



the Clackamas

CURRENT NEWS

CLACKAMAS RIVER BASIN COUNCIL NEWSLETTER

Fall-Winter 2013

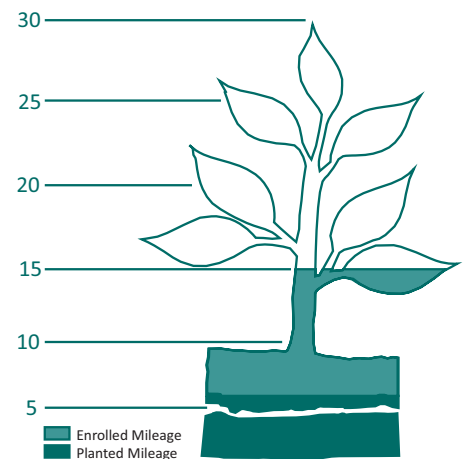
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Hurray For Shade!

Shade Our Streams is growing up fast! Just like the 79,000 native trees and shrubs recently planted by the program along streamsid es across the Clackamas watershed. The community tree planting project began with just 4 enthusiastic landowners. Two years later, there are over 73 landowners benefiting from the program, totaling over 15 streamside miles. Because 5 new streamside miles are included each year, enrolled properties are in varied stages of the program. The recently enrolled properties are in the 'site prep' phase, receiving weed treatments in preparation for winter plantings. Properties planted last winter are now entering a three year maintenance phase in which CRBC restoration crews treat the weeds, giving the native trees and shrubs a chance to get established. Over 70,000 additional plants will be planted early next year. Lookout for opportunities to participate as landowner or volunteer!

Shade Our Streams Mileage



Give Me An 'S'! Give Me An 'H'!

Another successful year of the Shade Our Streams program is something to celebrate! And that's just what we did on a sunny fall day in October, when landowners, partners, and volunteers gathered (to revel in our mutual excitement) for stream restoration. We met along the shores of the mighty Clackamas at Barton Park. There was something for everyone; live bluegrass from No Time to Lose, delicious barbeque, expert speakers, prizes, and restoration themed games. The event focused on native plants vs. invasive weeds and on the Clackamas watershed as a salmon stronghold. We welcomed the chance to learn from guest experts Sam Leininger of Clackamas County Soil and Water Conservation District and Todd Alsbury of Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife who spoke about these themes. It was a great opportunity for newly enrolled landowners to learn from seasoned program participants who have had a chance to see their streamside areas transform from overgrown weeds to native habitat.





Keep up the good work leaves!

Landowner Spotlight

Diane Kelso's property has historically been used as pasture for cattle and horses, leaving Doane Creek treeless as it ran through her property. When Diane decided she wanted to convert the pasture to native habitat, Shade Our Streams was there to help. A 50 foot buffer of newly planted native trees and shrubs now lines each side of the creek. As for the rest of the pasture, Diane has planted it with cedar, fir, and pine trees. Diane's vision for the near future is that it will "become a young forest and that the stream is fully shaded with interesting plant growth."

It's exciting to imagine how Diane's property is slowly transforming into habitat for both aquatic and upland wildlife right before her eyes!



Diane Kelso's property before Shade Our Streams plantings.

Leave the Leaves

Think of each Shade Our Streams planting area as its own ecosystem. The forest feeds and sustains itself, and these planting areas can too. The leaves that die and fall off trees provide many benefits to new plantings and the streamside ecosystem that gave them their start.

- When the leaves first fall to the ground, the blanket they create insulates the plants against sudden changes in temperature and protects exposed soil from heavy rains.
- As they break down, they release nutrients into the soil, fertilizing it and improving drainage and soil structure.
- Although they originate on land, the leaves that fall in the creek occupy a necessary place in the aquatic food web. They provide food for aquatic bugs, which in turn are food for fish, nourishing all members of the ecosystem, all the while adding valuable nutrients to the water.

A Valentine for Deep Creek!



Show the watershed some LOVE! Join us Saturday, February 1st at the Deep Creek Annex/Boring Station Trailhead project. We'll be mulching newly planted trees from 9-11 am, followed by a Winter Plant Identification Workshop until noon. Lunch will be served at the Boring/Damascus Grange #260. Please RSVP to morgan@clackamasriver.org.

11th Down the River Clean Up Stops the Flow of Trash



Photo Credit: Dave Kleinke

The Clackamas River was in the spotlight this past summer, but not for the scenic and natural beauty we often hear about. Litter and rowdiness raised concerns for public safety and environmental issues at this popular recreation destination. Fortunately, community members once again rallied to keep the Clackamas clean at the 11th Annual Down the River Clean Up, co-sponsored by the Clackamas River Basin Council and We Love Clean Rivers. On September 8th, over 355 volunteers gathered at Barton Park to float the lower 15 miles to Clackamette Park, scouring the banks and river bottom for trash.

The flotilla of SCUBA divers, rafters, kayakers, and drift boaters collected approximately 18 pounds of trash per person, for a total of 3.11 tons of garbage! Some of the more noteworthy items collected this year included a 1000 pound I-beam, a moldy old recliner chair, and an electronic cigarette.

Thanks to the meticulous efforts of our Material Recovery Team (who sorted trash and recyclables within the dumpsters) and the work of our solid waste hauler partners — 2020 pounds were recycled and kept out of landfills including 180 pounds of aluminum cans, 180 pounds of glass, and 1260 pounds of metal. This year's efforts bring the grand total of tons collected by the clean up to almost 30 tons over the past 11 years, with nearly 3,000 volunteers collecting garbage and recyclables.

After their hard work was completed, volunteers re-convened at Barton Park to enjoy a barbecue lunch, the fine sounds of Tubs of Love, and a silent auction benefitting We Love Clean Rivers. Artists participating in the Ripple Effect sorted through trash to find items that could be re-purposed as art pieces. The art created was exhibited at the Willamette Falls Festival on October 4-6th.

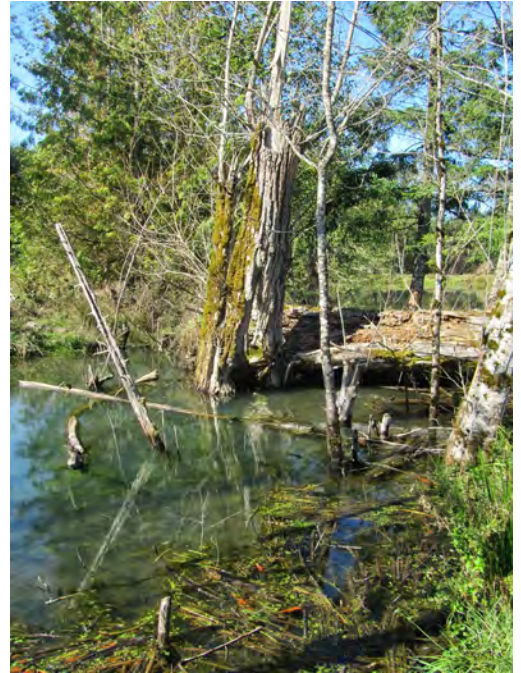
We encourage everyone to keep the spirit of the annual Clean Up alive by being responsible river users all year long. Grab a free, reusable Stash the Trash bag (featured in a new red color), available Memorial Day thru Labor Day at county and state parks located along the lower Clackamas. Be a part of the solution!



Wetlands in the Watershed

Called “nurseries of life”, wetlands are the link between land and water, the transition zone that provides habitat for thousands of species of plants and animals. These vital ecosystems are characterized by unique hydrology (the water table), soils, and vegetation that improve water quality, store floodwaters, cycle and filter nutrients and pollutants, and provide fish and wildlife habitat. Human benefits include abundant recreational and ecotourism activities, as well as the reduced risk of costly property damage due to flooding.

Wetlands act like natural sponges, storing water and slowly releasing it. When rivers overflow, wetlands help trap floodwaters, decreasing momentum and reducing the potential for erosion. Slower moving water then flows around plants, allowing suspended sediments to settle to the wetland floor. Plant roots and microorganisms in the soil help absorb nutrient and pollutant loads. Wetlands also feed downstream waters and re-charge ground water.



Wetlands along Tickle Creek at Sandy Bluff Park.

These nutrient-rich environments are some of the most biologically productive natural ecosystems in the world. A combination of abundant vegetation and shallow water sustains diverse habitats for waterfowl, fish, and mammals. The ability of wetlands to provide water storage, filtration, and biological productivity, are just a few of the large-scale beneficial functions that make wetlands one of the most valuable, yet fragile components of a watershed. Unfortunately, wetlands have vanished at an alarming rate over the past 200 years. **More than half of all wetlands across the nation have been drained or filled and are threatened by agriculture, development, contaminated runoff, nonnative species, and global climate change.** Today, wetland restoration is a growing activity nation-wide as the understanding of the link between degraded wetlands and watershed health continues to grow. Wetlands are crucial to the health of our waterways and communities downstream.



Sandy Wetlands: Since 2010, the Clackamas River Basin Council has worked with volunteers to plant over 1,200 native trees, shrubs, and wetland plants at the Sandy Wetlands located along Jacoby Road. Hundreds of pounds of invasive species have also been removed. This restoration project, in partnership with Oregon Department of State Lands and the City of Sandy, helps filter runoff from nearby neighborhoods before it flows into Tickle Creek, keeping the water cool and clean.

On October 5th, the first work party of the season kicked off at Sandy Wetlands. Nineteen volunteers pulled on their boots, rolled up their sleeves and grabbed a shovel to help dig in. They planted

190 shrubs that can handle having their “feet” wet, including Pacific ninebark, Red Osier dogwood, and Douglas spiraeae. With more natives planted in the wetland, understory invasives like blackberry, creeping buttercup, fireweed, and thistle will have less of a foothold to take over.

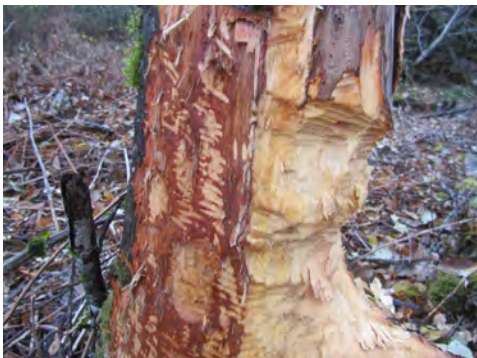
Baffled by Beavers?

While living with beavers can be challenging, these wetland champions provide many benefits to the environment. Furry engineers like beavers are considered “keystone species” because of their critical, but often underappreciated role in creating complex habitat. They build leaky stick-and-mud dams that slow the flow of streams, creating mini-reservoirs that become freshwater wetlands, keeping water on the land longer and also alleviating droughts.



American beaver (*Castor canadensis*)
Photo Credit: Dan Dzurisin

Though beavers orchestrate many positive effects to their surroundings, potential conflicts between landowners and beavers do exist. Besides their obvious effects on vegetation, the dams they construct can flood residences, roads, and fields, and the associated costs of property damage repair are a concern. However, these dams while sometimes causing local flooding upstream, can decrease major flooding downstream, essentially acting as a series of speed bumps that also allow fish and other wildlife to rest, rear, and feed in quiet waters. The dams also enhance the normal filtering of wetlands, detoxifying pollutants and collecting additional silt that otherwise would travel downstream and end up in our drinking water.



Beavers eat the leaves, inner bark, and twigs of aspen, alder, cottonwood, willow and other deciduous trees.

Beavers also benefit Oregon’s native salmon populations. Their feeding and dam building activities contribute to improved in-stream habitat diversity, seen by an increase in woody debris and deep pools that create fish refuge during high or low water flows. An abundance of leaf litter also supports aquatic insects for salmon to feed on. For these reasons and more, beavers are considered resourceful creatures that have been

identified as tools for fisheries recovery, watershed health, and habitat restoration by naturally and economically restoring stream complexity and stability, floodplain connectivity, riparian vegetative structure, surface and groundwater retention – all for free!

To learn more, visit: http://www.dfw.state.or.us/wildlife/living_with/docs/beaver.pdf

Sandy Bluff Park: This past spring marked the beginning of a partnership with City of Sandy at Sandy Bluff Park through the Shade Our Streams program. This unique site is situated on the edge of the Clackamas River and Sandy River Watersheds and is highly visible to the public. Tickle Creek flows through the park and eventually connects to Deep Creek, a tributary to the Clackamas River. The creek has been heavily influenced by beavers and an existing pond has a high level of salmon habitat potential. Next year, the Shade Our Streams program will plant almost ½ mile along the creek with 8,300 native trees and shrubs.



On November 2nd, twelve volunteers pitched in to plant 200 native shrubs along the pond, including red flowering currant, oceanspray, red elderberry, Pacific ninebark, twinberry, and blue elderberry. These attractive shrubs will enhance the natural beauty of the park for visitors, while helping to stabilize soils and improving fish and wildlife habitat. We’ll be back again in April 2014. Join us!

Portland State University Snapshot Program

Engaging in water quality monitoring is one of the best ways to determine watershed health! Fortunately, CRBC is in its 6th year partnering with Portland State University's Snapshot Program to analyze water quality in the Clackamas River Basin. As part of their capstone projects, seventeen students spent the summer sampling temperature, pH, turbidity, dissolved oxygen, ammonia, phosphorous, nitrate, and macroinvertebrates in 5 sub-basins: Eagle, Clear, Deep, Rock, and Richardson. Data indicated that Eagle Creek was the healthiest creek observed, meeting all standards, while the other streams fell outside the acceptable range on one or more parameters. Capstone students also participated in the Day in Damascus Celebration and presented their findings at a CRBC Board Meeting. A full copy of the report can be viewed on our website.



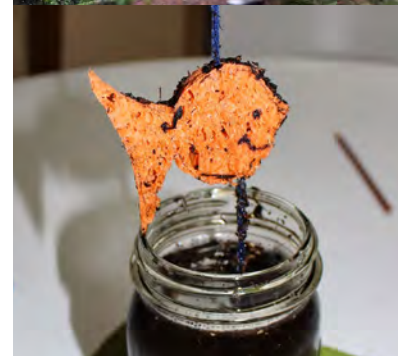
Clackamas High School

Thanks to thirty-eight students from Clackamas High School — 400 Coho salmon have returned to the upper reaches of the Clackamas Watershed to provide nutrients to the 137 wildlife species they support. On November 8th, students piled out of the bus at Metzler Park for morning of salmon dissection and carcass tossing. With scissors in hand, students sliced open plump and slimy salmon for a lesson on anatomy. Some were in for a surprise, when an average 2500 eggs spilled out! Their nutrient-rich carcasses were then tossed into the Clear Creek to benefit the next generation's survival. Due to a number of barriers blocking their passage, salmon aren't able to make it to the upper reaches of the watershed where they would historically lay their eggs and perish, providing the area with nutrients from their decaying bodies. By partnering with SOLVE and the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife on this salmon enrichment program, CRBC is able to help students learn about the salmon life cycle while placing hundreds of pounds of salmon carcasses in tributaries to the Clackamas River.



Abernethy Elementary

Nearly ninety 3rd graders from Abernethy Elementary School descended on Chrysalis Farms the first week of November. Located along the Clackamas River, these 33 acres are the ideal outdoor classroom to connect children to nature with the opportunity to see healthy ecological processes and practices on land and in waterways. Students explored the grounds on guided nature hikes as well as by hayride. The peacocks, mason bee condo, bat houses, and even a composting toilet, were all a hit. Invited to present in the Educational Barn, CRBC introduced Fred the Fish — a creative activity where students pour "pollution" into Fred's water on each leg of his journey downstream and learn how human actions effect water quality. Hopefully, all the students left with a new respect for nature and clean water.



Eagle Creek Elementary School

Eagle Creek Elementary School has a new nature trail down to their Shade Our Streams planting project along Goose Creek thanks to fourteen 1st-6th graders enrolled in STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Mathematics) after-school activities with CRBC. On October 24th, they spent an hour spreading mulch and had a TON of fun doing it! Students lined up assembly style, as a synchronized bucket and wheelbarrow brigade, quickly laying out a path for the nature trail. Their skills were apparent. Several students assured us that "saving the world" was pretty cool. In January, they'll be back at it again, but this time digging in to plant native trees and shrubs along the creek.



Support our Work, Make a Donation!

All donations are highly 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.

Our tax identification number is
91-1838169.

Thank you for your contribution!

Welcome, New Board Members and Staff!

CRBC is pleased to welcome new Board Members: **John Borden**, representative of Environmental Interests; **Dan Fink**, Commercial Woodproducts; **Dave Kleinke**, Citizen at Large; **Beverly Mason**, Property Owner Tributary; and **Jim Rice**, Commercial Woodproducts.

CRBC also welcomes **Morgan Parks** as the new Environmental Outreach and Engagement Coordinator.

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Thank You, Sponsors and Partners!

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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.

Council Meetings

We meet on the third Thursday of each month 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

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 while helping streams. Tools, gloves, and water are provided. Please bring a water bottle, dress for the weather, and wear closed-toed shoes or boots. All events start at 9:00 am and end at noon, unless otherwise noted.

January 4th, 2014 – Ivy Pull at Orchard Summit Property, Damascus

February 1st, 2014 – Deep Creek Annex/Boring Grange Work Party and Workshop, Boring

March 15th, 2014 – Rock Creek Watershed Wide Event, Happy Valley

Stay tuned for more date/location details:

April – Sandy Bluff Park, Sandy

May – Location to be determined



Deer at a Shade Our Streams project along Foster Creek.