



the Clackamas

CURRENT NEWS

CLACKAMAS RIVER BASIN COUNCIL NEWSLETTER

Winter 2014

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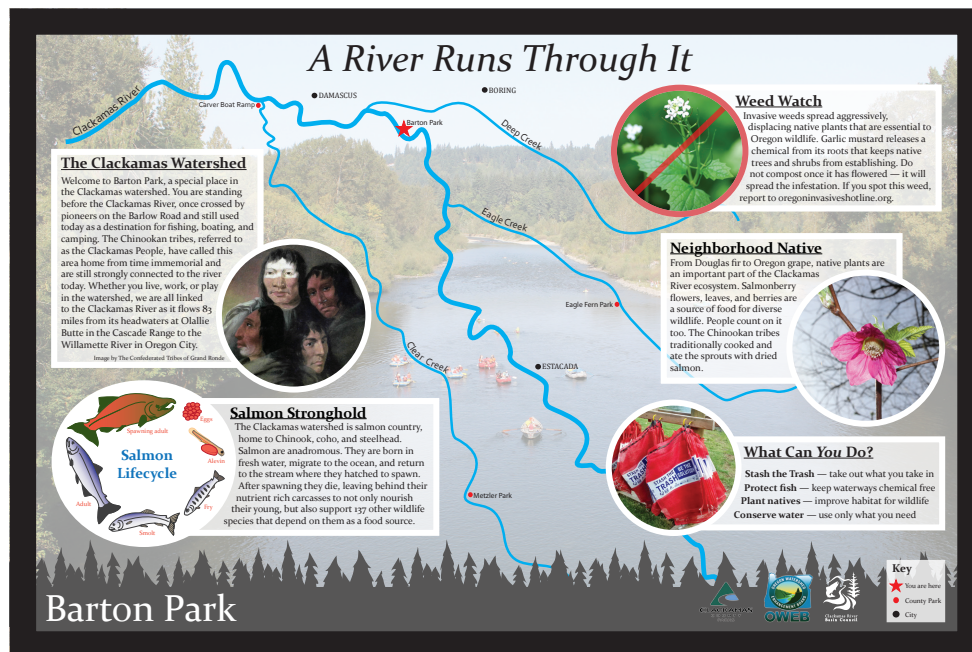
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New Signs for a New Year!

The Clackamas River Basin Council will kick off 2015 with new signs, literally! Four **interpretive signs** will soon be brightening up the watershed this winter. CRBC and Clackamas County Parks partnered on designing signs that will educate park users about the Clackamas watershed, history and natural heritage of the region, salmon life cycle and habitat needs, native and invasive plants, and how individuals can support watershed health. An Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB) grant supported the project. Signs will be installed at **Barton Park, Carver Boat Ramp, Eagle Fern Park, and Metzler Park**. Each sign will have unique elements with some repeating information and graphics for consistent visual presentation.

Thank you to our partners involved in this project including Clackamas County Parks, OWEB, ODFW, Clackamas County SWCD, and the Confederated Tribes of Grande Ronde and Warm Springs, with sign fabrication by local firm, Formations.

Keep an eye out for the signs in **January of 2015**—coming to a park near you! A **sneak peak** of all the signs can be found on our website at clackamasriver.org/announcements. Email info@clackamasriver.org with your feedback.

Shade Our Streams Landowner Spotlight: Linton Ball

Linton Ball has lived along Clear Creek for 34 years in a house surrounded by majestic cedars. The riparian area is not so lucky. "I've got a lot of trees here," said Linton, "but we could use more along the stream, to keep that water cold." We couldn't agree more.

Spawning salmon provide Linton with a yearly reminder of why it's so important that water temperatures remain cool. "We had a pretty good salmon run come through on the 25th of October." He said they didn't stay long as they headed further upstream to spawn. During a visit with Linton at his property in December, you could see through the aquamarine water of Clear Creek to the bottom where a spawned out salmon carcass was decomposing, completing the circle of life by giving its nutrients back to the river ecosystem.



Linton Ball at his property along Clear Creek

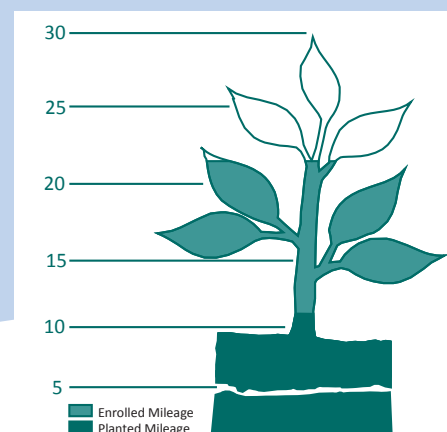


Linton's **2,500 trees and shrubs** are still young. Planted just last winter through the Shade Our Streams program, they've enjoyed only one summer in their new home, but appear to be thriving. The planting area is full of little Douglas firs surrounded by what looks like sticks in the ground, as the deciduous trees remain leafless until spring. Leaves or no leaves, the fast-growing cottonwoods are huge. Linton recognizes that they aren't the most popular tree, but as we look at them towering over the rest of the plants, it's obvious why they're such good shade trees and a favorite for stream restoration.

Linton has started to **mulch the young trees** in his spare time, providing them with protective cover around the base of the plant that will insulate them in the winter and conserve moisture in the summer, increasing their chances of survival. As with any natural area, Linton's Shade Our Streams plants have a lot to contend with. Deer, beaver, and moles also call this area home, and love the new food and building materials we've planted. For Linton, however, "The hardest thing will be keeping the weeds out. When I mulch, I pull everything away from the base of the plant – it helps." Before CRBC began treating the weeds, Linton was battling with reed canary grass, Japanese knotweed, English ivy, and blackberry along the creek. After two summers of weed treatments, the weeds are coming back less aggressively. When asked whether he has enjoyed working with us at CRBC, Linton responds, "Yea, they are great. They did everything they said they were going to do." That's what we like to hear, Linton.

What's Up With Shade?

With over 100 participating landowners, Shade Our Streams is growing up fast! Growing up right along with it are over **150,000 trees and shrubs** that have been planted along streams so far. And we're only 1/3 of the way to our goal! Streamside landowners along **Clear, Deep, Tickle, Noyer, Eagle, Rock, Sieben, Goose, and Richardson Creeks**, as well as the **Clackamas River**, are taking advantage of the opportunity to have their streamsid es planted at no cost. This winter, we will plant 76,000 additional trees and shrubs.



Champions for a Cleaner Clackamas

Community members once again rallied to keep the Clackamas River clean at the annual **Down the River Clean Up**, co-coordinated by the Clackamas River Basin Council and We Love Clean Rivers. This year's event on September 7th, saw the 2nd highest turnout in the past 12 years, with **401 volunteers** stepping up to scour the streambed and banks for trash along the lower 15 miles of the river from Barton to Clackamette Park. Thanks to a flotilla of rafters, kayakers, drift boaters, and SCUBA divers, volunteers collected approximately **14 pounds of trash per person**, for a total of **2.81 tons of garbage!** That's down from last year's total of 3.11 tons. Check out the breakdown in pounds in the table below.

Thanks to the meticulous efforts of our Material Recovery Team and the work of our solid waste haulers — **2,973 pounds were recycled** and kept out the landfills which included **65% metal, 13% plastic, 11% glass, and 2% aluminum cans**. Most memorable garbage items included a king sized mattress, a bikini top with hearts, and a wrestling cape.

Stash the Trash

We encourage everyone to keep the spirit of the annual clean up alive by being responsible river users all year long. Grab a free, reusable **Stash the Trash bag**, available Memorial Day through Labor Day at county and state parks located along the lower Clackamas River. **Be part of the solution!**

Photo credit: Mark Gamba
Photography and CRBC

Down the River Clean Up 2003 - 2014

Clean Up Year	No. of Vol.	Lbs. of Debris	Lbs. per Vol.
2003	40	NA	NA
2004	136	5,080	37
2005	190	5,140	27
2006	280	8,580	31
2007	300	6,440	21
2008	319	6,160	19
2009	325	4,960	15
2010	250	2,980	12
2011	420	6,800	16
2012	375	6,700	18
2013	355	6,220	18
2014	401	5,620	14
Total or Avg.	3,391	64,680	21

This year's clean up efforts bring the grand total of trash collected to over **32 tons**, the approx. weight of one gray whale!

Huge thanks to Siri and Son Farms, Organically Grown Company, Reser's Fine Foods, New Seasons, Costco, Food Front Cooperative Grocery, Jazzy Bagel, and Safeway for their donations for our BBQ.



Rock Creek Confluence:

Discover Rock Creek

On December 6th, over 75 volunteers and partners joined forces to celebrate the **unveiling of new fish habitat** at the **confluence of Rock Creek and the Clackamas River**. From ages 2 to 82, everyone enjoyed the opportunity to get outside, plant some trees, and learn about water quality, wildlife, and stream restoration. Usually closed to the public, the Rock Creek Confluence is a wildlife sanctuary in an otherwise urban area, which makes for a great outdoor classroom. The event kicked off with some inspirational opening remarks from Clackamas County Commissioner Paul Savas and North Clackamas School District Superintendent Matt Utterback. From there, those in attendance cycled through three **restoration stations** (urban wildlife, water quality, and fish habitat) before planting 500 native trees and shrubs in the floodplain.



Volunteers planting trees in the floodplain



Metro's Ashley Conley exploring signs of wildlife with the group

Urban Wildlife

Volunteers joined Ashley Conley, a Metro naturalist and wildlife expert, in search of evidence of wildlife along the creek. They spotted an **osprey nest**, holes in the sandstone streambanks made by **kingfishers**, a snag providing habitat for woodpeckers and squirrels, and coyote scat. All these are indicators of the **diverse wildlife** activity happening at the Rock Creek Confluence site while we're not looking.

Restoring Fish Habitat to Rock Creek

Situated between Highway 212 and the Clackamas River is the Rock Creek Confluence, a beautiful natural area surrounded by urban development. The Rock Creek watershed is urbanizing quickly, but that hasn't kept threatened and endangered Chinook, coho, and steelhead from returning to the creek year after year, and we want to keep it that way. That's why CRBC recently completed a large scale habitat construction project at this key juncture where Rock Creek flows into the Clackamas River.

Over 20 large wood structures and numerous boulders were constructed and installed in the stream bank to increase stream complexity, reconnect the stream to its floodplain, and reduce bank erosion.



Happy Fish Make Happy Valleys

Water Quality

Since 2010, students have used the Rock Creek Confluence as an **outdoor classroom**, testing water quality and learning about nature in the process. In that time, nearly **3,000 students** have identified roughly **10,000 macroinvertebrates** (which are water bugs) in the creek. At their station, Clackamas High School students explained the water quality sampling techniques they use and provided volunteers the chance to view and identify macroinvertebrates first-hand. These bugs act as an indication of water quality since certain types can only live in clean water.



Clackamas High School students collecting macroinvertebrates



Young volunteer checking out the salmon lifecycle and spawning salmon carcasses before getting into some tree planting

Fish Habitat

Volunteers got up close and personal with the newly constructed habitat. Large wood structures were placed along a quarter mile of the creek to create **habitat for local salmon populations**. The restoration contractor, project manager, and landowner were there to explain the need for salmon habitat at the site, the different types of habitat created by the new structures, and answer questions about construction. There were carcasses of spawning salmon present for a hands-on learning experience. The carcasses were later thrown into the creek to return nutrients to the ecosystem.

Because salmon return to their birth stream to spawn, natal streams need to provide a variety of habitat types to accommodate salmon at different stages in their lifecycle. The log structures provide protective cover for fish and create deep pools for juvenile salmon to feed and grow strong before migrating to the ocean. The shallow gravel is prime habitat for them to lay their eggs before they die, leaving behind their nutrient rich carcasses to nourish the ecosystem where their offspring will rear.

The project is supported with funding from Clackamas County Water Environment Services, Metro's 2006 Natural Areas bond measure, Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board, The Nature Conservancy's PGE Habitat Fund and the Clackamas River Basin Council's Shade Our Streams program.



Male and female coho salmon carcasses



Volunteers gathered behind new habitat structure

Salmon Carcass Toss

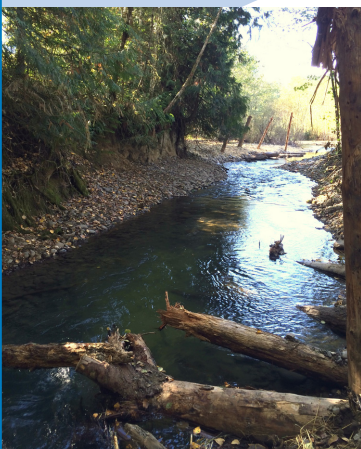
November rains came and with them, one of the strongest salmon runs in recent years. Fortunately for local high school students, that meant abundant salmon carcasses donated by local hatcheries for tossing. Thanks to 30 students from **Milwaukie High School** and **Sabin Schellenberg Center**, **690 coho salmon carcasses** have returned to Clear Creek.

Historically, salmon would of have migrated back to the home stream they were born to spawn. Their decaying bodies would then act as a **"fishy fertilizer"** for the water column, boosting marine-derived nutrient levels that help nourish the next generation of salmon as well as other wildlife and aquatic species. However, due to a number of barriers blocking passage upstream, salmon aren't able to make it to the upper reaches of the Clackamas watershed in the same numbers as they historically would have, leaving these portions nutrient-deprived. That's where the students step in. By tossing hundreds of pounds of salmon carcasses into Clackamas tributaries, students engage in **hands-on restoration** that improves stream habitat conditions. Plus, it's an opportunity for a lesson on salmon life cycle and anatomy too. A little slime and stench is no match for students eager to slice open plump bellies for a chance to dissect salmon guts. But some are in for a surprise, when an average **2,500 eggs** spillout!

This educational opportunity is made possible by a partnership with the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife and with funding from the Clackamas County WES RiverHealth Watershed Stewardship Program.

Milo McIver Park Has New Habitat for Salmon

While visiting Milo McIver State Park last summer you probably wondered what the heavy construction equipment was doing near the disc golf course. Portland General Electric (PGE) was using the equipment to implement one of its habitat restoration commitments from the licensing of its Clackamas River Hydroelectric Project. In collaboration with the various agency and public stakeholders, including CRBC, the Milo McIver site was selected because of its potential to greatly improve salmon habitat and the opportunity to partner with Oregon State Parks.



The site is located on a large meander bend that historically had active braided river channels frequently utilized by salmon. PGE reestablished two channels on the site and restored coho, Chinook and steelhead habitat. **Hundreds of logs and boulders** were installed to create a diversity of in-stream habitat elements for the fish.

Inter-Fluve, an experienced river restoration firm based in Hood River, designed and constructed the project. CRBC will install over **10,000 native plants** at the site this winter and continue to manage the invasive species. Large numbers of juvenile salmon have already been seen using both channels, and monitoring will continue to ensure that the side channels are function as designed. Interpretive signage will be installed in 2015, highlighting the importance of healthy salmon habitat for park visitors.

Clackamas River Confluence Restoration Project

An exciting project is flowing forward at the **confluence of the Clackamas and the Willamette Rivers**. CRBC was awarded funding from the [Metro Nature in Neighborhoods Restoration Grant](#) to **restore floodplain and riparian habitats** at Dahl Beach Park, located at the mouth of the Clackamas in Gladstone. CRBC is partnering with SOLVE, Clackamas County SWCD, and the City of Gladstone to improve the public park for human, fish, and wildlife visitors. Stay tuned for more updates and volunteer opportunities.



Make a Donation

All donations are greatly appreciated, and are tax-deductible to the fullest extent of the law.

Donate online via PayPal — just head to our website and click the "[donate](#)" button.

Receipt of donations through the mail is also appreciated.

Our tax identification number is 91-1838169.

Thank you for your contribution!



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Search by name or by non-profit #89223.

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Online shoppers can go to smile.amazon.com, then click on your account and select CRBC as your charity of choice - which will receive donations from a portion of your purchase price, at no cost to you.

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Email info@clackamasriver.org to be added to our e-blast list for the latest news and upcoming events.



Find us on Twitter by looking for [ClackamasRiver](#). Search for our Facebook Page by entering "[Clackamas River Basin Council](#)."

Thank You, Sponsors and Partners!

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THE NEWSLETTER OF THE CLACKAMAS RIVER BASIN • WINTER 2014

Calendar of Upcoming Events

If you're looking for a reason to get out into the watershed this winter and spring, look no further!
Contact Morgan Parks at morgan@clackamasriver.org if you have any questions about how to get involved.
Volunteer opportunities are also listed on our [website](http://www.clackamasriver.org).

Council Meetings

We meet on the third Thursday of each month from 6-8:30 pm at the Mt. Scott Fire Station, on 9339 SE Causey Avenue in Happy Valley. These meetings are open to the public. Check our website for information about that month's featured presentation.

First Saturday Work Parties (October - May)

Help plant native trees and remove invasive weeds in our watershed! Volunteering is a great way to get to know your area, meet new people, and get some exercise, all while helping our waterways. Tools, gloves, and water are provided. Please dress for the weather. All events start at 9 am and end at noon, unless otherwise noted.

January 3, 2015 - Rock Creek Planting on Delia Street, Damascus

January 31, 2015 - Ivy Pull at Boring-Damascus Grange Annex Site, Boring

March 14, 2015 - Rock Creek Watershed Wide Event at Pendarvis Farm, Happy Valley

Stay tuned for more date/location details:

April - Sandy Bluff Park, Sandy

Save the Date!

13th Annual Down the River Clean Up on the Clackamas - **Sunday, September 6th, 2015**



Salmon in Deep Creek, November 2014