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Volunteers Restore a Streamside Forest in Mill Park

By Robin Jenkinson, Restoration Coordinator- Johnson Creek Watershed Council

On the observance of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday, a hardy group of over 40 volunteers—including folks from the Overland Park Neighborhood Association, Hands On Portland, and students from Portland Waldorf School—gathered to help restore Mill Park, a public park along Johnson Creek in Clackamas County.

Having recently completed Phase 1 of the North Clackamas Revitalization Area Sanitary Sewer Project in the area, Clackamas County Water Environment Services (WES) was looking for restoration opportunities near Johnson Creek and was able to fund the installation of over 500 native trees and shrubs on the south bank of the creek.



The first order of business was the removal of non-native vegetation, so the volunteer crew braved thorns and mud to remove 5 cubic yards of plant material to make way for the new plantings. Meanwhile, a group working with North Clackamas Parks staff erected 360 linear feet of split-rail fence to protect the new plantings, and the Overland Park neighbors provided coffee and doughnuts for everyone.



Overall, the project will provide 8500 square feet of streamside wildlife habitat, as well as vital shading for the creek to help keep water temperatures lower for fish and other aquatic animals. Thanks to the planting of several large (3"+ diameter) trees—including fast growers like red alder and big leaf maple—that shade won't be long in coming!

This spring, JCWC will be adding a layer of mulch to help keep weeds down and hold moisture in the soil and will install protective cages around the trees to prevent any potential damage from beavers. Plus, a water quality swale in the park will be planted with wetland vegetation to further enhance wildlife value.