

2008 Annual Report

In 2008, the Bear Creek Watershed Council (BCWC or the Council) accomplished major parts of our 2007-2009 work plan and developed future projects and grant proposals for our 2009-2011 work plan. Highlights from 2008 include several riparian restorations and a continuing effort of to strengthen the Council organizationally. This year, BCWC has begun to take advantage of its 501(c) 3 non-profit status which was obtained last year, build new partnerships and continue active outreach. Overall we achieved our mission: *to foster collaborative efforts that protect, enhance, and restore the Bear Creek Watershed and the Rogue Basin.*

Restoration:

After receiving a grant from the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board to perform riparian restoration on four sites along Bear Creek, the Council contracted with the Rogue Valley Council of Governments to finalize plans and begin riparian restoration. A site at Blue Heron Park in Phoenix was one of the first locations where blackberry removal and replanting with native plants began.

In 1999, Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt took ceremonial first blows to remove the former Jackson Street Dam, then the top priority fish barrier on Bear Creek. This Governor’s Watershed Enhancement Board project returned chinook salmon and steelhead to downtown Medford after seventy years and opened nearly a hundred miles of spawning habitat. In the past ten years, blackberries and other invasive species had overgrown two overlooks so that viewing migrating salmon was obscured. Long time council member John Ward worked with the City Arborist and Medford Parks, local contractor Progressive Restoration, and Rogue Flyfishers to cut down the blackberries, limb-up and chip branches and restore salmon sightings as they move through the jump pools. Stop along the Bear Creek Greenway near Jackson Street in Medford to see the results.



Before maintenance and vegetation removal

After maintenance and vegetation removal



Outreach & Education

Latino Kids and Bugs, April 2008 - *Brings Kids and Creeks Together*

Planning is already underway for the fifth year of this welcoming and fun day-long watershed experience for local youth, now an established community event. Partnering with OSU Extension 4-H, Bear Creek Watershed Education Partners and several other groups, the Council looks forward to continuing this event which reaches out to underserved populations in exciting ways.

Riparian Outdoor School, April/May 2008

This year, the watershed education field school took place at the new Jefferson Nature Center in Medford's US Cellular Community Park. Students from many regional schools took advantage of a full day of experiential learning with local experts from the Bear Creek Watershed Education Partners, Klamath Bird Observatory, Rogue Valley Audubon, Jefferson Nature Center, and the Bear Creek Watershed Council among others.

Salmon On Your Plate, October 2008

Despite showery weather, the Annual Salmon Festival still drew over 600 people to North Mountain Park in Ashland to celebrate the return of adult salmon from the ocean. The Council's very popular "Salmon on Your Plate" activity with over 80 individuals making clay salmon joined many organizations and partners at this fun event.

"Salmon Sightings" on www.bearcreek-watershed.org

The Council's website hosts a more user-friendly "Salmon Sightings" with current viewing and public postings. Check the site to see BCWC monthly agendas as well as meeting minutes, the Ashland Watershed Assessment & Action Plan, volunteer opportunities and other materials.

In November 2008, Council Chair Richard Best was selected for a Spirit of the Oregon Plan Award by the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board recognizing his hard work and accomplishments in working to remove fish passage barriers and restore riparian areas in the Bear Creek Watershed.

Congratulations Richard!



2008 Salmon Festival participant making her "Salmon on a plate", North Mountain Park, Ashland



Assessments & Action Plans

The Ashland Watershed Assessment and Action Plan, completed late in 2007, opened new project opportunities. Neighborhood on-the-ground consultations with Paradise Cr., Neil Cr., and Wrights Cr. landowners led to action. A Wrights Creek neighborhood meeting resulted in BCWC bringing funding and diverse partners together for riparian restoration. Recently, the Council applied for funding a fish barrier removal near the mouth of Wrights Creek where the rancher has seen 20-inch steelhead. The Council has also consulted with the City of Ashland about riparian and wetland ordinances, and participated at Planning Commission meetings.



Wrights Creek -
Proposed site for fish
passage barrier
removal

Fish Passage

Currently BCWC, assisted by the Rogue Basin Fish Access Team, is working to resolve critical fish passage barriers at two sites. The Council has joined with the Bureau of Reclamation and OR Council of the Federation of Fly Fishers to fund surveys required for easements at BOR's Talent Irrigation District diversion dam on Ashland Creek. This dam will be replaced by a fish friendly structure to allow coho and steelhead to migrate up- and down-stream.

The Jackson Creek Watershed Assessment identified a critical fish passage barrier on Jackson Creek at Hanley Road. The Council is partnered with Bureau of Reclamation to design a promising solution. Other barriers in the watershed will require further steps to resolve.

Bear Creek Watershed Council Executive Committee 2008

Richard Best
(*Council Chair, Restoration*)
Engineering Department
City of Ashland
Ashland, OR

Laura Hodnett (*Treasurer*)
Medford Water Commission
Medford, OR

Vicki Simpson (*Secretary*)
Ashland, OR

Jim Hill (*Past Chair*)
City of Medford
Water Reclamation Department
Medford, OR

John Ward (*Outreach*)
Ashland, OR

Craig Harper (*Grant Review*)
Rogue Valley Council of Governments
Central Point, OR

Council Capacity Building

The Council is working to diversify its funding sources. After receiving IRS 501 (c) 3 Tax Exempt Status in 2007, the Council is now seeking funding from foundations whose eligibility is restricted to these tax exempt organizations.

Council members and Coordinator Frances Oyung have attended several organizational training opportunities and are actively working to use the techniques and skills learned to strengthen the Council.

The Bear Creek Watershed Council gratefully thanks its many partners for their contributions, support, and volunteers for joining us to make a difference.

Financial support

HDR Engineering, Inc.
Medford Water Commission
Middle Rogue Steelheaders
Anita & William Nevison
Northwest Nature Shop
Oregon Council of the Federation of Fly Fishers
Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board
Rogue Flyfishers

In-kind support & assistance

Bear Creek Greenway Joint Powers Committee
Bear Creek Watershed Education Partners
City of Ashland
City of Medford
Friends of the Greensprings
Jackson County, Roads & Planning Departments
Jackson County Watermaster
Jackson County Educational Service District
Jackson County Soil & Water Conservation District
Jefferson Nature Center
Klamath Bird Observatory
Lomakatsi Restoration
Middle Rogue Steelheaders
Network of Oregon Watershed Councils
Oregon Council of the Federation of Fly Fishers
Oregon Dept. of Environmental Quality
Oregon Dept. of Fish & Wildlife
Oregon Water Resources Department
Oregon Water Trust
OSU Extension
Rogue Basin Coordinating Council
Rogue Basin Fish Access Technical Team
Rogue Flyfishers
Rogue Valley Audubon Society
Rogue Valley Council of Governments
Rogue Valley Sewer Services
Rogue Valley Transportation District
Southern Oregon University, Ceramics Department
Talent Irrigation District
US Bureau of Reclamation
Water Watch
WISE Project

And our many individual volunteers and council members and their employers.

Looking ahead to 2009:

Organizational development will continue to be a priority to make the Council sustainable for the long term. Our self evaluation process this summer identified strategic and succession planning as priorities as well as important policy development and continued Treasurer efforts to strengthen our fiscal systems with multiple oversight and transparency. Expanded outreach is planned to further build membership and bring diverse individuals into active participation to expand and develop a broad-based Council.

In the coming year the Council will be involved in supporting the Bear Creek Total Maximum Daily Load implementation and reduction of stormwater impacts. Two large riparian planting projects are being developed on Bear Creek in Medford and at the confluence of Ashland and Bear Creeks in Ashland. Fish passage barrier resolution will remain important.

Climate change has fast become an important reason to re-focus on strong and resilient built and natural systems. Less snow and increased rain have serious impacts within Bear Creek watershed. Collaborative efforts to cope with rapid urban and rural development amid changes brought on by global warming will test the relationships Council has with partners.

With the support of Council members and the community, BCWC can continue to enhance, restore, and protect our natural systems in the Bear Creek watershed and the Rogue Basin in the years ahead. We look forward to continued collaboration and joining in partnership with agencies, organizations, and individuals to reach our shared goals.

Become involved:

- Attend a council meeting.
- Subscribe to our list serve and see what the Bear Creek Watershed Council is up to at **www.bearcreek-watershed.org**.
- Join the Restoration or Outreach Subcommittees.
- Volunteer with the Council to serve or take action.
- Make a financial contribution to support our work.

How to reach us:

Phone: 541-840-1810

Email: coordinator@bearcreek-watershed.org

Web: www.bearcreek-watershed.org

Project	Beginning Balance 11/1/2007	Income	Expenses	Ending Balance 10/31/2008
GENERAL FUND				
Unrestricted Funds	18,715.70	2,175.14	1,152.10	19,738.74
Kids N Bugs	0.00	200.00	200.00	0.00
Latino Youth Leadership	0.00	1,000.00	0.00	1,000.00
Ashland Creek Survey	0.00	1,000.00	840.00	160.00
TOTAL General Fund	18,715.70	4,375.14	2,192.10	20,898.74
GRANTS				
Ashland WS Assessment-204-281	4,205.43	9,099.75	12,305.18	1,000.00
Larson Cr Restoration 204-369	-825.00	23,385.93	9,698.43	12,862.50
Larson Creek Rip Planting 207-296	0.00	0.00	1.14	-1.14
Council Support 208-009	3,215.71	28,834.27	29,590.23	2,459.75
BC Rip Restoration 208-2012	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
TOTAL FUNDS	25,311.84	65,695.09	53,787.08	37,219.85
BANK BALANCE	25,311.84			37,219.85