

University of Oregon

University of Oregon Millrace Enhancement and Restoration

Eugene, Oregon



A pathway to revitalize the community's natural asset improves water quality and habitat, access to recreation, and opportunities for education and research on an aesthetically enhanced 9-acre site.

SERVICES

Ecological Restoration

The Millrace Enhancement and Restoration Project - Millpond Section was initiated by the University of Oregon to improve aesthetics, water quality, and riparian habitat. Biohabitats and their consultant team developed a conceptual design that provides a place for respite, learning, and exploration and to increase ecological function, all while providing stormwater conveyance.

The larger Millrace is an historic, man-made channel running through the University of Oregon campus that has served various functions over the years. Initially created to power mills with water diverted from the Willamette River, it later became a recreation destination for the University and Eugene community. More recently, it provides conveyance of University and City stormwater. In tandem with these changes in function, the Millrace experienced a dramatic change in the timing and amount of water that moves through the channel since it no longer connects directly to the river. The 9-acre Millrace was overrun with blackberry (*Rubus discolor*) and ivy (*Hedera helix*), limiting views to the water and suppressing native vegetation that could otherwise stabilize eroding banks and provide habitat for a variety of native species.

The design team, which included KPFF and PLACE, conducted technical studies including hydrologic and hydraulic analysis, a preliminary ecological assessment, a regulatory and permitting review, and a pump capacity study. Three options were identified for further development, culminating in a final design concept plan.