

Main City Park: Phase II

by Shelley Matthews

YEAR
6

in Gresham, at the corner of Main St. and Powell Blvd.



BEFORE

Riparian vegetation was lacking along Johnson Creek, and banks were unstable

AFTER

Volunteers from the community helped to restore native riparian vegetation



Main City Park is one of Gresham's oldest parks. Much of the park was created in the late 1960s when a large oxbow meander of Johnson Creek was filled in. As such, much of the 1/3 mile of creek that flows through Main City Park is an altered channel. This fact, combined with the formalized park landscaping that existed down to the stream channel, contributed to a number of negative impacts on the stream including the lack of a native vegetation buffer zone along the streambank, a massive bank failure which was worsened by the major 1996 flood event, and two large storm drains that emptied pollutants directly into the creek. The storm drains and bank failure were addressed in Phase I of this project. Phase II reestablishes a native wetland and riparian vegetation buffer along the streambank.

As June 1998, over 800 wetland plants and riparian shrubs and trees had been planted with a good success rate despite harsh soil conditions. Several volunteer plant species also established themselves at the site, including spike rush, alders, cottonwoods, and willows. The Parks and Recreation Division will monitor and irrigate the native plantings for as long as needed. Project partners and other community service groups will continue to maintain the plants and will help to weed, mulch, stake, plant, remove invasives, install beaver guards, etc.

Benefits

- Stabilized a creek bank and improved water quality by establishing a riparian buffer to intercept runoff and reduce soil loss, water temperatures, and the discharge of sediments and pollutants into Johnson Creek.
- Restored diversity, connectivity, and natural conditions along the creek, creating additional wildlife and fish habitat.
- Provided highly visible and accessible wildlife and plant viewing opportunities.
- Encouraged environmental awareness and promoted volunteer stewardship and a sense of community.
- Provided educational opportunities for both students and neighbors.

Budget

Total proposed – \$14,200

Total actual – \$9,313

Metro/U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service grant awarded – 6,500

Grant dollars spent - \$6,500

Helpful Hints – what worked, what didn't

- Select plants, as well as planting times and methods, that are appropriate for the project site; the design should be fitting to the micro-conditions of the area. By doing this we reduced potential impacts (i.e. people traffic and weeds, etc.) and secured an 80% success rate.
- Give plants adequate time to establish themselves. We planted vegetation in the spring to give plants 5 months to take root before the next flood season and installed an automated watering system.
- Develop strong partnerships; they were critical to the success of this project. Partners were very committed and involved in all phases of the project, including the follow-up monitoring.

- Carefully organize the planting event. Our planting was well organized and it paid off: event planning meetings were held with all partners to address logistics and details; the ratio of crew leaders to volunteers was good; roving inspectors/helpers were employed; refreshments were supplied and the quantity of work was reasonable; the site was divided into color coded areas and planting spots were flagged to ensure quick and efficient delivery and planting of vegetation.
- Monitor and maintain the site. Follow-up observations and timely maintenance was critical to the ongoing success of the project site. Volunteers were scheduled for the first summer and periodically throughout the year. Channeling education and community service groups to this site following the planting also provided ongoing stewardship of the site.

Partners

Johnson Creek Watershed Council
 M.E.S.D., Multnomah Youth Corps (MYC)
 Gresham Rotary Club
 Friends of Trees
 Envirocorps

Contact

Lora Price, Parks and Recreation Div., Dept. of Environmental Svcs., City of Gresham, (503) 618-2659

Timeline and Tasks	
March 6, 1997	Presented project to MYC at design workshop
March 6-30,1997.....	Reviewed planting design developed by MYC
March 1 - April 15,1997.....	Ordered plants
April 1-8, 1997.....	Ordered planting supplies
April 9, 1997	Held partnership planning meeting
April 27, 1997	Contractor completed site work
May 1-2, 1997	Plants delivered; Set-up planting day
May 3, 1997	Planted
May 5-10, 1997.....	Refined planting design and watered plants
May 17 - July 22, 1997	Volunteers watered, mulched, and weeded
Sept 29 - Oct 6, 1997	Installed beaver guards and replacement plants
April 25, 1998	Earth Day maintenance and additional planting