

PCC/Rock Creek Floodplain Enhancement Project

Partners: Portland Community College - Rock Creek Campus | Clean Water Services | Metro | Tualatin Riverkeepers | Friends of Trees

The Site

The Portland Community College Rock Creek Floodplain Enhancement Project is a unique site that supports 115 acres of floodplain habitat in close proximity to urban development near the juncture of Portland, Hillsboro and Beaverton. It integrates urban, rural and ecological communities across a natural and dynamic floodplain. The site ties together high quality habitat, including an intact stream corridor, with diverse wetlands, prairies and upland forests. On a landscape scale, this project adds to the connection between Abbey and Rock Creeks and will further safeguard an important fish and wildlife stream passageway. Just as distinctive, is having a healthy urban stream and riparian ecosystem supporting red-legged frogs, steelhead salmon, neo-tropical migrant songbirds and Roosevelt Elk.



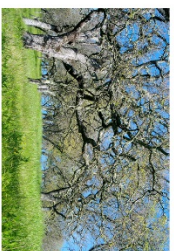
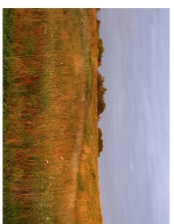
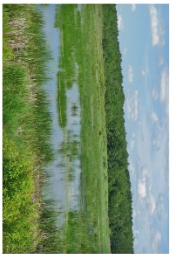
The Challenge

Under existing conditions, much of the site consists of wetlands that have been degraded by past activities aimed at draining the site for agricultural purposes. Historic aerial photographs show that existing ditches were created prior to 1936. The project site consists of degraded wetlands and requires significant improvements to the site's hydrology, water quality, and wildlife functions. The project will convert existing Palustrine emergent wetlands dominated by reed canary grass and non-native pasture grasses to a mix of forested, scrub-shrub, and emergent wetlands dominated by native species. Project design emphasizes natural processes including natural succession and integrating beaver into the floodplain design.

The Transformation

By installing natural wood structures through the floodplain, water will slow down and spread across the site. This will extend the duration of ponding and saturated soil conditions longer into the growing season and add to the wetland's effectiveness in providing nesting habitat for waterfowl and breeding habitat for amphibians. Placement of large wood within the wetland and planting a wide diversity of native vegetation will improve the character of the stream and provide additional resting, foraging and nesting habitat for fish and wildlife, particularly for beavers.

The PCC/Rock Creek Floodplain Enhancement Project presents its partners with an exceptional opportunity to protect a healthy urban stream and achieve ecological uplift at a basin-wide scale. Floodplain restoration on this site will efficiently incorporate changes in storm water and connect high quality riparian, aquatic and upland habitats.



WETLAND ENHANCEMENT PLAN



WETLAND BOUNDARIES



PCC ROCK CREEK FLOODPLAIN ENHANCEMENT

The vision for the Rock Creek Floodplain Enhancement Project integrates urban, rural and ecological communities across a natural and dynamic floodplain. Water on the floodplain will flow and recede in concert with the seasons. It will connect high quality habitat for diverse and sensitive wildlife species. The site will be a beautiful place for exploration, study and inspiration.