

Groups stream-up to solve river's biodiversity problems

■ The Stream Team, a University fraternity and community members joined together to clean up the river's climate

By Andrew Adams
Oregon Daily Emerald

A group of about 25 volunteers ripped out intrusive plants in the Amazon Creek wetlands area in West Eugene on Saturday as part of a statewide event.

Stream Team, a local environmental group, members of the University business fraternity Alpha Kappa Psi and other community members joined together to work in the event. The Amazon Creek clean-up was part of the fifth annual statewide "Down by the Riverside" event that was sponsored by the privately funded environmental group Stop Oregon Litter and Vandalism (SOLV).

Other events in the Eugene area during the day were litter removal at Alton Baker Park and trail restoration and building maintenance at Armitage County Park. Overall 87 locations across Oregon received attention.

Larna Baldwin, leader of the Stream Team, was pleased with Saturday's volunteer work and said the project was vital to the environmental health of the area.

"They're working so hard it's

going to be tough to keep them busy," she said.

Workers arrived at the wetlands near the Bureau of Land Management's office at West 11th Avenue and Danebo at 9 a.m. Saturday. They immediately went to work clearing out blackberry bushes, Scotch broom bushes and non-native roses. Volunteers not only teared plants out but also planted several lupine plants salvaged from a developed wetland.

Preserving the natural state of wetlands is vital to an area's overall environmental health, Baldwin said, because wetland plants act as a natural filter, which removes harmful bacteria from water systems. Intrusive vegetation can disrupt that filtering process when one non-native plant takes over an entire area.

"Biodiversity is the key to a healthy environment," Baldwin said.

Julia Ivonov, a junior finance major and member of Alpha Kappa Psi, said even though she had never done yard work, she was having a good time Saturday.

Members said the business fra-

ternity helped out in the "Down by the Riverside" event to perform some community service and bond together as a group. The fraternity works to provide business majors networking opportunities and to keep them active in the local and national business world.

Freshman Chris Falk, a fraternity pledge, said even though his allergies were bothering him and he had been "sneezing a whole bunch," he enjoyed being able to do some work for a good cause.

While junior business major Misty White said she enjoyed working at the event, she was also glad they had good weather.

"We're lucky it's not throbbing hot out here today," she said.

Erin Peters, the event coordinator for SOLV, said the purpose of the "Down by the Riverside" event is to get Oregon's outdoors "spruced up for the summer season." Last year 2,200 volunteers participated in the sprucing up.

SOLV was founded in 1969, Peters said, to "build community through volunteerism," and the "Down by the Riverside" is only one of a dozen statewide projects that SOLV coordinates every year. She said an average of 65,000 volunteers work with SOLV every year to enhance the state's parks.

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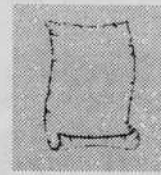
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