

CURRENT NEWS

The Newsletter of the Clackamas River Basin Council

New Bridge Helps Residents and Fish Get Home

High water during heavy rain used to make Cedarhurst Neighborhood residents living at the end of Sylvan Road nervous. The access road to their property crossed over a series of culverts over Spring Creek, a tributary to Clear Creek. When the creek rose, water backed up behind the culverts, with potential to wash out their road.



Long-time residents of the neighborhood also recall fish spawning in their creek, and dropping a line in for steelhead and salmon.

A recently completed habitat restoration project at this site, near Sylvan and Mattoon Road, is a win-win for both people, and salmon and steelhead. This summer and fall, the Clackamas River Basin Council helped the residents of the Cedarhurst Neighborhood remove the culverts and replace them with a bridge. Several large trees were strategically placed in the creek to create hiding places and resting pools for the fish. A recent email from a neighborhood resident is testimony to the benefits of the project.

“Just wanted to let you know the bridge...is BEAUTIFUL! And, best of all...this morning on our walk we saw four fish getting ready to spawn just upstream from the bridge.”

After many years away - having been blocked from a stretch of cold clear water shaded by large cedar trees - coho have returned to Spring Creek to spawn once again.

Clear Creek, and it's tributary, Spring Creek near Fisher's Mill, is home to one of the last two substantial runs of wild late run Coho in the lower Columbia Basin. This Clackamas creek was once so famous for fishing, that in 1889 Rudyard Kipling, the British author best known for "Jungle Book" and "Just So Stories", wrote rapturously about fishing from a large rock at the mouth of Clear Creek in his "From Sea to Sea" travel sketches.

Entering the Clackamas River at Carver, Clear Creek provides particularly important habitat for Coho and steelhead spawning and rearing. This south side tributary has over 100 miles of stream that can potentially harbor salmon and steelhead. The Clackamas River Basin Council (CRBC) has been working with volunteer



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With Clackamas River Basin Action Plan Completed, PIP Team Prioritizes Projects



Having finished our watershed assessments and Basin Action Plan in 2005, we moved into strategic and project implementation planning. A key goal is to make sure our priorities continue to be based on the best available science and community input. A Project Implementation Team (PIP Team) developed criteria to be used to evaluate priority projects for the council to undertake in the future. This prioritization process helps ensure that our projects get the “biggest bang for the buck,” and will fuel our strategic work for clean water and a healthy watershed. Many thanks to staff from Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife and the US Forest Service for working with us on the PIP Team.

Organizational Growth

Over the past few months the council expanded its capacity staffwise. In July the Council hired its first executive director, Cheryl McGinnis.



We also welcomed several new board members. Joining our board - Norm Ernst from PGE representing local hydropower utility; Bob McSwain, representing rural community planning organizations; and Manette Simpson from DEQ representing state natural resource agencies; Warren Traub representing Citizens At Large; and Betty Knudson representing Riverside Property Owners. We bid a fond farewell to Karen Williams of DEQ, and wish her the best in her new position working with the Molalla River.

Supporting Clean Water and Healthy Streams

We partnered with the City of Estacada to complete the Estacada Library bioswale with funding from the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB). The bioswale is a unique stormwater management technique that uses landscaping with native plants to mimic wetland functions and help runoff to infiltrate the soil rather than directing it into pipes and waterways.



Education and Outreach

This year, we involved 250 students in environmental science studies, restoration project monitoring, salmon carcass placement (“fish tossing”) and tree planting. A highlight was this spring’s children’s education event called WET Day, at Happy Valley Elementary School. Clackamas High School students designed interactive learning stations to teach elementary students about watershed concepts.

“The concepts fit perfectly with the curriculum in the classroom...the best part was the kids enjoying the day, also an excellent response back from the parents...it was a great success”

-Happy Valley Elementary School Teacher



Winter Steelhead- Rainbow of the Clackamas

"I have lived! The American continent may now sink under the sea, for I have taken the best of it, and the best was neither dollars, love, nor real estate." - Rudyard Kipling

The famous author Rudyard Kipling made this claim after spending a day steelhead fishing on the Clackamas in 1889. Longtime locals still know to call a big rock at the mouth of Clear Creek at Carver "Kipling's Rock." Today, anglers consider the Clackamas to be one of Oregon's best steelhead rivers, although runs have declined significantly since Kipling's day.

Steelhead are born in fresh water streams, where they spend their first 1-3 years of life. They then migrate to the ocean where they live for one to four seasons before returning to their native fresh water to spawn - a life cycle called *anadromous*. Unlike Pacific salmon, steelhead don't always die after spawning, some are able to spawn more than once.

Steelhead Like Smaller, Steeper, Cooler Streams

Steelhead prefer to spawn in small streams and tributaries where cool, well oxygenated water is available year round. After hatching, the developing steelhead will remain in the gravel for another four to six weeks. During this time, they are called alevins and obtain nutrients from a yolk sack attached to their body.

When they emerge from the gravel, they are called fry, and can catch their own food. Newly emerged fry move to shallow, protected areas of the stream (usually in the stream margins), where they establish and defend feeding areas. Most juvenile fish hang out in riffles, although larger ones will move to pools or deep runs. Along the west coast steelhead are found in Pacific Ocean drainages from southern California through Alaska. Across the Pacific in Asia, they are found on the east and west coast of the USSR's Kamchatka Peninsula.

A Seagoing Rainbow Trout

Rainbow trout and steelhead are the same species of fish. The name rainbow trout refers to a non-anadromous life (i.e. rainbow trout spend their entire life in the stream). The name steelhead refers to the anadromous life history. Anadromous forms of the trout can convert to resident populations when drought events or damming of rivers blocks their access to the ocean. Resident rainbow trout populations can become anadromous if ocean access becomes available. Interestingly, it is typical to have both life history patterns occurring in the same river system.



There are three stocks of winter steelhead in the Clackamas: the wild winter steelhead and Clackamas hatchery brood stock enter the river late December into January. Eagle Creek Hatchery stock shows up in mid-November or early December. With these three runs, the winter run lasts through April. The wild winter steelhead stocks in the Clackamas are federally listed as threatened, and there are efforts made to minimize effects of hatchery fish on wild stocks by sorting hatchery fish from wild fish at the North Fork Dam.

The Council continues to work to help restore and protect steelhead habitat in the river's lower tributaries. We are lucky to still have steelhead in our river today, and recognize the many values of this fish to our community. Not only are steelhead (and salmon) part of our stories - they provide dollars to our recreation economy, and foster a sort of love affair between anglers and the river. A misty winter morning on "the Clack" still finds rapturous anglers kissing the river's surface with wooly buggers or nymphs, trying to catch this seagoing rainbow.

To learn more about steelhead and salmon in the Pacific Northwest visit these websites:



<http://www.salmonnation.com/>
<http://wildsalmon.org>

River Stewards Make a Difference on the Clackamas



This summer and fall Mike Sovinski, Heather Easterly, Katrina Montoya and Mike McNulty (left to right) hiked and floated 53 miles of river and streams in the Clackamas during their efforts to control and monitor invasive plants. Along the way they saw otters, eagles and spawning salmon; made friends with 93 landowners; treated all known invasive Knotweed sites in Sieben, Richardson and Noyer Creeks; treated over 23,000 stems of this destructive plant with an approved herbicide along the mainstem and tributaries; and consumed 93 slices of pizza at Sparky's in Damascus!

Besides contributing to the local pizza and coffee shop economy- they made a big difference for watershed health. The three dedicated AmeriCorps volunteers (Heather, Kat, and Mike S.) have each donated over 900 hours to watershed stewardship projects. Although the team's focus has been invasive species mapping and treatment, they've also created maps, project reports and assisted with education and outreach. The team worked with high school students to enrich Clear Creek with the nutrients from 2400 lbs. of salmon carcasses, and took the council's outreach display to community events. Our outstanding AmeriCorps team leaves us soon to pursue other adventures, and Mike McNulty will stay with us to help plan next year's projects and maintain and update our geographic information system (GIS). We'll miss our highly talented and hard-working crew, but know that they will make a big difference at their next stage in their career development.

Boats In, Garbage Out, River Clean

Most Missed Item: set of dentures, Most Memorable: An intact prom photo, Most Enormous: a 7 foot tall, 1/2 ton giant tire from an earthmover, Most Comfortable: a couch, Most Creative: 8 foot chain of lost sandals and shoes.

These are some of the award categories from the 4th Annual Down the River Clean Up on the Clackamas. At the end of the day, September 10th the Clackamas River ran cleaner after 280 volunteers, most traveling by flotilla of kayaks, canoes, driftboats and rafts removed 4.29 tons of garbage from 13 miles of river between Barton and Clackamette Park, at the mouth of the river.



"There are few events that lend us the opportunity to make a difference like the Clackamas River Clean-up. It is great, great FUN!...it allowed my two children, ages 13 and 16, to feel the pride of caring for "their river" that happens to flow in their backyard that they use to fish, boat, raft, and swim...their outlook on this river and others will be forever changed. It was one very fine day, on a very fine river, with a very fine group of people." - 2006 Participant

The river clean up is rewarding both for organizers and participants. At the end of the day, we feel a stronger connection to our river and our community. Save the date and join us next September 9th.

While it feels good to clean up the river, it would be even better if everyone helped keep it clean all summer long! Watch for our ***Stash the Trash*** reusable, waterproof river litter bags next summer. These bags will be available to boaters at the Barton Store and the Barton, Carver and McIver Park boat ramps. Boaters can use the bags to pack out their litter and recyclables. To help make it easier for boaters to stash the river trash, Clackamas County Solid Waste and Recycling and the County Parks departments have expanded and moved recycling and litter disposal stations closer to the boat ramps. Thank you to Clackamas County, Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board, Oregon State Parks, and eNRG Kayaking for their support of this program to keep the river clean.

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landowners to remove fish passage barriers and improve streamside and instream habitat conditions along several miles of this creek. According to Michael Carlson, Conservation Director for the Clackamas River Basin Council;

“It’s very rewarding to see such an immediate return to the creek. These fish now have healthier conditions in Clear Creek to return to, and the human residents have reliable road access. Now fish and people can both get home.”

This fall and winter, residents and local students will continue the project by planting trees and native shrubs along the creek and carry on the good work to improve habitat for residents and wildlife along Spring Creek.

This clean water and healthy stream project is the result of a partnership between the CRBC, the Cedarhurst Neighborhood Association and the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife. It was made possible by funding from the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board, Portland General Electric, the Nature Conservancy of Oregon, and the Oregon Wildlife Heritage Foundation. Many thanks for their most generous support.

**Like What We Are Doing?
Want to support our habitat and education projects for clean water and healthy streams?
And make our holidays merrier?
Use the envelope inside this newsletter to donate.
All contributions are tax deductible to the fullest extent of the law.**

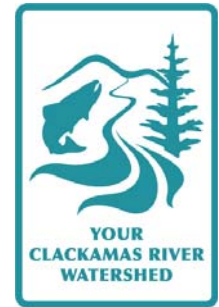
Many Thanks to Our Partners and Donors of 2006:

American Whitewater, AmeriCorps, Dave Albrecht, Alder Creek Canoe & Kayak, All Star Raft Company, Backyard Bird Shop, Cedarhurst Improvement Club, City of Estacada, City of Lake Oswego, City of Milwaukie, Clackamas Community College, Clackamas County Board of Commissioners, Clackamas County Dept of Transportation & Development, Clackamas County Marine Sheriff, Clackamas County Parks, Clackamas County Soil & Water Conservation District, Clackamas High School, Clackamas River Water, Clackamas Watershed Management Group, CM Meyers, Collins Retreat Center, Concordia University, Damascus Civic Club, Craig and Jilda Danielson, Eagle Creek Barton CPO, eNRG Kayaking, Estacada High School, Estacada Library, Fertile Ground Landscaping, Friends of Clyde Rice, Higgins Restaurant, Jacqueline Tommas, John Inskip Learning Center, Johnson Creek Watershed Council, LINKS Program, Lowell Hanna Studios, Metro, Mississippi Studios, the Nature Conservancy of Oregon, NOAA, Next Adventure, New Season’s Market, NW Rafter’s Association, Northwest Steelheaders, Oak Lodge Water District, Oregon Dept of Fish & Wildlife, OSU Extension, Oregon DEQ, Oregon Kayak & Canoe Club, Oregon Trout, Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board, Oregon Wildlife Heritage Foundation, Patagonia, Patterson Nursery, PGE, Portland State University, REI, River Network, Sandy Watershed Council, Sleepy Hollow Tree Farm, South Fork Water Board, Stone Cliff Inn, Student Watershed Research Project, Sunrise Water Authority, Three Rivers Land Conservancy, USGS, USDA Forest Service, Water Environment Services



**Thanks For Lending a Hand
to Support Clean Water and Salmon!**

Clackamas River Basin Council Watershed Calendar



- **Dec.-March Green From the Ground Up Seminar Series for Land-savvy Developers**
Experts from the building industry, including engineers, contractors and landscape designers, as well as those from the marketing field will present practical information and case studies on green development practices that will show homebuilders and developers how to keep green in both their pockets and their development projects. Seminars held monthly from December through March. For a complete schedule and descriptions of case studies go to:
<http://www.metro-region.org/article.cfm?articleid=20945>

- **Feb. 5-6 Get WET in the Clackamas Teacher's Workshop**

A two-day workshop for 3rd-6th grade educators who want to learn how to engage students in hands-on water related curriculum using science, art, writing and social studies. Day one will be classroom lessons and day two will explore the watershed showing student field trip opportunities in the Clackamas. For more information or to register; contact alisonh@clackamas.edu or 503.657.6958 x 2644

- **April 21 Celebrating Water- Earth Day Event: "Connecting Water, Land, and People"** This Earth Day event, held at the Gregory Forum at Clackamas Community College, is a celebration of our connections to water and what water means to our community. We invite children and families to explore and enjoy a variety of hands-on interactive water resource related activities, storyteller, workshops and exhibits. 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

- **Water Environment Services of Clackamas County sponsors habitat restoration work parties.**

For more information on how you can help, visit <http://www.co.clackamas.or.us/wes/calendar.asp>

- **Clackamas River Basin Council Meeting**

When: Third Thursday of the month, 6-9 P.M. Public is always welcome. You are invited!

Where: Sunnyside Service Center, Room 436, 9101 SE Sunnybrook Blvd. Clackamas, OR.

- **Save the Date! Fifth Annual Down the River Clean Up on the Clackamas- Sunday, Sept. 9th**

Join the Clackamas River Basin Council, eNRG Kayaking, Portland State University Outdoor Program, the Oregon Kayak and Canoe Club, Northwest Rafters Association and others to clean up our river! Bring your own boat, or sign up to help on shore or float in a raft provided by our sponsors. Call or email us or check our website for more details in August!

Coming Next Summer- Natural History of the Clackamas Watershed Naturalist Led Hikes.



Clackamas River
Basin Council

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