

Stella Olsen Park

in Sherwood, along Cedar Creek west of the historic old town district and east of Sherwood High School



AFTER

*Boardwalk is
free of invasive
Himalayan blackberry*

Stella Olsen Park is Sherwood's primary park. The north four acres are dedicated to limited active recreational pursuits centered on two islands formed by three channels of Cedar Creek. Ten acres of wetlands, woodlands and riparian areas have been reserved by the parks master plan as a natural area, where only passive recreation is allowed.

Prior to this grant, several new trail and boardwalk systems were installed to reduce impacts to the natural habitat portions of the park. The foot bridge once located at the intersection of the active and passive recreation areas was moved to align with the new trail. The prior location of the footbridge became overgrown with Himalayan blackberries. Other portions of the site had been invaded by Himalayan blackberries, English holly and English ivy. Waterbars were installed along the new trails to prevent erosion and maintain the integrity of the park's natural area. Two viewing platforms, and songbird, wood duck and bat boxes were installed.

The goal of the restoration project was to remove the exotic species and replant with appropriate native species and to reclaim areas where informal trails had been made.

Blackberries were removed from the remnant wetland area and replaced with slough sedge, meadow sedge, soft rush and soft-fruited bulrush. The riparian area, Cedar Creek Greenway north of the active and passive recreational area intersection, was expanded and planted with western red cedar. Invasive plant species were removed from the remainder of the park and replaced with species such as flowering dogwood, red osier dogwood, ninebark, black cottonwood and Oregon ash.

Benefits

The project enhanced and restored a degraded area of the city's major park to its natural state. Habitat was enhanced by removal of non native, invasive plant species and planting of desirable native species. Wildlife habitat in the park was improved, increasing the opportunity for park users to see and learn more about wildlife, wetlands and stream ecology.

Students from Washington County Service Corps (youth corps) were able to learn about environmental restoration through hands-on experience identifying, collecting, propagating and monitoring native plant materials.

Timeline and tasks

Spring 1993	Youthcorps installed water bars
Spring/summer 1993	10 days of Himalayan blackberry removal by youth corps; gully drainage near the high school
Fall 1993	Youth corps planted trees and shrubs; closed off informal trails using string, signs and placement of brush piles
Spring 1994.....	Upland plantings
Summer 1994	Sherwood public works crew and youth corps dug drainage near high school, approximately 200 square feet. The excavation created shallow detention pond. Rock was added for stability and habitat. The youth corps collected and planted sedge and wetland grass seeds. Propagation success was very limited
Spring 1995.....	Planted willow, cottonwood and red osier dogwood cuttings in area with closed trails; hauled gravel from adjacent gravel road out of the wetlands

Budget

Proposed – \$56,630

Actual – \$56,630

Metro/US Fish and Wildlife grant award – \$22,500

Partners

City of Sherwood

Washington County Service Corps

Sherwood School District 88J

Helpful hints – what worked, what didn't

- Make sure school groups understand the commitment and responsibilities involved. Interest can wane if expectations are not managed, especially in the amount of physical work required.
- Seed collection and propagation calls for thorough background information, including timing of collection, cleaning, preparing and storage.
- Rope, signs and large brush piles were not enough to deter people from using the informal trails that were to be reclaimed. Planting the areas and leaving large logs and debris that did not look intentional worked better.

Contact

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