

# Behind the Scenes

July 2018



Dear Friend,

We did it! We moved into our new location at 165 D Street - the old Valley & Siletz Railroad Depot for those of you familiar with the downtown historic district of Independence. We are grateful for the larger space, the sunnier windows and the outside patio. We are also thrilled that Lucas Hunt, Council Coordinator of the Rickreall and Glenn Gibson Watershed Councils, is now renting an office space within our building as well. To celebrate our move and introduce you to our new office, we are holding an LWC Open House Celebration on Wednesday, September 5, from 4 to 7pm. Keep your eyes on your mailbox for a postcard invitation, and come join us for some good food and drink, a tour of our building, and some great conversation with your LWC staff, board members, friends, family and neighbors!

Happy reading!

--Suzanne Teller, LWC Outreach Coordinator

## Love Your Watershed Update: Luckiamute Confluence Tour and More!

We have been busy putting together a fabulous line-up of events for our 2018-19 **Love Your Watershed** series. Our Luckiamute Confluence Tour, the very first event in the series, is scheduled for Sunday, September 23 and is filling up fast! We are teaming up with Greenbelt Land Trust and Polk Soil and Water Conservation District for this free interactive tour, which will give you an up-close look at three habitat restoration efforts located near the confluence of the Luckiamute River and the mighty Willamette. We will be meeting at 9:00am at Luckiamute State Natural Area's South tract parking lot (or 8:30 if you are joining the carpool in Corvallis), and we will end the tour at 2:00pm. For more details and RSVP instructions, visit our tour information page at [www.luckiamutelwc.org/luckiamute-tour.html](http://www.luckiamutelwc.org/luckiamute-tour.html)



If you won't be able to join us for the tour, don't worry - you'll be receiving more exclusive invitations to our upcoming **Love Your Watershed** events over the next few months. One of the ways we thank you for being a **Friend of the LWC**, is to give you early registration access to events like this, as well as discounts on all event fees. If you never received our early-access invitation to the Luckiamute Confluence Tour, please contact me to get your email added to our system or updated. You can reach me at the office at 503-837-0237 or by emailing me at [Outreach@LuckiamuteLWC.org](mailto:Outreach@LuckiamuteLWC.org).

Finally, make sure to mark your calendars for our **LWC Open House Celebration on September 5 from 4 - 7pm!** In addition to food, fun and fellowship, we'll have an update to our ongoing Strategic Planning process and hope to get your feedback on what we've done so far, and suggestions for improvement. Hope to see you there!

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

# Watershed Notes

## Upper Ritner Creek Project Update

Regardless of whether or not a tree falling in the forest makes a sound with no one there to hear it, it certainly makes an impact! In fact, logs and woody debris are valuable contributors to the health of our creeks and streams. Read through to the end for information about a project tour that will introduce you first-hand to the benefits of fallen logs in our streams!

Our Upper Ritner Creek Splash Dam Recovery project got started earlier this month with the placement of 142 fallen trees into the stream channel on private timber land. But why are these logs and snags so important to restoring the health of Ritner Creek? Here are 7 important ecological functions of large woody debris in our rivers, creeks and streams, from the National Forest Foundation:



*A backhoe lifts a fallen tree, preparing it for placement into Ritner Creek*



*Large woody debris in our streams and rivers provide essential habitat for fish and other aquatic species.*

- 1) Large woody debris helps slow down the stream flow, helping both adult fish moving upstream, and juvenile fish seeking shelter from strong currents.
- 2) When wood debris slows water flow, larger sediment like gravel is allowed to settle to the streambed. Native fish like lamprey, salmon, steelhead and cutthroat trout require gravel to spawn.
- 3) Large woody debris provides shade along streams, creating pockets of cooler water for species like salmon and steelhead, which depend on low water temperatures to survive.
- 4) Large woody debris creates places for fish to hide from predators and seek shelter during storms.
- 5) Woody debris helps trap organic material like leaves and twigs that provide nutrients for algae and macroinvertebrates - which in turn, provide food for fish.
- 6) Large woody debris helps prevent erosion by buffering stream-banks from scouring by fast currents, and preventing sediment from being washed downstream.
- 7) Pools of water and "steps" can form behind woody debris, which provide habitat for fish during periods of low water flow.

Streams like Ritner Creek suffer from a lack of woody debris due to a number of reasons - including historical splash damming and logging activity that removed trees right up to the water's edge, road building that channeled streams through culverts, and misguided attempts to improve or "clean" waterways by removing fallen logs and snags. The LWC is proud to be working with Hancock Forest Management and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to help reverse some of the damage done and restore much-needed salmon and steelhead habitat within Ritner Creek. We couldn't do this without the support of our partners, grant funding from Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board, and the **Friends of the LWC**, so thank you for the part you play in making projects like this successful!

As an additional way to say thank you, we would like to invite you to witness the placement of logs in a section of Ritner Creek located on BLM property. This activity will take place during August, but please be aware that there will not be much notice once we have this activity scheduled with our contractor. **If you would like to be informed of the date and time of log placement, please call me at 503-837-0237 or email me at Outreach@LuckiamuteLWC.org**, and I will send you the details of where and when we will meet as soon as I have that information. Thanks again, and stay tuned for project updates in future issues of **Behind the Scenes!**