



The Clackamas

# CURRENT NEWS

CLACKAMAS RIVER BASIN COUNCIL NEWSLETTER

## Fall 2019

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## Sign Up For a Class

CRBC is offering a naturescaping class this fall:

Gardening for Wildlife is on December 4 | 6 to 8 PM at the Happy Valley Library

Check our events page for details and to register.

## Battling Invasive Species

The Clackamas River Invasive Species Partnership (CRISP) was formed to improve the management of invasive species within the watershed. The partnership was initiated by the Clackamas River Basin Council (CRBC)



and the Clackamas Soil and Water Conservation District (CSWCD), with funding and support from Metro regional government. Portland General Electric provided a five-year, \$431,250 grant from the Clackamas River Habitat Fund in 2016 to help start its efforts. The partnership has grown to 13 members.

CRISP aims to strategically prioritize and manage invasive species associated with restoration efforts in the Clackamas River Basin. The CRISP MANAGEMENT PLAN guides the partnership and provides implementation goals. In 2019, Clackamas River Basin Council was successful in moving forward on several large projects. On Deep Creek, over 30 acres of Japanese knotweed were treated, and over the summer, CRBC gained the cooperation of three additional landowners on Deep Creek in the Boring area. Along the Clackamas mainstem, 17 acres of knotweed, Himalayan blackberry, and garlic mustard were treated.

## Down the River Clean Up Success

Thank you Volunteers! The 17th Annual Down the River Clean Up, a partnership of Clackamas River Basin Council and We Love Clean Rivers, drew 160 volunteers to five sites and the river reaches below along the Clackamas River on Sunday, September 8, 2019.

Drift boats rafts, kayaks and other paddle crafts launched at Milo McIver State Park, Barton Park, Carver Boat Ramp, and Riverside Park to collect debris at sites not accessible by land.

Volunteers walked the banks to pick up trash.

The Clackamas Sheriff's Office dive team was on hand to collect bottles, cans and many other lost or discarded items along the river bottom.

This year's event collected over 1.25 tons of trash and recyclable materials. Afterwards, volunteers gathered for a BBQ and celebration. The food was provided by Three Guys Grilling, and local artist Alaina Fidanzo sang and played guitar to the delight of all. A silent auction organized by We Love Clean Rivers raised \$2,000 to support the annual event.

Clackamas County TV was on hand to document the event. The video can be found on our website at [www.clackamasriver.org](http://www.clackamasriver.org).

Check it out!



Kayakers prepare to launch at the 17th Annual Down the River Clean Up.

## Voices from the Watershed

### Stream Assessment Work Brings Challenges and a New Perspective

By Britt McConn, CRBC Volunteer

"Looks like otters." Suzi Cloutier clomped by in her waders while pointing to a small, pale but colorful pile that looked like something you'd pull out of a dryer lint trap, but turned out to be crawdad shells. Apparently, they're a favorite for the local river otters in the Clackamas tributary that cuts around Milo McIver State Park.



A river otter basks in the sun.

*Photo courtesy USF&W*

I'd met Suzi out there early on a foggy Saturday morning to learn how to collect stream data and perform a biological assessment. I had heard about stream surveys before, and I knew they were important, but I hadn't realized how much work they could be, especially if there was only one person.

Suzi seemed happy to have the help that morning, and I just tried not to drop expensive tools in the water. She pointed out stream characteristics that were beneficial (or harmful) to salmonids, and occasionally quieted our chatting to identify birdcalls. Having a wildlife biologist with you while you're trekking along in a stream feels like a priceless experience that I could repeat over and over and learn something new every time I volunteered.

I spent nearly the entire day with Suzi learning about stream conditions, the urban interface issues that can arise, and the problems that can come up during volunteer events. One of the sites we went to measure had lost its former steward to health issues, and the area had become hazardous and carried risks that had nothing to do with topology. The large sprawling property had attracted squatters. It quickly became

apparent why having a partner afforded volunteers with safety beyond the environmental risks.

Later we joined up with John Borden. Suzi is a staff member, and John is a board member of the Clackamas River Basin Council and I found that between them they had decades of experience and were a wealth of knowledge. The three of us mapped out major characteristics, with Suzi's dutiful and encouraging instruction all the way up the stream. We strengthened new relationships with a local property owner during the assessment, and she was happy to be considered a steward herself.

The contrast from our earlier experience with property owners reminded me why people like Suzi and John keep pushing forward to inspire other volunteers despite their questionable reception. I learned that I had knowledge and experience to share also, and they were both curious and gracious in our conversation. We discussed the environmental conditions, policy issues, challenges in balancing industry and property management with wildlife conservation and so much more. This extremely memorable experience has given me new perspective and has me seeking out new opportunities to volunteer again.



Equipment and data measuring tools.



CRBC volunteer Britt McConn assists CRBC board member John Borden.

## Taking Collective Action

### At a Bend in the River, Residents Rally to Support Restoration

Two grants are supporting the work of Clackamas River Basin Council along Sieben Creek at its confluence with the Clackamas River. An Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board grant is funding large scale invasive plant removal throughout the seven acre parcel that includes valuable floodplain and fish habitat on Sieben Creek and an adjacent alcove along the Clackamas River.

Initial treatments to remove invasive weeds have been accomplished, providing opportunities for existing native species to flourish. Inter planting of additional native plants will be scheduled for the Spring of 2020.

Clackamas River Community Cooperative is a resident owned mobile home park. A Metro *Nature in Neighborhoods* grant is supporting the establishment of a resident stewardship team within the community. The residents collectively decide on changes and improvements to the park. Through the Metro grant, Clackamas River Basin Council will come alongside residents to provide classes on wildlife, native plants, stream health and other topics related to their site. CRBC will coordinate with the Cooperative to organize work parties for hands-on experience in invasive weed removal and planting of native trees and shrubs.



Residents of the Cooperative came out to support the restoration work in the Clackamas River floodplain adjacent to their mobile home park.

A kickoff picnic in August introduced residents to the idea of a stewardship team. An initial work party, organized by Clackamas River Basin Council and the Clackamas River Community Cooperative, in early October drew 26 people from the community to assist in the restoration project.



Removal of invasive species opened up scenic views along the river and will allow native plants to flourish.

Volunteers jumped into action and worked diligently to comb through the park for trash and debris. Items discovered included tires, lumber, lengths of pipe, a wheelchair, a small children's truck and little blue chair. All will be hauled away for disposal.

Residents concentrated on cutting ivy that is growing up mature trees and smothering shrubs, while others removed blackberry roots along a newly established trail along Sieben Creek. Residents have expressed their appreciation for the amazing work that is transforming the park, and are showing their support by learning about environmental issues and how to manage their property for the benefit of wildlife and clean water.



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and follow us on **Facebook** and **Instagram**  
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# Get Involved

## Council Meetings

CRBC meets on the third Thursday of each month from 6-8:30 PM at the Mt. Scott Fire Station in Happy Valley.  
Council meetings are open to the public - we'd love to hear from YOU!

Next meeting is scheduled for:

Thursday, November 21, 2019  
9339 SE Causey Ave, Happy Valley, OR 97086

# Classes and Volunteer Opportunities

## Get Involved with CRBC this Fall

NOYER CREEK INVASIVE WEED-PULL WORK PARTY is November 10 | 9 AM TO 12 PM | Damascus

GARDENING FOR WILDLIFE CLASS is December 4, 2019 | 6 TO 8 PM | Happy Valley  
Registration is FREE

More information on classes and volunteer events and work parties can be found on the "EVENTS" page at  
[clackamasriver.org/events](http://clackamasriver.org/events)

**Curious about other ways to support our work?**

Visit [clackamasriver.org/donate](http://clackamasriver.org/donate) for more details.