

Within Your Reach

A publication of the Johnson Creek Watershed Council

reach: a) a portion of a stream or river b) an extent, esp. of knowledge or comprehension

Your Wet Winter Watershed

By Jordan Vinograd, Community Outreach Coordinator

Your watershed has once again been transformed by the changing seasons. We entered 2006 with an unusually wet winter, causing our little creek to become a raging river. While the flooding caused by these high waters may make positive outcomes difficult to discern, one huge benefit of this precipitation is ground water recharge.

The term ground water is used to describe the large amounts of water that are stored in the ground. Most of this water comes from precipitation that trickles downward from the land's surface. Ground water accumulates in pockets underground called "aquifers." Aquifers are a huge store-

house of our water that people all over the world depend on in their daily lives. After relatively dry years like last year, our aquifers need to be refilled or recharged by the winter rains.

In this issue of *Within Your Reach*, we encourage you to think like your watershed and use the wet weather to "recharge" your system! The Council is highlighting stories of dedication, support and community that will inspire you to channel your renewed energy into watershed restoration activities.

One great opportunity for stewardship is our eighth annual Watershed Wide Event to be held on Saturday, February 25th.



Volunteers work along the Springwater Trail during last year's Watershed Wide Event

You'll notice ads placed throughout this issue from organizations that are supporting this community event. Thank you to our sponsors!

Happy New Year and happy reading!

Stories from the 'Shed: *Barbara Schnable*

By Michelle Bussard, Executive Director



Volunteers work to pull blackberry at Errol Heights below one of the structures built by George Schnable

I often tell people there are treasured places along Johnson Creek that are capable of transporting you into gentle stillness that only nature can offer. Sitting within the dimly lit living room of Barbara Schnable, I knew I'd found another treasure tucked away within the Johnson Creek watershed.

As Barbara talked, I immediately no-

tice her deep connection to the place she and her late husband George Schnable bought in 1944 and christened "the swamp." Her connection was expressed through a string of antidotes about barn owls, china pheasants, raccoons, possums, trilliums and duckweed; and through the lives of her neighbors, many of whom had lived in the neighborhood for even longer than she. "It is an ancient street," she says. She should know: it was the Leutholds who built her home. (For those of you that may follow this column, you'll recall that Randi Leuthold's story was featured Spring of '04.) Through this brief meeting, I came to know a part of this watershed through the eyes and heart of a woman whose connection to it defined her life story.

For George Schnable, a lithographer

and photo engraver, home was always all about being on the water. As newlyweds in 1938, they purchased their first property along Johnson Creek in the vicinity of Bell Station. It came with the original homestead deed. "It was like reading a piece of history," Barbara said. Over the years, she remembered, Johnson Creek would crest its banks and fill their basement with water and then, "it would drop that fast, like an elevator when the rain stopped." In 1952, George and Barbara assumed their position as guardians of "the swamp" along Errol Creek. Barbara recalled how they would sell water-cress from the ponds to Mr. Rivelli who paid just enough to pay their annual property taxes of \$17.

And George began his legendary build-

Continued on page 3



New Watershed Signs

By Heath Keirstead, Outreach Assistant

You may have spotted these watershed signs at one of 12 known creek crossings and watershed boundary locations in Portland and Milwaukie. The signs are three feet tall by two feet wide, white with teal lettering, display the Council's logo, and the words "Johnson Creek Watershed." The JCWC is about to raise the number to 42.

As outlined in the Public Outreach and Education section of our Watershed Action Plan, the goal of sign placement is to increase awareness about Johnson Creek among community residents. We began the Signage Expansion Project by identifying 99 possible sign locations (including 51 creek crossings, 8 places along the Springwater Corridor, and 40 feasible watershed boundary sites). We have now narrowed our list to the top 30 priority sign locations for the first phase of the project.



One of the old Johnson Creek Watershed signs

The locations were chosen based on a prioritization system that takes into account traffic density, population density, protection status of the stream reach, and the number of existing signs near the proposed location. Some of the highest priority sites include the intersection of Tacoma, 32nd and Johnson Creek Blvd, the crossing on Foster near Barbara Welch Blvd, the watershed boundary on 181st in Gresham, and the crossing on Deardorff Rd.

The first group of signs will be funded by money from the ThermoFluids settlement. As additional funding is secured we will continue to install signs in as many of the locations as possible, with the hopes of reaching every resident of the Johnson Creek Watershed from the headwaters to the mouth.

If you would like to be a part of this project by installing signs at specified locations or by monitoring sign condition once they've been installed, we'd love to enlist your services! Contact us at info@jcw.org or (503) 652-7477.

Did you know that...

- In Gresham and East County, anything that enters the stormdrain feeds directly into our rivers and streams without being treated?
- Pet waste is a major source of bacteria in rivers and streams?
- Any chemical you use on your lawn or garden, *even fertilizer*, washes into waterways and harms fish and other aquatic life?

What can you do? Take these simple steps to protect our rivers and streams!

- Maintain your car to prevent leaks.
- Use City of Gresham's **FREE** Fish-Friendly Carwash Kit for your fundraisers.
- Call for City of Gresham's **FREE** Doggie Bag Holders so you never forget to take a bag when you walk your dog!
- Reduce or eliminate chemicals and use only natural/slow-release organic fertilizers in your yard and garden.
- Plant native, drought-resistant plants on your property. These plants will need less water and chemicals to survive because they are already suited to our climate.



City of Gresham thanks you for your efforts to keep our local watersheds healthy!

Free Doggie Bag Holder

Made with reused materials from SCRAP

www.scrapaction.org



With this free Doggie Bag Holder, you'll never forget a bag. Just put it on your pet's collar or leash and it becomes a quick and easy way to help the City of Gresham keep our parks, streams, and wetlands safe and clean.

To receive your FREE Doggie Bag Holder:

- Send your mailing address to: dog.holder@ci.gresham.or.us
- Or call 503-618-2793

Limit 3 per address

Free Fish-Friendly Car Wash Kit

Is your community or school group hosting a car wash to raise money this spring?

- The City of Gresham has a free, easy way to have a car wash without harming the environment.
- Simply for using the kit, we will donate \$25 to your organization!

To reserve a FREE Fish-Friendly Car Wash Kit or learn more:

- Call 503-618-2793
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Restoration Project Funds Available Through the OWEB Small Grant Program

The Small Grant Program is an easy-to-engage-in, competitive grant program that awards funds of up to \$10,000 for on-the-ground restoration projects. It enables landowners to contribute to the Oregon Plan for Salmon and Watersheds by committing "small acts of kindness" on their properties for the benefit of water quality, water quantity, and fish and wildlife. From planting native plants along stream sides to reducing sedimentation and erosion from upland farms, citizens everywhere can make a difference.

The Program responds to a need for local decision-making about watershed restoration opportunities though designating a team of local representatives to review projects and give recommendation for funding to OWEB, who then awards final approval. The Johnson Creek Watershed is located in the Lower Willamette East Team, which is a partnership of local Watershed Councils and Soil & Water Conservation Districts. For more information about this program or to contact your local Small Grant Team call or email Christine Hurst at Christine@jwcw.org or 503-652-7477.

Stories (continued from front page)

ing projects from amassing construction cast-offs. Among other projects, George designed and built a "swept wing" storage shed. Its design was admired at the time and still stands as solid and graceful as 45 years ago. Unfortunately, it was hardly large enough to house all of his construction collections, piles of which were later uncovered beneath years of blackberry and ivy growth by a Johnson Creek Watershed Council volunteer team.

Whether grading the road in the neighborhood with his bulldozer, dumping dirt on Barbara's favorite hillside of trilliums – one of the few times she recalls being really angry at him - or using a car jack to lift into place the massive timbers that form the decaying skeleton of "the house" that overlooks the Errol Creek ponds, George preferred working alone. He did "love to sit and have a cigarette and talk though," and Barbara remembered how her son and their neighbors would

wander down to the ponds to have a chat with George. While George tended the duckweed and blackberries, Barbara was tending to children and family animals.

Barbara and George held a great affection for all animals, especially the fowl that nested in their swamp. Gussy, the goose, was a favorite. "She would nuzzle my leg when I was out hanging the laundry until I bent down to pet her," Barbara said. But there were also the peahen and peacock that they eventually sold to the zoo, and then the china pheasants that once abounded on the property.

The ponds were a source of pride for both Barbara and George. She recalled how "they nearly always stayed the same cool temperature. George worked incessantly to keep duckweed from carpeting the ponds below. On one occasion, he even brought Barbara down to see 5 barn owls watching him work.

Although George passed away in 1981,

today Barbara is still giving back to her watershed community. At 89 years old, she is an avid volunteer. Barbara sold the Errol Heights property to the City of Portland's Parks Bureau in 2000. She hopes that whatever may happen to her, the home that she has lived in for 54 years will be used "for some good cause." Meanwhile, she feels as if her husband's stewardship is being carried on as the City, Friends of Errol Heights and the Council carefully shepherd restoration of Errol Creek.

Luckily, on February 25th, hundreds of volunteers will have the opportunity to express and share Barbara's tireless enthusiasm for watershed stewardship as the JCWC fields volunteer crews at 10 restoration sites, including Errol Heights. Barbara will be there to greet them at "the swamp"!

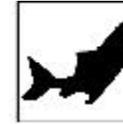
**2006
Watershed Wide
Event**

*Made possible by the
Jubitz Family Foundation*

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- Oregon Hunters Association
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Eighth Annual



Johns

February 25, 2006

Are you looking for a fun way to give back to your community?

For the eighth year in a row, Johnson Creek Watershed Council is taking a watershed wide approach to community stewardship. On February 25, 2006 the Watershed Wide Event will bring together hundreds of volunteers from throughout the Johnson Creek Watershed and beyond to ten sites for a variety of restoration activities. Volunteers of all ages and abilities will help enhance the creek by removing invasive species, planting native trees and shrubs, and mulching new plants. The restoration work will take place from 9am to noon, followed by a volunteer appreciation lunch party!

By joining us on this day in February, you can support restoration in your own neighborhood as well as contribute to the greater vision of a healthy Johnson Creek.

A brief summary of each site's activities is provided here, but be sure to check out the event webpage at www.jcwc.org/wwe.htm. To register, visit the webpage or contact us at info@jcwc.org or (503) 652-7477.



1. Klein Point (SE McLoughlin and Jefferson) - Come help remove invasive plants at this site near Johnson Creek's confluence with the Willamette River, right near downtown Milwaukie.

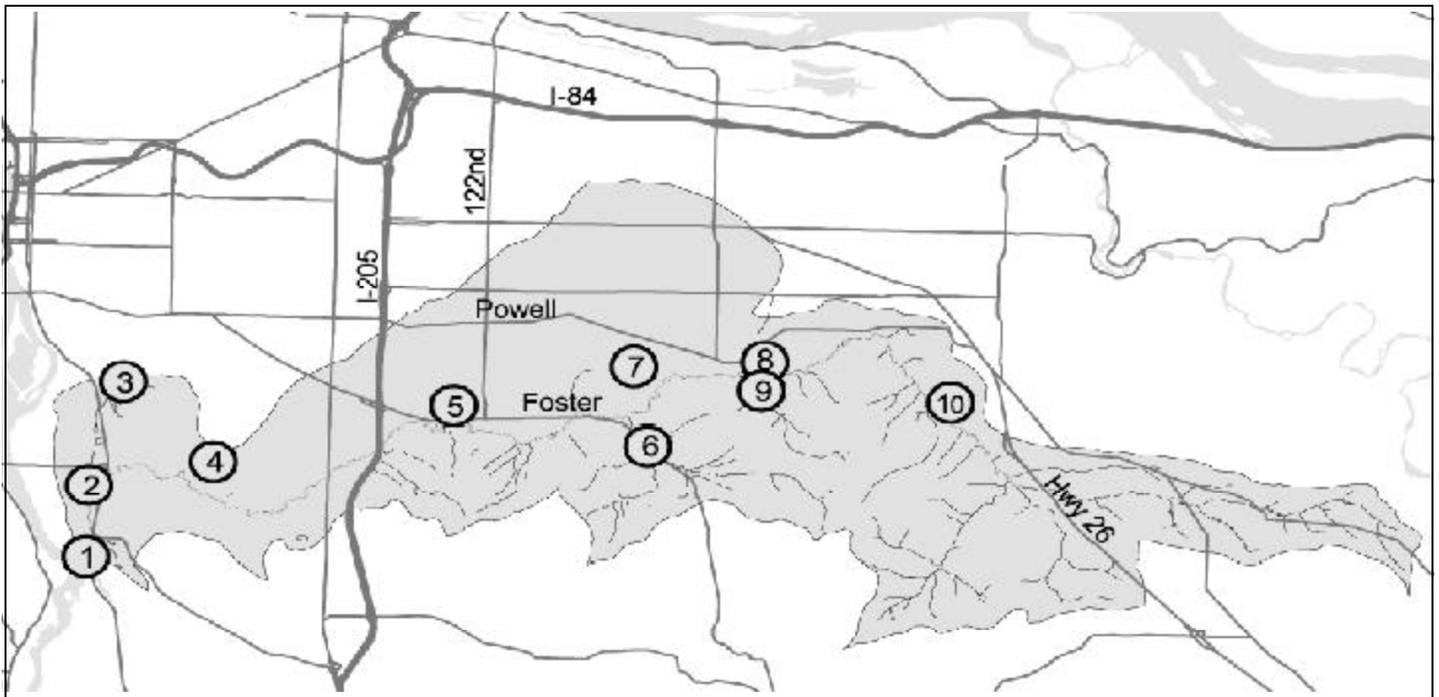
2. Johnson Creek Park (SE Clatsop and McLoughlin) Portland Parks and Recreation will lead this planting as part of a new restoration initiative to restore the east bank of Johnson Creek as it runs through this community park.

3. Eastmoreland Golf Course (SE 27th Ave and Bybee Blvd) - Join AmeriCorps, Boy Scouts, and PGE as they plant native trees and shrubs to complete this phase of restoration work along Crystal Springs.

4. Errol Heights (SE 45th and Harney) - Friends of Trees will lead this planting along Errol Creek, a tributary to Johnson Creek. Come see one of Portland Parks and Recreation's most recent success stories at this donated wetland property.



Johnson Creek Watershed Wide Event



5. Beggar's Tick (SE 111th and Harold) - Metro will be leading an invasive removal at this beautiful and historic open wetland in the Lents neighborhood. An excellent site for bird lovers!

6. Kelley Creek (SE 162nd and Flavel Dr.) Join area residents along this beautiful stretch of stream, as they work to remove invasive species that threaten the healthy undergrowth of Lower Kelley Creek.

7. Powell Butte Nature Park (SE 162nd and Powell) - Join Portland Parks and Recreation and the local chapter of the Oregon Hunters Association as they plant shrubs in one of the largest open spaces in the watershed.

8. Gresham Woods (SW 14th and Binford) - Join Historic Downtown Kiwanis in this natural area planting and invasive removal. Gresham Woods is a stunning 50-acre site right along the Springwater Corridor in Gresham.



9. Butler Creek Trail (SW 14th & Binford) - Join Gresham ESA Program, and area residents as they work to improve this corridor by removing invasive plants, and planting native shrubs along Butler Creek.

10. Hogan Cedars (Hogan Rd and Springwater Trail) Come help Metro volunteers as they continue to restore this area by removing ivy. Located in outer SE Gresham this open space along Johnson Creek is an urban gem.



The East Multnomah Soil and Water Conservation District is proud to support the Johnson Creek Watershed Council and the 2006 Watershed Wide Event

We all live in a watershed and we can all help protect and improve water quality!

Volunteer for the Johnson Creek Watershed Council's Watershed Wide Event. Work with us to make a difference in your own backyard.

Attend a Free Naturescaping Workshop

Pesticides, fertilizers, and loose soil from our yards can wash off our properties into streams and other waterways when it rains. Come learn how to use less water and chemicals *and* have less landscape maintenance – direct benefits to you, your garden and the watershed. Plus attract interesting and beneficial wildlife to your property.

To Register or Request a Schedule of Classes:

Please include your name, address including zip, telephone #, and e-mail address.

Email: naturescaping@yahoo.com

Phone: 503-797-1842



Request a Free Site Visit

The East Multnomah Soil and Water Conservation District offers site visits to farms of any size and to any property with a creek, stream, river, or wetland. We provide technical assistance to help you learn easy ways to improve your property and protect natural resources.

Assistance is available with:



- erosion control
- riparian & wetland restoration
- invasive weed control
- pasture management
- mud & manure management
- nutrient management
- water conservation
- wildlife habitat

Call 503-222-7645 x105 to schedule a site visit.



Japanese Knotweed

By Noah Jenkins, JCWC AmeriCorps Intern

You may have seen it in your travels in the watershed: 10-15 feet tall, stems like bamboo, pretty clusters of small, white flowers, and big, heart-shaped leaves. Don't let that pretty face fool you; this plant is BAD NEWS! Japanese knotweed, scourge of creekside plant diversity, is a fast-growing,

Knocking Out Knotweed

very invasive plant that is spreading rapidly through the Johnson Creek Watershed. Yet take heart, gentle reader! Noah Jenkins, an AmeriCorps member serving with the Johnson Creek Watershed Council, is leading an effort to eradicate this fleecy-flowered menace.

Noah will be contacting creekside residents by mail in the coming months, and following up with door-to-door visits to seek cooperation in finding where knotweed is in the Johnson Creek Watershed and beginning a program to eliminate it. He will be asking landowners' permission to look for knotweed on their property; if it's found, he will treat it with an herbicide application for them if they so desire,

FREE of charge. For more information on knotweed or about this project, check out our website: www.jcwc.org.

We need your help in locating stands of knotweed. If you know you have this plant on your property, or have seen it in the watershed, please contact Noah at (503) 652-7477. Spread the word to your friends and neighbors in the watershed! By locating and treating all of the knotweed stands in the watershed, we will be able to keep this plant from getting out of control and preserve wildlife diversity along Johnson Creek and its tributaries. This project is made possible through funding from the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Fund.

Knotweed F.A.Q.s

Q. *How did Japanese Knotweed get here?*

A. Knotweed was introduced here as an ornamental from Asia by way of the UK, and has been able to spread rapidly in the Pacific Northwest.

Q. *Why does it spread so fast?*

A. Because tiny fragments of root as small as 1/2" can sprout and form new colonies, it has moved quickly through watersheds.

Q. *Why is Knotweed a threat to Johnson Creek?*

A. Once established, it grows and expands quickly, crowding out native vegetation and preventing new trees from growing up to replace ones that die. This is bad news for wildlife; native trees and shrubs provide animals and birds with food and shelter, as well as the shade, wood, and erosion control that make streams healthy for fish.

Q. *What can I do to get rid of Knotweed on my property?*

A. Contact us at (503) 652-7477 or noah@jcwc.org to get assistance with eradicating this nuisance species!



WHEN PEOPLE GET TOGETHER THINGS GET DONE.

TOGETHER WE CAN PRESERVE ALL THAT'S GREAT ABOUT OREGON. VISIT SOLO.ORG



Thank you, new and returning Friends of Johnson Creek!

The Council would like to extend a very warm welcome and thank you to all our new and returning Friends! For over ten years, JCWC has been working to foster stewardship of this watershed. Our work depends on the support we receive from friends, volunteers and staff. With your continued help, we can make sure that present and future generations can enjoy living, working and recreating in a healthy Johnson Creek Watershed. Thank you to everyone who has expressed their support by becoming a Friend of Johnson Creek!

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 Steve Bennett
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 Brown and Caldwell
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 Frank Wildensee
 Bob Williams
 Rhea and Doug Wong

You can become a Friend of Johnson Creek too! Check out the Friends donation form below, or go to www.jcwc.org and click on the "Donate" button. Thank you!

Yes!
I want to become a Friend of Johnson Creek!

Name: _____
 Address: _____
 City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
 Phone: _____ E-Mail: _____

I want to volunteer at the 2006 Watershed Wide Event!

I've enclosed my contribution of:

| | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$500 Chinook | Please send me updates on the |
| JCWC: <input type="checkbox"/> \$100 Coho | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$50 Steelhead | <input type="checkbox"/> via newsletters like this |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$25 Cutthroat | <input type="checkbox"/> via e-mail |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$_____ Other | |

via check made payable to the Johnson Creek Watershed Council.

Please send your payment to us at: 1900 SE Milport Rd., Milwaukie, OR 97222



A Salamander's Surmise

By Daniel Felder

(Based on a true story)

It was a cold and dreary night
I spent inside my bath
The day had really been too trite
(Not the kind that does excite)
And I still had to finish math

The door was locked, for I despise
Those who just meander
And so imagine my surprise
When I stared into the glowing eyes
Of a red salamander.

The salamander, unabashed
Said, "Sir, I'm your salvation!"
"Your hopes of a peaceful bath,
Have, so suddenly been dashed
But you need education."

"I have been sent here to be
Your wise and aged tutor
I think we'll get on splendidly
(I've been told that you agree
With most anti-polluters)"

"The Watershed named Johnson Creek
Is not at all devoid
For though it can be cold and bleak
It is a home to meadow leeks
And many Salmanoids"

"150 years have past
Since the fish were thousands strong
Because our numbers dwindled fast
Now the empty creek seems vast
Can a few hundred fish be wrong?"

"So sir, grow up with this in mind
Oh, and incidentally
The next time you feel inclined
To leave behind a lemon rind
Please think environmentally!"

**Cleveland High School students,
Daniel Felder and Ashton Mackey are making
a splash in the watershed with some thought provok-
ing poetry about Johnson Creek. Please take a
moment to enjoy their insight and remarkable
talent!**

Something beautiful

By Ashton Mackey

Can you hear the sound of the creek?
Whispered silent, not a sound to speak.
The rude awakening sends a scream and shout
The end has come there's no way out.
Our waters have been poisoned like a selfish king
Hells all around us, birds no longer sing
With this fate grasp beneath our hand
We shall all get up and make a stand
Stand up for what's right in your heart
Giving back to your community, it's a start
A start of something beautiful



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Restoring Johnson Creek



A narrow ribbon of green and blue, Johnson Creek is one of the resources that makes the Portland area a wonderful place to live. The creek flows 26 miles from its headwaters near the Sandy River to its confluence with the Willamette River, passing through four cities and two counties along the way.



Water that once flowed clear and cold through dense forests and verdant wetlands now travels through neighborhoods, under freeways, and next to parking lots. Historic salmon and steelhead runs are threatened with extinction, and the creek suffers from pollution.



Fortunately, there is hope for one of our community's most important resources. The Johnson Creek Watershed Council works with local citizens, agencies, and organizations to protect and enhance Johnson Creek.

To get involved, call us at (503) 652-7477 or visit us on the web at www.jcwc.org. Look inside to find out more!



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