



Walama Restoration Project

Issue #1

PO Box 894 Eugene, OR 97440 541-484-3939 www.walamarestoration.org

Spring 2004

Creek Side Recovery and Renewal

In the scorching Willamette Valley heat of late August 2003, WRP field staff cut, dug and pulled at the parched ground with hand tools and machetes, removing bountiful bundles of Armenian blackberry by the root wad. After days of experiencing sunburn, occasional bee stings, and endless embedded blackberry thorns, a new landscape was beginning to unearth along two salmon-spawning creeks in rural Dexter, Oregon – a landscape filled with a vision for sustainable ecological restoration.



Dianne Davis of the Lost Creek Watershed Council (LCWC) contacted WRP last spring to work on helping construct a budget for two riparian restoration projects funded by the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board. The projects, when implemented in late summer, involved community volunteers, LCWC, and WRP field staff, and two landowners.

Both sites along Lost Creek and Carr Creek, which are home to species such rainbow trout and spring Chinook salmon, exhibited extreme encroachment of blackberries and, in some places, impenetrable thickets of reed canary grass along the banks. There was a significant lack of canopy cover along creeks themselves, and both banks were highly eroded in critical areas. The watershed council's goal was to remove the non-native species and replace them with native vegetation to improve fish and wildlife habitat. WRP's goal was to implement the logistics and design a plan so both landowners could continually conduct maintenance effectively for a period of time before the sites would be self-sustaining.



This past winter, **over thirty different habitat-specific species of trees, shrubs, and forbs were planted along both creeks and their adjacent habitats.** WRP staff used jute netting and willow stakes to stabilize extremely steep slopes that over cut the creeks. This spring we finished sheet mulching and, with the help of dedicated volunteers, we cleared any returning blackberry sprouts. Willow and dogwood cuttings are currently leafing out along the banks, small ferns and wood sorrels are spreading along the forest floor, salmonberries are filling out, and cottonwood seedlings are growing steadily.

Participation in these riparian projects open opportunities for WRP and LCWC to explore larger scale non-chemical treatments of non-native species through experimental design. **Projects like these are beginning to spread throughout rural and urban areas in Lane County with the support of willing volunteers and dedicated watershed councils.** With those who are ready to take the time and effort towards restoring critical habitats on a small scale, there is hope that we can push forward a stronger movement towards a new environmental paradigm that entails looking deeper into the cycles of our remnant ecosystems and stewarding what we have left by digging our hands into the dirt.

Our Mission

The Walama Restoration Project (WRP) is a community organized non-profit, founded in 2001, and dedicated to the enhancement, rehabilitation, and restoration of the waterways, forest, and grassland ecosystems within and adjacent to the Willamette Valley. WRP provides a crucial community service by actively maintaining the unique and fragile ecosystems in this valley. In addition to ecosystem restoration, our organization develops and implements educational outreach programs for school groups and the public to encourage local ecosystem awareness.

~ RESTORATION NEWS ~

In collaboration with the city of Eugene, **WRP was able to finish clearing five acres of ivy this year at the uppermost section of Hendricks Park.** Highland Park neighbors worked with Friends of Hendricks Park to raise support for us to clear an additional acre adjacent to Highland Avenue in February. Thank you Hendricks Park neighborhood!

This spring, WRP staff returned to **Maurie Jacobs Park** by the Valley River footbridge to clear blackberries and plant over ten different species of shrubs and trees throughout the 200-foot stretch by the river. Among the species planted and sheet mulched were black cottonwood, Willamette ponderosa pine, common snowberry, red alder, and big leaf maple. This three year project, implemented by WRP field staff, community volunteers, and students from Wellsprings Friends high school, has resulted in the beginnings of a diverse riparian urban landscape. We are currently seeking funding to continue our work along this site as well as further downstream.

During the month of March, **WRP volunteers introduced more native species to the region by planting grass and forb seedlings at Crest Height Park, in south Eugene.** Roemers fescue and blue wild rye were among the



Bank stabilization and re-vegetation project along Camp Creek.

grasses planted. Both species were grown from seed and processed by local youth in the Whiteaker neighborhood during August 2003. Other species planted at the park by volunteers included ocean spray and Willamette ponderosa pine. More seed collection will happen this June. Find out how you can become involved by reading the 'volunteer opportunities'!

Beginning in late December 2003, WRP field staff participated in a collaborative effort with the Mid Fork Watershed Council to **restore riparian forest habitat at Elijah Bristow State Park** through experimental design. WRP successfully cleared one acre of blackberries through physical removal. Follow-up monitoring will occur in spring 2005.

In March, WRP worked with **Juan Welsh of the Mckenzie Watershed Council to conduct riparian restoration along Cedar Creek and Camp Creek in Marcola.** WRP removed non-native species, planted a variety of native shrubs and trees, and re-contoured an extremely eroded slope. WRP is continuing to work with Juan on critical riparian projects this summer in the Mckenzie watershed.

Many thanks to the businesses, organizations, and major supporters who have helped us fulfill our mission as land stewards and educators!

Courtney Abbott, Evelyn Anderson, Fred and Sandra Austin, Brian Baker, Bruce Bowerman, Doak Creek Native Plant Nursery, Sue Dockstaden and Christine Mitchell, Down To Earth, Thomas Easton, Edison Elementary School, Eugene City Bakery, Friends of Hendricks Park, Growers Market Cooperative, Anita and Arthur Johnson, Guy Johnson, Beth Hunt, Albert Leinbach, Lorane Hills Nursery, Lost Creek Watershed Council, Mckenzie Watershed Council, Mid Fork Willamette Watershed Council, Netcorps, Peace Rose Graphics, Helen Posey, Victor Sabin, Tim Scott, Dwight Taylor, Think Electric, Westmoreland Elementary School, Delores Wilson

WRP Staff Spotlight

Nathan Greene, an Oregon native, began working with WRP as a technician in August 2002, and has since become a valuable asset to our programs. He can be seen in the field planting canopy trees along creeks or pulling English ivy while covered in mud from head to toe at Hendricks Park. He also assists and volunteers time at WRP's educational events performing several tasks from motivating and helping school groups plant trees correctly to hauling materials for sheet mulching and inventorying tools. Nathan emphasizes safety in the workplace and, above all, brings coherence and a rather unique sense of humor when needed (that includes those rainy days in the field).



Breaking Ground with the Edison School

On March 18th, Robyn Hagg-Dickens' 3rd grade class of 20 students took to the field and began digging away to plant snowberry and elderberry shrubs at Hendricks Park. The project began as a collaboration between WRP, parent-volunteers from Edison Elementary, and Friends of Hendricks Park. The day began with an in-class discussion on the impact of noxious weeds in their neighborhoods, followed by a visual display and short presentation on the roles of native plants in forest communities. The students then met five WRP staff and six Friends of Hendricks Park volunteers at the park to aid in the awaited project. Potted snowberries were strategically placed in spaces adjacent to steep slopes preceding the arrival of the students, and bundles of bare root elderberries were standing by ready to be planted. After the students arrived, they were led up a short trail to the upper section of the park where they were handed out shovels, and participated in a planting demonstration. They then took on the task of digging holes and planting shrubs. **More than sixty shrubs were planted along barren slopes that were recently eradicated of English ivy.** Many of the snowberries planted were propagated and transplanted at the park by local youth in 2002 with WRP staff.



By combining the seasonal steps of propagation, transplanting, and re-vegetating, students can participate in closing the loop in the cycle of restoration. Please contact Stephanie Schroeder at 484-3939 to see how your school can become involved with our outdoor classroom program.

Growing up in the Central Coast Range, Nathan has witnessed the gradual transformation of native forests changing into tree farms covered with non-natives like Armenian blackberry and scotch broom. He has always wanted to find a way to do his part in reversing the degradation he has seen since the late 70's. WRP gave him the opportunity to transfer this energy into mending native habitats in the Willamette Valley. Nathan believes that the greatest aspect of his job is "working together to restore native habitats and being able to really enjoy looking back every day of work to see significant progress." We thank you Nathan, for your skills, patience, and dedication!

~ Volunteer Opportunities ~

In June, WRP will be focusing on clearing out noxious weeds and collecting native seed at three urban natural areas. Please bring gloves and join us for refreshments and a workshop on native prairie species on the following dates. We meet from 9-noon. Contact us at 484-3939 for more information. Hope to see you there!

- **June 12:** Join WRP and Far West Neighbors at the Gudu-kut Natural Area. The Gudu-kut Natural Area is located along the Amazon Canal on City View street, between 15th and 18th Ave.
- **June 19th:** Berkeley Park. Located at 14th Ave. and Wilson Ct., off of City View street.
- **June 22nd:** Crest Heights Park. Located on Crest Drive behind Crest Elementary School.



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PO Box 894

Eugene, OR 97440

Community Supported Rehabilitation and Native Re-vegetation of Our Watersheds

Walama Restoration Project relies on community support to continue facilitating our educational programs. If you would like to become involved by volunteering at a work party or by making a tax-deductible contribution, please fill out this form and send to:

**Walama Restoration Project
PO Box 894
Eugene, OR 97440**

Yes! I would like to be a supporter!

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native gumweed
Amazon Park, Eugene

Yes! I want to volunteer!

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__Please let me know to how get my child's school involved!

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