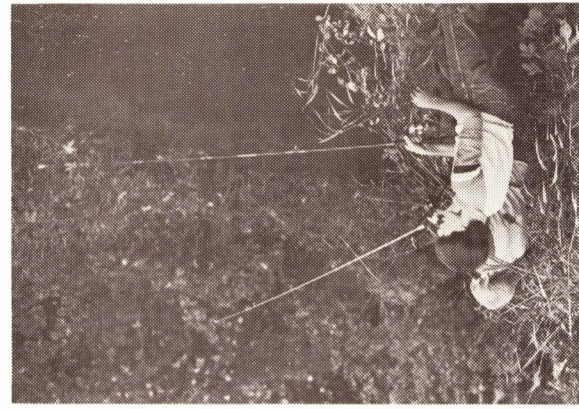


Besides being a readily accessible place to view a riparian habitat, Johnson Creek also can be a great place to catch fish close to home. Winter steelhead, Coho salmon, cutthroat trout and, occasionally, Chinook salmon occur naturally in the creek. In addition, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife supplements the natural fishery by stocking the creek (from Johnson Creek Park to SE 282nd Avenue) with rainbow trout in April and May.

A number of non-game species such as red-sided shiners, squaw fish and carp also are found in the creek. Together with crayfish and other aquatic organisms, they serve as a food source for riparian wildlife.

Johnson Creek Fisheries



The Johnson Creek riparian environment is interconnected to other wildlife habitat areas within the region, such as Oaks Bottom, Ross Island and Forest Park. For example, certain species of birds found along Johnson Creek rely on some of these other areas for nesting and feeding, and some mammals migrate between riparian areas. It is important to recognize the Johnson Creek habitat as a vital part of a wildlife system that exists within the urbanized Portland area.

Several accessible sites to view the riparian habitat of Johnson Creek are shown on the enclosed map.

A wildlife system

Stabilize creek banks and retard erosion. Vegetation provides areas for birds and animals to nest and feed.

The Naming of Johnson Creek

The father of Jacob Johnson (William Johnson) resolved to settle [near where] we are now. Jacob himself...settled on a piece of land some little distance eastward. From this family Johnson Creek has its name and the little stream will carry the name down through the ages.

Address by Harvey W. Scott at the funeral of Jacob Johnson, January 27, 1901 at the Evangelical Church in Lents, 6220 SE 92nd.

Pioneers from Maryland

It is not entirely certain whether Johnson Creek was named on behalf of William Johnson, a pioneer of 1846, or his son, Jacob.

William, a devout Baptist minister originally from Maryland, traveled with his wife and six children into the Willamette Valley in 1847. They settled a piece of land on the northwest side of Mt. Scott, extending from the creek to what is now Lincoln Memorial Park. The family's home stood just south of the creek and west of what is now 100th Street.

In 1849, William and his three sons joined the California gold rush and Jacob came back with \$2,000 in gold dust. He took a land claim 2½ miles east of where SE 82nd Street crosses Johnson Creek (near Deardorff Road). Jacob married Martha Jane Lee, who crossed the plains in 1852 with her father, a cousin of Robert E. Lee. Jacob and Martha later purchased William's Mt. Scott homestead.

A dissenting account

Most historical accounts report that William built and operated a water-powered sawmill near Lents and that the creek was named by U.S. surveyors in his honor. However, Jacob's son, J.J. Johnson (a prominent Portland attorney), refutes this story and insists that the creek was named for Jacob, who built a sawmill at the Deardorff Road site. (As reported by Fred Lockley in the *Oregon Journal*, April 9, 1931.)

Earlier settlers

The Johnsons were not the first people to inhabit the creek area, however. Creekside residents have reported finding Indian arrowheads, spears, bowls and other artifacts along the creek banks and in adjoining fields. This suggests that the creek was heavily used by Native Americans long before the pioneers entered the scene.

Undisturbed riparian vegetation is crucial to the survival of these wildlife species. Trees and low bushes shade the stream and keep the water temperature suitable for animal life. Root systems of riparian plants

The role of creekside vegetation

The Johnson Creek habitat sustains many plant species commonly found in riparian areas—willow, alder, Oregon ash, cottonwood, stinging nettle, elderberry and several species of fern—and supports many species of birds, mammals, reptiles and amphibians. During a recent tour of the creek, the Audubon Society sighted 33 species of birds, including such seldom-seen species as the American bittern, pileated woodpecker and belted kingfisher. Other species commonly seen around the creek are the Bewick's wren, cedar waxwing, band-tailed pigeon, Steller's jay, great horned owl and black-capped chickadee.

Mammals found along Johnson Creek include the raccoon, beaver, muskrat, Douglas squirrel and an occasional fox. The common garter snake, Northern alligator lizard and several species of frogs are commonly found reptiles and amphibians.

Creek plants, birds and mammals

Johnson Creek offers the citizens of Portland an excellent opportunity to view the wildlife of a "riparian" or streamside, habitat without leaving the metropolitan area. A riparian habitat is one of the most diverse types of ecosystems in the U.S.

Johnson Creek Wildlife

A familiar creekside resident.



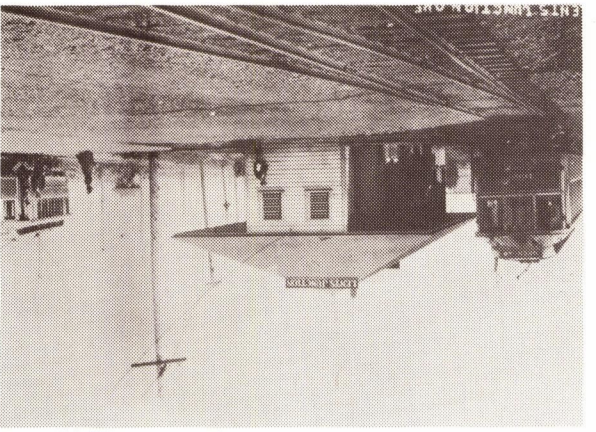
Along Johnson Creek

A guide to historical sites and natural resources



Produced by the Metropolitan Service District with financial assistance from the Center for Environmental Intern Programs (CEIP) and the Environmental Protection Agency (Section 208 planning grant).

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 527 SW HALL ST., PORTLAND, OR. 97201, 503/221-1646
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One of a system of railroad stations that once existed along Johnson Creek.

Historically, streams are also an important part of our locale. Native Americans and early settlers were drawn to streams as a source of fresh water and food. Because streams were vital to the logging and farming efforts of the pioneers, they played a notable role in Portland's developing economy and cultural heritage.

Johnson Creek, winding through 25 miles of the southeast metropolitan area, is a fine example. Several of its significant natural and cultural sites are mapped and described inside. These sites point out the contributions, both past and current, that make it a valuable resource.

Streams flowing through the Portland metropolitan area are a unique and valuable community resource. Many types of fish and wildlife would not be found in an urban area without the living and feeding areas streams and streambanks provide. These "greenbelts" of open space within developed areas furnish pleasant settings for outdoor recreation close to home as well as "outdoor classrooms" for the study of nature's processes.

1. Tideman Johnson Park
SE 37th along Johnson Creek

This is the only parkground near this district and it certainly is a beautiful place, with a running stream for fishing and swimming and with lovely beaches and an ice-cold spring of pure water, a cool and shady place for a hot day.

Letter to the Editor
Oregon Journal, Jan. 1, 1931.

The parkgoer above is referring to Tideman Johnson Park, donated to the City of Portland in the 1940s by the descendants of the man whose name it bears. In the 1880s, this Mr. Johnson (no relation to William) settled on a spot across the creek from the park. During the 1920s and 1930s, this was a popular site for family picnics, easily accessible to city dwellers by way of the railroad. Tideman's son, Telmer, was reported to have staged large fireworks displays each 4th of July.

Tideman Johnson Park is an excellent example of a relatively undisturbed riparian habitat, and it is easily accessible. A large part of the park is grassy with plenty of trees. Located at the only spot within the City of Portland where a creek flows through a ravine area, its natural freshwater spring, diverse vegetation and abundance of birds (26 species have been sighted here) make this park a nature lover's paradise.



Summer fun in Johnson Creek.

2. Johnson Creek Park
SE 21st and Clatsop

Johnson Creek flows through the center of this heavily used park. Large, grassy areas and play equipment are provided for active recreation, while the creek area provides a serene environment for more passive activities. This park is an ideal location for family picnics.

3. William Johnson Homestead
west of SE 100th at Johnson Creek

4. WPA Fish Ladder
near SE 45th and Johnson Creek

During the 1930s, the Works Progress Administration (WPA) did extensive channel clearing and bank stabilization work on Johnson Creek. At this site, they divided the creek into two channels and built a waterfall, impeding fish returning to the upper reaches of the creek to spawn. To allow fish to continue their journey, the WPA constructed a stone fish ladder in the original creek channel. To see these sites, follow SE Harney (west off SE 45th) to the end.

5. Lents

Mr. Lent was a pioneer of pioneers, and it was intended, by those who had known him, by giving the post office and village his name, to perpetuate his memory.
The Oregonian, Feb. 6, 1906.

Oliver P. Lent arrived in Oregon in 1852, and first settled near Sycamore. In 1866, he moved to the site of Lents and began a sawmill business which he operated for many years. Lent was a prominent member of the East Portland community, serving as school director, road supervisor, and justice of the peace.

6. Bunde Park

near SE 142nd and Cooper

This site is a little harder to find than the other parks along the creek, but well worth the effort. The only access is by way of a narrow dirt road off Foster, one street west of 142nd. The road dead-ends at a gate near the creek, and a path leads down into the park, which is undeveloped and overgrown. Because the site is relatively inaccessible to people, it provides an excellent habitat for wildlife. Douglas fir and western red cedar dominate, while sections of big leaf maple, cottonwood and alder exist along the creek bank. Birds are abundant.

7. Old Dwyer Mill

SE 100th along Johnson Creek (Lents)

A. J. Dwyer came to the Portland area in 1900 and began logging near Boring. In 1924, he established the Southeast Portland Lumber Company on the site along Johnson Creek where the old Rice-Kinder Mill once stood. (It burned down in 1914.)

To Dwyer, Johnson Creek at 100th Street seemed an ideal location for a sawmill—the creek could be dammed to create ponds for log storage, and the railroad passed right through the site. Business thrived and Dwyer soon became the largest retailer of lumber in the Northwest. Early in the 1930s, the company expanded and bought the old William Johnson homestead on the northwest side of Mt. Scott. In 1943, the name was changed to Dwyer Lumber Co., which remained in family ownership until 1964, when Publishers Paper Company acquired the mill.

8. Gresham City Park

Main Street and Powell Boulevard (in Gresham)

There is plenty of grassy area for active recreation in this large park. The creek runs through the south end and a bridge over it leads to an island that has been landscaped as a Japanese garden. Species such as Japanese black pine, weeping cherry, Japanese umbrella pine, azalea, rhododendron and wisteria are exhibited here.

9. Jacob Johnson Homestead

Deardorff Road and Johnson Creek

10. Leach Property (Sleepy Hollow)
SE 122nd along Johnson Creek

John R. and Lilla Irvin Leach, descendants of a pioneer Portland family, moved to this five-acre site along the creek in 1931. They immediately built a stone cabin, which still stands south of the creek, and later a main residence north of the creek. The Leaches also built a stone woodshed and outdoor fireplace on the property. John, a Portland pharmacist, and Lilla, an internationally known botanist, had a lifelong fascination with botany. They planted and maintained a botanical garden along the creek banks. The Leaches willed their estate, which they named "Sleepy Hollow," to the City of Portland with specific instructions that it be maintained as a botanical garden and museum.

According to records, there are more than 100 species of trees and plants on the property, many of them non-native and exotic. The major botanical attractions are the diversity of fern species (at least six) and an abundance of coniferous trees such as western red cedar and Douglas fir. Redwoods, tulip trees and other non-native species are also present. Sleepy Hollow provides an excellent wildlife habitat and is a pleasant surrounding for people.



11. Linneman (Cedarville) Railroad Station

SE 188th and Powell

A streetcar line extending from Portland to Estacada and paralleling Johnson Creek was opened on September 23, 1903. This line was part of the Eastside Railway System established in 1893 by the Oregon Water, Power and Railway Company. It was the first inter-urban line in the U.S. to be powered by electric current generated from water power. The company changed hands a number of times throughout its years of operation. Passenger service was finally disconnected in 1958.

The Linneman or Cedarville station is the only remaining railroad station along the creek. It is visible from Powell Boulevard, but partially covered by blackberry vines and moss. The station is a classic example of turn-of-the-century railroad architecture with wide, overhanging eaves, gently sloping roof and wooden framing boards around doors and windows. Included in the City of Gresham's Preliminary Inventory of Local Historic Places, the old station meets the eligibility requirements for the National Register of Historic Places (the official list of the nation's cultural resources worth preserving). It is definitely a structure worth seeing.

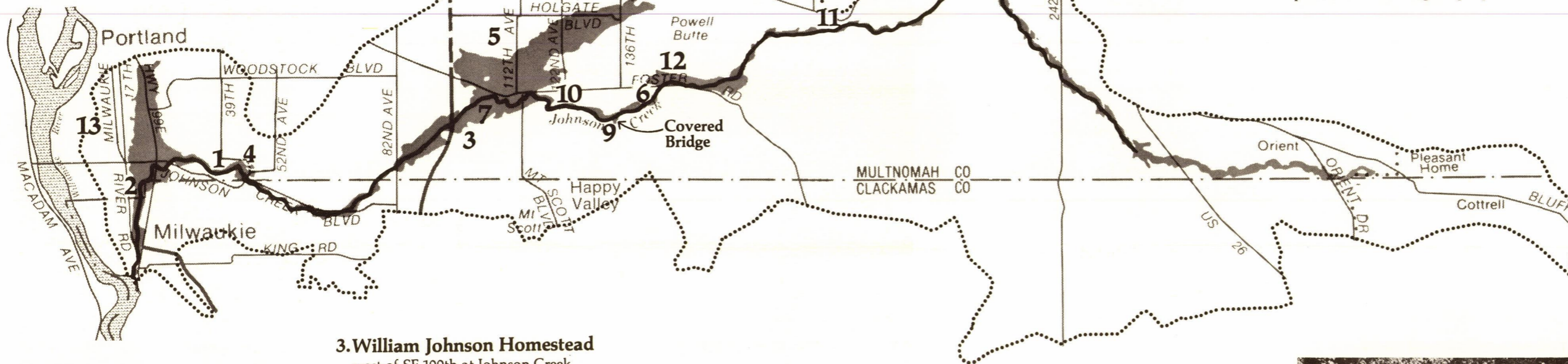
About the name: Linneman used to be called Cedarville in honor of a large cedar grove once present here. It is now named after Mr. and Mrs. John G. D. Linneman, German immigrants and pioneers of 1852. John Linneman was Portland's first tailor.

12. Sycamore

The George Flinn family settled at the spot called Sycamore in 1844. The Flinns named the site after their home state, West Virginia, known as the "Sycamore State." The United States Geological Survey operates a gauging station at this site, and has recorded creek flow data since 1941.

13. Sellwood

The Reverend John Sellwood, another Portland pioneer, picked this spot as the place for his settlement. In 1882 it was given his name.



The natural beauty of Tideman Johnson Park.



Gateway to "Sleepy Hollow."



OUR PLACE (in 1950)

*Our house lies down on Johnson Creek
Where willows grow and the grass lays thick
The wildlife thrives as sure it must
Away from highway, free from dust
Mussels, crayfish, eels and frogs
Rainbow trout and waterdogs
The children wade in pond and brook
The fish they catch with line and hook.*

*Our flowers are a pretty sight
Where birds do sing from morn to night
In peaceful calm and blissful rest
The robin make his mud-lined nest
As the sun comes up at break of dawn
He pulls the worms from out our lawn
As if in hunger, if not in greed
This frantic search for his daily feed.*

*The frost has come and all is killed
The heavens soon with clouds are filled
And Autumn winds shake brush and trees
And fill the air with floating leaves
Last Summer's beauty fades too fast
As soon will come that wintry blast
The snow and sleet, the ice and frost
Sweet memory of Summer, too soon is lost!*

*Donald C. Birch
Gresham*



SERVING
THE
REGION

HOME TIPS FOR CLEAN STREAMS

Urban streams like Johnson, Fanno, and Fairview Creeks are valuable community resources that need to be protected. Urbanization within drainage basins affects stream water quality and quantity. Hard surfaces such as streets and rooftops turn rain—which was once absorbed into the ground—into fast-flowing stormwater runoff. Urban stormwater runoff contains many dangerous pollutants that may enter streams untreated.

There are a number of things that individual property owners can do to keep urban streams healthy and clean:



Sunrise on Johnson Creek.



Johnson Creek Park.

In the garden and yard

- Use garden and lawn chemicals sparingly and with care. Follow disposal directions. Avoid over-watering treated gardens and yards.
- Take precautions to avoid excessive run-off when clearing land. Follow erosion control guidelines and regulations. Re-establish vegetation as soon as possible.
- Sweep walks and driveways. Hosing them off washes litter and dirt into gutters and then into streams.
- Leave as much of your lot as possible in grass, bushes, and trees. Bushes and trees capture and hold a lot of rain before it reaches the ground.
- Avoid landscaping plastic.

Along streambanks

- Leave streambanks and channels in their natural, unaltered condition. Keep natural vegetation on banks to shade the stream.
- Keep litter out of streams.
- Educate your children. Do not let them play in streams if they stir up bottom muds, collapse the banks, destroy vegetation, or harass fish and wildlife.

Car care

- Recycle crankcase oil. When oil runs off driveways and enters stormwater drains, it spills directly into streams. Phone Metro's recycling switchboard, 224-5555, for the location of the oil recycling depot nearest you.
- Fix leaky crankcases and transmissions or use drip pans to capture leaking fluids.
- Keep car engines and other motors well-tuned and clean to reduce exhaust fallout.
- Keep antifreeze out of stormwater drains.
- Use low-phosphate soaps when washing cars. Direct soap suds onto absorbent ground, such as lawns.

With everyone's help, our urban streams can continue to be an important part of our natural environment.