

What We Know About McAleer Creek

Physical Characteristics

- Largest of two stream systems in Lake Forest Park – other stream is Lyon Creek.
- Originates at Lake Ballinger, outflows into Lake Washington, a distance of almost 6 miles.
- Tributaries include Hillside Cr., Sheridan Cr., Brookside Cr., and Whisper Cr.
- Increasingly prone to flooding - \$4 million property damage in lower reaches in 2007. Stretches of the stream are scoured out, and other stretches heavily silted resulting from high volumes of water during major storm events.
- Relatively free of barriers to fish passage although some sections are heavily armored.

Habitat

- Small annual salmon runs: Coho, Chinook, Sockeye
- Supports a wide variety of other animal life, including raccoons, beavers, mountain beavers, coyotes, amphibians, herons and other birds, cutthroat trout, peamouth chub, crayfish and other crustaceans, insects, mollusks, and worms

Water Quality

- Dissolved oxygen levels generally very good: 9 – 14 mg/liter.
- pH consistently very good – 7.5 (At 4, fish reproduction is affected; at 3 fish die.)
- BIBI (Benthic Inventory of Biological Integrity) 2010 ratings 30 and 32, or “Fair.” (The highest score possible is 50, which would be a stream in a natural, undisturbed area. The lowest score possible is 10 – Thornton Cr. several years ago.)
- Some locations have elevated levels of fecal coliform, probably due to failing septic systems along two tributaries.
- Possible pre-spawn mortality (female Coho salmon die within hours of entering stream – very common around Puget Sound area).
- Future testing plans: heavy metals, nutrients, pesticides

Restoration Activities

- Lake Ballinger/McAleer Creek Forum – six governmental entities working to address flooding and water quality problems in the Lake Ballinger/McAleer Cr. watershed.
- Long-term, focused efforts to remove invasive plants and restore native riparian vegetation.
- Salmon raise and release projects: two elementary schools and two private property owners
- Wetland and riparian native planting efforts.

Resources

- LFP StreamKeepers - <http://lfpstreamkeepers.org/>
- LFP Stewardship Foundation - <http://www.lfpsf.org/>
- Streamkeepers of Clallam County - http://www.clallam.net/streamkeepers/html/biological_monitoring.html
- University of Alberta Online Macroinvertebrate Textbook - http://sunsite.ualberta.ca/Projects/Aquatic_Invertebrates/
- BIBI scores for many Puget Sound streams - <http://www.pugetsoundstreambenthos.org/>

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lfpstreamkeepers.org