

Behind the Scenes

November 2018



Dear Friend,

I apologize for being a bit late in getting your November issue of **Behind the Scenes** to you! Throughout November, we were busy preparing for our end of year project updates and appeal letters, which should be arriving in your mailboxes later this week. We also spent time getting the word out about Giving Tuesday, a global day of giving that took place on November 27. In total, we received \$2,050 in online donations through Facebook alone, plus a few more on our web site that put us over the \$2,400 mark! Nearly all of those donations were from supporters that were enrolling or renewing their enrollment as **Friends of the LWC**. We are grateful to you for supporting the Luckiamute Watershed Council this year through your donated dollars or time, and hope that you will choose to renew your membership as a **Friend of the LWC** for 2019 by donating an annual minimum of \$25, or a volunteer commitment of at least 5 hours a year. Our online donation page at <https://www.LuckiamuteLWC.org/donate.html> makes it even easier to set up a recurring monthly donation, or give a gift in honor of a loved one.

Thank you so much, and a very happy holiday season to you and yours!

--Suzanne Teller, LWC Outreach Coordinator

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LOVE YOUR WATERSHED: Sips 'n' Science off to a Great Start!

On November 15, we held the first of a three-part series of Sips 'n' Science pub talks at The Valkyrie Wine Tavern, in Independence.

Chris Jordan, a fisheries biologist from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) explained why partnering with beaver makes sense for many stream restoration efforts across Oregon. We had a FULL house with a total of 62 attendees, with one lucky attendee walking away with a wine basket door prize worth \$125!

Next up on the Sips 'n' Science calendar is our January 9 pub talk at The Brew Coffee & Taphouse. Brandon Weems, aquatic biologist with the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, will be speaking about efforts in our region to protect and restore Pacific Lamprey populations. An incredibly important resource for Northwest tribes, lamprey have been a focus of Grand Ronde restoration efforts since 2013. So come enjoy some local brews, excellent food, and a fascinating look at the status of this 650-million year old species in our watershed, and across our region.



** Please note: Because space is limited at this venue, be sure to RSVP on our website if you are interested in attending! You can get all the details and RSVP at <https://www.LuckiamuteLWC.org/lamprey-talk.html> **

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Watershed Notes

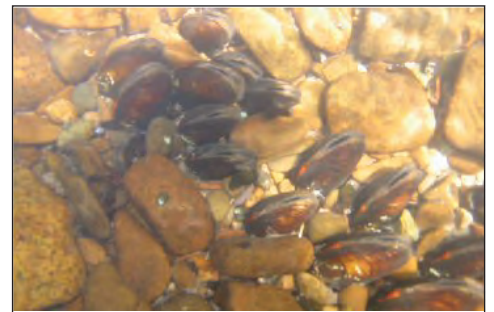
Friends of the LWC are invited!



On March 3 at 2pm, we will be holding an LWC celebration in honor of YOU and the rest of our **Friends of the LWC** network! We hope you will be able to join us for this fun, informal social gathering at the WOU Gentle House for some food, fun and fellowship -- not to mention our annual "Like Chocolate for Water" competition! If you have a sweet or savory chocolate dish up your sleeve that you think can rise above anyone else's favorite recipe, make sure to bring it with you! Entering the competition is entirely optional, but everyone present will have the chance to sample some exquisitely prepared chocolate-themed dishes and help decide the winning entry. And who knows, you may just go home with Grand Prize! Stay tuned for more details coming soon!

Taking Steps to Protect Native Freshwater Mussels

One of the most important "behind the scenes" factors in any organization's long-term success is to keep up with the latest information, and be open to new knowledge and techniques. The LWC is no exception. Our board and staff are sometimes asked to consider issues from a new perspective, or alter the way we do things based on some newly acquired information. Recently, LWC Project Manager Jean-Paul Zagarola and Executive Director Kristen Larson attended a workshop that shed light on a group of extremely important and critically imperiled residents of our watershed: native freshwater mussels.



Native freshwater mussels filter water, keeping it clean for salmon, trout and other aquatic life.

On August 28, the Xerces Society, North Santiam Watershed Council and Willamette Riverkeeper hosted a Restoration Best Management Practices and Oregon Native Freshwater Mussels Workshop in Stayton. Geared towards restoration planners and practitioners, this workshop focused on the ecology and conservation of our native freshwater mussels. These unassuming mollusks are not usually the creatures that come to mind when we think of native species conservation priorities. Yet these often overlooked filter-feeders are a vital part of healthy rivers and streams. They are also considered to be among the most imperiled group of animals in North America.

There are seven native freshwater mussel species that can be found in fish-bearing streams, rivers, lakes and ponds in the Pacific Northwest. The life cycle of a freshwater mussel is quite unique, with each species relying on a particular native fish to use as a host for their juveniles (glochidia). For a few weeks, the glochidia live on the host fish as external parasites before dropping off into the sediment. This unique form of 'travel' allows mussels to establish new mussel beds -- which can consist of several to tens of thousands of individuals. Adult mussels filter water through their gills to receive oxygen and food, and in doing so, remove pollutants, bacteria and other harmful substances from the water column. Like our native salmonids however, all of our native freshwater mussels are experiencing population declines due to habitat degradation and fragmentation caused by dams, water pollution and reduced streamflow. Unfortunately, in-stream restoration work can also cause harm to native mussel populations unless precautions are taken to protect existing mussel beds.

Protecting our freshwater mussels while working in a stream presents several challenges. First of all, adult freshwater mussels can burrow into the sediment or sit between rocks, causing them to be easily overlooked, inadvertently stepped on or crushed by equipment. Secondly, some stream restoration work causes changes in the water level or temporary de-watering, which can cause catastrophic damage to entire mussel beds. During the workshop, several best management practices were presented, which can help restoration practitioners identify the presence of freshwater mussels and take steps to protect or relocate mussel beds before continuing with project work.

The Luckiamute Watershed Council is currently taking steps to protect existing native freshwater mussel habitat by documenting the presence of live mussels at stream restoration project sites, and taking steps to protect existing mussel beds whenever they are found. Have you seen a freshwater mussel bed in a stream on your property or in your community? If so, we'd love to know - please call us at 503-837-0237 or send an email to Kristen at director@LuckiamuteLWC.org.