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More shade, happier fish

Shade our Streams improves habitat in Clackamas River Basin.

Conditions are improving for salmon and steelhead on the Clackamas River, thanks to Shade Our Streams, a Clackamas River Basin Council project.

PGE is part of the team on this six-year mission, which kicked off in 2013, to restore streamside habitat along 30 miles of Clackamas River tributaries, below PGE's hydroelectric facilities near Estacada, at no cost to property owners. It's one of Oregon's largest riparian shade-tree planting projects.

Protecting a vital resource

Why is this project important? Nearly 400,000 people receive their drinking water from the Clackamas River. It's also one of the best remaining salmon strongholds in the Lower Columbia River Basin for wild Coho, Chinook and Steelhead. The Clackamas River also provides important recreational fishing and boating opportunities.

PGE drives restoration project

PGE is committed to maintaining and improving the health of the rivers where we have hydroelectric facilities. One way we're doing that is by taking steps to reduce stream temperatures over time on the Clackamas River and its tributaries. Streamside tree planting is a proven and cost-effective way to cool the water and improve habitat. (Learn more about how PGE works to help fish thrive.)

"PGE's involvement and funding made the Shade Our Streams program possible. We're thrilled to partner with them," says Jenny Dezso, CRBC project manager. "Shade Our Streams brings together landowners, local partnerships, nurseries, volunteers and restoration crews to improve fish, wildlife and human habitats — all by planting native plants."

Teams are removing invasive weeds and will plant more than 450,000 native shrubs and trees to help shade and cool the water. Native trees improve water quality, reduce erosion and create better habitat for plant, animal, and fish species.

Local ties

"It really made sense for us to team up with PGE on this program because as the local, nonprofit watershed council, we already had developed relationships with landowners, who turn to us with questions on water quality, invasive weeds and riparian areas," Jenny

CRBC is also excited to support local businesses by hiring experienced re-vegetation crews, who specialize in restoration, invasive weed removal and planting, to tackle the majority of the work. The use of these professional crews not only benefits the local economy, but also helps ensure successful planting results.

Early signs of success

Although the full impact of the program will take a number of years as trees grow to shade the streams, some changes are starting to take place. Beaver have already moved into some newly planted areas rerouting the stream and changing the way the site is flooding.

Jenny explains that what might look like damage to the untrained eye is actually an early indicator of success. "The changes the beavers made are a huge benefit to the creek because that's what really starts building fish habitat."

If you own property along the Clackamas River or its tributaries, and you're interested in knowing more about Shade Our Streams, contact the Clackamas River Basin Council.

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