

# Local Watershed Council seeks to educate public on preserving the health and vitality of our river systems

By Rebecca McCoun-Travers

## What is a watershed?

A watershed is an area of land in which all precipitation drains specifically into a common body of water.

In the North Santiam Watershed, approximately a half million acres (766 mi<sup>2</sup>) drain from the highest peaks of the western Cascades to the confluence of the North Santiam River where it intersects the Willamette River. The watershed is located within Marion and Linn Counties, and includes the cities of Jefferson, Stayton, Lyons, Mehama, Mill City, Gates, Detroit, and Idanha.

The North Santiam and its contributing stream network is home to a number of diverse land uses, including timber, irrigation, recreation, grazing, urban city centers, and fish and wildlife habitat. The river intricately connects all of these diverse uses together, creating a common goal for a healthy ecosystem and community.

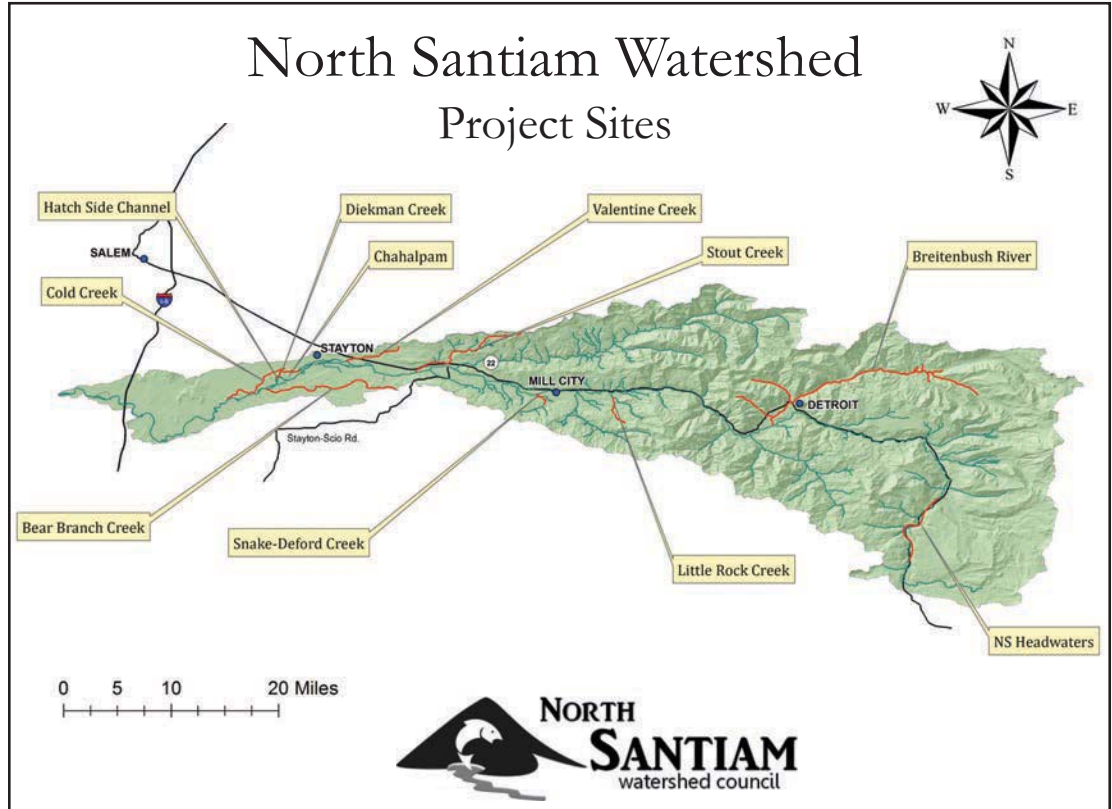
## What is a Watershed Council?

Watershed councils are locally organized, voluntary, non-regulatory organizations that were developed in a grassroots effort to improve watershed ecosystem and community health. Watershed councils seek to represent the broader interests of the local community, engaging members of local government, non-government organizations, businesses, and private citizens.

By managing water resources at the watershed level, stewardship and natural resource protection, enhancement, and restoration can transcend political and geographic boundaries through consensus-based decision making. There are approximately 90 watershed councils across the state of Oregon. The North Santiam Watershed Council was formed in 1995.

## The goals of the North Santiam Watershed Council are to:

- Promote awareness and education about watershed issues
- Preserve or improve water quality and quantity
- Maintain healthy, well-functioning natural, and human communities within the watershed
- Protect natural areas including wildlife habitat and biodiversity
- Recognize the social and economic



benefits of protecting the health of the watershed

In order to carry out these goals, the council helps people to identify and address habitat problems by planning, funding, and developing restoration projects. Examples of projects include noxious weed removal, restoring fish habitat in streams, and rehabilitating eroding stream banks that impact water quality.

General membership in the North Santiam Watershed Council is open to any individual or community, business or government group having an interest in the watershed and that supports the mission of the Council, which is: Providing opportunities for stakeholders to cooperate in (cont. net page)cont from page 6) promoting and sustaining the health of the watershed and its communities.

Membership is free and includes opportunities to see beautiful parts of the watershed and learn about the exciting restoration projects taking place throughout the basin.

Currently, the North Santiam Watershed Council has two Steering Committee positions and one Operations Committee position available.

The North Santiam Watershed Council meets on the 2nd Thursday of every month (September through June) at 7pm at the Stayton Community Center.

If you are interested in joining the council as either a voting member, a general member, or if you are just interested in finding out more about how the council can assist you, you may contact Rebecca McCoun-Travers at (503) 930-8202 or by sending an email to [council@northsantiam.org](mailto:council@northsantiam.org). Info: [www.northsantiam.org](http://www.northsantiam.org).

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