

McKENZIE MEANDERINGS

A Newsletter of the McKenzie Watershed Council

"..fostering better stewardship of the McKenzie Watershed resources through partnerships and collaboration.."



Spring 2010

Visit us on the web at <http://www.mckenziawc.org>

NEW CEDAR CREEK PARTNERSHIP FORMED

Principal goal is to improve native fish habitat under ODFW STEP project

On March 9 of this year, the Cedar Creek Partnership was created when landowner Eric Gossler signed the memorandum of understanding representing the Cedar Creek Irrigation and Flood Control Association. The Association joins Lane County, the City of Springfield, Eugene Water & Electric Board, Springfield Utility Board, McKenzie Watershed Council, Willamalane Park and Recreation District and Springfield Public School District in the new Partnership. The primary goal of this collaborative effort is to protect and restore the fish and wildlife habitat, water quality and riparian function of Cedar Creek. The group will assist the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife in implementing a new Salmon-Trout Enhancement Program (STEP) project on Cedar Creek. "This project will increase flow in lower Cedar Creek in an effort to meet minimum requirements for aquatic life during low flow months and to provide off-channel rearing habitat for fish during high flow months," stated Erik Moberly, ODFW STEP biologist. During the summer of 2010, ODFW plans to monitor water temperature and fish presence in the Creek and is seeking volunteers to help.

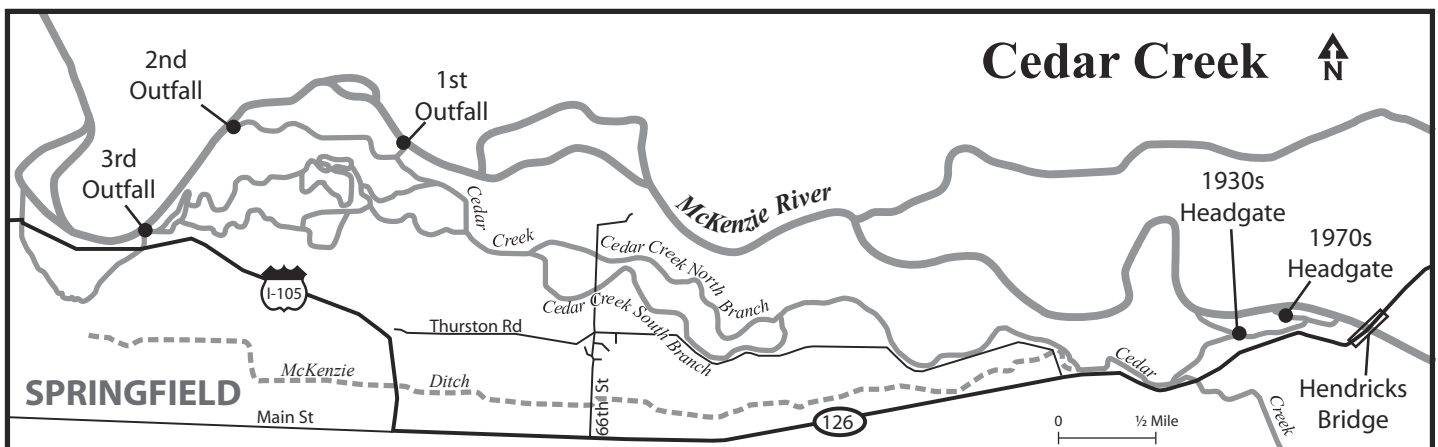
The Partners and ODFW also will be working with landowners on a voluntary basis to restore riparian and aquatic habitat on their land. A meeting with

landowners took place on April 28, where partners explained the new program and solicited landowner participation. According to Larry Six of the McKenzie Watershed Council, "The Partnership will provide a strong local collaborative effort that will enhance our ability to leverage local matching dollars and attract outside financial support for monitoring and restoration activities."

Another goal of the Partnership is to address the long-term problem of the existing intake on the McKenzie River. Due to downcutting and channel migration of the McKenzie River in this area, the existing diversion doesn't operate efficiently.

Cedar Creek is a tributary of the lower McKenzie River near Springfield and drains a watershed of approximately eleven square miles. Most of the watershed is outside the urban growth boundary and on private land. Cedar Creek crosses under McKenzie Highway near Cedar Flat and connects to a diversion from the McKenzie River. Water from the McKenzie River has flowed through head gates since 1915 to augment the natural flow of Cedar Creek.

For more information on the Cedar Creek effort, go to the McKenzie Watershed Council's website at www.mckenziawc.org/cedarcreek.



Who is the McKenzie Watershed Council?



McKenzie Watershed Council
P.O. Box 70166
Eugene, OR 97401
541/687-9076
FAX: 541/687-1065
Visit our web site at:
www.mckenziawc.org

Partner Organizations

At Large Representatives
Association of Northwest

Steelheaders
City of Eugene

City of Springfield

Upper Willamette Soil and Water
Conservation District

Eugene Water & Electric Board
Lane County

McKenzie Flyfishers

McKenzie Guides' Association

McKenzie River Trust

McKenzie School District

Mohawk Watershed Partnership

Oregon Department of Fish
and Wildlife

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

U.S. Bureau of Land Management

U.S. Forest Service

Weyerhaeuser Company

Wildish Sand and Gravel Company

Our Mission:

“..fostering better stewardship of
the McKenzie Watershed
resources through voluntary
partnerships and collaboration..”



Printed on recycled paper

COUNCIL MEETING SCHEDULE

The public is invited and encouraged to attend Council meetings, which provide a forum to discuss issues and activities related to watershed restoration. The 2010 meeting schedule is as follows:

June 105:30 p.m. EWEB, Training RoomEugene
September 10 ..5:30 p.m. SUB Board Meeting Room ...Springfield
October 14TBA Retreat.....TBA
November 10...6:00 p.m. McKenzie Fire & RescueLeaburg
December 95:30 p.m. EWEB, Training RoomEugene

Volunteer!

The McKenzie Watershed Council has been working over the past year to develop and host monthly volunteer projects throughout the McKenzie Basin. The idea is to reach out to the public with interesting and worthwhile on-the-ground work that not only benefits the watershed, but also establishes connections among the many individuals and various groups doing good work up and down the valley. To date we have hosted volunteer work parties along Horse Creek and Blue River, Cartwright Creek in Marcola, at Lively Park in Springfield and Armitage Park in Eugene. The various work parties have done everything from planting native trees and shrubs to picking up trash, pulling invasive weeds and trail maintenance work. To sign up for monthly updates on volunteer projects and other opportunities, contact Jared Weybright at 541-687-9076 or projects@mckenziawc.org.

Look forward to seeing you out there!

CAMPAIGN UNDERWAY TO RENEW RESTORATION FUNDING

Oregonians for Water, Parks and Wildlife has launched an initiative for the November ballot to continue the current dedication of Oregon's lottery funds to parks and natural areas. These funds have been used in part to do watershed restoration work throughout the state since the passage of the original measure in 1998. That year, Oregon voters overwhelmingly passed a measure dedicating 15% of Oregon Lottery funds to natural areas and parks. The funds have helped restore 2,600 miles of Oregon streams providing critical habitat for fish and wildlife. Grants enabled landowners to plant trees, remove barriers to fish migration, and control invasive plants. These funds have also helped protect more than 38,000 acres of prime habitats including coastal wetlands, valley woodlands and desert grasslands. Without voter approval, Oregon's dedicated support for parks, beaches and natural areas will end. The organization has a goal of collecting 60,000 signatures by June 30th.

To get more information on this effort, call Oregonians for Water, Parks and Wildlife at (503) 206-8933 or go to www.waterparkswildlife.org.

CAN WATERSHEDS WITH FORESTS MANAGED FOR TIMBER CONTRIBUTE TO CHINOOK SALMON RECOVERY IN THE WILLAMETTE VALLEY?

By Bob Danehy, Aquatic Biologist

Weyerhaeuser Environmental Forestry Research, Springfield, OR

The Willamette Valley historically supported anadromous fishes in most of the tributaries draining from the Cascades. Some of the basins have flood control dams while others remain free flowing. Unfortunately for the salmon, the best historic habitats are in Santiam, McKenzie, and Middle Fork Willamette basins that have dams. The Corp of Engineers is tasked through a biological opinion negotiated with NOAA to find a way to help the fish populations in those rivers. Those efforts are central to the recovery planning for the basin. However, since salmon could benefit from habitat in other basins, the potential of the free flowing rivers to augment salmon and steelhead recovery efforts is a question worth pursuing.

In 2007, Weyerhaeuser Company began the Five Rivers Project (5RP) to evaluate physical habitat and biological conditions of five smaller and lower elevation watersheds (Molalla, Calapooia, Mohawk, Little Fall Creek, and Mosby Creek) to augment existing ODFW anadromous salmonid monitoring efforts. This project has two primary goals. First, we want to understand current habitat conditions in each system and to identify factors likely limiting productivity of anadromous fishes. Second, we will evaluate the potential for changing limiting conditions and estimate the contribution these changes could make to the recovery of self-sustaining populations of winter steelhead and/or spring Chinook salmon.

The five study watersheds were among the first in the region to be utilized for timber production during early settlement. Logging of primary forests began in the mid to late 1800's and continued through the middle of the 20th century. A common method of transporting logs from the forests to the mills until the mid 20th century was floating them down the rivers. These log transportation practices left a lasting signature on the aquatic habitats in these watersheds. However, none of the five rivers has been dammed for flood control, although diversions have been constructed to provide irrigation. The Weyerhaeuser Company owns and manages timber in major portions of these watersheds. The ownership is concentrated in the upper end of

the watersheds and consequently much of the salmon and steelhead habitat in each watershed is within that ownership.

Historical scientific information from the watersheds including the McKenzie is limited, with much of the information anecdotal. The Mohawk watershed had a native run of spring Chinook until 1910. Data on the exact spawning distribution of spring Chinook is unclear but it is likely that they spawned in the mainstem above Marcola. The Mohawk River had splash dams that were used extensively in the late 1800's and early 1900's, and that practice contributed to the demise of spring Chinook in the basin. The Mill Creek drainage, a major tributary to the mainstem, once provided a substantial area for spring Chinook spawning. The scouring of the mainstem by transported logs played a role in the loss of the spring Chinook run.



There have been efforts by ODFW to reintroduce spring Chinook salmon in the Mohawk River for more than a decade. Both adults and fingerlings have been released in the upper river. The results of that modest effort have not reestablished a run, but there are some results that at least suggest the fish can rear in the existing habitats. Fingerlings found after release have shown some growth and fry were seen one spring after an adult release. These results have led to a continuation of the program and an increase in the number of fingerlings from the McKenzie hatchery.

In the coming years as we learn more about each watershed, the Weyerhaeuser Company, in collaboration with ODFW and others, will evaluate the potential of each 5RP watershed. In watersheds or portions of watersheds where restoration of anadromous runs appear possible, collaborative plans can be developed. A return of salmon is a lofty goal, but with a good understanding of what it will take and broad support it may be an attainable one. If any of the readers have information about past fish runs or learns anything about current conditions while out and about along the river, please let us know!

Restoration and Education Project Updates

The McKenzie Watershed Council is actively engaged in a number of ongoing enhancement projects which seek to enhance fish and wildlife habitat, protect and improve water quality and wherever possible provide educational opportunities for local middle school and high school students. The Council is a nonregulatory body that works with a variety of partners on voluntary and cooperative restoration and education projects. Without the participation and cooperation of private landowners, much of the work we do would not be possible. If you are interested in exploring restoration and enhancement opportunities on your property we want to hear from you! Potential projects include riparian enhancement, invasive plant control, livestock fencing and watering, fish passage and in-stream habitat enhancement. Several current projects are highlighted below. Contact Jared Weybright at 541-687-9076 or projects@mckenziawc.org for more information.

Leaburg Riparian Enhancement

The Leaburg Riparian Enhancement Project involves 9 contiguous landowners along the northern bank of the McKenzie River in the town of Leaburg covering 1.5 acres and 1900 linear feet of river frontage. Riparian areas within the project area are a mixture of remnant stands of native vegetation, areas inundated with invasive plant species and open residential lawns. Restoration at the site has focused on the control and eradication of the invasives and the reestablishment of native trees and shrubs in an effort to improve fish and wildlife habitat, bank stability and water quality. Collectively the Leaburg site presents an excellent opportunity to create a site showcasing properties which have successfully reestablished native vegetation in residential areas. The Council plans to highlight the site with a public tour in the summer of 2011.

Springfield Country Club Riparian Enhancement

The riparian enhancement work at the Springfield Country Club (SCC) began in the summer of 2009 and builds upon several years of previous project work in the lower Mohawk River basin. The SCC Project focused on controlling Armenian blackberry and other invasive species while reestablishing native plants on over 4 acres of land along the lower Mohawk River. SCC personnel, private contractors and the Northwest

Youth Corps worked together to control invasives and plant over 1500 native trees and shrubs at the site. Bleeding hearts, trillium, sorrel and other native herbs have been emerging from the remnant seed bank now that the blackberry has been removed. The site serves as a great example of successful partnerships between the Council and private landowners. The public is invited to tour the site on Thursday, June 17, 2010. (See project tour article on page 6)

Demonstration Ivy Removal Project

At multiple sites up and down the McKenzie River, English ivy seems to be covering nearly everything. The Council has taken on a small number of ivy removal projects over the last couple years in an effort to test control methods and techniques. One site is located on private property upstream of Vida. Crews have been working over the last year and a half to hand pull ivy from approximately 0.6 acres of riparian habitat along the McKenzie River. The work has been slow going, but the results have been very encouraging as native shrubs and forbs have come back from the remnant seed bank and newly planted western red cedars are flourishing. The public is invited to tour the site on Thursday, June 24, 2010. (See project tour article on page 6)

Camp Creek Basin Study

The Camp Creek Basin Study is an ongoing cooperative educational and restoration project developed by the Springfield Public School's WELL Project, the McKenzie Watershed Council and the Eugene Water & Electric Board. The Study provides students from Thurston High School, Springfield High School, Springfield Middle School and Agnes Stewart Middle School with field-based learning opportunities through watershed monitoring and restoration activities.

The Study's first on-the-ground restoration project began this past spring. Students will be working with the Council and a private landowner to control invasive plant species, primarily reed canary grass and Armenian blackberry, on over an acre of streamside habitat in the lower Camp Creek basin. The project will densely plant willows and other native vegetation throughout the project area in an effort to shade out the invasive grass over time. High-density willow plantings, together with a robust multiyear maintenance program, have

shown promising results in controlling reed canary grass elsewhere in the Willamette Valley.

McKenzie River Clematis Project

The non-native climbing vine, *Clematis vitalba*, has become established at multiple sites along the McKenzie River corridor over the last several years. Clematis is an escaped ornamental which grows rapidly and can quickly overtop mature trees, similar to English ivy. The plant readily spreads through vegetative fragmentation and is a prolific seed producer.



The Council began a project last year, in partnership with the Oregon Department of Agriculture, the McKenzie River Trust and a private landowner, aimed at controlling the invasive plant at two of its uppermost known sites along the mainstem McKenzie. The goal of the project is to limit seed production and explore methods for eradicating the plant. Crews spent several weeks last fall cutting and clearing vines from infested trees and shrubs and will follow up with additional work this summer. If you think you may have this plant growing on your property, we would like to hear from you! A quick search on the internet will yield representative photos, and there are several sites along the McKenzie where clematis can be seen. One spot is the outside curve around Leaburg Lake, and the second is the northern bank of the river directly opposite the International Paper container board plant in Springfield.

To find out more about the McKenzie Watershed Council's upcoming activities and events you can now follow us on Facebook!

GET INVOLVED!

Attend Council meetings.

The McKenzie Watershed Council meets on the 2nd Thursday of the month and welcomes public attendance and participation.

Become a volunteer.

Participate in Council habitat improvement projects, water quality monitoring, educational projects and cleanups.

Apply to become a Resident Partner.

The Council is looking to increase its membership representing residents of McKenzie basin communities.

Work with the Council to restore riparian habitat on your land.

Funds can be obtained for these activities.

Contribute to the cause.

Make a tax-deductible contribution to the McKenzie Watershed Alliance.

ANNUAL MCKENZIE RIVER CLEANUP SLATED FOR JULY 10 Volunteers Needed!

The annual McKenzie River cleanup event occurs on Saturday, July 10 this year. Volunteers from McKenzie River Guides Association, McKenzie Flyfishers, McKenzie River Ranger Station, McKenzie Watershed Council and other interested river stewards will remove trash from about 55 miles of the river, from Armitage Park to Paradise Park. Boaters will be assigned to sections of the river, and land-based volunteers will pick up trash around the major landings and bank fishing areas. Afterward, join us for barbecue and prizes at Hendricks Bridge Wayside. If you would like to join this effort, please call Larry Six at the McKenzie Watershed Council (541-687-9076).

We thank all of the volunteers who worked hard to make the 2009 cleanup a success, and we appreciate the contributions of the following sponsors:

Blake Hastings and Wild Duck Catering
The Caddis Fly Ike's Pizza
McKenzie Disposal
Oregon River Sports REI

COUNTY INITIATES PROCESS TO UPDATE RIPARIAN AND FLOODPLAIN ORDINANCES

In late 2009, the Lane County Board of Commissioners adopted a long-range working plan directing staff of the Land Management Division to update the riparian and floodplain ordinances. Updates to both ordinances have been proposed to help achieve related objectives - including the enhancement and preservation of floodplain/riparian areas to help protect and maintain water quality and to help protect public health and safety. The ordinance review and revision process is underway at this time, and code language is expected to be developed by July or August of 2010. The Lane County Planning Commission (LCPC) and public hearing processes would follow and are expected to be completed by October 2010.

At the time of its enactment in 1992, the riparian ordinance was one of the first and most comprehensive riparian protection rules in the state. However, shortly after its adoption, problems with the code became

apparent, including its complexity, the difficulty in administering and enforcing the code and the perception by some that the code was ineffective at preventing the loss of significant riparian habitat.

At its April 27, 2010 session, the Board of Commissioners learned that revisions to the riparian ordinance would trigger a state-mandated inventory under Statewide Planning Goal 5 which could take up to two years. The Board directed staff to look at an alternative which would create a surface water protection overlay zone which could provide similar riparian protections in those areas where surface water is the source of drinking water. Such an overlay does not trigger the Goal 5 inventory process. For the long term, this action does not preclude the County from initiating a process to revise the riparian ordinance. Staff also will continue as planned to draft revisions to the floodplain ordinance as directed last November.

Join Us on a Project Tour

On Thursday, June 17th, 2010 the Council and Mohawk Watershed Partnership will join with the Springfield Country Club (SCC) to tour a multi-acre riparian enhancement project along sections of the Mohawk River as it flows through the golf course. The SCC project converted over 4 acres of streamside habitat, previously dominated by Armenian blackberry, to native trees and shrubs. The tour will start at 6:30 p.m. and last about an hour and a half. We will meet at the old SCC clubhouse on Marcola Road approximately 4.5 miles north of Hayden Bridge. Signs will be posted, and more details will be available on the website.

On Thursday, June 24, 2010 the MWC and a partnering landowner will host a tour of an English ivy removal project along the McKenzie River. Over 400 linear feet of riverbank (0.6 acre) was cleared of ivy over the course of the last year and a half. Native flowers and shrubs can be seen sprouting in areas previously dominated by a carpet of ivy. The site will be open for viewing from



5:00 p.m. until 7:30 p.m. Meet at the project site along Highway 126, approximately 4 miles upriver from Vida, half way between mile marker 30 and 31. Again, we will be sure to post signs and more details will be available on the Council website, www.mckenziewc.org

Middle McKenzie Side Channel Enhancement

Healthy rivers and streams contain instream structures, such as large wood and boulders, which serve to reduce, or break up, the force of flowing water and create an array of habitat features required by salmonids and other aquatic life. A variety of historic and modern day land management practices have contributed to a situation where many rivers and streams lack the large wood needed to help create channel complexity and diverse aquatic habitats. The McKenzie Watershed Council has joined the US Forest Service and McKenzie High School in an effort to enhance McKenzie River aquatic habitat in nine side channels through the addition of large wood. The Middle McKenzie Side Channel Project will enhance habitat for spring Chinook salmon, bull trout and other native species while providing a unique field-based learning opportunity for local students.



Historically, large wood entered the river system via the natural process of regular flood events and falling from well established streamside riparian areas. The construction of multiple dams in the upper McKenzie disrupted the natural downstream flow of woody material and other substrate. Additionally, the harvest of streamside trees, human development in the floodplain and the actual removal of large wood from river channels also contributed to the low counts of large wood we find in the McKenzie today. Opportunities to restore large wood to the mainstem McKenzie River are limited by boating, recreation and human development. There are opportunities, however, to restore wood to unnavigated side channels

of the McKenzie River. Side channels offer critical habitat to native fish by providing rearing habitat for juveniles, refuge areas during high water events and are often excellent spawning areas.

Willamette National Forest fish biologists have identified 9 McKenzie River side channels, located along a 15-mile stretch of the river corridor upstream from Blue River, that are lacking large wood. Over the next two years large wood will be added to each side channel in an effort to enhance salmon habitat through the creation of large deep pools, addition of complex cover, and the enhanced ability to trap cobble and gravel.

In addition to enhancing fish habitat the Middle McKenzie Side Channel Project will provide a unique educational and stewardship opportunity for local youth. McKenzie High School students have been meeting approximately one Friday every month since last October to participate in a variety of different monitoring and restoration activities. Over the course of the last school year students have participated in stream habitat surveys, macroinvertebrate sampling, water quality monitoring, survey data assessment, streamside tree planting and tours of similar projects. Students will continue to assist the project by participating in post-project stream habitat surveys, spawning surveys, photo point monitoring and by creating educational signage to be placed at the Delta Campground Old Growth Trail. By integrating educational opportunities into restoration projects the Council and its partners seek to provide students with valuable natural resource management experience, increase the visibility of watershed enhancement actions and reach out to the public in an effort to develop similar projects elsewhere in the watershed. To learn more visit the McKenzie Watershed Council website, www.mckenziwc.org





**P.O. Box 70166
Eugene, OR 97401**



Who You Gonna' Call? *For Your Watershed Questions*

If you would like more information about any of the organizations listed in this newsletter, please call the following numbers:

- McKenzie Watershed Council -----541 687-9076**
- Mohawk Watershed Partnership -----541 687-9076**
- Upper Willamette Soil and Water Conservation District -----541 465-6436 Ext#3**
- Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife-----541 726-3515**
- Bureau of Land Management, Eugene District-----541 686-6600**
- McKenzie River Ranger District, Willamette National Forest-----541 822-3381**
- McKenzie River Trust-----541 345-2799**
- Department of State Lands -----503 378-3805 Ext#232**

Do you have a community-based project? Would you like to plant native trees and shrubs in your streamside? Do you have a fence that's in need of repair for pasture rotation? The McKenzie Watershed Council may be able to help you!

"When you put your hand in a flowing stream, you touch the last that has gone before and the first of what is still to come." Leonardo da Vinci