

2007 Annual Report

In 2007, the Bear Creek Watershed Council (BCWC or the Council) accomplished major parts of the 2005-2007 Work Plan and are in the process of developing projects and grant proposals for the 2007-2009 Work Plan. Highlights from 2007 include a dam removal and creek restoration project on Lazy Creek to open up critical fish refugia. The Council has been and will continue to partner with numerous organizations to bring the values of the Bear Creek watershed to hundreds of participants in several different events and programs. These and other outreach projects helped us reach a wider audience and were reported in English and Spanish newspapers, as well as by local television and radio stations. The Council has at long last obtained 501(c) 3 non-profit status. Overall we achieved our mission: *to foster collaborative efforts that protect, enhance, and restore the Bear Creek Watershed and the Rogue Basin.*

Restoration: Lazy Creek Dam Removal & Planting

August/Sept. 2007

BCWC removed a defunct dam near the mouth of Lazy Creek in Medford. The Oregon Dept. of Fish and Wildlife had identified Lazy Creek as productive fish habitat, particularly for providing a refuge during winter storm flows in Bear Creek. BCWC met with stakeholders, identified options, secured funding, and helped coordinate site restoration after removal. Partners in the project included: Medford Parks; ODFW; Dennis Gray - Cultural Resources Inventory; Middle Rogue Steelheaders; Upper Rogue Sportsmen & Guides Assoc.; Rogue Flyfishers; USFS; and the Rogue Valley Manor.



Dam structure removed from Lazy Creek bed.

An Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB) Riparian Restoration Planting Technical Assistance Grant was completed in February 2007 which evaluated and prioritized several riparian restoration sites along the Bear Creek corridor including the mainstem and tributaries. Following this evaluation, a grant request was submitted to OWEB to do riparian restoration planting at several of the sites.

Outreach & Education

Several local events and activities reached hundreds of participants, and new content and functionality was added to council's website www.BearCreek-Watershed.org.

Latino Kids and Bugs, April 2007

Partnering with OSU Extension, 4-H, Bear Creek Watershed Education Partners and several other groups, the council contributed in planning and hosting an activity filled day at Bear Creek Park targeted to Hispanic youth.

Riparian Outdoor School, April/May 2007

Taking place at Willow Wind Learning Center in Ashland, numerous regional schools took an all day field trip to learn from local experts from Klamath Bird Observatory, Audubon, Oregon Trout, Jefferson Nature Center, and the Bear Creek Watershed Council among others.

Latino 4H Day Camp, July 2007

Partnering with 4-H and OSU Extension, the Council participated in bringing kids to their local watershed for a day of fish oriented activities at Tou Velle Park on the Rogue River and Jackson Co. Expo for fishing.

Salmon Festival, October 2007

The Annual Salmon Festival is now an established community celebration bringing hundreds of people to North Mountain Park in Ashland to celebrate the return of adult salmon from the ocean. The BCWC is one of many presenters and partners at this fun event.

Bear Creek Teachers Watershed Tour October 2007

The Council provided support to an event sponsored by the Bear Creek Watershed Education Partners, and Oregon Trout's Healthy Waters Institute to bring local educators on a show and tell tour of the Bear Creek watershed to assist them in bringing watershed education into their classrooms.



Fishing at the Jackson Co. Expo pond – partnering to bring kids outdoors.

The Council hosted events bringing representatives from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to the region in March and August 2007. NOAA reports Bear Creek watershed has high intrinsic potential for threatened Coho salmon. Bringing NOAA to our watershed highlights opportunities for developing partnerships targeting watershed health and salmon recovery.

Assessments

The Ashland Watershed Assessment is nearing completion. The setting is unique and scenic with the city built on a terrace 5,000 feet below heavily eroded mountains. A dozen creeks, some supporting salmon, periodically flood across the urbanized terrace. The collected data and information gathered from seven neighborhood meetings, Mayor and City Commissions, local experts, and residents will be crafted into a comprehensive Action Plan targeting several issues affecting watershed health.

Monitoring

The Council is coordinating efforts to identify possibilities to restore stream flow in the Bear Creek watershed; Neil Creek, an important regional restoration priority is the current focus. Monitoring seasonal flow in Neil Creek began cooperatively in 2007 with Oregon Water Trust to determine natural flow and flow above and below irrigation diversions. Several opportunities to restore flow have been identified and are being explored with irrigators. Potential fish passage barriers have been mapped and are being studied at several locations. On Schoolhouse Creek staff gauges were installed.

The council is assisting in a regional data collection and compilation project – Rogue MAP – that will establish a single web based clearing house for monitoring data collected by many organizations across the entire Rogue Basin.

Post-project site monitoring was accomplished at Grant Road on Jackson Creek, Larson Creek, Baby Bear Creek, and Lazy Creek.

Fish Passage

The Delsman Griswold Ditch irrigation diversion and fish passage improvement project along with riparian planting was completed using an OWEB Restoration grant in November 2006. The improvements and installation of a new diversion structure along with the creation of jump pools will assist fish passage in all life stages at all times of year as they move up and down Ashland Creek near its mouth.

Council Capacity Building

Riparian canopy study, Fish passage reprioritization, partnership building

During 2007 the Council extended and improved partner relationships with organizations and individuals throughout the watershed and Southwest Oregon, an emphasis it expects to continue. These contacts are especially important in this multi-jurisdictional setting. Currently about 70 partners work with the Council.

After a lengthy process, the Council achieved 501(c) 3 Federal Non-Profit Status in September 2007. This will allow the council to access broader partner support, increase financial resilience, and receive tax deductible donations. The Council capability for documenting and presenting information visually was improved by investment in GPS and GIS equipment, software and training, and portable flow monitoring equipment.

After serving the Council for over two years, bringing systematic improvements to council processes and performing a critical role in several projects and events, Coordinator Beth Franklin completed the 2005-2007 work plan and OWEB Council Support Grant and has moved on to another position in the community. Frances Oyung stepped into Beth's hard to fill shoes this fall, contracting as Council Coordinator. The 2007-2009 OWEB Council Support grant has been awarded allowing the Council to begin work on its latest work plan.

The Council has markedly increased its participation in projects and events with partners such as: fishing groups like the Middle Rogue Steelheaders, and Rogue Fly Fishers, regional non-profits like the Oregon Water Trust which works to keep water instream, and state and local agencies – Oregon Dept. of Environmental Quality, and city governments working on Phase 2 Stormwater Management Plans and Total Maximum Daily Load requirements.

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