



## Street Trees Improve Water Quality

Elizabeth Specht, AmeriCorps Member with City of Portland: Urban Forestry

The city landscapes of the Johnson Creek Watershed have a direct effect on the water quality of Johnson Creek. The amount of paved or impervious surfaces throughout the watershed dramatically increases run-off from frequent winter rains. Street trees manage excessive run-off and stream water quality. These uniquely located trees work to reduce run-off by intercepting rainfall before it reaches hard surfaces. Street trees benefit not only the adjacent properties but extend to the entire watershed. These trees are an important feature in our urban watershed that improve water quality, air quality and reduce utility usage.

In general, trees help combat urban watershed issues like stormwater overflow and pollution loads. Street trees manage these issues through a process called evapotranspiration, where the tree exhales or transpires water into the air.

*(Continued on page 2)*

## Watershed Wide Event, Episode XVII: The Creek Awakens

March 7, 2015 will mark our 17th annual Watershed Wide Event! This year volunteers will be planting trees, removing invasive plants, and mulching at ten different sites throughout the watershed, with locations in Milwaukie, Portland, Gresham and Boring. We bring the tools; you bring the Force!

“The Council enjoys planning this event every year and we work hard to ensure that community members have a blast learning about Johnson Creek while also giving back. It’s a great event for the whole family – with a free lunch to boot,” says enthusiastic Volunteer and Outreach Coordinator Amy Lodholz.

The event was created by the Council’s founders in 1998 and the first Watershed Wide event had just three locations. Each year the event continues to grow thanks to community concern and love for Johnson Creek. This year’s locations are:

**JCWC Office** — Come help remove invasive blackberries and install habitat features for birds and bees along the banks of the creek right outside the Council Headquarters at 1900 SE Milport Road in Milwaukie

**Westmoreland Park** — Join the Crystal Springs Partnership and the City of Portland’s Bureau of Environmental Services to help weed and mulch plantings at a newly-restored wetland along the Crystal Springs tributary in Sellwood

*(Continued on page 2)*



Help JCWC count street trees this summer.

A Seven Year Journey Comes To A Close

## A Fond Farewell And Thanks

Matt Clark, Former Executive Director

This is my last letter as Executive Director of the Johnson Creek Watershed Council. In January, I set off on a new adventure in Ecuador with my family. My time at JCWC has been wonderful.

Highlights of my seven years include:

- Watching coho salmon return in greater numbers with each passing year.
- Discovering native freshwater mussels in the creek.
- Planting one hundred thousand trees and shrubs.
- Quadrupling our volunteer program to 1,300 strong.
- Hosting the Johnson Creek Art Show.
- Producing the "Songs for Johnson Creek" music album.
- Forging new partnerships with groups like St. Mary Ethiopian Church and Wisdom of the Elders.
- Building salmon habitat at the Johnson Creek-Willamette River confluence.

It has been my true privilege to work with such dedicated and vibrant staff, board members, volunteers, partners, and supporters, and my constant joy to watch the creek and watershed as it comes back to life. As I leave, I want to position JCWC and Johnson Creek for another seven years that are as good as the last seven have been. I ask you to join me in becoming or renewing as a Friend of Johnson Creek today. To sweeten the deal, all gifts to the Council will be matched, up to \$10,000, doubling your impact.

By giving generously, we can help ensure that the Council has the resources it needs to continue its remarkable work. So that seven years from now, we are looking back with the same pride and gratitude as we do today.

Warm Regards - 



Matt Clark leads a restoration team at Johnson Creek Park.

### Watershed Wide Volunteer Sites for March 7th (Continued from page 1)

**Tideman Johnson Park** — Help the Friends of Tideman Johnson install native plants at this outstanding natural area. Meet at SE 37th Ave & the Springwater Trail

**Springwater Trail at Linwood Ave** — With support from the Clackamas County Water Environmental Services, come and help plant and mulch native trees and shrubs between the Springwater Trail and Johnson Creek

**Foster Place** — Join neighborhood volunteers as we install native plants in Johnson Creek's floodplain at this hidden jewel near Leach Garden

**Clatsop Butte** — Come on out and help Friends of Trees and Portland Parks & Rec install native plants in this important upland habitat near SE 156th & Evergreen

**Butler Creek Greenway** — Help staff from the City of Gresham plant native shrubs and trees along this major tributary to Johnson Creek

**Chastain Creek** — Join Friends of Trees and the City of Gresham to install riparian plantings near the confluence of Chastain and Johnson Creek

**Springwater Woods Wetland** — Help install native trees and shrubs in this unique riparian wetland near the juncture of Hogan Creek and Johnson Creek in Gresham

**Mystic Woods** — Join staff from JCWC as we clean up and shade this site on upper Badger Creek, newly enrolled in our CreekCare program

Ready to sign up? Reserve your spot by calling 503-652-7477 or email [info@jwcw.org](mailto:info@jwcw.org).

### Street Tree Counting

(Continued from page 1)



**How many street trees do we have in the Johnson Creek Watershed?**

The Urban Forestry Department will be working with the Johnson Creek Watershed Council in the summer of 2015 to find out!

JCWC volunteers will be surveying the Powellhurst-Gilbert neighborhood. Once a baseline inventory is established, Urban Forestry will work with community partners to increase the number of street trees and expand species diversity in Powellhurst-Gilbert.

Contact Amy Lodholz if you would like to be part of the inventory team this summer call 503-652-7477 or email [amy@jwcw.org](mailto:amy@jwcw.org). No experience necessary. Inventory events will typically occur on Saturday mornings July-August.

## Tracking Coho Salmon Numbers in Johnson Creek

Robin Jenkinson, Watershed Science Director

In terms of salmon, Johnson Creek is essentially a Coho ecosystem. Coho salmon thrive in low-gradient streams with complex habitat including side channels, active floodplains, log jams, and beaver ponds. If Coho are thriving in Johnson Creek, it's likely that the entire ecosystem is functioning to support a diversity of native creatures and plants.

From mid-October through December, adult Coho salmon return to Johnson Creek and tributaries to spawn—laying thousands of fertilized eggs in gravel-piled nests called redds. The resulting young Coho live in our streams for a full year before swimming down the Willamette River, through the Columbia River Estuary, and on to the Pacific Ocean. There, they grow quickly, feeding on zooplankton and small fish over the Pacific Continental Shelf. As three-year-olds, they high-tail it home to spawn and die.

Historic Johnson Creek Coho runs probably numbered near 5,000 adult fish annually. Due to passage barriers (e.g. dams, road culverts, etc.), habitat degradation, over-fishing in the Willamette and Columbia, and many other impacts, numbers are way down and Lower Columbia River Coho salmon are listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act. With all these impacts to Coho habitat, it's unlikely that Johnson Creek could support a run greater than 150 adults at this time, and we're definitely not seeing anywhere near that number yet.

Little is known about Coho abundance and spawning locations in Johnson Creek today. What we do know is based on fish surveys conducted between 1992 and 2012,



a handful of fish salvage efforts during in-stream construction, and first-hand reports from people who have observed the creek for years. A small, but continuous run has been documented in Crystal Springs Creek over the years, and based on survey results, it appears that Coho are making a small recovery in mainstem Johnson Creek.

First, while electrofishing surveys in 1992-93 only found one juvenile Coho in mainstem Johnson Creek (near Gresham), surveys in 2001-03 found a number of Coho juveniles in two reaches of Johnson Creek up to SE Linwood. Then, in 2008-2009, Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife (ODFW) found Coho present throughout the length of Johnson Creek surveyed, from the Willamette to SE 159th, including in lower Kelley Creek in all four seasons sampled. Even greater numbers were found in 2011-12 (a total of 81) in upper Johnson Creek (up to 267th) and the lower reaches of many tributaries, including Hogan, Sunshine and Badger Creeks.

Second, in 1992-93 and each year since 2002, ODFW has conducted adult spawning surveys in specific reaches throughout the

length of Johnson Creek and never found an adult Coho in the mainstem. Then, in 2010, three adult Coho were found 15 miles up Johnson Creek by a Damascus resident. Each fall since for the past four years, after receiving training from ODFW and the Council, volunteer surveyors have walked four, one-mile index reaches in teams of two and also surveyed two exploratory reaches. Thanks to these hundreds of volunteers, we have documented wild Coho adults spawning in upper Johnson Creek, in and beyond Gresham, each year.

It's important to note that this possible trend in Johnson Creek may or may not be tied to anything we're doing in the watershed. It may be a reflection of higher than usual Coho returns seen throughout the 2000's in the Lower Willamette. In fact, Fall 2014 set a new record for the Clackamas River with the most adult Coho returning (>7,000) since counts began in 1957 at the North Fork Dam (the second highest year was 2002). In addition, very high returns were seen at Willamette Falls (~21,000) and more than one million Coho jumped up the fish ladder at Bonneville Dam on the Columbia. As part of this record high run, JCWC volunteer surveyors counted 11 Coho in Crystal Springs in one weekend, alone, with others observed elsewhere Johnson Creek!

Looking to the future, we're hopeful. Planting streamside forests, opening access to additional habitat, leaving fallen trees in the creek for Coho cover and shelter, learning to live with beaver (who provide some of the most productive Coho rearing habitat around), addressing runoff impacts and conserving floodplains will all prime the pump for even greater returns in the future.

To track Coho in Johnson Creek, we will continue with annual spawning surveys. Our partners plan to conduct ongoing electrofishing surveys. Once we observe 20 or more spawning adults, we will consider installing a screw trap for Coho smolts near the mouth of Johnson Creek to get an estimate of total abundance.



JCWC Summer Interns helped the City of Portland salvage fish in Johnson Creek using an electroshocker at the Luther Road Project.

## Promote Your Business—Support Johnson Creek Restoration

### Johnson Creek Celebration

The Johnson Creek Celebration is one of the Council's signature events, attended by 200 of the Council's partners and supporters. This year's gala dinner will feature a presentation by Watershed Science Director Robin Jenkinson as she unveils the 2015-2025 Action Plan. Developed in collaboration with Johnson Creek Watershed partners, this document will guide our restoration work for the next decade. An awards presentation will follow honoring individuals, community groups, civic leaders and businesses, whose work supports the mission of the Council.

#### Coho Sponsor \$2500

- Company name highlighted as Coho Sponsor in all event materials including: invitation, event sponsor display, program, table placards, slideshow, and press release
- Full page ad in the summer edition of the newsletter
- Reserved table (eight seats with VIP bar access)
- Verbal recognition at event during opening remarks

#### Lamprey Sponsor \$1000

- Company name highlighted as Lamprey Sponsor in all event materials including: invitation, event sponsor display, program, table placards, slideshow, and press release
- Half page ad in the summer edition of the newsletter
- Half-table reservation (four seats)
- Verbal recognition at the event

#### Steelhead Sponsor \$500

- Company name highlighted as Steelhead Sponsor in all event materials including: invitation, event sponsor display, program, table placards, slideshow, and press release
- One-sixth page (2.5"x4.5") ad in the summer edition of the newsletter
- Two tickets to the Johnson Creek Celebration
- Verbal recognition at the event

**Johnson Creek Celebration**  
Reed College – Kaul Auditorium  
Thursday, May 21



*Guest speaker Colin Thorne presents at the 2014 Johnson Creek Celebration.*



*Student project boards on display at the Annual Celebration.*

### Johnson Creek Science Symposium

Prior to the Johnson Creek Celebration, the Council will be hosting its first science symposium. Led by members of Johnson Creek's technical advisory committee, a series of short presentations will be given allowing for audience members to enjoy a more thorough and open discussion of the plans and research surrounding the 2015-2025 Action Plan for the Johnson Creek Watershed. This educational event will be free and open to the public.

#### Symposium Lead Sponsor \$5000

Support the Council's work in planning and hosting this unique educational event open to the public. Sponsorship dollars will be to provide staff support for the event, refreshments, event space and print materials. To honor your generous support, your sponsorship will be recognized in the following ways:

- Full panel acknowledgement board displayed on the stage during the event
- Company name highlighted as Symposium Lead Sponsor in all event materials including: invitation, program, table placards, slideshow, and press release
- Recognition in the Council's online and print edition of its newsletter
- Full table reserved at the Council's Celebration event following symposium (eight seats with VIP bar access)

#### Symposium Supporting Sponsor \$2500

Support the Council's work in creating a high-quality science-based event free and open to the community. Sponsorship dollars will be used for activities like event publicity, promotion and outreach to the community and surrounding neighborhoods.

- Company name highlighted as Symposium Supporting Sponsor in all event materials including: invitation, program, table placards, slideshow, and press release
- Recognition in the Council's online and print edition of its newsletter
- Half table reserved at the Council's Celebration event following symposium (eight seats)

**Johnson Creek Science Symposium**  
Reed College  
Thursday, May 21

## Creekside Hero I: Lauren Senkyr

Amy Lodholz, Volunteer and Outreach Coordinator

Lauren Senkyr and her husband, Gary, moved to a four-acre property on Sunshine Creek in Damascus in February 2013. Gary operates his business, Senkos Farm, from the property where they grow a variety of fruits and veggies, as well as raise chickens. They are expecting a baby in May.

### What do you value about living in the Johnson Creek Watershed?

We feel so fortunate to live along the creek. Living near water is a great reminder of how we fit in to the bigger picture in life, and it is a reminder of how our actions affect the resources that we depend on. Issues like erosion, litter, water quality, habitat are obvious and immediate to us since we can see them in our backyard. It also connects us to nature. We see bald eagles, great blue heron and hawks hunting from snags along the creek. We see beaver building up their dams after a flood, gnawing down new trees, and burrowing new tunnels. This past week we got two inches of rain in two days and the creek rose higher than we had ever seen it. It can be a little scary sometimes—there is more we have to do to protect our crops from flooding or protect our fruit trees from getting chewed down by beaver, but it's a privilege to live here and we do our best to be good stewards of the land.

### What role should homeowners have in Johnson Creek management?

All of us living in the watershed depend on Johnson Creek, its tributaries, and the riparian and wetland habitats around the creeks. These areas absorb and convey flood waters during storms, they provide shade and cooling during the heat of summer, they serve as habitat for fish and wildlife, and they filter water and contaminants from roads, septic systems and agriculture. Those of us who live along the creek play an important role in managing it to maximize the benefits of a healthy ecosystem. Anywhere you live there are things you can do to contribute to improving the watershed for people, wildlife, and future generations of both.



*"It's a privilege to live here and we do our best to be good stewards of the land," says Lauren Senkyr, Johnson Creek Hero.*  
*brucemacgregorphotography.com*

### Tell us about your relationship with the Watershed Council.

As soon as we became landowners in the watershed, we enrolled in the Watershed Council's CreekCare program. Staff from the Watershed Council are out on our property several times a year fighting invasive plants (especially blackberry, ivy, and holly) and they have planted hundreds of native plants so that eventually the area along the creek will be great habitat. We also enrolled it as wildlife habitat with Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, and worked with both groups to create wildlife habitat structures, put up nesting boxes, and remove trash.

### What is the ideal future for your Johnson Creek and how do you hope to be a part of it as a creekside homeowner?

My ideal future Johnson Creek has native vegetation growing along the creek and all its tributaries to create buffers between the water and adjacent land uses. All fish passage barriers would be removed and salmon would be spawning throughout the upper reaches of the

watershed. There would be an amazing diversity of fish and wildlife, and people would regularly come to parks and volunteer events to appreciate it all. As a creekside landowner, we are contributing to this vision by doing as much as we can to improve our small section of it and we are spreading the word to our neighbors and others in the community.

### What kinds of the challenges do you face as a Creekside homeowner?

Our two biggest problems so far are trash and invasive plants. We live along a busy road and downstream from a major road crossing, so a lot of trash makes its way onto our stretch of the creek. Realty signs, tires, food wrappers—we face a constant influx of garbage. Invasive plants are a problem because they take over the landscape and spread from one place to another with no regard for property lines. It would be great if more of our neighbors participated in the program so that we could handle it on a larger scale with a unified approach.

*"Creek Heroes" is a storytelling portrait series focusing on homeowners with creekside property.*

## Volunteers Worthy Of Presidential Recognition

Amy Lodholz, Volunteer and Outreach Coordinator

The presidential service awards are a federal awards program that dates back to the 1980's.

Watershed Council volunteers can achieve this level of recognition by completing 100 hours serving their country (or watershed) in one calendar year. That's about 9 hours a month a minimum. We are pleased to bestow this honor to Dick Schubert and Marty Urman this year.

Dick came to the Council in 2013 as a Board Member candidate. His commitment to the leadership of this or-



ganization since his election has been exemplary. From participating in boots-on-the-ground restoration events and other council activities to serving on various board committees, we are truly grateful for his service.

Marty Urman retired after seven years with JCWC in 2013. At the Appreciation Night last year she made it known that she wanted to get one of these awards and she's a determined lady so I didn't doubt her! Donating her time to newsletter production, graphic design



Marty Urman (left) receives her award at the 2014 Volunteer Appreciation Dinner.

and miscellaneous tasks like cleaning the Johnson Creek road signs and washing the salmon survey vests Marty has been a true asset even after her retirement.

Thank you both for your outstanding service!

Inspired? Are you ready to begin the journey to your own Presidential Service Award? Contact us at 503-652-7477 or email [info@jcwc.org](mailto:info@jcwc.org) to sign up for our next volunteer event.



Dick Schubert cleans up trash at the 2014 Johnson Creek Clean Up.

Twenty Restoration Events

## Rock On Council Volunteers

Amy Lodholz, Volunteer and Outreach Coordinator

In 2014, JCWC completed 32 volunteer restoration activities with over 1,000 volunteers. We host about two restoration events every month rain or shine. It's hard work but great exercise.

With Executive Director Matt Clark's departure I've been doing some reflection of my own and wanted to acknowledge some of the Council's restoration all-stars. These are volunteers who have participated in **20 or more restoration events** since the volunteer program officially launched in 2009:

Nicole Alexander

Julie Chapman

Paul Ciri

Kevin Hay

Lora Martin

Melanie McCandless

Walt Mintkeski

Paul Rayburn

Lee Spiker

Russ Stoll

Nate Whirty

Congratulations on your achievement. We hope to see you at many more activities in 2015. We are calling this level of accomplishment the 20+ Club. This will be an ongoing program if you would like to achieve an 'excellence in restoration' service pin – and many other volunteers are very close!



## Johnson Creek Park Stewards Program

At the beginning of each year, Portland Parks and Recreation identify natural areas within the Johnson Creek Watershed that require a delicate touch. These are healthy areas that might be damaged by a large group of people but still need ongoing maintenance.

These very important natural areas are then assigned to Johnson Creek Stewards. The volunteers are trained onsite and will then have permission to access these areas to perform ongoing restoration work on their own schedule, independently. Stewards report their work throughout the year with journal entries and photos posted as a public blog on the Council website.

The Johnson Creek Stewards work for a minimum of two hours each month for 12 consecutive months from January to December.

This year Stewards can work at the following parks:

**Beggar's Tick**

**Bundy Natural Area**

**Buttes Natural Area**

**Deardorff Creek Natural Area**

**Erroll Heights**

**Foster Floodplain**

**Johnson Creek Park**

**Powell Butte**

**Mitchel Creek**

**Wahoo Natural Area**

Just seeing this opportunity? Give the Council a call and we can still sign you up. 503-652-7477.



Still A Bit Wet Behind The Ears

## Wading Into Experience

*Danielle Miles, 2014-2015 AmeriCorps Riparian Technician*



During some of the coldest weather last month, I was charged with the task of patching leaky waders for salmon surveys. Having never patched waders, I turned to the ultimate source of do-it-yourself information: YouTube tutorials. Purportedly, the first step is a simple matter of hanging the waders from something sturdy, filling them with water from a hose, and marking the leaks with a sharpie.

With resolve I hung the first pair of waders from the impressively large Vine Maple in our atrium's Native Plant Garden—clipping the suspenders to a sturdy branch, sticking the hose into one leg, and hurriedly circling leaks with a Sharpie permanent marker. Suddenly there was a great “whoosh!” as the suspenders became unclipped and the waders collapsed, shooting water all over me. It was at this moment that I realized I had a confused audience on the other side of the Resource Room window.

We are a determined bunch here at Johnson Creek. With a little team work from our Communications Intern Leigh-Anne Dufresne and office volunteer Bryan Art, I successfully patched those (and many other) pairs of waders.

Other highlights from the past 4 months of service include:

- Spotting a large Cutthroat Trout during a fish survey in Kelley Creek, and helping coordinate fish surveys for other volunteers.
- Leading two volunteer events: No Ivy Day with Portland Parks and an invasive plant removal work party at the JCWC Office.
- Collaborating on monthly service learning projects with Mt Scott Learning Center and a native plant garden at Metro East Web Academy.
- Meeting watershed residents at a Coffee Klatch and recruiting a landowner to participate in our Creek Care program.
- Creating restoration plans for each new site with our Riparian Program Manager, Noah Jenkins
- Walking in the Veterans Day Parade with my son, JCWC staff, and volunteers.
- Spotting a magnificent Varied Thrush out our office window just as Noah and I were discussing the importance of riparian buffers for urban wildlife.

I look forward to seeing what 2015 will bring!



**Print moda: Color**

You may have noticed that last quarter's *Within Your Reach* was printed in eye-popping color for the first time. This was made possible thanks to the overwhelming generosity of Moda Health, our newsletter print provider since 2013. Thank you so much from all of us at Johnson Creek Watershed Council!



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**Amy Lodholz**

Volunteer and Outreach Coordinator

**Danielle Miles**

AmeriCorps Riparian  
Technician – July 2015

## Calendar of Events

For more details or to RSVP at any event, call Amy at 503-652-7477.

### **Volunteer Restoration Event – Tideman Johnson Park Planting**

*Wednesday, February 4 @ 9:30 am - 11:30 am*

Tideman Johnson Natural Area - SE 37th Ave & Tenino St, Portland

### **Volunteer Restoration Event – Veterans Creek**

*Saturday, February 14 @ 9 am - 12 pm*

Veteran's Creek - intersection of SE 98th Ave and SE Mt Scott Blvd, Portland

### **Arrow Creek Planting - February 21 @ 9 am - 12 pm**

Errol Heights - SE 52nd and Tenino Drive, Portland, OR 97206

### **Water Themed Trivia Night - March 3 @ 6 pm - 9 pm**

Cartlandia - 8145 SE 82nd Ave, Portland, OR 97266

### **Watershed Wide Event - March 7 @ 9 am - 12 pm**

Ten locations throughout Johnson Creek Watershed (details on Page 1)

### **Volunteer Restoration Event - Spokane Street - March 14 @ 9 am - 12 pm**

Spokane Street and 21st Ave, Portland

### **Kelly Butte Tree Care (with Friends of Trees) - April 11 @ 9 am - 12 pm**

Kelly Butte - 2850 Southeast 103rd Avenue, Portland

### **Save the date: Johnson Creek Celebration - May 21**

Our annual Celebration and new Science Symposium at Reed College, Portland

Did you know that JCWC's newsletter is also available online and sent via email? Text your subscription preferences to 541-968-3530 or call 503-652-7477.