

# Beaverton Creek Technical Center Park

by Shelley Matthews

YEAR

4

a 15-acre park in Beaverton, bordered by 153<sup>rd</sup> Ave on the east, the Portland General Electric powerline corridor on the west, Tualatin Valley Highway on the south, and the Light Industrial Park on the north



## BEFORE

*Lacks vertical dimension and diversity of habitat*

## AFTER

*Basking logs, snags, and native plants were installed to add vertical dimension and habitat structure*



Beaverton Creek Technical Center Park covers 15 acres and is dominated by reed canary grass. Beaverton Creek crosses the park from the east to west, and Johnson Creek enters at the southeast corner. The south portion is comprised of open ponds. This site was part of a wetland mitigation project in the mid 1980s under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act that had met all of its regulatory requirements. A follow-up survey by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

in July 1987 found that many of the plantings had failed. Subsequent tree plantings had mixed success due to extreme drought conditions. The few willow snags that remained were in advanced stages of decay and, unless replaced, would soon topple over leaving the park nearly void of vertical dimension and critical habitat for local fish and wildlife. It is also presumed that topsoil was bulldozed from this area during construction, further contributing to its degraded state.

The objective of this project was to create cover, perching and roosting sites for wildlife on five islands in the southwest section, a sixth island upstream, and the associated nearby channels. Basking logs (western red cedar was selected for its slow decay), snags (western red cedar) and a variety of plants (Pacific willows, Sitka willows, Oregon ash, Pacific ninebark, snowberry, and ocean spray) were added to the six islands. Douglas spiraea was planted at water's edge near basking logs and in clumps along opposite sides of the channels to form arches as it matured. The channel plantings provided protective cover for waterfowl and open structures close to the water for spiders, insects, and other wildlife.

On Earth Day, April 20, 1996, the Park District hosted more than 60 volunteers at this site. They removed blackberries and planted native willows. The volunteers also paid for a park bench, which was installed overlooking the site.

This is a high-visibility, high-use park. It withstands intensive use well because it keeps human activity within viewing areas and on a peripheral asphalt path. Considering the large-scale development of high-density residential units and commercial facilities in the Light Rail plan for this area, this park will continue to receive even greater use.

### **Benefits**

- Created cover and perching and roosting sites for resident species. A number of wildlife species have since been spotted using the basking logs, snags and surrounding habitat. Species observed at the site include western painted turtle, belted kingfisher, cinnamon teal, spotted sandpiper, cedar waxwings, hooded and common mergansers, green-wing teal, American goldfinches, Vaux's swifts, common yellowthroat, red-tailed hawks, beavers, nutria, and green-backed and great blue heron.
- Enhanced the natural beauty of the park.
- Provided an opportunity for volunteers to assist in restoring a habitat to a more natural condition and raised environmental awareness in the community.

### **Budget**

Total proposed – \$9,755

Total actual – \$8,555.75

Metro/U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service grant awarded – \$3,215

Grant dollars spent - \$3,215

### **Helpful Hints – what worked, what didn't**

- High water through the spring of 1996 impacted the planted areas and dislodged one of the basking logs. Some plants survived (a percentage is not available) and the basking log was returned and re-anchored.

- Wildlife frequently use the basking logs and snags.
- The large native willows, which were staked, tied, and screened from beavers, are doing well.

## Partners

Tualatin Hills Park and Recreation District  
Earth Day volunteers

## Contact

Ralph K. Cook, Jr., Naturalist, Tualatin Hills Park & Recreation District, (503) 645-3539

### Timeline and Tasks

July 1995	Developed planting/work plan for contractor bidding
August 1995	Visited site and modified plan based on observations
September - October 1995	Visited site and investigated locations for standing snags; listed contractors and drafted cover letter
November 1995	Completed final plan; solicited and selected contractors
December 1995 – March '96	Visited site: assessed condition and impact of high water during spring flood event; completed purchase order; met with contractor regarding work plan
April 3-8, 1996	Contractors planted vegetation and placed snags and basking logs
April 5-10, 1996	Monitored and assessed contractor's work; developed payment report; planned Earth Day volunteer project
April 19, 1996	Visited site; held conference for volunteers
April 20, 1996	Earth Day: 60 volunteers cut blackberries and planted willows
May – July 1996	Monitored and maintained site: staked trees, installed beaver screens, cut blackberries, made repairs
Dec 9, 1996	Evaluated site and took photos