

Behind the Scenes

August 2021



Dear Friend,

Now that we are officially in the “dog days of summer,” I thought I’d look into the origins of this phrase, which seems to invoke the image of a panting dog lying in the shade, avoiding the direct sun during the hottest time of the year. However the origin of this phrase actually lies with the ancient Greeks and Romans, who would keep track of the seasons by looking up at the sky. Near the end of July at the start of the very hottest days of the year, Sirius — also known as the “dog star” — would appear in the sky just before the sun. Ancient Greeks and Romans believed this bright star contributed to the heat of the sun, thus referring to this extremely hot period as *diēs caniculārēs*, or “dog days.” Due to variations in the earth’s rotation over the years, Sirius now appears in this position from July 3 through August 11, which puts us currently at the “tail end” of the dog days of summer!

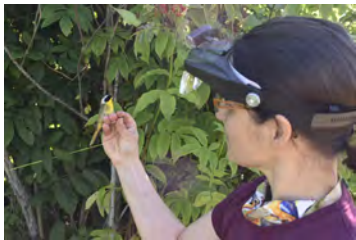
Speaking of dogs, a couple canine “best friends” make an appearance in our 20th Anniversary Photo Contest — including one of our category winning photographs, “Fishing the Little Luckiamute” by Emily Plec, a longtime Friend of the LWC! Congratulations, Emily, and congratulations to our Grand Prize winner, Kent Fields, as well as our other category winners Deb Merchant, Sam Oliveros, Dana Sharman and Dashiell McNett! View all the winning photographs and a link to our online photo gallery on our website at www.luckiamutelwc.org/lwc-photo-contest-winners. Also, make sure to RSVP for our 20th Anniversary Gala at Emerson Vineyards on October 9 - we are so excited to be celebrating 20 years of partnership with our watershed community!

Happy reading! - Suzanne Teller, LWC Outreach Coordinator



Love Your Watershed News & Updates:

Luckiamute State Natural Area (LSNA) Bird Banding Research Experience



In a couple of weeks, our volunteer bird walk leaders and Friends of the LWC will receive an invitation to participate in a unique opportunity to experience the bird banding research being conducted by Joan Hagar and Josée Rousseau at Luckiamute State Natural Area’s North Unit. This behind-the-scenes tour will take place sometime at the end of September at the start of fall migration, which is an incredible time to witness the diversity of birdlife utilizing our riparian forest habitat! Keep in mind that because birds (and bird researchers) are early risers, this event will require that you arrive at LSNA very early in the morning. If you are interested in attending, make sure to sign up as soon as you receive your email invitation since this experience will be limited to the first ten Friends who sign up! *If you are receiving this issue in the mail, please contact me at Outreach@LuckiamuteLWC.org to make sure I have an email address on file for you.*

2021 Love Your Watershed Fundraising Campaign Surprise



When we ended our 2021 *Love Your Watershed* fundraising campaign on July 30, we sent out congratulations and a heartfelt thank you to all of our supporters who helped us raise \$15,047 and come so close to getting Pedee to our \$18,000 campaign goal finish line. Then, a couple weeks later, we received additional contribution checks from two generous supporters, who pushed Pedee well beyond that goal with a new grand total of \$19,047! WOW!! Once again, thank you to each one of you who helped us reach — and go beyond — our *Love Your Watershed* fundraising campaign goal this year. Your support continues to help us inspire and empower our communities to take action for watershed health!

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

Watershed Notes

Bringing Back the Historical Floodplain Forest at Luckiamute State Natural Area

by Kristen Larson, LWC Executive Director

If we could travel back to the Willamette Valley in 1840, we would see a landscape quite different from what we see today. At that time, and for many millenia prior, the Kalapuya stewarded the Willamette Valley using traditional land management practices. Much of the valley and surrounding hills were dominated by oak woodlands, savanna and prairies. Along the rivers and streams, vast corridors of looming cottonwoods, big leaf maples, and other hardwood trees stretched for miles across the valley floor, with large and small river channels darting in and out of the forested areas. Historically, the middle Willamette valley from Albany to Newberg had some of the most extensive floodplain forests compared to other stretches of the river. In some places, floodplain forest habitat extended up to seven miles across the river!

With the arrival of Euro-American settlers, a very different land management style became predominant, resulting in the loss of much of these iconic Willamette Valley landscapes. Today, the Luckiamute Watershed Council is working with our partners to help protect and restore some of these historical landscapes.

We use the term “restoration” frequently, but there are many ways to think about how to restore an ecosystem. In most places, it isn’t possible to restore the landscape back to its pre-European settlement condition. As modern society has developed, swaths of land have been converted to grow food and fiber; communities dot the landscape with homes, businesses, and roads; and river flows are regulated by a network of dams to protect infrastructure from flooding and provide water for irrigation, recreation, hydroelectricity, households and industry. To use some of the jargon of the field, we instead focus on *restoring ecological processes* within sites that can offer the most ecosystem benefits and where the best opportunities for restoration exist.

Every once in a while however, we have the rare opportunity to restore ecological processes *and* restore a site to historical conditions. Luckiamute State Natural Area (LSNA), an Oregon State Parks property located between Independence and Albany at the confluence of the Luckiamute and Willamette Rivers, offers such an opportunity. In 2019, the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD) initiated the transition of a 60-acre field at the center of the North Tract Trail loop from leased agriculture to restored floodplain forest. Continuing with our decade of partnership, the LWC has been working with OPRD to secure funding to make this vision a reality. Since 2019, the LWC has been awarded grants from Portland General Electric’s Habitat Support Program, the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board, the Bonneville Power Administration* , and Meyer Memorial Trust to restore this site to its historical condition.

Over the next five to seven years, the LWC will work with OPRD to continue controlling noxious weeds to prepare for planting. Starting in early 2022, crews from D. Franco Contracting Inc. will plant approximately 160,000 trees and shrubs in the 60-acre field (see the rectangular shape on the top aerial photo above), and continue to control weeds through 2026. In conjunction with the revegetation work, researchers from the United States Geologic Survey will add this site to their ongoing research of resident and migratory bird use of floodplain forest habitat and track how birds use this site as the trees and shrubs mature.

Check out the Love Your Watershed News & Updates section to read about a future opportunity to visit the researchers at the site!

SAVE THE DATE! LWC 20th Anniversary Celebration

Date: October 9, 2021

Time: 1:00 - 4:00pm

Place: Emerson Vineyards (11665 Airlie Rd, Monmouth, OR 97361)

This year, we are celebrating 20 years of watershed restoration and outreach in partnership with our watershed community! We hope you will join us for a celebratory event at Emerson Vineyards, with door prizes, wine, hors d'oeuvres, and special recognition of our 20th Anniversary Photo Contest winners!

RSVP at www.LuckiamuteLWC.org/20th-anniversary-celebration.html



Current conditions (2018 aerial image on top) and future condition (bottom) of an expanded and restored floodplain forest, creating the largest continuous tract of floodplain forest in the Willamette Valley.



Photo Contest Grand Prize Winner!

“Ferns,” by Kent Fields

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