

Behind the Scenes

October 2018



Dear Friend,

As we approach the final two months of the year, I'd like to take the time to **thank you** for your support this year. Whether you have donated your dollars or your time, you exemplify the concept of community-based conservation. Your contributions do more than support our restoration projects and our outreach efforts, they also help offset the costs of the critical "behind the scenes" work that is needed to put these programs in place. Starting November 1, we will be starting our End of Year Giving campaign, which is typically our biggest fundraising effort of the year. We will be reaching out to all of our supporters and Friends to ask for your continued support. Please consider renewing your membership as a **Friend of the LWC** by donating an annual minimum of \$25, or a volunteer commitment of at least 5 hours a year. Our updated donation page at <https://donorbox.org/donate-to-the-luckiamute-watershed-council> makes it even easier to set up a recurring monthly donation, or give a gift in honor of a loved one.

Thank you so much!

--Suzanne Teller, LWC Outreach Coordinator

Outreach@LuckiamuteLWC.org



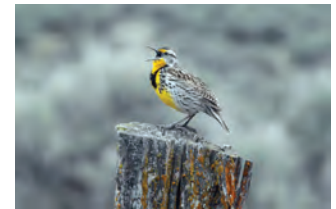
LOVE YOUR WATERSHED: FALL BIRD WALKS

Participants in our two Fall Bird Walks this month were rewarded for getting out early on Saturday morning with lovely weather, and a chance to see and hear some of our diverse native birdlife. On October 6, local bird expert Joel Geier led bird-walkers through the unique "striped" landscape of Luckiamute State Natural Area's South Unit. Here, oaks grow on gravel ridges while prairie and ash trees grow in the swales left by old oxbows and side channels of the historic Willamette River. During this sunshine-filled fall day, participants got to see many kinds of sparrows, goldfinches, yellow-rumped warblers and kingfishers, just to name a few!



Photo credit: Sally Morris

Then on October 21, Joel led a group of 15 bird-walkers along the Richard Guadagno Memorial Loop trail at Baskett Slough National Wildlife Refuge. Although cool morning temperatures dampened some of the bird activity early on, everyone was treated to lots of bird sights and sounds later in the day - including the lovely song of our state bird, the Western Meadowlark. This is one of the species that relies on Baskett Slough's expansive wet prairie habitat, which used to be the most common type of habitat found across the Willamette Valley but has now shrunk to less than 1% of its former extent.



Next up on the **Love Your Watershed** calendar is Sips 'n' Science! Our first science pub talk of the series will take place at The Valkyrie Wine Tavern in Independence on November 15, from 6:30 to 8:00pm. Chris Jordan, a conservation ecologist from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) will be talking about the important role beavers play in stream ecology, and successful stream restoration methods that mimic the action of beaver dams. Get all the details at www.LuckiamuteLWC.org/Sips-and-Science!



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

Watershed Notes

Upper Ritner Creek Log Placement Tour

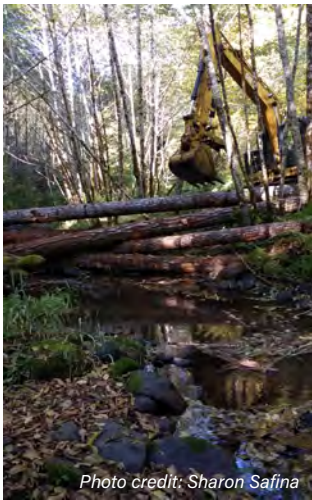


Photo credit: Sharon Safina

On October 21, a few **Friends of the LWC** got the chance to witness our contractors placing logs into Upper Ritner Creek as part of the Upper Ritner Splash Dam Recovery Project. With huge logs being maneuvered into place by dinosaur-like excavators, large wood placement is one of the more dramatic restoration activities we engage in. Built log structures are designed to mimic naturally-occurring log jams, which occur when streamside trees fall into the water or when beavers build dams. These log piles help slow the flow of a river, allowing spawning gravels to accumulate and providing habitat and nutrients for many aquatic species.

The logs used to build these structures were donated by Hancock Forest Management and the Bureau of Land Management, and project funding is coming primarily from the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board. All are partnering with us to restore the health of this tributary of the Luckiamute River and remove barriers to salmon and trout migration. Want to find out more about our Upper Ritner Creek Splash Dam Recovery Project? Head to www.LuckiamuteLWC.org/upper-ritner-project.html!

Temperature Monitoring Update

Earlier this month, LWC Monitoring Coordinator Caleb Price and several of our volunteers were busy pulling out all 28 temperature loggers (or sensors) from rivers around the watershed. These loggers were busy recording stream temperature every hour from May to October in order to provide valuable information about how warm the water gets during the hottest part of the year.

In our August issue of Behind the Scenes, Caleb described how the Luckiamute Watershed Council is using the temperature data collected by these loggers to help guide our restoration efforts to the areas that hold the most promise for good quality native salmon and trout habitat. The Upper Ritner Creek Splash Dam Recovery Project is one example of a project for which we used temperature data collected in 2017 to help inform the planning and proposal process. Data collected at Ritner Creek Park and on Gage Road above the park indicated about 1.5°C warming along about 0.8 miles of Ritner Creek. Based on this observed warming, we added weed control and revegetation of a two-acre reed canary grass patch to the project proposal, which would increase shade along this stretch of the creek.

As Caleb and the rest of the LWC Monitoring Committee carefully analyze this year's data and generate results for each of the 28 sites, they will be running several procedures to ensure that the equipment is in good working order and that the data collected is accurate. Although quality control checks and data analysis have not yet been completed, Caleb has already noted some interesting results. Preliminary results from a logger placed at the site of our Price Creek culvert replacement project were positive, showing that temperatures remained ideal for salmon and trout rearing throughout the summer. Data from Hook Creek, a small Luckiamute tributary that runs along Ira Hooker Road, suggested that thermal stratification occurred here in the middle of the summer. This happens when the warmer surface layer of the water sits on top of a layer of colder water. With no surface contact, this lower layer of water becomes insulated from daily air temperature fluctuations, which creates a refuge for salmon and trout as water temperatures elsewhere increase.

Caleb will be presenting the full analysis and results of the LWC Monitoring Program at a community forum early next year, so stay tuned for more details! In the meantime, if you have any questions about our monitoring program, please feel free to reach out to Caleb at Monitoring@LuckiamuteLWC.org.



Photo credit: Caleb Price



Photo credit: Caleb Price



Photo credit: Caleb Price