

the willamette model watershed partnership

10 years of innovation
and collaboration



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restoration highlights

Oregon Watershed Councils are small, community based organizations that advance on the ground habitat restoration work to support clean water and healthy habitats for people and nature. Watershed Councils are seen as local voices for rivers and streams; Councils often have youth and/or adult education programs that connect people to local lands and waters. The Willamette River Initiative (WRI) Model Watershed Program was a focused effort to enhance Council capacity that began in 2009 and extended through 2019. This report highlights progress towards targets and some of the benefits and lessons gleaned from the program as described by Council participants.

In 2008 Meyer Memorial Trust began to develop an initiative to spur investment in restoration in the mainstem Willamette River. Trustees asked if substantive restoration gains could be made in a focused geography and the Willamette Model Watershed program was born.

Relationships are a recurring theme throughout this report. Over the course of the 10-year Model Watershed Initiative, the seven participating Watershed Councils worked on the properties of over 905 landowners, helped form two new regional networks, and grew their organizations and missions to include diversity, equity and inclusion as core values. Additional accomplishments are highlighted in the pages that follow, and serve as a testament to the hard work of Councils, their boards, and WRI staff.

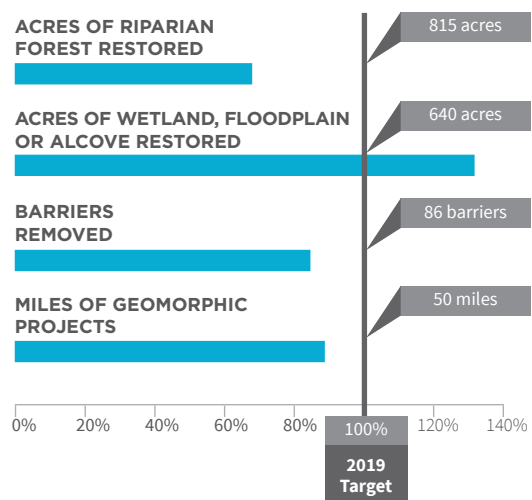
None of this would have been possible without the generous commitment of Meyer Memorial Trust, which made a bold and long term investment in small, community-based organizations in Oregon's Upper and Middle Willamette basin. The participating Watershed Councils who comprised the Willamette Model Watershed cohort include the:

- Calapooia Watershed Council (CWC)
- Long Tom Watershed Council (LTWC)
- Luckiamute Watershed Council (LWC)
- Marys River Watershed Council (MRWC)
- Middle Fork Willamette Watershed Council (MFWWC)
- North Santiam Watershed Council (NSWC)
- South Santiam Watershed Council (SSWC)

We are grateful to the past and present staff and boards of each of these groups for their ongoing commitment to relationship – with each other, their communities, and the lands and waters that give life and meaning to our work and support future generations.

Many of the targets set at the outset of this endeavor and highlighted in this report are ecological in nature but the stories behind them are of people, land, water and wildlife and the outcomes that can be generated when there is time to build trust and learn together. Aggressive targets were set and while not every one was met, tremendous progress was made.

Restoration Actions Targets 2010–2019



oak prairie and oak woodlands

Since Euro-American settlement began in the mid-1800s, there has been significant loss of Willamette Valley oak savanna, oak woodland and prairie habitats.

Consequently, many of the plant and animal species associated with these habitats have become threatened or endangered, including Bradshaw's lomatium, Willamette Valley daisy, Nelson's checker-mallow, Kincaid's lupine and Fender's blue butterfly.

Limiting factors to the recovery of oak prairie and oak woodlands include land use conversion to agriculture and/or urban development, species introductions, conifer encroachment, commercial timber practices, and the absence of fire. The large diameter oaks that provide so many habitat and wildlife benefits require a long time to grow, so even when groups can take action to restore or enhance them, it takes time to make up for decades of loss. Oak habitats were tended for millennia by Native Americans who continue to hold expertise that many Watershed Councils are learning from and emulating today.



Model Watershed partners advanced restoration on over

3,000
acres

of upland prairie and oak woodlands.

This represents

10%

of remaining Willamette Valley upland prairie and oak woodlands habitats



What is at stake:

Willamette Valley upland prairie and oak woodlands are iconic Oregon landscapes that are a center of biodiversity and represent places of tremendous cultural importance.

An estimated 1% of Willamette Valley upland prairie remains today, and oak woodlands have been reduced to 7% of their former area.



“We have about 160 years of fire suppression and woody plant growth to manage so that we can return the habitats to a structure of condition where we can reintroduce fire.”

—Katie MacKendrick, Long Tom Watershed Council

NSWC Bear Branch Oak Restoration

Foundation Funds as a Catalyst for Federal and State Resources

In the North Santiam, the Watershed Council (NSWC) is working to restore 67 acres of Oregon white oak savanna/wet prairie habitats and 57 acres of oak woodland habitat on two parcels in the Bear Branch sub-basin. MMT-funded outreach and relationship building set the Council on a course to leverage additional funding. The landowners have offered acres to the USDA Farm Services Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) for wet prairie, oak savanna and riparian restoration and the NRCS Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) for oak habitat restoration. The landowners have also enrolled with the USFWS Partners Program to assist with the wet prairie and oak savanna restoration implementation. The NSWC obtained

an OWEB Large Restoration grant along with CREP and USFWS funds to implement this large scale multi resource restoration project.

Plant Diversity and First Foods

The NSWC used revegetation funds provided by Meyer Memorial Trust to help cover site prep and bulb planting in the wet prairies surrounding the oak savanna habitat. Bulbs such as camas (Camassia quamash) typically grow in wetland soils and are important first foods of indigenous people throughout the region.

Next Steps

One important component of healthy oak and prairie habitats that is largely missing from the landscape is frequent, low intensity fires. Historically, these

habitats were stewarded by the Kalapuya people through the seasonal use of fire which favored beneficial species useful for food and fiber. Today, that culturally and ecologically important stewardship is largely absent from these habitats, which allows invasive plant species and even native conifer species to encroach – creating unhealthy forest and prairie conditions.

In addition to Long Tom Watershed Council’s ongoing work with willing private landowners and local tribal people to facilitate dialogue about reintroducing some of these important traditional techniques to the Long Tom last year, the council’s Ecologist Katie MacKendrick proposed exploring alternative techniques that might bring a few of the benefits that fire provides back to our oak and prairie project sites: the on-site creation of biochar.



wetlands and floodplains

Almost all remaining Willamette Valley wetlands have been degraded to some degree through altered water regimes, pollution, and invasive plants and animals. Bank armoring, draining, filling and paving of floodplain areas have reduced or constrained the natural floodplain, with deleterious impacts for people and wildlife.

Under climate change, rising temperatures are expected to change precipitation patterns, leading to reduced snowpack, and more precipitation falling as rain. Urban water demand could double as the basin’s urban populations grows.

Model Watershed partners advanced restoration on 640 wetland acres, an area equivalent to 485 football fields and delivering benefits estimated at over \$5 million. Wetlands provide so many services that matter to communities, it is hard to put a price tag on them. We use one conservative valuation estimate from WWF that helps lay out some of the diverse benefits that healthy wetlands bring:

WETLAND FUNCTION	MEDIAN WETLAND ECONOMIC VALUE (\$US/ACRE/YEAR, 2000; ADJUSTED FOR 2019 DOLLARS)	VALUE OF WETLANDS RESTORED BY MW PARTNERS
Flood Control	\$1,707.54	\$1,092,825.60
Recreational Fishing	\$1,376.76	\$881,126.40
Amenity/Recreation	\$1,810.35	\$1,158,624.00
Water Filtering	\$1,059.39	\$678,009.60
Biodiversity	\$788.21	\$504,454.40
Habitat Nursery	\$739.04	\$472,985.60
Recreational Hunting	\$452.96	\$289,894.40
Water Supply	\$165.39	\$105,849.60
Materials	\$165.39	\$105,849.60
Total	\$8,317.18	\$5,322,995.20



Model Watershed partners advanced restoration on

640
acres,

an area equivalent to

485
football fields

and delivering benefits totaling over

\$5M



Wetlands provide so many services that matter to communities, it is hard to put a price tag on them.



Ed LaFayette, Retired Large-Scale Farmer in the Calapooia Watershed

“After many years of land tours in his beat up Chevy farm pickup truck full of stacks of coffee cups, greasy farm tools, and windows that didn’t roll down; meetings over coffee, and private tours to other landowners’ projects, Ed finally agreed to allow us to help him with restoring the 100-acre “Rocky Pasture” - one of the few remaining Willamette Valley wet prairie remnants.”

—Sarah Dyr Dahl, Former Calapooia Watershed Council Project Manager and current Executive Director of the Middle Fork Willamette Watershed Council

Restoring a Wet Prairie in the Calapooia Watershed

A favorite wetland success story involves a wet prairie full of Bradshaw’s lomatium, managed by a multi-generational farm family outside of Brownsville. Ed LaFayette, a “retired” large-scale farmer was as friendly and welcoming as they get, but he wasn’t interested in having the Watershed Council do restoration work on his land.

After many years of land tours in his beat up Chevy farm pickup truck full of stacks of coffee cups, greasy farm tools, and windows that didn’t roll down; meetings over coffee, and private tours to other landowners’ projects, Ed finally agreed to allow the CWC to help him with restoring the 100-acre “Rocky Pasture” – one of the few remaining Willamette Valley wet prairie remnants.

Moving at the Speed of Trust

Capacity funding from MMT provided the most important resource of all: time. The relationship with Ed and his family took years to build.

The Many Benefits of Relationship Building

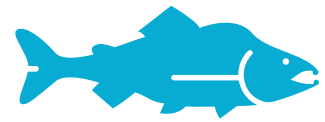
Ed’s family had grazed the Rocky Pasture for decades, but woody plants and invasive weeds were threatening native plant communities including Bradshaw’s lomatium (an endangered prairie plant) and Camas. The Calapooia Watershed Council worked with Ed and his grandson, Willie Tenbusch, to remove feral pear trees and other encroaching woody vegetation and treat invasive plants. About a half a dozen western meadowlarks became regulars of the Rocky Pasture after our restoration work was completed.



By Kevin Cole from Pacific Coast, USA (en>User:Kevincole) – Western Meadowlark (Sturnella neglecta) The State bird for Kansas, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, Oregon and Wyoming., CC BY 2.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=3892445>”

fish passage

One reason fish populations struggle is that human-made barriers, such as dams and culverts, restrict movement of fish up and down streams. Some structures may be barriers only to juvenile fish. Examples of barriers include hanging or perched culverts, dams and channelized streams with high flows. Fish passage restoration is also key to helping native fish adapt to climate change and extreme weather, which can exacerbate high or low flows that contribute to fish access issues.



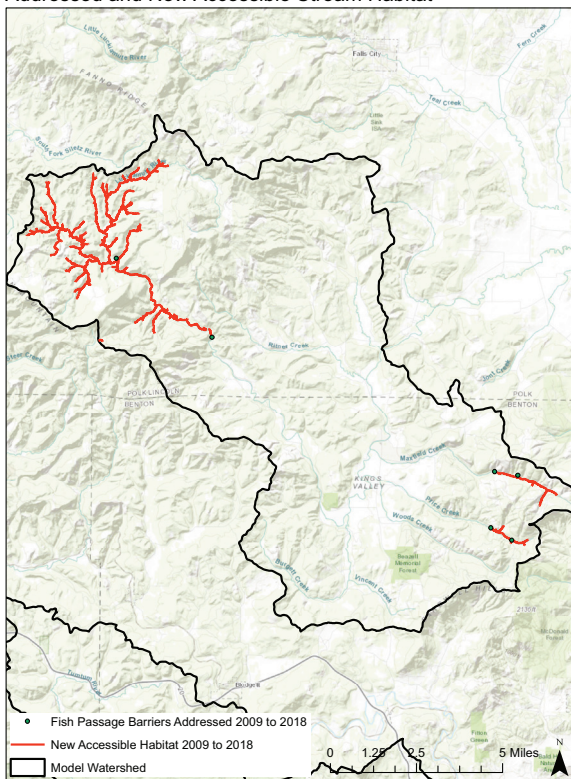
86
barriers removed

Barriers Addressed 2009–2018

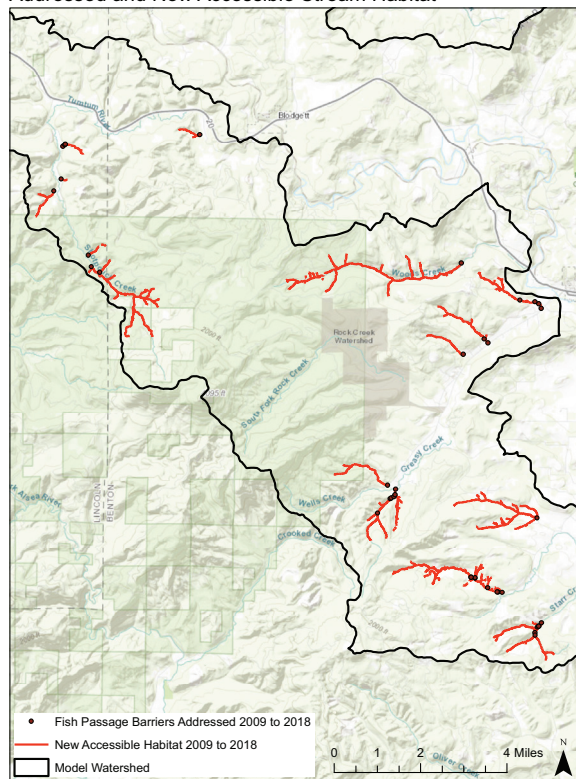
WATERSHED	BARRIERS REMOVED	MILES OF HABITAT MADE ACCESSIBLE
Calapooya	2	46
Long Tom	35	data not available
Luckiamute	6	47
Marys River	38	47
Middle Fork	2	data not available
South Santiam	3	data not available
Total	86	

140+
stream miles made accessible to fish

Luckiamute Model Watershed Fish Passage Barriers Addressed and New Accessible Stream Habitat



Marys River Model Watershed Fish Passage Barriers Addressed and New Accessible Stream Habitat





“Replacing a small 12” diameter concrete culvert with a large 150” diameter open squash pipe that allows native fish species such as spring Chinook, winter steelhead, Oregon chub, cutthroat trout, Pacific lamprey and other native resident fish access to a mile of prime off channel habitat at Bird Haven Tree Farm.”

—Rebecca McCoun, North Santiam Watershed Council

How Foundation Funding Made a Difference to Long Tom and Luckiamute Efforts

What were you able to accomplish?

During the model watershed program the Long Tom Watershed Council removed all the priority constructed barriers along four major coast range tributaries to open them up for fish passage. These streams provide important spawning and cool-water habitat for native fish. During the program, the LTWC worked with many special landowners and partners from a multitude of stakeholder groups – forestry, agriculture, County government, rural residential, and others. One of the highlights was a partnership project on a tributary to the South Fork of Ferguson Creek where we worked with Hull-Oakes Lumber, Giustina Land and Timber, and a neighboring farmer to remove four fish passage barriers. Staff from the two timber companies worked together to replace two culverts, one on each of their properties, which involved significant challenges due to the large culverts and deep road fills. Following completion of the work LTWC successfully nominated the two companies for the Oregon Department of Forestry Operator of The Year award. Representatives from the companies and LTWC were recognized at an ODF board meeting, Association of Oregon Loggers Forest Practices Seminar, and the Oregon Logging Conference.

How did MMT funding help you advance this work?

MMT funding helped advance this project in several ways. First, by supporting fish passage barrier surveys and recommendations to resolve them (2013). Second, by supporting the landowner outreach time to engage in the discussions and trust-building to gain support of the industrial timber landowners to agree to work on the project. And third, by supporting project development and grant writing time to fund the bridge design (2017) and ultimately the project grant. As Clinton Begley, Executive Director of the LTWC states: “If we can’t play the long-game, we can’t get complex projects with multiple landowners done.”

What challenges did you face?

MMT was a vital partner in the Long Tom’s fish passage restoration efforts from day one of the model watershed program. In the first year of the program MMT funds helped significantly expand the scope of fish passage inventory work. The LTWC was able to survey nearly 300 road-stream crossings throughout the Long Tom Watershed to assess their fish passage status. Dozens of new landowners ended up being project partners in later years of the program. The MMT funding was so important for allowing the Long Tom to have the capacity to successfully

start and maintain relationships with landowners that sometimes take years to develop.

What is next?

- In the Luckiamute, monitoring, outreach, revegetation and plant stewardship are on the docket for us. We are working to replace the upper culvert on the South Fork Pedee Creek Enhancement Project in the coming two years – this will mark removal of the final barrier on this river – a huge success story.
- On the Long Tom, we are currently trying to obtain funding to remove the final three passage barriers on Bear Creek, another important coast range tributary. We are also working with the US Army Corps of Engineers and City of Monroe to provide fish passage at the Monroe Drop Structure, a low-head dam at RM 7 on the mainstem Long Tom River. That dam blocks passage for juvenile spring Chinook salmon that would otherwise use the Long Tom for rearing habitat, as well as Pacific Lamprey. Once that barrier is removed there are two other USACE low-head dams between Monroe and Fern Ridge Dam on the Long Tom where we will try to improve passage for fish.

riparian planting

What makes riparian work unique is the long term relationships developed with project partners and the land. This includes landowners, land managers, and contractors, among others. Councils may spend a few years getting to know landowners and then 5-7 years working with them through the plant establishment phase.

MMT funds helped establish the Collaborative Grow program, which since 2011, has engaged numerous partners including nurseries, contractors, Watershed Councils, Land Trusts, and other nonprofits, agencies and researchers to streamline plant procurement and reduce administrative burdens across groups.

Advancing Plantings Through Relationships – An Example from the South Santiam Watershed Council

“Some of my favorite highlights were working with Dick Bates and family on McDowell Creek. Dick, his son Marty, and his grandson Reed were hardworking, blue collar farmers who thought that mud in Oregon and cows in the creek was just the way it is. Dick wanted to put in a fence because he was losing land to erosion and bare streambanks.

We talked him into enrolling in the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP), which meant not just putting a fence right next to the creek, but setting the fence back from the creek and planting a riparian forest. Coupled with off-channel watering and gutters on the barn – mud was no longer the norm and now Dick could walk the riparian forest “in peace” and not be hounded by the horses. Dick reluctantly allowed us to plant willows, which brought the beaver back. As they built their dams, we watched the shallow bedrock stream transform. With all these improvements, we tried to get Dick to market his cows as “watershed friendly” beef, which he just smirked at.” —Sarah Dyrdaahl, Executive Director, Middle Fork Watershed Council and former Project Manager for the SSWC



Model Watershed partners advanced restoration on

52
miles
and

815
acres
of riparian planting.

4M
native trees and
shrubs planted

45
species

6
local nurseries

20+
partner
organizations





Photo credit: Ben Hemmings

“In 2020 we celebrate the planting of 1 million native trees and shrubs in the Luckiamute and Ash Creek watersheds! In addition to our partners, planting crews, landowners and community supporters, the Willamette River Initiative’s Model Watershed funding played a critical role in this milestone.”

—Kristen Larson, Luckiamute Watershed Council

How Foundation Funds Catalyzed Riparian Planting – Reflections From The Luckiamute And Marys River Watershed Councils

How did MMT funding help you advance this work?

Reveg work requires a lot of outreach and project planning. MMT funding supported Council capacity to prioritize parcels and landowners, outreach and recruit landowners to participate, define projects, and secure implementation funding. So much work must be done before Councils can secure project funding; MMT funding was instrumental in enabling capacity to engage in important conversations, build landowner relationships, and develop meaningful projects.

The model watershed program also introduced new techniques for designing riparian restoration projects (high density planting). These new techniques helped make projects more effective and also have more impact in a shorter timeframe.

What challenges did you face?

Some landowners were reluctant to work with Councils at first, for various reasons. MMT funding provided the support needed to sustain the conversations, continue to address concerns and build trust, so that, in many cases, groups could ultimately overcome those barriers and get projects implemented.

Despite MMT’s awesome contributions towards riparian restoration efforts, Councils were still limited by a lack of resources for these projects. CREP had limitations in many counties and Councils were pushing up against the limits of grant funds.

The Marys River Watershed Council plants large-stock trees and shrubs, which helps immensely in reducing the required plant establishment and treatment with herbicides for smaller stock. However, we still need to use mechanical means to help plants get underway, and invasive species like Himalayan blackberry and Japanese Knotweed will continue to be a problem long after plant establishment funds from grantors are expended.

What did you learn?

MRWC: We learned about more cost-effective approaches to successfully establishing riparian projects (small bareroot plants, high density, etc.) but also learned that a one-size fits all approach doesn’t work due to site differences and landowner management strategies (i.e. organic properties). We were able to successfully get away from herbicide-intensive plant establishment strategies on a couple properties.”

LWC: “We learned that rushing to get plants in the ground to show restoration progress can lead to serious challenges to making a project successful. We planted in knotweed control areas at least 1–2 years too soon. Also – the push to “spread the funding to get more work on the ground” I think ended up compromising our organizations in future years with limited funds and a back log of projects without forethought on capacity to manage the building project portfolio. We are reckoning with this now.”

What is next?

- Continue to get plants established with our last model watershed funds.
- Develop strategies to assist landowners with the long-term stewardship of projects after implementation funds are gone.
- Figure out ways to get new riparian projects funded despite a lack of ESA-listed fish in some watersheds and CREP’s challenges.
- To overcome barriers to CREP, collaboratives could seek to fund new positions in agencies to advance these funding opportunities, similar to the Tualatin Watershed.

acres of land actively maintained

Maintenance is key to project success and supports plant survival. Maintenance also helps sustain positive relationships with landowners and their neighbors. The long term work of managing weeds, taking care of plantings and following up on other investments sends a big message to landowners that Councils are serious, capable and trustworthy partners. Maintenance involves a range of activities including manual and machine assisted cutting, herbicide application, and other activities to steward sites.

The crews who maintain sites are often considered local heroes to Councils and landowners alike. Their knowledge, commitment and work are critical to project outcomes and is foundational to the success of the Model Watershed Program. Key crew partners include but are not limited to: R. Franco Restoration, D Franco Contracting Inc, Habitat Contracting LLC, and Kuznetsov Thinning Company.



Model Watershed partners advanced restoration on

3,250
acres



“We have been extremely lucky to have R. Franco Restoration crews do our plant establishment activities. They have been with the projects from the beginning and take great pride in helping to get the trees free to grow.”

—Sarah Dyrdaahl, Middle Fork Watershed Council

Reflections on the Challenges of Scaling Work Too Quickly

What challenges did you face?

KRISTEN LARSON, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, LUCKIAMUTE WATERSHED COUNCIL:

“When we were just getting the high density planting strategy going we underbid ourselves on grant applications with the hope that we would be more successful with the applications. Once we realized what it takes to successfully maintain the plantings we began asking for realistic amounts to maintain them.”

HOLLY PURPURA, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, MARYS RIVER WATERSHED COUNCIL:

“The push to spread the funding as thin as possible to fund more work on the ground has created numerous difficulties for the Council that have lingered long after this push shifted. The Council is still working to catch up with the backlog of projects.”

What did you learn?

We learned about the importance of having robust plant establishment funding for the long-term success of

riparian planting projects. Prior to the Model Watershed program we used a model of volunteer planting and landowner maintenance, which was far less successful in getting planting projects established.

What is next?

Now, we are looking to wrap up plant establishment on the last cohort of our model WS project sites, and then find funding for new riparian planting sites in the Model Watersheds.

landowner engagement

Many riparian areas are held in private ownership, and engaging landowners and gaining their trust, support and partnership is a key step in advancing restoration.

Reflections from the Marys River Watershed Council

Our landowners are key to all of our work, and having landowner advocates from past projects helps immensely when working to recruit new landowners.

Tisa Wecht, a landowner off of Shotpouch Creek, described the complex relationship-building that is involved with getting a project off the ground, as well as what this work can mean and the value that having landowner advocates can have for future projects, “When I first began working with the [Marys River Watershed] Council, I was hesitant about moving forward, but working with Karen and Kathleen over the years, I decided to go ahead with the proposed restoration work. We have been thrilled with the final project. When the kids are over every summer, as we are sitting by the creek, I talk through the impacts of this work, not only on our property, but also in the whole system. When we had Jeremy out to get drone footage of the project [funded thanks to Meyer Memorial Trust], he perfectly said it, ‘Tisa, what you have done up here is making a difference in the water that flows under the bridges of Portland and out to the Pacific.’”

Despite her initial hesitance, Tisa is now one of the Marys River Watershed Council’s strongest advocates, assisting with advocacy as the Council worked to recruit 18 other landowners in the Shotpouch Creek subwatershed for a basinwide multi-faceted ecological uplift and holding tours of the restoration work on her watershed.

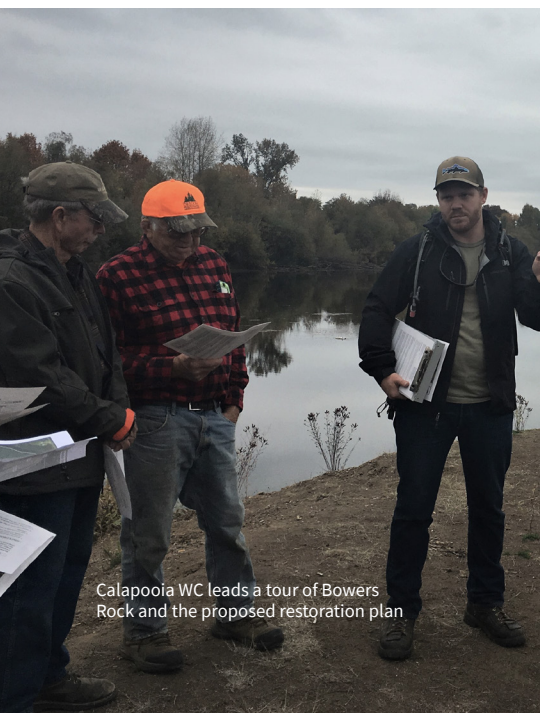
Limited funding for restoration and landowner outreach is an ongoing challenge. At times, landowners can be hesitant to move forward with restoration, and it can sometimes take years and seeing success stories of neighbors to move forward with restoration. Marys River Watershed Council is now working to move forward with a second Phase of restoration in Shotpouch Creek, as additional landowners are now interested in carrying out the restoration elements proposed on their properties after seeing the success of restoration over the first phase on their 19 neighboring landowners. In this case, it has taken 9 years for these landowners to come around. Long-term capacity support is essential to continuing to foster these relationships.



905

landowners engaged
2009-2018*

* Includes landowners who have granted permission to access their property and who have active projects



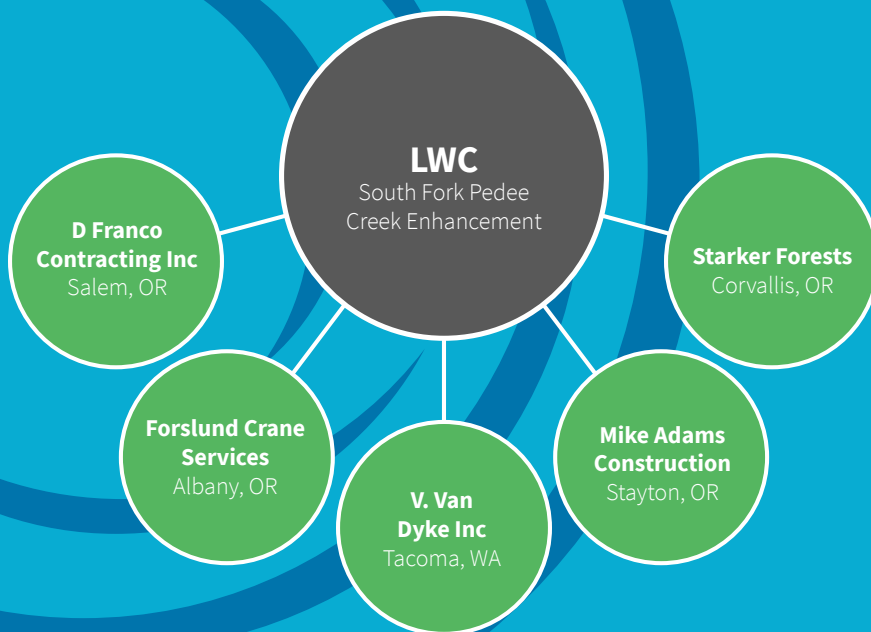
Calapooia WC leads a tour of Bowers Rock and the proposed restoration plan

“In 2016, When I purchased this property, I had a vision to see all 315 acres go into some sort of restoration. More importantly, I wish to involve my grandkids in the restoration activities on my property so I can instill the values of riparian and wetland prairie habitat... The Calapooia Watershed Council is helping me achieve my goals.”

—Scott Erion, Private Landowner and Friend of The Calapooia WC

supporting local business and economies

Clean water, clean air, fertile soils and healthy forests are the foundation of our economy. here in Oregon. Ecological restoration and enhancement work creates local jobs and stimulates economic activity. An estimated \$0.80 of every \$1.00 stays within the County where it was spent, and \$0.90 of every \$1.00 spent stays within Oregon. As a state with a strong natural resource based economy, watershed stewardship work builds upon local expertise from farmers and foresters, and involves many industries, from nurseries to planting crews, contractors and engineers. Restoration projects engage so many local businesses, as illustrated at the Luckiamute Watershed Council's South Fork Pedee Creek Enhancement Project. Family businesses grow stronger, as do the natural systems we are all part of and dependent upon.



“The day we set the beams for the bridge we had four family owned businesses working on the project. Plus, one additional company too if you count the crew spraying the blackberries for LWC!”

—Jennifer Beathe,
Starker Forests

education and outreach

Between 2017–2019, Willamette Model Watershed Groups Reached:



2,290

elementary school youth

through schoolroom and field based classes and stewardship activities

“I just like being out here amongst the diverse plants and animals; it is wonderful to listen to the birds.”

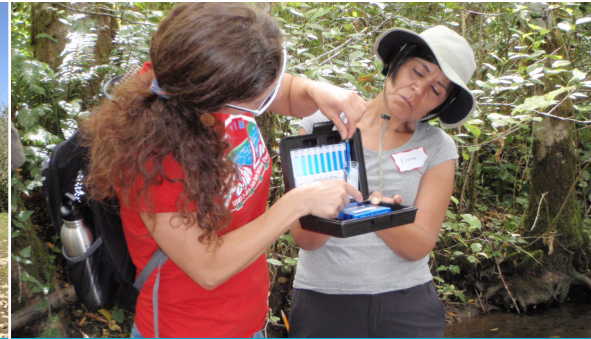


485

middle & high school students

through outdoor school, field trips, youth groups and internships

“I understand how insignificant each of us are singly but as a group we can make a huge impact.”



1,982

adults

through lectures, events and excursions

“I have an increased comfort with using macro tools, guides & curriculum book. Thank you! This has been a fantastic resource, collaboration and fun learning experience!”

Education and outreach is central to the mission of many Watershed Councils, and yet has grown increasingly difficult to fund.

Reflections from Suzanne Teller, Outreach Coordinator, Luckiamute Watershed Council

How has education capacity enhanced?

Our education and outreach efforts spread the word that individual efforts to improve the health of their watershed matter. Over the past 10 years, MMT funding has helped the LWC get the message out to our local community members that their involvement in planting trees, gaining familiarity with watershed processes, learning about restoration techniques, and showing up as part of a watershed community can make a difference in the health of our rivers and lands. Terry Murphy (LWC volunteer) said “Thank you for the terrific learning experience. I left the tour with such a better appreciation of what “the land” truly means. Trooping along those fields as we did, up close

and personal with those plants and the soil, visioning as you do what these areas will look like 10 and 100 years from now. That was schooling. I hope to join you again on another great tour like this.”

What has been challenging?

The biggest challenges have been 1) to build, organize and manage a sustainable volunteer program, which would require resources to devote to leadership training, recruiting, and retention; we’re not there yet and hope the Mid-Valley River Connections (a newly formed middle Willamette Valley watershed council network) will eventually help with this shared need; and 2) Sustainable funding for this type of work when most funders, including

foundations, want “measurable impacts” to the watershed but we are not equipped to track impacts from outreach and education (e.g. behavior changes as a result or other metrics beyond participation)

What is next?

Reaching new audiences with our education and outreach efforts is a key focus for the LWC. We are working on doing a better job reaching traditionally under-served and under-represented communities in our watershed in several ways, including organizing more family-friendly events, developing Spanish language materials, and co-planning events with partners in our local Latino community.

collaboration

Reflections from Suzanne Teller, Outreach Coordinator, Luckiamute Watershed Council and Holly Dye Purpura, Marys River Watershed Council

What are you learning and what is next?

SUZANNE: We are learning how to think of change as a lengthy process instead of a straightforward series of steps. In a culture that embraces quantifiable outcomes and checkboxes, it is often difficult to shift my mindset from the 'old way' of doing things to a new perspective. As an organization, we have work to do to move away from the goals that may give the appearance of diversity, to the harder goals of providing a more welcoming environment, seeking out uncomfortable conversations, and addressing our own complicity in maintaining the status quo.

HOLLY: We have learned so much in the last 10 years, have stable, experienced, talented and committed staff and team members – capacity funding helps to

harness and leverage that knowledge and experience and to build on our momentum. It will also help us continue to build new landowner relationships, and support the critical time of developing new projects and securing implementation funding to get more restoration work on the ground.”

How does collaboration pencil out? What benefits does it bring?

SUZANNE: For now – I think it’s building the trust and relationships so that when things arise – e.g. a need for Project Management support – we have a cohort to go to and problem solve. Peer support is very valuable. I think once things gel for us and we get our legs under us on 1–2 discrete initiatives, it will reap significant benefits from the up front time investment to build the foundation.

HOLLY: Over the past ten years, we learned that together, we are stronger, and the peer-to-peer network formed over the course of the Model Watershed Program has been invaluable. Working with our peers, this network helped us learn from each other, communicate shared experiences and problems, and help us in building the work of each other up and think about restoration on a larger scale.



Members of the Upper Willamette Stewardship Network



watersheds
program

watersheds@b-e-f.org

