

# Annual Report FY 2017 July 2017 – June 2018



**Greater  
Yamhill  
Watershed  
Council**

## Pesticide Water Quality

- With funding from the Oregon Depts. Of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and Agriculture (ODA), the GYWC and Yamhill Soil & Water Conservation District (YSWCD) continued coordination of the **Yamhill Pesticide Stewardship Partnership (PSP)**, a local initiative started in 2007 to **monitor pesticide water quality concerns in the Yamhill River Watershed** and **implement community-based solutions to reduce pesticide detections** in local waterways
- **Monitored pesticide water quality and stream flow** in McMinnville's **Cozine Creek** (Urban), & Dayton's **West Fork Palmer Creek** (Agriculture)
- **Partnered with YSWCD** to secure ODA funding for a Fall 2018 hazelnut orchard erosion control program to promote use of no-till drill cover cropping and mulching
- Secured ODA funding to host an **upcoming Fall 2018** no-cost, confidential **Agricultural Waste Pesticide Collection Event** which safely disposes an average of ~30,000+ lbs of unknown, unwanted, and legacy pesticides



Measuring stream flow and collecting water samples to analyze for 100+ pesticide analytes in Cozine and West Fork Palmer Creeks



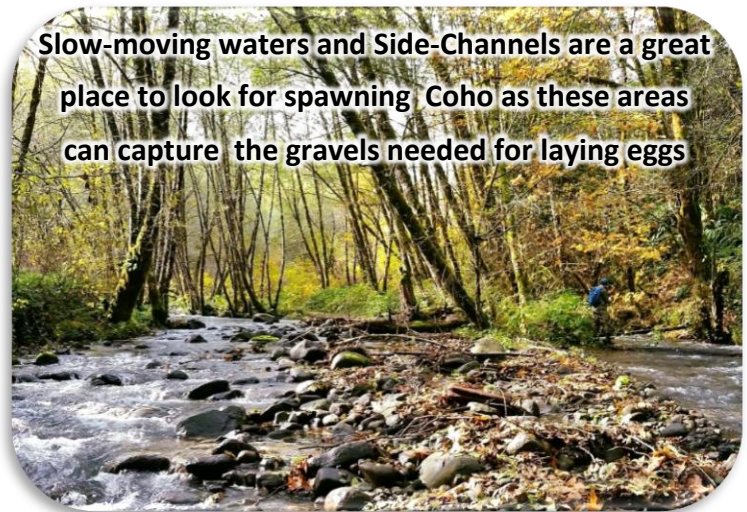
Planting Cover Crops can improve water quality in new and mature hazelnut orchards by reducing soil erosion and improving soil health. The Yamhill SWCD's affordable No-Till Drill rental program makes planting quick work

## GYWC Mission

Formed in 1995 by the Yamhill & Polk County Commissioners, and incorporated as a 501c3 non-profit in 2011, the GYWC is a stakeholder-led organization dedicated to helping the communities in the Yamhill & Chehalem Valleys to be good stewards of our lands, waters, fish & wildlife. In collaboration with more than 40+ public, private, and tribal partners, the GYWC works to provide voluntary-based solutions to protect, enhance, and monitor the quality of local natural resources, and to increase awareness of the importance of these resources for the long-term health and livability of our communities

# Native Fish Populations & Stream Temperature

- Coordinated and trained **local volunteers & landowners** to survey **distributions and abundances of spawning salmonids in 15+ stream miles**, across the North Yamhill, Upper South Yamhill, Mill, and Willamina sub-basins in the Yamhill River Watershed
- Conducted our **5th year of spawning surveys for naturalized, wild Coho Salmon**, (Oct-Dec 2017). The local newspaper published a GYWC article sharing about the history and status of Coho salmon in the Yamhill River, and efforts to involve the community in Coho monitoring and restoration projects
- Conducted our **4th year of spawning surveys for ESA-listed winter steelhead trout**, (Feb – May 2018), and documented a spawning population in the Willamina sub-basin despite continuing historic low returns of winter steelhead to the Upper Willamette River
- Continued the GYWC's long-term **summer stream temperature monitoring program**, including sites on Mill, Palmer, and Cozine Creeks in the Yamhill Watershed, and Chehalem sites in partnership with the City of Newberg – Chehalem, Hess, and Springbrook Creeks.



Slow-moving waters and Side-Channels are a great place to look for spawning Coho as these areas can capture the gravels needed for laying eggs



Decomposing salmon carcasses contain vital nutrients for local aquatic organisms and streamside forests

News-Register  
Friday  
Dec. 1, 2017

## VIEWPOINTS

### Coho salmon in the Yamhill

Watershed Council leads hikes to survey growing population in the local waterways



**Guest writer**  
Cabi Esperto is a Seattle native graduating in June 2018 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Environmental Studies and a minor in Mathematics from Linfield College. Her interests include hiking, playing the ukulele, trying to live a zero-waste lifestyle, and restoring social and ecological community health.

**S**almon are an iconic symbol of the Pacific Northwest. Strong and beautiful creatures, they provide a number of services to our ecosystems, economies and communities. They offer sustenance for not only humans, but also orca whales, eagles, herons and bears.

Salmon also bring nutrients into areas of low productivity, allowing for healthy food webs that circulate nourishment to plant and animal species. Their presence in high numbers indicates clean and thriving aquatic, riparian and upland environments. Pacific salmon support thousands of jobs and economies in the fishing industries. For millions of years, the Willamette Valley has supported populations of Pacific salmon, including Coho (*Oncorhynchus kisutch*) and Chinook (*Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*). Although they face hardships to survival, a booming population of Coho salmon are now producing naturally in the Upper Willamette River and find particular refuge in the Yamhill River Watershed.

Historically, Coho are not believed to have been able to migrate to significant numbers upstream of Willamette Falls at Oregon City. This is due to a roughly 45-foot drop at the Falls during the seasonal low flows in autumn months when Coho adults return to spawn.

In the 1880s, however, construction and operation of multiple fish ladders allowed adults to successfully pass upstream into the Upper Willamette Valley. No Coho were reported spawning in the Yamhill River Watershed until the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) started the Coho hatchery program in 1954, which ended in 1988. Over the course of three decades, ODFW released tens of millions of hatchery stock Coho into Upper Willamette Valley river systems, including the Yamhill, Metlala, Tualatin, Pudding, and the Middle Fork Willamette. This effort to establish a self-sustaining run of Coho



Oregon State University student Andrew Chiono holds up a Coho salmon carcass found on the Upper North Yamhill River during a Coho Creek hike. Since 2012, community volunteers, student interns, and local landowners have helped the Greater Yamhill Watershed Council discover where runs of wild Coho salmon are spawning across the Yamhill River Watershed.

above the Falls was primarily intended to support recreational and commercial fisheries and alleviate depressed ocean and Columbia River fisheries.

Since the end of the stocking program, Coho have continued to reproduce naturally across the Upper Willamette Valley. The population has exploded in recent years, setting historic records, including more than 20,000 Coho returning each year in 2009, 2010, 2013, and 2014. Some Coho, like many found in Agency

Creek, are even genetically distinct from the original hatchery stocks planted in the South Yamhill River in the 1960s and 1970s.

In addition, according to radio-tagging studies, the Yamhill Watershed can potentially receive more than 45 percent of all Coho migrating upstream of the Falls every year. The local run is large enough to support an active sport fishery from August 1 to October 31 on the Yamhill River from its mouth at the Willamette to the con-

fluence of North and South Forks of Yamhill River, as well as on the South Yamhill to the mouth of Block Creek near Grand Ronde.

From August to December, wild Coho salmon travel around 150 miles upstream from the Pacific Ocean to spawn in their natal streams of the Yamhill River Watershed. This makes them anadromous, which means they spend their lives in the ocean.

See ODMW, CA

**Local newspaper publications bring greater community awareness of local Coho salmon runs**

### Contact the GYWC

Zach Christensen, Board Chair  
Luke Westphal, Executive Director  
(503) 474.1047 [www.gywc.org](http://www.gywc.org)

[zach@gywc.org](mailto:zach@gywc.org)  
[luke@gywc.org](mailto:luke@gywc.org)  
[facebook.com/GreaterYamhillWC](https://facebook.com/GreaterYamhillWC)

Land  
Water  
& People



## Empowering Local Volunteerism & Stewardship

- With funding and support from City of McMinnville and Linfield College, **convened a “Friends of Cozine Creek” stakeholder partnership** to engage the McMinnville-area community in developing watershed programs. Cozine Creek activities included hosting 4 community presentations about caring for Cozine Creek, publishing a quarterly E-Newsletter, coordinating 12 habitat work party service days, **recruiting 100+ acres for future restoration** projects on public and private lands, & beginning **site preparation on ~20 acres /1 stream mile**
- Coordinated more than **1,738 hours of volunteer service**, with **475 community members, across 51 volunteer events**, including habitat restoration work parties, water quality monitoring field days, native fish surveys, and strategic planning sessions
- **Engaged an additional 439 community members through 26 public and stakeholder outreach events**, including presentations, workshops, tours, and more



Local youth learn how to identify and control invasive weeds that take over native habitats, including periwinkle and English Ivy



Local community members contributed more than 1,700 hours of volunteer service to improve local habitats, including removing invasive weed species along Cozine Creek at Linfield College

## Habitat Restoration

- **“Friends of Cozine Creek” partnership secured \$48,000 in habitat grants** from Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB), Oregon Dept. of Environmental Quality (ODEQ), Linfield College, and Yamhill Watershed Stewardship Fund (YWSF) for **4-year native vegetation restoration projects** across **0.6 stream miles of urban Cozine Creek** and **12 acres of floodplains and uplands**, at Linfield College and undeveloped & developed City Parks. **Additional weed control began on 8 acres across 0.4 stream miles** funded by local contributions of landowner cash match and in-kind donations of contracted services and volunteer service hours
- Supported an **Invasive Weed Control partnership** with Yamhill SWCD and Yamhill County Public Works to secure **\$61,000 in Oregon State Weed Board (OSWB) grants** to **survey and treat for priority invasive weeds** in Yamhill County, including **knotweed & garlic mustard** which are found in the urban and agricultural areas of the Cozine watershed.



The Linfield Environmental Studies Dept. Senior Capstone Class partnered with the GYWC to secure \$18,500 in grants to restore native habitat along Cozine Creek on campus



Invasive Garlic Mustard is currently only found in two areas in Yamhill County (Cozine Creek and Chehalem Mt.) making immediate eradication of this weed a top local priority



Neighbors of the 1-acre “Ash Meadows City Park” collaborated with the GYWC and City of McMinnville to secure ~\$9,000 in grants to restore native vegetation along a perennial tributary to Cozine Creek



**Greater  
Yamhill  
Watershed  
Council**

## Thank You to Our Partners & Funders

### Board Members

**Zach Christensen**  
*Agriculture*  
(Chair)

**James Riedman**  
*Forestry*  
(Secretary /  
Treasurer)

**Matt Young**  
*City of McMinnville*

**Leonard Rydell**  
*Forestry, Low Impact  
Development*

### Staff

**Luke Westphal**  
Executive Director

### Monthly Meetings

1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday  
6pm Social Hour  
6:30pm – 8:30pm  
Public Monthly Meeting

@ McMinnville Public  
Library, Carnegie Room

**Join Us &  
Share Your Voice!**

### **Non-Profit Organizations & Associations**

Newberg Chapter, Association of NW Steelheaders; Columbia Land Trust; Green Belt Land Trust; Institute for Applied Ecology; Miller Woods and Natural Connections; Cheahmill Chapter, Native Plant Society of Oregon; The Nature Conservancy; Yamhill Chapter, Oregon Small Woodlands Association; Yamhill & Polk OSU Extension Services; Spirit Mountain Community Fund; Yamhill Partners for Land & Water; Yamhill Watershed Stewardship Fund

### **Higher Education**

Chemeketa Community College; George Fox University; Linfield College; Oregon State University; Portland Community College; Portland State University

### **Municipalities**

City of Amity; City of Carlton; City of Dayton; City of Dundee; City of Lafayette; City of McMinnville; City of Sheridan; City of Newberg; City of Willamina; City of Yamhill; McMinnville Water & Light; McMinnville Parks & Recreation

### **Counties**

Polk County; Polk County Public Works Dept.; Yamhill County; Yamhill County Parks Dept; Yamhill County Roadside Vegetation Committee

### **Special Districts**

McMinnville & Newberg School Districts;  
Polk & Yamhill Soil and Water Conservation Districts

### **State Agencies**

Oregon Dept of Agriculture, Oregon Dept of Environmental Quality, Oregon Dept of Forestry; Oregon Dept. of Fish & Wildlife, Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board

### **Tribal Governments**

Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde &  
Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs

### **US Federal Agencies**

Polk & Yamhill Farm Service Agency; Polk & Yamhill Natural Resources Conservation Services; Salem & Tillamook Offices of US Bureau of Land Management; US Fish & Wildlife Service

## GET INVOLVED!

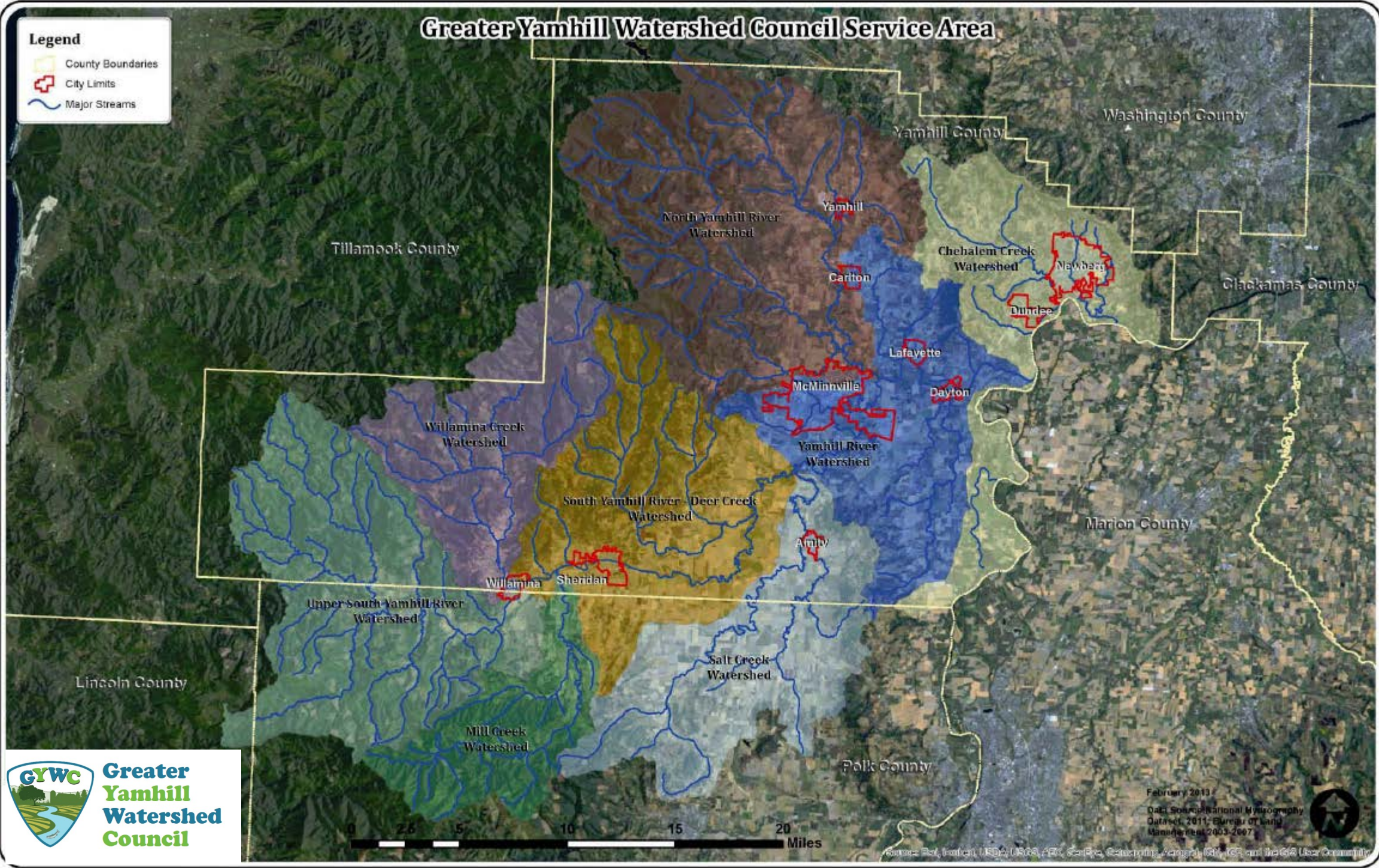
Volunteer opportunities abound. From fish surveys, water quality monitoring, and habitat restoration work parties, to stakeholder meetings, outreach, and more.

Sign up today @ [www.gywc.org/volunteer](http://www.gywc.org/volunteer)

# Greater Yamhill Watershed Council Service Area

## Legend

- County Boundaries
- City Limits
- Major Streams



February 2013  
Data Source: National Hydrography Data set, 2011; Bureau of Land Management, 2003-2007

Source: Adapted from USDA, NRCS, 2003. See [www.nrcs.gov](http://www.nrcs.gov) for more information. Adapted from the GIS User Community.