

Restoration Begins in Portland Harbor Superfund Site



Artist's rendering of Alder Creek Restoration Project after construction.

This summer habitat restoration efforts are underway at the Alder Creek site in Portland, Oregon. This is the first habitat restoration project that will be implemented specifically to benefit fish and wildlife affected by contamination in the Portland Harbor Superfund site. The project will provide habitat for salmon, lamprey, mink, bald eagle, osprey, and other native fish and wildlife living in the area.

The project will restore habitat that was once abundant but is now rare in this stretch of the highly industrialized Willamette River. By removing buildings, infrastructure, and fill material from the floodplain, reshaping the riverbanks, and planting trees and shrubs, the project will create shallow water habitat to provide resting and feeding areas for young salmon and lamprey and foraging for birds. The project will also restore beaches and wetlands to provide access to water and food for mink, and forests to provide shelter and nesting opportunities for native birds.

The restoration project is owned and managed by a habitat development company called Wildlands. The company intends to sell natural resource "credits" from the project to potentially responsible parties to help those parties meet their obligations for environmental damages resulting from contamination in the Superfund site.

Portland Harbor was designated a Superfund site in 2000. The Portland Harbor Natural Resource Trustee Council formed in 2002. Since that time the Trustee Council has been engaged in a phased natural resource damage assessment and restoration planning. The Trustee Council has worked closely with Wildlands on planning and design for the Alder Creek site to make sure the restoration project maximizes benefits to natural resource injured by long-term contamination in Portland Harbor.