

## FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

### Program Overview and Guidelines

The Tualatin Soil and Water Conservation District's (TSWCD) Financial Assistance Program is available to provide support to residents of Washington County for implementing certain conservation practices on private lands. For all selected projects, TSWCD staff will evaluate site conditions and create a site-specific project plan that includes the necessary details for carrying out the project. Projects funded through the Financial Assistance Program are planned by TSWCD staff and then implemented and managed by the participant.

Projects are funded on a reimbursement basis, up to \$100,000. TSWCD will provide up to 75% of the total project costs. Program participants are required to provide a 25% match for all awarded projects.

### **ELIGIBLE PROJECTS**

Projects receiving financial assistance from TSWCD must address one or more of the following natural resource concerns: water quality, water quantity/conservation, soil health and/or erosion, invasive species management, fish and wildlife habitat, or forest health. To be eligible, projects must be located on private land within Washington County, Oregon.

A list of example projects is provided below. This list is intended to give participants an indication of the types of projects that fit into the Financial Assistance Program. It is not a comprehensive list of every project TSWCD may fund. Actual projects selected for the program will be based on results of a formal site assessment and prioritization process.

- **Natural area enhancement or conservation project.** Examples: invasive weed control, native tree and shrub planting, forest management (pre-commercial thinning, selective thinning, structural/species diversification).
- **Sustainable agriculture or gardening project.** Examples: composting systems, hedgerows or field borders, use of beneficial insects, cover cropping, pasture management.
- **Water quality improvement project.** Examples: erosion control projects, manure composting facilities, rotational grazing plans and fencing, off-channel watering.

- **Water conservation project.** Examples: irrigation efficiency improvements on high value crops, irrigation water management plans, greywater or rainwater harvesting.
- **Sustainable stormwater management project.** Examples: parking lot bioswale, raingarden, tree planting, pervious pavement, green roof design and installation.
- **Engineering, design, or consultant services for a conservation project.** Examples: consulting foresters, engineering of a soil erosion control project, consultation for nutrient management or irrigation systems.

TSWCD values its role in testing innovative ideas that promote new or enhance existing conservation practices. Pilot projects are considered at the discretion of TSWCD based on available information and funding. Pilot projects may also be subject to a lower rate of cost share. All pilot projects will include an agreement with the participant that allows TSWCD access to obtain and use data from these projects to inform future implementation of the conservation practice.

## **PROGRAM ELEMENTS**

- **Planning**

Before a participant is enrolled in the Financial Assistance Program, they work closely with TSWCD staff to draft a project plan for the site. With participant input, TSWCD will provide all necessary project planning and site treatment specifications, including design standards and deliverables. Participants will be provided with specifications detailing project tasks and methodology. These specifications will be necessary for the participant to get bids for work and create a project budget.

- **Project Selection**

Projects are prioritized and selected based on a data-supported assessment of the project's watershed-scale impacts. Projects are identified, assessed, and developed on a rolling basis throughout the year. During the selection phase, TSWCD staff will conduct a site assessment with potential program participants and create a draft project plan and budget for each potential project. Projects are reviewed and ranked quarterly.



- **Implementation**

The participant is responsible for implementing all components of the agreed-upon project plan. Implementation of tasks can begin once the agreement and all associated project documents have been signed by the participant and TSWCD. Before the work begins, TSWCD and the participant will make arrangements for TSWCD staff to gain reasonable access to the project site for monitoring and certification of project tasks. At the landowner's request, arrangements can require that reasonable notice be given prior to entry. Participants enrolled in the program are expected to post a TSWCD sign at the project site and agree to let TSWCD publicize the project or use the site for project tours.

TSWCD **will not** act as a project manager during implementation of the project unless an arrangement is made at the discretion of TSWCD staff. TSWCD will support any necessary design work related to the project plan but will not engage in permitting or construction activities related to the project. TSWCD will not directly hire or promote contractors for work on a project. Participants will be responsible for selecting and hiring contractors. TSWCD staff will develop specifications for contractors to complete project tasks. Any bids, quotes, or agreements from contractors to perform work on projects will be managed by the participant. TSWCD staff will provide technical support while the work is ongoing.

- **Monitoring**

TSWCD staff will use photo monitoring to document progress throughout the duration of the project. Photo points will be established at key reference locations to capture baseline conditions (before the project is initiated) and project progress at regular intervals. TSWCD staff will review the completed project to ensure that specifications are completed successfully.

## FUNDING AND AGREEMENT DETAILS

When enrolling in the Financial Assistance Program, participants will enter into an agreement with TSWCD. The duration of the agreement will depend on the project type and the anticipated time needed to successfully complete the project. The agreement will indicate who is responsible for each project task and will outline project and payment deadlines. The participant agrees to maintain the project following the completion of the agreement.

Cost-share details will be outlined in the agreement signed by the participant and TSWCD. Costs will be reimbursed at the agreed-upon rate once TSWCD staff have reviewed project tasks to ensure specifications have been completed successfully. Program participants are required to provide a 25% match for enrolled projects. Match can be either cash or in-kind. In-kind or donated labor is valued at the federal



volunteer rate, which is currently \$25.43/hour (<http://www.independentsector.org>). Direct payment of contractors and partial payments in advance of project completion will be considered in special circumstances.

**Tax Implications:**

Payments totaling \$600 or more in a calendar year may be considered by the IRS to be reportable income. Participants who receive TSWCD funding will be required to complete an IRS W-9 form. If applicable, TSWCD will report the income to the IRS and to the participant on a 1099-MISC form. The participant should consult a tax advisor regarding income reporting requirements and whether project-related expenses may be included as deductions on the participant's tax returns to offset this income.