



# Annual Report

July 2012 - June 2013



**Building  
Partnerships**



**Leveraging  
Funding**



**Guiding  
Volunteers**

**Helping  
Landowners**



**...for healthy watersheds  
and healthy people!**

# About the Southwest Watershed Resource Center



Friends of April Hill Park

## **Mission**

The Southwest Watershed Resource Center (WRC) **inspires awareness and action on behalf of watershed health in southwest Portland neighborhoods.** The WRC accomplishes this by building partnerships, leveraging funding, outreach and technical assistance for on-the-ground projects, and offering support for watershed volunteer groups. This fiscal year the WRC raised \$90,573 for watershed projects and generated over \$100,000 of in-kind volunteer and professional services. Each month the WRC provides watershed news and event information to 10,000 households via the Southwest Neighborhood Newspaper, 242 e-newsletter, 305 Facebook, and 68 Twitter contacts.

## **History**

The Southwest Watershed Resource Center was established in 1999 by the City of Portland Bureau of Environmental Services through an agreement with Portland Parks and Recreation. From 1999 to 2013 the WRC was housed inside the lobby of the Southwest Community Center at Gabriel Park. In Fall 2013 the WRC moved to a new location within the Southwest Neighborhoods office in the Multnomah Arts Center.

## **Responsiveness to Community Needs**

Through the past 15 years, the community landscape has shifted from a need for basic watershed education to requests for technical support in project development and implementation.

The WRC currently provides the following services to individuals and groups doing watershed restoration in southwest Portland:

- *Grant writing assistance for stewardship groups, other community organizations and landowners*
- *Volunteer group work parties and event organizing*
- *Best management practices for invasive plant removal, native plant installation, stormwater management, erosion control, natural gardening and pesticide reduction*
- *Project development including site visits, assessment, planting plans, contractor referrals, grantwriting, permit information and other technical assistance*
- *Watershed e-newsletter, social networking, and other online resources*
- *Hand tool library for watershed restoration projects available to groups and individual landowners (tool shed, right)*
- *Willamette, Tryon, and Fanno watershed information and referrals*
- *Meeting and partnership facilitation, and other organizational resources for Friends groups*
- *Public speaking and presentations, outreach at neighborhood events*
- *Support and training for watershed education volunteers*



Gabriel Park Tool Shed

This report provides details about WRC work, and highlights outcomes and success stories from the July 2012 to June 2013 fiscal year.

For healthy watersheds and healthy people,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jen Slaman".

Watershed Center Manager

## Funding and Resources Leveraged

Contract funding for WRC staff and materials (BES)	\$52,000
Grants funded to SW Portland community groups	\$90,573
Second year (continuing) grants	\$13,124
Donation of plant materials for restoration projects	\$2,235
Estimated in-kind value of volunteer time & professional services	\$100,000+

## Watershed Center Drop-In Visits

Open Hours	Visitors
1051	427

## Landowner Assistance

	Fanno	Tryon	Willamette	Other Inquiries	TOTAL
Technical Assistance Inquiries & Site Visits	21	8 <sup>†</sup>	10	14	53

<sup>†</sup> note: additional landowners in the Tryon Creek watershed are referred to the Watershed Council for assistance.

## Watershed Volunteer Group Meetings

	Fanno	Tryon	Willamette	TOTAL
Events	17	16	18	51
Attendees	96	146	108	350

## Education and Training Program Participants

	Fanno	Tryon	Willamette	TOTAL
Events	13	2	4	19
Attendees	247	28	41	316

## Outreach Contacts

	Fanno	Tryon	Willamette	TOTAL
Events	3	2	11	16
Attendees	267	194	397	858

# Funding and Resources Leveraged

## **Core Funding**

The City of Portland Bureau of Environmental Services (BES) provides core funding for the WRC with \$52,000 in funding from a \$73,000 grant agreement to Southwest Neighborhoods, Inc. Funds support one 0.9 FTE staff position, taxes and liabilities, benefits, contract administration, program supplies, equipment and mileage. The WRC leverages this investment to mobilize in-kind volunteer time and additional monetary resources for southwest Portland watershed stewardship efforts.

## **Leveraged Funding**

A much-valued service of the WRC is grantwriting and project development assistance offered to community groups and landowners for watershed restoration and stormwater mitigation activities. This year, WRC grantwriting assistance resulting in \$90,573 in grant awards from July 1, 2012 to June 30, 2013, in addition to in-kind donations of 3,500 volunteer hours (including professional services) and over 1,250 donated plants.

## **Upper Fanno Basin Technical Assistance \$6,864 - West Multnomah Soil & Water Conservation District (WMSWCD) Partner Funding**

Funds support partnership between the WRC and Tualatin River Watershed Council for landowner technical assistance in the Fanno Creek watershed (see page 7) and expanded outreach.

## **Pendleton Creek \$4,374 - WMSWCD FISH Grant Year 2**

In 2012-13, volunteers and a contractor completed invasive removal, site preparation and tree and shrub planting in the first half of this Safe Route to School site in the Hayhurst neighborhood.



Other continuing project grants assisted by the WRC in 2012-13 included:

- St. Luke's Rain Garden (\$6,205)
- Garden Home Rain Garden (\$995)
- Maplewood Triangle (\$1,550)
- Tryon Creek Watershed Council (\$650)

## **Friends of April Hill Park (FAHP) Wetland Grant \$83,059 - Metro Nature in Neighborhoods**

In December 2010, Portland Parks & Recreation completed a Habitat Management and Trails Plan for April Hill Park, home to rare wetland plants, salamanders, frogs, and 69 bird species. The plan called for design of a more sustainable soft trail system, installation of a boardwalk, bridges, and



viewing platform in order to protect wetland habitat and water quality in Woods Creek from social trails and illegal dog off-leash activity.

However, in 2011 PP&R funding for the project was cut due to budget shortfall. To move the \$250,000 project forward, FAHP and the Maplewood Neighborhood Association sought help from the WRC to pursue funding through the 2012-13 Metro *Nature in Neighborhoods* Capital Grant program.

WRC staff:

- helped FAHP complete the Metro letter of intent and final application
- recruited a pro bono engineer to assist with design and permit-ready drawings
- secured partnerships and letters of support from Maplewood School PTA, Art4Life after school program, and Wildwood Preschool -- all of whom want to utilize the wetland for youth programming, but do not because of safety concerns
- led a site tour for the Metro grant review committee
- presented the project to the Interagency Streamlining Team for permitting feedback

In May 2013 Metro Council awarded the project \$83,059. Pending a \$33,000 neighborhood fundraising campaign, partners expect the project to be constructed in summer 2014.

## Community Stewards

A goal of watershed awareness is action -- through pollution reduction and watershed restoration with an eye to long-term stewardship. The WRC is effective in bridging grassroots, neighbor-to-neighbor action with city and regional resources by supporting community based watershed stewardship groups.

Fourteen "Friends" groups support watershed action in southwest Portland. These volunteer-led groups organize work parties in partnership with Portland Parks & Recreation, neighborhood associations, and other partners. Each year, over 1,500 volunteers participate in work parties and city-wide events such as Earth Day (April) or No Ivy Day (October).

Friends groups engage in a wide range of activities, from neighborhood outreach to grants and on-the-ground projects. The WRC provides services to Friends groups on an as-needed basis, including:

- grant writing
- organizational development
- meeting facilitation
- e-newsletters
- social networking
- work party coordination
- event publicity
- outreach events
- tool loan

## Partnerships

In order to promote best practices in restoration, the WRC participates in the following regional forums and events on behalf of Friends groups:

- West Willamette Restoration Partnership
- 4-County Cooperative Weed Management Area
- Adult Conservation Educators Northwest
- Backyard Habitat Certification Program (BHCP)

In May 2013 the WRC manager was also invited to serve on the Public Advisory Committee for the River View Natural Area Habitat Management and Trails Plan.



## Watershed groups In southwest Portland include:

- Bridlemile Creek Stewards
- Dickinson Park Stewards
- Friends of April Hill Park (*see page 4*)
- Friends of Marshall and Maricara Parks
- Friends of Marquam Nature Park (*see page 7*)
- Friends of Terwilliger
- Friends of Tryon Creek
- Friends of Vermont Creek
- Friends of Woods Park
- Multnomah Village Gateway Project
- PCC Habitat Team at Sylvania Natural Area
- South Portland Riverbank Partners
- Stephens Creek Stewards
- Tryon Creek Watershed Council

Other organizations active in and beyond southwest Portland who collaborate with the WRC on outreach and projects include:

- Tualatin River Watershed Council
- Fans of Fanno Creek
- Tualatin Riverkeepers

The WRC also publicizes and provides education support for watershed restoration projects at nine communities of faith in southwest Portland.

## Urban Watershed Mentors

For a second year, the WRC partnered with West Multnomah Soil & Water Conservation District, West Willamette Restoration Partnership and Tryon Creek Watershed Council to offer the Urban Watershed Mentors training for watershed leaders. The cohort meets for six months and participants are required to volunteer on one watershed project.

WRC staff:

- taught two course components
- mentored three volunteers plus one additional event, resulting in invasive removal and native planting plans for a church and two private residences

# Watershed Education & Outreach

Along with stewardship events and technical support for on-the-ground restoration, the WRC engages the whole community in learning about our watersheds, both indoors and out. Education research has demonstrated that learning outdoors is good for our health -- *and* it's necessary for understanding, and taking action in support of, natural systems.

## Science Learning

- Math & Science Night watershed model activity station, Maplewood Elementary
- Rieke Elementary School EcoThink parent training for after-school activities
- Maplewood Elementary School staff and parent curriculum presentations and trainings

## Community Presentations:

- SW Neighborhoods Inc. board presentation on Stephens Creek watershed information
- Bridlemile Neighborhood Association coyote discussion
- April Hill Park: Metro grant review committee site visit and Interagency Streamlining Team presentation on wetland project
- Willamette projects at BES Watershed Open House

## Hosted Workshops:

- Healthy Soil for Healthy Plants, and Edible Landscaping workshops (in partnership with Metro & OSU Extension)
- Living with Urban Coyotes (with Audubon Society of Portland)
- Urban Weed Control workshop (with West Multnomah Soil & Water Conservation District)
- Urban Watershed Mentors (in partnership with West Multnomah SWCD and Tryon Creek Watershed Council)
- Grantwriting and initial project development for 2014 stormwater workshop series, to focus on challenging residential sites in southwest Portland

## Nature Based Education Volunteer Trainings:

- Southwest Community Center camp staff
- Sprout Academy preschool
- Girl Scout leader activity training

## WRC Reach

Every month, the WRC delivers watershed news and events to more than **10,700** interested residents.

- The **SWNI News** paper reaches 9,500 households each month, with a full page dedicated to watershed news & events.



- 242 subscribers receive the **SW Watershed E-newsletter**, with an open rate of 46-51%.

- The **WRC website** averages over 5,000 hits per year.

- Filmed in 2009 with southwest Portland volunteers, the **"Home and Habitat" DVD** connects residents to the local watersheds and ecosystem.

1,854 viewers have watched it on YouTube, and over 800 residents have picked up a copy at events.



- Social networking is used to promote watershed events and Friends group projects to 305 **Facebook** friends and page likes, and 68 **Twitter** followers.



- WRC **publications** produced in 2012-13 include the SW Watershed Walking/Biking Map & Guide, and the April Hill Park Wetland project brochure.



# Landowner Assistance and Restoration Projects

## **Backyard Habitat Certification Program**

The WRC refers over 100 landowners per year to the Backyard Habitat Certification Program, and also receives referrals from the program. The WRC provides supplemental technical assistance for stormwater management projects, erosion control, problematic invasive removal, and loan of specialized tools.



*Pendleton Creek Safe Route to School*

## **Fanno & Tryon Creek Watersheds**

In 2012-13, the Watershed Resource Center received \$6,864 in Partner Funding from West Multnomah Soil & Water Conservation District for upper Fanno Creek. This funding increased the reach of the WRC community events and ability to facilitate projects beyond the WRC contract, including:

- Donation of over 1,250 plants from Tualatin River Watershed Council and a private donation, for SW landowners who received WRC site visits
- Initiated ecological assessment of large acreage site on South Ash Creek and a Trillium Creek property near Hillsdale with Urban Watershed Mentor program volunteers
- Managed Pendleton Creek stream bank project contractor and neighborhood planting work party (*above*) resulting in 350 plants installed along this Safe Route to School for Hayhurst.
- Site visits, planting plans, installation of 400 plants and/or erosion control fabric on properties with soil stability concerns on Deer Creek, Arnold Creek and Woods Creek
- Site assessment for stormwater and native plants at St. Mark's Presbyterian Church in the Tryon Creek watershed
- Seeding and removal of invasive plant regrowth for year two of native plant project in unimproved right of way sponsored by Maplewood Neighborhood Association

Additional requests in the Tryon Creek watershed are directed to Tryon Creek Watershed Council.

## **Willamette Subwatersheds**

- Helped develop West Willamette Restoration Partnership strategic plan and action plan
- Stormwater site assessment, planning, alternatives and community benefit evaluation for Greater Portland Bible Church pavement removal and native plant landscaping project
- Permitting inquiries on behalf of Rieke EcoThink outdoor classroom project
- Help organizing ecology book group for Hillsdale Community Church Back to Eden committee, and volunteer work parties to remove invasive plants and install natives with Urban Watershed Mentors
- Grantwriting assistance for a Friends of Marquam Nature Park grant to remove invasive plants in Marquam Gulch
- Presented watershed information to SWNI Board & Transportation Committee for evaluation of proposed development
- Erosion control planting plan and donation of 40 plants for Corbett landowner
- Invited to participate on River View Natural Area Public Advisory Committee for management plan

## **Backyard Habitat Program Accolades**

The WRC frequently provides landowners with technical directions for invasive plant removal, and loans tools such as weed wrenches to get the job done. A landowner participating in the Backyard Habitat Certification Program sent this note:

*"Hi Jen, Just wanted to thank you for ALL of your support through the SW Watershed Resource Center. We are now Platinum Certified and super happy that this 2-year project reached its pinnacle. It was a complex, difficult and very ambitious adventure but so worth the effort. We couldn't have done it without you, Jen!"*



*Lorena O'Neill*

# Acknowledgments and Collaborators

**Jennifer Seamans**

Watershed Resource Center Manager

**Sylvia Bogert**

Executive Director, Southwest Neighborhoods, Inc.

**Laura Goodrich**  
**Corinne Handelman**  
**Todd Ashley**

Watershed Center Interns

Annual Report  
**Jennifer Seamans**

Watershed Center Logo  
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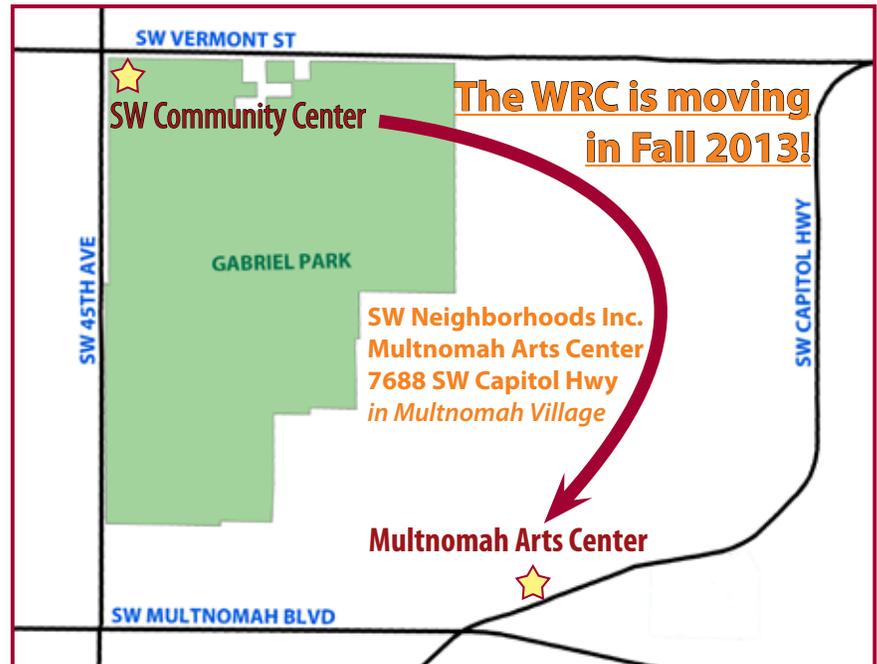
*Collaborators include  
SW Portland residents,  
neighborhood associations,  
watershed volunteer groups,  
faith communities, and:*



located inside the lobby of the  
Southwest Community Center  
at Gabriel Park

6820 SW 45th Ave  
Portland, OR 97219

503-823-2862  
<http://wrc.swni.org>  
[watershed@swni.org](mailto:watershed@swni.org)



## Program Sponsor



[www.portlandoregon.gov/bes](http://www.portlandoregon.gov/bes)

**Fanno/Tryon Watershed**  
Jennifer Devlin, 503-823-6182  
[jennifer.devlin@portlandoregon.gov](mailto:jennifer.devlin@portlandoregon.gov)

**Willamette Subwatersheds**  
Anne Nelson, 503-823-2584  
[anne.nelson@portlandoregon.gov](mailto:anne.nelson@portlandoregon.gov)