

Nofziger/Amberwood Park

by Shelley Matthews

YEAR
7

In Hillsboro, at 20900 NW Amberwood Drive, just west of NW 206th Ave.



BEFORE

*Boom arm
mower helps
remove invasive
blackberry from
embankment*

AFTER

*New growth of native
species enhances
habitat diversity and
cover*



Amberwood Park (formerly Nofziger Park; it was temporarily named after the previous owner) is a 21-acre site purchased with 1996 Open Spaces Bond Measure funds. A former farm site with pasturage, the site encompasses about 9 acres of floodplain and 12 acres of upland area. The restoration site is located within Amberwood Park at approximately River Mile 5.5 on Rock Creek, a tributary to the Tualatin River. A portion of the site was formerly grazed and had little native riparian vegetation. Several areas were overgrown with blackberry thickets.

The goals of this project were to:

- Remove invasive blackberries and replace with native trees and shrubs.
- Expand the riparian vegetation buffer along Rock Creek to a minimum of 50 feet by planting native trees and shrubs.
- Restore free flowing conditions to Rock Creek by removing a defunct crossing/culvert.

In the first phase of the project, blackberries were removed from two areas to prepare them for planting: 1) a 120-foot by 30 foot thicket on an embankment separating the floodplain from upland areas, and 2) a 2/3-acre thicket on an open woodland (scattered tree canopy) on the east side of Rock Creek. Jute/coir erosion control fabric was then installed on the steepest sections of the embankment prior to planting. Crews planted and mulched native trees and shrubs in both areas. Non-woven weed block fabric squares were installed around plants to suppress growth of competing grasses and weeds around the plants.

In phase II, the riparian corridor was expanded by planting native trees and shrubs (red osier dogwood, red alder, Douglas fir, Oregon grape, salal, swordfern, etc.). This area had been cleared when a trunk sewer line was installed across the property many years prior. The resulting corridor consisted of a single layer of canopy trees along the stream with some sections having no trees at all. Formerly grazed, the rest of the corridor was an assortment of grasses, including pasture and reed canary grasses. Weed block fabric was installed around the base of most plantings to reduce future competition from the thick grasses. Mesh seedling tubes were placed around plants and short sections of drain pipe tubing were also installed around the base of plants to protect against damage by string trimmers.

Finally, a homemade dam/stream crossing was removed. The stream crossing consisted of sections of broken pavement and asphalt heaped over culvert pipe. During summer low flow conditions, no water flowed over the rip-rap, obstructing fish passage. After removing the dam, heavy equipment was brought in to create a stream bank terrace for fir trees on the east side of the stream and to recontour a steep erosion-prone slope. This was reinforced with coir erosion control fabric and live willow stakes before the fir trees were cabled into place. Root wads were placed along the riverbank to provide additional reinforcement and instream structure. Fascine bundles were placed between the fir trees. Several large boulders and rootwads were placed along the west bank to protect the toe of the streambank.

Benefits

- Removed invasive vegetation and replaced with native plant materials.
- Expanded riparian vegetation buffer along Rock Creek.
- Created habitat for fish and wildlife in an urban area.
- Restored free flowing conditions in Rock Creek.
- Provided opportunities for hands-on student and public participation in restoration and enhancement projects.

Budget

Total Proposed – \$ 25,680

Total Actual – \$ 39,097

Metro/U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service grant award – \$ 12,840

Grant Dollars Spent - \$ 12,840

Helpful Hints – what worked, what didn't

- Schedule lots of time to monitor and control blackberry regrowth. Some say it needs to be attacked 12 times before it gives up.
- Consider tyvar fabric weedblock anchored with long staples as a mulch. It was particularly effective at controlling reed canary grass. The gray color blends better with the environment than black and may be more appropriate for non-irrigated settings as it does not “cook” the roots of young plants and may help preserve soil moisture.
- Mark all new plantings with survey ribbon to help you find them the next growing season and prevent accidental moving or damage.
- Stake new trees to aid in identification and support, particularly when new plantings are smaller than surrounding vegetation.
- Consider planting 1 or 2 gallon size plants: they are fairly inexpensive, small enough to handle for easy planting, and big enough that they can grow into easily identifiable specimens. Larger plants are more easily stressed.
- Provide every individual or group with clear instructions explained verbally on site and in writing. Give the whole picture, not just their portion of it.
- Always be open to new ideas: sometimes the best ideas come when and where you least expect them.
- Don't be afraid to change your plans if you need to: go with the flow and do what makes sense for the project.
- The Unified Sewerage Agency was highly effective in removing the culvert and stabilizing the bank. They had experience with similar projects and permit regulations and were very accommodating in sharing their skills with students.

Partners

Hillsboro Parks and Recreation

Friends of Trees

Jackson Bottom Wetlands Preserve

Miller Education Center

Tualatin River Watershed Council

Unified Sewerage Agency

Washington County Juvenile Department crew

Washington County Work-In-Lieu-of-Jail crew

Contact

Mary Ordal, Hillsboro Parks and Recreation, (503) 681-6225

Timeline and Tasks

First Planting:

June-August 1998	Site Prep: removed blackberries and mowed reed canary grass
September-October 1998 and February 2000	Planted native vegetation
May-June 1998	Secured Permits
September 2000	Removed Culvert
July-September 1999 And July-Oct. 2000	Irrigated new plantings
November 1998 and June 199-July 2000	Maintained site
Ongoing	Monitored site

Second Planting (east side of creek):

June-July 1999	Site Prep
October-November 1999	Planting
June-August 2000	Maintained and monitored site