



STRATEGIC PLAN 2017-2022

PREFACE

The Johnson Creek Watershed Council (JCWC) is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization with a mission of science-based watershed restoration and community engagement. Johnson Creek is 26 miles long. This Oregon watershed covers 52 square miles in Multnomah County (67%) and Clackamas County (33%) and encompasses parts of the land base in the cities of Milwaukie, Portland, Gresham, and Happy Valley, and the communities of Damascus and Boring.

As the Council nears the end of our 2012-2017 Strategic Plan timeframe, we find ourselves with continuing challenges: increased urbanization of agricultural lands in the upper watershed and the need for more functional and presentable office space. Several new challenges have developed: increased overnight camping and resulting damage on the Springwater Trail and uncertainty in federal funding.

We are in a strong position as an organization, with diverse financial support and strong relationships with many jurisdictions, a positive reputation in the community, and a clear ten-year Action Plan that serves as a roadmap for project selection.

PROCESS

JCWC has a history of being guided by strategic plans. The most recent five-year plan covers the timeframe 7/1/12-6/30/17. A prior two-year plan, finished in 2004, was updated annually. Like the last plan, this one covers a five year period, taking effect on 7/1/17 and ending on 6/30/22.

The Board's Governance Committee initiated this planning process in August, 2016. The core group was composed of four board members and three staff members. Strategic planning work sessions were conducted subsequently every month, both at committee and full board meetings, and at the annual board/staff retreat. The entire board and staff participated in stakeholder interviews to help guide our focus for the next five years.

LINKAGE TO OTHER PLANNING DOCUMENTS

JCWC is guided by several planning documents, which guide different aspects of the Council's day-to-day operations. This strategic plan does not supersede these other plans. Our intention is rather that this plan works in concert with these other plans and provides strategic direction

for *how* we operate.

ACTION PLAN 2015-2025. Two years ago, JCWC completed an action plan, which guides our selection of programs: restoration, monitoring, outreach volunteer engagement.

EQUITY and INCLUSION PLAN. Coincident with this strategic plan is our organizational equity and inclusion plan. The approximately 186,000 residents of our watershed speak dozens of languages and are ethnically and racially diverse. That plan has co-evolved with this strategic plan: each goal and objective in this strategic plan has been reviewed with an equity lens. The equity plan includes many tasks that advance our strategic goals.

WORK PLANS. Each year, the staff creates a work plan for the upcoming fiscal year. The annual work plan uses the strategic plan, equity plan, and the action plan to select the programs for the upcoming year.

ORGANIZATIONAL HISTORY

The Johnson Creek Watershed Council was formed in May, 1995, as the Johnson Creek Watershed Association. This formation culminated twenty years of effort by local residents, businesses, and government agencies to address degraded water quality and habitat in the creek after decades of urbanization. In the 1970s, resident began informal creek trash cleanups. In the mid-1980s, a small grassroots group called the Friends of Johnson Creek (also known as the Johnson Creek Marching Band) began leading tours of Johnson Creek, highlighting it as a community asset. It was the first time that any group had portrayed Johnson Creek in a positive light publicly. For years, Johnson Creek had been known primarily as a degraded eyesore that frequently flooded. Several government agencies had tried unsuccessfully to solve the flooding problems, prescribing top-down engineering solutions, which were met with resistance, if not outright hostility from local residents, who felt that government was forcing a costly solution on them without their input.

In 1990, the City of Portland began convening multiple agencies and citizen stakeholders to develop a Johnson Creek Resource Management Plan (RMP). The Johnson Creek Corridor Committee (JCCC), as the coalition was called, met monthly for almost five years before publishing the RMP in 1995. Unlike previous failed planning efforts, the JCCC insisted that both government agencies and citizens groups begin working on early enhancement projects and public education programs, even before planning was finished. These early projects were critical in overcoming more than forty years of inertia and began building a culture of creek stewardship that today is one of the core strengths of the Johnson Creek Watershed Council. They also were an important tool to identify and engage the many and diverse types of community interests in Johnson Creek. Previous planning efforts had made the mistake of treating Johnson Creek stakeholders as uniform, with flooding as their sole concern.

One of the key recommendations made during Resource Management Planning was that a permanent group be formed to provide continued leadership, fostering the nascent stewardship ethic in the watershed. The Johnson Creek Watershed Council (JCWC) is this permanent group that grew out of the Johnson Creek Corridor Committee. Its first meeting as the Johnson Creek Watershed Council was in 1995

The timing of JCWC's formation was fortuitous as it coincided with the statewide establishment of watershed councils and the development of the Oregon Plan for Salmon and Watersheds. One of the key features of the Oregon Plan is its focus on voluntary restoration actions rather than regulatory mechanisms to achieve endangered species recovery and watershed health. It's predicated on a spirit of volunteerism and stewardship and the belief that it takes local knowledge of problems and a local sense of ownership to achieve long-term watershed health. Another key tenet of the Oregon Plan is that healthy watersheds support the economy and quality of life of Oregon.

The Council's first formal strategic plan, a two-year plan, was created in 2004. A series of annual updates followed until a formal five year plan was adopted, covering the years 2012-2017. These documents addressed the strategic operation of the Council as an organization, as compared to the action plans, which governed the programmatic operations.

The 2002 document, *Johnson Creek Action Plan: An Adaptive Approach* was the first action plan created by the Council to guide its restoration program. This 191-page plan was used until the current *Johnson Creek Watershed Council Action Plan 2015-2025* was adopted in May, 2015.

Timeline of Significant Dates

1984 Friends of Johnson Creek / Johnson Creek Marching Band formed.

1990 Johnson Creek Corridor Committee (JCCC) formed.

1995 Johnson Creek Resources Management Plan approved by the JCCC and formally adopted by various watershed jurisdictions.

May 3, 1995 First meeting after renaming as the Johnson Creek Watershed Council (JCWC).

1995 Fiscal agent agreement signed between JCWC and East Multnomah SWCD.

1995 Oregon House Bill 3441 passed, providing guidance for forming watershed councils as locally organized, voluntary, non-regulatory groups.

1996 JCWC Watershed Coordinator hired first paid staff with funding from the Governor's Watershed Enhancement Board, City of Portland, and City of Gresham.

1997 The Oregon Plan for Watersheds and Salmon placed into statute by the Oregon State Legislature.

2001 JCWC designated a (501(c)3) tax exempt organization by the IRS.

JCWC IN 2017

The Council's Board currently consists of 14 members: nine volunteer community members and five jurisdictional, *ex officio* members (Portland, Gresham, Multnomah County, Clackamas County, EMSWCD). The staff size is currently six (5.25 FTE), including a one-year Americorps member.

The Board maintains six standing committees: Fundraising and Outreach, Governance, Facilities, Community Inclusion, Land Use, and Executive. All Board members serve on at least one committee.

The Council's office space is donated by Oregon Worsted. The rent is *gratis*, but the Council pays 80% of the utility bills.

MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission is to promote restoration and stewardship of a healthy Johnson Creek Watershed through sound science and community engagement.

ORGANIZATIONAL VISION

In 2022, we envision the following for JCWC, the watershed, and its residents:

- JCWC is well respected in the community as the watershed's voice and advocate.
- JCWC is an inclusive organization that welcomes, and is seen as welcoming, by all.
- Watershed residents are inspired to learn more and become engaged in the Council's work, in part because of sound science and compelling storytelling.
- Watershed residents know how to become involved with the Council and volunteers enjoy their experiences at Council activities.
- JCWC is a leader among Oregon Watershed Councils.
- JCWC is a full partner in watershed restoration with its jurisdictional partners. The Council's work adds value to public sector environmental stewardship.
- Ecological monitoring and restoration generates data and analysis that provides solid scientific information to inform our board, staff, and natural resources agencies.
- Employment at JCWC is rewarding and fulfilling and provides career-building experience.
- The JCWC office and website is a hub of: watershed science, knowledge of the Johnson Creek Watershed, and place for community and volunteers to engage and interact, access resources and technical expertise.

GOALS and OBJECTIVES

Goal 1: Building Community. Johnson Creek Watershed Council is a community of those people and organizations that live, work, play and pray in our watershed. All community members are welcome at our events. We work to engage the community in all aspects of our restoration and educational work.

- Objective A: The JCWC community—staff, board, volunteers, interns—reflects the diversity of the residents of the watershed. The collection of demographic information provides metrics to inform this process (*Community Inclusion Committee, all staff*)
- Objective B: JCWC hosts volunteer restoration, educational, and recreational activities that appeal to stakeholders who reflect the demographics of the full watershed. These activities are accessible to people of varying abilities (*Volunteer Coordinator, Community Outreach Coordinator*)
- Objective C: Relationships are expanding and deepening with individuals, schools, agencies, businesses and landowners, particularly in the upper watershed (*Staff*).
- Objective D: Student work, youth engagement, and workforce development for underserved communities are integrated into JCWC programs (*Staff, Community Inclusion Committee*).
- Objective E: Total community reach (number of individual contacts) continues to increase, and is tracked and documented (*Volunteer Coordinator, Community Outreach Coordinator*).
- Objective F: Organizational visibility, as measured through traditional and social media, continues to increase (*Staff*).

Goal 2: Organizational Sustainability and Governance. JCWC is a well-established, respected, sustainable organization with the human and financial resources and effective stakeholder partnerships to carry out its program plans and actualize its mission.

- Objective A: Financial policies and procedures follow GAAP and reflect best practices for nonprofit organizations. JCWC undertakes an annual audit (*Finance Coordinator, E.D., Treasurer*).
- Objective B: Human Resources policies and procedures welcome people from traditionally underserved communities (*E.D., Community Inclusion Committee*).
- Objective C: By 2019, a plan has been approved to engage the Advisory Circle (*Executive Committee, E.D.*).

- Objective D: JCWC completes a board self-assessment and strategic plan accomplishments review at least annually. By-laws are reviewed by 2022 (*Governance Committee*).
- Objective E: Board members participate in committees and projects; they are engaged in organizational governance (*Board, Governance Committee*).
- Objective F: The Council's outreach leads to increased financial support from businesses (*E.D., Fundraising and Outreach Committee*).
- Objective G: A general fund balance is maintained at a level necessary to respond to unforeseen emergencies or take advantage of unforeseen opportunities (*E.D., Finance Coordinator*).
- Objective H: The fund balance of the organization's endowment is increased through additional contributions (*Board, E.D.*).

Goal 3: Restoration and Monitoring. JCWC is guided by a comprehensive scientific framework for watershed health based primarily on the document *JCWC Action Plan: 2015-2025*. Projects are chosen and scheduled strategically.

- Objective A: Fish passage – Using the 2013/14 watershed fish passage barrier assessment, salmonid migration potential is improved by removing, repairing, or replacing barriers identified as high benefit relative to the project cost (*Restoration Project Manager, E.D.*).
- Objective B: Cooler streams – Existing riparian reforestation programs on privately-owned properties are maintained, focusing on high priority parcels as identified in the 2012 Riparian Reforestation Strategy document (*Riparian Program Manager*).
- Objective C: Cooler streams - Identify, prioritize, and address inline ponds that serve as heat point sources (*Restoration Project Manager, Riparian Program Manager*).
- Objective D: Science Hub – The JCWC website serves as an information hub for existing scientific research, monitoring data, restoration projects and community science efforts (*Restoration Project Manager*).
- Objective E: Community Science: Volunteers, directed by JCWC staff, collect watershed scientific data that contributes to restoration and land management (*Community Outreach Coordinator, Volunteer Coordinator*).
- Objective F: Water Quality / Stormwater – Stormwater Best Management Practices demonstration projects are completed in priority areas, focusing on industrial, commercial,

religious, and educational properties. Education and outreach is conducted to support stormwater water quality and quantity improvements (*Restoration Project Manager*).

- Objective G: Project monitoring. Effective and appropriate monitoring strategies are established and maintained (*Restoration Project Manager, Riparian Program Manager*).

Goal 4: Inter-organizational coordination and participation. Partners are essential to our work and our success.

- Objective A: JCWC fully participates in the Johnson Creek Inter-Jurisdictional Committee (IJC) and serves as a focal point for watershed science for the IJC (*E.D., Restoration Project Manager*).
- Objective B: JCWC is recognized regionally as a key stakeholder in public-sector planning processes that affect the Johnson Creek watershed (*E.D.*).
- Objective C: JCWC partners with jurisdictions and like-minded organizations on land use and development policies that have the potential to impact the watershed (*Land Use Committee, E.D.*).
- Objective D: JCWC participates in local, regional, and national professional networks (*Staff*).

Goal 5: Facilities. JCWC is truly place-based: its office is a welcoming community hub and gathering place, provides a productive workspace, supports the Council's activities.

- Objective A: Existing JCWC rented office is clean, orderly and attractively landscaped (*Staff*).
- Objective B: A signed commitment for a permanent Council office is secured by 6/30/2020 (*Facilities Committee*).
- Objective C: Fundraising for the permanent Council office is completed by 6/30/2022 (*Board, E.D.*).

PERIODIC REVIEW and ASSESSMENT

A strategic plan is only useful if it is integrated into the operations of an organization and is subject to periodic assessment. The following current procedures will continue, to insure that this document serves its purpose of guiding the strategic functions of JCWC:

- All activities documented in bi-monthly staff reports for the Board will indicate which strategic plan objective it furthers.
- Using these staff reports and other relevant documents, the Board's Governance Committee will annually evaluate the organization's progress toward realizing the goals and objectives in this strategic plan. This committee will then present its findings to the entire Board of Directors.
- The Board will then decide what updates to this strategic plan, if any, are necessary

APPENDICES

Appendix A: SWOT ANALYSIS

Many organizations analyze their strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) as a way to align operations to strategy, and strategy to mission. Strengths and weaknesses identify positives and negatives within the organization, those items most under the organization's control. Opportunities and threats are external, and as such are less under the organization's control, such as market forces, relative regional and national economic stability, and government policies.

	Internal	External
Positives	Strengths	Opportunities
Negatives	Weaknesses	Threats

Strengths

- Staff and Board competence
- Original continuity and history of organization
- Jurisdictional involvement, especially the Inter-Jurisdictional Committee
- Reputation and credibility
- Volunteer involvement
- Science-based approach to restoration
- Equipment inventory
- Low cost office space (free rent) and location
- Accounting and financial management, regular audits
- Policies and Procedures (HR, Finance) checks and balances
- Internship Program- capacity building, career opportunities
- Project completion/success – innovative, leaders
- Clear, relevant mission and success
- \$40,000 reserve funds
- Diversity work to date
- State of the watershed showing consistent improvement
- Grant writing
- Board competencies
- Alliances and collaboration
- Ability and willingness to share and provide technical expertise
- Support for both long-term and short-term volunteers and growing volunteer pool

- Staff flexibility to tackle independent projects
- Passion for work

Weaknesses

- Office/Facility – location, HVAC inefficiency, physical condition (bathrooms and floodplain risk)
- Staff turnover, small staff, lack of backstop, lack of career path
- Visibility/awareness of JCWC's existence and work (greater public view)
- Need stronger relationships, involvement with large business/employers
- Board, staff and volunteer diversity
- Endowment and emergency funds too small
- Vulnerable to disruptions
- Lack of in-house IT skills
- Missing from board or other involvement: funders, elected officials, City of Milwaukee
- Small board, too few Board candidates in pipeline
- Capacity to handle even more volunteers beyond recent surge
- No training manual for on-boarding employees, volunteers, or interns.
- Individual fundraising (as opposed to grant writing)
- Social media and IT expertise
- Tendency to silo staff/don't have bench capacity on staff

Opportunities

- Diversity of watershed population [volunteer engagement, grant funding, diversity potential in JCWC, can be more responsive to needs]
- Climate change – response, mitigation, new project opportunity, funding
- Private foundation funding (especially for community science)
- Give! Guide for annual fundraising
- Changing public perception of Johnson Creek [flooding, water quality], through community science, events, outreach
- Upper watershed, agriculture community, project opportunity, education, board members, volunteers, staff training and education
- Increase use of social media
- Piggybacking on culvert projects (leveraging)
- EMSWCD Strategic Partner Agreement (SPA) (leveraging)
- Restoration work with H.O.A.'s, community groups
- Leveraging virtual communication/social media channels
- IT expertise
- Languages spoken (Board and Staff)
- Managing and balancing advocacy

Threats

- Jurisdictional funding continuity
- Politics of Springwater Trail homeless camping
- Public Reaction to environmental crises
- Climate change [flooding, vegetation, wildlife]
- Public perception of Johnson Creek (pollution, flooding)
- Increased housing development in upper watershed
- Federal policy, regulatory and funding environment
- Advocacy that detracts from or is inconsistent with mission

Appendix B: Visioning Exercise, conducted at the Board/Staff Retreat, January 27, 2017

What will JCWC look like in 2022 compared to how it looks now? In order to get to where we're going, it is helpful to take a candid look at where we are in 2017.

Question	Now/2017	Future/2022
<p>Making the connection:</p> <p><i>What does JCWC want stakeholders and the public to know about our work?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some of our public misunderstands JCWC as an advocacy organization that deals with flooding; ongoing confusion over BES vs JCWC. • Council is perceived as a neutral party that wants what is best for the watershed and, in general, does not take sides. • Events are well-known and have good track record 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outreach is framed and based on solid science that appeals to watershed residents who are inspired to learn more and get engaged through both story and science. • Data generation, analysis and management is generating solid scientific information and provides the basis for board, multi-audience messaging and conservation education opportunities. • JCWC is increasingly “visible” as the watershed’s voice and advocate. • More of JCWC story is being told and acted out through new community alliances and agencies (brochures, co-signage, etc.) • Periodically, JCWC revisits for the watershed community the grand legacy and network of Councils and their role in Oregon; Invoke wisdom of the watershed elders • The volunteer pool is growing and there are many new internship opportunities being offered • JCWC home is a hub of watershed science, knowledge of JCW, and place for community and volunteers to engage and interact, access resources and technical expertise • JCWC is part of a larger network/web that is generating more and more useable science and ways to connect

		<p>with community and community to watershed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People know and/or can easily find out how to get involved • Strong branding tells people they are in the JCW and what the JCWC stands for • More coordination with partners/alliances especially with cultural, civic and business organizations in the watershed • The watershed community (and beyond) gets it: It's about so much more than flooding!
<p>Ensuring strategic fit:</p> <p><i>What is JCWC's reputation?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competent, professional, effective • Leader among other watershed councils and within the watershed • Message: Everyone can make a difference 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain everything doing now plus building in increasing inclusivity and diversity • Working with strong technical expertise and science that is underpinning message • Create environment that makes JCWC a place that people want to serve/invest their time, talent and resources • Alliances • Stepping stone/career builder • There is a feeling of fun and seriousness
<p>Generating Value: <i>What do we value most about our work: as Board/Staff team; in the watershed; through outreach?</i></p>		
<p>Board and Staff Team work</p>	<p>Through and with integrity, passion, best practices around financials, HR, polices and procedures. By focusing on protecting vulnerable human, plant and animal communities in the watershed. With well leveraged social media channels, flexibility, strong results and a reputation for getting things done. By embracing succession for both Board and staff and celebrating graduations.</p>	
<p>In the watershed</p>	<p>Through being known as an organization that connects people to nature, in some cases re-connects; is collaborative and generous in everything from sharing science to tools. By being engaged in broad community conservation education with a variety of cultural organizations and agencies; working with alliances to improve ESA listed species and all that co-exist with them. Through forging new new alliances (e.g. golf courses) and opening new cultural partnerships (i.e. Wisdom of the Elders). By demonstrating consistent success with strategic restoration projects and changing the dialogue from "flooding" to "flood protection." By consistently addressing systemic challenges for those who want to but</p>	

	do not have resources to participate and by making all events accessible and welcoming.
Through Outreach	By celebrating success and volunteers in ways and in places that are accessible and honor the diversity of the watershed; by improving storytelling and making the history and work of restoring the watershed come alive with new media and virtual communication tools that reflect the diversity of people who make up the watershed. By empowering community members (including volunteers) of all ages and backgrounds through mentoring, service learning, education, storytelling and by finding ways to honor and engage culturally specific communities in the watershed. By collaborating with jurisdictional partners on conservation education and science programs; and, capturing JCWC's history of educational alliances.

Appendix C: Stakeholders consulted

Fifty-two stakeholders were contacted with a survey in the fall of 2016. Twenty-eight of them responded, and are listed below.

Name	Organization
Gary Klein	Advisory Circle
Walt Mintkeski	Advisory Circle, Council co-founder
Diane Boly	Advisory Circle, Business owner
Teresa Huntsinger	Advisory Circle
Jamal Dar	African Youth Community Organization
Torrey Lindbo	City of Gresham
Rob Livingston	City of Milwaukie
Mark Gamba	City of Milwaukie, Mayor
Tom Salzer	Clackamas SWCD
Lara Jones	Confluence Environmental Center
Julie DiLeone	East Multnomah SWCD
Marianne Colegrove	Friends of Tideman Johnson
Logan Lauvray	Friends of Trees
Nikkie Hasandras	Impact Northwest
Russ Stoll	Key Volunteer
Carlotta Collette	Metro Councilor, Advisory Circle
Roy Iwai	Multnomah County Roads Dept.
Judy Shiprack	Multnomah County Commissioner
Tonia Burns	North Clackamas Parks
Liz Redon	Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board
Norbert Loske	Overland Park Coalition
Maggie Skenderian	Portland Bureau of Environmental Services
Annette Mattson	Portland General Electric
Lynn Barlow	Portland Parks & Recreation
Susan Hawes	Portland Parks & Recreation
Qunitin Bauer	SOLVE
Adam Stonewall	U S Geological Survey
Rose High Bear	Wisdom of the Elders

The stakeholder survey was conducted primarily by phone. Both board and staff conducted the surveys with stakeholders. The survey consisted of the following questions:

1. The Council's "Action Plan 2015 – 2025" defined six programmatic focus areas. Please rank them in terms of importance to your organization (1=highest, 6=lowest). They are:

- Building Community – Promoting volunteerism for Council projects, outreach into underserved communities.
 - Fish – (primarily) improving fish passage, also improving instream habitat conditions
 - Riparian Forests – Reducing stream temperature by increasing tree canopy and taking online ponds offline.
 - Water quality – improving storm water quality, creek cleanups, monitoring.
 - Wildlife – Community science, support watershed-friendly land use practices, supporting efforts to improve wildlife habitat
 - Watershed Science – Serve as an information hub for watershed data and education for the Johnson Creek Watershed: among jurisdictional partners, schools and universities, residents.
2. How does your organization's relationship with the Council help you achieve your mission? What do you value the most in this respect?
 3. (Process) How would you like to work with the Johnson Creek Watershed Council?
 4. (Outcome) What is your desired outcome of our organizations' work together?
 5. What resources and skills can you bring to the table to help realize our joint efforts?
 6. Is there anything else you'd like us to record that will help us in our strategic planning work?

Appendix D: Strategic Planning Committee

Board: Dick Schubert, John Nagy, Bruce Newton, Bob Sanders

Staff: Cathy Geiger, Daniel Newberry