

# COLUMBIA SLOUGH WATERSHED COUNCIL

Annual Report  
July 1, 2018 - June 30, 2019







## A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Recently, I had coffee with a long-time community supporter. Among our many topics of conversation, she said that when she was a little girl, she and her friend would run out to the fields in the summer and lay on the ground, watching the ladybugs crawl around, marveling at how big they must seem to the tiny insects. Then she and her friend would flop over and stare up at the sky, watching the clouds scuttle by, feeling small themselves. She said, "Every kid, everybody needs that. To touch the ground and see ourselves differently."

She continued: "This is what motivates me."

I knew perfectly well what she meant. It is, after all, what brought me to the Columbia Slough Watershed Council this past January.

I am honored to be part of this long-standing community group and proud of what we do; creating opportunities for people to study bugs, get their hands dirty planting trees, bike to hidden green spaces, or dip a paddle in the Slough.

A lot happens around here, as I learned within my first week on the job, and you will see in this report. In the coming pages, you will learn just a few of our many achievements during July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2019, from cleaning up our waterways, to teaching kids about groundwater, and taking grownups on their very first canoe trips.

It is important to note that this same time period was punctuated by a major leadership transition. All of these amazing accomplishments are a testament to our community of caring and committed staff, Board members, neighbors, financial supporters, and volunteers.

I want to thank each and everyone for their contributions to the watershed and the Council. This kind of initiative and passion is a hallmark of this place and our organization. It is why our wetlands and waterways are in better shape than they have been for nearly a century.

As always, there is more work to do. Not just addressing legacy industrial pollutants but also new contaminants we are just beginning to understand, and the vexing challenges of a warming climate, social injustices, and growing economic disparities.

Today's challenges can seem daunting.

It is one reason that we plan to undertake strategic planning in the next year. We will look at this place from fresh angles and our strategies from different frames of reference. This inquiry will be rooted in the immutable belief that of all the many ways our world may change, one's personal change in perspective is a powerful experience, essential to environmental stewardship.

Whether we are hauling trash out by boat, prowling for owl sightings, or talking about how the Council can best address our watershed's toughest challenges, I hope you will be a part of it.

There is a lot to discover about ourselves in the Columbia Slough Watershed.

Sincerely,

Cathy Kellon  
Executive Director





# OUR MISSION

**To protect and enhance the Columbia Slough and its watershed through community engagement, education and restoration.**

The Columbia Slough Watershed Council is a diverse group of neighbors, property owners, businesses, environmental groups, recreation advocates, and government agencies

who work together to restore and enhance the 60 miles of waterways, wetlands, and slow moving channels known as the Columbia Slough and its watershed.

## OUTREACH



## EDUCATION



## STEWARDSHIP



## VOLUNTEER





# This Year,

on the

# Slough

OWL  
PROWL

HOLIDAY TREE TOSS

GREAT SLOUGH CLEANUP

SLOUGH 101

## The Slough is for All





**BIKE THE LEVEES**

**COLUMBIA SLOUGH REGATTA**

**STEWARDSHIP SATURDAYS**

**2018-2019**

**EXPLORANDO  
EL COLUMBIA SLOUGH**

**MOONLIGHT PADDLE**

**AQUIFER ADVENTURE**

**CYCLE THE WELL FIELD**

**QUEER PADDLE**

**CELEBRATION GALA**

**SLOUGH SCHOOL**

**BAT NIGHT**

**EVENING CANOE**

Illustration by Jennifer Starkey



# OUTREACH & EVENTS

## WE BRING PEOPLE AND NATURE TOGETHER

Our Outreach and Events program provides free opportunities for individuals and groups to learn about and enjoy our watershed.

In 2018-19, we hosted over 20 free community events, workshops, and festivals with nearly two thousand participants. From biking and birding, to canoeing and clean-ups, there is something for all ages and abilities in the Columbia Slough watershed.

## THE SLOUGH IS FOR EVERYONE

From seasoned paddlers to first-timers, we equip everyone with the gear and skills they need to boat on the Columbia Slough by providing free boats, life vests and training at all of our community paddles. This year, we strove to make our annual Columbia Slough Regatta more accessible to community members from culturally specific groups by providing interpretation services and reserving 100 spaces for members of communities who have not historically connected with Council events, including immigrant and refugee communities.



## OUTREACH EVENTS

3 Bicycle events

3 Community festivals

8 Paddle events

8 Science-based workshops

20 Outreach events



1,990 total event participants



**“What you are doing is really working! You educated my daughter, in a fun and memorable way, that has had lasting effects.”**

**-Aquifer Adventure attendee**

5,065 people engaged through outreach







## WE TEACH THE NEXT GENERATION

Our Education program, known as Slough School, creates fun, science-based, and hands-on lessons for K-12 students to learn the history and ecology of the Columbia Slough watershed. In the classroom and out in the field, students explore the living and nonliving parts of this urban ecosystem, gain knowledge of environmental issues - past and present, and participate in projects to improve their local environment.



## SERVICE WHERE IT'S NEEDED

Slough School is dedicated to closing the gap in environmental education opportunities for students in our watershed. Our lessons align with school district learning standards and we prioritize Title I schools, where 40 percent or more of students come from low-income families, when scheduling Slough School lessons. Over 90 percent of student contacts in 2018-19 qualified for free lunch.

## TOTAL CONTACTS

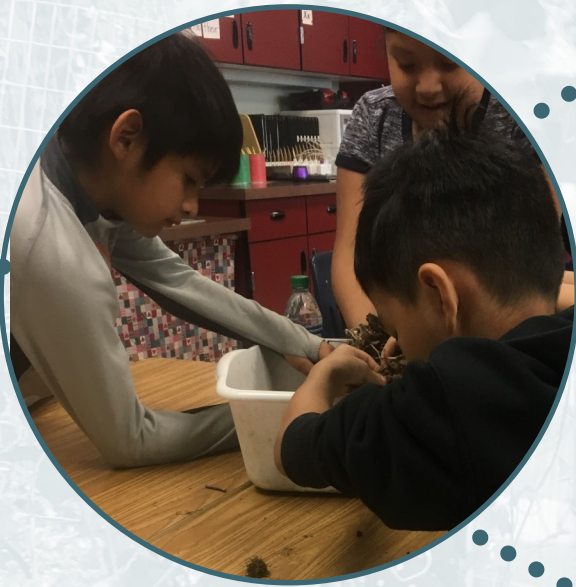
4,758  
elementary  
school students

2,104  
middle/high  
school  
students

448  
school staff/  
adults



**6,862** total  
number  
of youth  
contacts



**"The kids were talking about how  
much fun they had ALL day!"**

**- Woodland Elementary School  
Teacher**

**28** schools and  
organizations  
served







## WE HELP A HIDDEN GEM TO SHINE

Our Stewardship program works with local agencies, businesses, and community members to protect, improve, and enhance the Columbia Slough and its watershed. Our Stewardship projects range from weed pulls and tree plantings to trash cleanups and rain garden installations. This year, we removed over 52,000 square feet of weeds and restored 5,400 feet of stream banks.



## SUPPORTING LOCAL JOBS AND TRAINING

We partner with green workforce development organizations on a large portion of our projects from design through implementation. In these cases, we collaborate with other nonprofits that mentor, train, and employ low-income or people of color in environmental careers, including habitat enhancement and engineering. This process helps adults gain living-wage jobs and youth acquire skills and connections to prepare them for professions in the environmental sector.



**78** garbage bins of trash removed







# 11,061

native plants installed

**“I know that while it may be small, I helped to create a better habitat for these animals and a cleaner water source for my daughter.”**

**-Stewardship Service Day Volunteer**







## OUR MISSION AMBASSADORS

Each year, hundreds of community members contribute their time and talents to make the Columbia Slough watershed a better place for its people, fish, and wildlife. We strive to offer meaningful volunteer experiences that not only improve watershed health but that are also fun and rewarding.

We deeply appreciate every person who shows up for the Council and our community, including the huge number of dedicated people who return each season. Our volunteers are the best!



# 1,379

total volunteers

## PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

**Zoo Animal Presenters (ZAPs)** is a grant-funded youth program at the Oregon Zoo that employs young people as educators. The ZAPs work with live animals to provide free conservation programming to historically marginalized communities throughout the Portland metro area. For years, the ZAPs have volunteered at our bilingual event Explorando el Columbia Slough, and most recently at Aquifer Adventure.



*"We are happy to have these connections with the Columbia Slough Watershed Council and look forward to continuing this partnership. It's a great way for ZAPs to get hands-on education about local waterways and the water system."*



“Volunteering with the Council is an afternoon of fun, team building, and hard work, and I am already looking forward to next year!”



36 paddle team members



## VOLUNTEER HOURS

814  
Education

1,565  
Outreach and Events

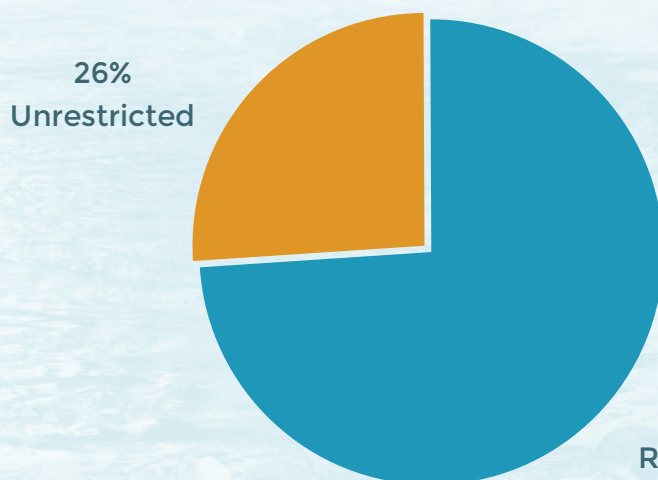
2,614  
Stewardship

## VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

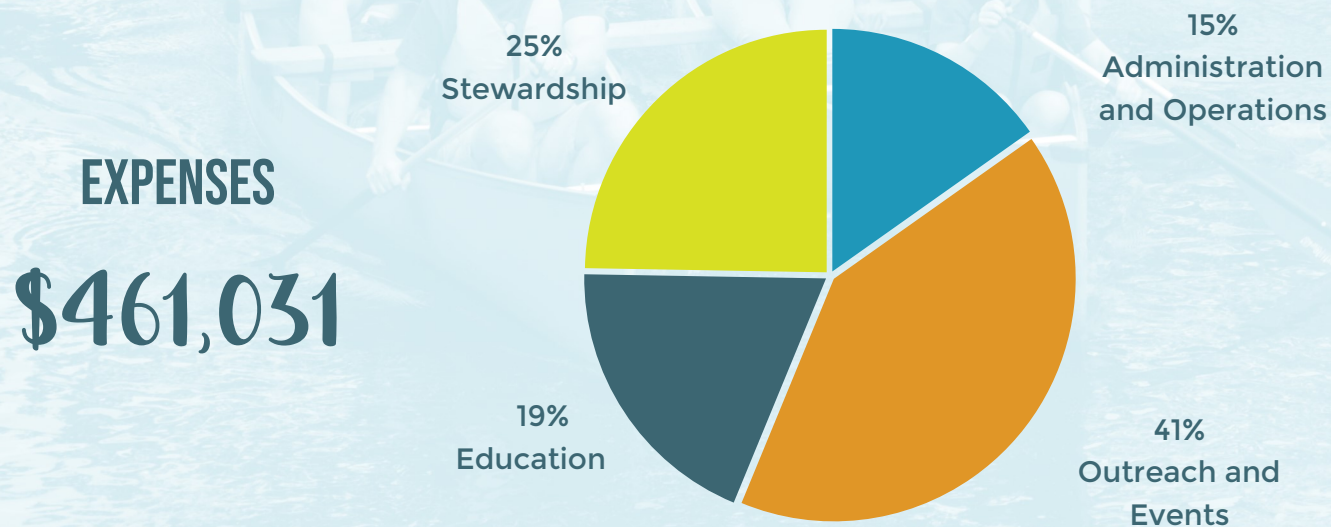
**Scott and Autumn Schlieff** started volunteering with the Columbia Slough Watershed Council in 2018 at the Great Slough Cleanup. Over the past year, these two have been incredibly active in all of our program areas, helping with everything from Stewardship Saturdays and Slough School to Paddle Team and Regatta. Beyond programming, Scott and Autumn have helped keep our office running by overhauling our equipment storage area, and even installing new coat racks for Slough School.

*“Volunteering with the Columbia Slough Watershed Council has been incredible for us because it gives us a chance to enhance our amazing watershed that is a gateway to nature for one of the most diverse populations in the Portland area.”*





**INCOME**  
**\$495,548**





# THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT



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Shop  
Multnomah County Drainage District  
Nancy Hendrickson  
New Cascadia Traditional  
Next Adventure  
Nossa Familia Coffee  
Nothing Bundt Cakes  
NVIDIA  
NW Discoveries  
NW Natural  
ON Semiconductor  
Oregon Community Foundation  
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Portland Timbers & Thorns FC  
Portland's Culinary Workshop  
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Rebecca Fitzsimmons  
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The Barberry  
The Boeing Company  
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Toni Smith  
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Wines for Humanity



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## COUNCIL STAFF



**Cathy Kellon**  
Executive Director



**Kirk Fatland**  
Volunteer Coordinator



**Jennifer Starkey**  
Education Director



**Matthew Lee**  
Stewardship Director



**Susanne Raymond**  
Outreach & Events Director

Thank you to all of our seasonal, temporary and interim staff  
who help keep us moving!





# SUPPORT THE SLOUGH!

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Learn more: [columbiaslough.org](http://columbiaslough.org)







**COLUMBIA SLOUGH  
WATERSHED COUNCIL**

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