

Behind the Scenes

February 2024



Dear Friend,

Even before Punxsutawney Phil let us know of spring's early arrival, the birds have been tuning up their vocal cords and the frogs have been busy announcing their readiness to contribute to a new generation! These signs of a waking watershed will ramp up over the next few weeks, so remember to take a moment to head outside and take note of all the hopeful signs of a new season approaching. I guarantee it will put a "spring" in your step! Speaking of spring, we typically have our annual LWC Social & Celebration event on the first weekend of March, but we have decided to delay that event until we hire a new Executive Director to introduce you to. In the meantime, we hope to see you at some of our fantastic upcoming Love Your Watershed events, including two March events that feature some of our less well-known wildlife neighbors (see below). Thanks again for your support of the watershed — and the Watershed Council!

--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



Oregon is home to several kinds of native freshwater mussels, a type of burrowing bivalve found in our rivers and streams. These animals are incredibly important for clean water and healthy fish populations, as they filter pollutants from our waterways and support complex habitats and food webs. However, they are easily and commonly overlooked. These unique animals are characterized by a bizarre life cycle, during which they may spend up to a hundred years filter feeding in the bottom of a stream, but begin the first few weeks of their lives as specialized parasites of fish. This presentation will introduce you to these incredible mollusks and share more about where they can be found, their need for special conservation, and what you can do for these fascinating animals. Learn more and register on our website at <https://www.luckiamutelwc.org/secrets-of-the-river.html>

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

Restoration Project Manager Update



It is with a heavy heart that we bid farewell to Ross Hiatt, who joined the LWC as a Restoration Project Manager in December 2022. Unfortunately, anticipated funding did not come through as quickly as was hoped, and a budgetary assessment led to the difficult decision to close the position until funding is more secured.

We are grateful to Ross for assisting and developing several in-stream projects, and for the unique and valuable insights he contributed to our watershed council team. Alongside his core project manager responsibilities, Ross demonstrated his communication skills at two of the LWC's community events — an Earth Day ivy pull along Ash Creek and a restoration project tour along Maxfield Creek. His knack for turning dense ecological jargon into easily understood concepts and insightful metaphors was a talent we all admired and appreciated.

The LWC bids Ross a fond farewell, the best of luck in all of his future pursuits, and many happy trails within the watershed!

Native Plant Sales Happening Near You

Polk and Benton Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) just closed the pre-ordering period for their plant sales, but in-person shopping is still happening during their plant sale days. You can view more details and links at LuckiamuteLWC.org/2024-swcd-native-plant-sales.



Also, read on below for more SWCD native plant sales with open pre-ordering periods going on nearby! After stocking up on all your plants, bulbs and seeds, don't forget to check out our Native Plants Resources webpage at LuckiamuteLWC.org/native-plant-resources after picking up your order!

Marion Soil & Water Conservation District's Native Plant Sale



Last Day to Pre-Order is February 10

Pick-up Days: March 1 & 2 (your pick-up time is selected at check-out)

Pick-up Location: Bauman's Farm and Garden, Gervais

Marion SWCD's Native Plant Sale can help you transform your yard into a habitat that supports birds, pollinators, and wildlife; minimizes water use requirements; and contributes to the creation of habitat connectivity across the landscape! Learn more at <https://www.marionswcd.net/what-we-offer/nps/>

Yamhill Soil & Water Conservation District's Native Plant Sale



Pre-ordering available now!

Plant Sale Days: March 1 & 2

Location: Yamhill Valley Heritage Center, McMinnville

You can now pre-order from Yamhill SWCD's Native Plant Sale to guarantee that you get the plant species you want. But if you prefer to browse, there will be plenty of plants to choose from on sale day, including plants that were not available for pre-order, and a great selection of t-shirts, bird and bat boxes and books! Get all the details at <https://yamhillswcd.org/nps/>!

What's Happening Behind the Scenes?



During this time of year, when the river levels are high and many of our plant and wildlife neighbors are still dormant, the Council's restoration program is buzzing with preparations for winter planting! Around 55,000 native trees and shrubs will be going into the ground within our project areas next month. Our Project Manager (Aubrey Cloud) and Monitoring Coordinator (Jonah Nicholas) will be keeping busy indoors as well, developing projects, outlining strategies and submitting proposals for several new grant opportunities. For our ongoing knotweed control program, we will continue to focus on finding funding opportunities and expanding to new areas and, thanks to Jonah's development of an exciting new Arc Online app, we will be even more efficient at tracking our knotweed treatment progress!