Accomplishments at a Glance

In collaboration with community partners and volunteers, the McKenzie Watershed Council’s 2016 accomplishments include:

Projects
- 19 acres of riparian planting, and over 50 acres of invasive vegetation and native plant establishment management
- 1 linear mile of in-stream habitat enhancement and 35 acres of floodplain enhancement
- 460 pieces of large wood placed for habitat creation and floodplain complexity
- 0.3 mile of livestock exclusion fencing installed
- Engaged with UO landscape architecture studio participants to develop naturescaping designs for four landowners

Community Engagement
- 10 Council Meetings were held throughout the year
- Diversity and Equity Statement adopted by Council
- McKenzie Watershed Partnership community presentation
- Council Partners attended project site tours
- Annual McKenzie River Clean Up
- Outreach at McKenzie River Trust’s Annual Living River Celebration on Green Island and other events

Education
- 1,705 students and community members reached
- Two student led presentations to the community
We believe the best way to ensure future watershed health is through education. By teaching and inspiring the next generation of environmental stewards we are safeguarding our watershed. To accomplish this, the McKenzie Watershed Council offers practical, hands-on learning opportunities to help students increase their knowledge of watershed science and the natural world as a whole. By engaging in rigorous scientific inquiry and field-based lessons, students are empowered with tools to explore and understand their local environment. The McKenzie Watershed Council works in collaboration with a variety of federal, state, and local community partners and dedicated volunteers to provide a broader perspective to students on many topics related to ecosystem health.

In 2016, we began a partnership with the Coast Fork Willamette Watershed Council (CFWWC) to expand its watershed education approach to a more regional scale. This partnership has led to the development of the Watershed Action Teams for Education, Restoration, and Stewardship Program (WATERS) a scalable, regional approach to field-based environmental education and public outreach which will involve approximately 250 students from 11 schools from five districts in the Upper Willamette basin as well as Lane Community College and the University of Oregon. During the 2016-2017 school year students participated on a monthly basis on 15 teams focused on water quality, well water or stream habitat monitoring, and riparian restoration. High school stream habitat teams surveyed 4.5 stream miles, water quality teams collected 450 samples and middle school restoration teams enhance 6 acres of riparian habitat. All team project work was done in coordination with local utilities, municipalities, and federal agencies.

Salmon Watch Field Trips provided experiential learning to expand upon curriculum taught in class. Students rotate through stations focused on water quality, riparian ecology, fish biology, and macroinvertebrate identification. Over 1,200 students had the opportunity to see salmon spawning and learn more about northwest ecosystems through this program last year. This was made possible with the help of 60 dedicated volunteers who offered to share their expertise. The second annual Salmon Celebration attracted an additional 80 public attendees of all ages.

In May of 2016, the McKenzie Watershed Council adopted the “McKenzie River Sub-basin Strategic Action Plan for Aquatic and Riparian Conservation and Restoration, 2016-2026.” Plan development began in January 2015 as a collaborative effort among Council Partners and technical advisors. The plan aims to achieve the following outcomes: 1) Improved habitat for key aquatic species, 2) Maintenance of high quality drinking water, and 3) Enhanced public awareness, understanding, and support for watershed conservation and restoration. In accordance with the Strategic Action Plan, the Council is continuing work with numerous partners to strengthen conservation and restoration of riparian areas within the McKenzie River Sub-basin. All actions in the plan are voluntary and will be accomplished through collaboration among diverse stakeholders throughout the watershed. Copies of the Strategic Action Plan are available in digital form upon request.

On July 9th, more than 100 volunteers participated in the Annual McKenzie River Clean Up. Volunteers in boats and on foot scoured the 55 mile section of river from Blue River to the confluence with the Willamette River. Nearly 30 cubic yards of trash was removed from the McKenzie River.

Restoration Projects

The Deer Creek Floodplain Enhancement Project was a collaborative effort between the Council and the Willamette National Forest designed to improve ecological function and biological productivity for native fish and wildlife by restoring impaired function and restore Deer Creek to a complex, dynamic, depositional, alluvial valley.

During summer 2016, 460 pieces of large wood were placed and over 2.8 acres of berms removed and redistributed along the lower mile and adjacent 35 acres of the Deer Creek floodplain. Results from the project have already been remarkable. A high-water event in October 2016 connected numerous channels throughout the floodplain, deposited spawning gravel and formed multiple deep pools. The project is visible from the McKenzie River Trail footbridge over Deer Creek and from portions of USFS Road 2654.

The Council continued to work with EWEB and other local partners to finalize development of the Pure Waters Program. This program is a new initiative designed to reward McKenzie landowners who protect high quality land along the river and would engage landowners on a watershed scale to maintain and improve riparian habitat condition and thereby protect drinking water quality and provide benefits to fish and wildlife. Landowners may receive annual payments, technical assistance or other incentives to participate in PWP. The program also provides assistance to landowners who wish to engage in restoration projects on their land.

Council Activities

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