

REVEGETATION: A PROCESS TO RESTORE NATIVE PLANT COMMUNITIES



Poor water quality, habitat, & biodiversity



BEFORE

WHY

Invasive weeds take over the land, so that native plants and animals don't have space to grow and thrive. Soil is compacted or prone to erosion, creating poor water quality in our urban streams.

WHAT TO EXPECT

- Invasive weeds covering the land
- Eroding stream banks
- Few native plants or animals
- Muddy water

Site Preparation & Treatment



Site prep requires clearing invasive species to reduce competition and set native plants up for success. It's similar to painting a house, where the exterior needs to be stripped before putting on the new coat of paint.

- Professional crews cutting or removing non-native invasive plants and/or applying safe and effective herbicides
- Dead or dying grass or trees

Waiting Period



CWS waits for invasive plants to die before replanting the area with native plants and trees. Depending on invasive weeds and their seeds, this can take between a month and a few years. This temporary—yet necessary—step will create room for a new native plant community with so many benefits.

- Invasive plants dying
- Landscape turning brown
- Some non-native trees may regrow

Replanting



Revegetation crews return to the site to plant thousands of native trees and shrubs that, as they mature, will add beauty and ecological resilience to the site.

- Crews and CWS staff planting seeds and young plants
- Possible opportunities for community planting parties

Monitoring & Maintenance



CWS visits the newly planted trees, shrubs, and groundcover to make sure they can be successful in their new homes. CWS and partner organizations provide ongoing stewardship, technical assistance, native plants, and education.

- Plants growing slowly at first until established
- CWS staff visiting site to check plant growth
- Invasive weeds being removed
- New native plants being planted

Diverse native plant communities flourish



AFTER

Diverse native plant communities provide multiple habitat types for a variety of animals, a robust ecosystem that can handle changes, and different root depths to prevent erosion and improve water quality.

- Diverse native plant communities
- Returning of native pollinators, mammals, birds, amphibians, and reptiles
- Flowering shrubs, groundcover, and trees
- Cleaner, healthier water

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs) ABOUT REVEGETATION: WHAT CAN I EXPECT?

What is revegetation?

Revegetation is a multi-year process of restoring a native plant community to support clean water, resilient streams, and wildlife habitat. Clean Water Services (CWS) works with partners across the region to enhance and sustain land along streams and wetlands to improve the health of our community, economy, and ecology. Revegetation activities and timelines vary based on the project area.

Site Prep and Treatment

Q: Is your herbicide treatment safe for kids and pets?

A: Clean Water Services takes the health of our communities very seriously. Staff and contractors follow rules set by federal and state authorities; use the safest, most effective herbicides; and practice safe and effective methods for application. We use blue dye to indicate where we've applied herbicide so people and pets can avoid these areas. Please see our resource list for more herbicide safety information.

Q: How often will contractors be accessing the property?

A: In contrast with traditional landscaping crews, restoration crews will work during specific seasons. Expect invasive species treatment in the spring and fall. Planting season is during the rainy, winter months. Vegetation monitoring contractors collect data during the summer or fall.

Q: I've seen birds nesting in the blackberry or other weeds, how will removing the weeds affect the nesting birds?

A: CWS and revegetation crews work to minimize impacts to wildlife as we enhance natural areas to provide high quality wildlife habitat. We do our best to schedule work around established bird nesting windows. Ultimately, native plants will provide better sources of food and shelter during multiple seasons.

Restoration in Progress

Q: When will CWS be back to plant?

A: Restoration crews work with the changing season. Our planting season is during the rainy, winter months. Because CWS and our partners are invested in the long-term health of our watershed, crews will return each planting season to replace plants as needed until the project is established.

Q: Why did you leave a dead tree?

A: A dead tree, known as a 'snag', actually plays an important role in supporting wildlife. Birds, small mammals, and other wildlife use them as a space for nests, nurseries, storage, and perching.

Replanting

Q: Why don't you use larger plants and irrigate?

A: Native restoration works with natural processes. Through experience and working with foresters, we have found that planting bare root (1-year old) plants in the cold, rainy months helps plants establish faster. Plus, we've found that not using irrigation also means saving ratepayers money.

Monitoring and Maintenance

Q: What will it look like when you are done? Will this area be like a park?

A: Natural areas are wild spaces that often look unkempt from a distance. Upon closer look, new forests provide areas for deer to graze and pollinators to use wildflowers. Wetland thickets provide areas for birds to nest. Mature forests are home to frogs under the downed logs and woodpeckers in snags. These areas are always growing and changing with the seasons.

Q: Will CWS be back to take care of the plants?

A: Yes! CWS and our partners are invested in the long term health of our watershed. Native ecosystems take a long time to develop. We will use vegetation monitoring information to make adaptive management decisions. Crews will return during each planting season to replace plants as needed.

Resource Links

Clean Water Services Integrated Pest Management Plan
bit.ly/2cB7pRF

National Pesticide Information Center
npic.orst.edu

Native Plant Finder
<http://emswcd.org/native-plants/native-plant-database/>

Living with Beavers
<http://jointreeforall.org/beavers>

All ages volunteer opportunities
<https://www.jointreeforall.org/calendar/>

Everything we do at Clean Water Services aims to protect public health while enhancing the natural environment of the Tualatin River Watershed.


Clean Water Services

2550 SW Hillsboro Highway
Hillsboro, OR 97123
503.681.3600
cleanwaterservices.org

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