



Luckiamute Watershed Council

www.luckiamutelwc.org

LWC Mission:

Working together to help people help their watersheds.

What we are:

The Luckiamute Watershed Council is a volunteer, non-governmental, advisory group composed of stakeholders living or working in the Luckiamute and Ash Creek watersheds.

Council meetings:

Held the second Thursday of every month at 7 p.m., Visit our website at www.luckiamutelwc.org for location and details. Meetings are open to the public. Please join us!



Events:

Join us and the Greenbelt Land Trust for the first-ever Luckiamute Headwaters to Confluence Tour on **May 10 from 8 a.m.—3 p.m.** For tour details and registration information, turn to page 3.

The Ebb and Flow of a River

As winter snows melt and spring showers drench the landscape, our rivers and creeks suddenly awakened with renewed strength and vigor. The quiet babbling of a brook suddenly sounds more like exuberant splashing, the rushing of a river more like a roar. We admire, marvel at, and sometimes fear this annual change – especially when water levels rise to the point that rivers spill out over their banks and into the surrounding landscape. Yet the cyclic waxing and waning of our waterways is a crucial part of nature’s own process of preparing for the rampant growth of spring and summer.

The area of land surrounding a river can be thought of as a giant basin – with the waterway at the bottom and the surrounding hills and ridges defining its rim. Rainfall and snowmelt follow the course of gravity, flowing over the land on its way into smaller creeks and streamlets, and finally into the river located at the



Luckiamute River near floodstage levels, March 7, 2014—
Image by Philip Bayles, psb@efn.org, www.RaptorViews.com

lowest elevation. This basin-shaped area of land surrounding a waterway is its watershed. Prolonged rainfall or spring thaw can cause a large influx of water into a waterway, which may cause water levels to rise above a river’s banks and spread out over the surrounding low-lying land, or floodplain. With floodwaters come nutrients to replenish the soil and nurture new growth, and the soil, in turn, relinquishes its own nutrient wealth into the rivers and streams.

This annual process has been especially noticeable the past few years for the Luckiamute River, which has undergone dramatic fluctuations in discharge rates. The United States Geologic Service (USGS) measures the discharge of a waterway in cubic feet per second (cfs), which is a measure of the volume of water flowing past a given point in one second. On May



Luckiamute River near floodstage levels, March 7, 2014—
Image by Philip Bayles, psb@efn.org, www.RaptorViews.com

Thanks to Landowners, Oregon Native Gets a New Lease on Life

A little fish made big waves this year when it became the first fish species in the United States to be removed from the federal threatened and endangered species list having met its recovery goals under the Endangered Species Act.

On February 4, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Department announced that the Oregon Chub, a tiny minnow that lives only in the backwaters of the Willamette Valley, was recovered — 21 years after it went on the endangered species list. First documented in the Luckiamute basin in 1949, Oregon Chub had virtually disappeared from the basin—and the entire Willamette Valley—as the swamps and beaver ponds it relies on were drained for farms, flood control, and development. Between 1991 and 2012, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) conducted the Native Fish Investigations (NFI) surveys at over 40 locations in the Luckiamute basin but did not find a single population.

One breakthrough came when, in 2012, a single tiny population of 90 Oregon Chub was found in a beaver pond on private land along the Little Luckiamute River. Based on their findings, NFI staff developed a recovery plan for the basin that focused on establishing partnerships with landowners to restore key habitats on their land, and then breeding and transplanting fish to those places. The results exceeded expectations, with 79 known popu-



Oregon chub, the first fish in the United States to be delisted under the Endangered Species Act. — Photo by Rick Swart/ODFW —

lations of the little minnow now thriving in the Willamette Valley — that's up from only 8 known populations when the species was listed in 1993.

Federal and state officials attribute the success of the recovery plan to the willingness of landowners to work with agencies in restoring and conserving prime chub habitat on their land. There is little doubt that the future of this little fish and other vulnerable species in the basin depends largely on cultivating these kinds of public-private partnerships.

About the LWC

The Luckiamute Watershed Council is comprised of volunteer watershed residents who care about the health of the watershed. Current members represent interests ranging from farming and forestry to education and water resources.

The Council is recruiting new board members and seeks individuals who work, live, or play in the watershed—you are a watershed stakeholder.

We also welcome donations to support the work of the council, an Oregon non-profit organization. Please send checks to: [226 S. Main St. Suite L, Independence, OR 97351](#)

Thank you!

Upcoming Council Meetings

Join us for Council Monthly Meetings, held the second Thursday of each month at 7 p.m. Our meetings are always open to the public and discussion topics include local watershed issues and actions. For details, please visit our web site at www.luckiamutelwc.org.

April 10, 2014, Pedee Women's Club (13025 Kings Valley Highway): The council will discuss upcoming project proposals and work on our new web site.

May 8, 2014, Luckiamute State Natural Area (Buena Vista Road): **Sarah Dyrda**, **Regional Projects Coordinator for the Calapooia, N. Santiam and S. Santiam Watershed Councils** will speak about the Rapid Riparian Revegetation (R3) strategy and integrating CREP.

June 12, 2014, Location TBD—check on our website!

Ebb and Flow of a River, continued from page 1

12, 2013, discharge bottomed out at 193 cfs, which was the lowest recorded discharge for that date since the USGS started keeping continuous records in 1941. The previous year saw drenching rains and widespread flooding, with discharge peaking at 10,400 cfs on January 17, 2012. This year left us guessing for a while, but USGS discharge data is showing that early spring fluctuations from low to high flows evened out right around median levels. This is good news for farmers and ranchers who had been worried that the unusually dry fall and winter would cause problems during the spring planting season.

Though floodwaters recharge aquifers, nurture new growth, and feed aquatic life, they can also wreak havoc in our communities when they down trees, cause landslides, knock out power and inundate homes. In the Luckiamute basin, many stream channels have been incised and disconnected from their floodplain. Historical stream network simplification has perpetuated downcutting and increased stream

bank erosion due to higher water velocities. This process, along with loss of riparian vegetation, has greatly reduced the floodwater storage capacity of the surrounding land. As we've witnessed in high water years, the results can be devastating. The ongoing efforts by the LWC to replant eroded streambanks with native vegetation, place large wood into streams and expand riparian habitat are some of the many ways we are hoping to restore the natural protective functions of the floodplain in the Luckiamute watershed. We are grateful to all the participating landowners who are a big reason for our continued success!

Household Hazardous Waste Collection for Polk County Residents
Free disposal of unwanted pesticides, fertilizers, solvents, paint and other household hazardous waste!
When: May 10, 9am to 2pm
Where: Polk County Shops 820 NW Ash St., Dallas




Luckiamute Watershed
HEADWATERS TO CONFLUENCE TOUR
MAY 10TH 8AM-3PM

What is a watershed? Why is it important? Come find out! Greenbelt Land Trust and the Luckiamute Watershed Council are co-hosting an outing that takes us from the headwaters of the Luckiamute River Watershed on top of Bald Mountain, to the confluence of the Luckiamute with the Willamette River. On our way downstream we will visit a river restoration project and a property utilized as a learning laboratory for local schools. Come and learn all about this dynamic watershed from project staff, landowners, and conservation partners! This event is free and open to the public.



SPACES LIMITED - RSVP TO: JESSICA@GREENBELTLANDTRUST.ORG

Coordinator's Corner: 2014 Planting Season Comes to a Close

Spring brings sunshine, longer days, and the incredible awakening of plant life. The Luckiamute Watershed Council (LWC) works hard year-round to secure funding for revegetation and other projects with participating landowners, plan the activities for restoration sites, take care of past planting and project sites, and prepare for planting season. At the end of February, we launch into a flurry of on-the-ground activity which this year culminated in the installation of over 211,000 bare root native trees and shrubs and over 16,000 cuttings from locally sourced plants (mostly willows). These plants were placed either in new planting areas or mixed in to sites that were planted last year to make sure we reach the desired number of plants in a given area. The work areas varied from hundreds of acres at Luckiamute State Natural Area (LSNA) and small to large sites in partnership with private landowners, mostly in the Model Watershed program area in the Kings Valley / Hoskins area in the upper part of the watershed. Great kudos and thanks to the landowners that work with us, our project managers that manage the logistics and oversee the contracted crews, the contractors who install thousands of plants per day, and our funders, primarily the Oregon Wa-



Kristen Larson, Council Coordinator, visiting the Bush Ranch planting site along the Luckiamute River. Note the small bare root plants that will one day fill the area with native trees and shrubs. (Photo: Jean-Paul Zagarola)

tershed Enhancement Board (OWEB) and Meyer Memorial Trust (MMT). This is a team effort with many moving parts, including Mother Nature, who threw a few challenges at us this year with flooding rivers the day we planned to start our planting work. As I go back to visit planting sites, I am continually impressed at the resiliency and vigor of the small, bare root plants that quickly flourish and transform a project area.



Japanese knotweed (pictured) is a noxious species that grows in dense thickets, takes over stream banks and outcompetes native vegetation. Contact the LWC to for more information and to participate in our knotweed control program.

Help us knock out knotweed!



Luckiamute Watershed Council

226 South Main St., Suite L
Independence, Oregon 97351

Phone: 503-837-0237

Email: info@luckiamutelwc.org

Coordinator: Kristen Larson

Outreach: Suzanne Teller

Project Managers: Peter Guillozet & Jean-Paul Zagarola

Email: jean-paul@third-stream.com



*Helping people help
their watershed*

www.luckiamutelwc.org