Campers on a Mission: Students Restoring Habitat from Mt. Jefferson to Hells Canyon

By: Yotokko Kilpatrick

In the 2014 growing season WRP decided to have some fun. Well, in all honesty there was quite a bit of work involved as usual. These exhaustively fun efforts included a return to previously visited sites such as Marion Lake in the Mt. Jefferson Wilderness as well as new adventures in the Hells Canyon National Recreation Area and the Hells Canyon Wilderness. WRP was not alone in these wilderness restoration efforts. Students and educators from Eugene’s Network Charter School (NCS) participated in all of the hard-working fun.

Early this past fall WRP and NCS students and staff backpacked into Marion Lake in the Mt. Jefferson Wilderness. A boat ramp that existed at the site prior to Wilderness designation has left the lasting impacts of highly compacted soils and a forest understory largely void of native vegetation. These dense soil conditions were de-compacted to make conditions suitable for the installation of native vegetation. Species such as Bear Grass, *Xerophyllum tenax*, Oregon Grape, *Mahonia aquafolium*, and Vine Maple, *Acer circinatum* were planted into the project area. This fall’s efforts are the third of a five-year plan to restore the northern portion of the lakeshore. Plant survival from previous years’ efforts makes Marion Lake a restoration success story.

Late in the spring of 2014 WRP and NCS students and staff travelled to some of the furthest eastern portions of the great state of Oregon to reach the Hells Canyon National Recreation Area. Three drainages (Cat, Copper and Bob Creek) along the Snake River were targeted for the removal of Yellow Star Thistle, *Centaurea solstitialis* and Scotch Thistle, *Onopordum acanthium*. These drainages were so remote they required boat transport for entry. WRP and NCS students surveyed and removed dispersed populations of Scotch Thistle from several hundred acres in the project area. Close to two acres of heavy infestations of Scotch Thistle were also removed. Impacts from old homesteads prior to wilderness and national recreation area designation have left lasting marks in the means of heavy populations of exotic flora in portions of Hells Canyon. Due to these impacts, not all populations of exotic flora were removed this past spring. WRP will work with the Hells Canyon National Recreation Area to develop a long-term strategy for vegetation control in the area.

In addition to exotic vegetation removal in the Hells Canyon National Recreation Area, WRP conducted an invasive vegetation survey in the Hells Canyon Wilderness Area between Hat Point and Freeze-out Saddle. This survey will assist wilderness managers in future invasive vegetation control efforts. This years’ efforts at Marion Lake and Hells Canyon were largely possible through generous support from the National Forest Foundation. For many students participating in projects at Hells Canyon or Marion Lake, this was their introduction to immersion into the wilderness. Perhaps if “Leave No Trace” ethics were taught and the purpose was to rehabilitate as well as recreate upon initial entry, human impact in the wild could be kept to a minimum.
A Special Thank You to the following:
National Forest Foundation
US Army Corps of Engineers
Fred & Sandra Austin
Friends of Hendricks Park
Wes Messinger
Michelle Marshall & Territorial Elementary
Carrie Patterson & Agnes Stewart Middle School
Matthew Bigongiari & The Village School
Lauri Holts, City of Eugene
Chad Hoffman, Lane County Public Works
Billy Hughes & The Network Charter School Urban Ecology Class
Alan Dickman, University of Oregon
David Sutherland, University of Oregon
Mountain Rose Herbs
Jenny Lippert, USFS
Steve Northway
Sequential Biofuels
John Newsom & Adams Elementary School
Sarah Ruggiero & Churchill High School
Sarah Walden, Dana Giles, Clint Moore & Ridgeline Montessori
Brian Naghski & South Eugene High School
Ryan Herlands & Thurston High School
Glen Herron & Sisters High School
Dan Hoynacki & The Youth Enviro-Squad
Cow Creek Umpqua Indian Foundation
Meyer Memorial Trust
Oregon Community Foundation
The Many Volunteers who help in the restoration of our Local Open Spaces!

Reconstructing Sub-Alpine Meadow Habitat at Santiam Pass
By Yotokko Kilpatrick

This Fall WRP converged at Santiam Pass with youth groups from both sides of the Cascades to rehabilitate sub-alpine meadow habitats impacted from recreational off-road vehicle use. In 2008 the US Forest Service created designated routes for All Terrain Vehicles (ATV’s). Since the creation of designated routes, ATV’s have been restricted from driving through meadow habitats in the Santiam Pass Area around Big Lake and the Hoodoo Ski Area. Unfortunately prior to this designation miles of terrain were impacted from tires that churned native grasses and wildflowers into barren moonscape type environments.

In 2012 WRP crews assisted by interns and participating volunteers collected seeds of native flora in the Santiam Pass Area. WRP constructed a nursery space and grew out over 7,000 native starts destined for Santiam Pass. Unfortunately snows in the fall of 2013 prevented the dates scheduled for planting with youth groups from Eugene and Sisters Oregon. The bitter winter of 2013-14 also took a toll on WRP’s Santiam Pass nursery stock.

In October 2014, the Youth Enviro-Squad from Salem Oregon and students from Sisters High School assisted WRP in Santiam Pass planting efforts. Over 60 youth from both sides of the Cascades planted over 3,500 native starts to rehabilitate sub-alpine meadow habitat. Native herbaceous species such as Goldenrod, Yarrow and Penstemon were planted along with native grasses such as Blue Wild-rye and California Brome. Seeds collected by WRP staff and interns in the summer of 2014 will help to further restoration efforts at Santiam Pass into the future.

The Youth Enviro-Squad from Salem Oregon installing native flora at Santiam Pass.

The Youth Enviro-Squad celebrating the reconstruction of sub-alpine meadow habitat at Santiam Pass, Oregon.

Every Nickel Counts: Mention WRP at Sequential Biofuels!
SeQuential Biofuels Station on McVay Highway in Eugene will donate 5 cents for every gallon you pump into your vehicle and 5% of store purchases to Walama Restoration Project. You must mention WRP when you make your purchase!
The From Seed to Habitat (FSH) Program is expanding exponentially this year. Thanks to generous support from the Cow Creek Umbqua Indian Foundation, the Meyer Memorial Trust, and the Oregon Community Foundation WRP is able to offer our education program to 13 classrooms in 10 schools for the 2014-2015 school year. We are vamping up the program in preparation for further expansions that will take place in the upcoming school years as the Community Involvement and Long-term Ownership Strategy, CILOS, gets under way. CILOS will create 3.5 acres of critically imperiled prairie habitat in the eastern portion of the Whilamut Natural Area. CILOS will give local school students the chance to be active environmental stewards through the FSH environmental education program. The implementation of CILOS also provides for the involvement of service learning groups from the community including clubs, neighborhood associations, scouts and more.

Fall Planting

This fall, over 300 students are experiencing the joys of getting their hands dirty with Walama by planting native wildflower starts. Fisher Butte wetlands were planted on October 29th by Michelle Marshall’s class at Territorial Elementary, where the kids were able to spot some fun wildlife on the walk in, including waterfowl nests, a Garter snake, Red-winged blackbirds and a Red-tailed hawk! The site will soon transform into a vernal pool for the winter, but the kids caught a window in the weather and experienced perfect planting conditions this fall. Students from the other 9 schools will be traveling to Alton Baker Park, where older students will aid in site preparation and younger students will help put the starts in the ground. During site preparation, FSH participants learn and develop a strong work ethic by tackling blackberry removal and shade fabric removal to reveal a weed-free blank slate on which to paint a new portrait of native species.

The Species

Prevalent species being planted this fall, which were grown by last year’s FSH students, include Yarrow Achillea millefolium, Self-heal Prunella vulgaris, Oregon Sunshine Eriophyllum lanatum and Goldenrod Solidago canadensis. Some species coming to the Butterfly Meadow will be getting special treatment! Species that WRP will grow out for 2 years, giving them a chance to become established, include Ligustichum api-folium, Achnatherum lemmonii, Sisyrinchium idahoense, Sidalcea malviflora, Lomatium nudicaule and Aquilegia Formosa which were all kindly provided by the City of Eugene Native Plant Nursery. All harvested seed material is prepared by the From Seed to Habitat students through threshing and winnowing. Each participating classroom experiences this historic method of seed processing right in their classrooms. They use advanced modern-day equipment (like spaghetti strainers) to sift the chaff from the seed. The ecology and ethno botanical uses of each species the students work with is discussed during the activity, and inevitably at least one fifth grader must know, “can we eat it?”

WRP is looking for new Board Members!

- Are you passionate about the need for restoring native habitats and promoting ecological education and public land stewardship in Oregon?
- Do you have special skills, knowledge, experience, or expertise that you would like to contribute to WRP?

If you answered yes to these questions, consider joining WRP’s Board of Directors! Board members are engaged volunteer leaders who govern and help guide our organization towards greater success. If you are interested in becoming a Board Member, please contact WRP Board President Taylor Zeigler at taylorzeigler@yahoo.com or WRP Operational Director Yotokko Kilpatrick at (541) 484-3939. Serving on the Board of Directors is a great opportunity to get involved with Walama Restoration Project on a level that helps craft, guide, and fulfill our organizational mission.
During the 2014 Growing Season WRP crews continued efforts to expand imperiled Willamette Valley Prairie habitat. At Quamash Prairie, a site managed by Lane County Public Works south of Eugene, WRP crews salvaged camas bulbs and removed exotic flora, mainly Pennyroyal, *Menta pulegium*, in the spring. Fall efforts included the collection of seeds of declining species of native flora and the planting of camas bulbs salvaged from this spring.

At the height of the growing season WRP crews continued invasive vegetation control efforts in Hendricks Park forest understory and up at the Oak Knoll in Hendricks. Big thanks are in order for the Friends of Hendricks Park for their continued diligence in the reclamation of habitat in Eugene’s first park.

WRP provided invasive vegetation control efforts with the Institute for Applied Ecology (IAE) at Twin Prairie, a high quality prairie habitat above Cottage Grove Lake. WRP also worked with IAE at Upper Oak Basin in the Coburg Hills, the highest elevation site for Fender’s Blue Butterfly. WRP mimicked fire with mechanical means to reduce encroaching vegetation pressures on Kincaid’s Lupine - the endangered butterfly’s host plant.

Late in the summer of 2014 WRP crews assisted the Nature Conservancy at the Cox Island Preserve in the middle of the Siuslaw River. WRP crews continued survey and removal efforts for Salt Meadow Chord Grass, *Spartina patens*. Cox Island is the only known location for this exotic species in the state. As mentioned, this island is in the middle of a river not far from the Pacific, prompting the urgency for the removal of this exotic species.

### Species Spotlight: Fragrant Popcorn Flower *Plagiobothrys figuratus*

Fragrant Popcorn Flower (*Plagiobothrys figuratus*) is a native perennial wildflower that can be found in the wet meadows, water courses and moist fields of Southern British Columbia to Southwest Oregon. This aptly named sweet smelling plant grows to a height of 6 to 15 inches and flowers from May to July. Plants have several erect or spreading stems with rust-colored hairs that lie flat on the stem, calyx and leaf surfaces. This plant has lower linear leaves (2-5 in. long) that occur in pairs and few upper linear to lanceolate leaves (0.5-2 in. long) that alternate. Flowers (5-10mm. wide) have white petals with a yellow center and are arranged in coiled inflorescences at the end of stems. Each flower can produce 4 egg-shaped nutlets (1-1.7 mm. long) that are moderately pitted and ridged with a scar located on the inner side of the nutlet, near the base. Populations of this wildflower from the Boraginaceae, or Borage family often occur with Scouler’s popcornflower and can be found in open areas at the edges of water. While the species is common in Oregon, it is listed as critically imperiled in British Columbia.
Our Mission:
Walama Restoration Project is a Non-Profit Organization Dedicated to Environmental Stewardship & Biological Diversity through Education & Habitat Restoration.

5th Graders Walk for Walama!

WRP would like to extend a big Thank You to the 5th graders at The Village School in Eugene for choosing WRP as the beneficiary of their part of this year’s Walk A Thon proceeds! We are so appreciative for your support and your hard work.

The Village School’s annual Walk A Thon, held October 3rd, gives each class the opportunity to support an ecologically-minded non-profit organization of their choice. We are honored to be the recipients of the 5th-graders' portion of the proceeds for the 4th consecutive year! WRP Education Coordinator Nicole Smedegaard has been working with Matthew Bigongiari’s 5th graders this year to propagate native wildflowers through the From Seed to Habitat Program. Nice work 5th graders!

Purchase Native Plant Greeting Cards to Support WRP
Now online as well as at these local shops!

Walama Restoration Project has designed six native plant greeting cards that we are selling as a fundraiser for our organization. 100 percent of the proceeds goes directly towards WRP’s From Seed to Habitat education program and to the expansion of declining rare native plant species of the PNW. If you would like to purchase greeting cards, you can do so on our website at walamarestoration.org or at the following local businesses. You can also contact us at (541) 484-3939 or via email: info@walamarestoration.org.

WRP Native Plant Greeting Cards can be found at:
Down To Earth  New Frontier Market
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Greater Goods  Smith Family Bookstore (downtown)
Kiva Grocery  Sequential Bio-fuels
First Alternative Cooperative (Corvallis)  Kalapuya Books (Cottage Grove)

Thank you to all of these fantastic local businesses for your support!

Thank you, Members, for your continued support of Walama Restoration Project!
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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