Thurston Conservation District

Celebrating 75 Years



Community Agriculture Program

The Role of Farmers & Forest Landowners in Protecting Water Quality

What are Conservation Districts?

- A local, non-regulatory, & voluntary approach to conservation
- We provide education, technical assistance, resources and funding to Thurston County residents





THURSTON COUNTY WATERSHEDS

Legend

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- Sub-division of state government
- Non-regulatory
- Incentive-based and voluntary education, technical assistance, and cost share
- Some funding from local property taxes in addition to local, state, and federal grants
- Volunteer Board of Supervisors, 3 elected and 2 appointed
- Technical Service Provider for the Voluntary Stewardship Program

Partner to support regulatory violations

Collaborate on permitting process for implementing projects

Partner on education and incentive programs Regulatory Agency

- Establish and implement regulations
- Investigate and issue code violations (ie planning, bldg and public health)
- Review project permits–forest conversions and farm
 - conservation projects
- Oversee Voluntary Stewardship Program
- Administer Farm and Forest conservation incentive programs

Supporting Local Producers to be Good Water Stewards

- Access to technical information and planning services - via VSP or other
 - Whole farm planning including habitat, water quality concerns, and ag viability/productivity improvements
- Cost-Share
- Market and land access support
- Non-regulatory support for referral cases



Supporting Conservation Efforts

- Updated code provisions to support conservation projects
- Expanded land conservation incentive programs to reduce farmland conversion
- Updating forest conversion ordinance to align with development proposals and require replantings
- Grant to complete land cover analysis--creating baseline for monitoring forest canopy change

Small Forest Landowners





- Forest management plans
- Large-scale restoration on riparian sites of both farm and forest land
 - CREP
 - ASRP
 - Sustainable Farms and Fields

Monitoring Ag Impacts on Water Quality: Voluntary Stewardship Program

- Statewide alternative to regulating farmland with critical areas
- VSP Work Plan identifies goals and benchmarks for protecting and enhancing critical areas where they overlap with Ag activities.
- Preparing 5-year Monitoring Report to assess functions and values of critical areas at a watershed scale
- Preliminary analysis points to improved water quality functions on farmlands (smaller footprint and changes in farming practices)



Continued **Collaboration**



Thurston County Community Planning Division Division Division District Th Co Ag Committee

Do I Need a Gritical Area a Gross My Farm Quasity for The Volumary Stewardship Program (VSD)

New Form, New Facility OR Expansion AND

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Is This You? Existing Farm Since July 24, 2012.





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