

Winter 2015/2016

**LWC Mission:**

To engage 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 volunteer, nongovernmental, advisory group composed of stakeholders living or working in the Luckiamute and Ash Creek watersheds.

**Council meetings:**

Held the second Thursday of every month at 7 p.m., Visit our website at: [www.LuckiamuteLWC.org](http://www.LuckiamuteLWC.org) for location and details. Meetings are open to the public. Please join us!



**Events:**

Join us on January 6 at Burgerville in Monmouth from 5 to 8pm, for a Burgerville Partnership night! Visit the [LWC website](#) for details.

Was your irrigation water shut off this summer? Questions about water rights? Join District 16 Water Master Joel Plahn on **January 7** for a discussion about irrigation efficiency opportunities in Polk County. Details at [www.LuckiamuteLWC.org](http://www.LuckiamuteLWC.org)

**Luckiamute Watershed Council**

[www.LuckiamuteLWC.org](http://www.LuckiamuteLWC.org)



**Special Report: The Willamette River's Health Depends on Us**

**B- Grade for Willamette**

There's a lot that's good: The river is now clean enough to swim in, native fish species far outnumber non-natives, and bald eagle populations are doing well. But, there are important problems to solve. Summer water temperatures are too warm for salmon, and authorities advise limits on the consumption of resident fish species like carp and bass due to mercury and other contaminants. Now is the time to take action to protect this vital resource.



[www.willamettereportcard.org](http://www.willamettereportcard.org)



Earlier this month, the first ever Willamette River report card was released by the Willamette River Initiative. Overall, the Willamette scored a B-, with the mid-Willamette (the section of the river between Albany and Newberg) receiving a slightly higher B grade. While we celebrate the fact that the Willamette is much cleaner than it used to be, there's still a lot more we can do to keep the Willamette a healthy working river and address specific problem areas.

Tens of thousands of people visit the Willamette and its tributaries every year to swim, boat, fish and play, and the Willamette Basin is home to two-thirds of the state's population. Agriculture, industry, urban areas and our thriving craft breweries all rely on the Willamette and the many rivers and streams that empty into it. And we're not the only ones who need and use our rivers. Bald eagles, beavers, turtles, salmon and many other animals rely on the river for their survival. It's an essential component of all Oregon life and prosperity.

The Willamette River Initiative released a river report card to raise awareness about the challenges the Willamette faces and to guide future planning and work that contributes to the ongoing health of this important river. People up and down the Willamette, along its main channel and the rivers and streams that flow into it, are already working together to improve the Willamette's health, but there is more that needs to be done.

Here at the Luckiamute Watershed Council, we are dedicated to working hand-in-hand with local businesses, state agencies, schools and landowners as a community, to protect and restore the Luckiamute River and its tributaries, as well as Ash Creek — all of which directly impact the health of our watershed and the Willamette River.

The ongoing planting and maintenance of the nearly 500,000 trees and shrubs

## Willamette Report Card (continued from page 1)

planted along the riparian (riverside) areas of the Luckiamute State Natural Area, is a collaboration among the LWC, Oregon Parks and Recreation Department, Meyer Memorial Trust, Bonneville Power Administration and the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board. Along Ash Creek, which flows through the backyards of many Independence and Monmouth residents, we are working with local entities and landowners to control the spread of invasive species and restore the native vegetation that provides shelter and food for fish and wildlife. Throughout our work area, we are helping dedicated people like you to restore the health of their part of the watershed. All of which is having a positive impact on the Willamette as a whole.

We can each do our part to make sure the health of our creeks and streams gets better and better—and that's what it's going to take to make sure that future generations can enjoy the bounty the Willamette and its tributaries offer Oregon. Treat your family to a riverside picnic, a swim or a day of boating. Take note of the birds, fish and other critters that you see utilizing your neighborhood streams. And if you are able, [volunteer](#). We, and our rivers, need everyone's help to make sure the health of the Willamette continues to improve.

A complex river like the Willamette calls for solutions on a large scale, such as restoring floodplain forests and cleaning up Portland Harbor. But individual actions matter too. You can lessen your own impact on the Willamette—as well as the

creeks, streams and rivers that run through our communities—with a few simple steps. These steps include reducing the amount of chemicals used at home and on your lawn and gardens, disposing of hazardous products properly, and ensuring that pet waste is picked up and thrown away. In addition, planting native trees and shrubs along streambanks is an excellent way to provide much-needed shade and filter runoff. You can learn more about growing and planting native vegetation at a [free workshop](#) being held on January 21 (see ad on back page). For more information and opportunities for you to get involved, contact us at 503-837-0237 or email us at [info@LuckiamuteLWC.org](mailto:info@LuckiamuteLWC.org).

This river belongs to all of us—let's all do our part. See the full report card at [willamettereport-card.org](http://willamettereport-card.org).



### About the LWC

The Luckiamute Watershed Council is comprised of volunteer watershed residents who care about the health of the watershed. Current members represent interests ranging from farming and forestry to education and water resources.

The Council is recruiting new board members and seeks individuals who work, live, or play in the watershed—you are a watershed stakeholder.

We also welcome donations to support the work of the Council. All charitable donations will be used towards building the organizational resources needed to address our goals of water quality enhancement, habitat restoration and community education.

To donate, go to [www.LuckiamuteLWC.org/donate](http://www.LuckiamuteLWC.org/donate) or you can send a check to: **226 S. Main St. Suite L, Independence, OR 97351**

Thank you to our supporters!

### Upcoming Council Meetings

Join us for Council Monthly Meetings, held the second Thursday of each month at 7 p.m. Our meetings are always open to the public and discussion topics include local watershed issues and actions. For details, please visit our web site at [www.LuckiamuteLWC.org](http://www.LuckiamuteLWC.org).

**January 14, 2016:** Volunteer Hall, Monmouth

*Join us for a brief presentation of 2015 project activities!*

**February 11, 2016:** Volunteer Hall, Monmouth

**March 10, 2016:** TBD

*\*Your contribution may be tax-deductible. The Marys River Watershed Council will provide a letter of documentation early next year, following your donation.*

*\*\*As our fiscal sponsor, the Marys River Watershed Council maintains the right to redirect funds if the LWC does not comply with our agreement or applicable laws.*

# Middle Willamette



Between Albany and Newberg, the Willamette meanders through a mixed landscape of rich farmland, parks, natural areas, and small cities and towns. The middle Willamette has good overall ecosystem health, with a grade of B. Water quality is comparable to the upper Willamette, and the middle reach has the largest number of juvenile Chinook salmon compared to other reaches. Concerns include failing grades for water temperature and fish consumption advisories, and C scores for the diversity of native fish species and amount of floodplain forest.



### One river, many uses

The Willamette River floodplain—the flat land directly adjacent to the river—contains highly productive farmland and many of Oregon’s largest cities. Naturally occurring gravel deposits, a valuable source of building material, are also critical for salmon habitat and water quality. Finding a balance between river health and the needs of important economic sectors is challenging everywhere along the Willamette, but especially here in the middle reach, where all play a prominent role in the area’s quality of life.



### The temperature story

The middle Willamette received the poorest temperature score. Historically, cold tributary inflows and the movement of water through gravel bars and floodplain soils moderated the summer river temperatures. Today, these features have been greatly reduced, while warm water sources—from reservoirs, municipal and industrial discharges, paved surface run-off, and removal of vegetation that shades the river—have increased. Remaining areas of cold water have become havens for temperature-sensitive fish like trout and salmon.



### Vanishing floodplain forests

Forests of cottonwood, alder, cedar, willow and fir once covered much of the Willamette River floodplain. Vital contributors to river health, these forests absorb floodwaters, remove sediments and pollution, reduce water temperatures, and provide important food and shelter for many species of fish and wildlife. Some of the best remaining examples of mature floodplain forest are found in the middle Willamette, but they occupy less than half their original footprint.

## Soil and Water Conservation Districts to Hold Annual Native Plant Sales

Believe it or not, now is the time to start planning for the coming Spring planting season. Your local Soil and Water Conservation Districts are also gearing up for the season by holding their annual native plant sales. Don't miss out on the opportunity to get native trees, shrubs, grasses and forbs in the ground for the low-

est prices around. Whether you are interested in erosion control, windbreaks, wildlife habitat enhancement, or simply the beautification of your yard, make it one of your priorities for this coming year. And make sure you call ahead to RSVP for the [FREE Native Plant Workshop](#) on January 21!

Key Dates	Benton SWCD <a href="http://www.bentonswcd.org">www.bentonswcd.org</a>	Marion SWCD <a href="http://www.marionswcd.net">www.marionswcd.net</a>	Polk SWCD <a href="http://www.polkswcd.org">www.polkswcd.org</a>	Yamhill SWCD <a href="http://www.yamhillswcd.org">www.yamhillswcd.org</a>
Pre-order Deadline	Mail-in: December 31 Online: January 31	N/A	January 22	January 29
Order Pick-up Day	February 20: 8am—1pm <a href="#">Benton County Fairgrounds Livestock Building</a>	N/A	February 6: 9am—12pm Polk County Fair Grounds	Feb. 4 & 5: 9am—6pm February 6: 9am—3pm Yamhill Valley Heritage Center
Native Plant Sale (Overstock Sale)	February 20: 8am—4pm <a href="#">Benton County Fairgrounds Livestock Building</a>	March 11: 10am—6pm March 12: 9am—1pm Bauman Farms, Gervais	February 6: 12pm—3pm Polk County Fair Grounds	Feb. 4 & 5: 9am—6pm February 6: 9am—3pm Yamhill Valley Heritage Center
For more information	(541) 753-7208	Jenny Meisel (503) 391-9927 x312	Liz Graham (503) 623-9680 x107	(503) 472-6403
Link to Native Plant Sale information	<a href="http://www.bentonswcd.org/programs/plant-sale">www.bentonswcd.org/programs/plant-sale</a>	<a href="http://www.marionswcd.net/?page_id=243">www.marionswcd.net/?page_id=243</a>	<a href="http://www.polkswcd.org/native-plant-sale-2">www.polkswcd.org/native-plant-sale-2</a>	<a href="http://www.yamhillswcd.org">www.yamhillswcd.org</a>

**Burgerville Fundraiser a Success!**

Thank you to all who came by the Monmouth Burgerville for our October 21 Fundraiser. Thanks to you, we raised over \$170 to help us achieve our goals for the upcoming year. If you missed us, don't worry—we will be back at Burgerville for another fundraiser on **January 6th, from 5 to 8 pm**. Sign up to receive our email alerts at [www.LuckiamuteLWC.org](http://www.LuckiamuteLWC.org), or connect with us on Facebook to keep up to date with all the latest LWC events!

### Native Plant Propagation Workshop

FREE!

January 21, 2016 6pm-8pm

Rickreall Grange Hall

\* Please RSVP by January 19 \* [Click for Details](#) \*



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

[www.LuckiamuteLWC.org](http://www.LuckiamuteLWC.org)

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