

Behind the Scenes

March 2024



Dear Friend,

March is certainly living up to its reputation of coming in like a lion! Even if you are opting to stay indoors where it is warm and dry, hopefully you are still able to take note of some of the exciting signs of spring that are now everywhere you look. For those of you watching birds, rufous hummingbirds and turkey vultures are now arriving from their wintering grounds, and watch for male goldfinches beginning to "dress up" for breeding season with more colorful plumage! You should also be seeing bright white osoberry flowers nestled among their newly emerging lime green leaves, as well as the vibrant blooms of the red flowering currant adding pops of pink to the edges of forests and along streambanks. For those of you looking forward to attending outdoor watershed events, I highly encourage you to check out one or more of the Winter Wildlife Field Day stations that will be showing up in various local spots throughout this month (see below).

Happy reading!

--Suzanne Teller (Outreach@LuckiamuteLWC.org or 503-837-0237)



Upcoming Love Your Watershed Events

Secrets of the River: The Weird and Wonderful Lives of Oregon's Native Freshwater Mussels

When: Tuesday, March 12 @ 6:30 - 8:00pm

This presentation will take place via Zoom webinar



Join Emilie Blevins and Jack Fetters from the Xerces Society for a presentation about the several kinds of native freshwater mussels found in the rivers and streams of Oregon. Learn about the bizarre life cycle of these animals, and why they are so important for clean water and healthy fish populations. Details and RSVP at <https://www.luckiamutelwc.org/secrets-of-the-river.html>

If you would like to attend an in-person freshwater mussels presentation by Jack Fetters, make sure to head to the Marys River Watershed Council's March 21 Tap Talk at Common Fields in Corvallis! You can find out more about this event at <https://mrwc.org/get-involved/events/>

Winter Wildlife Field Days



The theme this year is "Worlds Unseen," and activities will include dragonfly and jumping spider crafts, an interactive eDNA display, microscopes for close-up views of soil life, and so much more! Make sure to visit our website on March 1 to view the full schedule, plus all of the bilingual activities, links, partner spotlights and the Nature Explorer Guide!

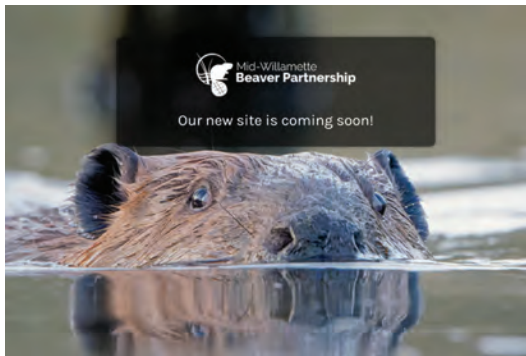
Local Field Station Dates and Locations

- **Monmouth: Wednesday, March 6, 1:30 - 4:30pm @ Monmouth Downtown Park**
- **Dallas: Saturday, March 9, 10:00am - 1:00pm @ Roger Jordan Community Park**
- **Independence: Saturday, March 23, 10:00am - 1:00pm @ Riverview Park***
- **Plus many more dates and locations in Corvallis, Albany and Salem!**

*LWC, Polk Soil & Water Conservation District and Greenbelt Land Trust will be hosting a table at this event! You can sign up to be a Field Station Volunteer at LuckiamuteLWC.org/WWFD

Watershed Notes

Mid-Willamette Beaver Partnership: Dam Good News for the Valley



The LWC is one of five local watershed councils that makes up the Mid-Willamette Beaver Partnership (MWBP), which also includes Bonneville Environmental Foundation and staff members from the Natural Resources Departments of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde and the Confederated Tribes of the Siletz Indians. For the past four years, the MWBP has been working to lay the groundwork for efforts to promote beavers where it makes sense from both an ecological perspective and a sociological one. In other words, we want to seek out those locations where beaver-based restoration will result in a win-win-win scenario for beavers, humans and the surrounding ecosystem as a whole.

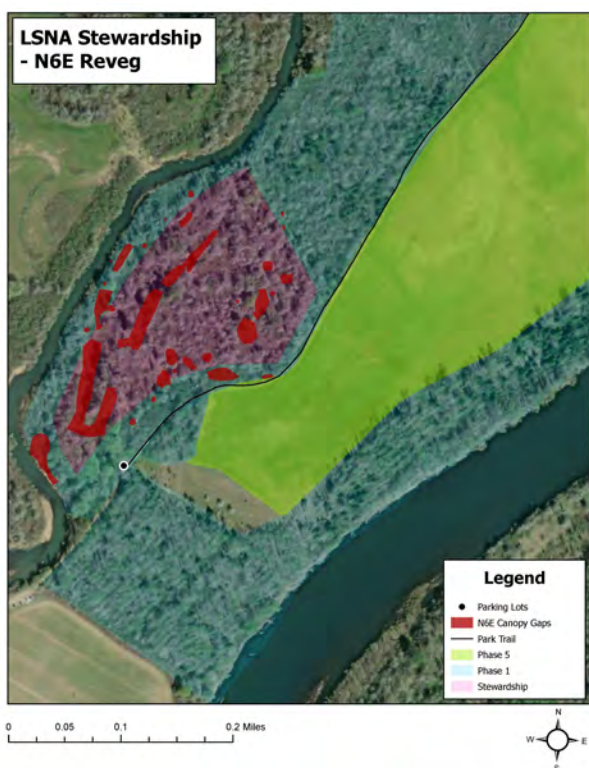
Since 2022, MWBP representatives, interns and volunteers have surveyed over 90 stream reaches, approximately 17 miles, and 85 beaver dams within the six watersheds that make up the MWBP service area (Luckiamute, Ash Creek, Marys River, Calapooia, North Santiam and South Santiam). These surveys have been helping to refine a modeling and assessment tool called BRAT (Beaver Restoration Assessment Tool) that will help us identify areas that would be best suited for beaver habitat restoration projects.

At the same time, we have been engaging with a wide array of landowners and land managers within these watersheds to get their input and feedback about their experiences with beavers, their primary concerns for the land they manage, as well as the barriers they have to coexisting with beavers on the landscape. As the MWBP shifts from an information gathering phase to an outreach phase, we will be using the information and feedback from these efforts to start planning beaver-based restoration pilot projects and create useful tools for landowners interested in learning more about successful beaver coexistence techniques.

One of these tools will be a new MWBP website that includes a “decision tree” designed to help guide landowners who are experiencing beaver-related issues towards solutions that resolve conflict and - at the same time - help keep beavers on the landscape. We are looking forward to launching this website in the next couple of months, so stay tuned for more exciting news on the beaver front!

To learn more about the Mid-Willamette Beaver Partnership, head to <http://www.mwbeaverpartnership.org>

Luckiamute’s Latest: Restoration and Monitoring Program Highlights



Project Manager Aubrey Cloud and crews from D. Franco Contracting, Inc. have now completed all planting activities within eight LWC project areas, resulting in the addition of approximately 53,000 new trees and shrubs in the watershed! Most of these were interplantings that took place within already established projects, but 9,000 of these trees and shrubs were added to a brand new 6.7 acre area within the Luckiamute State Natural Area (pictured left).

Monitoring Coordinator Jonah Nicholas and the LWC Monitoring sub-committee are currently working on drafting a monitoring plan that will be submitted as part of a 2-year Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board grant opportunity. Jonah will soon be preparing for another stream temperature monitoring season, which will include the deployment of temperature loggers at 29 stations around the watershed.

In addition to their individual program tasks, Jonah and Aubrey have been working together to explore the possibility of monitoring invasive tree species using remote sensing technology, which—in the future—could be used to help control the spread of invasive trees within the watershed.