River Monitoring, Restoration, and the Coast Fork STREAM Program

This winter has been a busy one in Cottage Grove. WRP is working closely with students from LCC’s GED/Adult Basic Skills Program, Al Kennedy High School, and Cottage Grove High School to restore a reach of the Coast Fork Willamette River, study stream ecology, and conduct water quality monitoring. Thanks to our partnership with regional watershed councils, students are now collecting water quality data that the Oregon Dept of Environmental Quality analyzes and stores in a statewide database. We thank the Gray Family Fund for supporting this project!

On June 10th, students participating in the STREAM Program will present their water quality findings at the Coast Fork Willamette Watershed Council’s general public meeting. The meeting will be held at 6:30pm in the Cottage Grove Community Center, located at 700 E. Gibbs Street. For more information, please visit the Council’s website at www.coastfork.org.

Lower McKenzie Prairie Seed Project at the Walterville School

Upon returning from winter break, Sherrie Warthen’s middle school class completed building two hoop houses to house native prairie plants, and held a ribbon cutting ceremony to celebrate their big achievement. Aaron Shaw, a 7th grade student, remarked that these hoop houses were a present to the environment. Then the students were very busy planting all the seeds. It was a fulfilling task.

The seeds have germinated and the nearly 2,000 plants are rapidly growing. Students have been hard at work tending the young seedlings. Using the “Seed Project” as a laboratory, the students have devised scientific experiments comparing growing conditions of the different plants. The 6th, 7th and 8th graders have been very excited to participate in a hands-on science project. They have been learning about the scientific method as well as butterflies!

Looking forward to next fall, Sherrie Warthen’s class took a field trip to EWEB’s Walterville hydropower dam to see where students will be planting the wildflowers that they have been growing at their school. The students were greeted with two great speakers: John Femal from EWEB and Tulsi Wallace from the Lower McKenzie Wildflower Seed Banking Project. The students learned a lot from John about how electricity is made. Their favorite part was seeing all of the different magnets. Tulsi got the students really excited about birds, and now the students have a much greater appreciation for the wildlife that is all around them.

Thanks to EWEB, WRP will continue the Lower McKenzie Seed Banking Project into 2010. We will collect more prairie seeds, and work with students to plant them next year at the Walterville School.
Walama Restoration Project is a non-profit organization dedicated to environmental stewardship and biological diversity through education and habitat restoration.

A Letter of Thanks and Farewell
From WRP’s Executive Director

I remember the first time I learned about WRP when I was 24 years old. Founders Heather Lintz and Yotokko Kilpatrick were diligently working on a handout explaining the importance of oak savanna restoration in the Willamette Valley. As an avid birdwatcher and novice plant geek, sparks lit up and I felt a dire need to be a part of their worthy cause. A few months later, I found myself alongside friends in Hendricks Park pulling English ivy down steep hills, working with WRP’s brand new board of directors, writing literature to promote restoration work in the valley, and running door-to-door to recruit members in Eugene. For the next six years, my passion for plants and Willamette valley ecosystems grew, and I began to devote most of my time to an organization with a mission so critically important for this region.

WRP currently serves Lane County by conducting high profile, collaborative restoration on public lands, and by providing creative outdoor science and service-learning programs for youth. We have sustained and strengthened partnerships with regional watershed councils, municipalities, neighborhood associations, four school districts, and other civic organizations to implement our successful education programs that link habitat restoration with community stewardship. We have proudly served more than 1,800 students in public schools throughout Lane County since 2002, including McKenzie High School in the rural Cascade Mountains and four public schools in rural Cottage Grove.

If you find yourself strolling through one of Eugene’s many public parks, you will most likely see the on-the-ground work of WRP. Alongside our project partners and volunteers, we have witnessed the magical transformation of ivy- and blackberry- ridden slopes and stream banks to lush, diverse landscapes filled with native plants and pollinators. We have had opportunities to work in remote places in the upper watershed and enhance pristine stream banks, mid-elevation meadows, and oak-laden hillsides. Finally, we have seen the excitement and satisfaction on students’ and volunteers’ faces when they finally transplant wildflowers and grasses to the ground. I am proud of the work we have accomplished since 2002, and appreciate our committed partnerships with neighborhood groups, agencies, schools, and other non-profit organizations.

This summer, I will say farewell to my position at WRP. For years, I have had opportunities to work with inspiring community members, project partners, board members, volunteers, teachers, staff members, and students who contribute insight, talent, and insurmountable dedication to our organization. It has been truly inspiring to realize that the foundation of my work focuses on gaining and sharing knowledge, whether it is along a stretch of river, among native wildflowers in a prairie, or with students in a classroom. I am ready to pass this incredible experience onto someone new, and spend this next year deepening my understanding of plants, birds, and streams in places beyond the Pacific Northwest.

Thank you all for this unique experience, and most of all, thank you for continuing to support Walama Restoration Project.

All the best,

Stephanie Schroeder
The Whilamut Butterfly Meadow Comes to Life with Native Plants

Spring is well on its way, and the butterfly meadow is waking up from its winter hibernation. There has been lots of human activity, though, and constant efforts are continuing to transform and expand this unique upland prairie. Since January, students and volunteers have planted more than 3,000 wildflowers and grasses in the prairie, including species such as yampah, Oregon sunshine, and collomia. Network Charter School students spent twice a month out at the prairie and its adjacent nursery sheet mulching new prairie habitat, sowing seeds, transplanting natives, and weeding the new project areas. Close to two dozen species are currently growing in the City of Eugene’s native plant nursery, and we are gearing up to collect seeds with Backyard Seed Project participants this summer.

In late winter, WRP had the opportunity to collaborate with Nearby Nature’s Erin Lamb on a prairie restoration project adjacent to the butterfly meadow. WRP provided 36 species of seeds to the project, and worked with Nearby Nature volunteers and Network Charter School students to plant the seeds. Erin labeled areas where volunteers sowed seeds at the site, so we can monitor their germination success. We are grateful for this strong partnership with Nearby Nature, and look forward to a park filled with native prairie plants and pollinators next year!

Do not miss seeing the butterfly meadow in action this June and July, which are peak flowering months. Participate in our work parties, or better yet, join us at our Open House on Saturday, June 20th. We hope to see you there.

Join WRP and the Whilamut Natural Area Citizen Planning Committee at Monthly Work Parties at the Butterfly Meadow!

We need help weeding and monitoring the site for pollinators this spring and summer! Help us expand a native upland prairie near the Willamette River!

Join us on May 23rd, June 20th, and July 11th from 9:30-12:30pm.

Gloves, tools, and refreshments are provided. For more information, please contact Liza Kachko, Volunteer and Education Coordinator, at 541-484-3939 or at liza@walamarestoration.org. See you there!
Make a Home for Bees
By Rachel Foster, WRP Board President

Pollinators are in trouble. Most people are aware of the mysterious ‘empty hive’ syndrome dubbed Colony Collapse Disorder. Not everyone is aware that other kinds of insect pollinators – other bees, wasps, flies and beetles, are also vanishing. Most likely many factors contribute to this decline, but the single biggest probable cause is the complex one of habitat loss, from development, conventional agriculture and the widespread use of pesticides.

While organic farmers generally understand the importance of insects in a healthy, balanced growing environment and plan their farms accordingly, most of our food is not grown that way. Huge monocultures of crops that require pollination are largely dependent on honeybee hives containing thousands of bees that can be trucked around where they are needed. The loss of honeybees would be a very serious blow to the world’s food supply.

Honeybees are not, however, native to North America. They were introduced by European colonists about 400 years ago. Before that, food plants and wild plants alike were pollinated by native insects, including thousands of native bee species, such as bumblebees and mason bees. Interestingly, studies of native bees suggest they are up to 100 times more efficient at pollination than honeybees are.

As feral honeybees become scarce, more home food gardeners are keeping hives. While this boosts the honeybee population and helps ensure pollination of homegrown food crops (and can provide honey, too, if properly managed!) we should not forget those original pollinators. How can we make them feel at home? In a study at the University of California (recently quoted in the New York Times) students surveyed 1000 plants in and around Berkeley. Only 50 were native plants, but 80 percent of those were attractive to pollinators. Of the remaining 950 plants surveyed, only 10 percent attracted pollinators.

On a local garden tour highlighting natives plants, I saw pollinators buzzing around buttercup, rosy plectritis and other wildflowers in impressive numbers. Larger plants are good to draw them in, though: maple, Oregon grape, serviceberry, madrone and elderberry, for example. Non-native plants that are pollinator magnets include lavender, rosemary, all kinds of composites, catmint, parsley and chives. Watch what your busy visitors prefer, and plant more of those! Large patches are easier for pollinators to find.

Orchard mason bees and many others lay eggs in hollow stems. Mason bees are solitary (individuals live and work independently) but they don’t mind sharing a drilled-out ‘bee block’ made from untreated wood. Bumblebees are social, forming small colonies in the ground or under up-turned flowerpots. They overwinter, and get going early in spring. So leave some uncultivated, mulch-free ground for bumblebees to nest in. Keep some weedy areas, and twiggy and woody debris piles. Use no pesticides of any kind, and reduce the area of hard surfaces and manicured lawn. If you can talk your neighbors into doing the same, so much the better.

WRP’s Cherished Work Force
Michael Clark, Michael Klinkebiel, Jeremy Cole, Drew Johnson, Jesse McAlpine, Vince Sansone, and Taylor Zeigler

Community members must wonder how WRP gets so much accomplished in the field and in the classroom. For years, we have worked with a highly skilled group of field staff who make us proud of the restoration work we do in natural areas. You will find them in our city parks, along our pristine rivers, in our oak laden foothills, and higher up in the watershed pulling weeds, planting native species, and collecting seeds. They play an integral role in our organization, and continue to encourage native plant communities to thrive throughout Lane County.
An Emerging Native Forest at Maurie Jacobs Park

If you have not walked, ran, or coasted by Maurie Jacobs Park on your bicycle yet, then now is a great time. WRP has been restoring a small stretch of along the Willamette River since 2002, just downstream of the Greenway bike bridge. Just this year, the City of Eugene decided to expand restoration efforts into the grassy hillside above the young riparian forest. WRP and the Stream Team recruited more than 125 volunteers this year to plant hundreds of trees and shrubs. Volunteers also mulched every tree planted to make sure young roots remained moist in the hotter part of the summer. What once began as a wall of blackberries is now turning into a Willamette Valley riparian forest.

A Special Thanks to our Community

Thank you to all of our Backyard Seeds Project participants, including Hamlin Middle School! Gaston Figueroa has been volunteering his time since January to re-vamp WRP’s website. Look for our new website this June! Also, WRP would like to thank Wain Schroeder for donating hundreds of hours to maintain WRP’s website since 2004.

Thanks to Gray Family Fund of the Oregon Community Foundation for supporting the STREAM Program!

A special thanks to the following volunteers, organizations, and businesses this year

Emerald Valley Kitchen
The Bread Stop
The Wandering Goat
Scott Altenhoff, Holistic Tree Care
Erin Lamb, Nearby Nature
Tulsi Wallace, Land Management Services
John Femal, EWEB
Laurie Bernstein, Cottage Grove
Ranger District
Jim Beyer, Friend of Hendricks Park
Matt McRae, The City of Eugene
Pam Reber, Coast Fork Willamette Watershed Council

Daniel Roque
Liza Koski
Topher Vollmer
Sandra Lee Bronstein
Alexis Brickner
Gail Baker and LCC biology students
Sherry Warthen and Walterville students
The Network Charter School Permaculture Class
Willamalane Parks After School Program
Cottage Grove High School
Al Kennedy High School

Like many non-profit organizations, WRP relies on community support now more than ever. Here are some ways to help:

Donate more than once a year
Host a benefit or presentation
Become a board member
Join our fundraising committee
Sponsor a WRP program
Flyer for our events
Help crunch numbers for our monitoring projects
Volunteer at community events
Become an Advisory Board Member
Help with weekly office duties

WRP 2009 Wish List

We have compiled a wish list of things that would help WRP continue to work more efficiently and effectively to facilitate habitat restoration and environmental education within our community. If you are willing to donate anything on our list, please let us know! All of your donations are always fully tax deductible.

* A donated or low-cost space to house a small office and shop to store our equipment. Ideally, the space is within biking distance from downtown Eugene and has a parking spot for our work truck.
* 2-3 comfortable office chairs. (Slightly used is just fine!)
* A PC laptop in good working condition
* A good sized office desk with drawers
* A file cabinet in good condition
* A newer, multi-use printer, scanner, fax, copy machine
* Color printing services (for our brochures)
* One-sided paper
* Small/children’s gardening tools
* Plastic plant identification tags (used is ok!)

WRP wholeheartedly thanks Tactics for donating $2,000 this January! Tactics is proud to be a member of 1% For The Planet, which means they give at least 1% of net sales to nonprofit organizations that are engaged in efforts to reduce negative environmental impacts and work toward restoring the health of our planet. Their support made it possible for WRP to pay for field trip and coordination costs for our Lower McKenzie Prairie Seed Banking Program at Walterville Middle School. Check out Tactics at www.tactics.com.
Walama Restoration Project relies on community support to continue facilitating our educational programs. If you would like to become involved by volunteering at a work party or by making a tax-deductible contribution, please fill out this form and send to:

Walama Restoration Project
PO Box 894
Eugene, OR 97440

Yes! I would like to be a supporter!

___ Limited income $15
___ Individual $35
___ Family $50
___ Sustaining Member $100
___ Sponsor $500
___ Other amount $_____

Yes! I want to volunteer!

name_________________________
email _________________________
phone ________________________
interests _______________________

*You can also donate on the web at www.walamarestoration.org

Give a Gift Membership

The recipient will receive a card recognizing your gift, and a subscription to WRP newsletters for a year. A one year Gift Membership is $30, but you can always donate in someone’s honor for any amount.

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Field Canvasser
Doug Black

Don’t miss our work parties at the butterfly meadow in May, June, and July!