



## Clackamas River Basin Council



CLACKAMAS COUNTY  
Soil and Water Conservation District

**March 11, 2013**

Testimony before the Joint Committee on Ways and Means  
Subcommittee on Natural Resources  
Oregon State Capitol  
900 Court Street NE, Room H-178  
Salem, OR 97301

**Co-Chairs Senator Edwards and Representative Unger  
Committee Members Senators Dingfelder and Thomsen and Representatives Bailey and Hanna**

**Thank you for this opportunity to testify before you today on the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board Budget.**

### **INTRODUCTIONS**

My name is Cheryl McGinnis, and I am the Executive Director of the Clackamas River Basin Council.

Joining me today is Tom Salzer, Manager of the Clackamas County Soil and Water Conservation District. The District is a key partner for our watershed council.

The Clackamas River watershed, with its 941 square miles, is the largest watershed in Clackamas County, and is one of two main drinking water sources for the Portland Metro area. Along with its importance to people, the Clackamas supports regionally significant fish runs that are listed under the Endangered Species Act including wild spring and fall Chinook, late fall Coho and winter steelhead. The Clackamas also supports important populations of migratory cutthroat trout and Pacific lamprey.

Land uses include dense concentrations of urban residences and businesses, suburban and developing areas, rural farms, and forested foothills. Streams and rivers run through it all.

### **SIMILARITIES and DIFFERENCES**

While the Council is focused on the Clackamas River watershed, the District provides service to all of Clackamas County. Nevertheless, our values, missions, and goals are very similar.

Our organizations touch different parts of the larger community. The Council includes a wide range of community interests, while the District is more tightly focused on agricultural lands and the people who work those lands.

The Council generates grant awards from local, state, and federal sources along with significant involvement of community members in volunteer activities that improve watershed health for the benefit of individuals, businesses, and wildlife.

Meanwhile, as a local government, the District provides access to state and federal conservation programs, with services and support supplemented by a voter-approved tax base. The District is able to provide supporting funds to our watershed council partners, helping them obtain vital funding for conservation projects.

The District also convenes a quarterly meeting with representatives of the ten councils in Clackamas County. We've been doing that for two years to help explore how we can work better together and achieve more. By working together, we provide a much more complete package of capabilities and results to our constituents.

## **BENEFITS: RESTORATION, ECONOMY, COMMUNITY**

### **We provide restoration benefits**

Together we complete projects that protect water quality and improve habitat for fish and wildlife. The District, Council and community partners held five Pesticide Roundup events that collected over 57 tons of pesticides that were disposed of safely.

We partner on local agriculture water quality activities, assisting landowners.

The District funded initial engineering designs for projects that were awarded funding through OWEB restoration grants. OWEB funds for projects completed in the Clackamas Basin in 2012 were matched by over 3times -- that is for every \$1 OWEB granted, we received \$3.32 in matching funds and in-kind services. Projects included adding large woody debris structures in streams, removal of fish passage barriers, flood plain reconnections, side channel enhancements, and riparian restoration.

The District and Council have led tours of projects featuring best practices, held workshops on lawn care, wells and septic systems, and helped landowners in their quests to manage invasive weeds and pests. Landowner interests are at the heart of what we do.

### **We provide economic benefits**

Ten percent of all farms in Oregon are in Clackamas County. We have more farms than any other county in Oregon. The 2007 agricultural census reported farm income from Clackamas farms totaled more than \$397 million. Agriculture is one of the largest uses of private lands in our region.

The District's job is to help people use natural resources responsibly, for current and future generations. The District invests their time, money, and energy in helping people protect natural resources while also productively using their land.

And the economic benefits of OWEB investments are significant to communities throughout Oregon. For every \$1 invested by OWEB for restoration, councils generate another \$1.05 and for every \$1 invested in Outreach, councils generate an additional \$1.82.

### **We provide community benefits**

Watershed councils and soil and water conservation districts involve people in local planning and project implementation. We engage citizens in our projects. Our volunteers transcend age groups, including students and adults alike.

For example, work parties involve a variety of individuals and organizations such as, REI, KeyBank, CrossFit, New Seasons, Damascus Civic Club, Boring Damascus Grange 260, Trout Unlimited, and others.

Student volunteer organizations include local high schools' environmental science clubs / National Honor Society, as well as from the National Charity League, Timber Lake Job Corps and Northwest Service Academy Interns. The restoration value can be overshadowed by the responses from young adults.

Warren Cunningham, Community Liaison and Work-Based Learning Coordinator from the Timber Lake Job Corps, shares: *when students are performing community service, not only are they doing something good for our community, but they also get to be around organizations that respect and value them as people, which isn't something they always experience.*

**Job Corps Student Quote:** *When you're outside planting trees and knowing that you're doing something good for the river, it just makes your heart smile. You feel good all day because you made a difference.*

Commitments from volunteers are significant, totaling over 5,000 hours per year generated from over a thousand volunteers. The "Down the River Clean Up" event held annually is a hallmark event as people gather to remove the summer season's debris from the streambed and banks of the Clackamas River along a 14 mile stretch above and to the confluence with the Willamette. Over 300 volunteers participate annually and over 26 tons of garbage and recyclables have been removed since 2004.

Our organizations and our agency partners take responsibility for getting projects completed in recognition of the statewide support to fund Parks, Water, and Wildlife.

Our work helps assure we have abundant clean water and healthy resources for farms, fields, families, and businesses

## **CLOSE**

Our two organizations are different, but we leverage those differences to achieve common goals that benefit local lands and people. What binds us together is the desire that our constituents can live, work, and play in a region known for healthy habitat and fishable, swimmable, drinkable water.

We can -- and do! -- achieve far more for natural resources and people by working together.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify before you today.

Sincerely,

Cheryl McGinnis, Executive Director  
Clackamas River Basin Council

Tom Salzer, Manager  
Clackamas County Soil & Water Conservation  
District