

# Behind the Scenes

April 2018



Dear Friend,

Well we certainly had our ups-and-downs when it came to the weather this April! After the mid-month deluge of rain, we were treated to a wonderful stretch of summer-like sunshine. And along with that much-appreciated sun comes the proverbial profusion of May flowers. If you haven't had a chance to visit a local natural area or park yet, I encourage you to get outside in the next couple of weeks to enjoy the Spring awakening. Not only will you be rewarded with a rich palette of color and texture, you will also hear the joyous Spring chorus of migratory birds announcing their return from winter refuges. This brings to mind that one of the highlights of our event calendar is our bi-annual Bird Walk series. Read on below for a glimpse of our Spring Bird Walks, the last of which took place this past Saturday. In this issue, we also hear from Jay Charland, our outgoing Monitoring Coordinator, who explains why we are monitoring stream temperature across the watershed and welcomes Caleb Price, who officially takes over the program this month. Finally, a BIG thank you goes to McMinnville resident Phoebe Newman for submitting a beautiful poem that is sure to inspire you to get outdoors this month. Would you like to be featured in a future **Behind the Scenes**? Email your photos, poems, stories or musings to me at [Outreach@LuckiamuteLWC.org](mailto:Outreach@LuckiamuteLWC.org)!

Happy reading!

--Suzanne Teller, LWC Outreach Coordinator



## LOVE YOUR WATERSHED

Like us, birds prefer to seek shelter in wet, stormy weather - which often means that our Spring Bird Walks end up needing to be rescheduled. Luckily, the menacing clouds that were overhead for our April 14 bird walk held onto their payload long enough for everyone to enjoy a lovely hike through Luckiamute State Natural Area's diverse landscapes. Quite a few raptors were spotted that day, including a pair of osprey on their nest, a bald eagle soaring overhead, a flyover Cooper's hawk, and a northern harrier hunting over the agricultural field.

After being rescheduled to April 28, our Western Skies Cattle Ranch bird walk turned out to be another relatively dry day. Our birders enjoyed a lovely walk through the wildflower-filled meadows and beautiful oak woodland located throughout this 113-acre sustainably managed cattle ranch. Along with quite a few wild turkey encounters, we learned how to identify the similar songs of the orange-crowned warbler and chipping sparrow. We also got a close-up look at the granary trees used by acorn woodpeckers to store their winter supply of acorns!



Next up for the **Love Your Watershed Series** is our free, open-format Ethnobotany Workshop at Bezell Forest Education Center on June 5! Get all the details at [www.luckiamutelwc.org/2018-ethnobotany-workshop](http://www.luckiamutelwc.org/2018-ethnobotany-workshop).

Your Land. Your Rivers. Your Community. Your Watershed.

# Watershed Notes

## For One Moment in this Day

by Phoebe Newman

Focus on the fragrance of earth.  
Inhale the green the gold of grasses,  
the comforting richness of humus,  
then the pungent bark of trees  
whose limbs are jeweled with finches  
and skittering squirrels.

Rest your feet in this cold water,  
the slow and murky Willamette  
meandering to the Columbia, sudden  
icy waterfalls plunging,  
dizzying whirlpools  
thrilling the forest air.

Listen for the low humming of cows,  
the giggles of llamas and newborn goats.  
Hear the crunch of deer eating your grapes,  
the raccoons devouring your tomatoes.  
Understand that they were never yours.

Sink barefoot into this welcoming soil,  
your toes finding shards of flowered teacups  
and small bottles along the riverbanks,  
blackened coins in the deep furrows of plowed  
fields.

The skies here are wide and filled  
with every shade of blue,  
and clouds are huge and still.  
In this remarkably ordinary place  
you have been given it all.

Wonder moves towards you,  
around you. Be so still the dotted fawn  
will nudge you and lick your forearm.  
Never mind all else you have heard  
about paradise. This is for you.

## Temperature Monitoring Program Update

Last fall, we completed our third year monitoring summer water temperatures in the Luckiamute River and its tributaries. Using 31 temperature sensors, called 'loggers,' which record the water temperature every hour for months at a time, we were able to build a clear picture of water temperatures around the watershed. While small streams in forested areas largely remain cool through the summer, we are seeing warming in the lower reaches of the tributaries as they approach their confluence with the Luckiamute River. But why, you might ask, is understanding stream temperature is so important?



Salmon and trout, which need cool water to survive, can thrive in the Luckiamute watershed because their life cycle is finely tuned to seasonal changes in water temperature. During the summer, when waters near the river are warmer, juvenile salmon and trout are in the cool forested areas feeding on insects and growing large enough to make the journey to the ocean. During the late winter and early spring, when steady rains keep temperatures low in larger streams and rivers, the young fish move down the system through the Luckiamute, the Willamette, and the Columbia to the sea. At about the same time, adults retrace their steps to their native streams to spawn.

Historically, the forested streambanks, gravel bars and floodplain soils that characterized small streams in the upper watershed provided cold water refuges for fish during the summer, and helped lower temperatures in the wider, slower Willamette River as well. Today, however, all of these features have been greatly reduced, and at the same time, warm water inputs from municipal and industrial discharges and paved surface run-off have increased. This makes the remaining cold water refuges all the more important to find, protect and enhance.

Last week, we had a sort of "changing of the guard," as our new Monitoring Coordinator, Caleb Price, prepared to take over for Jay Charland, our outgoing Monitoring Coordinator. Caleb brings with him extensive experience in fisheries management as well as a deeply rooted love for fishing and backcountry hiking, and we look forward to having him on our team! We would also welcome more volunteers to help us deploy the stream temperature sensors in the next couple of weeks. If you are interested in helping out with the Temperature Monitoring Program, please contact Caleb at 503-837-0237 or send him an email at [Monitoring@LuckiamuteLWC.org](mailto:Monitoring@LuckiamuteLWC.org). Finally, I want to thank those of you who are participating in our 2018-19 monitoring season. The success of this program ultimately depends on your support, and we are grateful for all that you do. THANK YOU!