

Butternut Creek Enhancement

Aloha, Oregon



Specialized construction enables a public utility protect public health and the natural environment by restoring ecological function, stability, and beauty to degraded stream.

SERVICES

Ecological Restoration

Under an on-call contract to construct natural systems for Clean Water Services (CWS), a regional water resources management utility serving more than 600,000 constituents in three Oregon counties, Biohabitats led construction to restore more than 1,000 linear feet of Butternut Creek. Over the last several decades, this tributary to the Tualatin River had become disconnected from its floodplain, severely incised, and overrun with invasive reed canary grass.

Crews regraded portions of the site to support floodplain reconnection, stream stability, groundwater recharge, water quality improvement, and native plant growth. This included the creation of a stormwater treatment swale to direct heavy rainfall flowing from surrounding development to areas where it can pool, slowly infiltrate, and nourish native plants. Biohabitats also placed 16 large wood structures within the channel to slow the water, stabilize the creek, and create habitat.

The restoration, which was initiated in partnership with CWS, Washington County, was successfully completed under a tight schedule, despite the challenges of COVID-19 and poor air quality resulting from nearby wildfires. In addition to these environmental challenges, there was an existing sanitary sewer main line that required steel plate protection for equipment and careful excavation adjacent to the alignment.