

# The Benton County Voluntary Program for Riparian Resources

**Emphasis on Education:** Benton County will support landowners to conserve and enhance riparian resources by informing them about the functions and values of riparian resources, and connecting landowners to technical and financial resources.

**Monitoring Progress:** Benton County has developed a procedure to estimate year to year gains and losses of riparian vegetation. Annual review of aerial photos and occasional site visits will identify changes in vegetation occurring in conjunction with building and land use permits near priority riparian corridors. Trends in vegetation gains and losses will help inform the community.

For more specifics on the 'Benton County Voluntary Program for Riparian Resources' please visit the project website at: [www.co.benton.or.us/cd/riparian](http://www.co.benton.or.us/cd/riparian) or contact the project coordinator at (541) 766-6085

## Resources:

Benton County residents care about their rivers and creeks. Great work has been done by local landowners in recent years to enhance stream habitat. But there's more to do and you haven't missed the opportunity to get assistance.

The following funding and technical resources are currently available to support streamside landowners' initiatives to protect and enhance their riparian areas.

- **Benton Soil & Water Conservation District**  
Assists small and large landowners by offering technical and financial assistance for protecting and enhancing agriculture, wetlands, riparian areas and wildlife habitat. Visit: [www.bentonswcd.org](http://www.bentonswcd.org) or call (541) 753-7208

- **Luckiamute Watershed Council**  
A volunteer group of diverse neighbors learning about the watershed and improving local water quality and habitat. Visit: [www.luckiamutelwc.org](http://www.luckiamutelwc.org) or call (503) 837-0237

- **Marys River Watershed Council**  
Works on a neighborhood by neighborhood basis to inspire and support stewardship of water quality, fish and wildlife habitat. Support includes technical and potentially financial assistance. Visit: [www.mrwc.org](http://www.mrwc.org) or call (541) 758-7597.

There are many up-to-date resources located on the Benton County Riparian and Wetlands Project page: [www.co.benton.or.us/cd/riparian](http://www.co.benton.or.us/cd/riparian). Call the Project Coordinator for details at (541) 766-6085

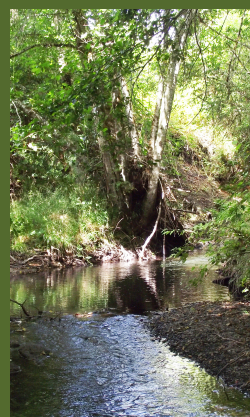
### -Cliff Hall Kings Valley Landowner

"We found many helpful resources in Benton County with the expertise and willingness to help us learn how to improve our stream side property. Our efforts to protect and restore the native vegetation along the waterways of our property have not only been fulfilling personally, but have helped leave a little spot of Benton County a better place for future generations of Oregonians."



### -Stella Guenther Woods Creek Landowner

"One day a representative from the Marys River Watershed Council knocked on our door and simply asked permission to control Japanese Knotweed that was present on our property. From that day on it has been a wonderful relationship. Through the guidance of the Marys River Watershed Council the Woods Creek Rd. project has become an excellent example of people working together to produce a mutually beneficial outcome."



## Benton County Enhancing Our Shared Water Resources *Voluntary Program for Riparian Resources*



"The goal is to protect and enhance our shared water resources without additional regulation."  
-- Benton County Board of Commissioners



Since 2009, Benton County, local landowners, Benton Soil and Water Conservation District, and the Marys River Watershed Council have worked to develop a local program to support protection and enhancement of riparian resources.

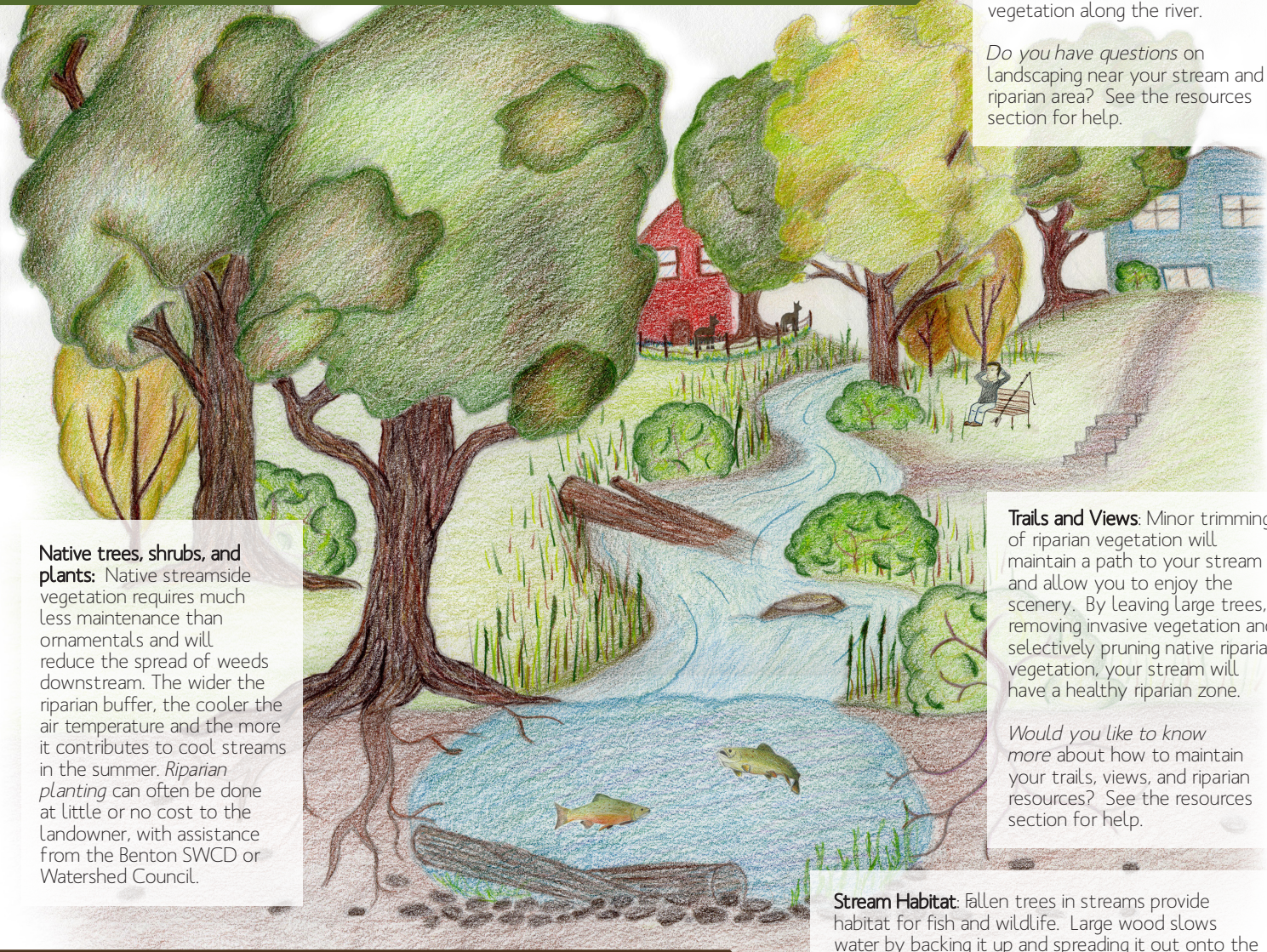
Partial funding for brochure development provided by the Oregon Chapter of the American Fisheries Society





# Our Shared Riparian Resources

Benton County contains over 3,800 miles of streams within the Alsea Basin and Willamette Basin. These streams provide drinking water, irrigation, habitat for fish and wildlife, and recreation.



**Native trees, shrubs, and plants:** Native streamside vegetation requires much less maintenance than ornamentals and will reduce the spread of weeds downstream. The wider the riparian buffer, the cooler the air temperature and the more it contributes to cool streams in the summer. *Riparian planting* can often be done at little or no cost to the landowner, with assistance from the Benton SWCD or Watershed Council.

**Homes and Landscaping:** Building a minimum of 50 feet from the top of the stream bank is required on most streams, and helps protect property against damage like floods and erosion. Lawns, gardens, and other landscaping near streams are possible without removing native vegetation along the river.

*Do you have questions on landscaping near your stream and riparian area? See the resources section for help.*

**Trails and Views:** Minor trimming of riparian vegetation will maintain a path to your stream and allow you to enjoy the scenery. By leaving large trees, removing invasive vegetation and selectively pruning native riparian vegetation, your stream will have a healthy riparian zone.

*Would you like to know more about how to maintain your trails, views, and riparian resources? See the resources section for help.*

**Stream Habitat:** Fallen trees in streams provide habitat for fish and wildlife. Large wood slows water by backing it up and spreading it out onto the floodplain. Spawning gravels settle out rather than being carried to sea, and native fish find slack water refuge on the floodplain.

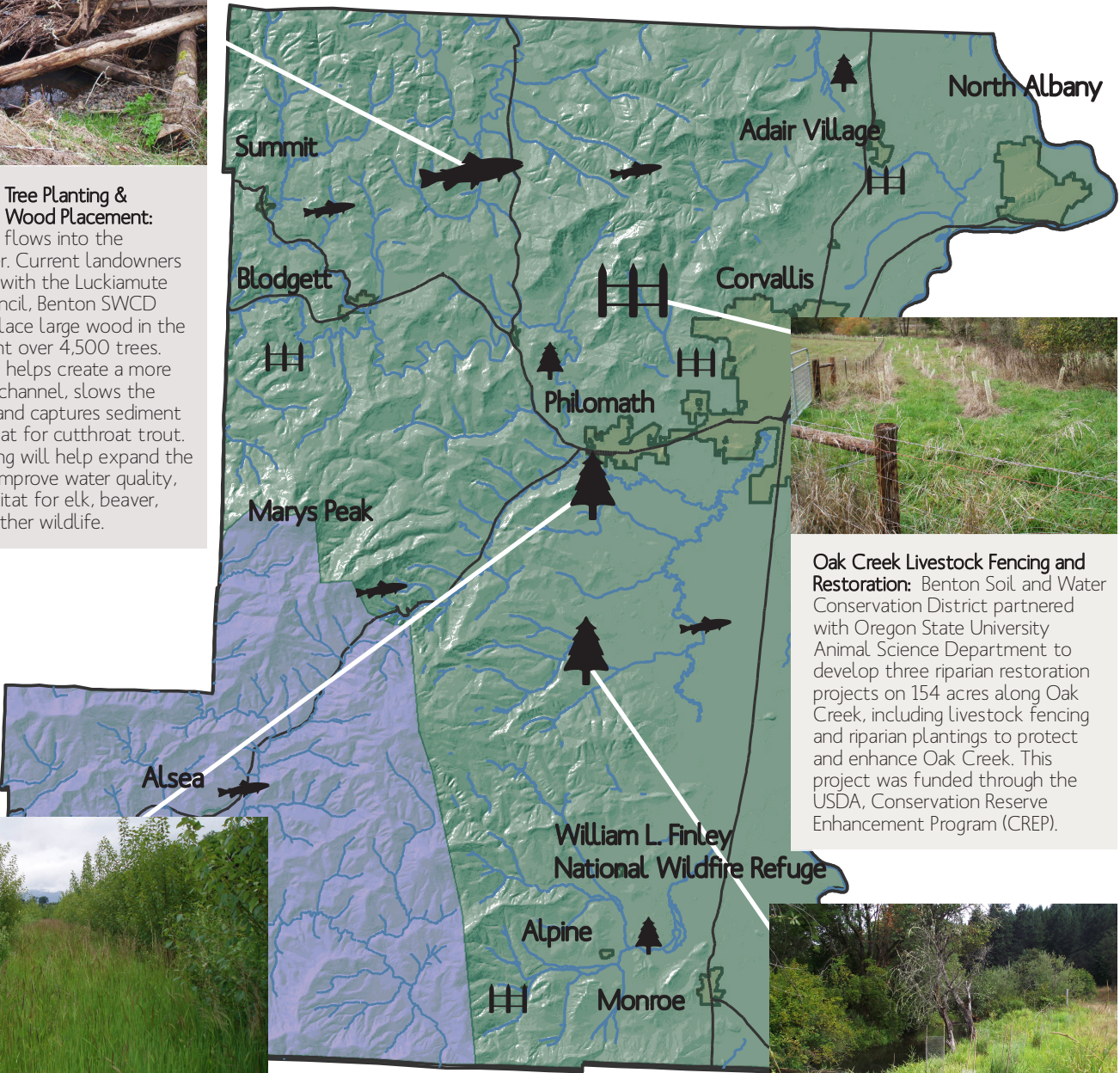


**Maxfield Creek Tree Planting & In-Stream Large Wood Placement:** Maxfield Creek flows into the Luckiamute River. Current landowners have partnered with the Luckiamute Watershed Council, Benton SWCD and others to place large wood in the stream and plant over 4,500 trees. The large wood helps create a more natural stream channel, slows the flow of water, and captures sediment to provide habitat for cutthroat trout. The tree planting will help expand the riparian forest, improve water quality, and provide habitat for elk, beaver, quail, fish and other wildlife.



**Evergreen Creek & Wetland Enhancement:** Owners of the Evergreen Wetland partnered with the Benton SWCD to plant native cottonwood, willow, ninebark, and other wetland shrubs/trees to provide habitat for abundant waterfowl and other wildlife.

## Everyone can have a role in supporting our streams



**Oak Creek Livestock Fencing and Restoration:** Benton Soil and Water Conservation District partnered with Oregon State University Animal Science Department to develop three riparian restoration projects on 154 acres along Oak Creek, including livestock fencing and riparian plantings to protect and enhance Oak Creek. This project was funded through the USDA, Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP).



**Beaver Creek Restoration Projects:** Marys River Watershed Council is completing long term 'neighbor by neighbor' projects with landowners along Beaver Creek including tree planting, weed control, large wood enrichment, fish passage, and snorkel surveys to monitor fish populations.

## What you can do to help

1. Maintain or plant trees along the water - reduce solar heating by increasing shade.
2. Leave wood in the creek to trap gravels and sediment so the stream is less exposed to solar heating of exposed bedrock and stays cooler as it flows through the gravels.
3. Conserve water and store winter rain in rain barrels and beaver ponds.

Follow the stream to more resources...

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