

2020 ANNUAL REPORT



PIERCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT
Over 70 Years of Conservation

WHAT WE DO

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Cover Photo: Though he recently had to leave the District to focus on his new role as a Pierce County Councilmember, our long-time Executive Director, Ryan Mello (left) left the District as a far stronger and more impactful organization than when he started in 2012. Seen here with City of Puyallup City Manager, Steve Kirkelie (right), helping plant trees at the City's Peck property as part of our newly launched City Forest Credits program, the first carbon credit program offered by any Conservation District in the country. This is one of many new programs and services launched under Ryan's leadership.

Article Right: For most of 2020, our staff, leadership team, Board of Supervisors, and dozens of our closest partners and community members engaged in a strategic planning process to help guide the District over the next five years. In these next five years, our plan is calling for an even more deliberate focus of our programming to not just solve problems, but to bring people together around solutions that work for everyone.

The Mission of Pierce Conservation District is to equitably support community-driven solutions to our most pressing local environmental challenges. The District works with the community to improve water quality, promote sustainable agriculture, create thriving habitat, and build a just and healthy food system for all, through education, community engagement, and financial and technical assistance. Our vision Pierce Conservation District's vision is a Pierce County with thriving ecosystems and resilient communities. We practice equity and inclusion to achieve this vision, recognizing that people of color, indigenous communities, low-income people, immigrants, and refugees are disproportionately impacted by ecological decline.

Our district's roots run deep in our community. Created in 1949 as part of a national response to the ecological disaster of the 1930s known as the Dust Bowl, we have worked for over 70-years to help local farmers, cities, and citizens address numerous sustainability challenges. Conserving our natural resources for future generations gets more difficult with each year, making the work of Pierce Conservation District more important than ever.

To learn more about the District's efforts to improve the natural resources of Pierce County, explore our 2021-2025 Strategic Plan.

You can download the plan at our website, www.PierceCD.org/353/Strategic-Plan

2021 - 2025 STRATEGIC PLAN

PIERCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT



OVER 70 YEARS of
CONSERVATION

OUR SIX CORE PROGRAMS

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

Our Environmental Education program inspires meaningful connections between K-16 students and their ecosystem. We focus on reaching students who are systematically excluded from high-quality curriculum and environmental education learning opportunities. In coordination with local school districts and community partners, we implement in-person and remote learning activities that include classroom lessons, workshops, outdoor and experiential learning, and community events focused on ecological stewardship.

HABITAT IMPROVEMENT

The Habitat Improvement program focuses on improving the riparian, floodplain, and marine nearshore habitats of Pierce County along with other rare and endangered plant communities unique to our region. We implement projects to recover native salmon/orca populations, remove invasive species, replant native trees and shrubs and restore other ecosystem processes.

WATER QUALITY IMPROVEMENT & MONITORING

The Water Quality Improvement program focuses on creating an informed public around water and helping local communities meet Clean Water Act standards. We engage community volunteers in green stormwater programming and monitoring local waters; action projects like depaving, installing rain gardens, planting trees in urban spaces and along streams work to filter out pollutants and reduce stormwater runoff.

FARM PLANNING & AGRICULTURAL ASSISTANCE

The Farm Planning & Agricultural Assistance program aims to build a robust local agricultural community and reduce negative impacts on soil, water, air, plants, animals and human resources. We provide technical assistance to help land users improve their stewardship practices, be economically sustainable and navigate the ever-changing economic, regulatory and ecological landscape.

HARVEST PIERCE COUNTY

Harvest Pierce County reconnects communities to each other and to their environment by cultivating community-based food systems. With a focus on education, connection and equity, we strive to center historically underserved populations and prioritize projects that work to increase food sovereignty.

CLIMATE RESILIENCY

The Climate Resiliency program assists Washington's farmers and rural communities in making the transition to clean, renewable energy and upgrading existing equipment and infrastructure with low cost, energy efficient technologies to both limit carbon pollution and save money and impact on natural resources

LETTER FROM OUR BOARD CHAIR



Jeanette Dorner
Board Chair

Our annual report's opening letter has typically been a joint letter from our Executive Director Ryan Mello and me as Board Chair. However, after almost a decade at our District's helm, Ryan has stepped down to take on his new role as a Pierce County Councilmember. I am so grateful to Ryan for all he accomplished in his time at the District.

In the ten years I have served as Board Chair, the best decision our board ever made was to hire Ryan as our Executive Director. He hit the ground running when he started in January of 2012, and he never stopped. He stabilized and grew our funding, increased our services, strengthened our relationships, improved our reputation, and moved us into a beautiful Conservation Center.

Of all of our accomplishments during Ryan's tenure, I am most proud of the development and implementation of our equity statement. It clearly articulates our commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion in who we serve and how we serve.

While we initially hired Ryan for his external partnership skills, he also cared deeply about our staff team. Our staff grew significantly

during his time at the District from 10 to over 25 now. He worked with staff to make them feel that they were part of a team that cared about their success. He made the District a workplace that was both productive and a fun place to come to work.

All of that work that Ryan did to strengthen and stabilize our organization was critical to our ability to survive and pivot in 2020 when the global pandemic turned everything upside down. Last March, along with the rest of the world, we closed our Conservation Center, sent all our staff to work from home, and canceled our in-person events. While it was a shock to our team, they were incredibly resilient and rose to the challenge. As you will see in this 2020 annual report, we still accomplished an incredible amount.

As we look forward to our next decade, we are well-positioned to continue our work with our community to ensure a healthy environment for all.

In service,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jeanette Dorner".

ORGANIZATIONS & COMMUNITIES WE WORKED WITH IN 2020

PARTNERS

PARTNER JURISDICTIONS

Pierce County
City of Bonney Lake
City of Buckley
City of Dupont
City of Fircrest
City of Gig Harbor
City of Lakewood
City of Milton
City of Orting
City of Puyallup
Town of Steilacoom
City of Sumner
City of Tacoma
City of University Place

2020 FUNDING PARTNERS

Army National Guard -
Camp Murray
Chambers-Clover Creek
Watershed Council
Environmental Protection Agency
Greater Tacoma Community
Foundation
Metro Parks Tacoma
Milgard Foundation
Natural Resources Conservation Service
National Association of
Conservation Districts
Pierce County
Pierce County Flood Control
Zone District
Puget Sound Energy
Puyallup Tribe of Indians
Puyallup Watershed Initiative
Tacoma Garden Club
Tacoma/Pierce County
Health Department
The Nature Conservancy
The Russell Family Foundation
US Department of Agriculture

Washington State Department
of Agriculture
Washington State Conservation
Commission
Washington State Department
of Ecology
Washington State Department of
Fish and Wildlife
Washington State Department of
Health
Washington State Recreation and
Conservation Office
Whatcom Conservation District
City of Tacoma Make a Splash Grant

SPONSORS

The Boeing Company
Bonneville Environmental Foundation
Central Co-op
Coordinated Care
Land Recovery Inc. (LRI)
Multicare Health System
Puget Sound Energy
Puyallup Tribe of Indians
Whole Foods

IN-KIND SUPPORTERS

19 C Lions Club
Boy Scouts
Cascade Compost
City of Tacoma Environmental Services
Clover Park Technical College
Girl Scouts
First United Methodist Church
Master Gardeners
Peninsula Metropolitan Parks District
Sumner Lions
TAGRO
University of Puget Sound
Washington Department of
Natural Resources

KEY PROJECT PARTNERS

AmeriCorps/Washington Service Corps
and Washington Conservation Corps
Chambers - Clover Watershed Council
EarthCorps
Forterra
Franklin Pierce School District
Green Puyallup Partnership
KGI Watershed Council
Mason Conservation District
Nisqually River Council
Washington Farmland Trust
Pierce County Surface
Water Management
Pierce County Planning and
Public Works
Puyallup River Watershed Council
Puyallup Tribe of Indians
Salishan Association
South Puget Sound Salmon
Enhancement Group
South Sound Clean Water Partners
Thurston Conservation District
WSU Puyallup Research and Extension
Washington Conservation Corps
Washington Environmental Council
Defenders of Wildlife
Snohomish CD/Veterans Corps

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Jeanette Dorner, Chair
Cindy Haverkamp, Vice-Chair
John Hopkins, Auditor
Mark Mauren, Member
Scott Gruber, Member
Don Gourlie, Associate Supervisor
Hannah Febach, Associate Supervisor
Bill Schiller, Associate Supervisor
Adam Reichenberger, Associate
Supervisor

GREEN PARTNERSHIP FUND GRANT RECIPIENTS

In addition to all the great work you hear about throughout the year that our programs and staff are delivering to the community, each year the District also works to support many of our wonderful partners who are also helping make our communities better. Our Green Partnership Fund allocates \$75,000 in small grants each year through a competitive process and we are excited to announce the great projects being funded this year.

Before we announce this year's awards, let's take a minute to celebrate last year's successes. While COVID-19 forced a couple of projects to be delayed and many projects to change plans that involved either hands-on learning, or in-person restoration activities, the majority of the projects still accomplished their goals. Congratulations to Center for Food Preservation Arts, Defenders of Wildlife, Citizens for a Healthy Bay, Glacier Middle School, Harbor WildWatch, and Tahoma Audubon Society for finishing your projects in exceptionally challenging times. Of note, City of Sumner's project to create Free Fruit Tree Harvesting Hubs and Jason Lee Middle School's Solar Project will be taking shape in 2021.



Photo: Students and volunteers helped install a rain garden at Blix Elementary School on Green Tacoma Day as part of Defenders of Wildlife's "Orcas Love Raingardens" project. Photo Credit: Rae Ware

In 2021, we can look forward to an even bigger impact with these grants:

- **\$20,000 - Pierce County Fresh** - Pierce County Fresh is a program that connects local farmers in Pierce County (PC) and promotes the consumption of local, seasonal produce.
- **\$10,000 - Chief Leschi School** - Make Lake Leschi Accessible to All: Teachers and students from Chief Leschi Schools, located in Puyallup, WA, plan to create a rain garden around Lake Leschi, a wetland connected to Canyon Creek, by removing invasive species and planting native species.
- **\$10,000 - Rose Island Farm** - BIPOC farming at Rose Island Farm: BIPOC farming at Rose Island Farm is a project that brings together black, indigenous, and other people of color (BIPOC) community members to share knowledge about traditional foodways and medicines by creating a garden and teaching space.
- **\$7,000 - Harbor WildWatch** - Connecting Virtual Learners to Outdoor Education: Connecting Virtual Learners to Outdoor Education provides immediate access to K-8 students in Pierce County through a series of outdoor field trips and a combination of virtual lessons and age appropriate self-guided activities. Students are encouraged to explore one of four Pacific Northwest habitats - the ocean, a forest, a river, or their own backyard.
- **\$3,000 - Center For Food Preservation Arts** - Seed to Shelf and Beyond: Center for Food Preservation Arts programs were disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic, but like good food, they adapted to the shifting conditions, and still fulfilled their goals. In 2021, this will continue as the community on how to preserve food will continue.
- **\$10,000 - Pierce County Agricultural Program and WSU Puyallup** - Agricultural Roundtable Coordination: Pierce County Agricultural Roundtable is a coalition of local agricultural service providers that coordinates and supports local agriculture. This project will develop a sustainable strategic plan for the functionality of PCAP and develop a shared vision for meeting agricultural needs.
- **\$5,000 - Washington Farmland Trust** - Farm to Farmer - Providing Viability Support for Pierce County Farmers: This project will continue the work of facilitating farmland access and farm viability support, supporting farmers during the pandemic, and particularly targeting support to black, indigenous, and other people of color communities.
- **\$5,000 - Defenders of Wildlife** - Orcas Love Raingardens: This project will restore the Salish Sea by facilitating the installation and continued maintenance of raingardens in public schools and parks in Tacoma to reduce stormwater pollution and provide opportunities for students and families to learn about the infrastructure (GI) in protecting endangered southern resident orcas.
- **\$5,000 - Tacoma Tree Foundation** - Growing and Sustaining a Green Tacoma: This project is focused on increasing access to yard trees and native plants through tree sales and giveaways, neighborhood-based tree plantings with residents, and the distribution of a tree-related youth educational material.
- **\$25,000 - Jason Lee Middle School** - Solar 2021: this student led project will install a new solar installation at the school, which will not only result in over 20,000kWh reduction per year, it will be a living laboratory for over 600 students.
- **\$5,690 - City of Sumner** - Sumner Free Fruit Tree Harvesting Hubs: This project will plant 150 new fruit trees throughout Sumner, producing over 2,000lbs of fruit for local food banks. (Delayed from 2020).

Help us congratulate these great partners and wish them luck as they work to make our communities a better place to live, work, and play.

GREEN PARTNERSHIP FUND

great projects:

that supports local
locally grown foods.

All: Students and
to restore the area
moving invasive species

: This project will engage
members in learning and
creating a demonstration

outdoor Education:
resive STEM education
courses. Using a
vities, students are
n beach, estuary, wetland,

Table - CFPAs 2020
d gardeners responded
work to educate the

p – Pierce County
Roundtable (PCAR) is a
d collaborates to better
ucture & continued
ultural community

Land Access and Farm
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g farmers through the
and people of color

project protects the
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n while providing hands-
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een Tacoma: This project
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schools, and parks, and

project will result in a
er 156,000lbs of CO₂
nts. (Delayed from 2020).
os: this project will result
of fruit for citizens and

hey help make our

HERE ARE THE RESULTS OF LAST YEAR'S PROJECTS:

530 K-12 students were provided Environmental Education and thousands more were provided virtual EE programming

24 Educational Workshops were held reaching 96 people

1,607 native plants and trees were installed

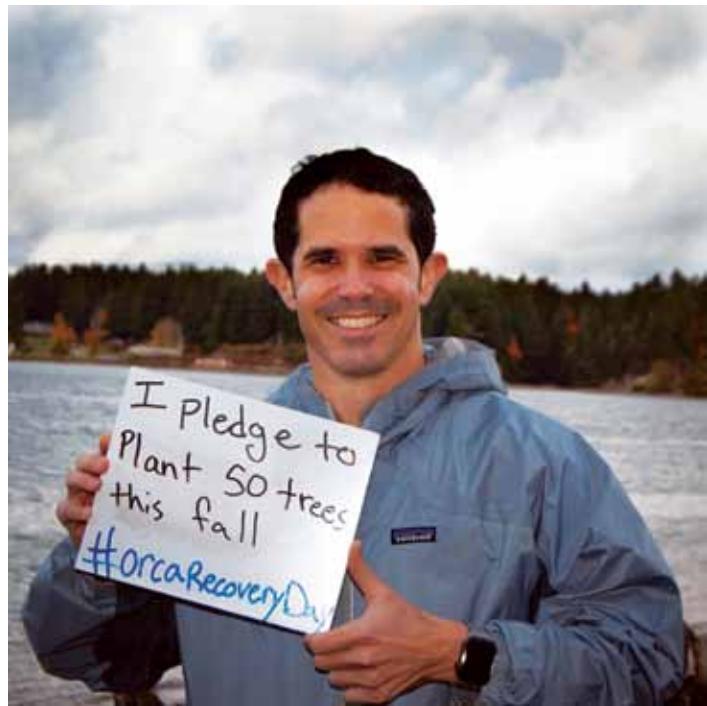
2 new raingardens a local schools were installed

282 volunteers provided 743 hours of support

243 pounds of food were preserved to help those in need



Photo: Citizens for a Healthy Bay held four days of our Environmental Justice Camp (EJC) for Girls, which they modified to allow for compliance with COVID-19 guidelines by taking campers out on Bay Patrol along Commencement Bay.



PROGRESS ON OUR STRATEGIC PLAN

2020 was the last year of our previous 5-year strategic plan and a year that we dedicated to developing a new 2021 – 2025 Strategic Plan. With the recent departure of our Executive Director, Ryan Mello, who guided our organization for 9 years, it seems like the proper time to not merely reflect on the past year, but the past decade. The Pierce Conservation District has grown tremendously, both in size and in impact on our community, over the past decade, and it's been a testament to Ryan's leadership. Here are some of the highlights.

ON JANUARY 1, 2012 THE DISTRICT:	ON JANUARY 1, 2021 THE DISTRICT:
Budget Was: ~\$2,000,000	\$5,400,000
Programs & Services Were: Farm Assistance, Habitat Improvement, Green Partnership Fund, and Stream Team	Harvest Pierce County, Water Quality Improvement and Monitoring, Shore Friendly, Environmental Education, Climate Resiliency, Natural Yard Care, Gleaning, Farm Foundations, Community Gardens, Share the Harvest, Habitat Stewardship, Regional Conservation Partnership Program, Cover Cropping, Direct Seed Drill, Communications, Farm Assistance, Habitat Improvement, Green Partnership Fund, Stream Team and City Forest Credits
Had: 10 Employees	26 fulltime staff, 5 AmeriCorps, and a team of Cultural Ambassadors helping deliver our programming to communities with low-English proficiency
Had: 0 (zero) Locally Funded Cost-Share Programs	Cost-share programs for Farm Assistance, Green Stormwater Infrastructure, and Shore Friendly

PROGRESS ON OUR 5 YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN



SINCE JANUARY 2012 THE DISTRICT HAS:

Installed over **90,000** trees and plants

Recruited over **15,000** volunteers who have supported our efforts with over 70,000 hours of work

Harvested and donated over **540,000** pounds of fresh food to the emergency food system

Restored **226** acres of habitat and **9.13** stream miles

Treated **4,100** acres of invasive species and **317** stream miles

Installed **1,547** best management practices on hundreds of local farms

Reached over **23,000** K-12 youth with Environmental Education programming

Had over **17,000** adults attend workshops on conservation practices

Naturally infiltrated **2,259,814** gallons of stormwater due to new District projects

Saved **4,056,081** kilowatt hours of energy each year due to projects installed on farms and rural businesses with District support

Created **4,587** carbon credits, becoming the first Conservation District in the country to offer a carbon credit program

Above Photo: With a staff that grew from 10 to 26 under his leadership, a new building became imperative, and Ryan lead the way in opening our new Conservation Center in 2017. Seen here with our Board of Supervisors Chair, Jeanette Dorner, Puyallup Chamber of Commerce President, Shelly Schlumphf, and Puyallup Tribal elder and Cultural Director Connie McCloud at the grand opening.

Far Left Photo: Ryan's leadership not only lead to over 90,000 native plants being installed during his tenure, but he also lead by example and contributed. Seen here with his pledge from Orca Recovery Day in 2019.

Middle Photo: Ryan helped launch our water quality improvement program by getting his hands dirty and tearing out pavement. Seen here helping with the All Saints Depave project, one of many that contribute to over 1.6M gallons of stormwater infiltrated annually.



COVER CROP COST SHARE PILOT PROGRAM

Farm Team added a cover crop cost share pilot program to our cover crop outreach and support efforts.

Seven farmers received 75% cost share, up to \$150/acre, to seed summer and winter cover crops on more than 40 acres. We had participation from a spectrum of farmers with varied cover cropping experience, and partnering in this way provided opportunity for great dialog around cover crops. The Veterans Farm in Orting used PCD's no-till drill to plant a summer cover followed by a fall cover to begin the process of bringing four acres of depleted Christmas tree farm soils into production for their growing incubator farm in Orting. We continued our cover crop partnership with Four Elements Farm as they work to rehabilitate degraded soils on their WA Farmland Trust property. Several beginning farmers used the cost share to support their first seedlings of cover

crops. The average total cost per acre for farmers was \$243 and farmers are eligible to receive the cost share for up to three years.

In other cover crop news, the Farm Team hosted the 2nd Annual Cover Crop Roundtable in March. The event was virtual, and drew over 50 participants to engage with WSU and OSU cover crop researchers and cover crop farmer April Thatcher of April Joy Farm in Ridgeland, WA. We also continued our collaboration with Doug Collins at WSU Puyallup to implement on farm cover crop research with several local farmers. While we were unable to host our usual in-person workshops for farmers to evaluate the projects, video footage was captured to create webinars that will be available in 2021. These on farm trials are supported by a grant from the Department of

Ecology, and will continue through 2021.

Above: In 2020, Pierce Conservation District (PCD) was able to secure 90% cost share funding through the WA State Conservation Commission's Shellfish Program to plant a native plant hedgerow buffer on a seasonal stream that flows through a farm on the Key Peninsula. This stream drains directly into Von Geldern Cove on Carr Inlet approximately 1/2 a mile downstream. The stream is listed by the WA Department of Fish & Wildlife as having Coho and Fall Chum documented presence up to a partial fish passage barrier on the adjacent parcel north of the property. And Carr Inlet also contains shellfish growing beds. The stream hedgerow buffer will reduce nutrients and pathogens in surface runoff reaching the stream and will improve wildlife habitat along and in the stream. This project will be followed-up with ag best management practices to include: runoff diversion, livestock heavy use area fencing and footing, pasture cross fencing, and construction of a waste storage facility. These practices are to be installed in 2021 with Near Term Action funds from Pierce County Surface Water Management via WA Department of Health. These projects are part of a targeted approach to invest in improvements voluntarily installed by conservation districts and landowners that will build cumulative results for shellfish recovery.

ON THE FARM BY THE NUMBERS

632 Best Management Practices installed on agricultural properties

16 Workshop/outreach events

439 Landowners received technical assistance

9 Cost share projects

685 Attendees to District workshops

\$55,311.81 In financial assistance to implement projects

6 Manure spreader rentals

6 Best Management Practice videos created

9 Farm plans completed

2 Hay probe loans

50 Poultry processing rentals

13 No-till drill rentals

28 Soil samples

2 Environmental Quality Incentive Program contracts signed under our Regional Conservation Partnership Program

BMP HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE:

37 land users installed heavy use area protection on **56,650** square feet of animal containment areas to prevent mud and associated manure and sediment runoff

13 stream or wetland exclusion fencing projects with **11** of them planted with trees and shrubs

36 pasture renovations on 158 acres

9 new manure bin structures

12 new roof runoff diversion projects

42 pollinator plantings



Veterans Farm - Incubator farmers with PCD cost share cover crop seeded with PCD no-till drill.

WATER QUALITY IMPROVEMENT



FLOODPLAINS
FOR THE FUTURE

PUYALLUP, WHITE & CARBON RIVERS



Floodplains for the Future (FFT) is a partnership of 21 diverse organizations working together to manage floodplains in the Puyallup watershed while balancing flood risk reduction, fish habitat needs, and conserve farmland and maintain agricultural viability. Since 2013 the partnership has collaborated to support, fund, and implement multi-benefit floodplain projects and activities in the watershed.

Pierce Conservation District has a key role in leading the development and implementation of a Shared Monitoring Plan and Index of Floodplain Health. The Index of Floodplain Health is comprised of 18 landscape level metrics focused around three themes – investments, land, and outcomes. Using these metrics to track these themes helps partners understand whether their financial and programmatic investments are achieving their goals. This understanding informs and directs their work and builds trust among the partners to sustain collaboration.

The work of FFT includes reconnecting the river to the floodplain; conserving farmland; restoring habitat; and reducing flood risk to communities in the Puyallup watershed. The plan also tracks conditions in the watershed the partnership does not have control over, such as the built environment. This metric tracks the loss of canopy cover and increase in impervious surfaces. The table below displays some of the results we are tracking. Visit www.floodplainsforthefuture.org to learn more about the Floodplains for the Future Program.

Combined Contributions by FFT Partners - **\$60,069,645** in combined contributions since 2013

Floodplain Reconnection Projects - **319** acres of completed floodplain reconnection

Conserved Farmland - **393** acres of conserved farmland

Restored Habitat - **118** acres of restored habitat

Built Environment - **250** acres of floodplain converted to Built Environment between 2015 - 2017

WATER QUALITY IMPROVEMENT



CHINOOK PROGRAM LAUNCH

A new component of Stream Team, the Chinook Program, was launched in Spring 2020. The Chinook Program recognizes long-term Stream Team monitors for their outstanding contributions to watershed stewardship by offering them a leadership role in the program. Chinook members are encouraged to assist PCD staff during events, mentor new monitors, participate in watershed councils, maintain their own kit (as available), and understand how their data fits into larger water quality efforts. Chinooks are a great asset to the Stream Team program because of their extensive knowledge and technical support.

Our first Chinook Monitors are Darren Chromey and Kelly Stave. Darren monitors Swan Creek and has been a Stream Team monitor since 2007. Kelly monitors two streams, Clover and Leach Creeks, and has been a Stream Team monitor since 2015. We are so proud of our first Chinooks and look forward to adding more leaders in the program!

Left Photo: Chinook monitor Kelly Stave.

Right Photo: Chinook Monitor Darren Chromey, seen here with his dad Paul, who sadly passed away in December. Darren carries on his dad's legacy as a longtime volunteer with the District, starting with Steam Team back in 2004. Paul will be dearly missed.

IN THE LAST 5 YEARS:

The Water Quality team has engaged **6,924** people in our programming



MAJOR CONSTRUCTION OF SOUTH PRAIRIE CREEK PRESERVE RESTORATION PROJECT COMPLETED

When the District acquired the former Inglin Dairy in 2005, it was with the intent to conserve the land for salmon habitat in South Prairie Creek. Fifteen years later, a major milestone was reached in salmon recovery efforts in the Puyallup River watershed as construction to reconnect the stream to its floodplain and improve instream and off-channel conditions for salmon was largely completed.

The footprint of this project covers about 50 acres and impacts a half-mile reach of South Prairie Creek. It involved the demolition of 11 buildings and a failing creosote bridge over South Prairie Creek; installation of a new bridge over Silver Springs Creek; excavation of a 2,600-foot side channel on the north floodplain; and installation of 113 engineered log structures (using 4,648 pieces of wood). Including property acquisition, permitting, design, and construction costs, this project is a \$6.3 million investment in local salmon recovery efforts.

This project is expected to yield an immediate 100% increase in habitat area for rearing and spawning life stages of Chinook, Steelhead, Coho, Pink, Chum, Cutthroat and Bull Trout. This project is also designed to improve habitat complexity and recruit better spawning substrate, as well as alleviate high velocity events through this reach that have scoured and down-cut the stream channel. In the long-term, ongoing ecosystem processes kickstarted by the project will be sustained in part by the revegetation of more than 40 acres of floodplain and riparian forest.

About half of this planting will be done in early 2021 and will continue into 2022.

It is difficult to overstate the patience and perseverance required on the part of all partners, including funders, who have supported this complex but important effort over the course of many years. The District would like to thank the South Puget Sound Salmon Enhancement Group, Puyallup Tribe of Indians, Pierce County, WRIA 10/12 Lead Entity for Salmon Recovery, the WA State Salmon Recovery Funding Board, WA Dept. of Ecology, Puget Sound Partnership, and the Puget Sound National Estuary Program, as well as the Snohomish Conservation District, ACI Construction, Aqua Terra Cultural Resource Consultants, Natural Systems Designs and the WA Conservation Commission for all their contributions to this project.

To learn more about this project, view our new video about it Building a New Future at South Prairie Creek here: <https://vimeo.com/527347579>

South Prairie Creek Preserve Project Timeline

2002 - South Prairie Creek Action Plan is completed.

2005 - PCD acquires Inglin Dairy property (104 acres) and Pierce County acquires adjacent upstream properties (25 acres), which together form the 129-acre South Prairie Creek Preserve.

2005-2008 - PCD plants 200' buffers on South Prairie Creek on PCD property.

2012-2013 - Pierce County completes assessment of

lower five miles of the creek, a project on the Puyallup River Salmon Recovery; Puyallup River Salmon Recovery Assessment of South Prairie Creek

2013 - SPCP Project completed, Pierce County SWM, Phase 1

2014-2018 - Funded engineering under SPCP

2018 - Cultural resources assessment

2019 - Permits obtained

2020 - Instream and off-channel work

2022 - Anticipated completion of the floodplain planting

(Thanks to Kristin for contributing to this timeline)



of South Prairie Creek that identifies Preserve as high priority for salmon. Puyallup Tribe completes Level 1 Watershed Plan for South Prairie Creek.

ject team is formed with PCD, Pierce Puyallup Tribe, and SPSSEG. Land secured; project design and easement underway.

resource surveys completed.

obtained.

and side channel construction.

ed completion of riparian and land.

n Williamson, SPSSEG, for this article.)

ew of the South Prairie Creek Preserve salmon in February 2017 (looking upstream). Photo

view of South Prairie Creek Preserve salmon in February 2021 (looking downstream).



2020 ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF PCD'S NEW SHORELINES PROGRAM

While the first full year of this program did not proceed exactly as we expected, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we made progress we are proud of.

Here are updates from the first full year of the Shore Friendly Pierce program:

Impact - 2020

Under COVID-19 safety protocols, the Shore Friendly Pierce program provided technical assistance to residential shoreline landowners throughout Pierce County, reaching the Gig Harbor and Key Peninsulas, Fox Island, Herron Island, Anderson Island, and the Brown's Point neighborhood of Tacoma. In total, we served:

- 20 shoreline landowners with free site visits and management recommendations
- 42 shoreline landowners with technical assistance or connection to other resources

Technical assistance site visits impacted:

- 1,618 linear feet natural shoreline, including 814 linear feet of feeder bluffs that support critical fish habitat processes
- 544 linear feet armored shoreline which were assessed for feasibility of armor removal or replacement with soft shore alternatives

Outreach Accomplishments

- We launched the new Shore Friendly Pierce webpage including a guidance document library of 14 technical assistance fact sheets customized for Pierce County marine shoreline landowners.
- We hosted our first workshop for shoreline landowners under the Shore Friendly Pierce program at the Key Peninsula Civic Center with 32 people in attendance (in early 2020, prior to COVID-19 restrictions).
- We pivoted our outreach efforts to an online platform following the Governor's "Stay Home, Stay Healthy" Order and released the "Top Five Recommendations for Your Shoreline" video series, which generated over 700 views. The series was featured by the National Association of Conservation Districts for our participation in the #DistrictsConserveCoasts campaign in celebration of National Ocean Month.

HABITAT



The forested area of the Vines floodplain is dominated by deciduous tree species and the presence of knotweed, blackberry, and other weeds. Restoration actions will emphasize control of invasive species and underplanting of conifer trees and other native species to enhance the site's diversity and resilience.

VINES ACQUISITION

A mile or two upstream from the South Prairie Creek Preserve lies a 38-acre parcel on the south side of the creek known as the Vines property. With a floodplain more than 600' wide in places and close to 2,000 feet of streambank, this reach is undeveloped and retains channel complexity and natural off-channel habitat vital to supporting some of the Puyallup River watershed's most threatened salmon runs. As such, it was identified as a high priority for preservation by salmon recovery partners and received funds for acquisition and restoration from the WA State Salmon Recovery Funding Board.

With support from partners including Forterra and Pierce County Surface Water Management, acquisition of this property was completed in August 2020. Since then, District staff have begun assessing the floodplain and prioritizing areas for restoration action. High priority tasks include control of knotweed and other invasive weeds, understory planting to increase species diversity with an emphasis on conifers, and establishment of vegetation to shade out reed canary grass.

The District would like to thank the many partners who supported this acquisition and stepped up to help make it happen. In particular, Forterra and Pierce County Surface Water Management worked hand in hand with the District through the acquisition process to meet the closing deadline. We'd also like to thank the Vines family for their commitment to conservation and for working with the District to help preserve this land.

HARVEST PIERCE



EDIBLE GARDENS SERIES BECOMES BILINGUAL IN PARTNERSHIP WITH VT RADIO UNIVERSAL

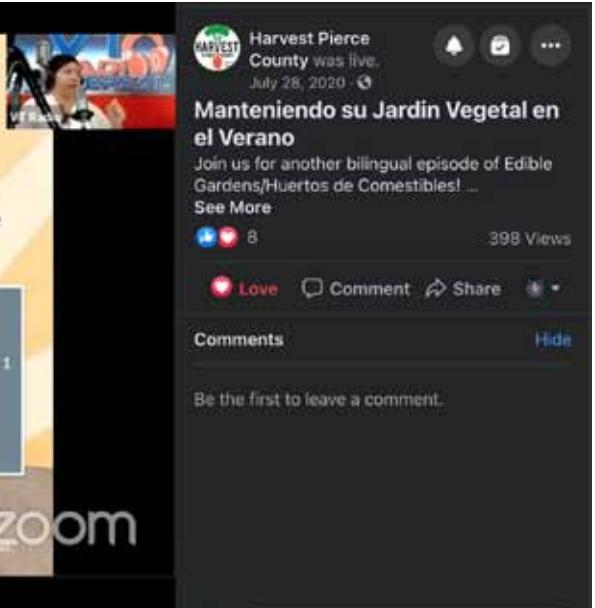
Every year since 2012, Pierce County residents have enjoyed the Edible Gardens Workshop Series, a free series of monthly workshops offered all around the County that teach beginner gardeners the basics of growing their own food, seed to table. Each workshop is designed to support our County's gardeners throughout the gardening season by addressing what needs to be done in the garden that month. Students' knowledge grows along with their garden, and attendees report that they leave classes less intimidated to get their hands in the soil and start gardening. The Edible Gardens Class Series is a partnership between the educators from Pierce County Public Works, and Harvest Pierce County, the urban agriculture program of the Pierce Conservation District.

In an effort to continue adapting our programming to the unique needs of our County, we began a new partnership in 2020 with VT Radio Universal, a local community radio station with most programming in Spanish. "VT" stands

for Voice of Tacoma. VT Radio Universal is now a bilingual station that spans the entire state, as well as Tune In, a mobile app, where people can listen to stations around the world. The success of VT Radio is that it connects community members to what they care about most: friends, family, and neighbors. In March of 2020, VT Radio Universal unveiled a new program, "Comestibles," the Spanish word for "Edible Gardens." VT Radio Universal's hosts, Lopez and HPC Co-host Wendy Pantoja, host shows from March to October, in Spanish, with slides in Spanish, and interview-style format. People watching can ask questions in Spanish, and broadcasts to typical English speakers have them answer in Spanish. For each show, our hosts work with HPC to advise them on content to the Pierce County speaking audience. We work with us to record the show, and advertisements for local interest and excitement.

At the end of the show, we have a lot of amount of views from people who are interested in our work and our mission.

COUNTY



na, though VT Radio connected to two FM stations across the County, is an Internet Radio station that can be tuned in from anywhere. Importantly, the spirit of the station is that it is a platform for cultural leaders to talk about what is important to them, and reach their local community at large. The Harvest Pierce County program on VT Radio is a program called "Huertos de Comestibles," a Spanish translation of "Edible Gardens." We worked with the program's cultural founder Christian Pantoja, a Cultural Ambassador, to help him deliver 18 bilingual programs from June to October, with a mix of formal and an informal Q&A format that allowed participants to join on Facebook Live and ask their questions and receive answers in real time. Our partners worked hard to promote and adapt the program to the Pierce County Spanish-speaking community. They also worked hard to recruit and produce short video clips for the show to drum up interest.

season, the average number of the Livestreamed

shows was 400 viewers, mostly coming from a Spanish-speaking viewership. The shows were also streamed to www.vtradiouniversal.com, where an average of 110 people tuned in to each show. On the TuneIn Radio App, another 120 people are reported to have tuned in per show. These shows ran during the beginning months of the pandemic, when people needed online content most, and during a time when an unprecedented number of people in our County began gardening for the first time, for both food security and mental health. We are thankful to our Cultural Ambassadors and our partners at VT Radio Universal for their insight, and for bringing our program to their platform in such an important and culturally sensitive way!

To learn more about VT Radio Universal, visit their website at www.vtradiouniversal.com or email voicetacoma@outlook.com

Photo: Screenshot of one of the livestreamed broadcasts of the show *Huertos de Comestibles*, which reached an average of 630 people per show through multiple VT Radio Universal channels. You can see the translated slides, as well as HPC Cultural Ambassador Wendy Pantoja hosting the show in the upper right corner.



Photo: A member of the East Tacoma Collaborative Community Leadership Team works to dig out a tire dumped in Swan Creek. The culturally diverse group came together to revitalize Swan Creek, removing 2.7 tons of trash and coordinating their efforts with 17 different local agencies to continue the work to bring health back to the creek. For this passionate effort, we awarded them the annual Brian Abbott Above and Beyond Award.

HARVEST PIERCE COUNTY

SWAN CREEK CLEAN UP

Swan Creek Park is 373 acres of green space with boundaries spanning both East Tacoma and unincorporated Pierce County, featuring a salmon-bearing stream, a wooded canyon, upland forest, paved and natural trails, community gardens, and mountain bike trails. It is an urban oasis on the Eastside, and as you walk through the ravine it's easy to feel like you are miles away in a state park, even though it's walking distance from a major highway. Strikingly, just off River Road you can see where Swan Creek connects to the Puyallup River, and from that point on a clear day you can see all the way to the mountain that mothers the waters of the Puyallup Watershed.

It's hard not to feel connected to it all, especially when you imagine all the people, homes, plants, yards, and paths our rains touch as they make their way down ultimately to the Puyallup River. And while we might feel small at the foot of it all, when we come together, we can make a big impact, as the East Tacoma Collaborative Community Leadership Team was able to demonstrate during the height of the pandemic in 2020. They won the Pierce Conservation District's Brian Abbott Above and Beyond Award for their innovation, leadership, collaboration, and impact on Swan Creek; this is their story.

Longstanding Challenges on the Eastside, and in Swan Creek
Currently managed by Metro Parks Tacoma and Pierce County Parks, Swan Creek is among the traditional homelands of the Puyallup Tribe, whose official ownership was lost as a result of the Dawes Severalty Act of 1887. Swan Creek, however, continues to hold sacred cultural and spiritual significance to the Puyallup people to this day.

In the years since Swan Creek transitioned from traditional indigenous stewardship, the river has had problems with pollution due to a variety of factors. Since 2008, the Pierce County Surface Water Management (SWM) division has tracked and reported the water quality of streams and lakes in an annual Surface Water Report Card; streams and lakes are graded on a scale of 'F' (failing) to 'A' (excellent). In 2017, Swan Creek received a "C" grade, and as recently as 2018, Swan Creek received a "D+."

Learn how this inspiring and diverse group of community leaders are working to revitalize Swan Creek here:
<https://piercecd.org/Blog.aspx?ID=333#item>

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION



REMOTE LEARNING RESOURCES

Like so many other things, the school year got turned upside down in 2020. Just as we were getting ready to host special events such as the Children's Water Festival and Envirothon, everything got put on hold. Instead of planning field trips, field days and other fun programs, our education team had to improvise. We spent much of the spring building up a library of remote learning resources. Each week featured a new theme as we created videos, at-home projects, and other activities. Our hope was to provide useful resources for teachers and families looking to engage kids during a challenging period. We collected these at our Environmental Education at Home page, where you can watch a stop-motion stormwater video, look at soil organisms up close, and explore other environmental science activities.

BY THE NUMBERS:

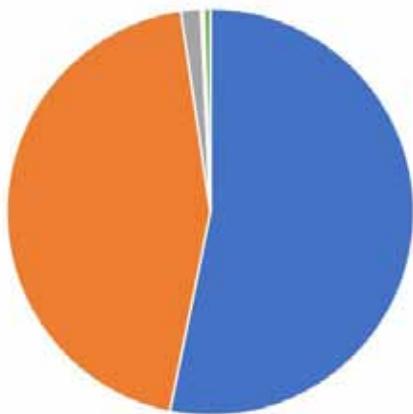
622 students

884 contract hours

7 remote learning themes

FINANCIALS

2020 REVENUES + SPENDING



REVENUE BY SOURCE

- Rates + Charges 57.5%
- Grants + Contracts 40.4%
- Native Plant + Tree Sale 1.4%
- Misc 0.3%
- Donations 0.5%



REVENUE BY SOURCE

RATES + CHARGES	\$2,675,558.00	57.5 %
GRANT + CONTRACTS	\$1,880,348.00	40.4 %
NATIVE PLANT + TREE SALE	\$64,670.00	1.4 %
MISCELLANEOUS	\$11,690.00	0.3 %
DONATIONS	\$23,596.00	0.5 %
TOTAL	\$4,655,862.00	

SPENDING BY PROGRAM

FARM/AG ASSISTANCE	\$705,329.32	17.0 %
ENVIRONMENTAL EDU.	\$180,982.26	4.4 %
HABITAT IMPROVEMENT	\$1,124,249.01	27.1 %
HARVEST PIERCE COUNTY	\$800,242.45	19.3 %
WATER QUALITY	\$863,774.10	20.8 %
ADMINISTRATION	\$473,912.41	11.4 %
TOTAL	\$4,148,489.55	

BALANCE SHEET AS OF 12/31/2020

CURRENT ASSETS	\$3,151,458.00
TOTAL ASSETS	\$3,151,458.00
CURRENT LIABILITIES	(\$74,926.00)
TOTAL LIABILITIES	(\$74,926.00)
NET ASSETS	\$2,542,326.00
NET INCOME	\$534,206.00
TOTAL EQUITY	\$3,151,458.00
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	\$3,151,458.00

Leveraged Funds:

For every dollar of rates funding the District leveraged \$0.77 in external funding.

2020 ANNUAL REPORT



Photo: Volunteers came out to support Green Tacoma Day in small groups of four due to COVID restrictions, but with four Orcas Love Raingardens project sites, we were still able to get multiple raingardens planted and help people get involved. This group of volunteers helped install a raingarden at Blix Elementary School to reduce stormwater pollution. Photo Credit: Rae Ware.



OVER 70 YEARS of
CONSERVATION
Since 1949

CONTACT US

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