



LONG-TERM VISION FOR THE BEAR CREEK CORRIDOR

Bear Creek, the most urbanized watershed in southern Oregon, is lined by dense colonies of invasive plants with sparse areas of native vegetation; it experiences chronic water quality issues such as low summer flows, high summer water temperatures, and high nutrient and bacteria loads. These conditions negatively impact native fish and wildlife, and create safety issues for users of the 25-mile long Bear Creek Greenway, and increase the risk of fire. In the face of these conditions, Rogue Valley organizations, municipalities, and advocacy groups remain committed to increasing the ecological and recreational value of Bear Creek and its riparian corridor.

THE BCRI VISION FOR BEAR CREEK

- The centerpiece of the Ashland, Talent, Phoenix, Medford, and Central Point communities such that commercial and residential developments embrace the creek as an amenity
- An inviting and safe place for people of all ages to recreate and experience all the nature has to offer
- An urban forest with enough infrastructure along its length and occasional, irrigated, manicured park-like settings that allow emergency responders to combat and contain fires
- A wide belt of native trees and shrubs, clean water, and complex habitat conditions that provide the necessary conditions for large numbers of salmon, Pacific Lamprey, American beaver, and other fish and wildlife to thrive
- A place of opportunity for employment and volunteer engagement to steward the Greenway trail and associated natural areas

Over the next 30 years, members of BCRI will encourage and promote the social, economic, and environmental values along Bear Creek that we all share.

2021 to 2030

- In coordination with local communities, we will continue to implement the recommendations made in the 2020 BCRI report by using existing policy and planning documents to inform restoration decisions, and engaging residents, municipalities, and other organizations on project design and implementation. We will start these activities at the ten priority project areas identified in the report, and areas that burned in the Almeda, Penninger, and Table Rock fires.

BEAR CREEK RESTORATION INITIATIVE (BCRI)

In 2018, in response to a large number of fires along Bear Creek, several organizations started a partnership to improve conditions in and along the creek. These groups developed the Bear Creek Restoration Initiative (BCRI) to assess current conditions and envision a desired future outcome by considering ecological, recreational, social, and public safety (including fire) goals. In 2020, the BCRI released their ten priority sites for restoration and started to develop and implement several of those efforts.

The devastating Almeda and Table Rock fires of September 2020 created additional pressure to address community, social, and natural landscape concerns along Bear Creek. The BCRI is intent on working with the public sector, social service organizations, and restoration practitioners to increase public and community safety, combat invasive species, increase water quality, improve fish and wildlife habitat, and encourage the establishment of native plants along Bear Creek.



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2021 to 2030 (continued)

- We will address invasive plant removal, foster native plant regeneration, and remove refuse on more than 330 acres along Bear Creek and several creek confluence areas from Ashland to the Rogue River.
- A significant portion of this work can be part of an on-the-job training program to employ individuals from the unsheltered population currently residing along Bear Creek and community members who lost jobs due to the fires. We will work with the Jackson County Homeless Task Force and WorkSource Oregon to identify opportunities for employing these community members in meaningful work situations to help them and the Bear Creek corridor.
- We will seek funds and establish a broader set of partners to accomplish habitat restoration and develop employment opportunities.

2031 to 2040

- We will restore sections of the Bear Creek corridor between those areas addressed during years 2021 to 2030, connecting the original ten priority areas.
- We will continue stewarding the ten priority project areas and the sections of the corridor impacted by the Almeda, Penninger, and Table Rock fires.
- Funding will come from federal, state, and private sources.

2041 to 2050

- We will maintain and monitor the corridor.
- We will establish a long-term funding mechanism to support Bear Creek Greenway maintenance and monitoring.

Keep current on Bear Creek Restoration Initiative's work and collaborative efforts in the Rogue Valley. Visit us to learn more!

RVCOG.ORG/BEAR-CREEK-RESTORATION-INITIATIVE

For more information on BCRI, find the following info sheets on our website:

Hazard Trees

Instream/Near-stream
Habitat + Floodplain
Connectivity

Invasive Plant Species
Management

Infrastructure Protection

Riparian Vegetation

Water Quality