

Restoring a Salmon Rest-stop

While it may look like a natural offshoot of the river, something special is happening here: clever engineering and native plants are working together to provide critical habitat for salmon and other aquatic species as they move into and out of the Clackamas River Basin.

The confluence of the Clackamas and Willamette Rivers is a perfect spot to stop, rest, and reflect on one's travels. And it's not just humans who appreciate time here. Migrating salmon and other aquatic species, such as Pacific lamprey, use floodplains, side channels, and alcoves—small waterways with minimal currents that branch off from rivers—to rest and find something to eat.

By the late 20th century, side channel habitats along the Clackamas and Willamette Rivers grew scarce as low-lying areas were filled in. At Dahl Beach Park, the riparian habitat was isolated from the main stem of the river. Habitat diversity also suffered due to the loss of large wood in the channel and a lack of native plants. As biologists have learned more about the importance of these areas to salmon, local and national organizations have worked to restore these rich habitats.

Community Clean-Up and Restoration



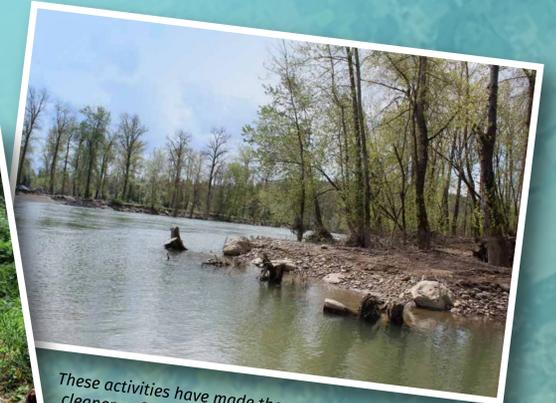
In order to restore this vital habitat and reconnect it to the main stem of the river, volunteers and partner agencies came together.



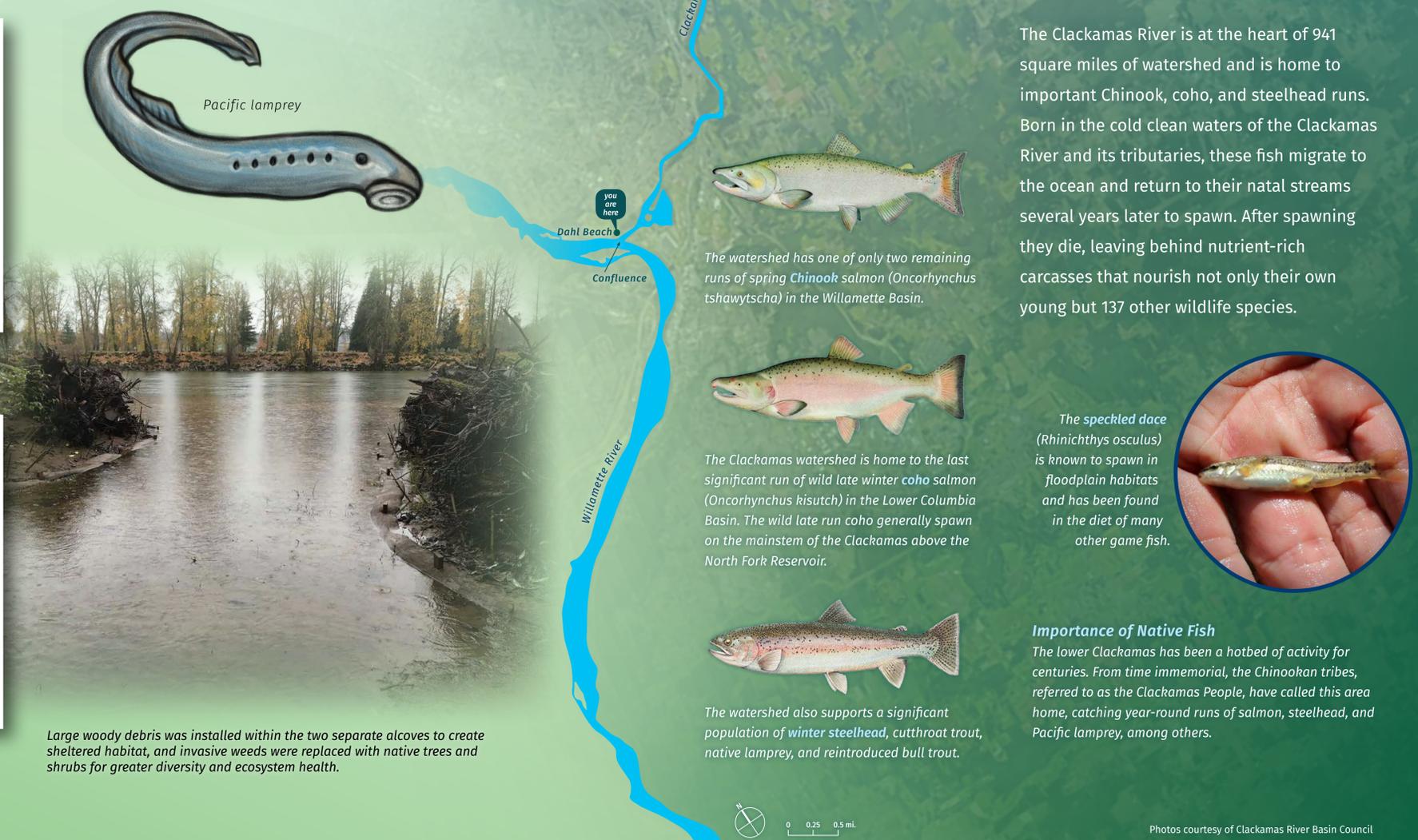
Contractors dug two alcoves and joined them to the river using heavy equipment, restoring a connection between the land and the river.



Between 2013-17, Dahl Beach Park received a "face-lift." Volunteers removed thousands of pounds of invasive species such as English ivy and Himalayan blackberry and planted over 15,000 native plants in the park!



These activities have made the park cleaner, safer, and more accessible while restoring vital habitat for salmon and other species.



Who is in the water?

The Clackamas River is at the heart of 941 square miles of watershed and is home to important Chinook, coho, and steelhead runs. Born in the cold clean waters of the Clackamas River and its tributaries, these fish migrate to the ocean and return to their natal streams several years later to spawn. After spawning they die, leaving behind nutrient-rich carcasses that nourish not only their own young but 137 other wildlife species.

Photos courtesy of Clackamas River Basin Council