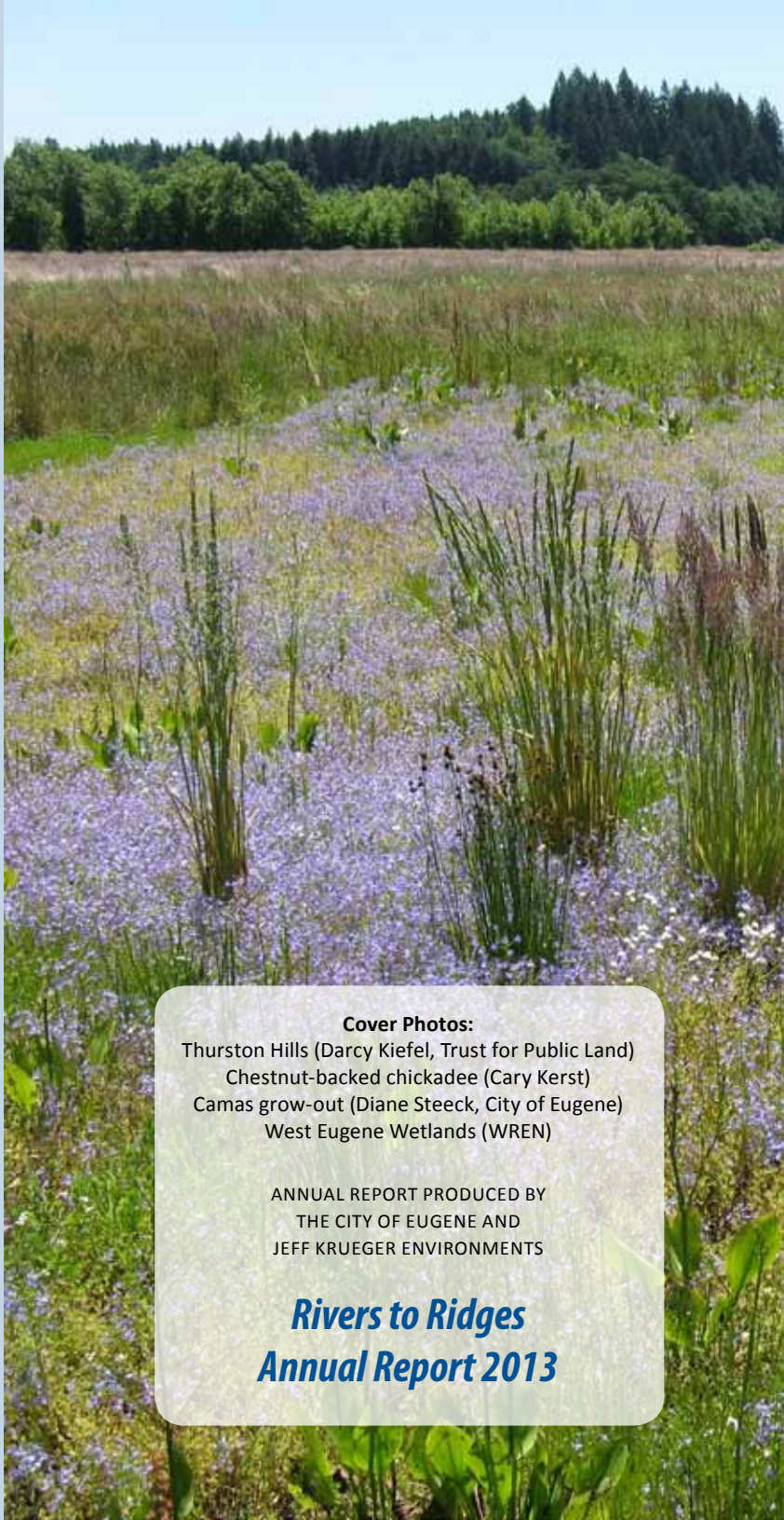
RIVERS TO RIDGES
PARTNERSHIP

Rivers to Ridges Annual Report 2013

Table of Contents

1.0 Rivers to Ridges Background and Overview 1
1.1 The Rivers to Ridges Partnership 1
1.1.1 Rivers to Ridges Partnership Vision Statement 1
1.1.2 Rivers to Ridges Statement of Partnership 1
1.2 Rivers to Ridges Annual Report 1
1.3 Administrative Structure and Summary of Activities 2
1.3.1 Rivers to Ridges Executive Team (R2R XT) 2
1.3.2 Rivers to Ridges Implementation Team (IT!) 2
1.3.3 R2R Field Operations Group 3
2.0 Land Protection 4
2.1 Land Protection in 2013 4
2.1.1 Spencer Swamp 4
2.1.2 Coyote-Spencer Wetlands Expanded 4
2.1.3 Green Island Bull Pen 4
2.1.4 Gray Property 4
2.1.5 Weyerhaeuser Thurston Hills Site 5
2.1.6 Weyerhaeuser Haul Road 5
2.1.7 Amazon Creek Rexius Property 5
2.2 Summary of Overall Partnership Acreages in the Rivers to Ridges Planning Area 5
3.0 Restoration and Habitat Management 7
3.1 Controlled Ecological Burns 7
3.2 Native Plant Materials 7
3.2.1 West Eugene Wetland Plant Materials Partnership 7
3.2.2 Willow Creek Nursery 8
3.2.3 Friends of Buford Park & Mount Pisgah Native Plant Nursery 8
3.3 Habitat Restoration and Enhancement Project Highlights 8
3.3.1 City of Eugene Project Highlights 8
3.3.2 Long Tom Watershed Council Project Highlights 9
3.3.3 Spring Box Savanna Project 9
3.3.4 Mount Pisgah Meadowlark Prairie and Savanna Restoration Project 10
3.3.5 The Nature Conservancy Hayfield Restoratin Project 10
3.3.6 Green Island Restoration 10
4.0 Recreation, Education, and Outreach Highlights 11
4.1 Middle Fork Willamette River Path Completed 11
4.2 Willamette Resources and Educational Network Education Program 11
4.4 Amazon Creek Initiative Public Meetings 12
4.5 Volunteer Stewardship Day 12
4.6 Buford Recreation Area Trail Improvements 12
5.0 Planning Highlights 13
5.1 Clearwater Park Natural Resource Management Plan 13
5.2 South Eugene Meadows Management Plan 13
5.3 Coyote Creek Management Plan 13

Rivers to Ridges Vision Map with Accomplishments 6



Cover Photos:
Thurston Hills (Darcy Kiefel, Trust for Public Land)
Chestnut-backed chickadee (Cary Kerst)
Camas grow-out (Diane Steeck, City of Eugene)
West Eugene Wetlands (WREN)

ANNUAL REPORT PRODUCED BY
THE CITY OF EUGENE AND
JEFF KRUEGER ENVIRONMENTS

Rivers to Ridges Annual Report 2013

R2R Partnership Organizations

- City of Eugene
- Coast Fork Watershed Council (2013)
- Friends of Buford Park & Mount Pisgah
- Lane County Public Works Department
- Long Tom Watershed Council
- McKenzie River Trust
- Middle Fork Watershed Council (2013)
- Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife
- Oregon Parks and Recreation Department
- Oregon Youth Conservation Corps
- The Nature Conservancy
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- U.S. Bureau of Land Management
- U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
- Willamalane Park and Recreation District
- Willamette Resources and Educational Network

Welcome to the Partnership!

With the unanimous vote of the R2R Executive Team, the Coast Fork Willamette Watershed Council and the Middle Fork Willamette Watershed Council were formally added to the partnership in 2013. Both watersheds contain critical components of the regional open space system including high value floodplain and upland habitats and important water and land based recreational trails.

1 Rivers to Ridges Partnership Background and Overview

1.1 The Rivers to Ridges Partnership

The Rivers to Ridges Partnership is a voluntary association of sixteen organizations working collaboratively to advance the protection, restoration, management, and public use of open space resources in the southern Willamette Valley. The name *Rivers to Ridges* (R2R) emanates from a regional open space vision document which was endorsed by many organizations and unanimously by local elected officials from the Eugene-Springfield area in 2003. The 2003 vision was further refined with by R2R partners in subsequent years including the *Ridgeline Vision and Action Plan* (2008) and the *Willamette River Vision and Action Plan* (2010).

1.1.1 Rivers to Ridges Partnership Vision Statement

The vision for the Rivers to Ridges Partnership, as defined in the R2R Statement of Partnership is:

> *To improve the quality of life of residents in the upper Willamette Valley by working together to protect and enhance the region's land and water resources and their ecosystem functions and values, and to provide environmental education and compatible outdoor recreation opportunities as outlined in the Rivers to Ridges Metropolitan Regional Parks and Open Space Study - Vision and Strategies document.*

1.1.2 Rivers to Ridges Statement of Partnership

The Rivers to Ridges partnership was formalized in 2010 through a Statement of Partnership (SOP), which has been signed by all partner organizations. The SOP outlines the administrative structure of the partnership and emphasizes the commitment to work collaboratively toward implementation of the vision. The mission as stated in the SOP is below:

> *To advance implementation of the vision outlined in the Rivers to Ridges Metropolitan Regional Parks and Open Space Study – Vision and Strategies document.*

1.2 Rivers to Ridges Annual Report

Although the Rivers to Ridges Partnership has formally been in existence since 2010, and informally for many years prior, this is the first year that an annual report has been produced. The purpose of this, and subsequent annual reports, is to provide an overview of the administrative structure of the R2R partnership and to document key decisions and activities for the year. The report will also track annual accomplishments in the areas of land preservation, education, recreational facilities, restoration and management, and planning. The annual report will also provide partners with an opportunity to highlight their own achievements from the year that have supported the implementation of the shared Rivers to Ridges vision.

Camas

1.3 Administrative Structure and Summary of Activities

Beginning in 2010, the Rivers to Ridges Partnership took over the administrative function that had been in place under the West Eugene Wetlands (WEW) Partnership since 1992. The WEW partnership had originally formed to oversee the implementation of the West Eugene Wetlands Plan, but over time had expanded its focus to include a much broader geographic area representing a range of additional habitat types. The formation of the R2R partnership, with the addition of several new partners, was an acknowledgement of this expanded reach. It is important to note that the R2R partnership has no dedicated funding sources for the administration of the partnership and it currently relies on staff time donated by the partners, with rotating facilitators heading up the various committees. Beginning in 2014, a voluntary annual partnership dues structure will be put in place to provide some support for tasks such as annual report production and web site management. The basic administrative structure used by the R2R partnership, is described below.

1.3.1 Rivers to Ridges Executive Team (R2R XT)

The function of the Rivers to Ridges Executive Team (R2R XT) is to guide management of the regional open space system in a cooperative manner. The team includes at least one executive representative from each of the 16 members of the R2R Partnership and typically meets once annually. This year's meeting was held in December and facilitated by Bob Keefer from the Willamalane Park and Recreation District. The meeting included a presentation of major open space accomplishments that had been achieved by R2R Partners in 2013 and the welcoming of the two new partners, the Coast Fork Willamette Watershed Council and the Middle Fork Willamette Watershed Council. At the meeting, the group also agreed to move forward with an amendment to the Statement of Partnership to include a modest annual fee to accomplish valuable partnership related tasks such as the annual report and website management. The Statement of Partnership will be amended to reflect these changes in 2014.

1.3.2 Rivers to Ridges Implementation Team (IT!)

The Rivers to Ridges Implementation Team (IT!) includes manager level representatives from each of the partner organizations. The IT! provides broad oversight for the implementation of the objectives of the R2R vision.

The IT! met a total of five times in 2013 and meetings continue to be marked by good attendance from the R2R partners and productive discussions. The 2013 meetings were coordinated by Katie MacKendrick from the Long Tom Watershed Council, with rotating facilitators. Major topics covered in 2013 included outlining the annual report content, the development of a partnership web site, institution of a voluntary annual partnership dues structure, providing feedback to LRAPA on new guidance on burning, the Eugene Celebration parade entry, and review of new R2R partner applications. Each meeting includes a standing agenda item that allows partners to give brief updates on the following topics:

- Acquisition
- Upland Projects
- Wetland Projects
- Waterway Projects
- Education
- Recreation

FOG field tour of the recent oak release project at the Buford Recreation Area

1.3.3 R2R Field Operations Group

The Field Operations Group (FOG) is a multi-jurisdictional team that typically meets several times annually to coordinate on-the-ground activities and share technical information and experience. Much of the coordination role of FOG has been delegated to subcommittees with general meetings dedicated to guest lectures, trainings, or site visits. The Nature Conservancy scheduled and facilitated the 2013 FOG meetings, which included the following:

- Representatives from the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, the Institute for Applied Ecology, and R2R partner organizations met to discuss recovery plans for threatened and endangered species in the southern Willamette Valley and how to coordinate funding opportunities and recovery actions.
- Presentation by Susanna Hamilton of Willamette Resources Education Network (WREN) about new curriculum development and an overview of audiences reached.
- Presentation by Jenny Getty from the Institute for Applied Ecology on the Willamette Valley Native Plant Materials Cooperative Strategy for Growing a Native Seed Cooperative.
- Presentation by Lauri Holts from the City of Eugene on the completed Delta Ponds Restoration Project.
- The first annual Habitat Management and Restoration in the Southern Willamette Valley gathering with multiple short project updates by R2R partners and others.
- Field tour of the newly wetland restoration project at the EWEB Roosevelt Mitigation Site led by Nancy Holzhauser.
- Field tour of the Mount Pisgah oak release project led by Jason Blazar of Friends of Buford Park & Mount Pisgah and Fraser MacDonald of the Lane County Public Works Department.
- Field tour of Green Island led by Chris Vogel of McKenzie River Trust to look at the south end riparian restoration efforts and planned gravel pit restoration.

Eight-spotted skimmer at Golden Gardens Ponds

Several subcommittees meet as needed to help coordinate specific aspects of FOG. These include:

- Seeds, Plugs, Rhizomes, or Underground Tubers (SPROUTs): This committee meets on an ad-hoc basis to develop and coordinate the R2R Partnership's native plant materials program.

- Prescribed Fire: This committee meets on an ad-hoc basis to coordinate and plan the annual controlled ecological burn program.

- Science: This committee was established to review germane scientific information, prioritize future research projects, and provide a forum for information sharing around scientific research. Recently this group has focused its efforts on the development of a coordinated recovery plan for the four federally listed endangered species found in West Eugene.

Spencer Swamp

2 Land Protection

2.1 Land Protection in 2013

In 2013, the McKenzie River Trust, Willamalane Park and Recreation District, and City of Eugene added a total of seven fee title acquisitions and one conservation easement, adding 435 acres to the protected land base of the Rivers to Ridges partners. The 2013 acquisitions and easements are listed below and shown in red on the Rivers to Ridges map on page 6:

2.1.1 Spencer Swamp

Located along Spencer Creek, the 52-acre Spencer Swamp property was purchased by the McKenzie River Trust (MRT) in 2013. This forested wetland is in very good condition and MRT has no immediate restoration activities planned. The land hosts a diversity of migratory birds including flycatchers, warblers, and grosbeaks. The site was purchased with funding assistance through the North American Wetlands Conservation Act (USFWS).

2.1.2 Coyote-Spencer Wetlands Expanded

In 2013, McKenzie River Trust purchased an additional 29 acres of land immediately adjacent to their 161-acre Coyote Spencer Wetlands (CSW) site. The land contains forested and emergent wetlands, wet prairie, and several small tributaries of Coyote Creek. Funding for this acquisition was provided by the North American Wetlands Conservation Act (USFWS). Management of the property will be consistent with the adjacent 161-acre CSW site, which includes several miles of Coyote and Spencer creeks surrounded by large swaths of forested wetlands, marshy emergent wetlands, and a small area of drier meadows.

Gray Property

2.1.3 Green Island Bull Pen

McKenzie River Trust added an additional 34 acres to their Green Island property in 2013. This key property, referred to as the Bull Pen, is situated along the historic McKenzie River channel and includes forested wetlands, agricultural land, and forested uplands. The acquisition was funded with McKenzie Watershed Council 412 funds. Management and restoration of the property will be done in conjunction with the larger Green Island property, which now totals nearly 1,100 acres.

2.1.4 Gray Property

This 172-acre property, which was acquired by Willamalane Park and Recreation District in 2013, is located at the eastern edge of Springfield and extends from Highway 126 up the north-facing slopes of the Thurston Hills to the ridgeline. Willamalane and the City of Springfield previously acquired an adjacent 3-acre site fronting on the McKenzie Highway that includes the historic Gray Family homestead house. The lower portion of the site includes pastureland and a segment of Gay Creek and associated wetlands and riparian areas. The middle and upper elevations are predominately Douglas-fir forest, which has been managed for timber production over the past 150 years. Funding for this acquisition

Photo credit: Raptor Views

Thurston Hills Site

came from the USDA Forest Service Community Forest Program and the Willamalane Bond Measure. Restoration plans include controlling invasive species within the wetland, riparian, and prairie areas on the lower end of the site and continued management of the upper forest through thinning operations. The historic homestead site will eventually serve as a support facility for public access and education and as a trailhead for Thurston Hills access.

2.1.5 Weyerhaeuser Thurston Hills Site

This 107-acre property, which was acquired by Willamalane in 2013, is located in the Thurston Hills near the Mountain Gate and Jasper Meadows subdivisions and adjacent to the Weyerhaeuser Haul Road (discussed below). The site includes Douglas-fir forest, oak woodland, and prairie openings. The property will be used for environmental education and will accommodate a leg of the planned ridgeline trail system as envisioned in the Rivers to Ridges Vision and Willamalane's Park and Recreation Comprehensive Plan. When combined with the Gray Property and another pending acquisition in the area, Willamalane will own a contiguous block of habitat of nearly 700-acres, spanning much of Springfield's Thurston Hills. Funding for this acquisition came from the Willamette Wildlife Mitigation Program and the Willamalane bond measure.

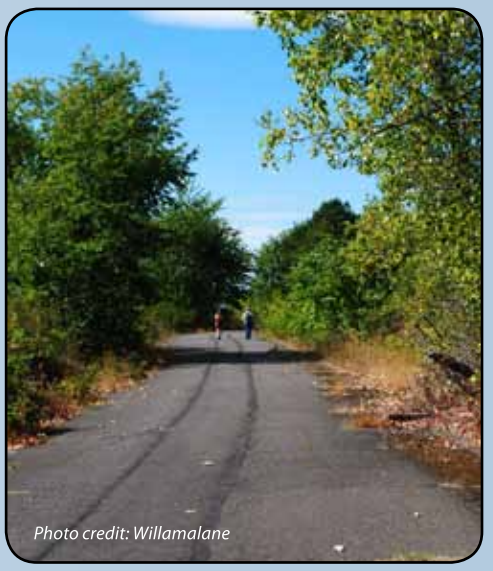


Photo credit: Willamalane

Weyerhaeuser Haul Road

2.1.6 Weyerhaeuser Haul Road

In 2013, Willamalane purchased a four mile stretch of the Weyerhaeuser Haul Road that extends from Main Street at South 48th Street to Wallace Creek Road. The acquisition area totals 33 acres. The road was constructed in the mid-1940s to provide access to and from timberlands in the Jasper, Hills Creek, and Fall Creek areas to avoid impacting public roadways. The public has long used the road as a recreational corridor for biking, jogging, and hiking, which will now be formalized and improved under Willamalane ownership. Funds from the Willamalane bond measure were used to purchase this property.

2.1.7 Amazon Creek Rexius Property

In 2013, the City of Eugene purchased 2.5 acres of land located along the south bank of Amazon Creek near the former Rexius composting yard west of Bailey Hill Road. This acquisition provides the city better access and control of about 1,200 linear feet of the creek and will allow future vegetation enhancements to occur. In addition, an adjacent 5-acres acquisition will provide space for a future neighborhood park.

2.2 Summary of Overall Partnership Acreages in the Rivers to Ridges Planning Area

Rivers to Ridges partners currently own or hold conservation easements on an estimated 22,152 acres of land within the Rivers to Ridges planning area (table left). This total includes the 472 acres added in 2013 that are described above and approximately 4,500 acres added since the Rivers to Ridges vision was endorsed in 2003. The majority of this land is in an undeveloped condition and has been acquired to preserve and restore native habitats, to protect natural resource functions (ecosystem services), to provide a recreational and educational resource, and to preserve visual quality.

Rivers to Ridges Partner Lands

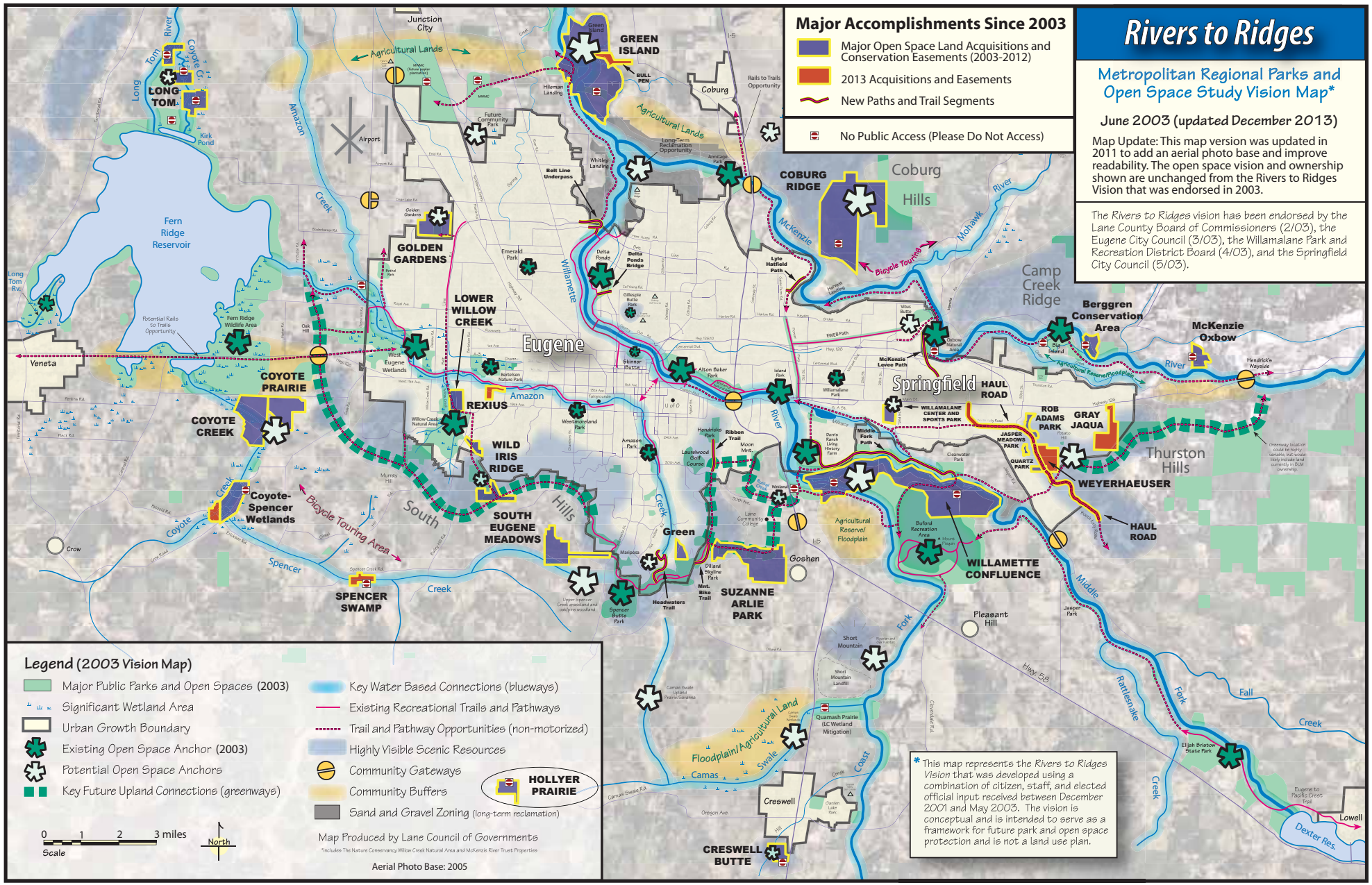
R2R Partner Ownership and Easements	Acres
Bureau of Land Management (WEW)*	1,305
Bureau of Land Management Easement	22
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers	3,870
City of Eugene	4,259
Lane County	4,032
McKenzie River Trust	1,569
McKenzie River Trust Easements	651
Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife	382
Oregon Parks and Recreation Dept.**	1,943
The Nature Conservancy	2,995
Willamalane Park and Recreation Dist.***	1,124
Total:	**22,152**

* *BLM owns and manages an additional 27,409 acres of land within the Rivers to Ridges planning area, mainly O&C land within the Coburg and Thurston Hills.*

** *The OPRD total includes 120 acres of land in Oregon Department of State Lands ownership.*

*** *The Willamalane total includes approximately 289 acres of developed park land.*

Rivers to Ridges Vision Map with Accomplishments



The map above is a compilation of the Rivers to Ridges vision map that was endorsed by local elected officials in 2003 and an overlay of major open space acquisitions that have occurred since that time.

Photo credit: City of Eugene

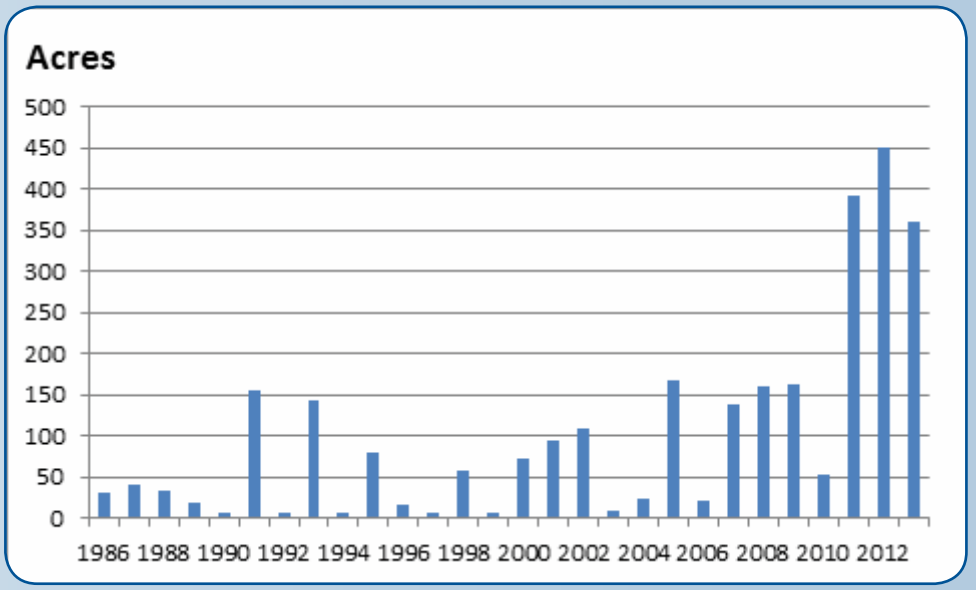
Controlled ecological burn

3 Restoration and Habitat Management

3.1 Controlled Ecological Burns

In 2013, Rivers to Ridges partners conducted controlled ecological burns on a total of 361 acres. The acreage burned over the past three years has far exceeded any previous burn year dating back to the mid-1980s. Since 1986, a total of 2,821 acres have been burned.

Yearly Acreage Burned by Rivers to Ridges Partners



Sites Burned in 2013

Site Name (owner)	Acres
Cherry Orchard (USACE)	7
South Eaton (USACE)	9
Big Spires (USACE)	20
Meadowlark Prairie (boot)	16
Meadowlark Prairie	152
Dragonfly Bend	38
Vinci (BLM/Private)	119
Total:	**361**

3.2 Native Plant Materials

3.2.1 West Eugene Wetland Plant Materials Partnership

The U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM), City of Eugene, and The Nature Conservancy's plant materials partnership continues to produce native seed and plants for restoration and enhancement efforts within the West Eugene Wetlands and associated upland prairies. The program is now able to provide seed of several slow-growing prairie natives, such as common camas and narrow-leaf mule's ear, that take 5 or more years to reach reproductive size. In 2013, the partnership provided seed of about 60 native plant species being produced by Willamette Valley growers for use in local restorations and enhancements. The partnership also continues to rely on hand collection from wild sites for a few wetland species that are common locally and to genetically refresh species cultivated by contract growers. Seasonal botanists working for the partnership, hand collected seed of 33 native species in 2013. Altogether, more than 1,195 pounds of local native seed was pro-

Photo credit: Diane Steeck

Plectritis congesta beds at Heritage Seedlings (plant materials partnership)

Photo credit: RaptorViews

Native Plant Nursery at Mount Pisgah

duced and procured for the plant materials program in 2013. The program successfully provided seed for 120 acres of restoration projects in 43 customized seed mixes. The mixes included those for emergent, vernal pool, wet prairie, and upland prairie communities.

3.2.2 Willow Creek Nursery

The Nature Conservancy's Willow Creek Nursery has shifted its production almost exclusively to the federally listed plant species, Bradshaw's lomatium, Willamette daisy and Kincaid's lupine. These species are being grown out for use on local restoration projects. In its seventh year of production, Kincaid's lupine produced approximately 8,000 seeds. This is down from the all-time high of 40,000 in 2011. In their second year of production, Bradshaw's lomatium and Willamette daisy both produced a few ounces of seed each. In 2014 The Nature Conservancy plans to expand the bed sizes for all three species.

3.2.3 Friends of Buford Park & Mount Pisgah Native Plant Nursery

The Friends of Buford Park & Mount Pisgah operate a native plant nursery to support restoration projects on and around Mount Pisgah. In 2013, they collaborated with Lane County Public Works to double the size of the nursery from one to two acres. The nursery depends on financial sponsors and community volunteers to produce quality native plants and seed. While the primary purpose of the nursery is to provide genetically-local plant materials to restore native habitat in the Mount Pisgah area, the nursery does offer one sale for the public every spring. In 2013, the nursery nearly doubled seed production, harvesting over 250 pounds of more than 80 species of grasses and forbs for area restoration projects.

3.3 Habitat Restoration and Enhancement Project Highlights

Listed below is a sampling of major habitat restoration and enhancement projects that have been implemented by Rivers to Ridges partners in 2013.

3.3.1 City of Eugene Project Highlights

Willamette River Reforestation: The City of Eugene, through its stormwater program, is committed to improving water quality in its creeks and rivers. This includes planting trees along waterways to provide shade to reduce water temperatures. Riparian plantings also provide important habitat for wildlife and play an important role in stabilizing banks and reducing erosion. In 2012, the City developed a five year Willamette River Riparian Planting Plan to identify high priority project areas where tree planting could occur along City-owned reaches of the Willamette River. The first of those planting efforts took place in 2013, with the planting of 800 trees in six reaches where riparian habitat was lacking. All trees were staked, heavily mulched with wood chips, and will be watered every other week during the summer for two years. Survival monitoring in September of 2013, following the first summer of watering, showed an 80% survival rate, which was remarkable given that 2013 was one of the driest years on record.

Photo credit: City of Eugene

Riparian Restoration

Coyote Prairie North (East Phase): The East Phase of the Coyote Prairie North Mitigation Bank is an 84-acre wetland prairie restoration project that is in its fourth growing season. Efforts to control non-native species

Photo credit: City of Eugene

Coyote Prairie vernal pool

Photo credit: Long Tom Watershed Council

LTWC stormwater retention project

Photo credit: Long Tom Watershed Council

Watkins property restoratin project

and establish natives continued this year as the site has matured to a relatively well-established native dominated prairie. Monitoring this year indicated the project has achieved 125% absolute native cover with only 7% absolute cover of all non-native species! With a diversity of 72 native plant species, this site is well on its way to success. 2014 will be the final year of monitoring and stewardship before all credits for the site will be released and it will move into long-term maintenance mode.

Photo credit: City of Eugene

Greenhill Wetland

Greenhill Wetland Mitigation Bank: The Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) has contracted with the City of Eugene to construct their Greenhill Wetland Mitigation Bank project. Located adjacent to the BLM's Oak Hill site, the Greenhill Mitigation Bank consists of 58-acres of potential wetland prairie habitat. The City began efforts this year by restoring site hydrology by modifying the flattened landscape to restore vernal pool and swale topography. In addition, several habitat features were added including logs and standing snags. Over the next six years the City will continue weed control and establish a diverse native plant community. After all mitigation credits are certified, ODOT anticipates transferring the property to the City of Eugene along with an endowment for long-term maintenance.

3.3.2 Long Tom Watershed Council Project Highlights

Thermo Fisher Scientific Stormwater Retention Project: With technical assistance from the Long Tom Watershed Council, Thermo Fisher Scientific (formerly Life Technologies) in West Eugene voluntarily converted the footprint of a demolished building site to a stormwater retention area of amended soils and native plants to enhance habitat, beautify the area, and filter stormwater runoff from nearly 1 acre of impervious surface. The project started in August 2013 and native vegetation was planted later in the year. Meyer Memorial Trust, EPA, the City of Eugene, and Thermo Fisher all contributed funds towards the project, scheduled to complete this year.

Watkins Property Restoration: In 2013, the Long Tom Watershed Council worked to enhance oak savanna, oak riparian, and streamside habitat along 1.25 miles of Coyote and Nighswander creeks. The project, which was led by the LTWC, included planting 30,000 native trees and shrubs on 15 acres of floodplain habitat, installing livestock exclusion fencing and two solar-powered, off-channel water sources, and restoring habitat structure and native understory species on 12 acres of oak savanna habitat. Project partners include the Watkins family, Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB), and Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife. This project is one of a string of similar habitat enhancement projects implemented by the LTWC along Coyote Creek in recent years, contributing to 4.25 miles of contiguous restored riparian habitat.

3.3.3 Spring Box Savanna Project

The Spring Box Savanna restoration project and accompanying Trail #3 and #4 realignment project (see section 4.5) highlights the collaboration of two Rivers to Ridges partners, Lane County Public Works and Friends of Buford Park & Mount Pisgah. In 2013, these partners implemented the 55-acre Spring Box Savanna restoration project at Mount Pisgah, which included woody vegetation and invasive species control for blackberry, Scotch broom, false brome, and small trees that were colonizing the savanna. Staff from Lane County Public Works assisted with mowing and the initial blackberry removal for the project. This project was completed with funding from the OWEB. As the momentum continues, it is anticipated that future projects will include partnering with

Photo credit: Lane County Parks

Meadowlark Prairie Restoration

Photo credit: Cheryl Schultz

Hayfield Restoration Project

Photo credit: McKenzie River Trust

Culvert at Green Island

The Nature Conservancy to implement an ecological burn in an area that extends across the park boundary to the adjacent TNC owned Confluence property.

3.3.4 Mount Pisgah Meadowlark Prairie and Savanna Restoration Project

Lane County Public Works and The Friends of Buford Park & Mount Pisgah partnered to thin several hundred encroaching conifers in the Meadowlark Prairie and Savanna on the south and east side of Mount Pisgah to support the release of legacy oaks. This project enhanced oak savanna habitat for future generations to enjoy while improving habitat for native plants and wildlife including western bluebird, wayside aster, Oregon iris, western gray squirrel, and western meadowlark – Oregon's state bird.

The project included:

- Control of invasive blackberry and other non-native invasive vegetation across 265 acres
- Removed Douglas-fir and other trees to restore oak savanna habitat on 26.6 acres
- Sowed site-specific seed mixes of native grasses and forbs.

Funding for this project was provided by the USFWS, ODFW, OWEB, and Oregon Department of Forestry (ecological burn implementation).

3.3.5 The Nature Conservancy Hayfield Restoration Project

Using the "Field of Dreams" hypothesis – If you build it they will come, The Nature Conservancy has been working for five years restoring an old hayfield into one of the largest Fender's blue butterfly habitats remaining today. From 2008-2012 TNC introduced a significant amount of plant material to the site:

- 111,000 Kincaid's lupine seeds grown in our Willow Creek plant nursery were hand seeded
- Over 1,000 pounds of native grass and forb seed was drilled and broadcast
- Nearly 100,000 perennial bulbs and over 25,000 containerized plants and cuttings were installed

Results of ongoing butterfly monitoring conducted by Dr. Cheryl Schultz (Assistant Professor of Biology at WSU) at the Hayfield site have found:

- Exponential growth of Fender's blue butterfly population within 5 years of planting
- Colonization of the farthest reaches of the site (clear colonization by distance from source trend)
- Phenomenal initial establishment of Kincaid's lupine and nectar plants
- 800 adult Fender's blue butterflies surveyed in the hayfield restoration in 2013

3.3.6 Green Island Restoration

The McKenzie River Trust continued their restoration efforts at their Green Island property in 2013. Major accomplishments in 2013 included:

- Installation of a 9-foot by 14-foot culvert between a major side channel of the mainstem Willamette River and the historic McKenzie River channel to enable hydrologic connection during high flow events.
- Installation of a box culvert in the historic McKenzie River channel to enable better year round access to Green Island, reduce impacts associated with repeated washout of the old culverts, and enable better fish passage.
- Continued restoration planting on 55 acres the south end of Green Island with approximately 22,000 trees and 500 shrubs planted in 2013.

Middle Fork Path

4 Recreation, Education, and Outreach Highlights

4.1 Middle Fork Willamette River Path Completed

In 2013, Willamalane completed the final phase of the 4.5-mile shared-use path connecting Dorris Ranch Living History Farm to Clearwater Park. Users enjoy outstanding views along previously inaccessible reaches of the river. The first phase of the path, from Clearwater Park to Quarry Creek, opened for public use in the spring of 2011. The second phase, from Quarry Creek to the new trailhead facility at Dorris Ranch, opened in fall of 2013. Including planning and design, the project was more than ten years in the making. Funding was from several sources including federal funding through the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU); the Surface Transportation Program-Urban (STP-U); ODOT's Transportation Enhancement Program; and local agency match.

4.2 Willamette Resources and Educational Network Education Program

The Willamette Resources and Education Network (WREN) was initiated in 1999 as the result of collaboration among various organizations interested in providing environmental education based in the West Eugene Wetlands. With the help of tremendous volunteers, project partners, members, and donors, WREN has offered environmental education programs rooted in the heart of the remaining Willamette Valley wet prairie since that time. WREN continued its mission of education and stewardship in 2013 and during that one year period has:

- Served 1,365 students, 330 volunteers and 3,879 additional community members!
- Increased outreach to diverse communities with even more field trips and classroom visits for students in low-income and rural schools, including Bethel, Eugene 4J, Springfield, Junction City, Fern Ridge and Florence districts, as well as home-schooled students and Girl Scout troops.
- Revised and updated all established curricula to meet current Oregon State Benchmarks.
- Developed new educational curricula for soils and understanding and using classification guides that meet Oregon State Benchmarks for grades 1-3 and 6-8 respectively, and address topics of interest to local teachers and school districts.
- Hosted family exploration activities and wetlands bird seminars to reach even more members of the community.

WREN has served more than 49,000 through school and interpretive programs for children and adults in their outdoor classroom.

Students in the wetlands with WREN

WREN nature study

Green Island Living River Celebration

Volunteer Stewardship Day

4.3 Green Island Living River Celebration

On June 29, 2013, McKenzie River Trust invited the community to the 2013 Living River Celebration, commemorating ten years of shared accomplishments on Green Island. Over 800 people attended this festive event to walk, bird, paddle, climb, picnic, and explore the expansive Green Island property. A repeat of this successful event is planned for 2014.

4.4 Amazon Creek Initiative Public Meetings

The Long Tom Watershed Council hosted two public meetings in March and July to present results from pesticide sampling data from Amazon Creek and discuss opportunities to improve stormwater entering the system. A total of 55 people attended these two watershed events.

4.5 Volunteer Stewardship Day

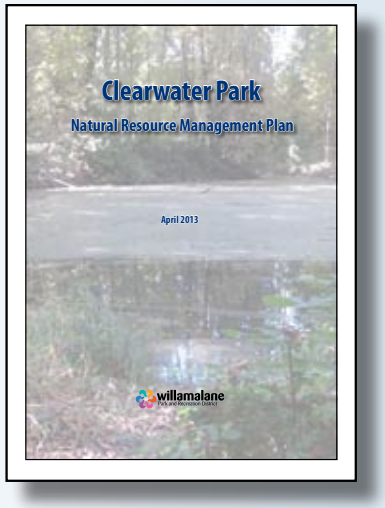
In 2013, the Long Tom Watershed Council coordinated nearly 40 volunteers from the University of Oregon and planted hundreds of native willow and spirea stakes along Nighswander Creek. These live stakes will provide important habitat and soil stability.

4.6 Buford Recreation Area Trail Improvements

In 2013, Friends of Buford Park & Mount Pisgah and Lane County Public Works partnered to make major improvements to two trail segments on the northwest slopes of Mount Pisgah. The project re-routed approximately 1,690 lineal feet of trail to improve safety and increase year round access to the north end of the park with the goal of reducing damage to vegetation and improving surfacing. Additionally, Trail #4, which was located in a draw that is seasonally wet, was rerouted to put the trail in a dryer and less sensitive area. The trail improvements were funded through a grant received by Lane County Parks from the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department's Recreational Trail Projects (RTP) grant program.

Living River Celebration

New trail segment at Mount Pisgah



5 Planning Highlights

5.1 Clearwater Park Natural Resource Management Plan

In 2013, Willamalane completed a Natural Resource Management Plan for the 65-acre Clearwater Park. The plan provides direction for management and restoration of the site's natural areas and related facilities. Clearwater Park was selected for management planning in part because recreational use in the area was increasing rapidly due to recent upgrades in facilities and because the park contained some of the District's highest quality habitat. The plan envisions provision of "abundant opportunities for nature based recreational activities and outdoor education." It identifies enhancement and management of the park's aquatic habitats, waterways, and riparian areas as a high priority, and proposes incremental restoration of native prairie habitat.

5.2 South Eugene Meadows Management Plan

In 2012, the City of Eugene purchased the 194-acre South Eugene Meadows site for the purposes of conserving imperiled habitats and rare and uncommon species, protecting open space, and providing an additional segment of the Ridgeline Trail. In 2013, the City completed development of a management plan, which describes the overall goals and objectives for management of the site's habitats and provides guidance for future public access. The plan documents the site's features and history, articulates its local and regional conservation importance, identifies the conservation targets, describes specific planned actions for protecting or enhancing those systems and species, details desired future conditions, provides a schedule of implementation, and formulates monitoring plans for key site resources and restoration areas.

5.3 Coyote Creek Management Plan

In March 2013, Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife (ODFW) purchased the 309-acre Coyote Creek Site for the purposes of protecting Coyote Creek and restoring Willamette Valley habitats for the benefit of wildlife and native plants. Under contract to ODFW, the City of Eugene prepared a draft management plan for the site. This plan describes the overall goals and objectives of ODFW's management of the Coyote Creek site for the next 10 years (2014-2024), and serves to guide restoration and management actions and public access. The plan provides context for the site's local and regional conservation importance, documents site features and history, and designates the habitat types and species that will be the focus of management and restoration. It describes the desired future conditions for the site and outlines a suite of actions to move the site towards those conditions. Importantly, the plan adopts an adaptive management framework, recognizing the importance of monitoring and the value of integrating improved site understanding into restoration and management regimes. ODFW will work to finalize the plan in 2014.