

Oregon's Riparian Shade Pilot Program

To address future pollutant-discharge requirements and potential temperature exceedances, the Metropolitan Wastewater Management Commission—a regional wastewater entity in Eugene/Springfield, Oregon—launched a pilot program to demonstrate the viability and cost-effectiveness of a water quality trading program for thermal load compliance with its future NPDES permits.

Background

The Metropolitan Wastewater Management Commission (MWMC) discharges to the upper Willamette River, part of the Willamette River Basin, which may be governed by a pending temperature TMDL with criterion to protect salmon spawning and rearing habitat. To address this, the MWMC looked beyond the wastewater treatment plant to other areas along the river for a solution.

The Pilot

To secure regulator-approved temperature credits, the MWMC contracted with the nonprofit The Freshwater Trust to restore streamside vegetation at two local priority side channels within its watershed trading area, thus reducing the solar load on the water via shade. Sites secured for restoration were cleared of invasive plant species and replanted with approximately 10,000 native trees and shrubs. These plantings created riparian shade on 4 acres/0.75 stream miles adjacent to the City of Springfield.



New native plants along Cedar Creek. *Photo credit: Freshwater Trust*



ECOS

This factsheet was developed by the Environmental Council of the States. It is one of ten factsheets on how states have used flexibility in the Clean Water State Revolving Loan Funds to pursue innovative projects. To view the other factsheets and information on other state projects visit www.ecos.org.

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This approach created a compliance solution that was integrated with the overall health of the watershed. Contracting with The Freshwater Trust to implement the project allowed the MWMC to transfer much of the risk and long-term operations and maintenance. Additionally, the MWMC specified these pilot projects would occur on local restoration priority systems, where the work would further leverage other conservation efforts on those streams.

Multiple Benefits

- Demonstrated feasibility of a riparian shade credit program.
- Helped MWMC prepare to meet potential temperature TMDL.
- Supported the overall health of the watershed.
- Pumped an estimated \$180,000 into the local economy for supplies and services.
- Improved water quality through reductions in sediments and nutrients.

Financing

To fund this work, MWMC acquired a \$48 million loan from the Oregon Clean Water SRF. As they combined a capital project with qualifying watershed project, they qualified for a reduced interest rate loan, or

sponsorship. Using the sponsorship option, by spending \$450,000 of the principal to the watershed project, the MWMC was able to borrow the CWSRF funds at 2.44% interest, a savings of 0.64% on the loan interest rate. This funding was complemented by \$200,000 in non-CWSRF bond funds.

Cedar Creek Mile 2.5	Before (pre-project)	38,100,000
	After (post-project)	25,120,000
	Uplift	12,980,000
	Restoration Actions	6,150 native trees and shrubs installed
Mill Race River Mile 2	Before (pre-project)	3,120,605
	After (post-project)	667,987
	Uplift	2,452,618
	Restoration Actions	3,600 native trees and shrubs installed
Total Uplift		15,432,618 kcal/day

More Information

For more information on this project contact:

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