



Be a planter at Walker

The MidCoast Watersheds Council is looking for volunteers to lend a hand with a restoration work party at Walker Creek near Waldport on Saturday, Dec. 14.

Walker Creek is a direct tributary to Alsea Bay. Coho salmon and winter steelhead are known to spawn in the lower reaches of the stream, and juvenile salmonids use it as a source of cold water in the summer months. This restoration project encompasses nearly two acres of planting along Walker Creek at the site of a former pasture, currently dominated by invasive species including Himalayan blackberry and reed canary grass.

Because of their thick mat of roots and aggressive growth, these non-native species are preventing the ability of native, woody plants to establish alongside the stream. This limits shading over the stream and inputs of large woody debris to it — both of which are vital elements for healthy salmon habitat. Planting trees and shrubs on Walker Creek will jumpstart these important natural processes and eventually out-compete the invasive species.

The site also has a history of beaver presence, an ecosystem engineer. Since initial planting on a portion of the property

in 2017, two active beaver dams have been seen on the site. This year's round of planting will include more diverse species that beavers use for food and dam building material. This is an opportunity to see firsthand the positive effects of beaver activity on fish and wildlife habitat, and how restoration planting supports their recovery.

The Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, United States Fish and Wildlife Service, Seal Rock Water District, Oregon Parks and Recreation Department and private landowners are all partners on this project.

The Dec. 14 work party will meet at 9:30 am at the Ona Beach boat launch parking area immediately east of Highway 101 on Beaver Creek Road and carpool/caravan to the restoration site about 10 minutes away. The group will work until 2 pm with lunch and snack breaks as needed.

Participants should bring water and food, rain protection, working boots and gloves.

To RSVP, contact Restoration Program Assistant Ari Blatt at ari@midcoastwc.org or 541-265-9195.

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