



## Follow the Chicken Creek Story

As restoration work begins, Tree for All partners are excited to watch Chicken Creek reach its ecological potential when—with the help of the beavers—the creek realigns to its historic path and native flora and fauna return.

Learn more at [jointreeforall.org/chicken-creek](http://jointreeforall.org/chicken-creek).



Since the establishment of the Tualatin River National Wildlife Refuge the number of bird species seen at Chicken Creek has quadrupled.

Learn more about TFA partners at: [jointreeforall.org/partners](http://jointreeforall.org/partners)



## Key Partners



CASE STUDY

# Chicken Creek



## Powerful ecological enhancement amid rapid urbanization



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

[JOINTREEFORALL.ORG](http://JOINTREEFORALL.ORG)

**CHICKEN CREEK** borders the west and north edges of the fast-growing city of Sherwood, Oregon, flowing through agricultural lands and past suburban homes before emptying into the Tualatin River. Just beyond the city, Chicken Creek meanders for two and a half miles through the Tualatin River National Wildlife Refuge, one of very few urban refuges in the country, where surrounding wetlands provide stopover sanctuary for migrating birds on the Pacific Flyway. This stretch of creek, located within a wildlife refuge yet so close to rapid urbanization, holds the promise of important benefits for our watershed.



## The Site

SIZE	294 acres	FIRST PLANTING	Fall 2019
STREAM LENGTH	2.5 miles	CONSTRUCTION SCHEDULE	Summer 2019/2020

## The Challenge

In the early 20th century, the reach of Chicken Creek approaching its confluence with the Tualatin River was rerouted to accommodate local agriculture. The once-meandering creek became a deep, linear channel whose quick-moving waters eroded stream banks, creating a ditch that greatly limited the creek from connecting with and saturating the floodplain. What had once been a woody and herbaceous wetland complex with thriving flora and fauna greatly suffered; due to a lack of suitable habitat, native wildlife populations declined. Today, as rapid urbanization occurs just outside the wildlife refuge, investing in the health and resilience of the creek is critical.



Because beaver habitat is integrated into the revegetation and construction of aquatic habitats, engineered water control infrastructure will be unnecessary.



Chicken Creek, fall 2018.

## The Transformation

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**For years, partners have been preparing to transform this reach of Chicken Creek. In 1996, thanks in part to the grassroots support of Friends of Tualatin River National Wildlife Refuge, the US Fish & Wildlife Service purchased the surrounding land and initiated restoration efforts. In 2009, a half-mile upstream from the refuge, neighbors on Green Heron Drive began working with the City of Sherwood, contractors, and other partners to enhance the creek near its crossing with busy Roy Rogers Road. Since 2017, the US Fish & Wildlife Service has been creating opportunities for volunteers to do hands-on creekside restoration near the southern edge of the refuge.**

More recently, partners embarked upon a long-awaited project that will realign Chicken Creek to its historic path, embracing the role that beavers can play in the placement of woody debris and revegetation. Project steps include modeling and excavating the historic path of the creek; rerouting and filling in the current channel; removing invasive species and replanting native vegetation; reestablishing a creek connection to the floodplain; and beginning long-term monitoring.

Most of the long-term ecosystem health responsibilities will fall to beavers and the structures they build. For example, enhanced by woody debris placed by beavers, the natural path of the creek will encourage the migration and spawning of Upper Willamette River Steelhead—a federally threatened species—increasing their population as well as the value of the ecosystem. Because beaver habitat is integrated into the revegetation and construction of aquatic habitats, engineered water control infrastructure will be unnecessary.

Chicken Creek holds great ecological potential. With wildlife reclaiming its historic home in the adjacent wetlands, the creek's capacity to enrich its local ecosystem and contribute to a healthy watershed is promising. In addition, restoration efforts here promise to benefit the local economy and community by enhancing and protecting Tualatin River National Wildlife Refuge, an important destination for environmental education and a source of regional pride.