

Behind the Scenes

March 2018



Dear Friend,

It sure is nice to see the sun shine brightly for days at a time as our spring rains continue to fill up our creeks and reservoirs with much-needed water! As we say goodbye to the third month of the year, I hope you have been enjoying your Behind the Scenes Bulletins so far. As one of the exclusive benefits of joining as a Friend of the LWC, Behind the Scenes is meant to dig a little deeper into what we do and why, and show you how your dollars and volunteer hours are contributing to our goals of clean water, healthy habitat, and engaged communities. However, there is always room for improvement and I'd love to hear your suggestions for future topics. Please feel free to call me at 503-837-0237 or email Outreach@LuckiamuteLWC.org with your ideas and comments. Also, if you are receiving this Bulletin in your mailbox and wish to help us save paper and printing costs, sign up to receive the electronic version instead at www.luckiamutelwc.org/bulletin. A bonus to signing up with your email address is that you will receive early access to event registration and discounts on event fees directly to your inbox!

Happy reading!

--Suzanne Teller, LWC Outreach Coordinator

LOVE YOUR WATERSHED: WATERSHED RECREATION FAIR

Have you ever woken up with the spontaneous urge to go hiking, kayaking or mountain biking but wondered where you could go that was close by? On March 17, from 12:00 to 4:00 pm, residents of Independence, Monmouth, Salem, Falls City and beyond, showed up at The Grove Coffeehouse to find out the answer to that question at our first-ever Watershed Recreation Fair! Formerly the site of the infamous Lenora's Ghost tavern, The Grove now hosts church services on Sunday and some of the best coffee drinks in town during the rest of the week. With its large open space, great acoustics, and comfortable seating areas, it turned out to be the perfect venue for the fair. Six representatives from a mix of federal and state agencies, local birding and hiking groups and Oregon State University's Forestry Extension office had tables displaying local outdoor activities and opportunities. Two additional tables displayed brochures, guides and take-home information about even more outdoor activities ranging from mushroom hunting and camping on private forest land, to winery-hosted bike tours and boating the Willamette River Trail. No matter your interests, age or physical abilities, there is such a wide range of activities to keep you engaged and involved in having FUN in your watershed!



And speaking of fun in your watershed, registration is now open for our Spring Bird Walks on April 7 and April 14! You won't want to miss this chance to learn about some of the amazing birdlife that can be found in our iconic landscapes - including oak savanna, streamside forest, and prairie habitat. As a **Friend of the LWC**, you will also enjoy a 30% discount off of our ticket price, making your admission -- with lunch included -- only \$7 per person! Use this special link to get your discounted ticket price: www.luckiamutelwc.org/2018-spring-bird-walks-friends or you can call 503-837-0237. Tickets are going fast, so make sure to RSVP today to secure your spot!

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

Watershed Notes



When we got a call in November from a Boy Scout in search of a project to complete his Eagle Scout rank, we were excited to be able to help a motivated scout as well as a struggling planting site within our Ash Creek Restoration Project. Broderick Buckholz was turning 18 years old in March, which gave him a short timeline to complete his Eagle Scout project, but which happened to coincide nicely with the perfect time of year to plant native trees and shrubs! The area of focus was a section of Ash Creek just east of Gun Club Road in Independence, where native vegetation had been planted on both city property and private property to help restore the streamside habitat. Unfortunately, the local deer population had been treating this newly planted area as a buffet and playground, and our plantings suffered heavy browsing and antler-rubbing damage. Being new to restoration ecology, Broderick sought guidance from LWC Project Manager Jean-Paul Zagarola to develop a list of trees and shrubs, pinpoint the best planting sites

for each species, and learn how to construct deer-proof enclosures. Perhaps the most time-consuming part of the project, however, was the time spent researching and reaching out to local plant nurseries, hardware stores and other local businesses to request assistance with plants, deer fencing and funding. Similar to the experience we have with larger projects in the watershed, it is the 'behind-the-scenes' work that can take the most time and effort to accomplish. To find out what happened, be sure to read our Spring Newsletter which should arrive in your inbox this week! If you have not yet signed up to receive our quarterly e-newsletter, you can do so at www.luckiamutelwc.org/lwc-newsletter.

The Creek Next Door

You might not notice that small creek behind your local grocery store. Your eyes might see right through the sign on the bridge that lets you know which stream you are driving across. But these urban waterways are so much more than just places that have avoided being paved over.

One urban stream that the LWC has been focusing on is a 2.8-mile stretch of Ash Creek that flows through Monmouth and Independence. Like many urban streams, Ash Creek provides an oasis for a wide variety of birds and wildlife that otherwise might find a typical residential landscape inhospitable. Waterways in urban and suburban landscapes are not only sources of food, water, shelter and nesting sites—they also provide safe migratory corridors for animals as they navigate from one feeding or breeding site to another. You may be surprised to learn that Ash Creek provides habitat for winter steelhead trout, a federally listed threatened fish species!

In 2014, the LWC was awarded a grant from the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board to restore the ecological health of lower Ash Creek. Since then, we have worked with the City of Independence, Monmouth Public Works, Central School District 13J, Ash Creek Water Control District, and local landowners to remove invasive species that have taken over much of the riparian area, and replant streamside areas with native vegetation. With only two more years left of funding, the Ash Creek Restoration Project has been a great success so far -- not only because we have helped improve streamside habitat, but also because it has served as an amazing outreach tool. Being able to engage students, churches, civic groups, and our neighbors with volunteer planting and mulching events right in our own backyard has helped us spread the word about just how important Ash Creek, and other small waterways, can be to the overall health of our communities.

This spring, I encourage you to take a moment to reflect on the ways our urban streams impact you and your neighbors - both human and non-human. Perhaps there are opportunities to engage more directly with that waterway through nature walks, bird watching, picnics or litter pick-ups. Do you have any stories, reflections or inspired poetry about your favorite waterway to share? Submit your writing to Outreach@LuckiamuteLWC.org and your work might just be selected to publish in a future newsletter!



Some parts of Ash Creek are in relatively good condition, with native vegetation along much of its banks.



Behind Talmadge Middle School, over 15,000 native trees and shrubs have been planted along Ash Creek!