



2016 Annual Report

PIERCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Working to conserve natural
resources that are essential to
both our economy and our
region's quality of life.

CONSERVATION ACROSS PIERCE COUNTY

What We Do

& OUR FOUR MAIN PROGRAMS

Pierce Conservation District works with local landowners and public agencies to conserve natural resources that are essential to both our economy and our region's quality of life. Our collaborative efforts with citizen volunteers to create a just food system, improve water quality, promote sustainable agriculture, and recover wildlife habitat, is the heart of our mission.

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 65-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 2016–2020 Strategic Plan. You can download the plan at our website, www.PierceCD.org/353/Strategic-Plan. ■



Did YOU know?

In 2016, the District engaged a total of **2,131 volunteers** who served **12,956 hours**.

"Our Conservation District is a critical partner to my constituents and their love for clean water, our quality of life in Pierce County, and a healthy Puget Sound. They're an effective partner and I'm excited for their continued work to protect our environment because a healthy environment means a healthy economy."

– Derek M. Young
PIERCE COUNTY COUNCIL DISTRICT #7

Contents

- p. 2-3 | What We Do
- p. 4 | Executive Director and Board Chair Message
- p. 5 | Recognition of Partners
- p. 6-7 | 2016 By the Numbers
- p. 8-9 | 5-year Strategic Plan
- p. 10-11 | Farm Planning & Agricultural Assistance
- p. 12-13 | Water Quality Improvement & Monitoring
- p. 14-15 | Urban Agriculture & Local Food Access
- p. 16-18 | Habitat Improvement & Environmental Education
- p. 19 | Financial Report



With support from a \$100,000 grant from the USDA, the District helped run a promotional campaign for 11 Pierce County Farmers Markets during the 2016 season, boosting sales of locally grown and crafted goods.



Urban Agriculture & LOCAL FOOD ACCESS

Through our Harvest Pierce County program, the district creates a community of abundance through gardening, glean- ing, and educating Pierce County about their food and food systems. Our Veggie Co-Op, Gleaning Project, and Commu- nity Gardens produce bountiful harvests of locally grown food for volunteers and local food banks alike. Besides growing crops for their own tables, participants gain a greater sense of community and connect with their local food system.



Habitat Improvement & ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

Our work focuses on improving riparian habitat through the removal of invasive weeds and replanting with native trees and shrubs. Streamside planting events engage hundreds of volunteers in efforts that help in the recovery of endangered salmon and other wildlife.

District Environmental Education programs include classroom presentations, organizing Family Fun events, workshops, and field trips for K-16 students. These efforts reached thousands of young people and the community at-large throughout Pierce County with a message of how important environmental steward- ship is and provided an opportunity to act on that message.



Farm Planning & AGRICULTURAL ASSISTANCE

The district provides local farmers with financial and techni- cal assistance that allows them to voluntarily improve their farm practices. This support makes farms more economically sustainable while helping reduce negative impacts on soil and water resources. The “Best Management Practices” that we help farmers employ serve to control soil erosion and water runoff, which can contaminate streams and the marine envi- ronment of Puget Sound. Additionally, the district’s support through programs such as our mobile meat unit and poultry processing unit create a shared infrastructure, which reduces production costs and increases access to local markets.



Water Quality IMPROVEMENT & MONITORING

The district works with citizen volunteers to monitor the health of our streams and rivers in order to educate the public about how our daily lives impact our local water. The data collected through our Water Monitoring Program helps promote low-impact development practices, informs public agencies of problem areas, and inspires citizen action to improve our water quality. The district engages citizens in action initia- tives through our rain garden, Depave, and streamside planting programs. These programs directly improve the water quality of our region by filtering out pollutants and reducing stormwa- ter runoff. Collectively, the efforts create an informed public and help local communities meet Clean Water Act standards.

Letter from

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR & BOARD CHAIR

2016 was a milestone year for the District. With the leadership of our Board and strong support of the Pierce County Council, the District's core funding increased and is secured for the next 10 years. This kind of certainty allows our District staff to focus less on paperwork and more on working with people in our community solve our conservation challenges. Having this long term certainty in our base funding also makes it easier for us to go after additional significant grant dollars that can greatly expand the scale and the scope of what we can accomplish. This work will put \$26 million of local dollars on-the-ground to conserve our natural resources over the next 10 years and leveraged with state, federal and private philanthropic grants will invest over \$42 million during this same period.

2016 was also the first year of implementing our 5-year strategic plan. We have set audacious and inspiring goals and have made good progress in meeting these goals. You can read about our progress implementing our plan throughout this report.

The work we do only happens with the partnership of private landowners, local jurisdictions, tribes, many other partner organizations, and the thousands of volunteers we work with each year. We are honored to celebrate their stories and many contributions to our important work throughout this report as well.

The one thing that is constant in our environment and at the District is change. We are committed to delivering programs that are meeting the natural resource challenges of our time and region. In addition to continuing the core

"Four Elements Farm is extremely fortunate to partner with PCD to establish native hedgerow plantings that attract pollinators and promote ecosystem health. **PCD provides all the conservation expertise so we can focus on the business of farming.**"

- **Amy Moreno-Sills**
OWNER/OPERATOR FOUR ELEMENTS FARM

District services you have come to appreciate, over this year you will see the District change to meet new and growing challenges. We will develop a "Green Shorelines Program" to assist landowners living along marine shorelines protect against erosion and improve this fast-disappearing and critical habitat for

endangered salmon in Puget Sound. The District will launch its "Climate Resiliency Program", working with rural property owners to reduce their energy cost and be more resilient in the face of climate change impacts. Also, the District will launch new services to row crop farmers – assisting them with soil conservation, soil health and drainage issues they face as they farm in our fertile valleys.

We are excited about advancing our work for current and future generations and facing the many challenges that greet us.

We remain very inspired and grateful to our partners and volunteers for your partnership and commitment to our work. Enjoy reading about the many accomplishments you made possible in this report and we look forward to seeing you at a volunteer event with us in the near future!

Thank you!



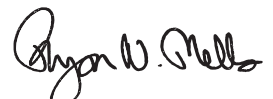
Jeanette Dorner
BOARD CHAIR



Ryan Mello, Executive Director



Jeanette Dorner, Board Chair



Ryan N. Mello
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Partners

ORGANIZATIONS & COMMUNITIES WE WORKED WITH IN 2016

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

2016 FUNDING PARTNERS:

Army Corps of Engineers
Army National Guard
– Camp Murray
Bonneville Environmental
Foundation
Environmental Protection
Agency
Greater Tacoma Community
Foundation
King Conservation District
Lakewood Water District
Metro Parks Tacoma
National Fish and
Wildlife Foundation
National Association of
Conservation Districts

National Resource
Conservation Service
PCC Farmland Trust
Peninsula Light
Pierce County Parks
& Recreation
Puget Sound Partnership
Puyallup Tribe of Indians
River Network
South Puget Sound Salmon
Enhancement Group
Tacoma/Pierce County
Health Department
The Boeing Company
The Nature Conservancy
The Russell Family Foundation
Toyota Together Green
US Department of Agriculture
Washington Department
of Fish & Wildlife
Washington State
Conservation Commission
Washington State
Department of Ecology
Washington State
Department of Health
Washington State Department
of Natural Resources
Washington State Recreation
and Conservation Office

EVENT SPONSORS:

Coordinated Care
Multicare Health System
Puget Sound Energy
Tehalah
Whole Foods
Land Recovery Inc.

IN-KIND SUPPORTERS:

TAGRO
City of Tacoma
Environmental Services
19 C Lions Club
Boy Scouts
Girl Scouts
Clover Park Technical College
First United Methodist Church
Master Gardeners
Cascade Compost

KEY PROJECT PARTNERS:

Pierce County Surface
Water Management
Forterra
Green Puyallup Partnership



BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Jeanette Dorner | *Chair*
Scott Gruber | *Vice-Chair*
David Seago | *Auditor*
Sheila Wynn | *Member*
Dr. Brian Sullivan | *Member*



Did YOU know?

We have been working
with local landowners
on conservation
issues **since 1949.**

By the Numbers

SOME OF OUR ACCOMPLISHMENTS FROM 2016

7,396
trees and
shrubs
planted

total of 22.61 acres
and 1.16 stream miles



2,627

K-12 students taught
about conservation

55 events
resulting in
2,840
contact
hours



2,131

volunteers across all
programs worked a
total of 12,956 hours
for a value of \$194,340



8,100 sqft. = **194,400 gal.**
of pavement removed of stormwater
runoff infiltrated



1070
students attended
Children's Water Festival

42 classes / 13 schools / 160 volunteers

\$\$\$

\$1,254,457

grant
funds
secured

90¢
for every
\$1 in rate
income

3,504 in Harvest
Pierce
County
individuals engaged programs

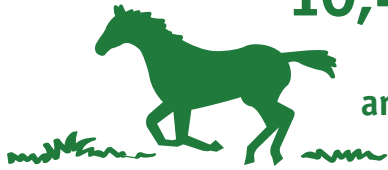


35
streams
monitored
at 54 sites



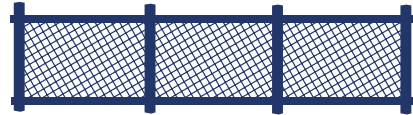
83 volunteers spent
1,000 hours monitoring
streams over the
course of 314 trips

10,404 sq.ft.
of heavy use
area protection
installed
by 5 landowners to *contain their livestock*
when they should not be out on pasture
(winter/droughty times)



2,064
attendees to
District workshops

800 ft.

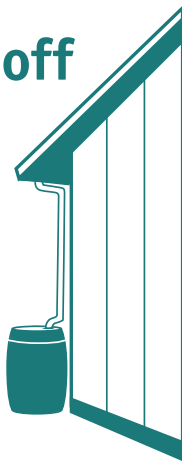


cross fencing
installed

by 1 landowners to facilitate *rotational grazing*

3 roof runoff
projects

to *divert clean*
roof water away
from livestock
heavy use areas



26,740
native
plants sold

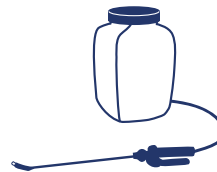
of pre-order
plant sale
customers: **582**
32 volunteers



736 acres
knotweed *treated*



44 stream miles
of Japanese
Knotweed *treated* in
Nisqually Watershed



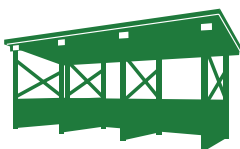
134 ft.



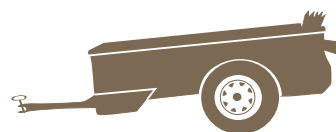
pond exclusion
fencing installed

by 1 *landowner* to exclude livestock

3 new manure
storage structures



built to
contain
and **compost**
manure



6 manure
spreader
rentals

631

individuals
engaged in habitat
stewardship
activities

4

farm **plans**
completed

16.52

acres of **pasture**
management

26

farm **workshops/**
outreach **events**

44

soil
samples

9

landowners
practicing
rotational
grazing

39

BMPs installed

156

farm **site**
visits

5

site visits to
assist shoreline
homeowners

8

cost share
projects

3

hay probe
loans

1,811

individuals
engaged in
water quality
programs

Progress on Our

5-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN

In 2015, the District put the finishing touches on an ambitious 5-year strategic plan. This plan is a roadmap full of strategies and actions that will help us achieve our lofty conservation goals by the year 2021. These actions will also put us on a path for even bigger goals for the future, such as ensuring the recovery of Puget Sound salmon, creating a healthy and equitable food system, and providing all of Pierce County's residents with clean water and a good quality of life.

2016 was our first year implementing our plan and we're happy to say that across the board, we're on pace to reach our goals. We wanted to highlight some of this year's achievements for you:

By 2021, 3,000 acres of additional agriculture lands permanently conserved.

The District secured an \$8 million grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Regional Conservation Partnership Program.

In partnership with local, state, and federal organizations, this funding will be leveraged \$1 for \$1, resulting in the permanent conservation of 1,000 acres of Pierce County farmland.

By 2021, District projects will contribute to 750,000 gallons of stormwater naturally infiltrated annually.

Completion of two Depave projects, one at Feast Art Center and another at the Yakima and Thompson Y's in Tacoma, not only resulted in 8,100 square feet of asphalt being replaced with trees and shrubs, but also big impacts for keeping Puget Sound clean. Combined with numerous rain garden installations, District projects in 2016 infiltrated 218,400 gallons last, keeping us well on pace for our goals.

In addition, the District secured a \$242,000 National Estuary Program grant for our Depave program, which will fund three additional projects over the next two years and help spread the program throughout Puget Sound!


By 2021, District programs will plant 35,000 trees and shrubs, 50-acres, and 4 stream miles.

Between all of our programs, the District planted 7,396 plants, 22.61 acres, and 1.16 stream miles in 2016. In addition, we secured a \$105,000 grant from the Salmon Recovery Funding Board to eradicate Japanese Knotweed in the Nisqually Watershed, which will lead to an additional 6,500 plants and 15-acres of restoration in 2017.



Along with 10 other partner organizations, the District secured an \$8 million grant from the USDA that will lead to nearly 1,000 acres of Pierce County farmland being permanently conserved. Through these funds, more projects like the 2015 easement acquisition of the 154-acre Matlock Farm will occur, which allowed the Sidhu family to purchase their 70-acre farm with help from Forterra.

PHOTO CREDIT: HANNAH LETINICH – FORTERRA

A group of seniors are walking along a path in a forest. In the foreground, a man in a blue baseball cap and a dark jacket is holding a white tote bag with the "HARVEST PIERCE COUNTY" logo. The logo features a green tree icon and the text "A PROGRAM OF PIERCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT". Behind him, several other seniors are walking, some wearing hats and sunglasses. The path is covered with fallen leaves, and the background is filled with green trees.

Here, Salishan seniors take a tour through the Swan Creek Park Food Forest as a part of an outdoor art exhibit. Harvest Pierce County was able to host this tour in Vietnamese, Khmer, Korean, and Russian, making it more accessible to people living in Salishan, Tacoma's most linguistically diverse neighborhood.

PHOTO CREDIT: JEFFERSON MOK

By 2021, outreach materials are translated into top languages spoken (other than English).

The District secured two grants to help Harvest Pierce County launch these efforts in 2016, the Walkability Grant from Tacoma Pierce County Health Department and an Urban Agriculture grant from the National Association of Conservation Districts. The HPC team used these funds to recruit a team of translators from the community who have helped us provide translation services to community gardeners, lead multi-lingual workshops, and translate outreach materials into Korean, Russian, Khmer, and Vietnamese. The leadership on this effort from our HPC team will provide a model for all of our other programs to adopt similar practices in the future. ■

Farm Planning & AGRICULTURAL ASSISTANCE

In 2016, Pierce Conservation District launched first steps towards the goals of the Climate Resiliency portion of our Strategic Plan. The changing climate will have a dramatic impact on farming and resource use in Pierce County, and the District is preparing to offer technical assistance to deal with added constraints. PCD is starting this brand new program with a strategy to lower greenhouse emissions from energy usage on rural properties.

A large part of this program is aimed to help farmers and rural businesses who want to reduce their carbon footprint and lower energy bills at the same time. In partnership with Puget Sound Energy's Resource Conservation Management program, the District is helping reduce the costs of electricity farmers face through improved efficiencies. Renewable energy and energy efficiency make good economic sense. These technologies lower operating expenses, hedge against energy price increases, and bolster sustainability. The addition of federal tax credits, USDA grants, and local incentives can make clean energy projects a win-win scenario – good for your business, and good for the planet.

District staff secured a USDA Renewable Energy Development Assistance (REDA) grant to help launch the program here in Pierce County, with the opportunity to extend the grant services to

our neighboring counties, King and Thurston. With the help of this grant, partnerships with NW SEED and local utility companies, PCD has a goal of getting 15 renewable energy systems installed in the tri-county area. More than that, 100 property owners will receive a free energy audit. Between conservation and the installation of on-site renewable energy, PCD has a goal of removing the equivalent of 50 homes worth of energy off of the grid.

This is an exciting launch for our Climate Resiliency Program, and we look forward to 2017 for the launch of the other elements of the program.

Goals of the 5 Year Strategic Plan for Climate Resiliency

- **Increase Climate Resiliency** - Increase the climate resiliency of agricultural lands and native habitats through existing programs.
- **Energy Conservation** - Develop an energy conservation program to reduce greenhouse gases from the agricultural sector.
- **Green Infrastructure** - Develop green infrastructure projects that improve climate resilience and adaptation.
- **Forest Resilience** - Prepare small family forests for drought and warmer, fire-risk temperatures.
- **Build Community Engagement** - Build greater community engagement through volunteer programs and work parties. ■



With support from Puget Sound Energy and the USDA's Renewable Energy Development Assistance program, the District has launched a new Renewable Energy & Energy Efficiency program. Through this work we hope to see more renewable energy such as these solar panels at Tahoma Farms.

*(Photo to the right)
Jim and Sandy Merrifield
of Buckley raise Finn Sheep
and have benefitted from
numerous District services
such as our farm workshops,
heavy use area improve-
ments, and soil sampling
to improve their pastures.*



Did you know?

The District secured an **\$8 million grant** from the USDA to permanently conserve and improve over **1,000 acres** of farmland over the next **5 years**



“PCC Farmland Trust couldn't do our stewardship work without the advice and services we have come to rely on from Pierce Conservation District. We look to PCD to develop a farm plan with each farmer and the Trust. Progressive implementation of that farm plan becomes a basis for each property's stewardship plan. The Farmland Trust again relies on PCD to design and restore habitats to buffer the farming activities from the natural waterways and to serve as habitat corridors. PCD is also an invaluable advisor as we look for next farms to conserve in the County.”

- *Rebecca Sadinsky*
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
PCC FARMLAND TRUST

Water Quality

IMPROVEMENT & MONITORING

Depave Brings Nature Back to Urban Spaces

Pavement does not have to be permanent and Depave reminds us that it's possible to bring nature back into our urban landscapes.

Tacoma's Hilltop neighborhood has reclaimed a derelict, crumbling parking lot and gained a multi-use green space. The project, completed in June 2016, now serves dual use as a community gathering space and a natural filtration system for otherwise polluted runoff. The transformed space now filters on-site more than 130,000 gallons of polluted runoff a year.

Thanks to its natural beauty, economic growth and the thriving tech industry, the Puget Sound region is one of the most rapidly urbanizing areas in the nation. Our population grows by more than 200 people every day and by some estimates will top 7.5 million by 2030. Often, this growth puts our green spaces in a losing tug-of-war with urban development. Sprawling pavement, rooftops and roadways send increasing levels of polluted runoff into our vital waterways, creating one of our most urgent environmental challenges.

Reclaiming even small patches of pavement and restoring nature's filtering systems can have a significant effect in mitigating

stormwater pollution, while at the same time reenergizing urban neighborhoods and improving quality of life within our communities.

For the Tacoma Hilltop project we enlisted more than 100 members from the community to help select a site and participate in its transformation.

"We partnered with Tacoma's Healthy Homes Healthy Neighborhoods program to identify unfunctional space," said Melissa Buckingham, Water Quality Improvement Director of the Pierce Conservation District. "Feast Art Center was moving into the area and wanted to create an outdoor community space. It just all came together."

With funds from Boeing and The Nature Conservancy and Environmental Sponsorship from the City of Tacoma, the Feast Arts Center, an art school and gallery, converted 4,500 square feet of derelict pavement at south 11th and south Sheridan into a vibrant community gathering space featuring an outdoor silent movie theater, rain garden and a green multi-use lawn for events. The perimeter includes a drivable area to accommodate a variety of community events that might utilize food trucks or blood drive vehicles.

"The building and the lot had been a vacant eyesore for many years, so many in the community are grateful for the change," said Todd Jannausch, co-owner of Feast Arts Center. "We use the space to host a variety of free events, classes and performances for the community."

Bringing nature back into our urban environment can do more than just energize the neighborhood. A growing body of research suggests that living near green space inspires physical activity, improves neighborhood safety, boosts the economy and helps children learn. The bottom line: It's easier being green!

The success of the Feast Arts Center depave project is a welcome reminder that we can reclaim a natural habitat in the urban environment, proving that humans and nature can thrive together in the same space.

Adapted from The Nature Conservancy



Dozens of volunteers came out to help Depave the Yakima & Thompson Y's in Tacoma last fall. This project turned 3,600 sq.ft. of pavement into 1,600 trees and shrubs and will eliminate 85,000 gallons of polluted stormwater from Puget Sound every year!



Tired, but happy volunteers after the 2016 volunteer planting at Murray Creek.

Murray Creek Restoration

Pierce Conservation District started their partnership with Camp Murray in 2004 to increase the buffer width of Murray Creek, an important spawning habitat for American Lake's kokanee salmon (landlocked salmon). Murray Creek, which begins in a wetland on Joint Base Lewis-McChord and flows west towards Camp Murray, is the only surface water input into American Lake. In recent years, Murray Creek experienced low flows due to reed canary grass filling in the channel. To reduce the reed canary grass and other invasive species, Camp Murray and Pierce Conservation District have planted native trees and shrubs along the creek. Since 2011, over 1800 plants have been installed along Murray Creek with the help of 240 volunteers plus one Eagle Scout project that grubbed out invasive species. These plantings are important to the continual habitat improvement of Murray Creek and could not have been accomplished without the time and effort of our volunteers.

Fircrest Habitat Stewardship

Digging, pulling, mulching, planting, shovels, loppers. What do these things have in common? They are the actions and tools most often used during habitat stewardship work. While often physically demanding and dirty, habitat stewardship reaps great benefits for communities and open spaces. Habitat stewardship is an important service Pierce Conservation District offers to partner jurisdictions and has recently started in Fircrest. The first project was Whittier Park adjacent to Leach Creek that provides an important riparian zone habitat. Since August 2016, Katie Baker, the habitat steward, and 20 volunteers have removed over 2000 square feet of invasive species. In 2017, a habitat stewardship group will also be formed at Thelma Gilmur Park that features a wetland and is named after local conservationist, Thelma Gilmur.



Did YOU know?

In 2016, District led projects kept **218,400 gallons** of **polluted stormwater** out of Puget Sound!

Urban Agriculture & LOCAL FOOD ACCESS



A Year of Expanded Outreach For Harvest Pierce County

Harvest Pierce County (HPC) is delighted to celebrate 7 years connecting the Pierce County community to each other through food, community, & place. With over 80 community gardens in the county, over a hundred fruit tree and farm gleans, and dozens of classes and events through the county, there are more opportunities than ever to grow, share, and learn about growing and harvesting your own food. We are also pleased to announce increased capacity to support non-English speaking community members through a tremendous grant from the National Association of Conservation Districts. Cultural liaisons support multi-lingual gardens and Harvest Pierce County through translation, multi-lingual events and gardening classes. The improved engagement and understanding in multi-lingual gardens in Tacoma has been the best ever thanks to this opportunity.

Harvest Pierce County is proud to be an active participant in the Just and Healthy Food System (JHFS) Community of Interest where partners come together to understand and eliminate barriers to healthy food by taking lead from communities who experience these barriers first hand. Harvest Pierce County is lead partner in the JHFS COI's work with Community Based Participatory Research (CBPR) supporting com-

munity members to gain deeper understanding from fellow neighbors about issues of food. We look forward to sharing the results of the CBPR research this coming year.



HPC offers dozens of workshops each year, including our Fruit Tree Education Series, where attendees learn how to prune and care for their trees.

KWA Orchard:

Harvest Pierce County, the Emergency Food Network and the Korean Women's Association (KWA) have partnered around a very special and unique place: the KWA Orchard in Roy. The site is stewarded year round by KWA care-takers who live adjacent to the Orchard. With the educational and volunteer support of Harvest Pierce County, the orchard produced around 4,000 lbs. of fruit for the Emergency Food Network per year. However, in 2015 the orchards production took a sharp dip to only 115 lbs. of apples. The reason was a lack of biodiversity in the orchard which prevented pollination and ultimately fruit production. After spending a year moving trees and planting new varietals, we are excited to report that the orchard is back on track. The hundreds of trees were loaded with beautiful, pest-free liberty apples and gleaners were able to harvest 6,325 lbs. this past autumn. Thanks to the fabulous work of the HPC Fruit Tree Stewards, arborist Robert Sweet and the busy pollinators for not only restoring but greatly improving the overall production and health of this uniquely special place. This is a telling example of the strength of partnerships to accomplish great things in Pierce County.



Happy volunteers celebrate the Harvest at one of many Gleaning Project fruit gleans.



Tacoma Community College and HPC worked with local gardeners to save the TCC Community Garden and bring the community closer together.

Community Gardens:

Each of the 80 community gardens in Pierce County is unlike any of the others. Harvest Pierce County works to support each community to create and sustain a garden uniquely their own. This past year, Harvest Pierce County had the pleasure of facilitating the resolution of Tacoma Community College's Community Garden – a resolution that at first seemed tenuous. The garden has been managed for the past 30 plus years almost primarily by Russian/Ukrainian immigrants and is part of Tacoma's heritage as one of the oldest (if not THE oldest) community gardens in the city. Over these decades, communication between gardeners and TCC slowly eroded. As TCC worked to meet the needs of the community and their students, it was difficult to see the immediate benefit of the community garden. They had made plans to phase out the garden, but were unable to discuss this plan with the gardeners. At the same time, the gardeners were deepening their connection to the garden through nature, food, and community and it was becoming

a dear friend to them. Through translators, they told News Tribune reporters they'd be heartbroken if they had to move. Harvest Pierce County was able to step in and facilitate a collaborative process where TCC and the gardeners were able to come to the same table in order to find ways for all to care for and safeguard this shared space. It looks like this garden may be around for many years to come. The successful collaboration was marked by a celebration with food, laughter and a renewed sense of optimism for the future of this space. ■



Did YOU know?

Through translation and a growing network of **community interpreters**, HPC is now actively connecting to Pierce County community gardeners who speak **Korean, Russian, Khmer, and Vietnamese**.

Habitat Improvement

& ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

Partnering with the Puyallup Tribe to Restore Clarks Creek

Over the years, the District has had the pleasure of working with Native American tribes in our area to improve natural resources. Particularly in the areas of water quality and salmon recovery, the goals of the District and tribes often overlap, creating opportunities for valuable partnerships. During the 2015-2016 planting season, the District was proud to assist the Puyallup Tribe with restoring more than an acre-and-a-half of riparian habitat along Clarks Creek, not far from where it empties into the Puyallup River.

This site, like many other streamside areas, had been cleared of native vegetation years ago and had degraded to a near monoculture of reed canary grass, with a few blackberries and a smattering of native and non-native trees. Severely lacking the shade critical to depress reed canary grass growth and help keep water temperatures cool for aquatic life, this section of Clarks Creek suffered from conditions that if left unchecked, could result in the creek filling in with sediment and grass, experiencing summertime water temperatures harmful to salmon, and otherwise providing minimal

wildlife habitat. Adding to the challenges at this site is a high water table and frequent flooding that occurs during times of heavy rain.

After a summer of cutting down the reed canary grass and preparing the site, an acre at the south end of the property was planted by volunteers in October of 2015. Shortly thereafter, a period of heavy rain ensued, and the planting was soon several feet underwater in some places. Initially thinking all was lost, we were pleasantly surprised to visit the site the following spring and see abundant signs of new growth on the previous fall's planting.

In April of 2016, a stewardship class from the Washington Native Plant Society and other volunteers planted 0.7 acres at the north end of the site. NCCC and WCC crews helped tie up loose ends, and now it's up to the plants to grow up, create shade, and provide diverse habitat for local wildlife.

To help make this planting successful, we employed a few tricks to improve the odds. First, the site was mowed, the grass was treated with an approved herbicide, and some of the blackberries were dug up by the roots. Secondly, a wide-range of plant species were installed, all of which were carefully chosen for their suitability to the site conditions. For example, native willows, red osier dogwood, and swamp rose were selected for the area expected to receive the most seasonal inundation. In addition to being able to handle seasonal flooding, willows also grow fast and will be some of the first plants to begin shading out the reed canary grass. Up higher, Douglas fir, snowberry, and a few red flowering currant dot the crest of the hill above the stream. And in between, cottonwood, Oregon ash, big leaf maple, ninebark, and other shrubs fill in the transition zone. Lastly, burlap coffee bags and coarse hogfuel mulch were placed around each plant to provide a bit of grass suppression during the initial growing season after installation.

Now, as these plants begin their second full year in their new home, we look forward to watching them grow! ■



Dozens of volunteers across multiple planting events helped install over 1,800 new trees and shrubs along Clarks Creek, helping restore vital riparian habitat for local salmon.



Did you know?

The District's goal is to plant **35,000 trees and shrubs**, restore **50-acres**, and **4 stream miles** by 2021.



The District reached over 2,600 K-12 students last year with Environmental Education curriculum. Students from one of 13 different schools are seen here at the 2016 Children's Water Festival learning about local wildlife.

Habitat Improvement

& ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION *(continued)*

Smelling Like Salmon - Puyallup Hatchery Program's Inaugural Year

The Puyallup School District started an exciting field trip program for 30 of its 4th grade classes this winter, thanks to the partnership between the Puyallup Historical Hatchery Foundation, Puyallup School District, and Pacific Education Institute. Fourth grade students toured the hatchery building to view salmon alevin and fry, observed spawning salmon in Clarks Creek to learn about their life cycle, and explored ways they can help make a difference in protecting water quality.

PCD was fortunate to be a partner on these field trips and hosted a station on the topic of salmon migration. During the activity, students attempted to “smell” their way home to a spawning stream much like a salmon would. With varying degrees of success in finding their spawning stream, students learned just how amazing a salmon’s journey can be, given the obstacles in their way.

For their efforts in launching this program, the partners are receiving the District’s Educator of the Year award. The field trip’s impact was evident in the excitement of the students seeing the tiny alevin and fry up close in the troughs, and watching (and smelling) the adult salmon return home to spawn in the stream.

When it was all said and done, roughly 700 students visited the hatchery as part of this program. That number is expected to grow next year as more students embark upon this unique program thanks to local watershed partners, and of course the tireless salmon making their way home to Clarks Creek. ■



1,070 local students representing 13 schools and 42 different classes took part in our 2016 Children's Water Festival at the University of Puget Sound. There were dozens of activities for the students to take part in, including the "Salmon Olympics" seen here.

Financials

2016 REVENUES & SPENDING

REVENUE BY SOURCE

Rates & Charges	\$1,387,526.26	50.8%
Grants	\$1,254,457.62	45.9%
Native Plant & Tree Sale	\$39,770.24	1.5%
Other	\$48,534.22	1.8%
	\$2,730,288.34	

SPENDING BY PROGRAM

Farm/Ag Assistance	\$665,011.20	24.4%
Water Quality	\$453,942.75	16.7%
Green Partnership Fund	\$34,202.20	1.3%
Legal Services	\$9,980.25	0.4%
Administration	\$242,209.40	8.9%
Communications & Outreach	\$35,745.68	1.3%
Obligated Funds	\$280,939.00	10.3%
Habitat Improvement	\$586,050.06	21.5%
Harvest Pierce County	\$417,899.31	15.3%
	\$ 2,725,979.85	

BALANCE SHEET AS OF 12/31/2016

Current Assets	\$1,522,580
Conserved Land & Easements	\$2,056,895
Other Assets	\$1,136

TOTAL ASSETS **\$3,580,611**

Current Liabilities **\$40,498**

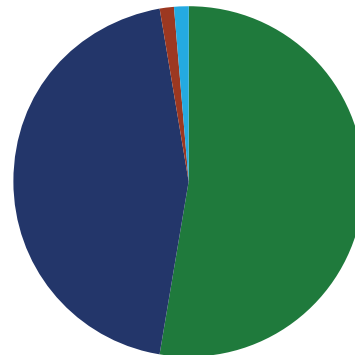
TOTAL LIABILITIES **\$40,498**

Net Assets **\$3,263,959**

Net Income **\$276,153**

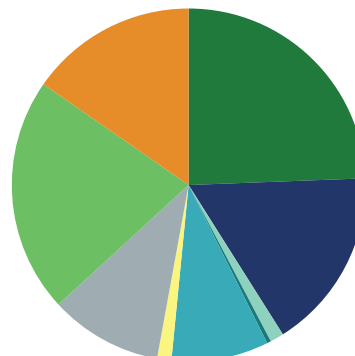
TOTAL EQUITY **\$3,540,112**

TOTAL LIABILITIES AND EQUITY **\$3,580,611**



Revenue by Source

- 50.8% Rates & Charges
- 45.9% Grants & Contracts
- 1.5% Tree Sale
- 1.8% Other



Spending by Program

- 24.4% Farm/Ag Assistance
- 16.7% Water Quality
- 1.3% Green Partnership Fund
- 0.4% Legal Services
- 8.9% Administration
- 1.3% Communications & Outreach
- 10.3% Obligated Funds
- 21.5% Habitat Improvement
- 15.3% Harvest Pierce County



A Washington Conservation Corps crew member helps guide some young volunteers during a restoration planting event at the Four Elements Farm, a conservation project the District partnered with PCC Farmland Trust on.

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