

Long Tom Watershed Council

Here it is May already! Yards and pastures are greening up, crops and gardens are being planted and vegetation on the stream banks is leafing out. It is important to stream health to allow riparian vegetation to build a shading canopy to keep the water cool during the summer months. Keeping animals off of the banks and out of the streams is also important for good water quality and to keep erosion of the banks to a minimum when winter rains come again. Buffer strips of vegetation between fields and streams filter runoff.

Trace the Long Tom River basin (watershed) on a map, and you'll find Fern Ridge Reservoir as the centerpiece.

The communities of Noti, Veneta, Elmira, Alvadore, west Junction City and Monroe, as well as south and west Eugene all rest on land drained by the Long Tom and Coyote, Spencer, Amazon and Willow creeks with Ferguson and Bear creeks joining the Long Tom below the dam. The river flows into the Willamette north of Monroe. The watershed covers 410 square miles.

The Long Tom Watershed Council is composed of interested people who live in or have interests in the watershed, and everyone is invited to join. The Council rotates monthly meetings between Monroe, Veneta and Eugene on the last Tuesday of each month. The Council meeting in April at the Monroe High School Commons discussed several subjects and heard Alvadore-area farmer, Tom Hunton, report the status of his project to create buffer strips along the 1100 feet of Amazon Creek that flows through his farm.

The Council recently completed an assessment of the watershed which included a review of existing water quality data, information on fish and wildlife and a summary of historical conditions. The assessment identified

poor water quality in parts of the watershed. Presentations of the assessment are being conducted in the watershed this month, and copies of the assessment are available at libraries in the watershed.

The Council began a water quality monitoring program in August 1999. Each month, Council volunteers and local youth groups collect information on a variety of water quality characteristics, such as temperature and dissolved oxygen, from 17 sites around the watershed. Information on the results of the monitoring will be presented here in future months.

The summer meetings of the Council in May, June and July will be tours of streams in urban, forest and farm landscapes. Times and locations will be published in the News.

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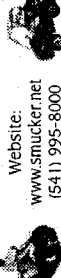


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