

Walama Restoration Project

Pine + Grass = Monarch Restoration

Walama’s contribution to this proven formula for restoring milkweed & monarch habitat in Willamette National Forest

This fall, the Walama Restoration crew began work on the Pinegrass Plantation Project. This project focuses on several plantations which were selected for restoration to meet goals of the Upper Willamette Watershed Action Plan to restore the historic character of the landscape.

The project is located in the southern end of the Willamette National Forest within a dry mixed conifer forest habitat that was historically open forest habitat including ponderosa pine, incense cedar, Oregon white oak, Douglas fir and a diverse understory that thrived in the open canopy forest habitat. This habitat is fire dependent and was altered through fire suppression and logging over the last 150 years. Recent research on the fire history of this landscape has shown that fires would occur about every 5 to 20 years. A fire return interval of this rate maintained an open habitat with large open grown conifers and oak trees. Fire suppression not only changed the habitat it has also made the area more susceptible to high severity wildfires.

The work in the Pinegrass Plantation Project involves going into young plantations to thin small conifers to guide the plantation into an open grown forest and preserve and enhance the existing ground cover which is predominantly California fescue and a diverse mix of wildflowers. Pinegrass sites are either adjacent to or in between meadows with heartleaf milkweed. This project has enhanced nectar forage for monarch butterflies and built corridors between monarch habitats. Walama’s part in the Pinegrass Plantation Project expands upon the work to restore habitat for monarch butterflies in the area. Since 2018 Walama has been collecting seed and growing out nectar species for monarch butterflies and recording locations of milkweed. This year Walama collected *Geranium organum* and will incorporate that into the seeding of a recently completed Pinegrass Plantation site that was accomplished by the Oregon Department of Forestry with a grant proposal Walama put forward through the Good Neighbor Authority. The crew recently seeded this site with California fescue and will return to set up monitoring plots for seeding geranium.



Walama crew member, Sebastian McMasters, skillfully seeds Pinegrass Plantation site #44

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- **It’s all net at Rigdon**

A Special Thank You to:

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Eugene BLM
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Society of Oregon
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Long Tom Watershed
Middle Fork Willamette
Watershed
Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation
Row River Partnership
US Fish and Wildlife
Willamette Resource
Advisory Council
Wasco County Soil
& Water Conservation District
Lane County Public Works
Institute for Applied Ecology

Teachers & Staff of

Adams Elementary
Agnes Stuart Middle
Cal Young Middle School
Cesar Chavez Elementary
Churchill High School
Edgewood Elementary
Elmira Elementary
Hamlin Middle School
Network Charter School
Rachel Carson Academy
ECCO High School
Ridgeline Montessori
Roosevelt Middle School
Territorial Elementary
The Village School
Wellsprings Friends School

Plus, the **Many Volunteers** who help in the restoration of our Local Open Spaces!

Continued from front page ...

...Pine + Grass

The Pinegrass Plantation Project consists of 73 sites, most of which have already been treated by the Northwest Youth Corps over the last 6 years. Over 1,000 acres has been accomplished and only the most severely degraded sites are left to finish. This project is the second restoration effort in the area to enhance dry mixed conifer forest habitat. Previously treated, Jim's Creek Savannah Restoration Project was a single site of over 300 acres that removed much larger trees to preserve old growth ponderosa pine, Oregon white oak, sugar pine, incense cedar and Douglas fir. Jim's Creek has about a dozen historic meadows with some containing milkweed. The project was completed in 2012 and now the meadows have expanded, and the milkweed is spreading in the site. The current Pinegrass Plantation site the Walama crew is working on sits on the northern edge of the Jim's Creek project. The Forest Service is now in the final stages of approving a new project to further this restoration work. The Young's Rock Rigdon project will complete similar actions on nearly 2,000 acres within this dry mixed conifer forest type over the next 5 years.



Ready, Steady, Grow!

Thank you Village School 5th Graders



Huge shout out to Matthew Bigongiaris 5th grade class at The Village School in Eugene. They have chosen Walama as beneficiary of the proceeds from their annual walk-a-thon! Each year in October the school raises money through this event to donate to local ecologically-minded non-profit organizations.

We are so grateful to be receiving this honor for the 10th time. Amazing.



Save the date: 3-22-2023 all day

Walama Inspires Oakshire

Oakshire is hosting Walama Restoration Project at their Eugene Public House to run an **Oakshire Inspires** fundraising day. A community-inspired small-batch brewing company, Oakshire endeavors to partner with and give back to our community in meaningful ways. Since opening in 2013, Oakshire is honored to have featured over 150 non-profit organizations, raising over \$125,000 for their direct benefit.

Join us on **Wednesday March 22, 2023**, where \$1 per pint benefits Walama!

Oakshire Eugene Public House
202 Madison Street, Eugene
oakbrew.com



Thank you for the gifts made in the honor of:

- ◆ Mary Morey
- ◆ Gary Morgan, *Master Beekeeper*
- ◆ Erik Muller

Restoration Success ~

Walama Crew Ups Survival Rates for Re-establishing WV Daisy at Fern Ridge

The Willamette Valley Daisy, *Erigeron decumbens*, is a federally listed endangered species endemic to the Willamette Valley. It is a perennial flowering plant and the only species of the *Erigeron* genus in Willamette Valley prairies to have pink-purple rays. Believed to have been at one time widespread throughout the valley floor, it now is found in 18 small populations scattered across seven Oregon counties.

One of the larger populations is found along Fern Ridge Reservoir managed by the US Army Corps of Engineers. In the fall of 2021, Walama was entrusted to plant hundreds of WV daisies which had been propagated by botanists from USACE. Due to the plant's rarity and endangered status our crew had to take special care in this endeavor. We set up plots and planted each individual plant at exact spacing on a 1ft x 1ft grid in order to make future monitoring easier to measure. In some grids we used propane torches to burn off thatch in half of the grid to see if that would contribute to the plant's survival.

The following spring, we were told that the plantings had been a huge success. We were told the WV daisy is a notoriously difficult plant to establish and a successful planting could be measured at 10% or more survival rate. Some of the grids we planted had plants surviving at over 50% success rate, because of this our crew has been unofficially dubbed the "**official planting crew of the Willamette Valley Daisy**".



Restoration Crew planting *Erigeron decumbens* at Fern Ridge Reservoir

We also planted *Sericocarpus rigidus*, white top aster, which we had recovered from a site in West Eugene under threat of development the year prior. We have also used the grid method to plant Kincaid's Lupine, the host plant for the federally listed Fender's Blue Butterfly. Both the Willamette Daisy and Fender's Blue butterfly were believed to be extinct during the mid 1900s until their rediscovery of both, in 1980 and 1989 respectively. The Walama Restoration crew has thoroughly enjoyed aiding in the conservation efforts of both species.



Education Update ~

From Seed to Habitat : Getting back to hands-on learning



"From Seed to Habitat" Students

Walama's education and outreach activities have faced a lot of challenges and changes over the last 2 years. We had to limited our activities in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, prioritizing the health and safety of the members of our community.

We also had to say goodbye to our much beloved Education Director, Nicole Smedegaard, aka "Nature Nicole," who has returned to live in southern Oregon. She served Walama, the communities of Lane County and many classrooms for over 10 amazing years. Her expertise, energy and fun-loving presence will be missed by all who were privileged to work with her. Thank you Nicole. We are forever grateful.

Walama welcomes Brooke Mitton as the new Education Director. Brooke stepped forward to take on the role when the need presented itself. She transplanted to Oregon 3.5 years ago from Idaho, where she studied Environmental Science at University of Idaho. Brooke is passionate about ecosystem health and grateful for the opportunity to work with educators to share her knowledge and experience with students in the Willamette Valley.

Since last winter, Brooke has been busy building connections and relationships with local educators. With humble beginnings she was able to work with 9 classrooms and 245 students that school year. This fall, "From Seed to Habitat" has returned to now 13 classrooms. As before, students participate in learning about subjects such as the anatomy of a flower, ecosystem types, food webs, photosynthesis, and butterflies & moths. Hands on activities included cold stratification and sowing of seeds, seed bomb creation and plant ID walks.

For anyone who might be interested in more information about participating in "From Seed to Habitat" programs, please reach out to Brooke at brooke@walamarestoration.org

With your help, we can grow back in 2023!

Walama is currently rebuilding after being shut down through the Covid-19 Pandemic. And, your support is needed for us to grow back our education and community engagements.

Our list of partner schools continues to grow, and we could not continue these programs without your donations. Students are receiving hands-on learning curriculum, growing out native plants, and being stewards of local natural areas.

Our nurseries are key to our restoration and education successes. We are working on installing and expanding seedbeds for 4 geographic areas. Walama will manage these seedbeds and allow for seed and plant material to be shared easier with other federal and state agencies and private landowners, further expediting restoration efforts in the Pacific Northwest

Walama also continues to enhance habitats with the removal of invasive species. We do not use herbicides on our projects and in doing so has reduced the use of chemicals on the landscape for over twenty years and built an expertise with mechanical management techniques.

With these techniques we have treated nearly 400 acres of houndstongue; *Cynoglossum officinale*, on the east side of the Mt. Hood National Forest. In 2023, we will start a five-year agreement with the US Forest Service to continue houndstongue removal on 1300 acres.

While Walama continues to be successful at receiving grants for our many projects, several of these grant opportunities require matching contributions and do not cover all the costs of the projects.

Your donations fill the gaps and your impact is multiplied many times over.

All that we have done and all that we aspire to be is due to your support and encouragement; Thank you!

Kris Elsbree
Executive Director

In 2023

**More Schools
& Classrooms in
Lane County**

**Seedbeds for
4 geographic regions
with added species**

**Paid internships
& Volunteer
opportunities to
protect natural
areas**

**20,000 native
plants ready for
return to expanded
habitats**



Walama Restoration Project, a 501(c)3 non-profit, relies on community support to undertake our education programs & stewardship of restored habitat. Please consider making a contribution.

Yes! I would like to be a supporter!

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PO Box 894

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You may also donate on our website ~

walamarestoration.org

Species Spotlight ~

Milkweed Beetle ~*Tetraopes femoratus*

"Tetraopes beetles are becoming critically at risk, much more so than the monarch butterflies or the milkweeds themselves, since they are obligate on milkweeds throughout their entire life cycle and they have a relatively low fecundity. Additionally, they are largely nonmigratory so they cannot escape when a milkweed patch is lost and they have not been seen to recruit onto newly planted milkweeds, even after the milkweeds expand to large patches decades later. Apparently, under our current conditions, once a Tetraopes population is lost it is lost forever. Milkweed patches that support a Tetraopes population should be considered for special protection and the patches given an opportunity to expand (Tetraopes beetles become lost from the edges of the milkweed patch and can't navigate their way back, so the bigger the milkweed patch the better). I have seen at least half of all the Tetraopes populations in the Willamette Valley disappear over the last 20 years, in spite of some rather substantial milkweed mitigation replantings." ~Walama thanks Steve Northway for these observations



Tetraopes femoratus; Milkweed Beetle on introduced milkweed at restoration site in the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area



Rachael Carson Academy
Habitat Heroes

Habitat Heroes

With the help of the Rachael Carson Academy at Churchill High School, and their super heroic energy, we were able to remove several invasives and plant 596 pots of avens, goldenrod, sidalcea and yarrow in the meadows of the Whilamut Natural Area, Alton Baker Park, Eugene.



The academy also helped us care for our Mount Hood National Forest pollinator species by up-potting rapidly growing plants at our nursery. Plus, students have planted avens, checker mallow, cinquefoil, yarrow and wild onions at the CILOS meadow totaling 1600 plants so far this fall!

Thank you, Rachael Carson Academy!



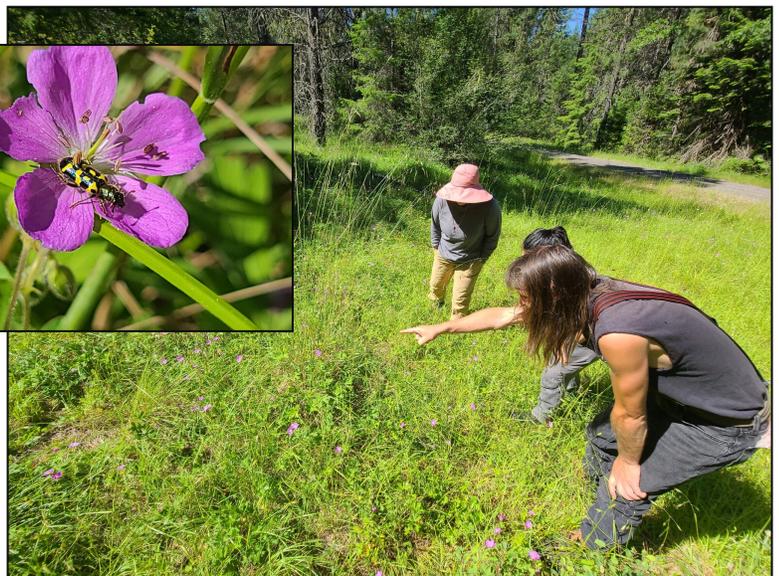
Collecting Seed ~

It's all net with *Geranium oregonum*:

Another species available in the Rigdon Pollinator Seedbeds

Over the past summer, Walama Restoration Project continued efforts to increase native seed availability for the Willamette National Forest. Working in the Rigdon area on the southern end of the Middle Fork Ranger District the crew collected Oregon geranium; *Geranium oregonum*.

Oregon geranium is an early season nectar resource for monarch butterflies and other pollinators. The seeds easily fall off plants when they are ripe so the crew visited populations of geranium to check on the phenology of the plants to see when the seed would be ready. Before the seed was ripe and the seedpods were still green the crew placed nets over several ripening seedpods and returned about week later when the seed was ready. The wet spring made for great seed production this year and Walama now has a another species to add to our Rigdon Pollinator Seedbeds.



Walama Restoration Crew monitors flowers and seedpods of Oregon geranium; *Geranium oregonum*, Willamette National Forest



Walama Restoration Project

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Return Service Requested

Walama Restoration Project is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the protection of our natural resources through environmental stewardship, education, and maintaining and restoring sensitive habitats in the Willamette Valley and Western Cascades.

We rely on community support for our education programs & stewardship of restored habitat sites.

Thank you to all who continue to make this work possible.

Let's Grow!



Roosevelt Middle School 6th grade science students sowed seed in their native plant nursery for our Mount Hood Pollinator Garden project and are hosting seedlings at their school.

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