

South Santiam Splash

The newsletter of the South Santiam Watershed Council

The South Santiam Watershed Council is a non-profit organization created via the Oregon Plan for Salmon and Watersheds. Our mission is to involve local people to enhance and protect the natural resources of the South Santiam River watershed for the social and economic benefit of its landowners, managers, and users.

Culvert Replacement in Wiley Creek Watershed

This past summer, the South Santiam Watershed Council partnered with the Campbell Group to remove a culvert on an unnamed tributary to Wiley Creek. The existing culvert posed several problems, the most obvious being that the perched outlet prevented passage of winter steelhead and cutthroat trout. In addition, the undersized culvert blocked the contribution of gravels and other bedload as much of it was deposited at the culvert inlet. These gravels serve an important function in the watershed, for fish use them to create spawning beds. A problem common for many undersized culverts was also in evidence at this location, during high water events the culvert would plug up with debris and back up the stream (see the overflow pipes in the picture at right). In some cases, this results in water crossing the road and threatening to damage the road or other infrastructure. A blown out road creates not only a transportation problem for traffic, but also contributes a pulse of sediment into the stream that threatens to cover salmon and steelhead eggs.



Culvert on tributary to Wiley Creek

To remedy this problem, the Council received a grant from the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB) to assist the land manager in removing the culvert and placing a 40' x 16' steel bridge. The project was implemented over the course of a few days in late July to accommodate the logging trucks that used the road. The stream was diverted using a pump, straw was placed to help capture sediment, and the culvert was excavated. After adding rock for stability and complexity to the stream bed, the bridge was placed and the road graded.

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A Message from the Coordinator

Greetings and welcome to another edition of the South Santiam Splash. There has been some very interesting developments in the past year; with the biggest change being the expansion of our partnership with our neighboring the North Santiam Watershed Council and the Calapooia Watershed Council. We are collaborating because our three respective watershed councils share similar ecological, social, and economic attributes and it makes sense to work together on certain projects. Our partnership has created organizational efficiencies and allowed us to leverage our work into new and exciting projects. Our collaboration has led to the hiring of Erika Lang, who is coordinating recruitment of landowners for restoration in all three watersheds. Erika has an extensive background in community organizing and a great interest in natural resource management. In the few short months that she has begun work on this project, results are already evident with many landowners contacting the Councils with potential restoration projects.

While some things change, others remain the same. The Council is still involved in restoration on Ames Creek in Sweet Home, treating Japanese knotweed on Crabtree Creek, partnering with the U.S. Forest Service on education and restoration projects, and last, but certainly not least, continuing to offer a neutral forum to discuss natural resource issues for those that live, work, or play in the South Santiam watershed. If you are interested in the projects and activities found in this newsletter, please feel free to attend an upcoming watershed council meeting. The South Santiam Watershed Council meets on the third Wednesday of the month from 6:00-8:00 pm at the Lebanon Senior Center, located at 65 Academy B St.

Local Students Assist with “Respect the River” Signs

In the winter and spring of 2007, students from Kris Richardson’s sixth grade class at Lebanon’s Pioneer Middle School assisted staff from the Council and the U.S. Forest Service in designing two “Respect the River” interpretive signs. The signs are placed at the Yukwah Campground on the Willamette National Forest. Students chose the themes of fish biology and ways that humans can reduce pollution into rivers and streams. After the interpretive panels were fabricated and the posts constructed by Al Grove’s Sweet Home High School metal shop class, the signs were placed in the ground in May. Soon after, the signs were featured in the inaugural “Over the Rivers and Through the Woods Scenic Byway” tour, and representatives from the class were able to present their work to tour attendees and the local media. We are grateful to the U.S. Forest Service and the Sweet Home Community Foundation for funding this great project.



Students with Yukwah Interpretive Sign

Japanese Knotweed Control Project: 3rd Treatment Season

This past fall, the Council completed its third season of treating Japanese knotweed on Crabtree Creek. This noxious, invasive weed was imported from Asia as an ornamental plant. Unfortunately, it has escaped the backyard and is threatening our watersheds. Japanese knotweed can grow to heights of 15 feet and is very aggressive, out-competing even the rugged Himalayan Blackberry in some locations. Knotweed often spreads during floods as the plant rhizomes are moved downstream. Knotweed infestations threaten plant biodiversity, offers poor streambank stabilization, and provide little or no benefits to fish and wildlife. To combat the spread of this weed, the Council has been working with landowners in the upper areas of Crabtree Creek and its major tributary Roaring River to treat knotweed on private property.



Japanese knotweed on gravel bar

In some locations, we've treated knotweed for several seasons and we are beginning to see some encouraging results. However, knotweed on Crabtree Creek is widespread and is a very hardy plant. It will likely take several more years of vigilance by not only the Council but by private property owners as well. The Council has a modest budget for re-vegetation with native plants where conditions are appropriate, and it also plans on working with interested landowners in obtaining grants to implement additional restoration.

The Japanese Knotweed Control Program is funded through the Federal Payments to Rural Counties program and the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board.

Summer Water Temperature Monitoring

The Council would like to give a big thank you for those who volunteered time this summer to place and check temperature dataloggers. This program, now in its 10th year, gives the Council valuable baseline data from which to help prioritize future voluntary restoration projects. Those who braved the hot summer weather and surprisingly high water in September were:



Sean Howells and Cascade Timber Consultants
Dave Zentzis and Mason, Bruce, and Girard, Inc.
Kris Richardson
Katie Kohl

SSWC Elections at Hand

That's right... The annual South Santiam Watershed Council elections for the 2008 Board of Directors are here! We are seeking nominations, and encourage any of you with an interest in the Council to nominate yourself or someone you know for the Board.



Our bylaws specify that half of the Board will rotate each year, to allow for more continuity amongst the Board over time. This year's elections are positions on the 15 person Board of Directors, to serve a two year term of office. ***Nominations are due by February 15, 2008.*** Elections will be held in late February, and the new Board of Directors will be announced shortly thereafter.

2008 will be an exciting year to be involved in the Council. We will be touring fun places in the watershed, and we have an early line-up of engaging speakers. The Ames Creek project is alive and well, the Knotweed Control project is well underway and we will be addressing culvert replacement throughout the basin. We will also be engaging landowners in priority sub-watersheds to complete voluntary restoration projects, and we will be working with the U.S. Forest Service on a variety of restoration and education projects.

Why should I serve on the Board of Directors?

Learn more about the people, places, and resources of the South Santiam watershed. Be a source for change and direction for the Council. The South Santiam Watershed Council offers local people the unique opportunity to be a part of a community organization that believes we can have both a strong economy and a healthy environment, and offers constituents a chance to be a part of some interesting projects and activities.

A Watershed Council is only as viable as its members themselves, as we are built from your knowledge and experience, and propelled by your time and energy. Please consider joining the Board to guide and govern the Council in 2008.

What am I getting myself into?

Your actual commitment of time and energy as a board member depends on your own interest and availability. In general, board members typically attend board and general council meetings, respond to queries from staff by phone or email, and represent the Council on a personal and professional level. The average board member contributes about 3 hours per month, and most of this time is invested at the monthly council meeting.

Who are we looking for?

We need dedicated individuals who care about the watershed in some way, shape, or form.

Elections continued on page 6

Landowner Recruitment for Restoration: Do a Project with the Council

This past summer, the SSWC began its “Landowner Recruitment for Restoration” program in partnership with its neighboring watersheds, the North Santiam and the Calapooia. Over the next two years, we will work with landowners on a voluntary basis to improve streamside buffers along Crabtree, McDowell, and Thomas Creek tributaries. These tributaries of the South Santiam River are being prioritized for several reasons. These streams have been listed on the federal Clean Water Act 303 (d) list for too high summer water temperatures. Increased water temperature affects survival of both salmon and trout. Streamside buffers, or riparian buffers, are narrow in many places or do not exist in others. The lack of native vegetation can lead to increased bank erosion, and a lack of fish and wildlife habitat. Additionally, invasive weeds including Himalayan blackberry and reed canary grass are commonly seen along these tributaries and are out-competing native vegetation.

If you live along Crabtree, McDowell, or Thomas Creek and would like to improve the riparian buffer on your property, please contact us! We will schedule a site visit with you and learn about your resource challenges. We have funding to help landowners complete a restoration project by:

- Removing invasive weeds
- Minimizing erosion through proper bank stabilization methods
- Planting native trees and shrubs
- Fencing off livestock from the creek to improve water quality and native plant survivability

As a landowner, you play a key role in helping to improve water quality, and fish and wildlife habitat! Planting riparian buffers with native trees and shrubs along the stream is a great place to start. A project along upper Crabtree Creek was completed this fall and is available to see upon request.

Culvert replacement continued from page 1

The new bridge easily passes water and will not likely require much maintenance. The SSWC with assistance from the U.S. Forest Service will monitor the project for several years to determine fish presence and record how the now free flowing stream channel has changed over the years. The SSWC would like to recognize K.C. Briggs, Norm and Diane Kaldahl, and Nels Jensen for their efforts and making this project a success!



New bridge over stream with Wiley Creek visible in background

Work Continues on Ames Creek



Bank erosion on Ames Creek



Bank stabilized with wood and vegetation

In September, restoration work was completed on Ames Creek at Sankey Park and just downstream behind the fire station. At Sankey Park, large wood was placed in the creek and anchored to boulders to help stabilize a failing stream bank below Weddle Bridge. The large wood will not only stabilize the bank, but will provide habitat for the fish in Ames Creek. At the same time, Ames Creek was reconnected to its floodplain at a site located behind the Sweet Home fire station. Dirt was excavated from the site, and the creek is now allowed to access its floodplain during high water events. This will provide flood storage for the homes and businesses downstream and a refuge for Ames Creek fish and wildlife during times of high water. Already this season, Ames Creek has accessed the site, and we expect that the project will continue to function as a restored floodplain. In December, students from Billy Snow's Sweet Home High School Biology class spent two hard working class periods planting appropriate vegetation at Sankey Park and behind the fire station. Project partners for the work accomplished include the U.S. Forest Service, City of Sweet Home, and the SSWC.

We expect more exciting work will be done in and around Ames Creek in the coming months and years, stay tuned for further developments!

Elections continued from page 4

You can be from anywhere or possess any background. Skills with farming, forestry, business, planning, teaching, biology, engineering, art, legal affairs, creative writing, history, etc. are all valued. You may also serve as a representative of a group, a particular interest, or a government that is here in the South Santiam watershed. We value detail-oriented people, creative brainstormers, and everyone in between!

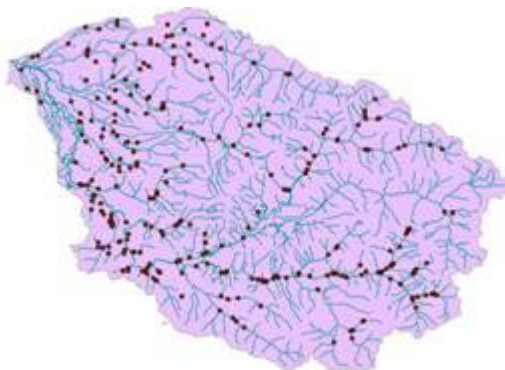
Please provide the name and phone number for each nominee, and submit the nomination to our office by mail, phone, or email. Send nominations to 4431 Highway 20, Sweet Home, OR 97386; call us at (541) 367-5564; or email at sswc@centurytel.net



Students planting at Ames Creek

SSWC Begins Fish Passage Barrier Prioritization Program

For several years, the Council has been trying to get a better idea of where barriers exist to fish migration throughout the watershed. A comprehensive program that crosses jurisdictional boundaries, and is thus able to answer big questions like, where should the Council invest time and resources to ensure fish passage? Or, which of these culverts that block fish migration should be our highest priority for correcting?



Potential barriers in the South Santiam watershed

The Council is excited to have these questions answered as we embark on the Santiam Fish Passage Barrier Inventory Program. This project involves both the South Santiam and North Santiam Watershed Councils as both organizations currently lack a complete picture of the fish passage barriers in our respective watersheds.



Perched culvert

A further benefit that the Council hopes to derive from the program is helping landowners alleviate problems associated with culverts becoming plugged with debris during flood events and cause damage to infrastructure such as roads and driveways. If a culvert has been made larger for fish passage or even replaced with a bridge, damages to infrastructure are less likely to occur as high flows pass through much easier.

The program is being funded through a grant by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (administering the Oregon Governors Fund for the Environment) and Federal Payments to Rural Counties. The project is being coordinated by Eric Anderson, graduate student in Water Resources Science at Oregon State University. It is expected that by the summer of 2008, the project will be field-based, with surveys being completed at potential fish passage barriers. Once barriers are inventoried, prioritization will be done using Geographic Information Systems (GIS) technology.

This project should prove to be fun as well as rewarding. The Council is looking for volunteers who are interested in conducting fish passage surveys, and don't mind getting a little wet this summer! For more information, please contact Eric Hartstein at (541) 367-5564 or via email at sswc@centurytel.net.



Low flow through Ames Creek culvert

SSWC Meetings:

The South Santiam Watershed Council meets on the 3rd Wednesday of every month from 6:00-8:00 pm. The meetings are held at the Lebanon Senior Center, located at 65 Academy B St., in Lebanon. We strive to include speakers that present on topics important and interesting for people in the South Santiam watershed. As always, everyone is encouraged to join us to discuss local watershed issues and solutions! For more information feel free to contact Eric Hartstein at (541) 367-5564.

Our upcoming Council meetings are:

<i>Date</i>	<i>Speaker</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Time</i>
<i>2/20</i>	<i>Eric Andersen</i>	<i>Santiam Basin Fish Passage</i>	<i>Lebanon Senior Center</i>	<i>6:00 pm</i>
<i>3/19</i>	<i>Greg Taylor</i>	<i>Foster Dam and Water Temp.</i>	<i>Lebanon Senior Center</i>	<i>6:00 pm</i>
<i>4/16</i>	<i>TBD</i>			



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