

TUALATIN RIVERKEEPERS® 2015 ANNUAL REPORT

Empowering the community to protect, restore, and enjoy the Tualatin River

EDUCATION



The foundation of Tualatin Riverkeepers' education program is a belief that awareness of space, place, and the intrinsic value of land and water is essential to our collective survival. TRK's educational program teaches students to think like water, following a water drop's journey throughout the landscape and showing students how our everyday choices affect the quality of the river, the vitality of the land, and the health of our people. Our motto is 'Clean Water, Dirty Kids' and reflects the value of exploration and hands on activities outdoors to promote interest in nature and science-related careers.

We teach students that wherever they are, they make choices that impact our community, including the plants and animals we share this world with. TRK engages youth through three mechanisms: half day field trips, week long nature camps, and educational sessions with key community partners.

Over 1,500 students were served on 30 field trips in 2015 with 85% of these students coming from Title I or underserved communities. Tualatin Riverkeepers' educational programming values strength in diversity. In this spirit, TRK has partnered with Adelante Mujeres and Community Partners for Affordable Housing (CPAH) to help reach previously under-represented groups with our quality educational materials. We also began work with PSU Indigenous Studies and Chemawa Indian School to take 100 Native students on field trips in the Tualatin Basin, learning about ecology, tribal history of the region and connection to place through shared values.

Whether we are taking youth to camas filled wet prairies like Metro's Quamash Prairie, navigating the river for the first time in kayaks at Cook Park with CPAH, or investigating water quality in the Summer Creek tributary during summer camp, we aim for a sense of wonder that lasts beyond the day's experience.



RESTORATION



Tualatin Riverkeepers' restoration program plans, installs, and maintains large-scale restoration projects. Based on watershed-level planning and prioritization, the program links community members to the restoration process, connecting multiple generations in unique and fun service projects where residents can feel the tangible benefit of planting trees and improving water quality along the Tualatin River and its tributaries.

2015 was a big year for the restoration program, in that we expanded work to three sites in the watershed: the Tualatin River National Wildlife Refuge, Woodhaven Park in Sherwood, and Cook Park in Tigard. More than 500 volunteers put 5,500 plants in the ground. Volunteers ages 2 to 85 often braved cold, rainy mornings to help bring the forest back to life along the river's edge. These volunteer planting events help remind all of us that with a little time and effort, positive changes can be accomplished.

Between the three sites we will have a collective impact of restoring close to 300 acres of riverside lands. Over 200,000 native plants and trees will be planted in the next two years through a combination of volunteer and contractor efforts.

Having a diverse reach geographically is important to TRK because this helps us connect the multiple communities we work with, predominately in Washington County. Connecting to the cultural diversity in the watershed is equally rewarding and 2015 witnessed a variety of groups from communities of faith like Baha'i and the Church of Latter Day Saints to Native American leadership talking about the Indigenous perspectives to healing and transforming the land. Through this work, our community feels ownership for the restoration process and is more likely to appreciate and steward the land. This is TRK's value added.

WATERSHED WATCH



Watershed Watch, Tualatin Riverkeepers' environmental advocacy program, promotes clean waterways and healthy communities. This program is the resident's voice for clean water and civic action, helping to steer water management agencies in the direction of conservation and advocate for progressive development that safeguards our waters. We devoted significant efforts to protecting wetlands in 2015, reducing stormwater runoff, and promoting policies that increase urban tree canopy.

Pressure to destroy wetlands is growing. Beaverton School District chose to fill 3 acres of wetlands at the new Cooper Mountain High School site rather than modify their design, despite the protection priority specified in the Cooper Mountain Plan plus an outpouring of support from the community. On the other hand, Tigard City Council stood firm when they unanimously voted to deny a development permit for apartments that would have filled wetland on Ash Creek. The developer came back with a new plan that avoided all wetland impacts. These experiences show the acute need for our Watershed Watch program, which works with developers, politicians, and environmentalists to forge beneficial solutions for multiple parties.

After 6 years of delay, Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) released a draft permit for Clean Water Services for management of stormwater and wastewater. We submitted extensive comments pushing for more low impact development projects, measurable run-off reduction targets, and improved recycling of wastewater and stormwater.

Tualatin Riverkeepers worked with Centro Cultural, Muslim Education Trust and Oregon Community Trees to co-design a training program that introduces young people to urban forestry careers. Urban forestry can reduce stormwater runoff, provide habitat and make cities more livable. We also conducted site visits with organizations serving farmworker communities to learn about connections with worker health, pesticides and the river. Our mission is strengthened by partnerships with community groups that represent the cultural and socioeconomic diversity of our watershed.

RECREATION



More kayakers, canoers, stand-up-paddle boarders, fisherpersons and swimmers explored the river than ever before as recreational activities on the river continued to expand in 2015. Serving close to 2,000 people throughout all of our Trips & Tours programs, TRK volunteers guided hundreds of paddlers on trips while our summer staff launched close to 1,200 paddlers from our Cook Park Boat Rentals in Tigard. After spending quality time on the river, we welcomed 115 new families who officially became Riverkeepers through membership. With free boat rentals and guided paddle trips as part of our membership benefits, it was an easy decision.



In June, we hosted our 26th Annual Tualatin River Discovery Day, our flagship paddling event. Beginner and expert paddlers, children and retirees, locals and visiting travelers all discovered the majesty of the river. At our Rumbo al Rio (Heading to the River) event with Adelante Mujeres, families learned about their watershed and spent time exploring the river. We also launched a [#LOVETUALATINRIVER](#) video campaign on social media highlighting why we love the river, from kayaking to meditation to beekeeping.

Continuing our goals of making paddling the Tualatin River accessible for everyone, no matter your age, income, or background, we hosted our first Paddle for Persons with Disabilities. We found that with little or no minor modifications, most disabled persons can enjoy paddling regardless of whether they have lost a limb, have impaired vision, or suffer from other physical or psychological impairments.

After years of advocating for new launch sites on the upper parts of the navigable Tualatin River, we are thrilled that in 2015 Metro began development on the new Farmington Bridge launch with a grand opening expected in 2017. Helping nature-seekers locate these access points, TRK worked with Washington County Visitors Association to create our new Tualatin River Water Trail Map. Look for strategically placed Water Trail directional road signs as well. Let 2016 be your year for exploration.



TUALATIN RIVERKEEPERS

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OUR MISSION

Tualatin Riverkeepers (TRK) is a community-based organization working to protect and restore Oregon's Tualatin River system. TRK builds watershed stewardship through education, public access to nature, restoration and advocacy.

The Tualatin Riverkeepers became a nonprofit in 1992 and is tax-exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

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www.tualatinriverkeepers.org



Tualatin Riverkeepers is proud to be a Waterkeeper Alliance Member.

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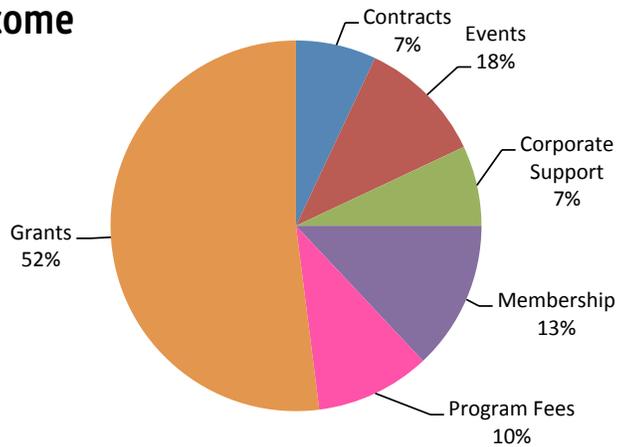
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