

# CALAPOOIA WATERSHED COUNCIL

## 24 - 25 Annual Report





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# OUR MISSION

## To protect and restore the health of the Calapooia River watershed through collaborative action

The Calapooia Watershed Council (CWC) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit committed to the health and vitality of the Calapooia River watershed. Our core mission is habitat restoration and environmental science education, all aimed at improving river conditions for imperiled ESA-listed salmonids and other native species. We take a strategic, science-driven approach to restoration, beginning with comprehensive watershed assessments. These assessments draw on agency expertise and extensive GIS data to pinpoint critical areas and identify landowners for strategic partnerships, guiding effective projects like riparian plantings, fish passage improvements, in-stream habitat restoration, and the revitalization of oak savannas and wetlands. We also actively work to remove invasive species that threaten our native ecosystems.

Central to our philosophy is the belief that educating the next generation is vital for long-term watershed health. In partnership with local teachers, non profit organizations and county youth services partners, our innovative Youth Education Program engages with over 1,900 local youth annually. Our program fosters curiosity, discovery, and connection with the land and water that sustains our community.



# HABITAT RESTORATION

## Albany Oxbows

Large-scale Fish Passage, Habitat Restoration, and Floodplain Enhancement

A tremendous effort has already taken place to develop specific, strategic restoration and conservation projects along the mainstem that will protect and add complexity to the channelized Willamette river system, create off-channel salmonid habitat and refuge, significantly improve water quality, and provide opportunities for public awareness and support for basin-wide habitat restoration.

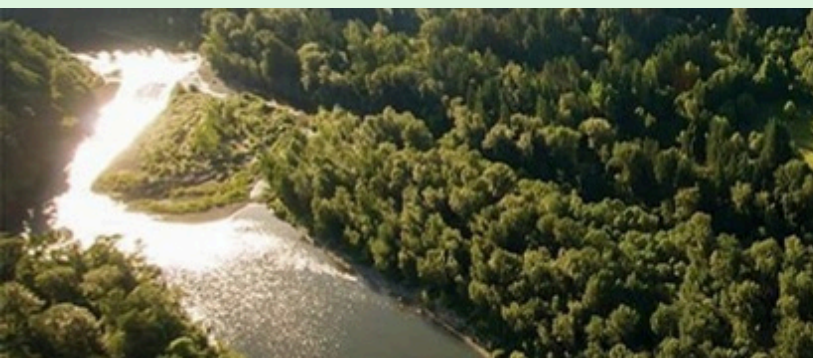
CWC has secured funding from the Bonneville Power administration to complete designs and permitting, and to begin implementation of a project to replace failed culverts and breach berms impounding relict log-corralling ponds within the Albany Oxbows complex near Third and Fourth Lakes.

These failed culverts and derelict ponds constitute massive fish traps as they are connected to the Willamette River during high flows but as flows recede, water levels drop far too quickly for migratory fish to escape.



This project will replace several large failed culverts acting as fish passage barriers, as well as breach the berms at key locations, improving throughflow and hydrologic connectivity and turning what was a fish trap into a valuable piece of floodplain habitat for salmon, steelhead, and other species.

Albany Oxbows is one of our living classrooms, as it provides ample opportunities for exploration and hands-on learning. Each year over 500 Albany students participate in a field trip to the site to explore how these areas nurture healthy rivers, sustain native wildlife, and human health.





# HABITAT RESTORATION

## Truax Island Greenway

Fish Passage Improvement, Habitat Restoration, and Floodplain Enhancement

Our long-term restoration efforts at Truax Island Greenway have included large-scale native plantings and maintenance, and now we are embarking on exciting new progress to address fish passage barriers present at this public property.

As an outdoor classroom, Truax offers opportunities to study the importance of adequate fish passage, drainage from the site to the Willamette, and human impacts on the landscape.

To restore this valuable floodplain habitat along the Willamette River, site preparation began in 2018. Work has consisted of manual and machine removal of blackberry thickets and other invasives with follow-up herbicide applications in the spring and fall.

In winter of 2020, the Calapooia Watershed Council and R. Franco Restoration installed 27,300 native trees and shrubs, and another 5,500 plants in the winter of 2021.

In 2024 we secured funding from NOAA to replace two of the crossings which constitute fish passage barriers, as well as at Murder Creek and the Central Floodplain within the Albany Oxbows Complex.



# HABITAT RESTORATION

## Periwinkle Creek

### Urban Habitat Restoration & Public Space Enhancement

Periwinkle Creek is a historically important waterbody for local biodiversity with Salmon & Beaver, as well as abundant native bird & pollinator populations.

The Periwinkle Creek Watershed has a history of ecological degradation due to agricultural & urban development, increasing stream temperatures and reducing habitat health and wildlife populations.

Riparian restoration efforts can transform Periwinkle Creek through a multi-faceted approach including additional native vegetation, natural bank stabilization for erosion control, water capture and filtration, and stream shade to buffer stream temperatures.

The CWC has been partnering with the Albany community, especially South Albany HS, to enhance the native habitats around Periwinkle Creek since 2014.

Since 2016, restoration activities have created a more functional and resilient riparian zone along Periwinkle Creek, accomplished through the reduction of invasive species, increase of structural diversity, and the reintroduction of native riparian plant species. South Albany High School students spent many hours monitoring conditions and strategically planting native species along the creek.

The next phase of restoration builds upon our existing investments along Periwinkle Creek. To date, 4,750 native plants have been installed along a total length of 2,800 feet of the creek. We have been thrilled by the survival of these plants, which has far exceeded our expectations.

We are actively managing the area, and major planting is planned for installation Winter 2025.





# HABITAT RESTORATION

## Tub Run

### Riparian and Wetland Prairie Habitat Restoration

Restoration efforts began in 2018, in partnership with landowner Scott Erion. Components to be implemented included: restoring 36 acres of farmland to wetland prairie, and restoring 37 acres of degraded riparian habitat. The project area expanded in 2020 after it was discovered to be a favored nesting site for the Streak Horned Lark; a Federally-listed as Threatened native bird to Oregon with less than 2,000 remaining. Streaked Horned Larks are endemic to the Pacific Northwest, meaning this subspecies lives nowhere else on the planet. With additional support from the landowner, the total restoration area is now over 140 acres.

The initial restoration project restored wetland prairie habitat that has become very rare in the Willamette Valley. Habitat loss and destruction are the main drivers that lead to extinction, and a number of prairie dependent bird species that were historically common in the Willamette Valley along with other prairie dependent species, have suffered greatly from habitat loss.

Efforts improved riparian zones which help to prevent sediment, nitrogen, phosphorus, pesticides and other pollutants from reaching a stream. By slowing down floodwaters and rainwater runoff, the riparian vegetation allows water to soak into the ground and recharge groundwater. Slowing floodwaters also allows the riparian zone to function as a site of sediment deposition, trapping sediments that build stream banks and would otherwise degrade our streams and rivers. Just as importantly, riparian buffers provide valuable habitat for wildlife. In addition to providing food and cover they are an important corridor or travel way for a variety of wildlife.

Work in 2024-2025 involved spring and summer preparation and seedings of 140 acres, as well as the seasonal maintenance to ensure plant success.



# RESTORATION PARTNERSHIPS

## Mid-Willamette Beaver Partnership



The Mid-Willamette Beaver Partnership (MWBP) is a multi-basin group of partners that is exploring where and how beaver-based restoration would make the most sense – both ecologically and sociologically.

The MWBP seeks to expand the ecological and social benefits that beaver habitats provide while mitigating the potential negative impacts beaver behavior can cause.

For more information and to learn about specific efforts visit [mwbeaverpartnership.org](http://mwbeaverpartnership.org)

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## Mid-Valley River Connections

The Mid-Valley River Connections (MVRC) network includes the Luckiamute (LWC), Marys River (MRWC), Calapooia (CWC), South Santiam (SSWC), and North Santiam (NSWC) watershed councils.

While each watershed has distinctive characteristics and challenges, and each watershed council (WC) has its own priorities and strategies, there are also many shared challenges across the region and similar approaches to addressing them. This cooperative effort seeks to leverage these similarities. By collaborating and sharing our best strategies, we make our entire region stronger and more resilient.





# EDUCATION & OUTREACH PROGRAMS



Calapooia Watershed's 2024-2025 Education & Outreach programs engaged 1,442 students and youth directly from Linn County.

Furthermore, through a shared staffing model with the South Santiam Watershed Council, our programming successfully served an additional 435 students in the Sweet Home and Lebanon areas. In total, our programs connected with 1,877 young people across the watershed.

Our success is rooted in strong collaborative partnerships with:

- **Greater Albany and Harrisburg School Districts**
- **Jackson Street Youth Services**
- **Linn County Juvenile Department**
- **Albany Public Library**
- **Oregon State University's New Beginnings for Tribal Youth**

Together, we cultivate future environmental stewards by providing unique, hands-on learning experiences that invite curiosity, nurture a personal connection with nature, and build community around our shared natural spaces.



# URBAN ECOLOGY



In the spring of 2025, 345 fifth grade students from Albany participated in a day of exploration and discovery at Albany Oxbows and Talking Water Gardens in Albany.

Students begin their day with the creation of watershed models and see the interconnectedness of all life through the universal need for clean water. Later, students enhanced their observational skills as they discovered the many plants and animals that inhabit the natural spaces in their city. Students round out their day by creating wetland models to demonstrate the role healthy wetlands play in maintaining clean rivers.

Students work in small groups or independently, and are encouraged to share their questions and curiosities to personalize their experience. Nature journaling and grounding exercises are integrated throughout the experience to strengthen student connection with the natural world.



# “ROAMING RIVERS” FRESHWATER SNORKELING

In the summer of 2024, 137 students and youth from Linn County took part in one or more of our unique and unforgettable freshwater snorkeling experiences.

The CWC partnered with Jackson Street Youth Services and the Linn County Juvenile Department to offer this program to youth, many of whom are navigating homelessness and other incredibly challenging life circumstances.

Participants immersed themselves into the natural beauty and crystal-clear waters of the South Santiam River, discovering the world beneath the surface, and experiencing the healing effects of time spent in nature.

Indigenous Youth from Tribes throughout Oregon snorkeled the Siletz River as part of their week-long New Beginnings for Tribal Youth experiential summer camp, hosted by Oregon State University.

The CWC partnered with Ophelia’s Place to provide snorkeling experiences for girls in their science camp.

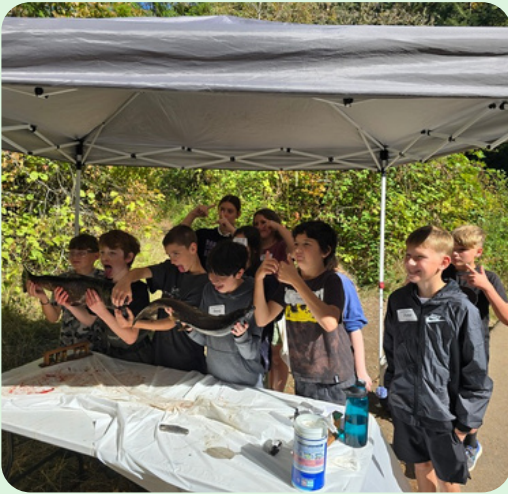
45 additional youth took part in snorkeling experiences as part of their classes at Timber Ridge and West Albany High Schools, to bring life to the ecosystems they study.

These trips focus on more than river health; they offer a powerful connection to nature—providing space for healing, wonder, and a sense of belonging in the outdoors.





# SALMON WATCH



In the fall of 2024, 613 fifth grade students from 7 Albany schools and 72 sixth grade students from Harrisburg participated in Salmon Watch, an immersive field experience held at River Bend County Park in Foster.

Surrounded by the flowing waters and lush riparian zones of the South Santiam River, students became scientists for the day—observing, questioning, and connecting with the natural world.

Through hands-on exploration, including a salmon dissection, macroinvertebrate study, and salmon run activity, they learned about the life cycle and migration of salmon, what makes a healthy habitat, and the many challenges salmon face—from historical disruptions to present-day environmental threats, and develop an understanding and sense of wonder about these iconic fish who have survived despite these challenges, and continue to nourish the people and forests of the Pacific Northwest.



# EDUCATION PARTNERSHIPS

## ALBANY PUBLIC LIBRARY



In summer 2024, our renewed partnership with the Albany Public Library delivered another successful season of Splashy Science in Bryant Park. This lively, hands-on series invites children and families to explore and appreciate the natural world through weekly morning discovery sessions.

This year, 125 participants spent two hours each week immersed in nature, engaging in activities that built curiosity and a connection to the outdoors. Highlights included:

- Protecting Pollinators: Crafting butterfly watering stations to support local insect populations during the dry summer months.
- Art and Nature: Creating nature-inspired art and reflecting on the beauty of the park.
- River Health Explorers: Getting hands-on by collecting and identifying macroinvertebrates, learning how these small creatures serve as critical indicators of river health.
- Birding Basics: Spotting and learning about local bird species.

## OPHELIA'S PLACE



The CWC partnered with Ophelia's Place in Albany to bring two science-based camps to life with nature art, owl pellet dissection, and a snorkel trip. Ophelia's Place focuses on empowerment of female and female-identifying youth in the Albany area. Their science camps spark curiosity and encourage discovery in science fields.

## JACKSON STREET YOUTH SERVICES



In addition to the summer snorkeling program for youth from Jackson Street Youth Services, the CWC leads monthly hikes for youth staying at Jackson Street 24/7 shelters. Locations for hikes are chosen for their proximity to Albany and Corvallis, beautiful vistas, waterfalls, and historical or cultural significance. This year, 47 youth participated in at least one such hike. Recently visited sites include McDowell Creek Falls, McDonald Dunn Forest and Peavy Arboretum, Silver Falls, Shotgun Creek Recreation Area, and Beazell Memorial Forest.







# COMMUNITY OUTREACH

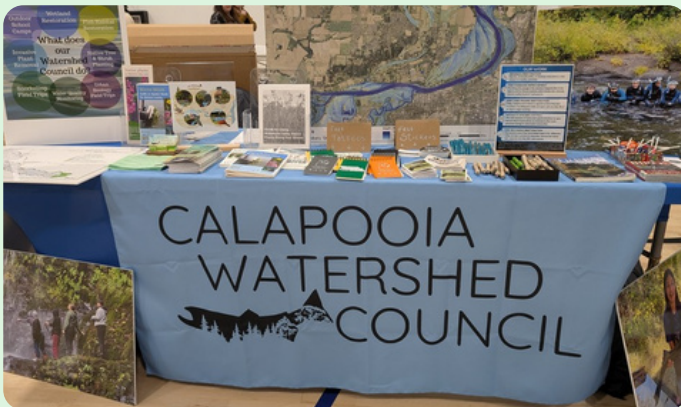
## FESTIVAL LATINO

CWC once again joined in the fun that is Festival Latino in Albany with activities and giveaways to highlight and engage visitors in the work of the council.

Over 650 guests attended the festival in 2024, enjoying great music and connecting with other resource providers in the community.



## ALBANY NON-PROFIT NETWORKING EVENT (ANNE)



In early 2025, we attended the annual non-profit networking event in Albany at the Boys and Girls Club. Always great to meet old and new associates working to create a stronger community for everyone!

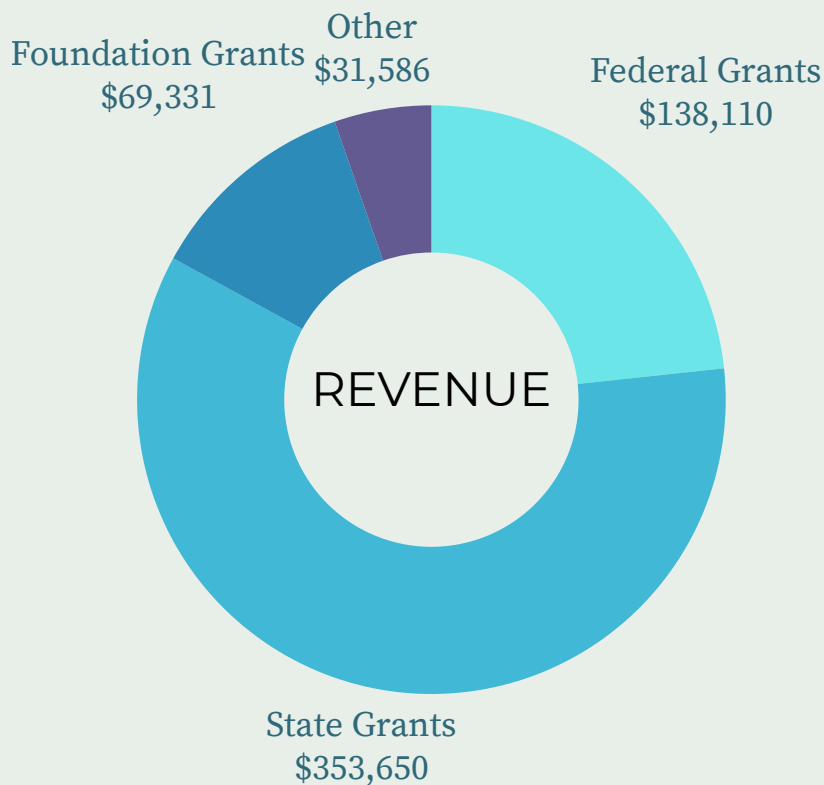
## EMERALD ASH BORER PRESENTATION

Our December Board Meeting was held at the Albany Public Library and featured a presentation on the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB), a present threat to Oregon ash trees.



Community members heard from Kat Bethea, EAB Specialist with the Oregon Department of Forestry with information about identifying and reporting sightings, as well as what is being done to prevent EAB damage.

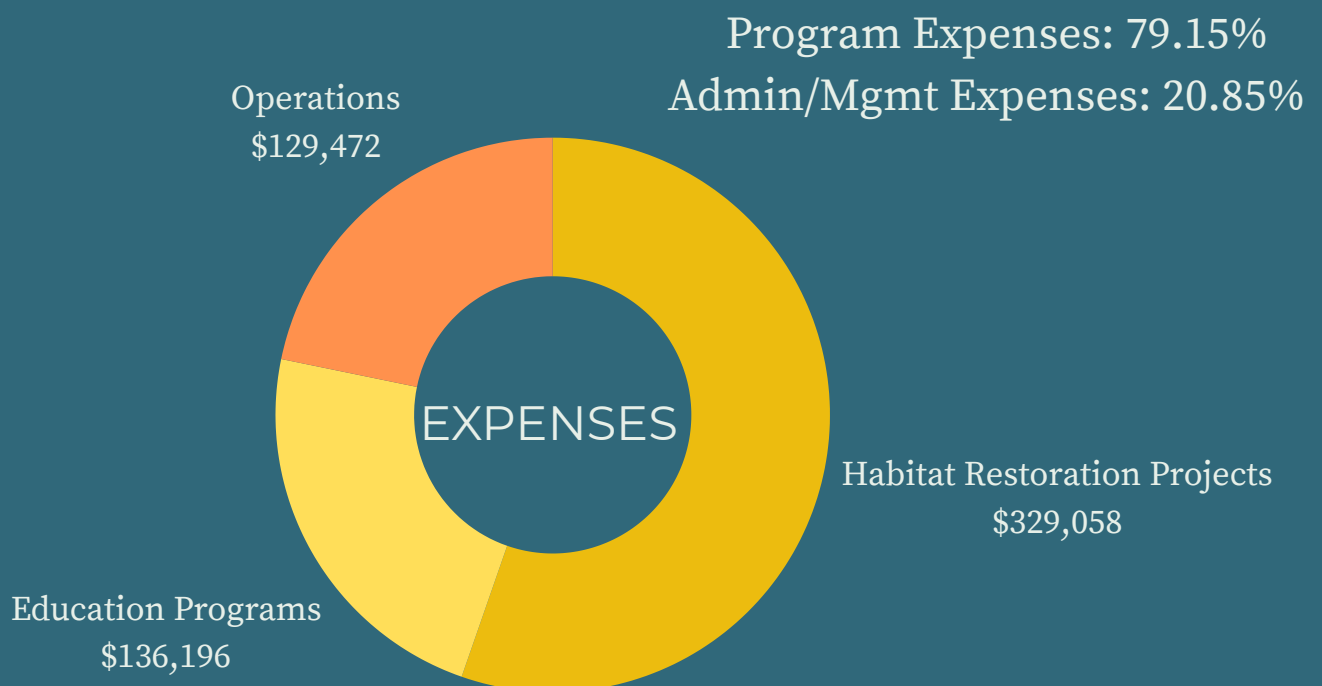
# FINANCIAL OVERVIEW FYE 2025



Gross Revenue: \$491,8292

Expenditures: \$594,798

Net Revenue: (\$102,969)







# GRANTORS & DONORS

Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board  
 National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration  
 The Nature Conservancy  
 Pacific Gas and Electric  
 Oregon Dept. of Forestry & Wildlife  
 Oregon Parks & Recreation Dept.  
 Oregon Dept. of Agriculture  
 Bonneville Power Administration  
 BCI Contracting  
 Jana McCandless  
 George & Cheryl Pugh  
 John & Karen Joiner  
 Dee & Kathleen Swayze  
 Josh Christensen  
 Bruce Bowlby  
 Cyndi Anderson  
 American Fisheries Society  
 Benton Soil & Conservation Water District  
 Oregon Dept. of Land Conservation and Development

