

Behind the Scenes

February 2019



Dear Friend,

Just when we thought that spring was just around the corner, winter decides to show us that it is not quite over yet! Nevertheless, signs of new life are everywhere. From buds ready to burst to busy birds building their nests, there is no mistaking that warmer weather is coming soon! Those of you who have properties participating in one of our revegetation projects may have seen our crews out planting over the past few weeks, and we are busy preparing to start several other restoration project activities - including temperature monitoring and floodplain reconnection at Luckiamute State Natural Area. Our outreach calendar is also reflecting the transition from winter to spring, as we begin to switch from indoor- to outdoor-oriented events. Make sure to keep an eye on your inbox for updates about all the opportunities to get outside and enjoy your watershed!

Happy reading!

--Suzanne Teller, LWC Outreach Coordinator

LOVE YOUR WATERSHED: Upcoming Events

We have a growing list of *Love Your Watershed* events to add to your calendar! As a **Friend**, you will have the opportunity to register early for events that require an RSVP, and a discount on all event fees. Just one more reason to celebrate being a **Friend of the LWC!**



Last week, we thoroughly enjoyed Jerry Paul's presentation on The Mighty Mason Bee at The Valkyrie Wine Tavern. More than 60 people came out to learn about the life cycle of the mason bee, and the invaluable contributions that this native pollinator makes to food production and ecosystem health. Stay tuned for our next Sips 'n' Science pub talk coming on June 14 to The Bread Board in Falls City! In the meantime, here are our upcoming events you won't want to miss:



Stream Temperature Monitoring in the Luckiamute Watershed

March 21, 2019 @ 6:00 - 7:30pm
Monmouth Public Library (168 S. Ecols St., Monmouth)
RSVP at www.LuckiamuteLWC.org/tempmonitoringupdate



Watershed Recreation Fair

April 13, 2019 @ 10:00am - 2:00pm
The Grove Coffeehouse (116 S. Main St., Independence)
Details at www.LuckiamuteLWC.org/recfair



Earth Day Mulching and Deer Fencing on Ash Creek

April 20 @ 1:00 - 4:00pm
Polk County Fire District #1 (1800 Monmouth St., Independence)
RSVP at www.LuckiamuteLWC.org/earthday2019

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

Watershed Notes



According to the Chinese 12-year animal zodiac, we have just begun the Year of the Pig. Though it may not be intuitive for those of us not well-versed in the traditional Chinese calendar, the natural element associated with the Pig is Water. What's more, this year's Pig is also linked with the element of Earth! With these two elements being so closely tied to restoration work, this year might just be an auspicious one for a watershed council! But whether or not this year will bring us unexpected fortune, we do know that we are VERY lucky to have an amazing network of Friends. Thank you so much for your dedication and generosity. Your contributions, whether financial or through volunteering, are invaluable

to us and we hope to be able to thank you in person during our LWC Social and annual *Like Water for Chocolate* competition happening this Sunday, March 3, at The Historic Gentle House in Monmouth. If you are interested in attending, it is not too late to plan on coming! Get the details and RSVP at www.LuckiamuteLWC.org/lwc-social.

Celebrate Winter Planting!

With the frigid temperatures, occasional snow and heavy rains, you may not think of winter as an ideal time to be outside planting. But this just happens to be the perfect time to plant native trees and shrubs to give them the best chance of survival. Because they are already well-adapted to our climate, native plants thrive without the need for too much extra care, as long as we pay attention to and accommodate their natural internal clocks.



While the parts of the plant we can see might look dormant—or even dead—to us, there is a whole world of activity going on beneath the surface of the soil. Native plants have evolved to take advantage of our seasonal cycles and often start growing well before the first day of Spring in order to get a head start on development before the drier, hotter summer weather begins.



During the past month, professional reforestation crews have been busy working in the cold, wet weather, planting thousands of native trees and shrubs within Luckiamute State Natural Area and along many of our waterways—including the Luckiamute River and Maxfield, Upper Ritner, Plunkett, Pedee and Price Creeks. In total, 16,200 plants will be added to our restoration sites this year, as well as many locally sourced native cuttings. These skinny, bare-root saplings may not look very impressive now, but they will soon be emerging from dormancy and growing at a remarkable rate during their first year in the ground.

Waiting until April or May to plant natives on your property could still work out just fine, but in many cases, extra watering through the first summer will be necessary to allow the roots to get established enough for the plant to survive on its own. By getting plants in the ground now, the young plants will be poised to endure the hot, dry summertime weather without any extra watering. If you want to get a jump on adding natives to your property now, check out our local Soil & Water Conservation District plant sale schedule at www.LuckiamuteLWC.org/2019-swcd-native-plant-sales.

Some of our restoration sites do benefit from a little extra TLC to keep them from succumbing to drought, weed competition and deer browsing—particularly within our more developed or disturbed sites. So although Earth Day may come a little too late for planting native trees, it is a perfect time to help newly planted trees and shrubs get an even stronger head-start. That is why for Earth Day this year, we are recruiting volunteers to help us spread mulch and put up deer cages around some of our vulnerable young trees and shrubs along Ash Creek! Behind the Polk County Fire District #1 station in Independence, one of our planting areas happens to sit in the midst of a deer “super highway” and would benefit from some protection from browsing and antler-rubbing. Applying a layer of mulch would help reduce weed competition, and keep moisture in the root zone. This fun community event takes place on Saturday, April 20 from 1:00 to 4:00 pm, and we'd love to have your help! If you would like to join us, make sure to RSVP at www.LuckiamuteLWC.org/earthday2019.

