



The Clackamas

CURRENT NEWS

CLACKAMAS RIVER BASIN COUNCIL NEWSLETTER

Winter 2021

- 1 - Journey Down the Clackamas
- 2 - Replant the Riverside - We are putting trees in the ground!
- 3 - CRBC projects withstand winter floods
- 4 - Gardening for Wildlife classes

Upcoming Events:

March 17 @ 6pm: Gardening for Wildlife part 1

March 20: Replant the Riverside community planting: Register on-line to volunteer

March 23 @ 6pm: Journey Down the Clackamas: Geology1

March 24 @ 6pm: Gardening for Wildlife part 2

April 6 @ 6pm: Journey Down the Clackamas: Geology2

Take a "Journey Down the Clackamas" with us!

The Clackamas River Basin Council is proud to present the "Journey Down the Clackamas" Conference, a year-long series of seminars on the resources of the Clackamas River basin.

We've gathered together an impressive array of engineers, scientists, political leaders, agency officials, educators and others to share their expertise about the Clackamas River basin, including some of the latest research occurring within its boundaries.

In a year-long program of 33 presentations, we'll cover everything about the river, from its birth on 7,218-foot high Olallie Butte to its confluence with the Willamette River, 83 miles away. Our guest presenters will explain geology, hydrology, water quality, forestry, agriculture, fish, wildlife, recreation, history, indigenous culture, and public policy.

CRBC is partnering with the Environmental

Learning Center at Clackamas Community College (CCC) so that many of the sessions may also qualify for Professional Development Hours. Workshop attendees may receive CCC Continuing Education Units, and can also request a signed Certificate of Completion for each session.

Clackamas River Basin Council Executive Director, Cheryl McGinnis, and Council Member David Bugni hosted the first session on Tuesday, March 9, with a special [introduction by Senator Ron Wyden](#). Their presentation gave an overview of the Clackamas River Basin ([Watch the recording](#)).

"For the first time ever, a series of webinars intended for a general audience is being presented about key aspects of the Clackamas River basin," Bugni said. "This is long overdue for what is arguably the most unique, major river basin in Oregon - in terms of the diversity of uses."

Presentations will take place on Zoom and will run every other Tuesday from March 9 through May 22 of 2022. Recordings of each session will be uploaded to the CRBC Youtube channel. The conference is free for everyone to attend thanks to Gold Sponsor Clackamas Water Environment Services and Bronze Sponsors Clackamas River Water Providers and Geological Society of the Oregon Country, along with other generous donors.

To see a full list of classes and to register, please visit our website at <http://clackamasriver.org/journey-down-the-clackamas-conference/>

**Donate to Journey
Down the Clackamas
Conference**



REGISTER to attend this virtual conference: Join scientists, engineers, and fisheries biologists as we explore foundational background and the latest research about our amazing Clackamas River Basin: <http://clackamasriver.org/journey-down-the-clackamas-conference/>



[Replant the Riverside update inside!](#)

Thanks to Community, We 'Replant(ed) the Riverside' on March 5

CRBC has identified a location for post-fire restoration project funded by community donations

Since the September wildfires, the Clackamas River Basin Council has taken an active role in restoration efforts. We are working with the Clackamas Soil and Water Conservation District, Molalla River Watch, and Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board to help landowners who were impacted by the Riverside Fire. We are working with the North Santiam Watershed Council and other organizations to restore areas damaged in the Lionshedd and Beachie Creek Fires. And we called upon you, our generous community of supporters, to fundraise to "Replant the Riverside" to restore riparian areas affected by wildfires.

Through our coordination with other organizations we have picked a few locations to plant our trees!

First, let's review the [Replant the Riverside: 10 Trees for the Clackamas](#) campaign.

We shared the traumatic experience during the days of heavy winds, fires exploding throughout the Cascades, and smoky, apocalyptic skies. We helped each other evacuate and kept each other informed. We supported each other through some of the toughest times of our lives.

When we asked you to help heal these burn-scarred lands, you responded with the same encouragement that got us through those scary days. We promised: for every \$10 donated, we would plant a tree along the river and visit these trees for 5 years to make sure they thrive. You answered, giving \$18,000, uniting around the hope of a fresh, green start.

Now that the smoke has settled, we can assess the full extent of the damage. We've gained an understanding of the various aid programs and insurance coverages. For Replant the Riverside, we decided to choose a place that's being overlooked by other restoration efforts and funds.

A majority of the 138,151 acres burned by the Riverside Fire is on Forest Service land and is being restored with federal funding, so we began inspecting areas of the Clackamas River affected by the Dowty Road Fire. The Dowty Road Fire started near Highway 211 in Eagle Creek and spread southwest through rural properties and the Bonnie Lure State Recreation Area before crossing the Clackamas River to homes on the terraces above the western bank.

In talking with landowners, consulting tax lot databases, and walking through the blackened trees, we've found a small patch of forest along the river that was severely damaged and needs help to recover. The plot we've chosen is just south of Bonnie Lure State Recreation Area - and actually has no land ownership.

It's a strip of forest that was once riverbottom, so it was never designated to a government agency nor sold to a private party. A majority of our plantings will go into this unmanaged area. We are also working with private landowners affected by both the Dowty Road Fire and the Riverside Fire for additional planting sites.

CRBC Riparian Specialist Ari Sindel has taken the lead on our post-fire work and found our locations for Replant the Riverside.

"Although we were sure there was a need for forest recovery following the fires, identifying partners was challenging. Residents of our community with burned property had their lives upended by the fires, making it difficult to open communications with them. Many property owners qualified for other forms of assistance, and some would not meet our criteria for Replant the Riverside, which includes a maximum distance of 500 feet to the Clackamas River or its tributaries," Ari said. "Through building enthusiasm with landowners and consulting our watershed partners, we found the unmanaged land with severe burns and additional properties."



Fire, water, earth: CRBC Riparian Specialist Ari Sindel and Stewardship Manager Suzi Cloutier inspect the Replant the Riverside site. The Dowty Road Fire killed the vegetation, exposing the soil to be stripped away by January's high flows. Replanting trees and shrubs here will protect the riverbank from erosion and promote the succession of native riparian forests rather than invasives.

Ari put the planting plan together, ordering a mix of native trees and shrubs that thrive in riparian areas like red alder, red osier dogwoods, black cottonwood, and other species. To cover as much ground as possible, we decided to purchase "bare-root" seedlings from Champoege Nursery in Aurora. These bare-root seedlings are much cheaper than potted saplings - so we will actually be able to plant over 5,000 trees and shrubs!

"Like most of our planting projects, Replant the Riverside will employ a 3:1 shrub to tree mix. We start by planting at a very high 3-4' spacing density or 2,400 plants per acre," Ari explained. "We know that, as in nature, not all individuals will survive to maturity, but our final product, many years down the road, will be a forest with a healthy canopy and understory filled with food and habitat for many forest dwellers as well as shade, habitat, and food for the nearby river dwellers."

Planting bare-root seedlings is a technical process, so we hired Diego Franco's reforestation crew to get the area planted. On March 5 our trees went in to start the process of our riverside's recovery!

"Our Council is pleased to see the overwhelming response to financially support replanting our riverside and equally enthused to see the commitment of many who are excited to take part in planting together," CRBC Executive Director Cheryl McGinnis said. "We have an extraordinary river loved by so many who live, work and play here. Thank you for Your extraordinary support!"

We know many of you were hoping to help plant these trees, and we also believe in the healing power of physically putting these young trees into the ground for oneself. That's why we have also planned a volunteer opportunity on March 20. We will plant our trees on the property of Bob and Cynthia Patterson. They live in

Estacada, on the south slope above the Estacada Reservoir. To sign-up to volunteer, go to <http://clackamasriver.org/resident-resources/replant-the-riverside/>

Thank you for your generosity, your enthusiasm, and your continued support for our watershed. These trees will help hold together the soils, protecting the river from sedimentation and landslides. Regrowing these forests is important to create shade to shield our fish from dangerous water temperatures in the summer. By planting trees, we are empowered to heal our landscape and declare our hope for our future generations.



Promise of plants: Help us plant these beautiful native douglas firs, Oregon grape, and red alders as we resolve to heal our riverside.

Winter Flows Can't Shake CRBC Log Structures at Eagle Creek

We Oregonians often joke we only have two seasons: a short, blissful summer and 9 months of rain. Since the 2020-2021 rainy season began in October, the Clackamas River nearly reached flood levels of 40,000 cubic feet per second (cfs) twice, with the USGS WaterWatch gauge near Oregon City registering 32,100 cfs on December 21 and 37,800 cfs on January 13.

While these high flows are natural - and hardly begin to compare to memories of the massive floods of 1964 - they can be problematic. September's wildfires burned soils throughout the watershed, making the earth less absorptive. Forest rainfall is more likely to run straight to the waterways, bringing sediments, pollution, and sometimes even trees and landslides with it.

As our climate continues to change, our precipitation will vary even more. NOAA declared in September that we've entered an El Niño year, meaning the warm, tropical current will bring more moisture overall but less will fall as snow. That could mean greater spring flood risk and greater chances of summer droughts.

For the CRBC, these high flow events put our restoration projects to the test. It's a test our engineers have studied for, however, as they incorporate flood model calculations as part of the project design process. Now, the



proof is in the muddy pudding.

After a visit to our Large Wood Enhancement Project on Eagle Creek at Bonnie Lure State Recreation Area, we noticed the soils had been stripped by flood events this season. Some of the park burned in the Dowty Road Fire and the lack of ground cover made the soils vulnerable to the flows. We inspected the log structures we installed and even noticed mud and pebbles stuck on top of the structures - 6 feet above the bank! That showed us just how high the waters had risen - and that our structures had not even budged with such forceful flows.

As we continue to adapt to a climate with greater variability, we can anticipate stronger weather events to occur more frequently. We must put in place contingencies to account for these challenges and we appreciate the knowledge and skills of our partners to be able design and implement forward-thinking projects with such solid results.

This project is funded by the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board. CRBC works with 14 other organizations to address and mitigate our salmon species' most pressing challenges in an effort called the Clackamas Partnership. This project helps salmon by giving them improved access to side-channel habitats and large wood structures as cover habitat for juvenile salmon.

GARDENING FOR WILDLIFE - TIPS FOR A PESTICIDE-WISE WATERSHED

Gardens are growing in popularity as folks are looking for quarantine hobbies. Whether you're new to gardening or if your thumb's been green for years - please help reduce the amount of pesticides in our watershed by following these tips.

To Spray or not to Spray?

Weather-wise - If you use pesticides, make sure to check the weather. Spray:

- 1) On days without wind
- 2) On dry days, days before next rain.

Spot Spray - Save time and money by spraying only the weeds on your lawn - rather than spraying large areas.

Read labels - Use pesticides correctly!

Integrated Pest Management - Plant native species around your garden or lawn to attract beneficial insects. Bugs that eat pests can replace insecticides, which are poisons that also harm birds, amphibians, and fish (all of our local amphibians eat insects, and 96% of terrestrial birds feed them to their babies).

It's already Fertile!

Avoid over-fertilizing - Grass can only absorb so much nitrogen! OSU Extension recommends "only a pound or less of actual N per 1,000 ft² of lawn annually as long as clippings are returned."

Test your soil - OSU Extension recommends to select fertilizers with high levels of N and low levels of P and K.

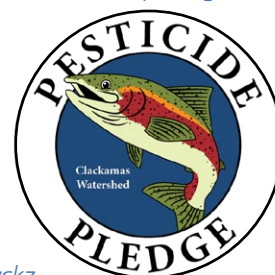
Slow-release - Choose a granular fertilizer that absorbs slowly. Granulars give you more control over where you need to fertilize, and the slow-release extends the time needed between applications.

End "Lawn Worship" - Let it yellow! It may harm your pride, but it will be better for our water quality and wildlife!

Encourage Your Neighbors

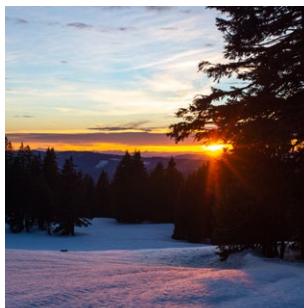
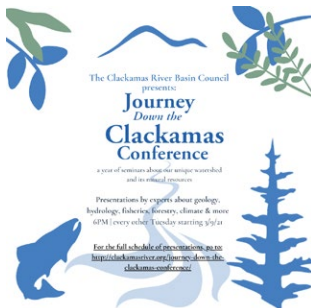
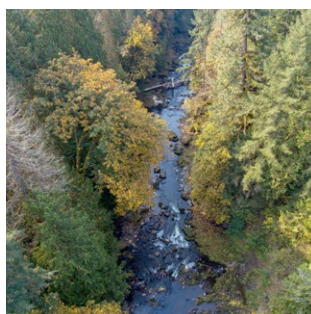
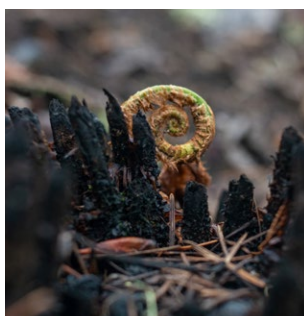
Pesticide Pledge - The best way to change behavior is by establishing social norms for what the expected behavior should be. Help us reduce pesticides in the Clackamas Basin by signing our Pesticide Pledge. We'll send you a free metal plaque for your garden so you can encourage your neighbors to be more pesticide aware, too!

<http://clackamasriver.org/resident-resources/pesticide-reduction/parting-with-pesticides/>



If you're digging this, sign up for our free **Gardening for Wildlife Class**: <https://tinyurl.com/2acxyckz>

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Email info@clackamasriver.org to be added to our [email list](#) for the latest news and upcoming events, or to sign up for a print copy of this newsletter.

Let us know what you would like for the future of your watershed!

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