## **Education and Outreach Committee**

## **FY 2021 Report to the Board**

**January 2021 – November 2021**

## **Addressing the Strategic Plan**

The Education and Outreach (EnO) Committee works to increase visibility of the council, and actively engage with all of the diverse communities living, working and recreating in the Luckiamute and Ash Creek watersheds. The EnO Committee addresses the Community Engagement goal of the LWC’s Strategic Plan, which involves building a sense of personal connection to the Luckiamute and Ash Creek watersheds, and enhancing the knowledge and skills needed to create positive change in watershed conditions through personal actions. Through our events and volunteer opportunities, we provide ways for individuals to learn about and connect to the watershed in new ways, meaningfully contribute to the health and biodiversity of the watershed, and learn how to protect and restore local lands, rivers, plant communities and wildlife populations. For 2021 through 2022, our Love Your Watershed theme is “Exploring the History of our Watershed.” With this theme, we are seeking not only to celebrate the 20th Anniversary of the LWC, but also to highlight our restoration partners, and honor the much longer history and current contributions of the Tribes’ relationship to the watershed. In 2021, the EnO Committee recognized these facets of our watershed history and addressed strategic plan goals by creating workshops, webinars, presentations, events and videos that actively and meaningfully engage all members of our watershed community.

**2021 Accomplishments to Date**

* Met our LYW goal for the third year in a row, securing $19,588 to help support our Love Your Watershed series for 2022.
* Held our first ever LWC Photo Contest, which resulted in 110 spectacular photos of our local landscapes, people, plants and wildlife being added to our image library, as well as two new subscribers to our email list.
* Return of our Spring and Fall bird walks resulted in a record number of individuals (60 total participants) getting better acquainted with local ecology.
* Planned, organized and implemented a “Planning and Planting Your Native Garden” virtual workshop along with 4 local SWCD’s, NRCS, North Santiam WC. 140 Participants.
* Continued to successfully adapt our popular Sips ‘n’ Science pub talks to a virtual webinar format, resulting in a total of 125 participants during four presentations.
* Engaged with our Friends of the LWC and volunteers specifically to express appreciation
  + Mailed Watershed Care Packages containing native seed packets and pollinator-friendly landscaping resources to 122 Friends of the LWC.
  + Arranged tours of Joan Hagar’s and Josée Rousseau’s bird-banding research at LSNA for our Friends of the LWC and bird walk leaders
* Partnered with the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde and Polk SWCD to plan, produce and release a two-part video series highlighting the core concepts and practical applications of Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK). As of December 1, the videos have been viewed 122 times on our YouTube channel.
* Held 5 volunteer events during 2021
  + Three separate volunteer work parties involving a total of 16 volunteers planted 95 conifer seedlings along Maxfield Creek and planted and caged 56 native trees along Ash Creek. A fourth volunteer planting event is scheduled with WOU students on 12/15.
  + Two Adopt-A-Road clean-up events involving a total of 6 volunteers picked up trash along Buena Vista Road and kept it out of waterways
* Welcomed Kendra Callahan to EnO team as a contractual Outreach Assistant

**What Lies Ahead**

* Theme for 2022 will continue as “Exploring the History of our Watershed”
* Continuation of our virtual Sips ‘n’ Science pub talks with a January 11 presentation of the history and impacts of splash-damming in the Luckiamute basin, by renowned historian and former log driver, Stephen Dow Beckham.
* A rescheduled 20th Anniversary of the LWC Celebration (target May 2022), including recognition of our LWC Photo Contest winners
* Spring and Fall bird walks will continue – J2E Tree Farm, Soap Creek valley
* Planned bilingual Butterfly/Moth nature walk with lepidopterist Dana Ross – tentatively scheduled for July 30 – 31, 2022
* Planned landowner tour(s) to highlight practical applications of TEK, in partnership with the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde and Polk SWCD.
* Anticipate return to in-person Sips ‘n’ Science for Fall 2022 (pending COVID-19 status and trends)
* Heavier involvement with and workload relating to Mid-Willamette Beaver Partnership Stakeholder Engagement process – including team meetings with Action Research, basin-wide stakeholder surveys, focus groups and beaver-related outreach
* Begin priority-setting for stormwater-related outreach efforts within Ash Creek watershed

**Challenges**

* Continued restrictions on indoor in-person events, and inability to plan long-term events due to uncertainty about COVID-19 trends
* As LWC’s EnO program grows, the demand for staff time continues to push the limits of available staff hours. The addition of Kendra to the EnO team has definitely helped, however there is still a need for more EnO capacity – specifically with website updating, constituent and donor database management, social media interactions, volunteer engagement, and outreach to new audiences (i.e. youth, Spanish-speaking communities)
* In order to reach our Spanish-speaking communities, EnO has a need for bilingual / bicultural staff and/or translation services for our events, materials and website