2019 Annual Report

DEDICATED TO IMPROVING THE HEALTH OF STREAMS AND WATERSHEDS OF OREGON'S CENTRAL COAST

MIDCOAST WATERSHEDS COUNCIL

LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

Here we are at the end of a decade. While there is much work to do, I am so grateful to our MCWC team. The leadership from the Administrative Committee, Technical Team, and the Council at large has provided clear direction, as well as a list of successes. Our partnerships continue to grow, and our community engagement and volunteer work sessions give me hope that the momentum will carry on into the future.

MCWC continues to engage in the full range of issues here on the Central Coast related to watershed health. This includes our participation in the Mid-Coast Water Planning Partnership, where we focus on efficient use and conservation of our precious water resources. Restoring natural systems can help provide clean, cold, adequate drinking water, as well as water for fish and wildlife. Hard storage options such as dams and reservoirs may be necessary, but there is also a lot of water that can be stored in healthy streamsides, floodplains, and beaver ponds, that provides more flow during summer droughts. We are also helping to lead the Siletz Business Plan partnership for coho recovery, which aims to develop strategies to restore ecological function on a whole-watershed scale while working with willing landowners. Another process we engage with is the Siuslaw Collaborative Watershed Restoration Program which works to improve habitat in watersheds that cross Siuslaw National Forest and private ownership boundaries.

A burgeoning partnership at the end of 2019 is Operation Appleseed. Initiated by the Worthy Garden Club, Operation Appleseed has the lofty goal of planting one million trees in three years for carbon storage and climate change mitigation. If you, your family, friends, or neighbors have any interest in improving your streamside property, do not hesitate to give us a call and be a part of a Cascades to Coast effort in the years to come.

Carbon and climate change of course have long been on our minds, and in the 2018 Annual Report, we drew attention to the need to further engage in these discussions. Thanks to the hard work of our board members and staff over the course of 2019, a six-part speaker series will begin in January 2020, taking place at the beautiful Pacific Maritime Heritage Center in Newport. Each night's presentation will cover how different pieces of the coastal landscape—from ridgetop to reef—can play a role as a natural climate solution. Following each presentation, recordings and slides will be made available on our website so that anyone can access this valuable information.

Meanwhile, the North Creek culvert replacement project featured in this report is an example of an on-the-ground success to be proud of. It opens up aquatic habitat in a critical area of our MidCoast Watersheds within the Drift Creek-Siletz Basin—I want to thank all that were a part of this amazing endeavor.

While there are many challenges to improving water quality and salmon recovery at a regional scale, our efforts—linked together in partnerships with focused strategies here on the Mid-Coast—can help maintain and restore habitats crucial to multiple species and ecological processes for decades to come. Thank you for reading, I look forward to crossing paths with you at one of our events or at our Community Meetings on the first Thursday of each month.

Paul Engelmeyer
Ten Mile Sanctuary Manager, Portland Audubon Society & Central Coast Preserve Manager, The Wetlands Conservancy

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red

a poem by Duncan Berry,
written during the first rains of
autumn on Slippery Rock Creek

it is one of the mysteries

that the green backs of leaves
and the green backs of salmon
turn red at the same time

converging
miles from the sea
in the clear streams of fall
before the rains have come.

perhaps it is the leaf
returning
to the original darkness
descending from green
through yellow
and red
on its journey back
to the black earth

perhaps it is so with the salmon
returning to its source
red
where she can see him
in the liquid shadows
under the dark log

her belly
resting on smooth black gravel
swollen with eggs
charged and ready

red
so she knows
in the moment she spills her seed
that the risk she takes
she will not take
alone.

2019 BY THE NUMBERS

3 RESTORATION PROJECTS IMPLEMENTED

4 NEW LANDOWNERS

4 PREVIOUS RESTORATION PROJECTS MAINTAINED

15 ACRES OF RIPARIAN ZONE PLANTED WITH NATIVE SPECIES

26 ACRES OF RIPARIAN ZONE MAINTAINED

43 LARGE WOOD HABITAT STRUCTURES INSTALLED IN STREAMS

81 VOLUNTEERS AT RESTORATION WORK PARTIES

453 ATTENDEES AT COMMUNITY MEETINGS

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PHOTO CREDITS
Duncan Berry
MCWC Staff & Friends

MIDCOAST WATERSHEDS COUNCIL

Over the summer of 2019, a $900,000 project was completed with the help of the United States Forest Service (USFS) and other partners. A huge, 50-ft wide, 15-ft tall, open bottom culvert replaced a severely undersized and degraded 12-ft wide culvert under tons of fill of Forest Road 1790. This old culvert was a barrier for many fish and other organisms, and didn't allow large wood and gravel downstream to create needed habitat. Now, for the first time in 62 years, Chinook, coho salmon, steelhead, coastal cutthroat, lamprey and other aquatic organisms can freely access 16 miles of high-quality habitat in North Creek, a tributary of Drift Creek in the Siletz watershed. Additionally, the new road over the replaced culvert now allows for safe transport to and from popular forest recreation areas and Drift Creek Camp.

This old culvert was the only barrier to fish passage in an otherwise nearly pristine watershed, and cut off all of North Creek to fish passage under most stream conditions. The land around North Creek is managed by the Siuslaw National Forest as a "late successional reserve" to encourage and sustain old-growth forest habitat conditions. These forest characteristics in turn create excellent stream conditions—North Creek is well-shaded by a diverse forest canopy, leading to cold, clean water. In addition, large trees have fallen into the stream that provide cover for juvenile fish, slow water to collect spawning gravels, and create deep pools that provide refuge for both juvenile and adult fish.

As early as 1961, the Oregon Fish Commission (the predecessor of Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife) identified the North Creek culvert as a fish passage problem. Over the years, engineered fish passage improvement projects were attempted but all failed. Storm flows destroyed concrete lined pools below the culvert outlet in the early 1960's, and concrete weirs built in 1982 were unsuccessful, even with modifications and the addition of boulders and large wood. Before the culvert was replaced, adult salmon hadn't been seen in North Creek for decades , and environmental DNA (eDNA) analysis conducted by the Trout Unlimited (TU) Bluebacks Chapter in 2018 detected no Pacific lamprey above the culvert.

North Creek, Siletz

The culvert replacement project, which began with extensive grant writing and fundraising in 2015, was managed by the MidCoast Watersheds Council in close coordination with USFS. Many more collaborators assisted with funding, including the USFS, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Fish Passage Program, Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board, the joint Oregon Department of Transportation-Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife Fish Passage Program, TU, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, and the Native Fish Society.

Monitoring work began after project completion in the fall to document changes. Students from Oregon Coast Community College's Freshwater Habitats course visited the North Creek restoration site six times to determine how the stream simulation underneath the new culvert changed as it faced its first storm events, and identified how organisms like salmon and aquatic insects responded to the newly opened channel. Volunteers with TU Bluebacks Chapter will continue eDNA sampling at 13 locations in the North Creek Watershed for two more years to determine the presence of difficult-to-survey target species such as juvenile salmonids, lamprey, and freshwater mussels. The efforts of these community partners will be complemented by stream temperature monitoring for three years by the USFS and the Environmental Protection Agency. This monitoring information will help inform other large-scale aquatic organism passage projects.

Evan Hayduk
Council Coordinator

The historic culvert had a firehose effect on downstream habitat, flushing out spawning gravels.

OCCC students identify aquatic insects collected fromNorth Creek.

RESTORATION FOCUS

MIDCOAST WATERSHEDS COUNCIL

ENGAGING COMMUNITY

One of the MCWC's goals is to provide a public forum for discussion and education about regional watershed topics affecting our salmon, water quality and other topics. We know that natural resources serve as the backbone of and backdrop to our local culture and economy. However, gleaning knowledge on the status of these resources from the experts that study them can be a challenge. On the first Thursday of every month, MCWC hosts presentations by researchers, professionals, and project collaborators on natural resource topics of interest in our watersheds. The consistent date, time, and place of these meetings allows community members to more easily share in the wealth of knowledge that exists here, and to meet other interesting people. We serve snacks after the presentation so that people can take a few minutes to interact with their friends or meet new ones. We host engaging and often state of the art presentations that encourage constructive discussion. This allows for a reciprocal learning environment that builds our understanding of our environment and our fellow citizens. At right are all the speakers we were grateful to host in 2019.

JANUARY: Orcas of the Oregon Coast. Colleen Weiler, Whale and Dolphin Conservation.*

FEBRUARY: 20 Years of Monitoring Stream habitat and Salmon. Mark Stone, Lincoln Soil and Water Conservation District.

MARCH: Wave Energy on the Oregon Coast. Burke Hales, PacWave.*

APRIL: Ocean Acidification and Hypoxia. Caren Braby, ODFW.*

MAY: Integrated Stormwater Management. Mike Broili.*

JUNE: Corvallis to Sea Trail. Jim Golden.*

AUGUST: Habitat Restoration Work. Evan Hayduk.

SEPTEMBER: Celebrating 20 Years of Ocean Study. Heather Fulton-Bennett, PISCO.

OCTOBER: Using BioBlitzes to Better Understand Our World. Ian Throckmorton.*

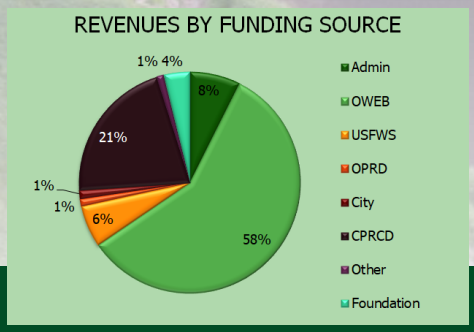
NOVEMBER: Process Based Stream Restoration. Chris Jordan, NOAA.

DECEMBER: The Story of Life As Told By Water. Duncan Berry.

*Presentation slides are available on our website.

2019 FINANCIAL REPORT

REVENUES	
Federal Grant Receipts	$157,463
State Grant Receipts	$186,926
Administrative Receipts	$26,856
Donations Receipts	$3,501
Foundation Receipts	$15,062
Contract Receipts	$2,617
City Funds	$5,000
Interest Income	$1
Other Receipts	$569
TOTAL	**$397,995**



VOLUNTEER IMPACT

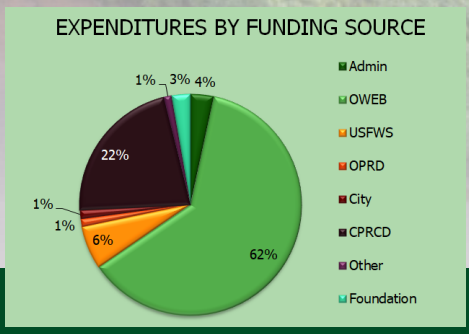
As with countless other non-profits, volunteers could be said to make up the bread and butter of MCWC. From board members who tirelessly offer their time and intellect to govern our organization, to those that physically commit to restoration work, there are countless individuals that we owe our gratitude to.

When I first joined the mighty team of two MCWC staff members at the start of 2019, it didn't take long to understand that this organization would not accomplish the amount it does without strong partnerships with other organizations, agencies, and community members alike. In my first month here, three Restoration Work Parties took place along Little Lobster Creek in the Alsea Basin, in which a rugged team of retirees, federal government furloughers and others joined forces to plant 1,000 native trees and shrubs and 400 willow stakes along a full mile of the stream. While everyone came from different backgrounds, all could appreciate the importance of improving the creek's habitat for fish and wildlife—and were willing to show it with their boots on the ground.

Following that first month, MCWC has strived to further expand opportunities for people to participate in restoration work firsthand. While Restoration Work Parties planting native species, protecting new plants from animal browse, and removing invasive species at sites all across the Central Coast are by necessity more physical endeavors, we also work in partnership with Oregon State Parks to operate a native plant nursery within Brian Booth State Park. Nursery Work parties are often much more ergonomic in nature, involving things like potting locally-sourced cuttings and seedlings to grow for future use. There are also several other volunteer events sprinkled throughout the year, such as river clean ups.

In a world where environmental issues can feel more than overwhelming to address, getting involved in MCWC's restoration efforts presents a positive, local means to learn about and participate in solutions that work.

Ari Blatt
Restoration Assistant



EXPENDITURES	
Personal Services	$82,266
Material and Supplies	$18,421
Administration Expenses	$26,856
Office Rent	$8,613
Contract Services	$232,953
Internet and Telephone Services	$1,457
Travel and Conferences	$6,001
Office Expenses	$8,166
Interest Expenses	$601
TOTAL	**$385,334**

This financial report represents fiscal year 2018-2019. It was prepared by Fiscal Manager, Tanya Graham, who works remotely after nearly two decades of work locally for MCWC and Lincoln Soil and Water Conservation District.

MIDCOAST WATERSHEDS COUNCIL

Thank You! to all our 2019 Funders, Partners, and Volunteers:

Aaron, Katie, Leo, and Ona Duzik
Alicia Foster
Andy Doremus
Anne Sigleo
Anna Miller
Audubon Society of Portland
Barry McPherson
Benton County
Benton Soil and Water Conservation District
Bill Montgomery
Bill Roth
Brad Loveland
Brandon Larrabee
Brett Montague
Bureau of Land Management
Cascade Pacific Resource Conservation and Development
City of Newport
City of Siletz
City of Toledo
Chris Janigo
Colleen Weiler
Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw Indians
Confederated Tribes of the Siletz Indians
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Lincoln Soil and Water Conservation District
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Mark Baxter
Mark Elliot
Mark Saelens
Michael Damman
Michael Lance
Mike Broili
Mike Clark
Millie Follet
Native Fish Society
Natural Resources Conservation Service
Newport Visual Arts Center
Oregon Department of Environmental Quality
Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife
Oregon Department of Forestry
Oregon Department of State Lands
Oregon Department of Water Resources
Oregon Parks and Recreation Department
Oregon State University
Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board
OSU Extension Service
Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission
Paul Engelmeyer
Paul Katen
Paul Robertson
Peter and Cathy Tronquet
Peter Higbee
Private Landowners
Ron Spies
Salmon Drift Creek Watershed Council
Samantha Lonie
Scott and Hope Millman
Seal Rock Water District
Siletz Watershed Council
Susan Hogg
SOLVE
Starker Forests
Stephanie Kerns
The Press and Outreach Partners
The Nature Conservancy
The Wetlands Conservancy
Thompson Sanitary Service
Tom Chandler
US Army Corps of Engineers
US Environmental Protection Agency
US Fish and Wildlife Service
US Forest Service- Siuslaw National Forest
Van Eck Forestry
Weyerhaeuser
Will Lehman

DONATE TODAY FOR SALMON TOMORROW

The MidCoast Watersheds Council is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. All donations are tax deductible and may be sent to our mailing address, or made on our websoite.