



Watershed Restoration Benefits Community Health

BRINGING NATURE BACK into our communities doesn't only benefit water quality and wildlife—it's essential to the health and wellbeing of all the people who live, work, and play in the Tualatin River Watershed.

Tree for All is bringing back Mother Nature on a landscape scale. This translates into equally large-scale health benefits for the population of Washington County.



Tree for All engages communities large and small in conservation projects throughout the Tualatin River Watershed in Oregon.

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**“It’s about my health,
it’s about your
health, it’s about the
overall health of our
communities.”**

— Dr. Philip Wu, retired Kaiser
Permanente pediatrician

We may intuitively know that we feel better after sitting under a tree or taking a stroll through a park. In fact, scientific evidence confirms that nature provides significant health benefits. Thirty years of research shows that trees and green spaces are important for human health and wellbeing. Nature not only creates a healthier living environment; it improves our physical and mental health, enhances cognitive function, and creates happier, more connected communities. In other words, people need nature just as much as fish, songbirds, and beavers do.

The best part is, when we bring nature back into our neighborhoods we don't have to travel to enjoy these benefits. They are available to us right in our communities. And because of the high population density of urban areas, every square inch of nearby nature has the potential to benefit hundreds of people every day. By connecting the community to the Tualatin River Watershed, Tree for All helps Washington County residents live longer, healthier, and happier lives.



Paseos Verdes: The Watershed Health Walks Program

Paseos Verdes connects underserved community members to natural areas in Washington County through guided walks in the Tualatin River Watershed.

The program is based on the simple idea that connecting the community with nature is good for the watershed and good for human health and wellness. The walks engage families to learn about watershed health, water management, and wildlife. These experiences promote environmental stewardship while providing the health benefits of being active in nature and the outdoors.

In 2018, Paseos Verdes expanded to include a Bilingual Naturalist Training Program. A cohort of five Washington County residents was recruited to participate in the trainings and lead the walks. Participants learned about plants, animals, and habitats through classroom learning and field practice, while developing organizational and leadership skills.

Walks take place at Fernhill Wetlands, just south of Forest Grove, and at the Jackson Bottom Wetlands Preserve in Hillsboro. In 2019, the program will also be expanding to the Tualatin Hills Nature Park. Along the trail, participants can often be heard exclaiming “I live nearby and I have never been here before!” while planning their next visit together. On one walk, children lined up excitedly to observe great blue herons and bullfrogs through a bird-spotting scope while marveling over the fact that their bathwater

could end up in such a beautiful place. On another occasion, a delighted grandmother spotted wild chamomile growing alongside the trail and taught the group about the plant’s various uses in her native Mexico.

The first two years of Paseos Verdes have been a great success. The response from the Bienestar community has been overwhelmingly positive. Working closely with Bienestar promotoras (resident leaders), program participation has exceeded expectations. Families have been eager to sign up again. In 2019, Paseos Verdes will also be partnering with Virginia Garcia Memorial Health Center to provide walks to patients of the Cornelius Wellness Center.

By providing culturally competent and engaging opportunities for Washington County residents to connect with the Tualatin Watershed, Paseos Verdes is improving community health while fostering the river stewards of tomorrow.

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Learn more about Paseos Verdes at:
jointreeforall.org/paseos-verdes

