



MOLALLA RIVERWATCH, INC.

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Oct. 1, 2009

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

OWEB funds Molalla RiverWatch as the Molalla River Watershed Council

The Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board voted in September to fund Molalla RiverWatch as a watershed council. RiverWatch joins more than 60 other watershed councils in Oregon that receive administrative money from OWEB.

Before OWEB can fund a watershed council, it must first be approved by the county. On Jan. 15, the Clackamas County Commissioners unanimously approved a "Resolution to Formally Recognize Molalla RiverWatch, Inc. as the Official Watershed Council for the Molalla River Watershed."

Molalla RiverWatch began in 1988 and received its non-profit status in 1992. The organization was created by a group of local concerned citizens for the purpose of protecting, preserving and restoring the plants, animals and water quality of the Molalla River and its tributaries. MRW is committed to promoting respect and understanding of the Molalla River watershed through education, conservation and restoration activities for present and future generations.

Current MRW projects include: two annual river cleanups, Molalla River Recreation Corridor and trail system improvements, student environmental studies, tree plantings, stream-side restoration, fish enhancement, and community education, among others.

OWEB programs support Oregon's efforts to restore salmon runs, improve water quality, and strengthen ecosystems that are critical to healthy watersheds and sustainable communities. OWEB administers a grant program funded from the Oregon Lottery, as a result of a citizen initiative in 1998, federal funds and salmon license plate dollars. The grant program supports voluntary efforts by Oregonians seeking to create and maintain healthy watersheds.

"Oregon's lakes, rivers and streams are the lifeblood of our environment and vital to our quality of life," said Lauri Aunan, OWEB grant program manager. "OWEB provides funding to support local efforts such as Molalla RiverWatch, which works with volunteers, property owners, students and citizens to protect clean water and healthy habitat."

Watershed councils bring together local stakeholders from private, local, state, and federal interests in a partnership. Councils plan watershed protection and restoration strategies in a holistic way -- from ridge top to ridge top, and from headwaters to mouth. Through this watershed partnership, council members collaborate to identify issues, promote cooperative solutions, focus resources, agree on goals for watershed protection and enhancement, and foster communication among all watershed interests.

"Watershed Council support provides many new opportunities to increase the capacity of Molalla RiverWatch through the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board and Network of Watershed Councils," said Kay Patteson, Molalla RiverWatch executive director. "The organization is now part of the Lower Willamette East Small Grants Team with the ability to secure funding for projects that benefit fish, water quality, citizens and landowners."

OWEB granted Molalla RiverWatch \$37,500 for two years. Funding has also been approved for a technical assistance grant to identify projects along the lower Molalla. RiverWatch is seeking OWEB restoration grants in October for a fish habitat project on the North Fork Molalla and is seeking a technical assistance grant to create designs to replace a culvert on Cedar Creek. The fall Molalla River cleanup begins at 9 a.m. Oct. 10 at Feyrer Park.

For more information, contact Kay Patteson, executive director at 503-824-2195.

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