

Behind the Scenes "Lite"

January 2024



Dear Friend,

Just like the some of the more precocious blooms and bulbs in our gardens, the LWC is emerging into the new year with lots of energy and a sense of new purpose! We're also feeling a mix of bittersweet emotions as we say goodbye to our longtime Executive Director and two amazing board members who've been with us on this journey. Huge thanks to them for all they've done! (Make sure to read Kristen Larson's letter and a tribute to George Grosch and Jay Tappen in the Winter issue of Meanderings, which follows this page!)

But hey, change can be good, right? We're excited for a fresh start and pumped to build an even stronger watershed council in 2024. And guess what? You're the secret ingredient - your support is the bedrock that keeps us going. Every dollar, every hour volunteered, every shared vision - it all adds up, like tiny raindrops feeding the streams and rivers that flow through our watershed.

This year, let's roll up our sleeves together. We'll continue to focus on planting lots of native trees and shrubs across our project areas, protecting and restoring the health of our streams and rivers, and building a more connected community where everyone has the opportunity to show how much they love their watershed. As a part of the Friends of the LWC network, you play an outsized role in keeping the momentum going. If you've already made an end of year donation or pledged to volunteer, thank you so much for renewing as a Friend for this year! And if you haven't yet done so and would like to now, please visit www.LuckiamuteLWC.org/friends.html#renew and scroll down to see which of the THREE ways to renew your membership works best for you.



Osoberry (*Oemleria cerasiformis*) flowers can appear as early as January.



Male and female steelhead trout
(Credit: NOAA Fisheries)

In this year's line-up of monthly Behind the Scenes bulletins, you can look forward to reading about the activities of our awesome volunteers, cool projects unfolding in the watershed, upcoming Love Your Watershed events, and maybe we'll even be able to share a few awesome beaver sightings and stories from around the watershed! We want to keep you in the loop, show you where your support makes a splash, and invite you to join us for engaging events and meaningful activities. Sure, there will be challenges ahead. But with your partnership, we'll tackle them head-on, celebrating victories big and small along the way. Let's make 2024 a year where our community overflows with support of - and love for - the beautiful rivers and landscapes of the watershed.

Thanks for being the wind in our sails, the sun on our backs, the fish in our stream (okay, maybe that's a stretch, but you get the picture). We can't wait to grow together in 2024!

Happy New Year to you and your loved ones!

--Suzanne Teller, LWC Outreach Coordinator

P.S. Please share the news about our search for a new Executive Director far and wide! Details and full application instructions are available on our website at www.LuckiamuteLWC.org/employment.

Also, we are looking for a couple more watershed supporters to join our amazing Board of Directors! You can learn more about being an LWC Board member at www.LuckiamuteLWC.org/become-a-member, or reach out to Maya Cook at Operations@LuckiamuteLWC.org. We'd love to answer any questions you might have about what to expect as a member of the LWC Board!

Winter
2024

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:

Karin Stutzman, *President*
Monmouth

Britton Castor, *Treasurer*
Pedee

Scott Youngblood, *Secretary*
American Bottom/Buena Vista

Dave Ehlers
Kings Valley/Hoskins

Nick Hazelton
Kings Valley/Hoskins

Jackson Stalley
Dallas

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.

COUNCIL MEETINGS:

Typically held the second Thursday of even-numbered months from 6 to 8 pm. *Details and links posted at:* www.LuckiamuteLWC.org

Reflecting on Eleven Years of Stewardship at the LWC



By Kristen Larson, LWC Executive Director

When the Oregon Plan for Salmon and Watersheds was adopted in the late 1990's, one of its core tenets was "community-based action". Local groups such as watershed councils were recognized as critical to getting the work done on a local level and achieving community-based actions on a voluntary and collaborative basis.

The Boards of watershed councils are designed not only to reflect the geographic range of the area a council serves, but to reflect the range of interests, land uses, and perspectives in the community. By design, a watershed council is intended to bring together diverse voices and perspectives to identify priority problems, work out an agreed upon solution, and make the solution happen – in a voluntary and

collaborative way. This is not simple or easy. But when it works, it is a beautiful thing that strengthens community and results in lasting changes.

The community-based, voluntary model of watershed councils is what drew me to this work. My personal statement to apply to Oregon State University for graduate school was focused on getting my master's degree and going on to work for a watershed council because I believe in this model.

Over the last 11+ years, I have been continually inspired and humbled by the remarkable communities of the Luckiamute and Ash Creek watersheds – people voluntarily opening up their properties to us for on-the-ground restoration work, the volunteers, donors, and experts

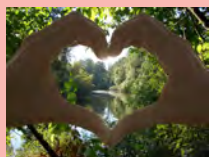
Reflecting, cont.

who share their time, treasure, and expertise, our partners who share in the struggles and successes of the work, our dedicated Board and committee members who give so much and work behind the scenes to support the overall organization, and our amazing staff who help make it all happen.

It has been an honor and a pleasure to serve as the Executive Director of the LWC and work in the beautiful space of the Luckiamute and Ash Creek watersheds and with this remarkable community of people. There are challenges ahead – managing a staff transition, working on Board recruitment, and the continual pursuit of grant funding – but the LWC's powerhouse team of talented staff and dedicated Board members are up to the task and will guide the LWC through.

I look forward to being a member of the watershed community, a Friend of the LWC, and watching the next chapter of the LWC unfold. Exploring ways to coexist with beavers on the landscape, continuing to monitor stream conditions to inform restoration decisions, implementing new and improved restoration projects, and engaging the community with fun and educational events – these are just some of the ways that the LWC will continue to share the wonders of the watershed and ways we can all contribute to making it a better place.

Thank you to everyone who supports, cheers on, and participates in the LWC and watershed council world in some way. You are the spirit of the Oregon Plan in action, and I am so grateful for you.



Love Your Watershed

Sips 'n' Science Pub Talks coming in 2024!



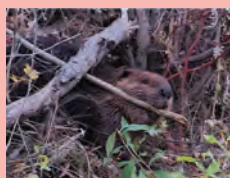
Mark your calendars, and stay tuned for more information and RSVP info coming soon!

Cultivating Harmony: Vegetation Management for Beaver Coexistence

Date: February 22, 2024

Time: 6:30 - 8:00pm

Place: In-Person Venue (TBD)



George Kral, owner of Scholl's Valley Native Nursery, will delve into how to manage vegetation to effectively coexist with beavers. He highlights strategies for attracting beavers by planting trees and shrubs that serve as their preferred food sources. Additionally, he explores planting techniques that can discourage beaver activity in areas where their presence is undesirable. George's observations and lessons learned over decades of practice will provide valuable insights for landowners, natural resource managers, and anyone interested in promoting sustainable coexistence between beavers and humans. By understanding beaver behavior and employing effective vegetation management strategies, we can minimize conflicts and reap the benefits of these ecosystem engineers.

Secrets of the River: The Weird and Wonderful Lives of Oregon's Native Freshwater Mussels

Date: March 12, 2024

Time: 6:30 - 8:00pm

Place: Online only (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.

Be the LWC's Next Executive Director!



Are you passionate about clean water, thriving ecosystems and building strong communities? The LWC is searching for a dynamic and dedicated leader to join our team as Executive Director. This is a rare and exciting opportunity to impact the health and future of the communities supported by the Luckiamute River and Ash Creek. If you're a visionary leader with a deep commitment to collaborative conservation and meaningful community engagement, check out the details and how to apply at <https://www.luckiamutelwc.org/employment.html>

Celebrating 10 Years with LWC's Outreach Coordinator



Happy ten-year work anniversary to LWC Outreach Coordinator, Suzanne Teller! As author and curator of the *Meanderings* Newsletter and all the LWC's publications, you hear from Suzanne regularly, but often she is describing the work of LWC's projects and partners and not her own accomplishments. As the LWC's first and only Outreach Coordinator, Suzanne has brought creativity, attention to detail, a strong work ethic, and an engaging style to the LWC's events, publications, website, social media, mailings, and all things outreach. To recognize and show appreciation for Suzanne's ten years of service as the Outreach Coordinator, members of the LWC staff, board, and Education and Outreach Committee gathered for treats and coffee at Jubilee in Independence and presented Suzanne with glass water droplet sculpture – our now traditional 10-year anniversary gift! Kristen Larson, Executive Director, shared the story of Suzanne's interview for the job and that, from the moment she left the room, the hiring panel knew there was no question who the LWC's Outreach Coordinator would be – and Suzanne has affirmed that choice for ten years! The LWC would truly not be what it is today without her. Thank you, Suzanne, for all you have done and all you do for the LWC and the watershed community!

A Watershed of Gratitude: A Tribute to Two Outgoing Board Members



As we turn the page to the LWC's next chapter, we pause to acknowledge the invaluable contributions of two departing board members: George Grosch and Jay Tappen. George's Board service spanned seven years and multiple roles, including President, Treasurer, and Secretary. His financial expertise brought stability and foresight, and he actively fostered a culture of inclusiveness and community-building. Jay enriched the Council during his 1.5 years of service through his unique perspectives and love for the land gained from his time traveling throughout the western U.S. with his wife Jane, and his varied experiences living, working and volunteering for local non-profits. We extend our heartfelt appreciation to George Grosch and Jay Tappen for their dedication, passion and positive impacts on the LWC. May their contributions continue to inform our mission and guide us towards a lasting legacy of clean water, healthy landscapes and a more connected watershed community!



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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!*

Find out how to join the Friends of the LWC at www.LuckiamuteLWC.org/Friends!

Thank you to our supporters!

We welcome donations* of any amount at www.LuckiamuteLWC.com/Donate. If you prefer to donate offline, you can mail a check to: 165 D Street, Independence, OR 97351

*Your contribution may be tax-deductible. The LWC will provide a letter of documentation early the following year.

Upcoming Council Meetings

Join us for our LWC Monthly Meetings, typically held the second Thursday of every even-numbered month. Our meetings are always open to the public and discussion topics include local watershed issues and actions. Details, driving directions, and/or Zoom links are posted at www.LuckiamuteLWC.org.

February 8 @ 6:00 - 8:00pm (Zoom only)

April 11 @ 6:00 - 8:00pm (Zoom only)

June 13 @ 6:00 - 8:00pm (In-person, TBD)

THANK YOU TO OUR MOST RECENT DONORS AND VOLUNTEERS!

We are so grateful to the following donors and volunteers who have contributed their dollars, in-kind donations, and their time and energy to our conservation and community education goals from October 1 to December 31, 2023. Your support of the LWC 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.html>

Anonymous Donors (2)
Judy Beebe
Michael Cairns & Gail Oberst
Maya & Jim Cook
Verna & Dale Curry
Whitney & Ron Francis
Jeremy Gordon
George Grosch & Ann Bowen

Charlie & Hollis Holstine
Stephen & Ava Howard
Renee Jaffer
Becky & Jon Jay
Paige Jenkins
Deb Merchant
Leanne Merrill
Becca Meskimen

Erin Murphy
Terry Murphy
Eric Noel
Caleb Price
Linda Samuels
Scott Youngblood

October 1 - December 31 Donors

Anonymous Donors (9)

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Cyndi Anderson
Michael Baltzley
Julia Battle
Chris & Lori Beatty
Ole Bergman
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Alcyon Lord
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Stacy & Peter Moore
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Rick O'Hara
Laura Ouellette
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Jackson Stalley
Karin Stutzman
Jay Tappen
April Turple
Sarah Willis
Scott Youngblood
David Zahler
Lauren Zatkos

October 1 - December 31

Volunteers

Ashley Almon
Brian Bangs
Julia Battle
Judy Beebe
Marc Bell
Britton Castor
Heidi Christensen
David Ehlers
Dan Farnworth
Douglass Fitting
Derek Godwin
George Grosch
Cliff Hall
Nick Hazelton
Mark Henkels
Linda Hillesum



Luckiamute Watershed Council Staff



Executive Director: Kristen Larson
Operations Coordinator: Maya Cook
Outreach Coordinator: Suzanne Teller
Project Manager: Aubrey Cloud
Monitoring Coordinator: Jonah Nicholas

THANK YOU, BUSINESS CIRCLE DONORS!



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