an incredible amount of work . It has been very enjoyable to watch others do the work and do it well. I love to see more shrubbery and trees between my field and the creek. I especially love to see my fence instead of a massive blackberry invasion smashing my fence to the ground.’



DISCOVERING THE MAGIC OF HEDGEROWS

In its second year, our Discovering Hedgerows project has gained traction and attention in our community! This project takes a multi-pronged approach to connecting with community members through engagement, demonstration, and hands-on project implementation. From Spring 2024-Fall 2024 the Thurston Conservation District team, in collaboration with WSU Extension Water Resources Program and Native Plant Salvage Foundation, has installed two large hedgerows on local working farms.



Hedgerows have a wide range of ecological and agricultural benefits, including providing food and shelter for wildlife, protecting soil and water quality, supporting pollinators which directly impact crop production and yield, among many other benefits!



During this portion of the project, **over 2,350 plants were installed to create over 21,250 square feet of hedgerow plantings.** We held demonstration workshops which allowed participants the opportunity for hands-on learning. This approach to education allows for maximum impact on the project sites and empowered the **over 50 participants** to feel more confident making pollinator and wildlife friendly choices in their own yards.

In conjunction with these live events, we also co-hosted two webinars focused on teaching participants all the important steps to successfully create their own hedgerow and even recorded and published a Conservation Starters podcast episode entitled Discovering Hedgerows! Hundreds of listeners have tuned in to these resources which will remain available for future learners.



Native Plant
Salvage
FOUNDATION



Funding for this project comes from the Washington State Conservation Commission and the Sustainable Farms and Fields program.

WATER QUALITY AND QUANTITY ENGINEERING THE FUTURE OF SALMON IN THE SKOOKUMCHUCK



The Riverbend Ranch Restoration Project is a multi-benefit conservation project located along the mainstem of the Skookumchuck River. The Jenson family, landowners and ranch operators, have been partnering with the Conservation District since 2014 to meet their land and farm management goals. This portion of the river is vital salmon habitat and also has significant impairments to river health. This project is designed to benefit both the agricultural viability of the land and Riverbend Ranch, while also restoring the river, surrounding lands natural processes, and providing habitat for critical aquatic species like salmon.

2024 saw significant in-river work such as the engineered log-jams that are pictured here. This kind of installation helps to create better salmon habitat, slows river flow to decrease erosion, and helps return the river to a more diverse habitat for the whole river system.

WHEN COMPLETE, THIS PROJECT WILL INCLUDE:

- 56 ENGINEERED LOG JAMS
- 112 ACRES OF REVEGETATION
- 120 ACRES OF INVASIVE WEED CONTROL
- 4 FISH PASSAGE BARRIER CORRECTIONS
- 3 HIGH FLOW CHANNEL EXCAVATIONS
- 1 RESTRICTED CATTLE FORD

Scan the QR code to stay up to see maps, project implementation timelines, and learn more about each phase of construction.





*‘Through the work of the Thurston CD, we are creating stewards, knowledge and strategies around conservation, which benefit the greater good.’
– TCD Stakeholder Survey Participant*

COMMUNITY EDUCATION HIGHLIGHTS IN 2024

From our Annual Native Plant Festival and Sale to our Harvest Festival, TCD had so many wonderful points of engagement with our community in 2024. We grew our programming to include more education about community and urban gardening (pg. 8), hedgerows and pollinator habitat (pg. 10), and we hosted our first Grower's Conference (pg. 15). We also conducted important research into landowner's feelings about endangered species as we support the ongoing efforts to restore habitat for the endangered Oregon spotted frog (pg. 16). And all year we made sure to regularly share the ways we partner with our community through social media, in-person tabling, and a monthly newsletter.



Top Left: Participants in a farm walk learn about agroforestry at Colvin Ranch. Top Right: Orca Recovery Day saw over 100 volunteers at Squaxin Park in Olympia. Bottom Left: Volunteers helped plant a hedgerow at Oyster Bay Farm. Bottom Right: TCD staff help with cider pressing at our annual Harvest Festival.

60

Educational events
held or
participated in

4,086

Total attendees at
workshops, events,
& demonstrations

2,000+

Hours of community
service dedicated to
conservation by
volunteers

1,300

Attendees at Annual
Native Plant Festival
and Sale

A unique way we reach our community and the broader conservation interested population is through our monthly podcast, **Conservation Starters**. 2024 was the third season of the podcast and included episodes on things such as forestry, home gardening with the Master Gardeners, TCD programs for farmland preservation, cost share, and equipment rental, and a deep dive into the Nisqually Watershed. Find all episodes streaming on major platforms or at conservationstarters.com.



YOUTH EDUCATION HIGHLIGHTS IN 2024



Thurston Conservation District supports youth education through a variety of programs. In particular, our partnership with **South Sound GREEN** is responsible for engaging and educating thousands of elementary and middle school aged kids on water quality, habitat restoration, and environmental stewardship. This engagement supports students getting outside on experiential and hands-on field trips. Check out this year's engagement numbers below!

8,638

Total student
interactions

429

Participants in
Student GREEN
Congress

1,642

Hours of community
service dedicated to
youth programs by
volunteers

116

Teachers engaged
in professional
development

2024 saw the 31st Annual Student GREEN Congress, a summit of students who participated in field trips with South Sound GREEN, Nisqually River Education Project, and the Chehalis Basin Education Consortium. Students report water quality data they collected and analyzed, make recommendations for actions to improve local water quality, and participate in hands-on sessions of their choosing. This youth conference-style event had the highest rate of student participation yet and was made possible by the dozens of community partners and volunteers who moderated, facilitated, and taught classes to students. The day included a keynote presentation by Musician and Environmentalist, Dana Lyons.



Through **Teens in Thurston**, TCD engages high school students in monthly service learning opportunities. In 2024, **75** teens joined us for events including school and community garden work, invasive removal with Capital Land Trust, and a restoration project with Wolf Haven International.

TCD also supports the **South Puget Sound Regional Envirothon** competition for high schoolers each year.



COMMUNITY EDUCATION

CLIMATE CHANGE & FOOD PRODUCTION: A GROWER'S CONFERENCE



**SOUTHWEST
WASHINGTON
FOOD HUB**

In January 2024, TCD collaborated with many local partners to put on our first ever Grower's Conference. Focused on the current and future impacts of climate change on local food production, the ticketed event featured an evening tasting menu of local food prepared by local chefs and a day-long conference and networking event. The evening dinner was a fundraiser for the Southwest WA Food Hub.

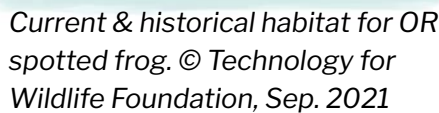
The conference day, held at SPSCC Lacey, featured opening speaker, Chantay Anderson, from the Nisqually Indian Tribe speaking on Indigenous food sovereignty, four conference sessions attendees could choose between that highlighted local climate impacts such as heat, pests, and flooding, a resource fair, and a closing keynote by Dr. David Montgomery speaking on soils and their critical role in food production and climate resiliency.

The conference was made possible, in part, through a partnership with The Evergreen State College to offer a service learning event for students in the Practice of Organic Farming Program. Student volunteers helped both days of the event and participated in workshops.

With regional attendance of over 100, TCD saw great and new engagement with this important topic and looks forward to exploring more opportunities such as this in the future.



COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH TO SUPPORT OREGON SPOTTED FROG



Oregon spotted frogs are highly aquatic and require specific habitat to both live and breed in. This species is also negatively impacted by invasive species, development, hydrological changes, and climate change. Due to population declines, the need to improve vital habitat is increasing.

To support this effort, the Thurston Conservation District offered a series of engagement opportunities for Black River basin residents. These opportunities included educational workshops, in-person listening sessions, and the opportunity to participate in a written or online survey questionnaire.

A circular illustration of a frog in a pond. The frog is brown with black spots and a red belly, swimming in green water with white ripples. Green lily pads are visible in the background.



DISTRICT OPERATIONS

INVESTING IN THE FUTURE OF LOCAL CONSERVATION

To achieve local goals like retaining open spaces, preserving agriculture, and managing impacts of growth, people in every corner of Thurston County need access to conservation services. Over 79% of Thurston County is privately owned, and our population is approaching 300,000 — we can't expect healthy natural resources and farmland without informed public involvement in conservation.

Thurston Conservation District continues to be the accessible hub of natural resource and agricultural expertise for people in our county. For over 75 years, our local team has connected people to free and low-cost services that help them practice conservation where they are — whether on a farm or in a neighborhood.

In 2024, we proposed a system of rates and charges public funding to our County Commissioners. This steady funding is the linchpin for Thurston CD to deliver conservation services at a county-wide scale. We were thrilled to have unanimous support from our County Commissioners to renew that public funding for another 10 years.

As you can see in our 2024 Budget Review (pg. 20), this predictable and steady funding sources was able to be leveraged by over 1,000% in 2024 to bring even more funding and support into Thurston County. That directly translates into increased support for individual community members, increased habitat restoration and maintenance, and real tangible benefits for the students in our youth programs, farmers that grow our food, and community members seeking to be the best stewards of our shared landscapes that they can be.

Thank you to everyone who shared their public support for this critical funding!

CONSERVATION & EDUCATION CENTER PROJECT UPDATE



You probably noticed that Thurston CD moved offices in the beginning of 2024. Our lease was up at the old site and we did not have the option to renew. Thus, we've transitioned to the new offices on Tilley Court in Tumwater!

This new office location brings ease of access to I-5, better equipment and vehicle parking, and a more accessible conference room for public meetings and events. We plan to be in this space for the next five years or so as we continue to plan for our Conservation and Education Center.

Throughout 2024, a committee of Staff and Board met regularly to ensure this project moves forward.

THE CONSERVATION & EDUCATION CENTER WILL BE...



A PLACE TO SEE CONSERVATION PRACTICES TANGIBLY DEMONSTRATED



SPACE FOR INCREASED SERVICES SUCH AS NATIVE PLANT PROPAGATION, EVENT SPACE, AND FIELD TRIP HOSTING



A COMMUNITY HUB TO CONNECT WITH LOCAL CONSERVATION PARTNERS AND OTHER COMMUNITY MEMBERS

DISTRICT OPERATIONS

NEW STAFF IN 2024

For several years, Thurston Conservation District has continued to increase our staff in order to better meet the needs of our community. This year we specifically increased our technical capacity with additional Natural Resource Specialist staff, an in-house Forester, and increased support for our Restoration Crew. Find all our staff's contact information on pg. 22.



AIMEE RICHARDSON, SHE/HER
NATURAL RESOURCE SPECIALIST



KENNA FOSNACHT, SHE/HER
NATURAL RESOURCE SPECIALIST



ALEX CHACON, HE/HIM
STEWARDSHIP FORESTER



TAYLOR SHERROW, HE/HIM
RESTORATION CREW
ASSISTANT SUPERVISOR

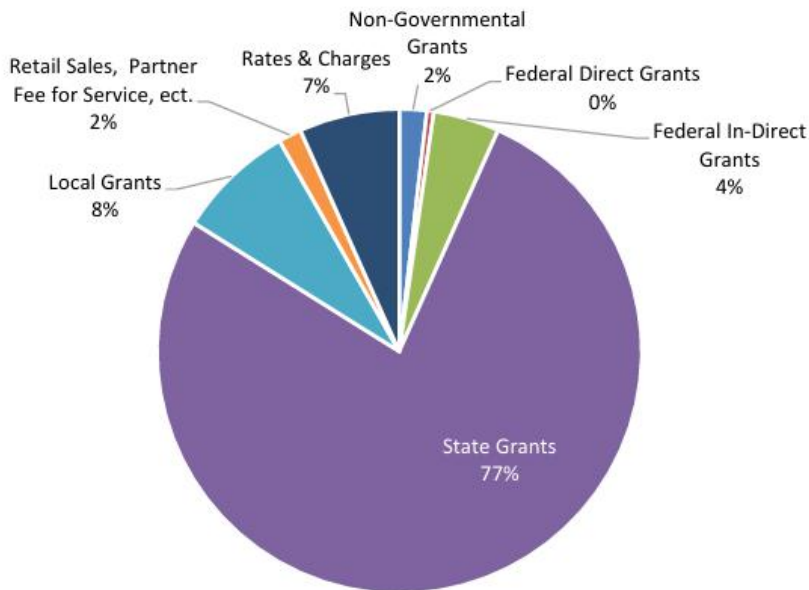


RED BEVER, THEY/THEM
SOUTH SOUND GREEN
AMERICORPS EDUCATOR

DISTRICT OPERATIONS

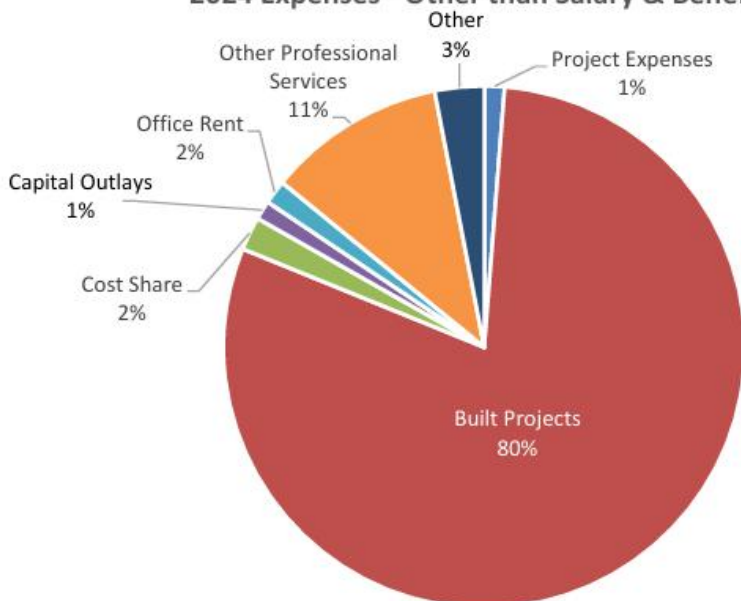
2024 BUDGET OVERVIEW

**Thurston Conservation District
2024 Income**



In 2024, TCD's income more than doubled over 2023's income. The District realized revenues of \$8,454,585 in 2024 up from \$4,173,517 in 2023. This on-going trend in growth in our income illustrates our growing capacity for grant writing and management, project implementation, and support for conservation efforts through Federal, State and Local funding sources in 2024.

**Thurston Conservation District
2024 Expenses - Other than Salary & Benefits**



In 2024, TCD also more than doubled its expenses. It is typical for governmental agencies whose income is based on expense reimbursement for the agency's income and expenses to increase/decrease at about the same rate. Increases in TCD's expenses can be thought of in terms of increased investments in Thurston County conservation. In 2024, the District incurred \$8,545,859 in total expenses, an increase of 111% over 2023. Cost Share, Built Projects, and Professional Services expenses made up 91% of TCD's non-salary & benefit expenses. These funds went into investments for on-the-ground built projects; that's up from 69% last year.

Since 2019, with the approval of Thurston County Rates and Charges, TCD's income has increased 647%. In other words, over the past six years, with a relatively small investment of an average of \$557,157 per year, TCD has brought in an additional \$16,295,968 in conservation funding for Thurston County. In private sector business language, over the past six years, Thurston County has earned a Return on Investment (ROI) of 150% with Thurston Conservation District. In 2024 alone, Thurston County's TCD ROI was 1,397%.

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Five members comprise Thurston Conservation District's Board of Supervisors, each serving three-year terms, without compensation. Three of the five Supervisors are elected by registered Thurston County voters, and two are appointed by the Washington State Conservation Commission.



MARIANNE TOMPKINS, SHE/HER
ELECTED POSITION 1
VICE CHAIR
MTOMPKINS@THURSTONCD.COM



TJ JOHNSON, HE/HIM
ELECTED POSITION 2
BOARD CHAIR
OLYURBANAGRARIAN@GMAIL.COM



DAVID IYALL, HE/HIM
ELECTED POSITION 3
BOARD AUDITOR
DAVID.IYALL@THURSTONCD.COM



DOUG RUSHTON, HE/HIM
APPOINTED POSITION 1
DOUG.RUSHTON@THURSTONCD.COM



JENNIFER COLVIN, SHE/HER
APPOINTED POSITION 2
JCOLVIN@THURSTONCD.COM

Thank you to our outgoing Board Member, Betsie DeWreede, for her six years of service to Thurston Conservation District!



Elections for our Board of Supervisor Elected Positions occur each March. Learn more about Board Elections via this QR Code.



DISTRICT STAFF

Finance and Administrative Department

Sarah Moorehead, Executive
Director
smoorehead@thurstoncd.com

Susan Shelton, Finance & Admin
Director
sshelton@thurstoncd.com

Yan Dong, Senior Accountant
ydong@thurstoncd.com

Kirstin Hill, Special Projects
Coordinator
khill@thurstoncd.com

Bridgette Vaughn, Accounting
Coordinator
bvaughn@thurstoncd.com

Sophia Barashkoff, Admin
Assistant
tcdadmin@thurstoncd.com

Community Sustainability Department

Stephanie Bishop, Community
Sustainability Program Director
sbishop@thurstoncd.com

Sam Nadell, South Sound GREEN
Sr. Program Specialist
snadell@thurstoncd.com

Alex Chacon, District Forester
achacon@thurstoncd.com

Education & Outreach Department

Nora Carman-White,
Communication & Education
Director
nwhite@thurstoncd.com

Kiana Sinner, Education &
Outreach Sr. Specialist
ksinner@thurstoncd.com

Jae Townsend, Community
Resilience Coordinator
jtownsend@thurstoncd.com

Tina Wagner, Community
Agriculture Programs
Coordinator
twagner@thurstoncd.com

Technical Assistance Department

Katrinka Hibler, District
Engineer
katrinka@thurstoncd.com

Karin Strelieff, Conservation
Program Director
karin@thurstoncd.com

Paul Cereghino, Restoration
Program Manager
pcereghino@thurstoncd.com

Mara Healy, Sr. Habitat
Restoration Specialist
mhealy@thurstoncd.com

Alex Papiez, Sr. Habitat
Restoration Specialist
apapiez@thurstoncd.com

Joey Burgess, Habitat
Restoration Specialist
jburgess@thurstoncd.com

Marguerite Abplanalp, Agriculture
Program Manager
mabplanalp@thurstoncd.com

Emily Landrus, Sr. Natural
Resource Specialist
elandrus@thurstoncd.com

Kendall Carman, Sr. Natural
Resource Specialist
kcarman@thurstoncd.com

Aimee Richardson, Natural
Resource Specialist
arichardson@thurstoncd.com

Kenna Fosnacht, Natural Resource
Specialist
kenna@thurstoncd.com

Restoration Crew

TJ Jenkins, Restoration Crew
Supervisor
tjenkins@thurstoncd.com

Taylor Sherrow, Restoration Crew
Assistant Supervisor
tsherrow@thurstoncd.com

2024 Crew Members

Jaden McGinty, Ashley Lewis,
Elizavyeta Dimitriva, Ghader
Alrashid, Nicholas Rubesh, Donalyn
Johans, James Dyson, Gloria
Ferguson.

2024 Interns & AmeriCorps

Red Cedar Bever (South Sound
GREEN AmeriCorps Educator),
Laura Reuche (Education &
Outreach Intern), Cree Bell (South
Sound GREEN Intern), and Elijah
Orr (South Sound GREEN Intern)



Thurston
Conservation
District

www.thurstoncd.com

