

# Behind the Scenes "Lite"

July 2023



Dear Friend,

Happy July 5th! As temperatures cool off a little over the next few weeks, I hope you are able to get out and enjoy some of the sights, sounds, smells and tastes of what is definitely a fantastic time of year to enjoy the beauty and abundance of the Willamette Valley. Local farmers' markets and u-pick farms are ready to welcome visitors of all ages, and the diverse array of beautiful parks and natural areas provide so many opportunities to enjoy nature and recreate outdoors within minutes from our front doors.

This month, you are receiving a "lite" version of Behind the Scenes, followed by the summer issue of LWC's Meanderings newsletter. Inside the following pages, you will see a feature article about a unique bird walk that took place last month, previews of upcoming events and projects, plus news about the exciting finale to our Love Your Watershed campaign!

Happy Reading, and THANK YOU for your continued support of the LWC! --Suzanne Teller, LWC Outreach Coordinator



## Partner Events

July 11 @ 12:00 - 1:00pm - **Getting Wild: Using Native Plants to Restore Biodiversity** (Webinar)



Though we humans often choose plants based on the produce they provide or the beauty they bring, other creatures depend on plants for survival. Opting for native plants that support and protect our local wildlife can enhance biodiversity and restore disrupted ecosystems, both of which benefit all life. This presenter will share seven steps you can take to create a healthy, productive garden or landscape that supports pollinators and birds. <https://extension.oregonstate.edu/mg/events/getting-wild-using-native-plants-restore-biodiversity>

## Restoration News and More!



While we don't have a brand new restoration project site to unveil right now, the LWC and its partners are accomplishing a lot of fantastic restoration and stewardship goals within our existing project areas. Below are just a few of the highlights:

- **668** acres are currently being stewarded within **42** different project sites
- Stream temperature at **29** sites is being monitored
- **160** landowners are participating in the knotweed control program (that's **50** stream miles!)

Behind the scenes, we are also working on a couple of new projects that are now in the beginning states of planning and development. The LWC and other partners in the Mid-Willamette Beaver Partnership (MWBP) are working with a web designer to create a logo and a brand new website for the MWBP, which will be launched later this year. The website will feature general information about beavers, information about co-existing with beavers, and resources on preventing beaver-related conflict. Speaking of beavers, we are also working on a series of Sips 'n' Science events focused on our favorite furry ecosystem engineers for this fall and winter, plus an exciting line-up of other beaver-related events, plus several project tours and site visits for later this year and through 2024!

The LWC is also working with River Network to design a community-led research effort that will help us learn directly from local community members in Independence and Monmouth about what their concerns and priorities around urban water issues and potential climate change impacts are. We are looking forward to sharing more news about this effort in the months ahead!

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

Summer  
2023

# LWC Meanderings

## Watershed News & Reflections



### LWC MISSION:

To engage and assist landowners and communities in the voluntary protection, restoration and enhancement of the Luckiamute and Ash Creek watersheds.

### WHAT WE ARE:

The Luckiamute Watershed Council is a 501(c)3 non-profit comprised of stakeholders who live, work or recreate within the Luckiamute and Ash Creek watersheds.

### WHO WE ARE:

Karin Stutzman, *President*  
Monmouth

George Grosch, *Treasurer/Secretary*  
Kings Valley/Hoskins

Britton Castor  
Pedee

Dave Ehlers  
Kings Valley/Hoskins

Nick Hazelton  
Kings Valley/Hoskins

Jackson Stalley  
Dallas

Jay Tappen  
Kings Valley/Hoskins

Scott Youngblood  
American Bottom/Buena Vista

*The Luckiamute and Ash Creek watersheds are part of the ancestral lands of the Kalapuya Indians, who are represented today by the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde and the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians.*

### COUNCIL MEETINGS:

Typically held the second Thursday of even-numbered months from 6 to 8 pm. Details and links posted at: [www.LuckiamuteLWC.org](http://www.LuckiamuteLWC.org)

## Building Community Through Birding

By Suzanne Teller, Outreach Coordinator



Left: Bird walk participants have fun practicing their binocular skills on a gorrión (sparrow). Right: Watching libélulas (dragonflies) and golondrinas (swallows) fly over Ash Creek was entertaining for all ages!

*¡Escucha, es un picogordo tigrillo!*

Our bird walk group stops walking and listens to a sweet melody with rising and falling notes. The bird experts instantly recognize the distinctive song of a black-headed grosbeak, also known as *picogordo tigrillo* to Spanish-speakers from Mexico. We search with our binoculars, but the singer is across the creek and hidden among the trees. *¡Que linda es su canción!*, remarks a birder enamored with its song.

Although the LWC has been organizing seasonal bird walks for many years, this bird walk happens to be the first of its kind for the Council. The bird walk took place on June 3 and was bilingual, but with Spanish as the primary language spoken during the event. Participants met at the community room at Colonia Amistad apartments in Independence, where they heard about the LWC and the other event partners – Ash Creek Water Control District (ACWCD) and Salem Audubon. Once introductions were made and binoculars handed out, Willamette University students Juan Vargas-

Perea and Hector Rosales-Gomez took over the leadership role alongside their biology professor David Craig and Salem Audubon member Mike Unger. Ramón Martinez, former Community Engagement Coordinator for the City of Independence, assisted in translation between Spanish and English where needed.

Aided by [illustrated guidesheets](#) that included bird names in both Spanish and English, we set off along a public walking path that follows alongside Ash Creek, a tributary to the Willamette River that flows through Monmouth and Independence. As we walked along the path, participants honed their binocular viewing skills and learned the importance of the creekside habitat to the health of many different species of birds and other local wildlife. Two bird walks – starting at 10am and 1pm – were held, with a delicious burrito lunch provided for all participants at noon, thanks to a favorite local lunch spot [Carniceria Mi Casita/Los Primos](#).



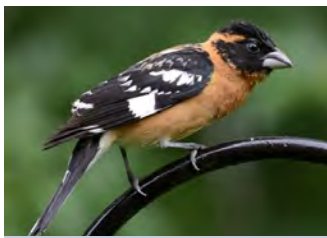
## Building Community, continued

During each bird walk, we were able to tick off a surprising number of bird species for such a small area so close to an urban setting. But perhaps it isn't so surprising when you consider the amazing transformation Ash Creek and its surrounding riparian (streamside) zone have undergone over the past ten years. Invasive blackberry and choking ivy vines have been replaced with a diverse and thriving native plant community, thanks to a restoration effort led by the LWC and supported by many partners - including the cities of Independence and Monmouth, Central School District 13J and ACWCD. In May and June, a profusion of bright yellow Oregon grape blooms and red flowering currant turns this area into a picture-perfect spring landscape. In fact, talented young authors and poets from nearby Central High School (CHS) have used Ash Creek as an inspiration for beautifully written poetry and short stories, published as an anthology entitled "[Where the Fish Live and Breathe: An anthology of poetry and short fiction about Ash Creek.](#)"



*In the spring, native shrubs adorn Ash Creek's riparian area with a beautiful array of colors.*

A variety of bird houses and mason bee nesting boxes were also built and installed here by CHS students as well as seventh and eighth graders from Talmadge Middle School, which is located right next to the walking trail. During the bird walk, we noticed several of these houses were inhabited, and spent a good amount of time watching the aerial ballet of a tree swallow - or *golondrina bicolor* - as she flew in and out of a nest box after catching insects on the wing.



*The aptly named picogordo tigrillo shows off his colors!*

Bird walk participants also learned that many of the bird species we are familiar with in our region are also commonly seen in Central and South America, where they migrate to during late fall and winter. The English and Spanish names of local birds can be similar or quite different from each other, depending on which characteristics are highlighted by residents of two distinct regions of the world. *Picogordo tigrillo*, the Spanish name for black-headed grosbeak - means "fat beaked little tiger," which actually seems a much more appropriate name for this orange-and-black voracious seed eater! Another example is the *rascador manchado*, a bird we know in English as the spotted towhee. "Rascador" means scratcher, and is an apt description of the bird's habit of scratching the ground in search of insects, seeds and nuts. The English name "towhee," on the other hand, refers to the sound of the bird's two-noted call.

As we wrapped up the second bird walk of the day, we learned that some of our most overlooked avian neighbors in the Willamette Valley have a claim to fame in Mexico, having inspired several iconic songs - including Miguel Gallardo's "[Gorrión \(Sparrow\)](#)," and Narciso Seradell Sevilla's "[La Golondrina \(The Swallow\)](#)." By the end of the day, it was clear that a bilingual bird walk offers more than a chance to learn about local birds in two different languages, it is an opportunity to share knowledge and observations that connects different cultures with a common appreciation for the natural world.

Although advertising for this particular bilingual bird walk was limited to residents of Colonia Amistad and the Spanish-speaking communities of Independence and Monmouth, we look forward to working with our partners to hold future bilingual bird walks that are open to anyone interested in learning more about the birds of Ash Creek!

See Mike Unger's bird walk report, including all 25 bird species we saw that day at <https://ebird.org/tripreport/136272>. For more information about the Ash Creek Restoration Project, visit <https://www.luckiamutelwc.org/ash-creek-restoration-project.html>.

## Love Your Watershed Supporters Surpass Campaign Goal!



**WOW!** A big thank you goes to all of our **Love Your Watershed** fundraising campaign contributors for the outstanding response to this year's fundraising campaign!

Not only did we reach our \$10,000 goal, we over-topped it by over \$1,000! Lucki Beaver is speechless with gratitude for your support. Which means we can now introduce you to "Lucki, a mute beaver!" (A special thanks goes to super-volunteer Linda H. for naming this year's campaign mascot and pointing us toward this pun!)

We are overwhelmed with gratitude at the outpouring of love and support that came through the mail, our inboxes, and in-person from so many of you! Whether your support comes in dollars, services, expertise or volunteer time, you are helping us achieve the goal of a *healthy and more connected watershed for all!*



# Love Your Watershed

## Upcoming Events

We LOVE sharing fun activities and educational experiences with our watershed community, and are looking forward to hosting some outdoor activities out in the 'shed in the coming months! Right now, the staff is steeped in some long-range planning and new projects that are keeping us busy as beavers. But rest assured, we do have some fantastic fall events lined up that we can't wait to tell you more about! Check out the previews below and keep an eye on your inbox for more information coming soon!

### LSNA Bird Banding / Restoration Tour (September 2023)

Join Project Manager Aubrey Cloud for a in-depth look at the restoration efforts that are protecting and enhancing the health of the floodplain forest habitat at Luckiamute State Natural Area. During this tour, you will also have the opportunity to go "behind the scenes" of an exciting research project that focuses on the connections between floodplain forest health and native birds!

### Upper Ritner Creek Project Tour (Fall 2023)

This is a great opportunity to explore the progress being made in restoring the in-stream and riparian habitat along the upper section of Ritner Creek with Restoration Project Manager Ross Hiatt. Tour participants will also be visiting an active beaver dam at Ritner Creek and learn about the role they play in the watershed.

## News from Heritage Museum in downtown Independence!



Test your knowledge of native plants and animals of the Willamette Valley at Heritage Museum's brand new installation along their back wall at 281 South 2nd Street! Some of the images are of iconic species that you will surely recognize, but some may leave you stumped! This is a great family activity while you are out and about in downtown Independence. While you are there, you can stop inside the museum for a special exhibit that will be displayed only until July 15, entitled "Fire and Freedom: Food & Enslavement in Early America." This powerful traveling exhibition explores the early colonial era, when European settlers relied upon indentured servants, Native Americans and African slave labor for essential knowledge of farming and food acquisition. Learn more at <https://www.orheritage.org/events-1/fire-and-freedom-food-enslavement-in-early-america-1>

**Please note the schedule change for the LWC's monthly meetings below. If you are not getting meeting updates directly to your inbox and would like to start receiving them, you can subscribe by [clicking here and updating your preferences!](#)**

## Join the FRIENDS OF THE LWC!

### What does it mean to be a FRIEND OF THE LWC?

- Monthly "Behind the Scenes" Bulletins
- Early access to event registration
- Discounts on workshops and our online store
- *Knowing that you are helping improve the health of your watershed!*

**Ready to Join?**

Find out how at

[www.LuckiamuteLWC.org/Friends!](http://www.LuckiamuteLWC.org/Friends!)

We welcome donations\* to support the work of the Council. All charitable donations will be used towards building the organizational resources needed to address our goals of water quality enhancement, habitat restoration and community education.

*\*Your contribution may be tax-deductible. The LWC will provide a letter of documentation early the following year.*

## Upcoming Council Meetings

Join us for our LWC Monthly Meetings, typically held the second Thursday of every even-numbered month. Our meetings are always open to the public and discussion topics include local watershed issues and actions. Details, driving directions, and/or Zoom links are posted at [www.LuckiamuteLWC.org](http://www.LuckiamuteLWC.org).

August 10 @ 6:00 - 8:00pm (at Happy Workers Club)

October 12 @ 6:00 - 8:00pm (Location TBD)

December 14 @ 6:00 - 8:00pm (Location TBD)

To donate to the LWC, go to [www.LuckiamuteLWC.org/donate](http://www.LuckiamuteLWC.org/donate) or you can send a check to:

165 D Street, Independence, OR 97351

**Thank you to our supporters!**

# THANK YOU TO OUR MOST RECENT DONORS AND VOLUNTEERS!

We are so grateful to the following donors and volunteers who have contributed their dollars, in-kind donations, and their time and energy to our conservation and community education goals from April 1 to June 30, 2023. Your support of the LWC makes a BIG difference, and helps us achieve our goal of a *healthy watershed for all*. **THANK YOU!**

## Special Recognition to the LWC's Bedrock Society

*A special note of thanks goes to our donors who are opting to make automatic monthly contributions to the Luckiamute Watershed Council! Like the bedrock that underlies every stream of our watershed, recurring donations provides a foundational layer of support for our organization with a steady stream of income that we can count on every month to advance our mission. Find out how you can set up a recurring monthly donation and become a part of our Bedrock Society at <https://www.luckiamutelwc.org/donate.html>*

**Anonymous Donor**  
Judy Beebe  
Michael Cairns & Gail Oberst  
Maya & Jim Cook  
Verna & Dale Curry  
Whitney & Ron Francis  
Jeremy Gordon  
George Grosch & Ann Bowen  
Charlie & Hollis Holstine  
Stephen & Ava Howard  
Renee Jaffer  
Becky & Jon Jay

Paige Jenkins  
Mike & Karen Lippsmeyer  
Deb Merchant  
Leanne Merrill  
Becca Meskimen  
Erin Murphy  
Terry Murphy  
Eric Noel  
Caleb Price  
Linda Samuels  
Scott Youngblood



If you shop at Fred Meyer, you can link your Community Rewards card to the LWC using these steps:

Sign in to your Rewards account at [www.FredMeyer.com](http://www.FredMeyer.com). Then click "Community Rewards" on the lefthand menu. Follow the steps to link your card to the LWC using our organization number: **Q1717**

## April 1 - June 30 Donors

<b>Anonymous Donors (2)</b> Maya Abels Ashley Almon Victoria & Dave Beasley Donald & Frances Brostrom David & Peggy Clyne David & Sarah Ehlers The Joseph Fisher Family Carolyn Foland Linda & Earl Hadfield Cliff & Gay Hall Linda & Joe Hillesum Wendy Hudson Kyle Jansson & Carol Harding Becky Jay <i>In Memory of Maduddin Jaffer</i>	Kristen Larson & Tom Wilson McMenamins Corvallis Pub Judy Maule Carolyn Mendez-Luck New Morning Bakery Jerry & Judith Paul Anne & Stephen Scheck Pat & Ken Simila Anne Smith Jay & Jane Tappen Trillium Forests, LLC Town & Country Hardware Darrell Ward Western Skies Cattle Ranch <i>In Memory of Dorothy James</i>
---	--

## April 1 - June 30 Volunteers

Kailee Badua Brian Bangs Judy Beebe Marc Bell Erin Burns Rob Burns Aulani Casco-DeLeon Britton Castor Heidi Christensen David Craig Faith DeVyldere Sarah DeVyldere David Ehlers Dan Farnworth Douglass Fitting	Joel Geier Derek Godwin George Grosch Nick Hazelton Linda Hillesum Joe Hillesum Ramón Martinez Kristen McAlpine Refugio Morales Terry Murphy Morgan Neil David Olson Blake Oyala Brooke Roberts Hector Rosales-Go-	mez Sharon Safina Chris Seal Jackson Stalley Karin Stutzman Justin Sunada Jay Tappen Mike Unger Juan Vargas-Perea Sydney Wilbur Sarah Willis Tom Wilson Scott Youngblood
---	--	--



## Partner Spotlight

*This quarter we are expressing our appreciation to the [Ash Creek Water Control District \(ACWCD\)](#) for their support of and participation in last month's Bilingual Bird Walk. ACWCD has partnered with the LWC in several restoration efforts along Ash Creek, as well as events and volunteer opportunities that help connect the community with their local waterway. We are grateful to ACWCD for helping us to achieve a healthier and more connected watershed!*

## Luckiamute Watershed Council Staff



**Executive Director:** Kristen Larson  
**Operations Coordinator:** Maya Cook  
**Outreach Coordinator:** Suzanne Teller  
**Restoration Project Managers:** Aubrey Cloud and Ross Hiatt  
**Monitoring Coordinator:** Jonah Nicholas

## THANK YOU, BUSINESS CIRCLE DONORS!



**Spiritopia**  
**Starker Forests, Inc.**  
**Croft Vineyards**  
**The Independence Hotel**  
**KWIP La Campeona 880 AM**  
**Manulife Investment Management**  
**Western Skies Cattle Ranch**