

Moonshadow Park

by Shelley Matthews

YEAR

6

borders Alden Ct. to the North, in the Garden Home area of Portland, OR.



BEFORE

Invasive blackberries and ivy, a trail, and stormwater pipes and outfalls compromise the narrow riparian corridor remaining along Ash Creek through Moonshadow Park

AFTER

Invasive species were removed, native vegetation was planted, and large woody debris was returned to the area to improve habitat structure, stabilize the stream, provide cover and shade, and enhance the diversity of plants and animals



This project was a collaborative effort between the Tualatin River Watershed Council and the Tualatin Hills Park and Recreation District (THPRD) to restore Ash Creek, a tributary of Fanno Creek, to a more natural state. Ash Creek meanders through a headwater riparian corridor dominated by a mixed forest of red alder, western red cedar and Douglas fir in Moonshadow Park. The THPRD owns and maintains Moonshadow Park, which is located in the heart of a residential community. The understory along the creek had been highly disturbed by residential development on the upland slope, and the placement of a sewer line along the stream. The corridor understory was dominated by invasive Himalayan blackberry. Intact wetlands and floodplain helped to absorb some of the land use related impacts. A single asphalt trail runs parallel to the creek and provides access for visitors from both the north and south side of the Park, but also results in disturbances to the already narrow riparian corridor. Dumping of yard debris by neighbors in the Park was also a problem.

The objective of this project was to enhance wildlife habitat and water quality of Ash Creek by returning the riparian corridor to a more natural condition. The project was also designed to increase neighborhood understanding of the creek system and promote stewardship. Restoration activities were also used to gauge support for a stream friends group for Ash Creek.

To enhance fish and wildlife habitat, provide shade, and improve water quality, crews removed invasive weeds (Himalayan blackberries and ivy) and re-vegetated the area with native plants. A concrete sleeve was poured around an exposed sewer pipe and large woody debris was secured downstream of the pipe to stabilize the eroding stream banks. Pole cuttings of willow and red osier dogwood were added to the bare banks. Additionally, gravel was placed downstream to enhance fish spawning habitat.

Efforts were made to educate and involve neighbors in restoration efforts and long-term stewardship. Flyers were sent out to 200 park neighbors on a regular basis to explain the project, notify them about upcoming work parties, and encourage them to get involved. A "Stream Care" brochure about organic lawn care and composting was developed and distributed throughout the neighborhood. In addition, a Naturescaping for Clean Rivers workshop was held at the Garden Home Recreation Center.

Benefits

- Enhanced fish and wildlife habitat within the park: increased canopy cover and diversity, and provided shade along the stream.
- Improved water quality by providing stream cover and lowering water temperatures.
- Stabilized streambanks and reduced further soil loss and sediment discharge into the creek.
- Enhanced fish habitat by improving spawning areas and providing additional cover.
- Slowed stormwater flows, reduced downstream flooding, and improved stream connections to its floodplain with the addition of large woody debris.
- Improved the aesthetic appearance of the park and minimized further down cutting along the path by covering up exposed sewer pipe.
- Provided wildlife and plant viewing, stewardship, and educational opportunities.

Budget

Total Proposed – \$25,888

Total Actual – \$16,071

Metro/U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service grant award – \$9,400

Grant Dollars Spent - \$9,115

Helpful Hints – what worked, what didn't

- Hire, or otherwise secure, appropriate technical support (e.g., biologists, hydrologists, etc.) Obtain permits early (months ahead of time) and anticipate delays when scheduling /coordinating the work crew's availability.
- Inform residents early and often of project purpose, recruitment opportunities, work parties, and community meetings.
- Hire youth crews to remove large growths of blackberries. Remove the blackberries before spring growth to allow the native understory vegetation to start taking over.
- Limit work parties to 4 hours, provide refreshments, and send thank you notes; make it fun.
- Secure funding and consider equipment or horses to facilitate placement of large wood.

Partners

Cascade Education Corps

CH2M Hill

Naturescaping for Clean Rivers

Tualatin Hills Park and Recreation District

Tualatin River Watershed Council

Unified Sewerage Agency

Contact

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Timeline and Tasks	
March 1997	Reviewed work plan, sent notices to neighbors, arranged for crew to assist with blackberry removal, researched and ordered plants
April 1997	Developed planting plan, arranged plant delivery, recruited neighbors, and conducted community work party
May 1997	Conducted community work parties and arranged watering
June 1997	Prepared plans to place wood and spawning gravel, prepared and submitted permits, monitored and watered plants
July 1997	Distributed "Stream Care" brochure to neighbors, and monitored and watered plants
August- September 1997	Installed concrete sleeve over exposed pipe, stabilized bank, placed spawning gravel, removed blackberries
November 1997	Removed blackberries, installed willow cuttings on eroded banks
March – April 1998	Removed more blackberries and planted more native vegetation, advertised Naturescaping workshop, placed woody debris in stream
May 1998	Conducted Naturescaping workshop