

Conservation Notes

Providing Natural Resource Leadership

The New Year

By Tim Stieber, Executive Director

It is hard to believe 2011 is right around the corner – right on the heel of a busy 2010 complete with its many challenges and changes. Staff and directors will be hosting more education and outreach activities this upcoming year. One new challenge will be making our prairie conservation work successful which Amie Loop-Frison will kick off with a public meeting February 16th. There will be a tour of restoration sites on May 20th. Josh Togstad was hired in November as the district’s Riparian Planner. He is busy getting to know existing customers and searching for new ones. Marie Vicksta has scheduled our first conservation film event for January 18th with a showing of “Dirt”. She will also work with Mike Crabtree to host a horse management workshop scheduled for April 16th. The workshop will be held at Pat Fitzgerald's horse operation near Yamhill and it promises to be fun and educational.

The district is organizing a work day Saturday Feb. 26th at Chegwyn Farms at which participants can learn about the restoration work underway on the farm and help hang bird boxes.

Tom Brewster, local bird box expert, will be assisting with this event. Tom has been organizing bird box construction classes for schools bringing students to Miller Woods. In this cool project, he milled the needed lumber from Miller Woods trees and many of the resulting boxes will go out on projects throughout the county. We expect to provide access to Miller Woods to over 3000 students during 2011. Local schools have been scheduling increasing numbers of outdoor educational activities the past few years. In addition to these field trips, we are hosting three free “Kids Days at Miller Woods” for non-school days this spring. These events will be organized by Laura McMasters and promise to be great fun. Sign your young naturalists up soon. Space is limited.

In addition to “new” activities, the district will be hosting its 20th Native Plant Sale, its 49th Woodland Tour, and the 4th annual Earth Day at Miller Woods this spring. Learn more about all these events on the district website www.yamhillswcd.org which was recently re-designed by our Office Administrator, Josie Reid. Staff is working to review and upload relevant content to the new categories so some pages may not be fully developed.



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Yamhill Soil and Water
Conservation District
2200 SW 2nd Street
McMinnville, OR 97128
Tel.: (503) 472-6403
Fax: (503) 472-2459
Josie.reid@or.nacdnet.net

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Leo Krick, **Treasurer**..... **Zone 3**
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| | |
|--------------------|-------------------------|
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| Gordon Cook | Lucien Gunderman |
| Henry Wyman | Mike Green |

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Mike Crabtree, Conservation Technician
Marie Vicksta, Conservation Planner
Amie Loop-Frison, HCP Project Manager
Josephine Reid, Office Administrator
Irma Koyama, Administrative Assistant
Joshua Togstad, Riparian Planner

NRCS STAFF

Leo Preston, Basin Team Leader
Kim Hudnall, District Conservationist
Sergio Villasenor, Soil Conservationist
Rachel Russell, Program Assistant

You're Invited!

Yamhill SWCD conducts their regular Board meetings the 2nd Wednesday of each month, beginning at 7:30 AM. Board meetings are open to the public. Citizen attendance and input is encouraged. The Board meetings are held at the Miller Woods conference room, 15580 Orchard View Rd NW, McMinnville, Oregon. For more information or call the District at 503-472-6403



conservation stewardship program

apply by January 7, 2011

Contact Kim Hudnall for additional information

(503) 472-1474 ext 101 or
kim.hudnall@or.usda.gov

cultivate your future with the natural resources conservation service

Don't miss your opportunity to apply for the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) signup. Applications will be accepted through *January 7, 2011*. CSP offers payments to producers who maintain a level of conservation on their land and want to adopt higher levels of stewardship.

Eligible lands include: *Cropland, Pastureland, Rangeland, and Non-industrial Forestland*. Find out if CSP is right for you by using the CSP self-screening checklist. Find it online at: <http://www.or.nrcs.usda.gov/>.

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Agriculture and Energy Efficiency Program



Agriculture is big business in the Pacific Northwest and it takes substantial energy to fuel that business. Bonneville Power Administration and local public utilities have incentives to help farmers become more efficient and save electricity costs. By saving energy, farmers may be able to reduce costs, increase irrigation uniformity, decrease the amount of water and fertilizer required, and potentially increase yields.

For more information on how you can become more energy efficient view program specifics at www.cascadepacific.org/energy.htm. Or contact Terry Johnson, Energy Program Manager at terry@casco.net or 541-760-6444.

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YAMHILL SWCD EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR EARNS STATE RECOGNITION

SUN RIVER, Ore. – The Oregon Natural Resources and Conservation Service (NRCS) awarded Tim Stieber, Executive Director, the 2010 SWCD Employee Partnership Award during the annual Oregon Association of Conservation Districts (OACD) conference held in Sun River during October.

The award was presented by visiting Deputy Undersecretary for Natural Resources and Environment, Ann Mills, who had been in Oregon visiting various NRCS projects and speaking at the conference.

“Its efforts like Tim’s, and all our SWCD partners across Oregon that makes us both successful and makes a difference in our communities,” said Ron Alvarado, the NRCS State Conservationist in Oregon. “Without this great cooperation – it just would not be able to happen.” The purpose of this award is to recognize the SWCD individual that has provided outstanding conservation assistance and service as a partner to NRCS over the past year.



Yamhill Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) Executive Director, Tim D. Stieber (left), is presented the award for the Oregon Natural Resources and Conservation Service SWCD employee of the year by Deputy Undersecretary for Natural Resources and Environment, Ann Mills in Sun River, Ore.

MEET OUR NEW EMPLOYEE JOSH TOGSTAD RIPARIAN PLANNER

Josh Togstad is the new Riparian Planner for the District. He was hired to work with landowners to develop and establish riparian buffers and projects throughout the county following the approved USDA NRCS planning process. He is now the primary contact for all existing and future enrolled Conservation Reserve and Enhancement Program (CREP) landowners. Josh is excited about meeting and working with Yamhill County landowners.



**Josh Togstad,
Riparian Planner**

Before coming to work for Yamhill SWCD, Josh worked for Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife where he conducted stream habitat surveys and oversaw salmonid fin marking operations across the state. He also has knowledge of land surveying practices through work for a local land surveyor. Josh graduated with his Bachelor of Science Degree in Fish and Wildlife Science from Oregon State University in 2007. If you have a stream running through your property and interest in improving the riparian zone please contact Josh at (503)472-1474 ext. 104.

Yamhill SWCD presents Dirt! The Movie

“Dirt!” is a documentary film that brings to life the environmental, economic, social and political impact that the soil has. It shares the stories of experts from all over the world who study and are able to harness the beauty and power of a respectful and mutually beneficial relationship with soil.

Q/A period to follow with NRCS Soil Scientist

Where: 3rd St. Pizza, Downtown McMinnville

When: Tuesday, January 18th at 7 pm

Cost: FREE admission

Pizza will be available at \$1 a slice



HABITAT CONSERVATION PLAN

Do you have native upland prairies or remnant oaks scattered across grasslands on your property? Do you have threatened or endangered species occupying those habitats? Most landowners in the county don't know the answer to this last question. In response to this need and as part of the District's new Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) for upland prairies, we are providing free, no obligation surveys for Kincaid's lupine and Fender's blue butterfly beginning in April 2011. We will also host a public meeting at the McMinnville Community Center on February 16th at 6 pm to answer any questions about the HCP, ESA regulations and landowner options.



By documenting locations on private land, the District will learn more about the biological requirements and distributions of these species in the County, understand how agricultural and other land use practices may benefit them, and promote effective conservation. Surveys are also a means for landowners to learn more about the habitats and species their property supports. **Having a survey completed does not add any new regulations to your property.** All surveys will require permission and will be conducted voluntarily.



If lupine and/or butterflies are confirmed on your property and you wish to continue with your current land use practices which may have the potential for a negative effect upon these species, you will have the opportunity to participate in the HCP and receive planning assistance from the District. Technical and potential financial incentives will be available for significant lupine and butterfly habitats which are located.

The District has always believed that there is a way to utilize the land for economic prosperity while also being in compliance with regulations such as the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA). Good conservation practices can provide for both and we are here to help local landowners find that balance. Results of these surveys will provide assurance that the ESA is not being violated or will lead to planning that will provide future compliance all at no cost to landowners.

If you are interested in joining our survey effort, please visit our website at www.yamhillswcd.org and click on "HCP" underneath the projects tab which will lead you to the sign-up form. Those without internet access can contact Amie at (503) 472-1474 ext.113.

New District Director, Mike Green

Mike Green was voted in as Yamhill SWCD's newest Director this past November. Mike ran for an At-Large position that previously was held by Jim LeTourneux. Mike's four year term starts January 1, 2011.

Mike and his wife Patty live on their 80 acre property outside Yamhill where their Deux Vert vineyard is located. The site has south facing slopes with Willakenzie soils where the Green's planted the first to Syrah and Viognier grapes in Yamhill county. In addition to producing wine grapes that are sold to a half dozen different wine makers, the Green's property produces grass seed and has several acres of riparian habitat. Mike hopes to provide a 'wine grape grower' voice on the SWCD board since this industry has grown to be so important for the county. He will be working to make other wine grape growers more knowledgeable concerning the programs and guidelines that the district oversees.



Mike has a strong business background and has served on Yamhill Counties Budget Committee, and as a Board member of the Yamhill-Carlton District AVA. The Green's are also members of LIVE (a sustainable grape growing organization) and the Oregon Farm Bureau.

Upcoming Events

January

Yamhill SWCD Conservation Film Presentation

Tuesday, January 18th 7 pm-9:30 pm

Location: 3rd Street Pizza in McMinnville

Yamhill SWCD presents “Dirt!”, in our first conservation film and discussion series at 3rd St Pizza in downtown McMinnville.

“Dirt!” is a film brings to life the environmental, economic, social and political impact that the soil has. It shares the stories of experts from all over the world who study and are able to harness the beauty and power of a respectful and mutually beneficial relationship with soil.

Q/A to follow. Free!!! See you there.



February

Native Plant Sale

Thursday, February 10 – Saturday February 12

Location: Yamhill SWCD Parking Lot

This fundraiser for Miller Woods always relies heavily on volunteers. We'll provide lunch, snacks, and knit hats with our logo to all volunteers. Hope to see you there. **Contact Irma at 503-472-6403 ext 117**

Prairie Conservation Public Meeting

Wednesday, February 16th at 6 pm

Location: McMinnville Community Center

Come and hear about the District's exciting new program which will focus on developing a Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) for private landowners who have Kincaid's lupine and/or Fender's blue butterfly on their property. We will discuss the upcoming survey season when we hope to visit a large number of properties to locate these species. Landowners will gain knowledge as to life cycle requirements of these species as well as be informed on obligations under the federal Endangered Species Act and options for compliance.

Kids Day at Miller Woods - FREE

Monday, February 21st from 11am - 2pm

Location: Miller Woods

The kids have off from school, let them spend some time at Miller Woods learning about the outdoors! Laura McMasters and special guest Mark Leppin will focus on capturing and learning about the life cycles of aquatic insects.

Important things to bring, good sturdy shoes, lunch and snacks **Contact Irma at 503-472-6403 ext 117 to reserve your spot.**



Learn and Work at Chegwyn Farms

Saturday, February 26th 9am

Location: Chegwyn Farm off Grandhaven Street

Come learn about habitat restoration underway on the farm. Volunteers needed to help hang bird boxes around the property. Chegwyn Farm is near Grandhaven Elementary School, 3471 NE Grandhaven Drive in McMinnville. Snacks & Beverages included!

March

Kids day at Miller Woods - Free

Tuesday, March 22nd 11am-2pm

Location: Miller Woods

The kids have off from school, let them spend the day learning about the outdoors! Laura McMasters and special guest, Karen Hoyt (Raptor specialist) will be focusing on Birds and Reptiles. **Important things to bring, good sturdy shoes, lunch and snacks**

Contact Irma at 503-472-6403 ext 117 to reserve your spot.

April

Horse Management Workshop

Saturday, April 16th Time: TBD

Location: Fitzgerald Farm

Learn about best management practices for horses including manure management and water conservation. More details to come.

Earth Day Event at Miller Woods - Free

Saturday, April 23rd 10am

Location: Miller Woods

Yamhill SWCD will be holding its fourth annual Earth Day celebration. Guided hikes by staff and volunteers. Laura McMasters and special guest and bat expert, Lowell Spring, will be focusing on mammals and tracking. **Important things to bring, good sturdy shoes, lunch and snacks**

Contact Irma at 503-472-6403 ext 117 to reserve your spot.

May

Woodland Tour – For 5th Graders

Wednesday, May 10th – Thursday May 11th 9am

Location: Cruickshank Farm

We are looking for volunteers for this year's woodland tour. If you are interested in volunteering, please **contact Irma at 503-472-6403 ext 117**

Upland Prairies 101 – A Primer for the Most Endangered Habitat in Yamhill County

Friday, May 20th Time TBD

This workshop will be an introduction to upland prairie habitat. It will describe what elements make up a prairie, what species it supports, what legal obligations go along with it, why it is threatened and what can be done to preserve this increasingly rare habitat. Tour sites will include examples of intact native prairie as well as prairies which are actively being restored.

June

Farmers Market – McMinnville

Last Thursday of each month

1:30 to 6 PM.

Yamhill SWCD will host a booth related to natural resources at the market.





December 2010

Newsletter of the Greater Yamhill Watershed Council:
 “Working to improve our watersheds”

Mission Statement

The Yamhill Basin Council works to improve watershed conditions and promote awareness and understanding of watershed issues to achieve healthy forest, farm, urban, and riparian communities in the Yamhill Basin.

Greater Yamhill Watershed Council

Officers

Annette W. Frank *Chair*
 Dave Hanson *Chair Elect*

Staff

Bernadette Hansen *Council Administrator*
 Jeff Sanders *Watershed Coordinator*
 Denise Schmit *Monitoring Technician*
 Corissa Kunze *Monitoring Assistant*

Stakeholder Groups

Agriculture
 Bureau of Land Management
 City/County Government
 Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde
 Environmental Groups
 Forestry
 Students
 Utilities
 Small Woodlands Assoc.
 Watershed Residents
 Yamhill & Polk SWCD



Aplodontia rufa
 (Mountain Beaver)

P.O. Box 1517
 800 NE 2nd Street
 McMinnville, OR 97128-1517
 Phone: 503.474.1047

The Kingfisher



GREETINGS FROM THE CHAIR!

This is it, the Greater Yamhill Watershed Council’s final article in the Kingfisher newsletter. It is with sadness and excitement that this commentary is brought to you. 2010 has been a turbulent one, yet during this turbulence the Council has seen impressive growth and change. One of the most significant changes is our transitioning to a nonprofit, stand-alone organization. The GYWC has great appreciation for the Yamhill Soil and Water Conservation District, being our parent organization overseeing and collaborating with the watershed council for the past 13 years. But the time has come to cut those motherly strings and go our own way. **Thank you SWCD** for all you have done!!

However, excitement grows knowing that as recently as a month ago the Articles of Incorporation were filed with the State of Oregon, bringing the GYWC that much closer to obtaining nonprofit status and the benefits associated with this. As a nonprofit organization, we will be able to apply for funding from such grantors as the Meyer Memorial Trust, the Oregon Community Foundation and many others. It will open the door to many more funding opportunities and allow the GYWC to flourish in ways it has never had in the past. With this new status comes considerable responsibility, as well as providing notable incentive for people and groups that we previously were unable to tap. Furthermore, this new nonprofit status bestows a different standing for the GYWC within the community that is much more attractive to prospective council members, as well as new partnerships.

Welcoming new members and creating new partnerships will be key in the coming year, thus making them one of the priorities for me as the chair. Recruiting new council members, engaging current members and volunteers is always at the forefront. It is a topic needing specific focus because it is the very foundation of the watershed council and its works to educate the community and improve the health of the watershed. Therefore, my goal as chair in the coming year is to focus on outreach and education and in doing so, recruiting new council members. A first step to moving in this direction is getting our website updated, making it more user friendly and easily accessed. In addition to the website, we plan to circulate our own electronic newsletter - so keep your eyes open for these coming soon.

Finally, I want to take time to thank staff and volunteers for all their hard work to make the Projects Tour a success. We not only gained a new council member, (welcome JL Liddane!) but we had prominent attendees who we hope to collaborate with in the very near future. This success is just one of many as we move into our new status as a nonprofit, 501(c) (3) organization. Thank you all for your hard work; it is appreciated immensely!

Annette W. Frank,
GYWC Chair

LEAVE IT TO THE BEAVERS!

During the early to mid-nineteenth century, beavers faced near-extinction due to unregulated trapping across North America. Because of this, widespread environmental damage occurred due to the drying up of many streams and rivers that were formally sustained by high water tables associated with beaver dams. Additional environmental impacts had occurred through more frequent and severe flood events, stream channel incision due to increased stream flow velocities, and the drying of stream-side riparian areas. In addition, many of the wetlands created by beaver dams were disappearing along with the benefits of increased biodiversity and natural attenuation of water pollutants. Although beaver trapping has now become obsolete, the State of Oregon still regards them as “predatory” animals and permits landowners to “eliminate” them in order to protect their property from damage.

Why is it then, that here in the Beaver State we simply do not tolerate Beavers? There is a beaver on the State flag and also one on the State quarter, but when we see one on our land...it’s all-out war! A high-powered rifle has typically been the quick and easy way to mitigate a beaver problem as many landowners are not willing to invest the time required to beaver-proof their property. It’s a fact that beavers can cause problems for some landowners including damaging stream-side trees or crops and causing minor flooding, however, the benefits that beavers provide far out-weigh the drawbacks. Unfortunately, even today many land owners do not understand the importance of beavers and the vital role they play in our ecosystem.

The Greater Yamhill Watershed Council (GYWC) conducts many types of projects that are aimed at preserving wildlife habitat and restoring impacted areas throughout the Yamhill Basin. Degraded water quality, reduced water availability and impacted aquatic habitat are the primary issues the GYWC is faced with everyday. Unfortunately, due to historically poor watershed management practices, one of the most important project types we are now faced with is stream and riparian restoration.

Because of the historic and misguided practice of stream “cleaning” (removal of all natural wood debris such as logs and beaver dams) there have been significant impacts to our watersheds. This stream cleaning was essential to historic splash-dam logging practices used to transport logs downstream. It was also thought that these in-stream wood “obstructions” were inhibiting the passage of fish, therefore a movement took hold that encouraged the removal of all in-

stream barriers in even the smallest of streams. Naturally, any dam-building beavers were shot on-sight. By the 1960’s much of the stream cleaning activities had been completed and, to the amazement of most people, most areas experienced significant *reductions* in fish populations - the exact opposite of what was expected.

Since those times, numerous studies have confirmed that beaver dams do not constitute barriers for fish and are actually beneficial to fish populations as they provide refuge and habitat for both spawning and resident species. Studies have also determined that not only do beaver streams support larger fish populations, but the fish also grow bigger and healthier. Naturally, beaver dam ponds also provide habitat for mussels, crayfishes, amphibians and other aquatic and terrestrial animals...including beavers!

In an effort to reverse the negative impacts that debris (and beaver) removal has had on our watersheds, many organizations (including the GYWC) are spending millions of dollars every year installing wood debris and engineered structures in an attempt to restore these impacted streams. These restoration activities have helped to prevent further damage that includes the deterioration of aquatic and riparian habitat, increased stream velocities and erosion, higher frequency of flooding and reduced fish populations. These structures are carefully designed to provide long-term benefits related to aquifer recharge, water retention, water quality, riparian vegetation and wildlife habitat. Ironically these are the same benefits that beaver dams provide, except beavers provide installation and maintenance free of charge. In recent years, hundreds of in-stream structures have been installed across North America however; many areas are simply beyond repair.

Beavers can cause damage to trees and beaver dams can cause localized flooding, but only recently has there been any thought given to how people can live with beavers. There are many *very simple* techniques landowners can implement to prevent beavers from causing property damage. The use of these techniques will help prevent tree damage and allow the land owner to moderate water levels in beaver ponds. Visit the web site link below to learn about learn how to eliminate impacts to your property while allowing beavers to remain and do the job they do so well.....protecting our watersheds.

http://www.dfw.state.or.us/wildlife/living_with/docs/beaver.pdf

Native Plant Highlights

By Lisa Blackburn, NPSO

Kinnikinnick (*Arctostaphylos uva-ursi*)

Kinnikinnick or bearberry is a low growing (up to 6" inches) matted plant well suited as a ground cover. It has smooth red-brown stems, dark green leathery oval leaves, and small, pale pink or white lantern shaped flowers which produces a red berry. Kinnikinnick is a very common plant found in cool regions throughout most of the Northern Hemisphere. It was very useful as a folk medicine to Native Americans who used it as a tea for treating numerous conditions including kidney stones, bladder infections and indigestion. Kinnikinnick is a good choice as a soil stabilizer, especially on sandy to medium textured soils. It is moderately shade tolerant (grows in open spaces and under partial shade of tree canopies) and highly drought tolerant. Kinnikinnick requires very little maintenance once established and is very long lived.



Twinberry (*Lonicera involucrata*)

Twinberry is a long-lived deciduous native shrub which grows up to 10 feet in height. Leaves are bright green, elliptical in shape, and paired opposite each other on the stem. Flowering occurs in June-July, with small, tubular yellow flowers growing in pairs. The name "twinberry" is based on the paired black berries the plant produces. Twinberry is found throughout the western United States from Alaska to Mexico growing in moist forest openings, swamps, streamsides, and meadow edges, ranging in elevation from sea level along the Pacific Coast to subalpine sites in the mountains. In the garden, twinberry flowers attract hummingbirds and birds feed on the fruits. Twinberry prefers moist, well-drained soil in full sun or partial shade, and is tolerant of cold climates.



Coast redwood (*Sequoia sempervirens*)

Coast redwood is an evergreen long-lived tree living 1200-1800 years or more. These are the tallest trees on earth, reaching up to 380 feet in height and 25-26 feet in diameter. The bark is very thick and fibrous with a bright red-brown color when freshly exposed, which led to the common name of redwood. This thick bark provides good protection from fire and insect damage and is a major reason for the tree's long life. The roots are shallow and wide-spreading. Before commercial logging and clearing began by the 1850's, this massive tree occurred naturally in an estimated 2.1 million acres along much of coastal California and the southwestern corner of coastal Oregon. Because of its resistance to decay, redwood was extensively used for railroad



Native Plant Society of Oregon (NPSO)

The Native Plant Society of Oregon (NPSO) is dedicated to the enjoyment, conservation and study of Oregon's native plants. The NPSO Cheahmill Chapter hosts monthly meetings on the 4th Thursday of each month at 7:00 p.m. in the Carnegie Room at the McMinnville Public Library. Presentations this year at the meetings have included the flora and fauna of Denali National Park, the sex life of plants, and historical tribal uses of native plants in our local area. Upcoming presentations include on January 27th a comparison of modern day inventions against the ability of plants and animals to engineer devices (think zipper or serrated blades) and an update on sudden oak death (February 24th). The Cheahmill Chapter will also host their annual wildflower show on Saturday May 20th in the Carnegie Room. The Chapter maintains a demonstration garden around the McMinnville Public Library where people can learn to identify and appreciate Willamette Valley native plants, experience how they can be used in the landscape, and learn the value and wisdom of using and preserving our native plants. Come to a monthly meeting or the wildflower show and experience the beauty and wonder of our native plants.

ties, and more recently in gardens as borders, steps, etc. Redwood burls are used in the production of table tops, veneers, and turned goods. Although not native to the Willamette Valley, the trees grow well here in garden settings. When deciding to grow a redwood, you must consider its extreme size and its incredibly rapid rate of growth. Once established, a redwood adds 5 to 6 feet each year and has been known to grow 150 feet tall over the course of one lifetime. Mulching increases survival of planted seedlings by reducing water evaporation and reducing competition from shrubs. Seedling survival can also be enhanced with the use of shade.

Managing Your Property for Birds

Birds will enhance the beauty and functionality of any natural space. The Willamette Valley is an excellent area for birding. Oregon is ranked 5th in the nation for bird diversity and there are over 500 species of birds that use Oregon at some point in their lifecycle, over 200 of which spend some time in the Willamette Valley. This diversity is partly derived from Oregon’s location in the Pacific Flyway migratory path. Creating an environment that will be suitable for the great variety of species we can find in Oregon is not always easy, but there are some simple things that every landowner who is trying to attract birds to their property should consider.



Most property owners creating backyard habitat for birds want to be able to experience the birds they attract conveniently close to their homes. However, having some sort of distance or buffer between your home and the quality bird habitat you are trying to create is important to ensure that the birds will not be disturbed. During the nesting season is when birds will be the most selective, sometimes following very specific habitat requirements, and they will abandon nests if they feel like they are threatened.

Increasing the structural diversity of habitat is one essential step to attracting birds to your land. Uniformity may be attractive to the human eye, but if you want to attract a larger diversity of bird species it is best to incorporate a variety of layers of vegetation between the ground and treetops. This vegetative layering can be enhanced by including plants that will provide an adequate amount of cover and food as the seasons change. Clustering your plantings instead of planting individuals will also improve the habitat quality for birds by creating better cover. Another way to add to structural diversity is to leave downed wood or snags which birds will use for foraging and cover.



When choosing plants that will enhance the bird habitat on your property, it is important to consider the plant community that is already present. This will give you some indication of what kinds of plants will do well in the soil and climate that you have. When selecting the types of plants that would best attract birds, you should keep in mind: Will this provide good nesting habitat or protective cover? What kind of food will this plant provide? It is also important to include floral plant varieties; these plants will attract pollinating insects and provide a source of food for insectivores. Supplementing your properties habitat with species specific bird boxes and feeders will also increase the probability that a greater diversity of birds will populate the area.

Plants to consider planting for song birds from ODFW’s Naturescaping Guide

- Miner’s Lettuce
- Chickweed
- Strawberry
- Wood sorrel
- Sunflower
- Dandelion
- Blueberry
- Grapes
- Pine
- Oregon Oak
- Maple
- Elderberry
- Dogwood
- Serviceberry
- Snowberry





Gaining Ground Farm Goes Solar

By: Michael J Paine, Farmer



More than three years ago we began to imagine how we could reinvent the irrigation systems at Gaining Ground Farm. The most challenging issue for us has always been electricity and how to irrigate without it. We have no power in or even near the fields. The way our land is situated and how the power was run did not avail us any traditional options and the cost of a longer line and the twelve month road that would have needed to be installed and maintained would have been cost preclusive. For our first three years (and the better part of the three that followed) we used high pressure, gas powered pumps to push water all over the property. While these pumps were efficient as high-pressure movers of water, they created numerous challenges to our system. Being gas powered, they needed to be refilled every two hours. Even creating an oversized fuel reservoir only gained us a couple hours. One of the two pumps was more than a third of a mile away from the fields. Several times a day someone would have to stop what they were doing, and make the trek to refill the pump. This fueling scenario also made the possibility irrigating through the night and into the early hours of the day very challenging. Finally, these pumps were loud and over the course of the season took a lot of gas to run (a the cost is always much higher when it isn't even working right).

Because of the pressure and volume that these pumps moved our irrigation water at, over the years we almost completely stopped using drip/micro irrigation and went to handlines and overhead sprinklers, as the pressure and volume were more suited to this form of irrigation. However, the move to overhead irrigation brought with it even more challenges. In our organic system, weeds are one of the biggest challenges and consumers of labor hours. With overhead irrigation we were watering 100% of the field surface (i.e. between plant rows, furrow, field edges) while we were only growing on a third of it. Even with some level of mechanical cultivation we were making far more work in keeping the weeds in the fields at a reasonable level. Having to spend more time cultivating was a bitter pill to swallow and there were not extra hours to be had in any case. These hand lines were also very difficult to move. While we had acquired several sets to limit the amount of movement between fields, they still had to be moved across fields as often as our irrigation calendar required, which seemed like constantly. We needed a change.

I had started to work out what a solar powered system

might look like in the field and did some research into how it might come together. Early on in my design I went to the Yamhill Soil and Water Conservation District and I asked Mike Crabtree what his thoughts were. From that point on he and the conservation district were crucial partners in the design and implementation of the project. The first step was the district connecting us to a USDA engineer that took our rough idea and ensured it was safe and as efficient as possible. In the meantime, Mike and I kept tweaking the system from a users standpoint. The biggest design challenge in the solar portion of the project was how we would store power. I was hoping to avoid a large battery bank in the system. We decided that using our hillside and incorporating a gravity flow aspect to the system would be the best solution to our storage needs. Furthermore, it became clear that we could add a number of elements to the system that would not only add efficiency but also ameliorate other issues we were having on the ground.

The system was completed this summer. A 2-kilowatt solar array powers a solar specific pump (made by Sunpumps). During solar hours of the day the pump pushes water up the hill to 10,000 gallons worth of storage tanks. On the shoulders of the day and through the night we gravity feed water back down the hill to computerized valves that control the irrigation in the fields. Our irrigation is now entirely drip. Mike also designed an adjunct system that catches all of the rainwater off of our house and shop and directs it to the holding tanks. Furthermore, the overflow from the tanks gets routed back down the hill (via drainage pipe) and catches the rainwater off of the barn before going back down to the pond. This redirection of water not only insures that the water gets to the pond where it can be used, but channels thousands of gallons away from our roads and paths giving us added erosion control benefits. While we were able to do some experimenting late in the season this year, the real test of the system will come next season. That said it is perfectly clear that we will far exceed expectations on the time savings and increased efficiency that we had been hoping for. It seems possible that we can cut our water consumption by as much as half and at the same time increase the efficiency of our water delivery to our crops. Between the time we used to spend directly on irrigation and time saved from cultivation, we might have several hours per day that we can dedicate to other farm activities. I hesitate to add we might even be able to take a day off. What is for sure is that this system would not have been possible without the assistance and guidance of the YSWCD, and for that both farmers and crops are grateful.

ITEMS FOR SALE AT THE DISTRICT OFFICE

NEW POSTERS

Available for SALE:
LOW IMPACT LIVING

RAIN GARDEN

See Website for all
available posters.



\$10



\$10

T-SHIRTS



\$10

"DIRT Shirt" available in
Youth & Adult Sizes



\$10

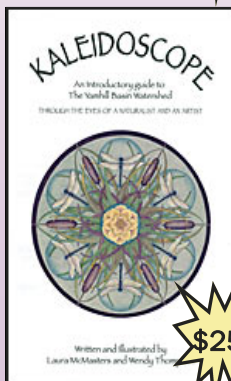


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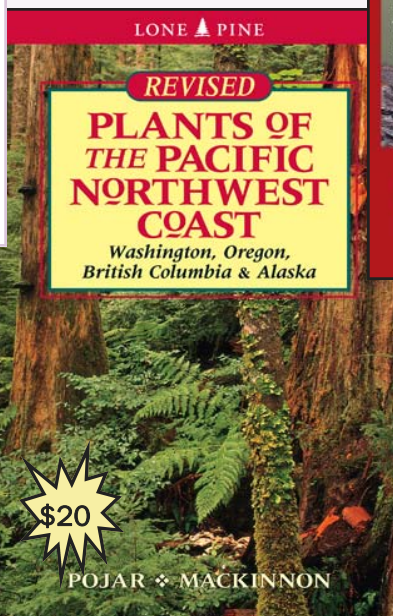
Field Guide to Weeds
of the
Willamette Valley



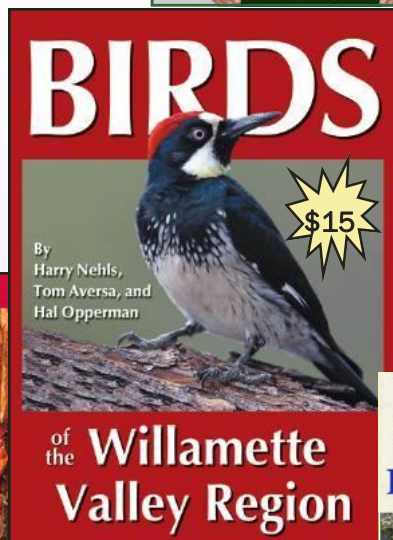
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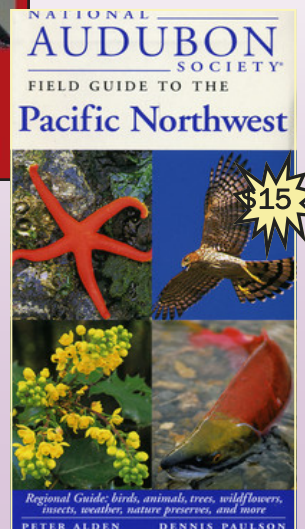


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Conservation Notes – 12

20th Tree Sale Event Scheduled - Volunteers Needed

Yamhill SWCD is looking for volunteers to assist with its annual native plant sale. This event has been organized for 20 straight years during which time over 750,000 native trees and shrubs have been distributed. Proceeds from the sale go toward Miller Woods education program.

Help is needed as follows:

- Feb. 3, 4 for plant labeling, table set-up
- Feb. 7-9 for filling of pre-orders
- Feb. 10 - 12 Day of Sale - help customers
- Feb. 20 post sale cleanup

Contact Irma Koyama
503-472-6403
Yamhillswcd@frontier.com

Conservation Christmas Ideas

The district has a great selection of native plant T-shirts, colorful posters, plant and animal ID books, bird nesting boxes, and other surprises have accumulated at our office. We are offering these at great prices while supplies last. See our website for selection and prices. www.yamhillswcd.org

