

McKenzie Watershed Council Projects Corner

By Juan Welsh, MWC Projects Manager

Many McKenzie Valley landowners have been busy working in collaboration with the McKenzie Watershed Council this winter on improving riparian habitat within the floodplain of the McKenzie through native tree planting. The watershed council traditionally assists interested McKenzie River residents who live within the floodplain of the river with tree planting activities on their land. Numerous landowners have taken advantage of this program during the last two years. Riparian improvement projects usually involve mowing and control of invasive weeds found on the site (predominantly reed canary grass and blackberry), followed by intensive planting of site-appropriate native trees such as Big leaf Maple, Black Cottonwood, Red Alder, Oregon Ash, Pacific Willow, Ponderosa Pine, Douglas Fir, and Western Red Cedar.

The optimal tree planting season along the McKenzie is just now wrapping up, but this winters' dry weather has made effective watering of new plantings this spring and summer a very high priority.

Another important undertaking currently happening within the McKenzie Watershed Council's projects world is the coordination of replacement work for culverts that have historically blocked passage for fish and other aquatic species. The Council has been collaborating with Lane County Public Works and the Willamette National Forest in attempting to replace a culvert located along Simmonds Creek just outside of Blue River, and has been collaborating with Lane County Public Works and the BLM to replace a culvert on Toms Creek located along Goodpasture Road. It's anticipated that both culverts can be replaced during the low flow period this coming summer.

For questions about these projects or any other project work that the McKenzie Watershed Council is currently engaged in, please contact MWC Projects Manager Juan Welsh at 687-9076.