

Spring 2016



Luckiamute Watershed Council

www.LuckiamuteLWC.org

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 volunteer, nongovernmental, 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 on April 19 at Burgerville in Monmouth from 5 to 8pm, for a Burgerville Partnership night! Visit the [LWC website](#) for details.



Join the **Oregon Season Trackers** program and help scientists better understand our weather patterns and how plants and animals are adapting to our changing climate. Find out more at www.LuckiamuteLWC.org

Planting Natives at LSNA is for the Birds



The streaked horned lark has recently been listed as 'threatened' under the Endangered Species Act. Photo by Joel Geier



The vesper sparrow is one of Oregon's most critically imperiled birds. Photo by Joel Geier

One of the best places to go birding in the Willamette Valley is at Luckiamute State Natural Area (LSNA), a beautiful 925-acre state-owned park that many locals may not even be aware of. What makes this natural area such a birder's paradise is the diverse – and often rare – habitats found within its borders.

LSNA is best known for its large remnant of deciduous "gallery forest" -- a forest of majestic cottonwoods and maples arching high over an exceptionally diverse understory. Less well known is that about a third of the Natural Area – and much more of the surrounding neighborhood – was historically grassland (prairie and oak savanna), which has become the Willamette Valley's most threatened habitat type. These landscapes attract a wide variety of bird species – some of which are considered threatened or of special concern.

Since 2011, the LWC has been working together with Oregon Parks and Recreation Department, Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board, Meyer Memorial Trust and Bonneville Power Administration to restore the unique

landscapes of LSNA. Within the northern section of the natural area, vast tracts of non-native invasive plants – including blackberry, reed canary grass and tansy – have been eradicated and replaced with over 500,000 native trees and shrubs. Where once stands of blackberry dominated, a diverse mix of elderberry, Oregon grape, snowberry, salmonberry and Indian plum now flourishes. A healthy wetland grown over with Sitka rose, red osier dogwood, spirea, and willow stands in place of what had been a vast 'ocean' of reed canary grass. Already there has been an amazing transformation in how these areas appear and sound. With the growth and spread of native vegetation, so do the populations of our native birds and other wildlife.

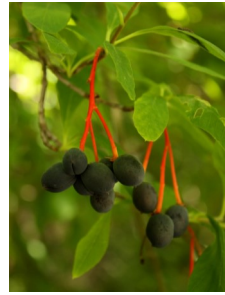
You often hear about the importance of using native trees and shrubs for landscaping and gardening, but what makes them so much better than other plants?

Planting natives at LSNA (continued from page 1)

Well, for starters, native plants provide a wealth of winter forage for the birds that stick it out during the winter. With so much surface area, small songbirds like black-capped chickadees, Bohemian waxwings and tiny bushtits lose heat quickly and must eat constantly to store up enough fuel to last through the freezing nights. To survive freezing nights, many birds rely on berries that are rich in fat and antioxidants. Plants that are native to your region are the best at meeting the needs of these birds for several reasons. First, they are familiar to our resident songbirds and second, they are adapted to the local climate and resistant to heavy deer damage.

To help you get started with deciding which native trees and shrubs would be the best option for your own backyard, a few of our favorites are listed on the right. Next time you visit the LSNA, keep a lookout for these bird-friendly native plants!

Make sure to RSVP for our April 16 LSNA Bird Walk, led by ornithologist Joel Geier, at www.LuckiamuteLWC.org. Also, be on the lookout for an invitation to the LSNA Spring Grand Tour to celebrate the progress we've made towards our restoration goals at the Natural Area! Not only will you get a 'behind the scenes' look at a restoration project in progress, you'll also be able to view our three brand new interpretive panels along the North Tract loop trail!



Indian Plum (*Oemleria cerasiformis*)

Shrub. Ht. 8' – 15'. Full sun/full shade.

Indian plum is a great choice for winter forage since it grows very fast, and is one of the first plants in the area to flower (February) and develop fruit (June), giving birds an early start on storing up reserves for the coming winter. These shrubs generally grow more tall than wide, and can tolerate both sun and shade. Be advised, however, that you do need both male and female plants for fruit to develop.



Snowberry (*Symphoricarpos albus*)

Shrub. Ht. 3' – 5'. Full sun/part shade.

You have probably seen the namesake white berry clusters already – they are a common site in woodlands, floodplains and backyards throughout the northern and western U.S. These shrubs do not just add beauty to your landscape, they also provide important winter forage and shelter for many birds and other wildlife. In addition, snowberry is a larval host and nectar source for the Vashti Sphinx moth.



Red Elderberry (*Sambucus racemosa*)

Shrub. Ht. 10' – 20'. Full sun/part shade.

Red elderberry grows wild in Oregon only west of the Cascades. What makes this large shrub popular with many native gardeners is that it is easy to grow, resistant to pests and disease, and very tolerant of wet soil. Its clusters of bright red berries are a magnet for all kinds of birds and other wildlife, while its showy spikes of tiny white flowers are a nectar source for many kinds of insects. If you prefer blue berries to red, there is also the very attractive (and delicious!) native Blue Elderberry (*Sambucus cerulea*) to consider.

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. To donate, go to www.LuckiamuteLWC.org/donate or you can send a check to: **226 S. Main St. Suite L, Independence, OR 97351**

Thank you to our supporters!*



Mark your calendar for a night out at **McMenamins in Corvallis on Monday, April 25, from 5pm 'til close!** By ordering up burgers, salads, drinks, desserts and more, you'll be supporting both the Marys River and the Luckiamute Watershed Councils!

**McMenamins Corvallis Pub
420 NW Third St., Corvallis**

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 14, 2016: Falls City High School Resource Room,
Falls City

May 12, 2016: Luckiamute State Natural Area, Albany

June 9, 2016: Volunteer Hall, Monmouth

**Your contribution may be tax-deductible. The Marys River Watershed Council will provide a letter of documentation early next year, following your donation.*

***As our fiscal sponsor, the Marys River Watershed Council maintains the right to redirect funds if the LWC does not comply with our agreement or applicable laws.*

Central High School Environmental Club plants more than just trees



CHS students help transplant native tree cuttings along Ash Creek

Central High School students are clearly excited about a new opportunity to gain hands-on experience in environmental science and serve their community at the same time. A total of 14 students attended the first meeting of the CHS Environmental Club on February 16, a number that surprised even Sylvia Hoagland, biology teacher and co-founder of the club.

The idea of a CHS Environmental Club had hatched as a result of a discussion of ways in which the Luckiamute Watershed Council could collaborate in more ways with our local High School. Sylvia, who had just recently started teaching biology at CHS, had a strong desire to introduce her students to hands-on ecology, environmental science and botany activities, and the LWC had a strong desire to work with CHS students to nurture a stewardship ethic and encourage volunteerism among the local youth. After several meetings and conference calls, the concept of an Environmental Club was created,

and a proposal submitted to the [Jubitz Family Foundation](#). A few months later, on November 30, we were informed that our proposal had been awarded a grant, and that we had secured additional funding for plants and supplies by the [Willamette Habitat Restoration Fund](#).

While there is some classroom time, the focus of the club leans heavily toward hands-on learning about botany, restoration ecology and environmental stewardship. Having 14 students show up for the first meeting is a strong signal that this after-school club was filling a niche that many students were hungry for. Though most of the students were unfamiliar with terms like "watershed," "restoration," and "riparian zone," they quickly absorbed the concepts and related them to the things many of them did know about and ardently believed in - the need to take good care of our natural resources.

For the first club meeting, the task at hand was to transplant cuttings -- or branches -- along the banks of Ash Creek to fill in the gaps that had been left when last year's hot, dry summer killed many of the trees and shrubs that had planted here as part of our [Ash Creek Restoration Project](#). Not all trees and shrubs can be propagated by cuttings, but certain species do readily sprout roots from branches that are lopped off and immediately planted deep into the soil. The five species in the waiting buckets - red osier dogwood, willow, douglas spirea, snowberry and Pacific ninebark - were carefully selected not only because they are relatively easy to propagate this way, but because they provide a lot of benefits to the fish, birds and wildlife communities that rely on healthy streamside habitat for their survival. The students made sure to step gingerly around the young plants already in the ground, as they dug deep holes for each cutting and marked each site with a green flag. For about an hour, they worked hard, laughed a lot, asked many questions, made new discoveries, and ended up transplanting close to 60 cuttings!

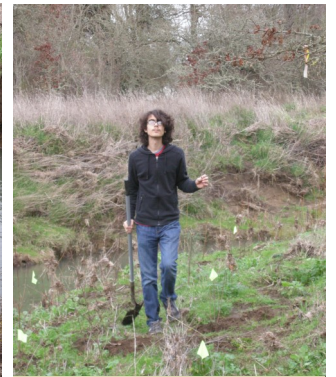
When all is said and done, maybe some of these trees weren't quite planted to the right depth, and maybe a harsh summer will wipe some of them out. Maybe some will be washed away by high water, and some might succumb to deer or voles. But one thing has already been planted within this group that is certain to thrive -- the desire to make their community a better place.



Teamwork is a big part of the Environmental Club experience!



Willow cuttings thrive in the water-logged soil near the river's edge



Bright green flags mark the sites where cuttings were planted.

Thank you to the Central Lions Club and Boy Scouts Troop #38!



A great big THANK YOU to the Central Lions Club of Monmouth and Independence for supporting the work of the Luckiamute Watershed Council with a generous donation of \$300! And that's not all—with the help of the Lions and Boy Scouts Troop #38, we planted 34 Douglas fir, western red cedar, vine maple and buckbrush seedlings on a landowner's property along Ash Creek. Plus, these dedicated volunteers spread mulch around more than 1,000 young trees and shrubs! WOW! We are grateful for the support of our volunteers — without you, we would not be able to accomplish our goals! www.LuckiamuteLWC.org/volunteer.html



Be a part of the Monmouth-Independence Grand Parade!



Help keep trash out of our streams by volunteering to be a part of the "rear detachment" during the annual Rotary Club Grand Parade. Your mission will include riding or walking beside our truck as part of the Independence Day parade, holding up signs, and helping to collect trash along the parade route.

Don't miss this unique opportunity to keep our waterways clean, and interact with the cheering public as part of a well-loved Independence Day tradition!

Visit www.LuckiamuteLWC.org/grand-parade-volunteer.html for details.



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

www.LuckiamuteLWC.org

Luckiamute Watershed Council

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