

Behind the Scenes

June 2020



Dear Friend,

I hope you are well, and that these long June days are giving you plenty of time to connect with your family and friends, and with your watershed community. Although COVID-19 precautions are still limiting our ability to host events and tours this year, we are continuing to work with our landowners and partners to protect and restore our rivers and landscapes. In fact, we are getting ready to commemorate the planting of our ONE MILLIONTH native plant this Fall! Read on to discover how you can help us celebrate by sending in your own plant photos!

Take care, stay safe, and happy reading!

--Suzanne Teller, LWC Outreach Coordinator (Outreach@LuckiamuteLWC.org or leave a voicemail at 503-837-0237)

Love Your Watershed: Native Plant ID Walk Video is ready for viewing!



We are excited to announce that you are now able to participate in a virtual Plant ID Walk & Learn tour from your living room! Since we had to cancel our Plant Walk that had been scheduled for May 20 at Sarah Helmick State Park, we decided to bring the trail to you instead. In this video, Jody Einerson and Brad Withrow-Robinson from Oregon State University Extension Office will be showing you how to identify several native woodland trees, shrubs and herbaceous plants commonly found in our watershed, and throughout the mid-Willamette Valley. A big thank you goes to Willamette Habitat Restoration fund for providing the funding for this video production, and to Grahame Bywater of Bywater Films for his excellent videography skills. You can watch it now on our Love Your Watershed webpage (www.LuckiamuteLWC.org/LoveYourWatershed) or on YouTube (www.youtube.com/watch?v=1UrFA82MRgl&t=2s).

A Closer Look at Bird Diversity in Luckiamute State Natural Area



Credit: Josée Rousseau



Earlier this month, I had the pleasure of joining USGS forest ecologist Joan Hagar and OSU PhD candidate Josée Rousseau as they conducted bird-banding research at the edge of Luckiamute State Natural Area (LSNA)'s gallery forest habitat. For three days every month, Josée, Joan and their research team get up before dawn and set up mist nets at LSNA from 5am to 10am. Birds captured in the nets are identified, weighed, measured, then fitted with tiny leg bands before being released back into the forest. Their research will help shed light on how native birds use our riparian (streamside) and floodplain forests, and the importance of restoring these ecosystems for both our resident and migratory birds. As soon as it is feasible, we plan to invite Josée and Joan to a Sips 'n' Science pub talk to tell you more about their research, plus we are exploring how we might be able to invite our Friends of the LWC to a live bird-banding demo sometime in the future!

Pictured on the left are two of LSNA's birds we had the pleasure to meet - a juvenile Northern saw-whet owl (above) and a young yellow warbler (below).

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

Watershed Notes

Help the LWC Celebrate **One Million Plants in the Ground this Fall!**



In 2013 (top), Riverview Park along Ash Creek was overrun with blackberry and other noxious weeds. Today (bottom), native vegetation is thriving where invasive plants used to grow!

This Fall, we will be marking an important milestone in LWC history — the planting of our one millionth native plant! Due to COVID-19 concerns, we have had to make the difficult decision to cancel a celebration we had planned for this September. However, we are planning to reschedule this event for next year, when hopefully we will have the opportunity to come together to honor all those who have made this achievement possible.

Even though we can't celebrate in person this year, we do want to mark this occasion by featuring "before and after" photos of the planting sites where we have worked with our partners and project landowners to restore the health of our watershed, one plant at a time. Do you have a planting site on your property that we can feature as part of our celebration slideshow? Please head to our webpage at www.LuckiamuteLWC.org/one-million-plants to find out how to submit your photos. And don't forget to include your own smiling face, as well as any family members, partners, co-workers and beloved pets you wish to include. After all, YOU — our landowners and land managers — are a big part of the reason we have been able to achieve this momentous milestone!

Upper Luckiamute Project Officially Funded!

We are happy to report that on June 11, we received the good news that the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board decided to release the funding for our Upper Luckiamute Restoration Project! Officially titled, "Protecting the Best: Upper Luckiamute Mainstem Anchor Habitat Enhancement," this project is focused on restoring and enhancing the aquatic and riparian habitat along the uppermost reaches of the Luckiamute River with in-stream log placements, invasive plant removal, and understory plantings. Identified by NetMap watershed mapping software as an "anchor habitat," this area has some of the greatest potential in the watershed to be restored back to health and to once again provide healthy habitat for the native fisheries that flourished here in the past.

As with many of our projects, our goals will be accomplished with the help of many partners - including Bonneville Environmental Foundation (BEF) for contracted Project Management services; the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and Hancock Forest Management, who are donating the logs that will be placed in the stream channel; Xerces Society, which is conducting freshwater mussel surveys; Insititute for Applied Ecology (IAE) who is assisting with wetland surveys; Trout Unlimited, who has contributed \$1,000 directly to this project; Trask Consulting, who is designing and constructing the in-stream log structures; and the contractors who will be removing invasive species, thinning conifer stands, and planting and stewarding about 14 acres with native vegetation.



During a preliminary survey of the Upper Luckiamute project site, big leaf lupine, yellow monkey flower, blue-eyed grass and native clustered thistle were spotted growing in the wetland area.

A unique part of this project will be an inventory and restoration assessment of an eight-acre wetland that lies between a timber access road and the riparian corridor. Within this site is a unique population of hybridized Nelson's-meadow checkermallow (*Silphium laciniatum* x *nelsoniana*), which has never been documented before in the wild. Working together with IAE Restoration Ecologist Andy Neill, Project Manager Jean-Paul Zagarola just completed a "sensitive area" survey to look at ways that impacts to this wetland area could be minimized during the log harvest and placement phase of the project.

Originally, the harvest and placement of the logs into the river was scheduled to begin this summer, along with strategic conifer thinning to encourage the growth of larger diameter trees within the riparian area. However, because COVID-19 concerns delayed the release of grant funds until now, these project activities may have to wait for a later date. We'll keep you updated in the coming months with more information about this exciting project!