



Oregon Solutions Approach Leverages Investments in Eugene Restoration Project

The Delta Ponds area encompasses more than 150 acres, including several interconnected ponds owned by the City of Eugene, bordering the Willamette River downstream from the Valley River Shopping Center.

The City of Eugene approached Oregon Solutions to form a team of regional partners to help Delta Ponds reach its true potential as an urban wildlife area of community, regional and state significance. The area offers a unique opportunity for wildlife, natural systems, and environmental education.

Oregon Solutions grew out of the State of Oregon's Sustainability Act of 2001. Oregon Solutions is a nonprofit organization dedicated to developing sustainable solutions through collaboration and provides the mechanism for communities to work across sectors, jurisdictions, interests, and issues. Using the Community Governance System (see inset). Oregon Solutions projects bring diverse partners to the table to reach agreement.

The City wanted to capitalize on a Corps of Engineers aquatic habitat restoration project by identifying and mobilizing other state and local resources, including volunteers to maintain the area. Through the Oregon Solutions process, a team of 28 public, private, nonprofit organizations and citizens met over the course of 6 months to agree on their contributions to complete the project in a timely fashion. Members of the group signed a Declaration of Cooperation outlining commitments to the project. The group determined the goals to re-establish the flood plain of the river and re-connect the ponds to the Willamette River while enhancing wildlife habitat, and providing passive recreation opportunities.

As a result of this collaborative process, the Delta Ponds project has successfully begun implementation and has expanded the project to include a mile-long scenic trail. The City of Eugene and its major partner, the Army Corps of Engineers are providing overall project management and design of the project. The City is committed to marshalling the required matching funds or in-kind support as well as any local match required by state or private funding sources.

The City is removing invasive non-native vegetation and replacing it with native vegetation that will provide better habitat for birds and other wildlife. Last month, about 40 members from six Eugene area Rotary Clubs worked on the North Path to place, rake, and compact over 50 yards of gravel and they pulled and dug ivy and blackberry plants along the path. They also spread compost along the sides of the trail and sowed a mix of native seed. The Rotary Clubs have adopted the Delta Ponds project as their Centennial project for the next two years and will provide in-kind volunteer labor from approximately 500 Rotary members.

Other commitments and contributions to the Oregon Solutions project include a land easement from the McKenzie River Broadcasting, a transfer of land from Lane County, and volunteer resources from the Eugene Lions Club, the Northwest Youth Corps, and Lane Metro Youth. The Lane Audubon Society will help develop interpretive materials and lead educational trips to the ponds and University of Oregon students are conducting a monitoring program to determine fish and wildlife populations. The City has designed a small parking lot with a portable restroom, landscaping, irrigation and a paved down to the ponds. The parking lot and associated amenities will be constructed in the spring of 2005 using grant funds provided by Oregon State Parks. The collaborative nature of this project has also attracted a \$389,000 Community Conservation Initiative grant from BLM. By engaging partners from across the sectors, the Delta Ponds project continues to attract additional resources.

For more information about Oregon Solutions visit: www.ORSolutions.org