



100 Valleys

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WHATS INSIDE:

Restoration Update : 1-3

Presidents Corner: 4

Outreach Update: 5

Executive Director's Update: 6

Wilderness Committee Update: 7

Education Update: 8

AmeriCorps Update: 9

Conservation Update: 10-11

PUBLIC FORESTS ARE NOT THE PROBLEM...

by Ken Carloni

PROLOGUE

In late December, I wrote a guest column below for the Roseburg News-Review (see below) in response to the ever-increasing drumbeat of articles and opinion page letters claiming that federal forests had been “mismanaged” before the 2020 Labor Day, blaming their “lack of management” for the increase in recent fire severity. They now claim mismanagement again because they contend that low levels of post-fire salvage logging have increased the likelihood that they will burn again. I felt the need to respond to these unfounded accusations by presenting solid, fact-based evidence from peer-reviewed academic sources to show that 1) trees in federal forests survived at higher rates than those in surrounding industrial plantations, 2) subsequent wildfires are more severe in areas that were salvaged than those left to heal on their own, and 3) natural seedling recruitment in unlogged burned forests is greater than in salvaged stands.

With an 800-word limit, no option to add footnotes, and no opportunity to include photographic evidence, I could only give the briefest of factual responses to this very complex and contentious issue. And as you might imagine, the pushback in the online comments section was swift and reactionary, particularly from one of our county commissioners with a vested interest in logging on federal lands. I spent a week cordially responding with data and science. The comment section is worth a read, especially to get an idea of the entrenched, backward-looking views of our leaders (and for a bit of entertainment).

[NEWS REVIEW GUEST COLUMN DEC. 27, 2023](#)

PUBLIC FORESTS ARE NOT THE PROBLEM

Several recent contributors to the NR have shared an opinion that local federal BLM and Forest Service lands are being mismanaged by allowing fuel to build up in old-growth forests. Without evidence, they claim this causes wildfires to burn more severely, endangering adjacent homes and private plantations.

A number of recent peer-reviewed studies at local, regional, and international scales indicate quite the opposite: forests with more old-growth and fewer plantations are more fire-resilient than lands dominated by even-aged plantations with dense, continuous fuels.



FIGURE 1. An extremely fire-prone 30-40 year-old plantation in southern Douglas County owned by a large timber corporation. Note the heavy density of hazardous fuels on both the lower tree trunks and on the ground.

Even though there is typically more biomass in a native forest, the structure of their fuels makes plantations burn more severely. Old-growth forests are cool and moist, providing double the stream flows of plantations¹. Large, widely spaced trees with uneven heights,

thick bark, and separated crowns are highly resistant to wildfires. These older forests commonly exist as islands on public lands that were also heavily clearcut and replanted in rows a few paces apart beginning in the middle of the last century. Stand on any viewpoint in the public/private BLM “checkerboard,” and 60-80% of what you see will be carpets of plantations.

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 facts unequivocally support the common-sense conclusion that dense, flammable plantations put the last stands of remaining old-growth forests at greater risk, not the other way around.

In 2013, a swarm of dry lightning struck in the Cow Creek drainage, with the strikes distributed evenly across federal and private land. The Douglas Complex fire burned through nearly 20,000 acres of public and private timberlands. Heat patterns from satellite images revealed higher-intensity fires in plantations even though the public's old growth contained more biomass. Subsequent analysis confirmed that observation: weather was found to be the biggest driver of tree mortality, but "...intensive plantation forestry characterized by young forests and spatially homogenized fuels, rather than pre-fire biomass, were significant drivers of wildfire severity."²

An analysis of the 2020 Archie Creek Fire again found that after weather, forest management is the most important factor influencing fire severity.

Winds were unusually high during a heat event as the fires were sparked at many locations along a powerline. Nearly $\frac{3}{4}$ of the 131,000-acre fire area burned severely in the first day, with public lands faring slightly better (75.3%) than private (80.7%). But after the wind event, "... there was a sharp decline in high severity fire, and we observed an increase in mixed-severity mosaics... private lands burned at significantly higher severities than federal lands."³

Archie Creek was typical of all of the 2020 Labor Day Fires: "Early-seral forests [plantations] primarily concentrated on private lands, burned more severely than their older and taller counterparts, over the entire megafire event regardless of topography"⁴, and "Under high fuel aridity but light winds, young stands composed of small trees, found primarily on private lands, exhibited a much lower survival rate than older stands composed of medium to large trees, found primarily on federal lands."⁵ The Oregon Forest Resources Institute also reports that high-severity fires were most common on "Large Private" lands followed by BLM and the USFS lands.⁶

At the regional scale, an analysis of 23.5 million acres of western conifer forest found that burn severity tended to be lower in areas with more ecological protections (less intensive management), after accounting for topographic and climatic conditions.⁷ International studies are in close agreement: fire risk increases with intensive forest management.⁸

Another common narrative implies that wildfires tend to start on "poorly managed" public lands and spread to nearby communities. A recent study of western US wildfires refutes this: "...cross-boundary fires were primarily caused by humans on private lands... Public lands managed by the US Forest Service were not the primary source of fires that destroyed the most structures."⁹

Other messaging suggests that if public timber is not salvaged, burned forests will be more flammable and will not regenerate as well as logged and replanted sites. On the contrary, black trees don't carry fires and they don't impede forest regrowth.

Studies conducted after the nearby 2002 Biscuit fire reburned parts of the 1987 Silver fire documented that salvage-logged and replanted areas "...burned more severely than comparable unmanaged areas, suggesting that fuel

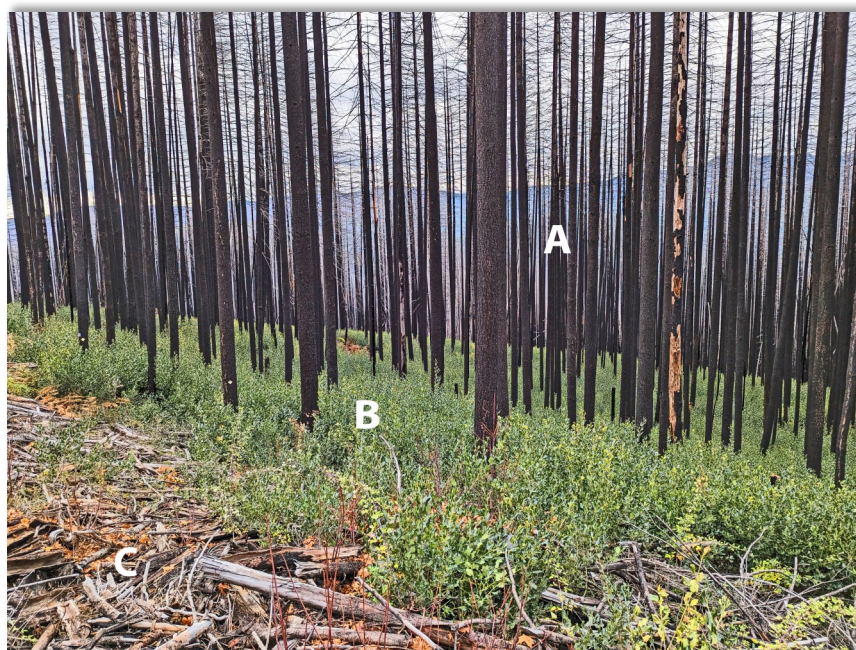


FIGURE 2. A 50-60 year-old plantation stand burned in the Archie Creek Fire. Note: (A) the minimal amount of remaining fine fuel available for a future crown fire, (B) the heavy shrub layer dominated by nitrogen-fixing *Ceanothus* species enriching the soil in the understory, and (C) the heavy layer of fuel in the foreground left from salvaging the adjacent stand.

conditions in conifer plantations can increase fire severity despite removal of large woody fuels.”¹⁰. Moreover, “Natural conifer regeneration was abundant after the high-severity fire. Postfire logging reduced median regeneration density by 71%, significantly increased downed woody fuels, and thus increased short-term fire risk... Postfire logging can be counterproductive to the goals of forest regeneration and fuel reduction”.¹¹

We can all agree: no one wants to see more megafires. But before we can start talking about solutions, we all have to recognize the problem. Science and common sense agree – the forestry practices of the last century, combined with a changing climate and increasing human-caused ignitions, means we will either need to get used to smokey summers or change the way we treat our forests.

EPILOGUE

The N-R article that motivated me to write this guest column in the first place was titled [“A balancing act: The forestland management debate”](#). After being told by the reporter what industry representatives were telling him about the poor state of federal forests, I pushed back. Although I spent over an hour giving him peer-reviewed chapter and verse on the ecological damage caused by clearcut plantation forestry and salvage logging, he chose this quote: “It’s a specious argument for them to say that federal timber is the problem. Plantations are the problem,” Carloni said. “This whole argument that federal forests are being poorly managed and that is why fires are spreading like that is absolutely false, and that’s a narrative that we have not been able to blunt because the industry has got a bigger mouthpiece. Money is speech and the more money you have, the more speech you get.”

At first, I was annoyed that he chose the last part when he could have cited any of the evidence I gave him to back up my statement. I brought this up with him a few weeks later, and he defended his choice by saying, “But so much of this IS about money that I thought it was important to put that in”. The more I thought about it, the more I realized that, yeah, people still need to be reminded of that.

On Feb. 15, 2024, the [N-R](#) ran another story about former Republican gubernatorial candidate Christine Drazan coming to town to host a “roundtable” of “community leaders from around the county” to discuss wildfire. The lead sentence? “People sitting around the table Wednesday at the Douglas County Courthouse mostly seemed to agree on one common problem concerning wildfires in Oregon — the lack of management on federal lands.” So the same now-debunked misconceptions were trotted out yet again. A government affairs executive at a large timber corporation said, “When we remove that dead wood, it takes fuels out of the fire equation. That standing wood can burn again”. Participants repeated other baseless claims I also addressed in my column. And the beat goes on...

To my knowledge, Drazan’s “community leaders” did not include any members of the scientific or conservation communities. She is now heading a new nonprofit she recently formed that, among other things, aims to “connect Oregonians with each other” and “improve transparency.” But apparently, it is only among those who can afford the most speech.

In my last response to the commissioner’s comments to my guest column, I used a 1935 quote from Pulitzer Prize-winning author and activist Upton Sinclair that sums up the situation perfectly: “It is difficult to get a man to understand something, when his salary depends on his not understanding it.”



FIGURE 3. A highly fire-resistant old growth stand in southern Douglas County. Note the minimal amount of fine fuels on the ground and lack of understory “ladder fuels”. Also note the structural differences between this centuries-old stand and the stands in Figs. 1&2. The younger stands have not had the time to develop the wide spacing and irregular canopy structure that resists high-mortality crown fires.

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President's Corner... by Janice Reid

There are nearly 1000 non-profits or charitable organizations in Douglas County, Oregon. Umpqua Watersheds is the only non-profit in the county that has fought to preserve older forests. Other

conservation or natural resources organizations have more specific missions, including fish or water protection. These organizations are dedicated and work hard for the resource, which is their main focus. At least one local organization has recently proposed to change historical oversight of federal forests and wants to take the reins on managing them. Still, the truth is that the organization, which is heavily funded, is interested in heavily impacting older forests. Ecologist Frank Edwin Egler says, "Nature is not more complicated than you think; it is more complicated than you CAN think." UW believes the system, the old growth ecosystem, is functioning well and that any plans to put old growth on a rotational schedule are short-sighted and greedy. Unfortunately, those who want to liquidate and "transition" old growth believe an 800-year-old forest can be on a much shorter rotation. Any shortcut to "develop" heterogeneous complexity is likely to fail. The old-growth ecosystem supports a variety of plant and animal life, and manipulating the system without protecting and preserving significant amounts of older forests is likely to lead down the path of a trophic cascade. You cannot trade one old-growth tree today for 4 in 350 years. No agreement or forest plan



lasts that long. The Northwest Forest Plan is 30 years old and is currently being targeted for revisions, ones that will likely lead to less, not more, protection for the old-growth forests. But UW will be there fighting to make our voices heard along with many other groups outside of Douglas County.



Upcoming Events:

- **Watershed Wednesdays**, the last Wednesday of each month from 4-6 pm at Old Soul Pizza
- **Eastwood Nature Days**- May 6-10
- **Earth Day 2024** Campaign all month in April. Check the website as it gets closer.
- **June 2 Banquet** at the UW Outback Stage- Speaker will be Paul Englemeyer
- **Annual Twin Lakes Youth Camp Out** in July- contact Julie Lowe if interested in volunteering or signing up a youth
- **Call for board members**- if you're interested reach out to Janice or Kasey
- Stay tuned for upcoming hikes and volunteer opportunities.

Outreach Update...by Kasey Hovik



Lots is going on with Umpqua Watersheds' Outreach Programs. In January, we started our monthly "Watershed Wednesdays," held on the last Wednesday of each month in the Old Soul Pizza annex. We hope it would allow us to get together with our members and update them on our projects and issues we are working on. It also allows us to get feedback, answer questions, get to know new members, and catch up with old friends. We couldn't be happier about how our first two Watershed Wednesdays have gone and look forward to this monthly gathering throughout the year.



On March 1-3, UW tabled at the 42nd annual Public Information Environmental Law Conference at the University of Oregon. The Conference attracts activists, advocates, attorneys, scientists, government officials, and concerned citizens together to share information and strategies that will more effectively further environmental and social justice goals.



Several of us attended the conference and learned a lot from the many panel presentations. We also had the opportunity to meet many of our

colleagues in the Pacific Northwest Climate Alliance (PNWCA). <https://www.forestclimatealliance.org/> We work closely with the PNWCA, mostly through Zoom meetings. PIELC allows us to get together and talk about the issues and projects we are working on together.

On April 8-9, several of us will attend the Oregon Nonprofit Leaders Conference. The Oregon Nonprofit Leaders Conference brings together as many as 350 nonprofit leaders for educational and networking sessions on current, relevant, and inspiring topics facing nonprofits today. We will also be tabling at the event to provide information about our organization and programs.



We will have the Umpqua Watersheds Annual Banquet on June 2nd, 3-7 PM, behind our building in the Umpqua Outback space. Paul Englemeyer will be our keynote speaker. Paul gave a wonderful presentation in January at the Roseburg Library at an event sponsored by the Umpqua Audubon Society. He has been involved in many conservation and restoration projects for many years. He will discuss "Land-Sea Conservation Issues and Strategies," covering marine reserves, salmon conservation efforts, the Endangered Species Act-listed marbled murrelet, and restoring beaver to our watersheds.

LAND-SEA CONSERVATION ISSUES AND STRATEGIES

Marine Reserves | Salmon Conservation
Marbled Murrelet | 30 x 30 Vision



Presented by Paul Englemeyer
Manager, Portland Audubon's Ten Mile Creek Sanctuary

Executive Director Update... by Kasey Hovik

Spring is a time for renewal and an increase in activity in nature and in organizations. This is certainly the case with Umpqua Watersheds as we continue to work on some major projects that will have a tremendous impact on our organization, the environment, and the community we serve. I want to provide an overview of some of the major projects we are working on, and hope that you will be inspired and will contribute in whatever way you can to support our work.

All the projects we are working on involve collaborations with other organizations. Our strategic partnerships have played a major role in our success over the last couple of years. I provided an overview of the importance of collaboration in my summer 2021 update <https://umpquawatersheds.org/outreach-update-summer-2021/>. We are so grateful and proud of our partnerships and our work with them. We believe the projects we are working on together in 2024 will have major impacts in the Umpqua Basin for years to come.

Eastwood Nature Days and Trail Restoration Projects

Eastwood Nature Days is an opportunity for over 500 third-grade students to learn about the natural environment. It has been an extremely successful event that Umpqua Watersheds and our

AmeriCorps project partners have participated in putting on. When long-time organizer Jeff Plummer stepped down, Umpqua Watersheds agreed to take his place in organizing and facilitating the event. This year it will be held during the week of May 6-10.



Eastwood Nature Days includes five 40-minute lessons with transition breaks and a 30-minute lunch break. The day generally starts between 9:00 and 9:30 and ends 1:45-2:00. Explorations in natural environments aligned with third-grade Next Generation Science Standards and Language Arts and Mathematics Common Core Standards.

UW and our partners will also be working to be able to create an Environmental Education Training Program for teachers. UW's Learning in the Umpqua program, started by Ryan Kincaid will be expanded to include the Eastwood environmental education program.

Situated on Deer Creek in East Roseburg is a nature area that includes a pond, a Ponderosa Pine Forest, and a Native American Plank House. The Eastwood Nature Trail is approximately one mile on a circular path that is a flat, easy walk. Side trails lead to overlooks and additional learning opportunities. In addition to providing Eastwood students with an on-site learning lab, the area is used to educate students throughout the school district.

There are lots of opportunities to work on maintaining and restoring the Eastwood Trail system and wetlands, and our Restoration Committee and our partners will be working on this very important project.



South Umpqua Beaver Survey and Restoration Project

Umpqua Watersheds will be receiving a \$97,000 grant from the Forest Service and EPA to do beaver surveys in the south Umpqua to determine where beavers are present and provide the data to work with multiple partners in protecting and enhancing habitat for beavers.

The grant will provide the opportunity to do restoration, conservation, outreach, and education related to the important role beavers have in creating and maintaining healthy aquatic and wetland ecosystems. Cindy Haws, the President of the Umpqua Natural Leadership Science Hub (UNLSH) and UW's Education Chair and member of our Restoration and Conservation Committees, took the lead on writing the grant, and we believe this opportunity will be a keystone in the history of Umpqua Watersheds.

We plan to create a template to expand these types of surveys across the Umpqua Basin, and we are also working to create a Beaver Working Group as part of the Pacific Northwest Climate Alliance (<https://www.forestclimatealliance.org/>) where we can share best practices and engage state, federal and other stakeholders to do more to protect beavers.

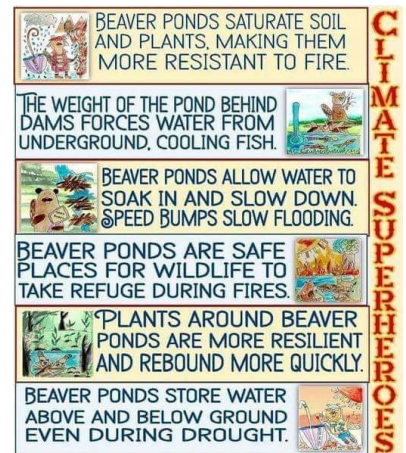
Operation Access

We have several initiatives which fall under the umbrella of a project we call "Operation Access". These programs include increasing the signal of our KQUA radio station using the Non-Commercial Education (NCE) license we received in 2023 and the Umpqua Outback Project. We continue to write grants and seek public support to pay for leasing space on a tower on Mount Scott. Our goal is to be able to "flip the switch" in June, so anyone within 20-30 miles will be able to pick up the station on their radio in addition to listening online at <https://kqua.org/>.

Last summer we constructed a new stage behind our building (<https://umpquawatersheds.org/outreach-update-fall-2023/>), and this Spring, we will put an awning over the stage and a mural behind it and purchase a 40' x 80' tent we can use for special events. We recently received a \$4,999 tourism grant from the City of Roseburg and are in the process of writing other grants to reach our goal of adding covered seating areas on both sides in front of the stage.

In addition to these projects, we have also started a monthly meeting of our supporters called "Watershed Wednesdays", held on the last Wednesday of the month to be able to meet with our supporters, update them on issues and projects we are working on, and celebrate the friendships we have made in the process of doing our work.

We have a lot going on at Umpqua Watersheds; we're doing good work for our environment and our community. None of it would be possible without the financial and volunteer support we receive from our funders and members and through our collaboration with our partners. Thank you!



Wilderness Committee Update...by Diana Pace

Greetings as we prepare for the long-awaited spring. Bob Hoehne prepared the Four Ladies in Tennis Shoes history display and Rick Kreofsky got it beautifully framed. The four friends, Yvonne

Krouse, Mary Powell, Alice Parker and Jeanne Moore, brought their findings to the U.S. Forest Service and convinced the agency to declare its 1,800 acres as a Natural Research Area in 1975. Due to the tireless research of the ladies, the Limpy Rock Research Natural Area (RNA) was established to represent ecosystems associated with a large number of special interest vascular plant species. Some of these are fairy slipper-Calypso bulbosa, ghost orchid, fawn lily, gnome plant, Kalmiopsis fragrans, and Lilium pardalinum. The display was at Steamboat Inn for the fall. Robbin arranged to have the history display at the library lobby for February. It looks great and is getting a lot of attention. The display will be at the library until May.

The culmination was an event on February 23 at the library 'In the Footprints of Four Ladies in Tennis Shoes: A Case for Wilderness'. Our very special guest was Jeanne Moore of the Native Plant Society and the sole survivor of the ladies. The evening was started by Jessie Jackson of the Takelma Cultural Center and Education Director for Cow Creek Tribe, with drums, flute, and prayer. Very inspirational. Wayne Chevalier, South

Umpqua Trail Manager, regaled us with scientific information on the value and effect of wilderness to people. Susan Applegate shared information on natural resources and climate change. The culmination was a slide show by Bob Hoehne on the Crater Lake Wilderness Proposal highlighting major water sources of 5 rivers in the proposal and wildlife corridors. It was an impressive group of supporters, 86 attended, including some of the former Umpqua Wilderness Defenders group who got Boulder Creek Wilderness approved. Check the UW Facebook site for the recorded event being posted.



Diana reports on researching National Parks and Wilderness:

- Over 80% of all National Park Service Lands are managed as wilderness
- 50 national parks have designated wilderness- for example, Mount Ranier 97%, Yosemite 95%, and Death Valley 93% with intersecting roads
- Many national parks throughout the country manage their lands and waters as wilderness. These are valuable statistics for the Crater Lake Wilderness Proposal.

The committee has asked for a meeting with the Cow Creek Tribe Resources Committee to talk about the wilderness proposal and what they would need in the proposal. February 5th the committee met with Zac Otjen, local rep for Representative Val Hoyle, to inform him about the CLW Proposal. He was very interested and will be sharing the information with Rep Hoyle. We plan on re-engaging with the staff of Crater Lake National Park and Friends of Crater Lake to update on the committees' activities and present the new slide show.

I want to praise and thank the fabulous Wilderness Committee for their dedication, particularly our UW veterans Bob Hoehne and Susan Applegate as well as Robbin Schindele, Connie Page, and Rick Kreofsky. Bob Allen is an esteemed grandfather of UW and the Wilderness Committee. His knowledge is exceedingly valuable.

Robbin is moving to Eugene but wants to stay on the committee and be involved with the work. We wish him well and will miss him. He's been a great spirit and creator for the committee. I must express that this committee is very dedicated and firmly believes in our goal. The only thing missing is some young adults! Where are our future Bob and Susan dynamos? Contact UW if you would like to help further this project. **You are needed!**

Wilderness Committee History from Bob Allen

Wowies song tune to the Whiffenpoof Song

To the tables down at Old Soul, to the place where M A dwells, to the dear old Brothers Pub we love so well. There the Wowies did assemble with their glasses raised on high, and the magic of their singing cast a spell. Tis the magic of their singing, of the songs we love so well, of the forests and rivers where we dwell. We will serenade our wilderness while life and voice shall last, then we'll pass and be forgotten with the rest. We are poor little Wowies who are on our way; we are wild on wilderness every day Rah, Rah, Rah. Dedicated songsters off on a spree, music and work for eternity, Lord have mercy on such as we, Rah, Rah, Rah.

Education update....by Cindy Haws

Winter and Wetlands: Who Would Think They Go Together? Oh yeah, chest waders and chilly water....AND The BEAVER



This quarter, education activities have trained students, educators, and citizen volunteers to complete monitoring surveys, count and identify native amphibian egg masses in wetlands. Native lentic water-dependent amphibians have been seriously impacted by invasive fish, bullfrogs, and other human impacts, including recreation access, threats from outlet stream head cut erosion, and structural modifications to the wetlands. Since I teach principles of fisheries and wildlife conservation at Umpqua Community College, I recruit student volunteers interested in a career in natural resources to help conduct the monitoring and learn about wetland ecosystem composition, structures, and functions. We had at least 12 student volunteers, three educators, and one UW citizen volunteer in the effort.



Other education activities this quarter include an interview on the *Living Downstream* radio program on why you should call a “watershed” a “water catchment.” We are also planning out all of our education programs for 2024-2026 and hoping to receive support to bring on education staff in addition to the AmeriCorps position to improve our education effectiveness and capacity. We are excited about taking on Eastwood Nature Days. This 5 day program will host at least nine schools, and we have at least 16 other education programs we will be conducting throughout the year at schools, in the woods, along the streams and wetlands, and in the wilderness.

AND The BEAVER

We are discussing adding to River Appreciation Day education information activities for youth AND adults around beavers, such as a demo of the structures and fun activities. Ideas?



We worked with Yoncalla High Natural Resources teacher Jannelle Wilde and students in two of her classes surveying at Susan Applegate's, one of the 3 wetlands we are monitoring. Along with taking down data on egg masses to estimate population conditions, we discuss the conditions of the habitat/ecosystem we are surveying. This gives students great experience for their resumes and our community volunteers learn firsthand what the issues and concerns are in regards to these wetlands. After all, if you don't go and stand next to one, you may not know that it is functioning as a population sink for our native species, and

AmeriCorps Update...by Julie Lowe

Winter seems to have passed us by in the blink of an eye, which marks the arrival of spring, my favorite season, just around the riverbend! We had a beautiful kickoff event to celebrate the best of winter spirit with our annual MLK Day of Service. Our incredible community came together with the support of



10 sponsors whose contributions made the MLK Day of Service possible. Their generosity fueled our efforts with tasty treats, revitalizing water, and the tools that made our work possible and exemplified the spirit of

community support that makes Roseburg and surrounding areas so special. Over 150 individuals took part in the event, with participants from ages 3 to over 80 representing multiple organizations from high schools, the community college, associations, special interest groups, and local businesses. Our focus was not only on trash cleanup but on invasive plant removal. Every aspect of the event, from logistics to technical plant work, showcased the collective effort and dedication of community members from all walks of life. Whether it was volunteers lending their time and expertise, local businesses generously contributing resources, or attendees enthusiastically participating, each person played a vital role in making the event a resounding success!

With spring in our sights, we've begun our work on restoration of wetlands by marking amphibians' emergence and monitoring their egg masses. Our focus this spring has been the Shadow and Drew wetlands in Tiller and the Applegate wetlands restoration area in Yoncalla. I've been thrilled to have the opportunity to engage volunteers in the field as we conduct amphibian surveys and monitor invasive plants and animals in our target areas. From enthusiastic high school and college students eager to gain hands-on experience to adults seeking fulfilling volunteer opportunities, each individual brings their unique talents and perspectives to the table. One of my favorite roles is designing intriguing and meaningful volunteer opportunities for people to make a real difference. Time spent in nature, working hands-on to protect and restore these precious areas, has a profound impact on individuals' spirits and motivations. Many volunteers report feeling more grounded, centered, and at peace after spending time in the wilderness and seeing the emergence of new life.

A highlight this early spring was the inspirational program presented by the Wilderness Committee featuring the "4 Ladies in Tennis Shoes" – 4 inspiring citizen scientists who surveyed 12,000 acres near Limpy Rock. Through their



superb documentation, photography, and data collection, they were able to justify the designation of 1800 acres as a Natural Research Area. I was honored to design the marketing materials and promote the event. I was deeply moved by the love and emotion in the room during the program, especially with the surprise arrival of Jeannie Moore, the leader of the ladies, and the moving flute and drum contributions by Jesse Jackson, president of the Takelma Cultural Center. Nearly 90 community members joined us that evening to celebrate and learn about the proposed Crater Lake Wilderness Area.

I'll now be turning my focus to the design and planning of the Eastwood Nature Days, for which Umpqua Watersheds has assumed responsibility. This annual event welcomes the third-grade classes from eight Roseburg schools, and we hope to open the event to homeschooled students in the Umpqua Watershed and Cow Creek participants. This incredible program will bring a week of environmental education to the beautiful 40-acre Eastwood Nature area. Topics will include salmon and lamprey, Native American Storytelling and Language, Water Hydrology and Ecology, Animal Adaptations, Beaver, Living Deadwood, Dendrology, and Technology, among others. Each day will have a particular focus and highlight featuring a special topic. We welcome any volunteers who would like to join us that week and share the knowledge and passion for the environment and the watersheds of the Umpqua! We especially welcome teachers who have flexibility in their schedules to join us that week to teach your favorite watershed lessons.

I've been creating new interviews for Living Downstream every weekend since October, and I'm eternally grateful to the amazing experts and enthusiasts who have generously given me their time and shared their knowledge. Their willingness to contribute to our environmental education efforts for the community is simply amazing, and I've loved the relationships and friendships I've formed through this service. Thank you all for listening to the program!

Though these have been our primary areas of focus, I have been taking a series of watershed and science lessons to Maple Corner Montessori, the Umpqua Valley Coop Homeschool community, and a specialized animal adaptations lesson to all of the eighth graders of Jo lane. I was thrilled to represent Umpqua Watersheds at the Beaver conference and showcase the Stream Table and Water Table. I spent a couple of days showing the same to the Yoncalla High School Natural Resources class, and I will be attending the PIELC conference in Eugene. We will be participating in Earth Day events, the YMCA Healthy Kids Day Event, and Kellogg Springs Camp, as well as planning for River Appreciation Day and the annual Twin Lakes Campout. There is so much going on, such an incredible amount of activity and enthusiasm, all fueled by a deep love and synergy for watershed restoration and education. The Umpqua Watershed is truly revitalizing!



Conservation Update: Lethal Barred Owl Removal... by Janice Reid

There are several opinions on the proposal by the US Fish and Wildlife Service to lethally remove barred owls within the range of the Northern and California Spotted Owl populations.¹ Spotted owls are a specialized species with narrow habitat and prey requirements. Work continues to protect the old forest ecosystem, the preferred habitat for the spotted owl, but the populations are still in peril. The invasive barred owl has been implicated as an impediment to stabilizing spotted owl populations.² A pilot project to determine if lethal barred owl removal would be successful and feasible was conducted in a few areas within the range of the Northern Spotted Owl, including right here in Douglas County, Oregon, near Myrtle Creek. Evidence indicated that lethally removing barred owls increased the occupancy of spotted owls within those areas.^{3,4} In Northern California, lethal

removals of the barred owl on the Hoopa Nation and Green Diamond Timber Resource Company lands also resulted in a rebounding of spotted owl populations. The barred owl is not native to Oregon, or the West Coast, for that matter. The range expansion is well documented and shows that the barred owl is a recent arrival to our area facilitated by European settlement as colonists moved west.⁵ Once in the west, where the main competition for resources was the smaller and more specialized spotted owl, the barred owl quickly began to overtake the territories of the spotted owl and oust its western cousin from their preferred habitat. The smaller, more specialized spotted owl cannot defend itself against the more aggressive barred owl. Exploiting this new niche and the ability to reproduce more quickly made the barred owl an emerging threat to the spotted owl in the 1980s. The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife writes, "The Barred owl expanded its range from the eastern United States. It was first reported in Oregon in the early 1970s and has since spread to forested areas throughout most of the state."⁶ The



Oregon Invasive Species Council indicates that "Invasive species are defined by Oregon Statute as 'nonnative organisms that cause economic or environmental harm and are capable of spreading to new areas of the state.'" ⁷ It is clear that the barred owl is considered

invasive and, therefore, subject to rules and regulations about invasive species at the state and federal level.

Management actions to deal with invasive species can take on many forms. It is not new that agencies have to choose one species over another. An example similar to the barred owl/spotted owl interaction is the interaction between the American

Bullfrog and the Oregon Spotted Frog, an endangered species. The American Bullfrog is a nonnative invasive frog that not only consumes Oregon Spotted Frogs but also aggressively competes for food and habitat. In addition, the young western pond turtles are consumed by the bullfrog. The Western Pond Turtle was recently proposed for listing as a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act. Proposals to lethally control American bullfrogs, a native of the eastern US, parallel the barred owl's lethal removal.

"Without management to reduce these threats, Oregon spotted frog populations will likely continue to decline."⁸ There are many examples of efforts to lethally eliminate a nonnative to restore a native species. The eradication of nonnative Brook Trout through lethal means to restore Bull Trout Populations in a stream near Crater Lake National Park is another example of the lethal removal of a nonnative species to favor the native species.⁹ There may be less opposition to these management actions because frogs and fish are not as charismatic as owls.

It is not always that a non-native species is outcompeting a native species when we need to intervene. It can be that our naïve actions in the past have resulted in changes to the environment that have resulted in favoring one native species to the detriment of another.





On our 13 acres, we are embarking on a project to restore the native Oregon White Oak habitat. Oaks have declined due to several human activities, including cattle

grazing, development, and fire suppression. We happen to have some oak habitat where native species are competing for resources. Removal of native species to favor the Oregon White Oak is a process that the Umpqua Oak Partnership promotes for some areas within the Umpqua Valley.¹⁰

With the barred owl and other nonnative species, we have to think about how they are impacting the ecosystem that did not evolve with them. Naturalist John Muir said, "When we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the universe." Barred owls are such voracious predators that they are consuming native species in quantities so large that the impact on those prey species is likely to trigger a trophic cascade within the ecosystem.¹¹

We are just learning about the effect that the extirpation of the passenger pigeon has had on our health. Lyme disease has increased and is linked to increased chipmunks, voles, and mice. Passenger Pigeons consumed enormous amounts of grain, including acorns that mice and other small mammals thrive on. Low food availability and the predatory pressure from foxes kept the rodent population in check.



Without the Passenger Pigeon, mice, voles, and chipmunks, prominent hosts for the nymph stage of ticks, increased due to increased food availability. The increased rodent population led to an increase in ticks and a subsequent increase in Lyme disease, a tick-borne illness affecting wildlife and human health.¹³

The effort to save the spotted owl may not have the desired result, but in my opinion, we have to try. We won't run out of barred owls, but as we did with the passenger pigeon, we could very well run out of

spotted owls, and that is a gamble we cannot afford to risk without making our very best attempt at keeping them in the system. There is more than one species at risk, and if we do not take action sooner rather than later, it may be too late to manage the barred owl by the time we find out what those impacts are. Changes to the forest could make the future forest look very different or disappear altogether. The decision to act or not act comes with consequences. Not acting has a higher consequence.



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 Wednesday 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 2!

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