

Behind the Scenes "Lite"

October 2021



Dear Friend,

With the arrival of cooler, wetter weather, we are gearing up for planting season within several of our project areas around the watershed. We are also preparing an excellent line-up of virtual Sips 'n' Science talks delving deeper into the history of our watershed. Check out the Fall issue of Meanderings (attached) to see all of our upcoming events!

--Suzanne Teller, LWC Outreach Coordinator (contact me at Outreach@LuckiamuteLWC.org or 503-837-0237)

Love Your Watershed Spotlight: A Bird in the Hand

By Kendra Callahan, Outreach Assistant



Photo by Mike Unger

A Pacific wren awaits a few more measurements before being released.

Every once in a while, we are given the opportunity to thank our Friends of the LWC with an experience like no other. This year, we were able to arrange for our Friends and volunteer bird walk leaders to join a weekend bird-banding survey happening at Luckiamute State Natural Area (LSNA) between Albany and Independence. On September 25, I met some of our Friends of the LWC in the early morning hours at LSNA's North Unit. After a quick greeting, we headed out along the trail with the light slipping through the trees, songbirds calling in the bushes, and tule fog hanging over the fields. Our destination was the edge of a field surrounded by native trees and shrubs that have been planted by LWC and its partners starting in 2010. Once we arrived, we were warmly greeted by our hosts for the morning — Joan Hagar, Research Wildlife Biologist for the U.S. Geological Survey and Josée Rousseau, Postdoctoral Fellow for Cornell Lab of Ornithology, and their expert bird banding crew.

This team has been banding birds on this site since 2014 as it supplies a unique location to examine the changes in the health and populations of birds and the effects of the habitat restoration that has been conducted in this area. Those of us who were lucky enough to attend this event got an up-close and in-depth look at how a typical day of bird banding is conducted. Right after we arrived, the team started with the banding and collecting of health information of several songbirds who had flown into mist nets posted within the native trees and shrubs surrounding the field. The nets are posted at the same location and the banding is conducted at the same time each year so that the data gathered can be compared over time. The nets were checked each half hour so there were always birds to look at and mist nets to check.



Photo by Kendra Callahan

Willette Burbach releases a golden-crowned kinglet.

The data collected are remarkable, but I think for many of us who were guests there, the highlight was simply getting to see songbirds up close, without the use of binoculars, and appreciate just how special each one is. We got to enjoy the feistiness of a chickadee, see the beautiful big eyes of the Swainson's thrush who migrates at night, marvel at the golden feathers atop the head of a Golden Crowned Kinglet, who we discovered weighed just 0.8 grams more than a nickel! We saw all of these species and many more and each one flew off with a band on its leg after the researchers were able to gather information (weight, feather condition, amount of fat, sex, age.) Gathering this data, along with banding can help track life-span, survival rate, reproductive success, population growth and more.

Thanks once again to our gracious hosts and to all our participants as well! We hope to do this again in future years and there will be even more data to track as another phase of restoration starts at the Luckiamute State Natural Area this January 2022!

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Fall
2021

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:

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

Karin Stutzman, *Secretary Monmouth*

Britton Castor
Pedee

Dave Ehlers
Kings Valley/Hoskins

Jackson Stalley
Dallas

Scott Youngblood
American Bottom/Buena Vista

COUNCIL MEETINGS:

Typically held the second Thursday of every month from 6 — 8 pm.

Details and links will be posted at:
www.LuckiamuteLWC.org

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.

The Legacy of Splash-Damming in the Luckiamute



From left to right: Splash dam on the Luckiamute River; Luckiamute River splash dam pond inundation (both historic photos courtesy of the Polk County Historical Society, Monmouth, OR); Many of our streams — including Ritner Creek pictured here — have been scoured down to bedrock as a result of historical splash damming practices. A primary goal of the Upper Ritner Creek restoration project is to restore gravel and sediment accumulation using in-stream large wood placement and conifer plantings. See the project page at <https://www.luckiamutelwc.org/upper-ritner-project.html> for more details.

By Suzanne Teller, LWC Outreach Coordinator

"For he goes birling down and down the white water. That's where the log driver learns to step lightly..."

The lines written above are part of the chorus of "Log Driver's Waltz," a Canadian folk song written by Wade Hemsworth in 1956. This song celebrated the skill and finesse of log drivers, who had the dangerous job of riding atop felled timber as it floated down the river to its final destination at a downstream mill. Using long hooked poles called 'peaveys,' the role of the log driver was to run or walk along the "birling" (rolling) logs, dislodge any that were stuck, and ensure that the timber would continue floating freely along the river.

The ideal waterway for a log drive was a wide, straight river with steep banks, no obstructions and a predictable flow of water. However, because few rivers in our region met those criteria, timber operations had to develop techniques to make our meandering, unpredictable rivers more amenable to quickly transporting large volume of logs to downstream mills.

One of these techniques included the construction of temporary wooden dams — "splash dams" — to raise the water level in streams, creating a holding basin for timber until the spillway was opened up to release the logs and allow them to float downstream. Dynamite was then used to clear boulders, log jams and other obstacles downstream, and sometimes to open up the splash dam itself to release the timber. Both the dynamite and the high velocity of the released water and logs resulted in streams being simplified and straightened, and scoured down to bare bedrock.

This practice was used in the Luckiamute basin from the late 1880's until 1938, and played a significant role in the reduction of suitable salmonid spawning habitat along the Luckiamute River and its tributaries. And while splash dams and log drives were the most efficient and effective methods of moving logs from harvest to market until the railroads moved in, they have left a lasting legacy in many waterways in western Oregon, including in our watershed.

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Splash-Damming, continued

Today, the impacts can still be seen within splash dammed streams, which have more exposed bedrock, fewer deep pools, and less large woody debris than streams that were not splash dammed (Miller, 2010). In some stream reaches, stepped bedrock ledges were created, which then became barriers to juvenile salmon and trout migration.

So how are we addressing these challenges within our watershed?

Mapping software tools such as NetMap help us identify areas in our watershed that have the potential to be excellent habitat for our native salmonids, and also allow us to target our efforts to sites where we can have the greatest impact with our restoration activities. Many of our restoration projects taking place within streams impacted by splash-damming involve placing large wood back into the stream channel to help slow down water velocity. This single restoration action has numerous positive impacts on stream health — including creating habitat for juvenile fish and other aquatic life, allowing gravel and sediment to settle on the streambed, reducing streambank erosion, reconnecting the stream channel to its floodplain, and providing a source of nutrients for a diverse array of aquatic life. Planting the large wood of the future is also one of our strategies. By revegetating stream banks with additional native conifers, we are ensuring that there will be naturally occurring large wood jams in the future.

Thanks to our project partners, landowners, contractors, funders and you — our supporters — we look forward to continuing our progress in restoring healthy stream habitat throughout our watershed in the coming years!

Reference: Miller, Rebecca, "Is the Past Present? Historical Splash-dam Mapping and Stream Disturbance Detection in the Oregon Coastal Province." For the degree of Master of Science in Fisheries Science, presented on September 23, 2010.

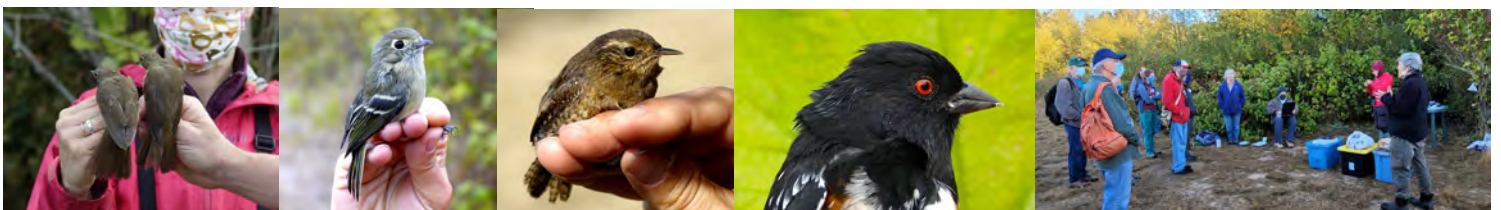
LSNA Research Tour is "For the Birds"

As a way to say "thank you" to our Friends of the LWC, two tours of a bird-banding research survey happening at Luckiamute State Natural Area (LSNA) were arranged for the weekend of September 25 - 26. Each day, a small group of attendees were able to get a behind-the-scenes look at the bird research going on at LSNA from Joan Hagar, Research Wildlife Biologist for the U.S. Geological Survey and Josée Rousseau, Postdoctoral Fellow for Cornell Lab of Ornithology, and their bird banding research crew. Tour participants got a unique opportunity to see the birds up close, learn interesting details about each species captured, and even gently hold a bird in their palm before releasing them. Kassi Roosth, who coordinates the Audubon International Program for Illahe Country Club and has been a volunteer bird walk leader for the LWC, noted that the most exciting part for her was seeing two genetically distinct subspecies of Swainson's thrush (olive-backed and russet-backed) side-by-side.

Joan, Josée and their team have been conducting bird surveys at LSNA since 2014, evaluating the health of the floodplain forest habitat by looking at the changes in bird health, activity, population size and diversity over time. Because their nesting, feeding and migration patterns draw specific bird species to specific plant communities, birds can be great indicators of habitat quality for other native wildlife - including salmon, trout and lamprey populations.

One recent highlight for the bird banding research team was the August 26 recapture of a Hutton's vireo that had been first banded on May 2 of this year. This was an especially significant recapture because this Hutton's vireo (as well as another breeding female) was caught at nearly the same location as it was originally captured. This species is particularly elusive and hard to catch, so having both the first capture and recapture within a small distance of each other, 5 months later, suggests that it relied on LSNA's riparian (stream-side) forest habitat to survive and is likely a year-round resident. The capture of a female with a brood patch also points to a breeding population at LSNA as well.

This is exciting news not only for bird-lovers, but also for the watershed as a whole. Thanks to the hard work and support of restoration efforts at LSNA by our contractors, partners, funders, and the watershed community, more floodplain forest and riparian habitat is available to the species that depend upon this type of landscape for survival. *Stay tuned for news about the LSNA Floodplain Forest Expansion in early 2022, when contracted crews will start planting 60 additional acres with native trees and shrubs!*



(From left to right): A member of the bird-banding survey team holds an olive backed (left) and russet-backed (right) subspecies of the Swainson's Thrush; The recapture of an elusive Hutton's vireo indicates that this species relies on LSNA's riparian habitat throughout the entire year; One of the smallest wrens in the U.S., Pacific wrens are frequently heard but can be difficult to spot in the brushy habitats it frequents. The striking red eyes of the spotted towhee are seldom seen from afar; Joan Hagar speaks to a group of Friends of the LWC about the research her team is doing at LSNA. **All close-up bird photography courtesy of Mark Lundgren. Tour group photo by Kendra Callahan.**

A Fond Farewell.. and a Warm Welcome!



It is with mixed emotions that we bid farewell to Wendy Hudson, who has moved across the country to Massachusetts, after 3.5 years of service on the LWC Board. It is impossible to overstate the many significant contributions

Wendy has made to our watershed council - and to the watershed itself.

Wendy took on the role of LWC Board President in February 2020, right before the onset of COVID-19. Despite the challenges of leading a community-based organization and navigating fundraising during a pandemic, her commitment, expertise, insight and energy helped propel the LWC forward towards greater efficiency and efficacy. Thanks to Wendy, we have strengthened our Love Your Watershed fundraising campaign, launched a new [Planned Giving program](#), and streamlined several processes for better staff and board communication and coordination.

While we will all miss Wendy's presence, we are thrilled for her move to another beautiful part of our country and an exciting new chapter in her life.



We are excited to announce the newest member of our Education and Outreach team! As of August, Kendra Callahan is on contract as an Outreach Assistant, and will be helping plan and organize our outreach events and volunteer activities.

Kendra has a BS in Environmental Science from Oregon State University and has worked for multiple years for Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife. She has been an active volunteer, starting a Junior Naturalist Program at her children's school, leading groups of students at outdoor education events, and earning her Master Naturalist certification. In addition to her work for LWC, during the school year she is an Educational Assistant at Mt. View Elementary in Corvallis.

Kendra is a long time resident of the Soap Creek Valley just north of Corvallis where she lives with her husband and their two boys. She delights in the company of the wildlife that shares their property, loves taking daily walks in the forest and any activity that will get her outside with her family. We hope you get to meet Kendra soon at one of our upcoming events!



Details and RSVP
info coming soon at
LuckiamuteLWC.org

Love Your Watershed

Upcoming Virtual Sips 'n' Science Events

Sips 'n' Science with Jennifer Beathe of Starker Forests, Inc.

Tuesday, November 2 @ 6:30 - 8:00pm

Via Zoom (RSVP required)

Sips 'n' Science: Black Settlement History of Oregon and the Mid-Willamette Valley

Wednesday, December 1 @ 6:30 - 8:00pm

Via Zoom (RSVP required)

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!

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 in January 2022, following your donation.

Upcoming Council Meetings

Join us for our LWC Monthly Meetings, typically held the second Thursday of each month. Our meetings are always open to the public and discussion topics include local watershed issues and actions. Details and Zoom links will be posted at www.LuckiamuteLWC.org.

October 14 @ 6:00 - 8:00pm (via Zoom)

November 11* @ 6:00 - 8:00pm (via Zoom)

December 9 @ 6:00 - 8:00pm (via Zoom)

*Please note that our November board meeting day falls on Veteran's Day and may be rescheduled. Check our website for details after our October 14 meeting!

To donate, go to 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 hard-earned dollars and their time and energy to our conservation goals from July to September 2021. Your support of the Luckiamute Watershed Council 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.htm!>

Anonymous Donor

Judy Beebe

Michael Cairns & Gail Oberst

Maya Cook

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George Grosch & Ann Bowen

Hollis Fishelson-Holstine & Charles Holstine

Stephen & Ava Howard

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participants!** Your
purchases earned us
\$47.11 for the second
quarter of 2021!

You can participate in this program by signing into <https://smile.amazon.com> with your Amazon account info, and choosing the **Luckiamute Watershed Council** as your designated charity!

July - September 2021 Donors

Ron & Ingrid Cooper

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Sean & Shari Hathaway

Julie & Nick Hawley

Wendy Hudson

Chris & Kathy Jensen

A BIG thank you also goes to our anonymous donor for this quarter!

Tess Kreofsky

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Heidi Christensen

Maya Cook

David Ehlers

July - September 2021 Volunteers

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720 NE Granger Ave, Bldg B,
Corvallis, OR 97330

Business Circle Spotlight

Thank you to Chris and Lori Beatty, and the entire Spiritopia family, for your continued support of the Luckiamute Watershed Council! Your contributions to LWC restoration efforts, outreach events and the watershed community as a whole are helping us achieve a healthy watershed for all!



THANK YOU TO ALL OUR BUSINESS CIRCLE SUPPORTERS!

**Croft Vineyards
Hancock Forest Management
KWIP La Campeona 880 AM**

**Les Schwab
Spiritopia
Starker Forests, Inc.**



Luckiamute Watershed Council

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Executive Director: Kristen Larson
Outreach Coordinator: Suzanne Teller
Project Manager: Jean-Paul Zagarola
Assistant Project Manager: Aubrey Cloud

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