



21-22

CALAPOOIA WATERSHED COUNCIL

# ANNUAL REPORT



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# A NOTE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

**COLLIN MCCANDLESS**

It was another good year for the Calapooia Watershed Council. Some things have returned to where they were pre-pandemic, and some things are settling in to what they will be.

More often than not, staff work from home and commutes to the office a couple times a week when necessary. It is amazing how well we have learned to work together while physically apart. This work structure helps us reduce our emissions and also our costs as our economy recovers. CWC staff is thankful to the board of directors for encouraging the flexibility in our workplace. We have started to hold our board meetings in person once again (!) and hope that you will join us. We have traditionally held our board meetings in Brownsville, although moving into the next year, we hope to hold meetings in Albany as well to encourage greater participation.

The CWC Education Program faced some changes in 2022. Our Outdoor School Coordinator, Sarah Norton, took a job in Florida to be closer to family. Our Greater Albany Public Schools (GAPS) Outdoor School program dissolved, although the Calapooia Watershed Council recognizes this as an opportunity to continue our goal of providing student centered outdoor experiences that give us an opportunity to make a deeper impact in smaller group sizes.

The habitat restoration and monitoring program moved into exciting new territory. We conducted a project in the upper Calapooia river where 13 trees with large root wads were tipped into the river to improve conditions for Winter steelhead. We also conducted our first ever environmental DNA (eDNA) survey of the entire Calapooia river.

It's been a great year overall, and I'm proud of the progress we've made. I'm looking forward to even further success in our restoration and education goals in 2023!

*Best Wishes. Collin McCandless*

# ABOUT THE CALAPOOIA WATERSHED COUNCIL

The Calapooia Watershed Council (CWC) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization whose focus is habitat restoration, and environmental science education to restore and improve river conditions for ESA-listed salmonids and other native species to the Calapooia River watershed.



## ★THE CALAPOOIA WATERSHED



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# HABITAT RESTORATION

The CWC restoration program continues to restore and enhance natural habitats for fish and wildlife within the Muddy Creek and Calapooia watersheds. The program assisted local landowners with the restoration of upland prairies, wetlands, and riparian zones to benefit the community as well threatened and endangered species.



HABITAT RESTORATION PROGRAM MANAGER,  
CRIS SALAZAR

8,600

**TREES & SHRUBS**  
*planted*

151  
LBS

**WILDFLOWERS +  
GRASSES**  
*seeded*

0.9

**RIVER MILE IN-STREAM  
HABITAT**  
*enhanced*

91

**ENVIRONMENTAL DNA  
SAMPLES**  
*collected*

316

**ACRES OF WILDLIFE  
HABITAT**  
*actively managed*

The council has been active throughout the watershed since 1999 with multiple projects ending in 2021/2022. The Marble Ranch restoration in Crawfordsville ended with over 20 acres of riparian habitat enhanced by thousands of established riparian trees and shrubs now free-to-grow.

We continue to work closely with the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, U.S. Forest Service, City of Albany, neighboring landowners, and other stakeholders to plan for new projects that include a large restoration project on the Willamette Greenway funded by grants from multiple agencies. The project involves plant establishment, invasive species removal, and habitat restoration at a retired gravel mine.



# HABITAT RESTORATION

## UPPER CALAPOOIA

The biggest restoration project of the year was the Upper Calapooia Steelhead Habitat Enhancement.

The project was initially funded back in 2019 after being ranked #1 for funding in the Willamette Region by the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board. The goal is intended to increase quantity and quality of available spawning and rearing habitat in ~1 mile of Upper Calapooia River for ESA-listed winter steelhead.

Then came two years of wildfires and covid-19 pandemic which delayed the restoration implementation, but the time was well-spent in the planning with the inevitable changes that the fires in particular created.

After so much anticipation, the entire project was completed in less than 7 days in the summer of 2022, and thanks to the expertise and planning of our specialists, went even better than expected.

In July 2022, 13 trees with rootwads attached were strategically tipped into the upper Calapooia River to improve habitat conditions for ESA-listed winter steelhead. The added instream complexity will trap spawning gravel and provide juvenile steelhead refuge during both high winter flows and low water periods during the summer.



Located on the Willamette National Forest, CWC partnered with Sweet Home Ranger District, BCI Contracting and Blue Ridge Timber Cutting to complete the project.







## TRUAX ISLAND

Since the initiation of the project in 2018, acres of noxious weeds have been replaced with over thirty two thousand native trees and shrubs and hundreds of pounds of native grass and wildflower seed. This Willamette floodplain restoration project is on a positive trajectory providing habitat for countless species of fish and wildlife. The community is encouraged to visit this Willamette Greenway managed by Oregon Parks and Recreation Department to view the project and track its changes.

Visit in Spring or early Summer to enjoy the flowering shrubs, wildflowers and the many birds and pollinator species that now call this park home.

## PERIWINKLE CREEK

A tributary to the Willamette River, Periwinkle Creek has its headwaters in the foothills east of Albany. Its hydrology is driven by stormwater and agricultural runoff which delivers sediment and contaminants to the creek. To address these water quality concerns, CWC is working with the City of Albany to enhance the riparian buffer to protect water quality and provide beneficial habitat for wildlife. The planting of native riparian trees and shrubs is already underway along with the development of a comprehensive plan for improving water quality and riparian habitat within the Periwinkle Creek watershed.





## HABITAT RESTORATION



## ENVIRONMENTAL DNA MONITORING

The Council performed the first ever OWEB-funded Chinook eDNA Monitoring project to determine the presence of spring Chinook in the Calapooia River. Out of the 91 samples collected 12 detected the presence of Chinook DNA. This is the first evidence of the ESA-listed species in the Calapooia River since 2015.

## NATIVE TREE PLANTINGS

The councils project manager and Executive Director planted native trees and shrubs across the Calapooia watershed in late winter. These native species will provide numerous habitat benefits for local wildlife as they mature.





## TUB RUN WETLAND PRAIRIE

The council has been working with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and a generous local landowner to transform **193 acres** of former agricultural land into a biologically rich wetland and prairie ecosystem. With less than **3%** remaining across the Willamette Valley, healthy wetlands and prairies provide a host of benefits for declining species of native birds, amphibians, and plant species. The Tub Run Phase 1 and Phase 2 projects are located at the base of the Coburg Hills in the Muddy Creek watershed. The restoration project has been home to an increasing number of **Streaked Horned Larks**, an imperiled grassland bird and Oregon Conservation Strategy Species in the Willamette ecoregion.



Photo Courtesy of Niles Brinton; Streaked Horned Lark Monitoring at Erion Wetlands, 2021 Report



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# YOUTH EDUCATION

THE CWC EDUCATION DEPARTMENT SAW THE RETURN OF SOME OF OUR FAVORITE PROGRAMS IN 2022



Through our continued efforts to keep outdoor education programs running, we held the return of Salmon Watch programs on campus for several schools, and even had some classes return to the field for their spring Urban Ecology field trips.

We also continued to offer snorkeling trips for middle and high school students from the Greater Albany Public School District (GAPS) and Jackson Street Youth Services, and began a partnership to snorkel with youth from Linn County Detention's enrichment program.

1,324

**STUDENTS**  
*served*

12

**SCHOOLS**  
*participated*

15

**SNORKEL TRIPS**  
*provided*

150

**HOURS**  
*of youth engagement*

## OUTDOOR SCHOOL

In January, our Outdoor School Coordinator, Sarah North accepted a position in Florida and the CWC was sorry to see her go, but we wish her the best on her new adventure!

In March 2022, we dissolved our Outdoor School partnership with GAPS. Although the CWC was saddened by this development, the CWC has *grown stronger in our resolve* and *commitment* to provide *student-centered outdoor experiences* that are *inclusive to all students* by deepening and expanding our network of community partners.



## URBAN ECOLOGY



159 students served from 4 schools



The Urban Ecology program made its return this year for North Albany, Central Linn, and Liberty Elementary schools at Simpson Park, and Sunrise Elementary at their campus.

We're excited about the many updates made to this program! Fifth grade students participate in a hands-on lesson in observation, practicing their skills around Simpson Park, exploring Talking Water Gardens, and building a model to observe how wetlands filter water.

**WE HAVE PARTNERED  
WITH OTHER  
ENVIRONMENTAL  
AGENCIES AND NON-  
GOVERNMENT  
ORGANIZATIONS ON  
THIS PROJECT.**



## FRESHWATER SNORKELING

➤ 159 youth, 15 snorkeling trips

### THE SNORKELING PROGRAM CONTINUES TO BE AN ENRICHING EXPERIENCE FOR YOUTH.

This year saw the continuation of our partnership with Jackson Street Youth Services. CWC education staff led snorkels for Jackson Street twice per month, moving further upstream as the summer progressed, giving youth the ability to observe changes in the river including geology, habitat availability, and diversity of life at each of the four sections of the South Santiam River.

The CWC also partnered with Greater Albany Public Schools to offer snorkeling opportunities for youth throughout the summer. These trips focused on middle and high school youth, and focused on watershed health, drinking water, and natural resource careers.

Linn County Detention's Enrichment program also took part in a snorkel, with plans to return each summer with a new group of youth enrolled in their programs.



**THE SNORKELING PROGRAM IS PERHAPS OUR MOST MULTI-DIMENSIONAL PROGRAM, OFFERING THE OPPORTUNITY TO SLOW DOWN AND RELAX IN OR NEAR THE RIVER, LET GO OF EXTERNAL PRESSURES AND FOCUS ON HAVING FUN WITH PEERS, AND TO DISCOVER THE MANY CREATURES WHO INHABIT THE RIVERS AROUND US.**

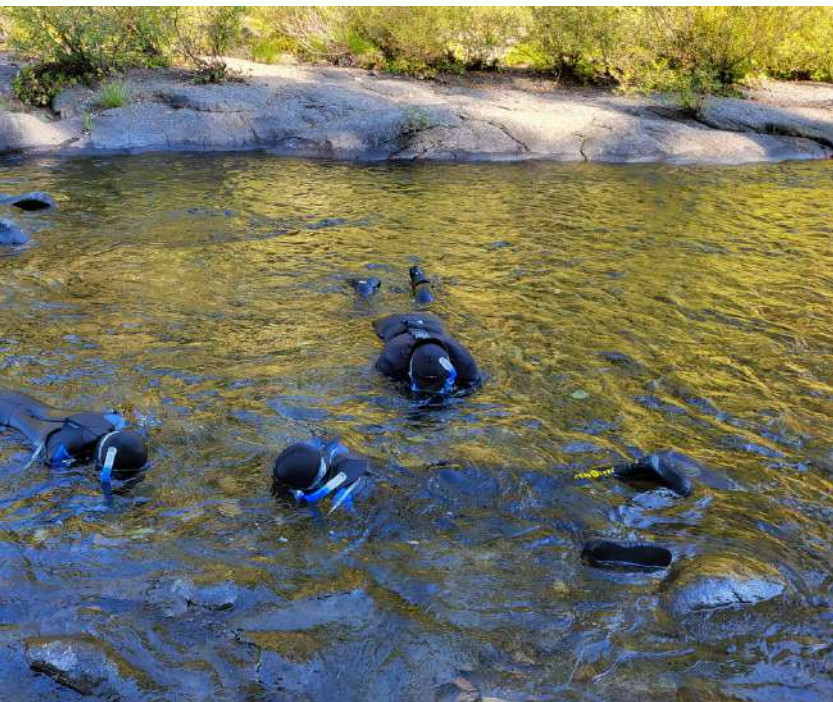




# YOUTH EDUCATION



Participants used nets (or their bare hands!) to collect macroinvertebrates, sculpin and other small fish, and crayfish/ crawdads. They were also able to observe the different geological formations along the South Santiam River, and see large rainbow trout and steelhead in their natural environment.





## SALMON WATCH

➤ 220 students from 5 schools

Salmon Watch made a return this year, though the Covid-19 Pandemic required some creative solutions. Instead of busing students to the South Santiam River, we brought the river (and the salmon) to them. Each school campus was transformed into a field trip location, where fifth grade students from North Albany, Tangent, Sunrise, Central Linn, and Central Elementary Schools tested water quality, dissected a salmon carcass, created nature-inspired art, took part in salmon dissections, and played a game based on freshwater food webs.



The Linn Benton Salmon Watch team also held our first Salmon Watch Family Day event at Clemens Park on the Alsea River.





# HIGH SCHOOL ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDS

*formerly Youth Watershed Council*

➤ 50 youth served



Some very dedicated students from South and West Albany High Schools re-established clubs at their schools which focus on environmental stewardship (and social activism at South Albany).

The CWC Education Program Manager met with these groups weekly as her schedule allowed, and assisted them with the planning and implementation of native planting projects at Periwinkle Park and East Thornton Lake Natural area.



More projects are planned for the 2022-23 school year, including clean-ups, more plantings, and the creation of a native plant garden at the South Albany campus



# YOUTH EDUCATION

WE BEGAN A PARTNERSHIP WITH THE ALBANY LIBRARY TO OFFER OUTDOOR EXPERIENCES FOR ALBANY YOUTH OF ALL AGES.

## LIBRARY PARTNERSHIP

"SPLASHY SCIENCE"

➤ 63 youth served

After the rise of the Omicron variant led to the cancellation of this program after just one event in the summer of 2021, the CWC and the Albany Public Library partnered again in the summer of 2022 to host monthly nature experiences for the youth of Albany.

Together, we hosted a preschool event focused on trees; who lives in them, what they look like, and why we love them, as well as a macroinvertebrate hunt in the Willamette River at Bryant Park.

Youth had a great time getting up closer to the natural environments right here in the City, and were quite surprised by the number of animals they found in the river.





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# STAFF & TEAM MEMBERS



**COLLIN MCCANDLESS**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



**CRIS SALAZAR**  
HABITAT RESTORATION  
PROGRAM MANAGER



**KRISTEN DALY**  
YOUTH EDUCATION  
PROGRAM MANAGER



**FIONA JULIAN**  
OPERATIONS COORDINATOR



**KELCEY YEAGER**  
YOUTH EDUCATION  
PROGRAM INTERN

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2022

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**DEE SWAYZE**  
**JOHN JOINER**  
**JAMES WAGNER**



**JIM MERZENICH**  
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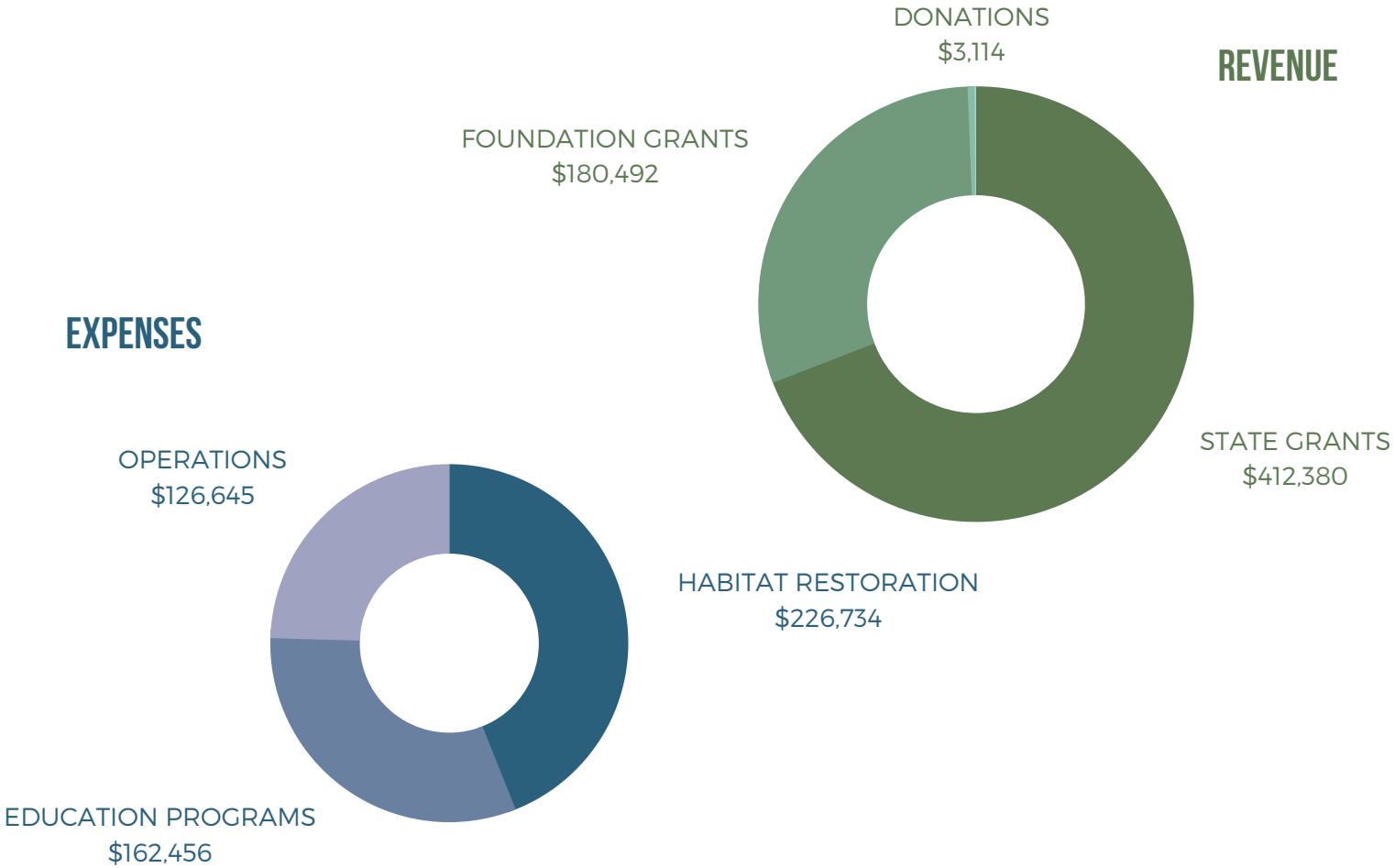
# FINANCIAL STATEMENT

**GROSS REVENUE**  
GRANTS, DONATIONS, IN-KIND \$ 609,103

**TOTAL EXPENSES**  
PROGRAM SERVICES, OPERATIONS \$ 520,960

**NET INCOME** \$ 88,143

**BALANCE SHEET JUNE 2022 \$ 399,204**





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# DONORS & GRANTORS

Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board

The Nature Conservancy

Oregon Community Foundation

Gray Family Foundation

Oregon Department of Agriculture

Oregon State Weed Board

City of Albany

Oregon State University

The Freshwater Trust

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United States Forest Service

Pacific Gas & Electric

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