

# Macleay Park – Balch Creek

Macleay Park is located along Balch Creek in Northwest Portland



## AFTER

*Logs are readied to form pool to enhance fish habitat (top)*



## BEFORE

*Balch Creek flows uninterrupted, badly eroding banks (at right)*

The Balch Creek watershed consists of undeveloped wood lots, residences, businesses, sanctuaries, and one of Portland's most heavily used parks, Macleay Park. Balch Creek serves as a storm drainage way, water source, house and road drainage, educational and recreational area, and fish habitat for a population of 2,000 to 4,000 native cut-throat Trout. At Lower Macleay Park, Balch Creek flows into a culvert and under the streets of Portland, eventually reaching the Willamette River. In order to protect the culvert and prevent flooding downstream, logs and debris that fall into the creek are removed. The naturally created habitat, essential to the fish and other aquatic life, is destroyed. The removal of debris also increases the velocity of the stream causing bank erosion. Development adjacent to the banks is causing sedimentation in the creek. In addition, the heavily traveled trails are creating erosion and sediment problems. Uninformed recreational users are going off the trail, destroying vegetation, compacting the soil, and entering

the creek. Thus, areas along the creek are bare of vegetation and sediments are being swept into the stream, degrading the water quality. English ivy and blackberries have engulfed native plant species in the area and decreased the habitat for wildlife. The Balch Creek corridor has become a dump site along the road for tires, appliances and household trash.

The project sponsor hired 12 crew members (high school-age youth) and three adult crew leaders in the summer of 1992 as part of the Balch Creek Watershed Enhancement/Education Project to address these problems. In addition to trail and creek work, the crew participated in educating the public. They developed a flyer for nearby residents, to explain the project and let people know how to become involved. Two additional flyers were passed out: American Forestry Association's – "Things You Can Do to Help the Environment" and the Governor's Watershed Enhancement Board's brochure about watersheds.

## Timeline

Aug. 1-31, 1992 ..... Construction of eight pools in Balch Creek and 12 pools in Miller Creek to expand and enhance areas for native trout species to feed and breed

Installation of cribbing along the trail to repair erosion damage and prevent further damage in three locations;

Removal of non-native species vegetation along the first mile of the trail (English Ivy and Himalayan blackberry)

Trash and litter removal along 2 miles of Balch Creek trail

Construction and installation of four signs along the Balch Creek trail advising of sensitive fish habitat in the stream

The work crew's education program consisted of three main elements:

- Work experience with training in proper tool use, trail maintenance construction and work behavior
- Field trips to local natural and educational areas
- Special presentations concerning conservation and natural resource management.

## Benefits

The improvements made to the fish habitat areas will provide protection and preservation for native trout species in the creek. Erosion control and prevention along the trail will continue to protect the habitat from the heavy public use. Property owners, developers and citizens who were educated about watersheds and their importance to our very survival, will bring about positive change. The education program provided valuable education for the crew.

## Budget

Proposed – \$35,225

Actual – \$32,127

Metro/US Fish and Wildlife Grant award – \$14,338

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

The most notable problem was the failure of three crew members to complete the program. Although occasionally a crew member is unable to complete a project, the experience with these three was particularly disappointing. All three were "at-risk" youth referred by the King Youth Center. In the future, the enrollment of youth with problems should be done with attention to the resources needed to assure successful completion. Perhaps smaller crews and crew leaders who have experience with "at-risk" youth would have helped. When tasks are menial, do them in small sessions and offer variety.

## Partners

City of Portland

Friends of Trees

Oregon Department of Agriculture

Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife

youth crew (high school aged)

King Youth Center

## Contact

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