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

By the late 20th century, side channel habitats

Destoring a Salmon Rest-stor





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.

Community Clean-Up and Restoration



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.



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.

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.

Large woody debris was installed within the two separate alcoves to create sheltered habitat, and invasive weeds were replaced with native trees and shrubs for greater diversity and ecosystem health. The Clackamas watershed is home to the last significant run of wild late winter **coho** salmon (Oncorhynchus kisutch) in the Lower Columbia Basin. The wild late run coho generally spawn on the mainstem of the Clackamas above the North Fork Reservoir.

The watershed has one of only two remaining

runs of spring Chinook salmon (Oncorhynchus

tshawytscha) in the Willamette Basin.

The watershed also supports a significant population of **winter steelhead**, cutthroat trout, native lamprey, and reintroduced bull trout.

Importance of Native Fish The lower Clackamas has been a hotbed of activity for centuries. From time immemorial, the Chinookan tribes, referred to as the Clackamas People, have called this area home, catching year-round runs of salmon, steelhead, and Pacific lamprey, among others.

Photos courtesy of Clackamas River Basin Council

Special thanks to:

Confluence

