

Woods Memorial Park

northwest of the intersection of Southwest Capitol Highway and Southwest Taylors Ferry Road



BEFORE

Bank erosion is a problem

AFTER

Native plants create bank stabilization

The project was organized by the Southwest Neighborhoods, Inc., a neighborhood coalition for 16 neighborhood associations and three business associations in Southwest Portland. Woods Memorial Park is a 45-acre, undeveloped park in Southwest Portland. Woods Creek runs through the park and is a tributary of Fanno Creek. The project was planned as a demonstration project for the Fanno Creek and Tributaries Conservation Plan. The purpose was to improve an area of the stream channel and banks on the east fork of Woods Creek within the park that had become severely degraded. An illegal rope swing that youths used to swing from the top of the bank onto the other side caused severe erosion of the banks, vegetation to be trampled and soil compaction. English ivy and Himalayan blackberries were displacing native plants. Nuisance plants, especially ivy, were killing large trees. The stream needed pools for fish habitat.

The project had several components. The first task was to

remove nuisance plants, litter and old tires. Next native plants were purchased and planted to stabilize the stream banks, reduce erosion, provide nesting materials and food for wildlife. Erosion control netting was placed to retain soil until the plants became established. Logs and debris were carefully placed in the stream to create pools for fish, reduce stream bank erosion, and cool water temperatures.

The project depended heavily on volunteers from the community. Not all work was “on the ground.” Project staff worked closely with the Portland Parks and Recreation and Bureau of Environmental Services, and obtained a permit from the Division of State Lands to work in the stream. Southwest Neighborhoods, Inc. applied for an environmental review in partnership with the Portland Parks and Recreation and Bureau of Environmental Services.

Benefits

The eroded stream banks of Woods Creek were repaired. Trampled vegetation was restored, relieving compacted soil. Although the 1996 February floods washed out a significant number of newly planted native plants, many did survive. The initial removal of nuisance plants was not affected by the floods. The floods impacted the amount of work done in-stream. Logs and other structures were not placed as planned. Due to the flood, geotechnical experts and hydrologists will be needed to reassess the stream.

The project had numerous secondary benefits, including opportunities for community work and education, particularly for local youth. A resident organized Boy Scouts to accept year-round stewardship of the park. Scouts, with Portland Parks supervision, have done extensive work defining the trail system throughout the park and repairing broken bridges. Students from Wilson High School took photographs, participated in park cleanups and various grant site plantings. Smith Elementary School students took several field trips to the park and started a greenhouse project as part of their studies.

Budget

Proposed – \$7,220

Actual – \$14,664

Metro/US Fish and Wildlife grant award – \$4,500

Helpful hints – what worked, what didn't

- Nonprofits should be sure to understand what is involved in applying for permits (professional knowledge/skills and funds for permit fees).
- Employee turnover for the land-use specialist was high because of budget problems.
- Stay on top of the photo log, locations, documentation.
- Involve the community. Park neighbors, schools, scouts, church youth groups, bureaus, etc. have taken responsibility of watching for vandals, dumping, etc.

Partners

Southwest Neighborhoods, Inc.

Oregon Youth Conservation Corps

Timeline and tasks

Feb. 19, 1994	Ivy removal
April 16, 1994	Cleanup: removed tires, scrap metal, litter and yard debris
April 30, 1994	First planting
May 14, 1994	Second planting
July 16, 1994	Work party: removed invasive ivy and blackberry vines
Summer 1994	Extremely hot/dry weather conditions required frequent watering of all planting areas
April 15, 1995	Trail work party
April 22, 1995	Cleanup: removed tires, scrap metal, litter, and yard debris
Summer 1995	Monitoring and watering of site
Oct. 14, 1995	Work party: removed invasive ivy and blackberry vines
Winter 1995-96	Windstorms knocked down several trees. Woods Creek flooded and washed out much of the plantings. Loggers who fixed damage left deep ruts in the forest floor.
March 30, 1996	Smoothed out ruts, filled rain-caused rivulets
April 13, 1996	Cleanup
April 30, 1996	Geo-technical and hydrology experts need to study the stream before any further work could be done.

Local churches

Boy Scouts

Contact

Leonard Gard, Southwest Neighborhood Information, Inc., 823-4592