

Blue Sky Fund Project Update

Due each November 30<sup>th</sup> within the award period and 30 days after project completion

*Reporting Instructions:* Please save this document to your computer and complete the narrative and budget in the format provided. Please check the appropriate box to indicate which report you are submitting. Each report you submit should build upon each other and should be sent to The Freshwater Trust as a Microsoft Word document.

Interim Report

Final Report

Project Name: **Bear Creek Riparian Improvement Project**

Watershed (Fifth field HUC): 1710030801

Oregon County: **Jackson**

Nearest Oregon Community: **Medford**

Lead Entity: **Rogue Valley Council of Governments**

Match Funding Partners (list partners and their respective total lump sum contribution, please indicate if the contribution is cash or in-kind):

Secured: \$46,695

Partner	Cash	In kind	total
City of Medford	\$15,000.00	\$15,000.00	\$30,000.00
Oregon Stewardship	\$5,000.00	0	\$5,000.00
ODOT	\$0.00	\$10,000.00	\$10,000.00
Bear Creek Watershed Council	\$375.00	0	\$375.00
RVCOG	\$ 1,320.00	0	\$1,320.00
Total	\$21,695.00	\$25,000.00	\$46,695.00

Pending:

Total Project Cost: **\$71,695**

Blue Sky Funds Awarded by TFT: **\$25,000**

Additional Partners (list any project partners not identified in the Match Funding Partners list):

Jackson County, Jackson Soil and Water Conservation District, Rogue Community College, Medford Urban Bear Creek Corridor Working Group (Jackson County, Bear Creek Greenway Foundation, Coyote Trails, Gordon Eldwood Foundation, Rogue Gallery, and others).

Benefiting Anadromous Species and Lifestages: Chinook and Coho salmon, steelhead, lamprey. All life stages.

Timeline (including updated beginning and anticipated completion dates of the project work):

May 2014 through October 31, 2015

Miles of Habitat Protected Restored (river miles): 1 mile

Project Status Update:

Project Summary – Please describe project location; project objectives; project activities that took place within the reporting period and their relationship to project objectives.

The Bear Creek Riparian Improvement project is located in Jackson County in southern Oregon. The project focuses on a stretch of Bear Creek that is located near downtown Medford and runs from 10th Street downstream to McAndrews Boulevard. A general map of the project showing the area and roles and responsibilities of organizations involved is attached.

May 1, 2014 through November 14th Activity Summary

The project is currently accomplishing:

Objective 1: Remove up to 4 acres of Invasive Species (Invasive Species Management):

The Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT), the City of Medford, Oregon Stewardship, and project contractors (Strauss Ecological Services and Spraymasters) have been removing invasive species throughout the project area using hand tools, mechanical methods, and herbicide application. Blackberries were the primary invasive species treated. In addition, there was an area of English Ivy that was also treated. Refer to the invasive species map for approximate areas of responsibility within the project area. Approximate area treated based on quick GIS calculation 15.7 acres.

We are currently working with the City of Medford and the Jackson County Community Justice Crew to clear and remove the dead/dying blackberries. See appendix A for photos.

Objective 2: Plant native trees and shrubs along Bear Creek (Planting)

Oregon Stewardship has been planting both sides of Bear Creek from 10th Street to the old Jackson Street Dam site. Most of the work completed has been match for the project. Some project funding (\$390) was used to purchase plants. Estimated 2.4 acres planted based on quick GIS estimate, including both public and private lands.

We will be planting another 1,000 natives trees and shrubs in December 2014 and January 2015 within approximately 7 acres of riparian corridor along Bear Creek.

Refer to the planting map for approximate areas of planting responsibility.

#### Objective 4: Monitoring

We have established nine photo points for the project, conducted visual surveys and site assessments and collected monthly water quality data from a site located near Hawthorne Park (match collected as part of an ongoing water quality monitoring program). We have also established basic monitoring protocols and potential sampling locations for the project. We have placed two temperature loggers located near the upstream and downstream ends of the project to collect baseline project data. Loggers were picked up loggers in early November. The upstream temperature logger was missing. We are also working with the Jackson Soil and Water Conservation District to develop a landowner assistance program that would provide assistance to private landowners along Bear Creek initially outside the scope of the initial grant area, to remove blackberries and plant native trees and shrubs.

#### Education and Outreach (ties into Objectives 5 and 6)

An article discussing previous work along Bear Creek and the opportunity for the Blue Sky grant appeared in the Mail Tribune on March 28, 2014. The article is available at:  
<http://www.mailtribune.com/article/20140328/NEWS/403280320/0/SEARCH>

An article regarding the riparian restoration project was featured in the September 2014 issue of ODOT's "moving forward" which is inserted into the Mail Tribune and has an estimated distribution to between 40,000 and 50,000 people. The article is available at:  
<http://www.odotmovingahead.com/2014/08/teamwork-restores-bear-creek-greenway/>

Local article regarding the riparian restoration project was featured in the Mail Tribune on September 14, 2014. The article is available at:  
<http://www.mailtribune.com/article/20140914/NEWS/140919798/0/SEARCH>

Created a project website for information about the project  
[http://rvcog.org/MN.asp?pg=NR\\_Medford\\_Riparian\\_Restoration](http://rvcog.org/MN.asp?pg=NR_Medford_Riparian_Restoration).

Objective 3. Install irrigation system for the project. this objective will be install over the next several months as we finish the planting phase and prepare for spring time plant maintenace, scheduled for late april 2015.

#### Meetings/Planning

Created an initial and revised project schedule including identified project needs including contractors.

Mapped project are using GIS to define geographic roles and responsibilities of agencies involved.

Conducted project meetings in the office and on-site with ODOT, the City of Medford, Oregon Stewardship, the Job Council, Lomakatsi, and others.

Several site visits with the Medford City Council, members of the Bear Creek Corridor Urban working group, interested agencies and organization, and project contractors.

Met regularly with the Urban Bear Creek Greenway Corridor Partnership to update them on progress and also to potentially work on the messaging and signage, and tie in other project elements from the Bear Creek Master plan (e.g., art on the viaduct columns) and Hawthorne Park Plan.

Developed and signed contracts with Spraymasters and Strauss Ecological Services for invasive species removal.

Developing a program with Jackson Soil and Water Conservation District to assist landowners adjacent to Bear Creek. This program may provide funding so interested and willing landowners can receive help to remove blackberries then plant native trees and shrubs in areas adjacent to current project area.

Progress to date against plan – Please describe the updated timeline; percentage of proposed project complete; any variances to original plan; accomplishments within reporting period; challenges and lessons learned; and opportunities to partner to celebrate and or share the project's completion.

The original proposal requested \$33,000 from the Blue Sky fund. This reduction in funding (\$8,000) does affect our ability to accomplish the original project goals. The recent partnership with the ODOT has allowed us access to resources not originally available to us. The inclusion of ODOT has actually allowed us to exceed our original target acreage (more than 15 acres versus 5 acres). We are on target with invasives (blackberry) removal, anticipate planting in winter of 2014/2015. We are currently 25 percent completed with the project.

The partnering with ODOT is also providing an opportunity to expand the project beyond the original area. In early 2015 we anticipate applying for additional funding to work upstream and downstream of the current project area. This expansion would give us a significant footprint along Bear Creek and allow us to realize several miles of riparian corridor being restored.

As we are removing the invasives, mostly blackberries, we are finding more native plants than we anticipated. This is resulting in less planting needing to be accomplished. This is allowing us to purchase larger trees and shrubs (five gallon container stock versus one gallon) than originally proposed. This should result in higher plant survival and quicker attainment of effective canopy cover in areas where blackberry colonization was very dense.

Our timeline remains the same as in the original proposal.

Financial report showing allocation of Blue Sky Habitat funding:

Please retain back-up documentation to have available upon request and indicate below how funds *have been* and *will be* spent. In other words, based on your knowledge to date, please update the proposed budget to show the entire Blue Sky and Match amounts as you expect they will be spent.

	Blue Sky Funds	Blue Sky Funds % of Total Project	Match Funds	Match Source	Total Project Expense
In-house Personnel	7,000	9.7	7,500	City of Medford, RVCOG	14,500
Contracted Services	11,600	16.1	34,000	City of Medford, ODOT	45,600
Communications/Outreach	400	0.5	800	City of Medford, ODOT	1,200
Supplies/Materials	3,000	4.2	1,650	City of Medford	4,650
Travel	250	0.4	245	City of Medford	495
Other	250	0.4		City of Medford	250
Overhead	2,500	3.5	2,500	City of Medford	5000
Totals	25,000	34.8	46,695		71,695

Project Story: 300-400 words with enough context to stand alone and fit for public consumption, please describe the project to Blue Sky Habitat Fund customers including any noteworthy or unexpected benefits (to be used by Pacific Power for general outreach):

The 400-square-mile Bear Creek basin, located entirely within Jackson County, Oregon is the most urbanized watershed in Southern Oregon. The mainstem flows through five communities, the largest

being Medford, before it joins the Rogue River at River Mile 127. The creek is water quality limited for phosphorus, dissolved oxygen, temperature and fecal coliform (DEQ Fact Sheet 2012).

This reach of Bear Creek is used for spawning, rearing, and migration for adult Chinook and Coho salmon as well as steelhead (ODFW 2013). Coho salmon are currently listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act. The project area is bordered by Interstate 5 on the east and private property (mostly businesses) on the west. The Bear Creek Greenway running through the eastern side of the project provides access for walkers, hikers and bikers allowing residents a unique opportunity to see the importance of healthy streams and riparian areas, to observe salmon in Bear Creek, and see the how restoration is being done in the watershed.

A partnership, led by the Rogue Valley Council of Governments (RVCOG) and including the City of Medford (City), Oregon Stewardship, Jackson County and the Oregon Department of Transportation is working with public and private landowners in downtown Medford to improve riparian and stream bank conditions along a mile of the stream from 10th Street downstream to McAndrews Road. The project has extensive community support from entities including Coyote Trails, Rogue Community College (RCC), Red Cross, Bear Creek Watershed Council, Medford Art Gallery, Gordon Elwood Foundation, the Bear Creek Greenway Foundation and Jackson County. The project area is adjacent to a Freshwater Trust project and ties into work that is (or has) being done upstream and downstream on Bear Creek by the City, RVCOG, Oregon Stewardship, and others.

The project includes: removal of invasive plants including Armenian Blackberry and poison hemlock; the planting and maintenance of native trees and shrubs, and the incorporation of bioswales to treat urban runoff flowing through riparian areas. Actions will improve stream conditions; most notably sediment storage, nutrient delivery and routing as well as improved water quality conditions through shading and filtering provided by riparian plant growth and development. These conditions will aid in addressing water quality concerns and provide better conditions for adult and juvenile salmon and steelhead.

Project Photos. See Appendix A.

Pre and Post Project Pictures of the project or project area:

File format: JPG or .TIFF

Resolution: High (300 dpi or better)

Color Mode: In color (CMYK or RGB)

Please attach:

- 1) Digital images when submitting your project update;
- 2) Any media or PR materials or publications that have highlighted the project;
- 3) Any other relevant materials that support an understanding of the project (*optional*).

## Appendix A Project Photos



Photo 1. Photo point 4 looking north. Pre-project showing native trees and shrubs and blackberries. Photo taken by Craig Tuss July 2014.



Photo 2. Jackson County Community Justice Crew preparing to remove blackberries and other invasives along Bear Creek in Medford, Oregon. Photo taken by Craig Tuss November 24, 2014



Photo 3. Work crew clearing blackberries and other invasives from riparian area along Bear Creek, Medford, Oregon. Photo taken by Craig Tuss November 24, 2014





Photo 4. Piles of blackberry canes piled and ready for removal. Photo taken by Craig Tuss November 24, 2014



Photo 5. City of Medford Public Works truck picking up blackberry canes and other woody material to process into mulch for future use on project. Photo taken by Craig Tuss November 24, 2014



Photo 6. Photo point 4 looking north. Post clearing-task showing native trees and shrubs and blackberries removed. Photo taken by Craig Tuss November 25, 2014.