



100 Valleys

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THE WINCHESTER DAM

A Slow-Motion Ecological Disaster...by Ken Carloni

The Winchester Dam has degraded the fish runs and aquatic habitats of the North Umpqua River for over a century. It is currently undergoing repairs that will not improve access to the upper North Umpqua River by salmon and steelhead. The state and federal agencies that regulate dams, fisheries, water rights, and water quality all failed for decades to use their authority to require the dam owners, the Winchester Water Control District (WWCD), to bring the dam and its antiquated fish ladder up to current standards. The latest repair continues this lax enforcement: the dam owners were permitted to use the least expensive methods possible for the repairs, which involved drawing down the reservoir. This also drains the fish ladder, blocking access to critical habitat during the migration of imperiled summer steelhead, spring chinook and coho salmon and decimating lamprey larvae in the reservoir pool.

Work on the dam closed the fish ladder on Aug. 7th and was supposed to be completed by Aug. 28th. The WWCD could not complete the work on time, so the owners have predictably been granted an extension until Aug. 31th. As I write, migrating salmon and steelhead continue to be blocked from their natal streams as the reservoir refills.



Winchester Dam Construction, Aug. 17, 2023. Photo by the author.

The Winchester Dam is a derelict structure originally built 4 feet high in 1890 to run a lumber and grist mill. Using wood crib with cobble fill construction, the dam height was later raised to its current 17 feet in the early-1900s as a hydropower facility. A fish ladder was installed in 1945 to improve passage for migrating fish, and counts began the next year. After PacifiCorp discontinued generating hydro power at the dam in 1969, ownership was transferred to the WWCD who now maintains the dam solely to provide a private water ski lake for approximately 120 landowners surrounding the reservoir. Dams are allowed in Oregon ONLY for power generation or irrigation, but the Winchester Dam is "grandfathered in" because it predates those rules.

According to the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODF&W), the Winchester Dam impedes access to 160 miles of high-quality habitat for salmon and steelhead, and is one of the state's highest priorities for fish passage correction. Closing the ladder has now completely trapped those fish in the warm water below the dam with no cold-water refuges nearby. Ironically, rising temperatures earlier in the summer and rapidly diminishing summer steelhead numbers had compelled the ODF&W to shut down all angling in the North Umpqua from August through November. It is incomprehensible that the ODF&W is one of the agencies that signed off on a plan that completely blocks access to 160 miles of high-quality steelhead habitat during a critical time for the survival of this iconic run.

Upcoming Events:

- Umpqua Brew Fest will be held downtown in conjunction with Blocktober Fest October 7, 2023
- September 23rd– Tipsoo Peak hike (6 mile round trip)
- See Conservation for a few important agency webinars
- Combined Federal Campaign kicks off in October. Federal employees and retirees can contribute from their payroll deductions

Our Mission:

Umpqua Watersheds is dedicated to the protection and restoration of the ecosystems of the Umpqua watershed and beyond through education, training, advocacy and ecologically sound stewardship.

THE WINCHESTER DAM

A Slow-Motion Ecological Disaster continued...

Umpqua Watersheds is a member of a coalition that includes WaterWatch of Oregon, the Native Fish Society, the North Umpqua Foundation, the Steamboaters, Pacific Rivers, and the Conservation Angler, and we've been working for years to raise concerns with agency and government officials over the WWCD's chronic non-compliance with state and federal repair permitting, engineering, water quality, and dam safety requirements, and calling out WWCD's apparent disregard for protections for fish and wildlife despite the essential habitat importance of the North Umpqua for salmon and steelhead.

The coalition has pointed out serious ecological problems that should have been addressed by the dam owners before permit should have been issued including:

Blocking Upriver Spawning Habitat: First and foremost, the poorly functioning fish ladder was constructed with a number of tight jumps, right-angle turns and little ability to control flow velocities, making it difficult for fish to navigate it under a wide range of flows. The ladder is also on the north side of the dam while the main flow of the river is toward the south. As a consequence of the "false attraction" of the main current, migrating fish spend a significant amount of time and energy jumping against the dam before they finally find the weaker flow that takes them to the ladder. An Oregon Dept. of Fish and Wildlife official is [quoted](#) as saying "It's passing fish. But again, we also recognize that the dam is delaying migration. And that was one of the major reasons for moving it up on that statewide priority list [to improve fish passage]". The ONE THING in the WWCD proposal that would have made a minimal improvement is fixing the leaks in the dam footing that were creating attractive flows causing injury to fish on sharp concrete and rebar. Unfortunately, photos taken as the reservoir refills show water continuing to leak under the dam.

Injury and Predation of Out-Migrating Smolts: Not only does the dam slow upstream migration, but the 17-foot fall onto bedrock injures or stuns out-migrating smolts, making them easy prey for predators that feast just downstream.

Massive Loss of Lamprey Larvae: Lamprey are jawless fish that are among the most ancient vertebrates, having evolved over 130 million years BEFORE the first dinosaurs walked the planet. Lamprey larvae (known as amocetes) spend the first 2 to 7 years of their lives as filter feeders in sediments of slow-moving side channels and alcoves before beginning their migration to the ocean. Even though reservoir drawdowns during past dam repairs have killed untold thousands of amocetes, sprinklers that were planned to keep at least a small percentage of them alive were deployed late, leading to another massive die-off. After the dam owners failed to conduct an adequate salvage required by their permits, dozens of agency employees spent the first few days of the drawdown in a largely futile emergency effort to save as many as possible. "Save" meant moving amocetes to the narrowing flow of the river where many would fall prey to all of the fish in the reservoir that were also crowded into that much smaller space. The cost of deploying so many state and federal workers has not yet been calculated but will likely run several tens of thousands of state and federal tax dollars.



Lamprey larvae stranded by the Winchester Reservoir drawdown, Aug. 7, 2023. Photo by the author.



Winchester fish ladder. Note sharp right angles and small, shallow channel access, Aug. 9, 2023. Drone image by Kasey Hovik.

The Dam DOES NOT Block Access to Invasive Smallmouth Bass:

Ryan Beckley, the president of the WWCD, has been [quoted](#) as saying "It appears as though the Winchester Dam and its fish ladder, in its current configuration, is keeping out only smallmouth bass. It's allowing salmon, it's allowing trout, it's allowing steelhead in huge and vibrant, healthy numbers." In a [recent News-Review article](#), Beckley said that without the dam "...every other kind of invasive species that's in this river [would] migrate their way right up this river and they would destroy this habitat." These statements are laughable for a couple of reasons.

First, if the ladder was passing "huge and vibrant" numbers of salmon, the ODF&W would not have made it one of the highest priority dams in Oregon for fish passage improvement. But the biggest red herring in this statement is the pervasive myth that the dam is somehow blocking smallmouth bass (smb), an invasive predator known to prey heavily on out-migrating salmonid smolts. The 12-inch steps of the ladder present a much smaller challenge to smb than Red Beach and Burkhart's

Rapids do a few miles downstream – so if smb can make it to the dam, a percentage will make it across.

In a recent conversation with an ODF&W official, I was told that the first observation of smb passing through the ladder was in 1980 when 5 fish crossed the dam, and that they have been traversing the ladder sporadically ever since. Some years, none are counted, but in 2013, 27 were observed passing the ladder. I live 4+ miles upriver from the dam, and about that same year, I saw two adult smb swimming in our eddy. I worried that this was the beginning of the end, but I haven't seen a single one since. A fishing guide friend saw one at about that time at Gravel Bin, and a former Umpqua National Forest fisheries biologist told me that a team from OSU reported juveniles at the mouth of Steamboat Creek about 20 years ago. So why haven't all those bass been able to colonize the river above the dam and “destroy this habitat” in over 40 years?

All species of bass including smb require warm, slow water with lots of submerged vegetation – conditions that make smb a real problem in the warmer, slower South and Main branches of the Umpqua. However, the North Umpqua above the dam gets progressively faster and colder, making it very poor bass habitat. Native fish need wild rivers, but exotic fish thrive in domesticated ones.

Reservoir Heats Up Water in Lower North Umpqua: If anything, the reservoir with its warmer, flat water creates far better bass habitat (and poorer salmonid habitat) than the North Umpqua below the dam. As water from the cool North Umpqua spreads out in the shallow reservoir, it is exposed to significantly more solar radiation. As the warmest water from the surface of the reservoir passes over the dam, it adds heat to the last stretch of the river before it joins the South Umpqua at River Forks.

Invasive Aquatic Weeds: The warm, slow water of the reservoir also creates perfect conditions for water milfoil, a highly invasive exotic weed that can impact water chemistry, choke out other native aquatic plants, and create habitat for other invasive species including smb. A large amount of milfoil was released downstream when the dam gates were first opened on Aug. 7th. As the planet continues to warm, we can expect the dam to increasingly degrade the habitat for native species in the reservoir and downstream.

Potentially Toxic Materials: Repairs over the last several decades have included the use of pressure treated wood, with older timbers having been treated with copper-chromium-arsenate (yep, it's as toxic as it sounds). The drinking water for over 37,000 Roseburg residents comes from the south side of the Winchester Dam. No effort is being made to remove that material, and the voids in the dam are being repaired by filling them with polyurethane foam, a known source of microplastic pollution.

Downstream Water Rights: The WWCD was notified by state officials in a January 2023 letter that they were storing more acre feet of water than their filed water right claim. The reservoir refill will begin in early September and will temporarily reduce river flows downstream of the dam during the driest and hottest time of the year, likely impacting North Umpqua instream water rights intended to protect salmonids, particularly the struggling summer steel head run.

The WWCD could have installed a coffer dam behind the main dam to create a dry space over the top and face. This would not have required a significant drawdown and would have kept the fish ladder open, but that would have cost more money. Despite the ongoing storage of more water than they claim, the WWCD's proposal to cut costs on dam repairs received all necessary state and federal permits to dewater the reservoir to the detriment of lamprey, steelhead, and the Oregonians to whom that water belongs.

The Winchester Dam has no ecological value to the North Umpqua River, to the citizens of Douglas County, or to the iconic fish we revere. At an absolute minimum, the fish ladder must be brought up to modern standards. But the less costly and more environmentally responsible option is to simply take out the dam. WaterWatch has offered to take the lead in raising the money to remove the dam, but the WWCD has not surprisingly rejected that offer.

We urge you to learn more about the value of restoring free-flowing waters to one of the crown jewels of southwest Oregon's natural heritage. Please visit www.waterwatch.org, www.nativefishsociety.org and other local conservation websites and podcasts, and keep an eye out for Watersheds Moments in your inbox to stay informed on more Winchester Dam details and updates.



Water milfoil released from the Winchester Reservoir, Aug. 9, 2023. Photo by the author.

Education updateby Cindy Haws

UW Education committee and volunteers have been very busy this quarter having connected with 606 youth, 15 teachers/youth program instructors, and 44 adults. Totaling up the year so far we connected with **600+** youth, **50** adults and worked with **11+** teachers and program instructors. I would like to thank Jessica Saxton UW AmeriCorps volunteer as she did a stellar job to make this year so very successful. We implemented multi-day programs such as Eastwood Nature Days, Twin Lakes Campout, and Umpqua Natural Leadership Science Hub (UNLSH) Day Camp as well as supported school programs such as Highland Elementary School & Eastwood School 5th grade Science Camps and Douglas High Invasive Crayfish survey project. We supported Fremont school in a field trip to Dorena Dam conducting a nature walk and scavenger hunt where we learned about a unique effort by the Army Corps of Engineers to improve conditions for salamanders. We also tabled at River Appreciation Day where we presented information on all the different species that

rely on the river and demonstrated the new Creative Images ground water model obtained by UNLSH through a grant with **Gray Family Foundation**.



Highlights of all of these actions were seeing youth get connected to their natural surroundings and start to consider how everything works together. I personally was overjoyed to finally get youth to hike the East Fork of Cow Creek trail during the UNLSH 3 day camp event to see the old forest, riparian and stream habitat and compare it to Myrtle Creek City Evergreen Park riparian and stream conditions where we spent the first 2 days. Yes they got the differences in composition, structure, and function! And they loved the hike into the beautiful forest, played in the stream and didn't mind hiking back in wet shoes. We got to see a rubber boa, many butterflies and bees, and identify so many different species of plants. The Twin lakes event was also notable with Morgan Fay making a wonderful effort in native plant seed collection while Ken Carloni led his usual amazing hike doing plant identification along the way and also covering topics such as forest ecosystem functions, logging, other human impacts,

wildfire, and leave no trace. Larry Broker also led instruction on the geology of the Twin Lakes area. The River Appreciation Day poster describing all of the species reliant on the river and the Creative Images ground water model were very effective in communicating the importance of protecting water resources. Lastly, the EMRiver stream table model was a big success where we used it as students could get the big picture with the stream table and then apply it to the stream when we did activities there.



Umpqua Watersheds education program has worked with so many partners this year. In total thus far we have partnered with **8** schools and organizations. Each partner brings more connections that then bring in more education opportunity and resources. In doing so the programs have become much more enriched with more educational tools and materials, more specialist instruction and many more learning activities resulting in so much more to the people we are serving.

Fall and winter of 2023 and 2024 is going to continue to offer many new and continued environmental education learning opportunities with partners. Our new AmeriCorps volunteer Julie Lowe is already an amazing educator and will bring her enthusiasm and amazing skills to the program. Along with the regular UW education programs we will be working on a new educational opportunity with the Calapooia tribe in Yoncalla in support of their youth camp and with Susan Applegate in support of her wetland and pollinator habitat work. We will also be developing educational activities around the upcoming biannual **State of the Beaver Conference** put on by the **South Umpqua Rural Community Partnership Beaver Advocacy Committee** in partnership with the **Cow Creek Band of the Umpqua Indians** to be held November 13-15th. In 2024 and 2025 major wetland restoration activities will be occurring at Shadow wetland on the Tiller Ranger District of the Umpqua National Forest that will involve education opportunities for all ages.

AmeriCorps Update...by Jessica Saxton From one AmeriCorps to the next

My last day as Umpqua Watersheds' AmeriCorps was July 31st, 2023. The Twin Lakes Youth Campout was the last activity I planned, and I am so grateful for the volunteers, UW staff, and parents who helped to support this event. Today's article is my service's highlight reel, a chance to demonstrate the opportunities my position created.



I was able to accomplish a great deal as this organization's AmeriCorps. In 11 months, I provided environmental education for 600+ Umpqua youth, hosted events, worked with six schools, and harnessed the power of 70 volunteers in our community. I had the

opportunity to host the radio show Living Downstream, which encouraged me to branch out of my comfort zone and interview various knowledgeable people. I still don't enjoy listening to my voice. Yet, I have gained much confidence by interviewing more than 30 people and producing 20 episodes.

I am genuinely grateful for the experience I gained serving with Umpqua Watersheds. I not only had the chance to give to our community as an AmeriCorps, but I also gained so much. This last year, I felt like a sponge, soaking up so much new information in environmental teaching, classroom management, civic responsibility, community service, leadership, and planning. I look back at the beginning of service and can't believe how much I have learned and grown as an individual.

This article is also a chance to thank you- to show gratitude to all the members of this organization, especially my supervisor, Kasey, who supported me during my time with Umpqua Watersheds

and while I furthered my education. Thank you to the UW Board Members and staff who provided much guidance and mentorship. Also, thank you to the Douglas County public school teachers who opened their classrooms to my environmental lessons and activities. Robyn Bath-Rosenfeld's (previous UW AmeriCorps) classroom was the first place I taught. I appreciate Robyn's guidance with classroom management and teaching. Thank you to the City of Roseburg for helping host the Martin Luther King Jr. Day River Clean Up. Finally, thank you to all the supporters, sponsors, and grantors who funded our efforts to bring watershed education to the Umpqua.

Now that my service has ended, I will stay in the area for now, pursuing a bachelor's in Natural Resources Fish and



Wildlife Conservation to further my ambitions to work with wildlife or become a public school science teacher. Serving with UW has emphasized how crucial environmental education and exploring nature is for all ages. In the future, I want to serve the community, protect our wildlife, and educate youth.

Umpqua Watersheds is welcoming their newest AmeriCorps, Julie, in September! She is an incredible woman with a strong passion for education and outreach. Watersheds is so lucky to bring her on board! She volunteered for the Twin Lakes Youth Camp Out, connected with everyone involved, and will excel as the next AmeriCorps. It takes a lot for this organization to bring on staff and resources- now that my service is over, and like you, I am a citizen supporting my local watershed. Please consider giving what you can and support UW with a donation today! This donation will go towards our newest AmeriCorps and the resources she will need as the Environmental Education and Outreach Leader. I appreciate your support and making our service possible!
The next AmeriCorps...



Hello Umpqua Watersheds Community! My name is Julie Lowe, and I am delighted to be the new Environmental Education and Outreach Leader for Umpqua Watersheds through the United Communities AmeriCorps program.

Born and raised in Montana, nature has been my home and love from my earliest memories. Having lived in both the mountains and plains of Montana, nature was my first teacher, and I have never looked back. With a degree in Artificial Intelligence and Cognitive Science, I am a life-long learner and teacher, with studies in Wilderness Management, and certifications as a Master Naturalist, and a Master Herpetologist. My expertise is with nature-based, hands-on science and I have spent over 15 years teaching physics, chemistry and natural sciences to children. With a love of learning and an overwhelming enthusiasm to teach and inspire others, especially our youngest community members, I strive to embrace the quote from Naturalist David Polis in everything I do:

'Why must we always teach our children with books? Let them look at the stars and the mountains above. Let them look at the water and the trees and flowers on Earth. Then they will begin to think, and to think is the beginning of a real education.'

While in Maryland, I was fortunate to work for two non-profit organizations, the Wilderness Society and American Rivers, learning first-hand the value of legislation on a national level as a tool to protect our most profound national treasures, our wild lands and our rivers.



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President's Corner... by Janice Reid

While I am not in the Umpqua Valley, my heart aches for the many friends challenged once again by the unhealthy smoke and threatening fires from the recent lightning strikes of last month's thunderstorm. It reminds us again how the forces of nature can shape our lives, our plans for the future, and our mental health. As we were preparing for our trip, one of my biggest worries was the possibility of fires at this time of year. My fears were not without merit. Accepting that fires will happen is necessary; what we can do about it to limit the effect on us and our friends is another. We can help the fire-fighters by protecting our homes from a wildfire. As we saw in Hawaii recently, it is not just forests that burn. The Hawaii fires brought to light the devastating effects of invasive species and drastic changes to our natural environment. The natural vegetation, although not impervious to fire, is better adapted to the conditions of our area. The ornamentals we plant around our house may be an inferno waiting to happen. On our property just north of Roseburg, we participate in the Firewise program. Although we may not do some things perfectly, we have done some things to limit our risk, and we do more as each year passes. Once I learned about the volatility of the juniper bushes that the previous owner planted, they were the priority for removal. Juniper will flame up even when they are green. Many tall, non-native grasses require yearly trimming, especially around our small native trees. As I said, our efforts may not be immense, but every effort contributes to the main goal, no matter how small.



We often think that our efforts can only contribute a little and that we need a lot of effort to make a difference. With Umpqua Watersheds, this is sometimes just the case. But even a little contribution can be immensely helpful. Keeping the office cleaned up, the facilities in good repair, and running errands or making deliveries is helpful.

Our facility requires attention, but not constant attention. Upkeep is important with 3 rental units and the main Umpqua Watersheds office. It can be helpful to contribute simple things such as weeding the back parking area, picking up trash, removing old telephone wiring, or repairing a toilet (all things that I have done).

We also have opportunities related to contacting businesses to support the radio station as underwriters, sponsoring events such as Brew Fest and River Appreciation Day, or organizing hikes and community events such as river cleanup.

Let us know if you have an idea for a radio show that you can help see through to reality. Community-related radio content is important, and we could use contributions from you.

Every little bit helps.



Executive Director's Update...by

Kasey Hovik

Over the last couple of years Umpqua Watersheds (UW) has increased our focus on building partnerships and increasing collaborations to support our mission and our community. In doing so we expand our capacity, increase our resiliency, and maximize our financial resources. In 2023 I am proud to report that we have exceeded our goals for collaboration, in fact have worked with more groups than at anytime in my 10+ years working with UW, and we have accomplished much in the process.



Lakes Campout, created Outreach displays and learned how to create radio PSA's, shows and podcasts. You can listen to Les Rodgers, the coordinator for Peer2Peer talk about it in an episode of Living Downstream on KQUA. <https://www.podbean.com/ew/pb-d9qjy-145b8c4>

Another strategic partnership we have is with Umpqua Natural Leadership Science Hub (UNLSH). Cindy Haws, UW Education Director, and long-time member of Umpqua Watersheds is the founder and Executive Director of UNLSH. We have partnered with them on a number of projects this year and our collaboration has strengthened both organizations and we are excited about many more projects we will be working on together in the coming months.



The 37th River Appreciation Day at River Forks Park on July 15th was a smashing success because of our collaboration with the Umpqua Valley BIPOC Community, Thrive Umpqua, Umpqua Natural Leadership Science Hub

(UNLSH) and guests from several Tribes from around the area. It was a delightful day! We had great conversations and people of all ages participated in a variety of events including beading, music, and games. It was a day full of enlightenment and we are working on other opportunities to work together including next year's River Appreciation Day.

In June we worked with the Douglas County Education Services (ESD) to provide a 3-week Vocational Rehabilitation summer work experience program called Peer2Peer. It is a



peer mentorship program where students receiving special education services are mentored by fellow students who train in job coaching skills. It was an amazing experience for both the students and for Umpqua Watersheds. Two students from South Umpqua High School helped prepare for the Twin



Other strategic partnerships we are currently working closely with include WaterWatch of Oregon and the Native Fish Society to monitor and report on the repairs to the Winchester Dam. Umpqua Watersheds helped by providing drone footage and water samples and our partners are taking the lead in providing public input into the project. <https://www.facebook.com/search/top?q=winchester%20dam>

We are also working with several community groups on the second annual Bloctober Fest (see Outreach article). Lastly, we continue to work closely with United Communities AmeriCorps (UCA) and the partners who work with them. We have worked with UCA since 2009 and our great history of hosting AmeriCorps members continues with our 2023-24 AmeriCorps member, Julie Lowe.

Through collaboration with our partners, we can accomplish so much more together than we could if we were going it alone. Together we provide support, energy, ideas and shared resources and it continues to help us achieve our goals and strengthen our community.

Outreach Update ...by Kasey Hovik

We are making progress on the Umpqua Outback Community Space! As expected, it is a slow process and will involve 4 stages with the goal of having the whole project complete by May 2024. At the end of last month, our



team of volunteers (Ken Carloni, Mark Eason and other volunteers) worked for several days building the stage. It was very exciting to see us make physical progress on the project. The first

community event on the stage was a wedding! Old Soul Pizza, which has the building next to Umpqua



Watersheds is partner in the project and Ray Bartram's daughter (and manager of Old Soul Pizza) got married on the stage. It is exciting to think about all of the events which will take place



in the Umpqua Outback in the months to come. We envision it to add a much needed place where people can come together to enjoy music, food, theatrical events and presentations.

We have raised almost \$20,000 in cash and in-kind donations so far but still need to raise additional \$20,000 for cash matches for grants we are seeking. All donations to the project qualify as a tax-deductible donation.

Scan to donate



gofundme

Please consider donating to support the project by going to the gofundme page <https://www.gofundme.com/f/umpqua-outback-covered-stage-and-community-space> or by scanning the QR Code below. Every little bit helps!



Our first Umpqua Watersheds event in the Umpqua Outback will be the Umpqua Brew Fest which will be part of the Roseburg Blocktober Fest event on Saturday, October 7th. One of the major goals of the Umpqua Outback Project was to enable us to have the Umpqua Brew Fest and other major events in our own facility, saving thousands of dollars in expense. We are so excited to be part of Blocktober Fest this year. It is a perfect example of many organizations working together to create something special for our community. Last year over 4,000 people came to the first Blocktober Fest and this year we hope to have over 6,000 people.

Wilderness Committee Update ...by

Robbin Schindele

Hello everyone hope you had a fun summer. The Wilderness Committee has been chugging along, moving our efforts towards making the Crater Lake Wilderness a reality rather than a proposal.



We have been at the Umpqua Valley Farmers one Saturday since a month since May and have put together

nearly 100 postcards signed by Douglas County citizen and mailed to our federal legislators. Saturday September 9 will be our last day at the market for 2023 so come on by. Sign a postcard or two and chat with the volunteers or other people who stop by.

This grass roots effort is one of the most significant things we do. Every time we're there we talk to more than 100 members of our community, not just about the Wilderness proposal but about other Umpqua Watersheds activities and events as well. Some are already familiar with our conservation and restoration work, and many know nothing about us at all. People are very interested in learning about the CLWP and most think it is protected already because it is a National Park, not true; many think if it becomes wilderness people won't be able to go there, also not true. This is our chance to talk face to face and explain why a new Oregon wilderness would be a good thing for them and the environment. Most leave, if not totally on our side at least more sympathetic to the cause.

We also gather citizens who sign up for this newsletter, join UW, donate, or sign up to say they're

interested in volunteering. I'd like to quote Thomas Paine here; "The mind once enlightened cannot again become dark."

The year we started the postcard campaign (pre-covid) we were at the market 12 Saturdays and mailed over 1000 postcards. Unfortunately, through attrition and people moving away, the committee no longer has enough volunteers to make that kind of commitment so we do what we can. Please seriously consider joining us.

The other thing we're working on right now is getting our **"Four Ladies in Tennis Shoes"** display out into the community. This Spring we framed and put behind plexiglass

four 38x34" posters that tell their story. A story of how four "just regular" Douglas County citizens convinced the forest service to protect 1955 acres as a National Research Natural Area in the 1970s. A true demonstration of the power of citizen activists. So far, we have approached the Douglas County Museum and the Roseburg Public Library as possible venues for the exhibit. If anyone has suggestions for other potential locations, please let me know at Robbin@umpquawatersheds.org

Well that's all for this time, have a great fall and keep on keep up the good fight whatever yours may be.



Conservation Committee Update...by Diana Pace



Conservation and Wilderness Committees hike on the North Umpqua Trail

During the last few months, the Conservation Committee followed up with several state and federal projects.

In July, the Forest Service held an information meeting via Zoom to update the public on the progress of **Executive Order 14072**. The order directs the Forest Service (FS) and Bureau of Land Management Lands (BLM) to define mature and old-growth forests and complete an inventory, identify threats, coordinate conservation, develop policies to address the threats, and develop climate-informed forestry practices and reforestation plans. The key is to pursue science-based, sustainable forest and land management. Stakeholders include state, local, tribal, private sector, non-profits, unions, and the scientific community. Assessing and acting on all federal forests is a daunting, slow task. In April 2023, the FS released a 68-page document describing regions and forest types. Looking at it gives one a perception of the scope of this project. The speakers explained the identification process thus far. A final report is expected this winter. The meeting was not recorded, but for more information, go to www.fs.usda.gov/managing-land/old-growth-forests.



In August, the OSBF (Oregon State Board of Forestry) Zoom meeting provided updates on the FMP (Forestry Management Plan) and the HCP (Habitat Conservation Plan). They outlined their emphasis as greatest permanent value, sustainability, revenue, climate change, and adaptive management incorporating new ideas and adjustments. Objectives outlined are food, fuel, timber, forest products, mineral resources, clean air and water, regulating services such as water, climate, carbon, and disease, nutrient cycling soil formation, biodiversity, cultural, recreational, spiritual, and scientific. Performance measures are adaptive management capacity of forests, aquatic and terrestrial habitat, carbon storage, community engagement, finances, economic opportunities, finances for counties, harvest and inventory, recreation, and education. The target for performance measures is spring 2024. Meetings and slides are recorded and posted on the Oregon Department of Forestry website. **The next meetings are Sept 6 & 7 on the department's YouTube channel. This meeting is important because the conservation community communicates that the timber industry is pressuring the OSBF to weaken the HCP and make more forests available to loggers. Public participation and comment are essential. Raise your voice! A website where you can read the FMP and HCP is www.oregon.gov/odf**

At the August **Elliott State Research Forest (ESRF)** meeting, an update was given on formulating the FMP and HCP. They

were discussing various plans for logging and wildlife protection. A quick overview of the Elliott: Since 2019, the Department of State Lands (DSL) and Oregon State University (OSU) have worked together at the DSL Board's direction to transform the Elliott State Forest into a publicly owned state research forest. The Oregon Legislature in 2022 passed Senate Bill (SB) 1546, which established an independent public agency to oversee the forest, set expectations for public accountability and transparency, and lock in ESRF's ongoing contributions to conservation, economic growth, recreation, education, and forest research. DSL and OSU continue collaborating to establish the ESRF and meet the 2023 SB 161 deadlines. The ESRF board is composed of conservation and timber interests. The conservation community is advocating for preserved habitats and less logging. OSU needs to sell timber to meet expenses managing the forest, and grants will fund some research establish the ESRF and meet the 2023 SB 161 deadlines. The ESRF board is composed of conservation and timber interests. The conservation community is advocating for preserved habitats and less logging. The next meeting is Thursday, September 21, at 6 p.m. Zoom links to join the listening sessions and more information about the forest management planning process can be found on the OSU College of Forestry website. Also, here's the link to the DSL website: www.oregon.gov/dsl/Land/Pages/Elliott. Cascadia Wildlands organized an ESRF field trip led by Francis Etherington. UW members Sally Brown and I attended. Francis provided important information on potential actions in the ESRF. The Conservation Committee advocates for no new roads and some decommissioning, generous buffers on fish-bearing waters, and areas of reserves with no logging. Keep tuned in to the opportunities for public comment.



Most recently, Conservation received a disappointing decision for the East Elk Timber Sale on the BLM. The final Environmental Assessment (EA) and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) were released on August 22, 2023. UW and other conservationists made field trips, took photos, and wrote comments. The conservation community requested Alternative 4, which would have met the BLM threshold Allowable Sale Quantity (ASQ) and



provided protections. The BLM selected Alternative 3, which includes thinning and clear-cuts, more roads, and impacts the Spotted Owl (NSO) home range. Five hundred twenty-two acres of NSO habitat will be clear-cut, and 466 acres will be affected by thinning. The two oldest units we and other conservationists commented on for protection will be thinned. UW commented on the negative impact on the network of fish-bearing streams in the project. The remaining avenue is to file an appeal to the decision to the Interior Board of Land Appeals, a complicated process.

UW President Janice Reid signed UW on to the coalition letter for the Northwest Forest Campaign regarding the Northwest Forest Plan Revisions. Also, UW signed a letter by the Forest Climate Alliance to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Congress regarding air quality standards for prescribed burns. As you can see, a small group at UW multitasks for the environment. If you are motivated, let us know if you want to help.

A WIN FOR EASTSIDE OLD GROWTH!...by

Ken Carloni

“A federal judge has found that a Trump-era rule change that allowed for the logging of old-growth forests in the Pacific Northwest violates several laws.” *NPR Aug. 31, 2023*



In an important ruling, a federal court has just declared that a rule change implemented during the Trump administration, which allowed for the logging of old-growth forests, stands in violation of key environmental laws. The ruling, handed down on Aug. 31st, represents a significant victory for eastside old growth and underscores the importance of preserving these critical ecosystems.

The Trump-era rule change, implemented in 2021, aimed to relax regulations governing the logging of old-growth trees by removing the ban on cutting trees 21 inches in diameter or greater, and instead emphasized maintaining “a mix of trees, with trees at least 150 years old prioritized for protection”. Our eastside partners argued that allowing the logging of the largest and most fire-resistant trees would have devastating consequences for these ancient forests and the species that depend on them.

The court's decision was based on several key findings:

- **Failure to Conduct Adequate Environmental Impact Assessments:** The ruling emphasized that the government failed to conduct thorough environmental impact assessments before implementing the rule change. This omission violated the *National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)*, which requires federal agencies to assess the environmental impacts of their actions and consider alternatives.
- **Contravention of the Endangered Species Act:** The court found that the Trump-era rule failed to adequately protect endangered and threatened species that rely on old-growth forests for habitat and survival. This constituted a violation of the *Endangered Species Act (ESA)*, which mandates the protection of such species and their critical habitats.
- **Disregard for Public Input:** The court also pointed out that the rule change was enacted without meaningful public participation, undermining the

principles of transparency and democratic decision-making. Public input is a fundamental aspect of environmental policy-making, as outlined in the *National Forest Management Act (NFMA)*.

This ruling mandates the immediate cessation of old-growth logging activities under the invalidated rule. It also compels the government to initiate a comprehensive review of the environmental impacts and alternatives before considering any future changes to regulations concerning old-growth forest management.

Kudos to the Greater Hells Canyon Council, Oregon Wild, Central Oregon LandWatch, Great Old Broads for Wilderness, WildEarth Guardians and the Sierra Club who brought the lawsuit and to all of our partners who provided expert testimony!



Get Involved! Join a Committee

Until further notice, our committee meetings are being held via Zoom Conferencing. If you are interested in participating in any of the committee meetings, please email kasey@umpquawatersheds.org for the latest schedule of meetings.

Monthly Board of Directors:

When: 3rd Tuesday of Every Month 5pm

For board and staff members only. If there is a topic, you feel the board should broach, let us know!

Email kasey@umpquawatersheds.org

KQUA Committee

When: Every Wednesday at 3pm

Kasey Hovik kasey@umpquawatersheds.org

Conservation & Restoration Committees

When: 1st Thursday of Every Month at 6pm

Conservation:

Janice Reid janice@umpquawatersheds.org

Restoration:

Ken Carloni ken@umpquawatersheds.org

Education Committees

When: 2nd Wednesday of Every Month at 5:30pm

Cindy Haws cindy@umpquawatersheds.org

Wilderness Committee

When: Last Wednesday of Every Month at 6pm

Robbin Schindele robbin@umpquawatersheds.org

Outreach Committee

When: Last Thursday of every month at 5:30pm

Kasey Hovik kasey@umpquawatersheds.org

Volunteers can track hours using the website. Visit umpquawatersheds.org and click on the “Get involved” tab to find the “Track your volunteer hours” selection. Fill in the information and we will take it from there!



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Check out the calendar of events on page 5!
Banquet May 7th!

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