

Behind the Scenes

September 2018



Dear Friend,

The rains are returning, the night-time temperatures are dropping a little further, and the leaves on many of our trees are showing hints of color. Everywhere around us, there are signs that it is time to fully embrace the arrival of autumn. But summer isn't retreating without leaving us some glorious days full of sunshine and warmth, so I encourage you to find the time to get outside and soak it in while you can! Right now, you can register for one or both of our October Bird Walks with Joel Geier, which will take you to some beautiful parks and wild places within and around our watershed. If the timing doesn't work for you or birdwatching just isn't your thing, you can also head out on your own time to explore some of the many breathtaking landscapes that we have the privilege to live so close to. Need some ideas? Take a look at our webpage for a growing list of nearby outdoor recreation spots, along with links to more information! www.LuckiamuteLWC.org/outdoor-recreation.html

Happy reading!

--Suzanne Teller, LWC Outreach Coordinator

Questions or comments? Contact me at (503) 837-0237 or Outreach@LuckiamuteLWC.org

LOVE YOUR WATERSHED

The return of summery weather this past week has us taking advantage of every free moment we can to explore our local rivers, forests and wild places! Last weekend, we had the opportunity to take a closer look at some of the restoration work going on around the Luckiamute River and its confluence (meeting point) with the Willamette. The Luckiamute Confluence Tour was the first event in our 2018 - 19 *Love Your Watershed* series, and gave participants the chance to learn about what the Luckiamute Watershed Council and some of its partners are doing to protect and conserve native landscapes and river health within our basin.



On Jont Creek, a tributary to the Luckiamute River, the Auer family is working with Polk Soil & Water Conservation District, US Fish and Wildlife Service and Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife to restore pond and wetland habitat and provide better access to the many resident species of native fish and wildlife. During our second stop at the Willamette Bluffs, we learned how Greenbelt Land Trust and the Rust family are protecting and enhancing 120 acres of native wetlands, woodlands and oak prairies - both for its ecological value and the cultural significance of this site to local tribes. Finally, we witnessed the amazing transformation of the Luckiamute State Natural Area after almost a decade of streamside restoration work, thanks to the Luckiamute Watershed Council, Oregon Parks & Recreation Department, and the on-the-ground expertise of our restoration crew, D. Franco Contracting.

For those of you who were able to attend, we hope you enjoyed this behind-the-scenes look at how restoration work gets done, and why strong partnerships are crucial to their success. For those of you who weren't able to join the tour, there will be plenty of other opportunities to enjoy some of the beautiful parks and natural areas found in our watershed. Keep reading for details about some of our upcoming events!

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

Watershed Notes

There is still time to join one of our Fall Bird Walks in October! Make sure to head to our special Friends of the LWC page at www.LuckiamuteLWC.org/FallBirdwalks-friends.html to take advantage of a 33% discount on the event fee - one way we are saying *thank you* for your support! As always, registration includes a delicious bag lunch from Ovenbird Bakery.

On November 15, plan on joining us at The Valkyrie Wine Tavern at 6:30pm for a Sips 'n' Science pub talk about the role of beaver in stream restoration, and how communities in Oregon are partnering with beaver to restore and enhance watershed health. Chris Jordon, a conservation biologist with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), will introduce you to his work with these furry landscape engineers and offer you the chance to ask questions - all while sipping local wines and enjoying some fantastic fare in downtown Independence! Find out more on our Events page at www.LuckiamuteLWC.org/events.html.

We will have another Sips 'n' Science pub talk on January 9, at Brew Coffee and Taphouse. Torey Wakeland, an Aquatic Biologist for the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde, will introduce you to the Pacific Lamprey - a truly incredible eel-like fish that has lived in our rivers for 450 million years. Stay tuned for more details about this event in the coming months!



Charting A Course for the Future

Since early this Spring, the Luckiamute Watershed Council Board members and staff have been devoting many hours to crafting a strategic plan for the LWC. We've also reached out to watershed residents and our stakeholder groups to listen to their input, and help us zero in on some important watershed priorities that we want to devote our attention to in the coming years.



A strategic plan helps us define the impact we hope to have in the watershed, which then helps us target the types of projects we will seek funding for. This process also helps us identify some topics that we are interested in learning more about. One topic that came up is beaver. We are interested in exploring their history in the watershed, the role they play in local ecology and how our watershed community feels about that role and their presence in general.



During our Open House last month, we received a few comments to the fill-in-the-blank statements posted on our whiteboard: *"When I think about beaver in the watershed, I think about..."* and *"My experience with beavers has been..."* We'd love to collect more impressions about beaver, whether they are positive, negative, mixed or neutral. Would you take a moment to participate in our online beaver survey at www.LuckiamuteLWC.org/beaver-survey.html? If you prefer, you can email your responses to the questions above to Outreach@LuckiamuteLWC.org.



Stay tuned for the opportunity to view the full text of our Strategic Plan, which we will be sharing with all of you as soon as the final version is approved by our Board of Directors. If you would like to get a sneak peak, make sure to attend our upcoming Board Meeting, which will be held on Tuesday, October 9 from 7:00 to 9:00pm in the Hamersly Library (Room HL301) at Western Oregon University. Get all the details, including the agenda and parking instructions at www.LuckiamuteLWC.org/monthly-meeting-details.html. Hope to see you there!