WRP Provides Alternatives to Pesticides for Rural Oregonians & Spawning Salmon

By Yotokko Kilpatrick

In September 2010 WRP entered into a partnership with Oregon Toxics Alliance (OTA), the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) and rural residents in the Siuslaw Watershed to provide an alternative to toxic pesticide use along Highway 36 in the Blachly/Triangle Lake area. Even though Lane County has a no-spray policy in regards to maintenance of invasive roadside vegetation, Highway 36 between Mapleton to south of Junction City is managed as an ODOT right of way. The current management policy employed for this stretch involves spraying Milestone VM+, a chemical defoliants associated with cancer, birth defects, and detrimental impacts to spawning salmon.

OTA’s mission is to work for all Oregonians to expose root causes of toxic pollution and help communities with solutions that protect and enhance environmental and human health. OTA helped orchestrate all parties in discussing and planning the project. Residents in the Siuslaw Watershed transportation corridor raised funds to implement a manual (opposed to chemical) control strategy for the project area.

In early October WRP restoration technicians removed seeds and flowering heads of meadow knapweed (Centaurea pratensis) in place of pesticide applications along an eight-mile stretch of Highway 36. Manual vegetation control within this stretch prevents unnecessary exposure to harmful pesticides adjacent to homes, Triangle Lake, spawning salmon and Triangle Lake schools. Next spring WRP technicians will begin the process of physically removing meadow knapweed as part of a pilot program which has the potential to expand throughout the Siuslaw Watershed.
A Special Thank You to the following Volunteers, Organizations & Businesses
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Looking Glass
WRP Backyard Seed Project Tactics
Eugene Weekly Sequential Biofuels Wandering Goat Sundance Natural Foods The Buffalo Exchange
The Many Volunteers who came out to restore our Local Open Spaces!

WRP would like to welcome Nicole Smedegaard, our new Education Coordinator. A native to Oregon, Nicole grew up enjoying the outdoors in rural Rogue River, and is now excited to expand her knowledge of native habitats while doing what she loves, working with kids. Nicole graduated from the University of Oregon with a bachelor’s degree in English and art, and is planning to start work on a master’s degree in the future. With three part-time jobs and hobbies like whitewater rafting and backpacking, Nicole has her hands full, but says she is right where she wants to be, “making a difference and enjoying what life has to offer.” Nicole is glad to be working outdoors and applying hands on techniques with classes at the Butterfly Meadow. She is applying her past experiences teaching as a recreational instructor for the City of Eugene, as counselor at a primitive summer camp in the San Juan Islands, and as gallery manager for another local nonprofit. Nicole is working hard to create a successful year with the many schools participating in our From-Seed-to-Habitat Education Program.

Species Spotlight: *Anaphalis margaritacea*, Pearly Everlasting By Yotokko Kilpatrick

Pearly everlasting is an herbaceous perennial with erect cottony stems growing one to three feet tall and often clumped together creating a bushy appearance. It has narrow grayish-green to wooly-white leaves and globular white flowers arranged around a yellow center. Commonly used in dry floral arrangements, pearly everlasting is also an extremely beneficial plant for butterflies. The American Painted Lady butterfly utilizes this plant as both a host and a source for nectar. The Parnassian butterfly also uses pearly everlasting as a nectar source. Folk remedies include using this plant as a salve for burns. The Cherokee employed it for headaches and colds, and as a respiratory aid. Northwest tribes such as the Quileute used the whole plant as a steam bath to help with rheumatism.

Pearly everlasting is still used as a poultice for sores and bruises and as stuffing material in pillows and mattresses. Look for this lovely plant along roadsides, in the mountains, or at the Whilamut Butterfly Meadow flowering from July through September.
Many schools are participating in WRP’s From-Seed-to-Habitat Education Program this year. Students in Eugene, Springfield, and surrounding rural communities have a chance to get dirty, have some fun, and learn about local imperiled species in the Willamette Valley with WRP’s new education coordinator.

From Seed to Habitat is a two-year program which in year one incorporates native plant propagation and in-class lessons on plant communities, ecosystems and restoration. In year two students participate in field trips, in the fall to plant starts they have grown and in the spring to experience the outcomes of their efforts. The second field trip incorporates prairie monitoring, maintenance, and botany. Through From Seed to Habitat, WRP engages students in all aspects of plant propagation, including seed collection and cleaning, cold stratification, potting and planting. Participating rural schools include Walterville Middle School and Territorial Elementary School. The plants propagated with Territorial students will be lovingly planted in a wetland prairie by Fisher Butte which has great potential for wildlife habitat.

Schools continuing the From-Seed-to-Habitat Program this year, Network Charter School, Hamlin Middle School, and Walterville School, will plant the starts they grew from seed at sites including the Walterville Tailrace, an upland prairie area we’re working to restore in partnership with the Eugene Water and Electric Board. Walterville students are continuing their third year of hard work on the wildflower meadow at the Tailrace where they have done an excellent job working to establish prairie habitat that attracts butterflies and other wildlife.

Students in Dan Courtney’s class at Looking Glass Center Point School have also returned for their third year working with Walama. They have accomplished countless hours of service learning at the Butterfly Meadow, where shade tarps were removed in October and planting has begun and will continue into November. The Butterfly Meadow acts as a living laboratory and provides an opportunity for field trips and planting parties with some of the schools new to our program this year, including Cesar Chavez Elementary School.

This school year, our education coordinator is excited to work with Cesar Chavez Elementary School, Agnes Stewart Middle school, The Village School, and Territorial Elementary School, which are all participating for the first time in our From-Seed-to-Habitat Program. With a total of seven schools currently participating in From Seed to Habitat, and several more involved in service learning projects, Walama has high hopes for our future stewards!

Walama also looks forward to working with our newest partner, the Youth Enviro Squad (YES), an OSU Extension program, which engages middle and high school students from Marion County in environmental leadership and stewardship projects. YES will be participating in an exciting restoration project at Marion Lake in the Mt. Jefferson Wilderness of the Willamette National Forest, repairing overused and damaged campground sites in 2011.
Recreation Site Restoration at Marion Lake in the Mt. Jefferson Wilderness
By: Katie MacKendrick

With funding from the National Forest Foundation, Walama Restoration Project is working to carry out the first year of a multi-year, community-based restoration project at Marion Lake in the Mt. Jefferson Wilderness in partnership with the Detroit Ranger District of the Willamette National Forest, Linn County, Oregon, and middle and high school students and residents living near the project site.

Project Background

Located off of Highway 22 about 70 miles east of Salem, Marion Lake is a popular recreation destination for day hikers, backpackers, and fishers within the Mt. Jefferson Wilderness. A three-mile hike allows access to the mile-long lake. On busy summer weekends, as many as 10 groups camp in close proximity to the lake’s northwest shore in a 450-by-300-foot area. Use is so high that a fire ban has been in place since 2005 within half a mile of the lake to reduce impacts from firewood collection. The area around the lake is a reservoir of plant and animal species diversity. However, the 450-by-300-foot area adjacent to the lake has become denuded of vegetation as a result of high use.

Marion Lake is in a time of transition from a past of increasing use and impact with as many as 8,000 visitors per year. The area was included in the Mt. Jefferson Wilderness in 1968 and since that time, the Forest Service has worked to manage the area as wilderness. Through this community-based-restoration project, the Detroit Ranger District and project partners hope to restore species diversity and reduce soil compaction and erosion near Marion Lake, while at the same time ensuring recreation opportunities for visitors. Community members and students will lead this effort to restore Marion Lake and steward it into the future.

Student and Community Engagement

In early October 2010, WRP led the Youth Enviro Squad, a group of middle and high school students representing eight schools in and around Salem, to Marion Lake to collect plant cuttings to use in restoring the northwest shore of Marion Lake next fall. Under an early fall rain, students learned about the history, ecology, and plant communities of Marion Lake, and collected cuttings from Oregon grape (Berberis nervosa) and pipsissewa (Chimaphila umbellata). Over the coming seasons, WRP will work with the students to propagate the cuttings collected in preparation for two community restoration work parties next fall (2011). Next spring, WRP will return to Marion Lake with students to collect additional plant cuttings and data to learn more about the site and inform restoration planning.

GET INVOLVED! WRP hopes to engage more high school students, classes, and community members interested in assisting with plant propagation and site monitoring over the coming year, as well as nonprofits and community organizations. Students, educators, community organizations, and community members are encouraged to contact WRP to find out more about how to become involved in this project: email: info@walamarestoration.org or call: 541-484-3939.
Helping Create Balance: Ecosystem Rehabilitation Update

By: Yotokko Kilpatrick

WRP field crews spent the 2010 growing season working to combat many species of exotic vegetation that currently plague the ecology of our region. Extensive steps were taken to enhance biodiversity by collecting native seeds from critically imperiled plant communities. This combination helps create balance among the ecosystems of the southern Willamette Valley.

False brome is rapidly becoming one of the most problematic species in Oregon. Adaptable to a variety of growing conditions, false brome can rapidly displace native vegetation in habitats ranging from upland oak savanna to riparian forest. WRP crews worked to remove this invader from the foothills of the Coast Range to various sites within the Middle Fork Willamette Watershed. Meadow knapweed was also a species of focus in the eastern stretches of the Oregon Coast. WRP crews also implemented a variety of non-chemical control methods for reed canary grass in the lower McKenzie Watershed.

Enhancing biodiversity in our region is high on WRP’s agenda. Seed collection of critically imperiled plant communities today will help in the formation of the habitats of tomorrow. Targeted species include Willamette Valley gumweed (*Grindelia integrifolia*). With a flowering window from late June to mid October, this herbaceous perennial provides nectar options for many pollinators through much of the growing season. Indigenous Americans used the flowers and leaves of gumweed as a poison oak remedy as well.

Grassland Song Bird Restoration at Fisher Butte

By: Yotokko Kilpatrick

This fall Walama Restoration Project began the process of reclaiming wetland prairie habitat within the Fisher Butte Unit of the Fern Ridge Research Natural Area. With support from the Beulah Drake Grant Program of the Oregon Wildlife Heritage Foundation and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, WRP removed woody vegetation encroaching upon 70 acres of high value prairie habitat. These efforts are aimed at improving habitat for declining grassland songbirds as well as a number of rare and endangered plants.

Listed as Oregon’s state bird in 1927, Meadowlarks have unfortunately become increasingly rare due to agricultural practices and fire suppression. WRP crews removed undesirable species such as Armenian blackberry (*Rubus armeniacus*) and English hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) while leaving strategic species such as Western crabapple for both wildlife forage and singing perches.

This site will serve as a living classroom next spring when WRP facilitates educational fieldtrips with local schools. Field trips will focus extensively on raising awareness regarding the plight of imperiled grassland habitats in the Willamette Valley and the species associated with them.

Thank you to our partners:
Walama Restoration Project relies on community support to facilitate our education programs. If you would like to make a tax deductible contribution or would like to volunteer with WRP, please fill out this form & send it to:

Walama Restoration Project
PO Box 894
Eugene, OR 97440

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