

Network Update—Spring 2006

Newsletter of the Network of Oregon Watershed Councils. Vol 2, Number 2

Inside this issue:

Moonshadow Park Restoration <i>Tualatin River Watershed Council</i>	2
Riparian Blackberry Control <i>Oregon State University Extension</i>	3
Council Support Grant Update	3
Re-establishing Floodplain Forest <i>Middle Fork Willamette WSC</i>	4
Riparian Grazing Strategies <i>North Fork John Day WSC</i>	5
12 Years of Tree Planting <i>Applegate River Watershed Council</i>	5
In the next issue... Transitions	6

Network Moves Toward Non-profit Status

By Jason Dedrick, Network Chair

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The Network Interim Board met for two full days at the end of April in Salem for our quarterly board meeting. Taking its direction from councils provided at our gathering in Bend last November, the Organizational Development Team has maintained an astonishing pace of work. Team leader Michelle Bussard presented recommendations to the Board to move forward on several fronts in our pursuit of non-profit status for the Network. The Board affirmed these recommendations and the team will continue to work on those details as well as developing by-laws. These two efforts comprise our core tasks for 2006 and the progress is exciting.

The Board also received an update from Resource Development Team leader

Chuck Sams. With a change in the direction of the team's tasks and Chuck's impending departure, the Board thanked the previous team members for their efforts and reauthorized creation of a new team with an eye toward planning, budgeting and the opportunities to be presented once non-profit status is accomplished.

While efforts continue toward improving council capacity and skill-building, key partnership development is ongoing on several fronts. Lori Warner-Dickason from OWEB joined us to present the results of her interviews with councils from around the state concerning the Council Support process. This challenging task has produced a wealth of information and the board was very encouraged at the thoughtful manner in which designing this process for the

Continued as "Board" on Page 6

Coordinator's Corner...

By John Moriarty, Network Coordinator

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At their April meeting, the Interim Board took a significant step in meeting the request that councils made in Bend last November: they approved Articles of Incorporation for the Network of Oregon Watershed Councils. Thanks to the diligent support work of the Organizational Development Team (composed of volunteers from councils throughout the state), the board was able to reach a decision on how to incorporate as a non-profit in Oregon to best meet the needs of councils and the desire for a transparent, well-functioning statewide organization. This is a crucial step in meeting the direction that councils gave the Interim Board to take the steps for the Network to become a 501c3 organization eligible for foundation support.

In short, after a thorough and wide-

ranging discussion, the Organizational Development Team recommended that the Network begin by incorporating as a *non-membership* organization. Then, when a new more "permanent" board is elected at our annual meeting in October, they can decide if they want to revisit the issue. By being a "non-membership" organization, we can start by having *all* councils included. No one has to sign up or pay membership dues to be a part of the Network as a non-membership organization. However, all of the councils who participate are still able to vote for their representatives to the board. The Organizational Development Team felt that this would be the most inclusive, representative, transparent, and expedient way for the Network to move toward 501c3 status. The Interim Board agreed. We should be filing our paperwork to incorporate in the State of Oregon later this month.

The next step will be to draft and approve a set of bylaws for the Network. Again, the OD Team will take the lead in

working on a draft that incorporates the values that councils have said they want to see in the Network. These include: fair and broad geographic representation; inclusivity; regional control over respective regional representatives to the Board; no membership barriers; and transparent decision-making. The OD Team will be sharing bylaw information with councils in the weeks ahead. We must work quickly to be able to raise funds in the near future. Please share your input.

Network/OACD/OWEB/ODA partnership update- The Network continues to work with OACD, OWEB and ODA to develop a unified and compelling message about the importance of both districts and councils for effective watershed restoration in local communities throughout Oregon. We are discovering that this process is one of building a solid foundation of trust

Continued as "NonProfit" on Page 6

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Views Expressed in Network Update are of those of the authors, and do not necessarily represent the views of the Network of Oregon Watershed councils or its member watershed councils.

Moonshadow Park Restoration – A Lasting Partnership

By Kyle Spinks, Tualatin River Watershed Council Chair

The Moonshadow Park Restoration Project began in 1998 and recently moved into its last phase of invasive plant removal and replanting. Moonshadow Park straddles about 1,500 feet of Ash Creek and is fully surrounded by single-family homes in SE Beaverton. The park includes 4.7 acres of mostly Oregon ash and red alder riparian forest, but the understory is mostly dominated by invasives, including Himalayan blackberries, bittersweet nightshade and field bindweed.

In the past eight years, the Moonshadow Park project has led to removal of almost an acre of weeds, which have been replanted by Tualatin River Watershed Council (the Council), SOLV, Tualatin Hills Park and Recreation District, Boy Scouts of America and many dedicated neighborhood volunteers. The earlier years of the project included the Council and Clean Water Services (the local storm and sanitary system management agency) working together in obtaining permits and placing large wood debris in Ash Creek. During this last phase, Clean Water Services and the Bureau of Land Man-

agement Native Plant Co-op provided many of the native plants while others were purchased from local native plant nurseries. A handful of neighbors planted, removed weeds, took numerous photos to document the projects, provided plant storage areas prior to projects, and conducted extensive neighborhood outreach via e-mail to bring even more volunteers to the Saturday work parties.

To help with outreach, Tualatin Hills Park and Recreation District produced the first issue of the Moonshadow Messenger in the fall of 2005. The flyer gave park patrons and neighbors updates on the project, information about the park and a list of upcoming projects, all accompanied by photos and graphics. This has proven a valuable tool to keep the neighborhood volunteers interested and involved in the restoration project.

Late last year, the Council applied for, and received, an OWEB small grant for hiring a crew to cut the remaining acreage of blackberries and to replant the area with more native vegetation. Once the blackberries have been cut to knee-height, volunteers will dig out the roots during the summer and fall of 2006 and replant the cleared areas over the winter of 2006-07. Volunteers will monitor this project, documenting the growth of the newly planted shrubs and trees, and providing feedback on the overall success of the Moonshadow Park Restoration Project.

Below: Neighbors removing invasive plant species during the summer of 2005.



A Thorny Challenge to Riparian Health

By Max Bennett, Southern Oregon Research and Extension Center, Central Point, OR

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What species is found in every western Oregon county (and a few on the east side), produces an edible fruit, was introduced as a horticultural crop in the late 1800s, and has been planted for erosion control in central Washington? You guessed it – it's our friend, the Himalayan blackberry (*Rubus discolor*), recently renamed the Armenian blackberry (*Rubus armeniacus*). At some point in the murky past, Himalayan blackberry escaped cultivation and has since invaded a variety of sites, including many low elevation streamside areas, where it is the dominant understory species and often forms a monoculture. Despite its presence in riparian zones, H. blackberry is not a riparian species per se. It favors deep, moist soils, and can tolerate seasonal flooding, but not prolonged flooding or saturated soils. H. blackberry is intolerant of deep shade, and thus is less abundant where riparian canopies are dense and contiguous – unfortunately, not a common condition in most of our lowland riparian areas. H. blackberry reproductive strategies are well known: it re-sprouts vigorously from root crowns and rhizomes, roots from fallen tips, and has abundant seeds that remain viable in the soil for many years.

Some folks – usually not watershed council members - claim that H. blackberry has taken a bad rap. After all, doesn't it provide cover, erosion control, streambank stability, and food for wildlife and berry pickers? On the positive side, H. blackberry does provide channel roughness to dissipate the energy of floods. Some cover is better than none at all. On the other hand, blackberry-lined streams tend to be undercut. The root system (while extremely arduous to dig out) is relatively shallow and much inferior to that of native riparian trees. Blackberry canes often drape over steep, incised stream-

banks – look underneath, and the undercutting is often visible.

The effects of blackberry on the abundance and diversity of native vegetation are pretty obvious: Because of the intense competition for light, moisture, and other resources in Himalayan blackberry thickets, few new trees and shrubs can become established. Those that do are mainly root suckers of established plants. As short-lived riparian trees such as alder and black cottonwood die, they will not be replaced with younger trees. Hence many tree-covered riparian zones may be in danger of turning into relatively stable, Himalayan-blackberry-dominated shrub fields.

From the standpoint of riparian function, H. blackberry is probably better than concrete and shopping carts, but it's a poor substitute for a diverse assemblage of native trees, shrubs, and other streamside vegetation.

Many strategies have been used to control H. blackberry and restore native plants to riparian zones. There is no sil-

ver bullet. Herbicides in combination with mechanical control (e.g., mowing) can be very effective. Grubbing out the roots and root crowns ("burls") either manually or mechanically is possible, but labor is intensive and expensive, and may result in significant soil disturbance. Repeated mowings and cuttings have been successfully used in a few restoration projects, but patience and a strong commitment to follow-through are essential. Goats will browse the succulent leaves and canes of blackberry plants but their use introduces a whole new set of challenges (fencing, predation, damage to desirable vegetation, etc). The blackberry rust recently discovered on the Oregon coast may prove to be an important control strategy down the road. Over the long term, increasing shade in riparian areas (e.g., through planting wider buffers, planting conifers) will help. Further challenges in H. blackberry control include the potential for streambank sloughing, when thickets close to the stream are removed, and invasion by other noxious weeds. Nevertheless, it can be done, and needs to be done to improve riparian functions in many of our western Oregon watersheds.

Rubus armenicus. According to the late German botanist, H.E. Weber, "The plant is native to Armenia and was for the first time introduced to Germany about 1835 by Booth, named '*Rubus fruticosus* fr. *maximo* Booth' and, because of its large, sweet fruits, became the most frequently cultivated blackberry in Europe. Obviously it was introduced to America 1885 by Luther Burbank, and before 1885 to New Zealand." (<http://www.ou.edu/cas/botany-micro/ben/ben230.html>)



Council Support Grant Update

It's time to start thinking about the next biennial Council Support grant application to OWEB. According to Lori Warner-Dickason, OWEB's new council support contact, a draft of the new rules and application will be available on OWEB's website on June 1 for a two-week comment period. The new application will be shorter and more streamlined and the workplan and accomplishment report will be combined. According to Warner-Dickason, the new grant applications do not reflect any significant policy changes and awards will continue to be merit-based. For more information, contact Lori at (503) 986-0046.

Reestablishing Floodplain Forest in Elijah Bristow State Park

By Eve Montanaro, Coordinator, Middle Fork Willamette Watershed Council
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Elijah Bristow State Park is where Lost Creek meets the Middle Fork Willamette River. Confluence areas tend to be ecologically rich, offering a variety of habitat for both aquatic and terrestrial species of plants and animals and the mouth of Lost Creek is no exception. The confluence and nearby wetlands harbor increasingly scarce species such as Oregon chub, spring Chinook, red-legged frogs and western pond turtles.

Because these bottomland forested areas flooded regularly their soils tend to be rich. As prime areas for agricultural development, they were among the first cleared by early settlers. Although the Lost Creek confluence area remained forested longer than many bottomlands, it was eventually cleared in the early 1960s, probably to create pastureland for livestock grazing. After grazing was no longer conducted at the site, non-native blackberry and Scot's broom took over the disturbed acreage, eliminating any chance that the area's native forest of red alder, black cottonwood, Oregon ash, big-leaf maple and incense cedar would return on their own, to blend into the adjacent forest.

The Middle Fork Willamette Watershed Council adopted a 27-acre area at the confluence to restore to floodplain forest. Funds were obtained from the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board and the Oregon Department of Parks and Recreation in 2003 to implement Phase One of the restoration project. Phase One involved the removal of Armenian blackberry and scot's broom from 3.5 acres within the 27-acre project site. Once these non-native plant species were removed, volunteers planted over 700 native tree species. An innovative solar-powered irrigation system was installed and drip irrigation delivered water to the newly planted trees. In all, over one thou-



sand trees were planted and have a survivability rate of 95%— believed to be a result of the irrigation system.

The Council has just received nearly \$200,000.00 to implement Phase Two of the Lost Creek Confluence Restoration project. Phase Two will include removing invasive plant species from 12 acres and creating a mosaic of native plant communities. The plant communities will consist of grass, shrub and tree species that were historically established at the site. The Council will work with local elementary school children to salvage native plant species at the site before removing the invasive plant species. The plan for Phase

Above: Phase One Tree Planting
Below: Phase Two, on right of Creek

Two also includes enhancing habitat for the western pond turtle. Signs will be placed along a trail that passes by the project site with educational information describing what is being done here and why.

For additional information about the Elijah Bristow State Park confluence restoration project and other activities of the Middle Fork Willamette Watershed Council, contact council coordinator and project manager Eve Montanaro at (541) 937-9800.



Grazing and Creeks

By Alex Conley, Coordinator, North Fork John Day Watershed Council

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Livestock grazing in riparian areas is a contentious topic throughout the West, and ensuring that livestock grazing does not degrade Oregon's streams has become a key part of efforts to improve the future of our salmon and steelhead runs. Installing enclosure fences to keep cattle from grazing along streams is one solution. Through projects undertaken by the North Fork John Day Watershed Council, SWCD, NRCS, ODFW, tribes, and Forest Service, hundreds of miles of streams have been fenced in the John Day Basin. Fencing out cattle can dramatically change riparian conditions, and is relatively straightforward to implement. But fencing is only one possible solution, and not always the most elegant. Sometimes fences are too expensive to maintain, break up a ranch into unusable pockets of pasture, or just don't meet landowner objectives.

Other projects can change how livestock behave without requiring exclu-

sion fencing. Upland water developments have been a key part of our Council's projects, with over 60 installed on local ranches to date. The trek to get a drink is part of every cow's daily routine, and where they can get that drink often determines where they graze. By providing attractive sources of water in upland areas, we can draw cattle away from creeks. Cross fences are also a great tool, and we're working with numerous ranchers and the NRCS's Environmental Quality Incentive Program to develop new pastures that allow creekside areas to be protected as part of improved rotational grazing systems.

When we help ranchers get the tools they need, it's easy to measure success by the numbers—miles of fence, number of upland waters. But doing so risks mistaking the means for the ends. Used right, fences and waters can make a great difference. But they are not the only way to achieve our goals.

At a recent Society for Rangeland Management conference in Vancouver, B.C., "fenceless grazing rotation" was discussed frequently. People throughout the west are combining new and

old tools to move cattle through large areas so they effectively use forage while avoiding undesired impacts to sensitive areas. These tools included strategically-placed nutritional supplements, low-stress herding, selective cattle breeding, running herds in common across larger areas, patch burning (to green areas up and draw cattle to them), and electronic shock collars. It was exciting to learn about so many innovative efforts. Three keys to success were identified:

- 1) *Excellent communication* among everyone involved,
- 2) *A livestock manager with a knack for the art of managing and a desire to try new things,*
- 3) *A clear shared vision of desired outcomes.*

Whatever tools are used (including those prickly fences), this last point is key. We need a clear sense of what we are managing for (here, how a particular stream should look), and effective ways to tell if we are actually getting those results. This requires a long-term vision and stakeholders that are willing to engage in difficult discussions and hands-on monitoring—just the things that watershed councils across Oregon are cultivating.



Left: Volunteers at Annual Transplanting Event at BLM Seed Orchard

thousands of native trees and shrubs, with a goal to reduce stream temperature and sediment of water quality impacted streams in the Applegate basin. Plants for this Riparian Restoration

Program were purchased from commercial and state/federal nurseries, but the program now maintains a comprehensive native plant propagation component. The success of the program is the result of strong partnerships between the Applegate River Watershed Council (ARWC), local volunteers and the Bureau of Land Management Med-

ford District, particularly the BLM Provolt and Sprague Seed Orchards.

ARWC grows hundreds of native trees and shrubs each year in addition to the supplemental purchase of stock from local nurseries. Species grown include: Oregon ash; red alder; mock orange; oceanspray; Pacific ninebark; red-osier dogwood; snowberry; vine maple; black oak; white oak and big leaf maple. Local residents assist ARWC in all phases of propagation. From collecting and sowing seeds to transplanting seedlings into larger containers, ARWC has a dedicated group of volunteers that log in hundreds of hours per year.

The Sprague Seed Orchard (located in Merlin) offers greenhouse space and technical assistance for sowing and stratifying seeds. Seedlings remain in the greenhouse during the first growing season in a controlled environment before being transplanted by

Continued as "APPLEGATE" on p.6

12 Years of Tree Planting with Vounteers and the BLM

By Chris Vogel, Project Manager, Applegate River Watershed Council cvogel@arwc.org

For 12 years, the Applegate River Watershed Council has worked with hundreds of landowners and planted tens of

APPLEGATE—From Page 5

volunteers. These transplants spend the second growing season outside at the Provolt Seed Orchard under regular conditions, where watering and weeding continue—this ensures maximum vigor and root growth. In addition to keeping the stock at Provolt for a second growing season, mature cottonwood, willow and red-osier dogwood rows are established and used for cuttings, which provide a quick source for material used not only by ARWC but also by other watershed councils and agencies.

Each planting season (Dec-April), ARWC works with nearly 50 landowners on native riparian planting. Depending on the site and goals of the landowner, ARWC can provide the labor for planting, noxious weed removal, and riparian fencing to ensure minimal damage from livestock. Thousands of trees are given to landowners each year as “self plants,” while ARWC focuses on the high priority sites providing labor for planting, maintenance, and monitoring.

Each year ARWC engages the local community in volunteer events. Participants for tree planting events have included: the Southern Oregon Fly Fishers, Rogue Fly Fishers, Jackson County Job Council, Girl Scouts, and Hidden Valley High School.

Through the years the program has received funding from: Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board; Oregon Dept. of Environmental Quality; American Forest Foundation; American Forests Global ReLeaf and National Fish and Wildlife Foundation.

BOARD—From Page 1

2007-2009 Biennium is occurring. On a second front, we continue to be involved in an emerging partnership with the Oregon Association of Conservation Districts, Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board and the Oregon Department of Agriculture. The board affirmed the positive direction taken by these productive discussions.

Above all, I continue to be struck by the energy and spirit that all of you bring to your work. I am reminded of this as I write to you from River Network's 2006 River Rally, where I have been repeatedly approached by complete strangers from all around the country who speak of the respect they have for Oregon's watershed councils and what all of you have accomplished. It is both humbling and inspiring, and it serves to remind us of the larger fabric within which all of our work is woven. Keep up the great work and continue to check the Network website for important updates on our progress together.

Transitions

Welcome New Coordinators:

Beth Franklin—Bear Creek WSC
Michael Cairns—Luckiamute WSC

Farewells...

Alex Conley—N. Fork John Day WSC
Denise Hoffert-Hay—Calapooia WSC
Chuck Sams—Columbia Slough WSC
Todd Cullison—Northcoast Coordinating Council
Art Tassie—Harney County WSC

NONPROFIT—From Page 1

among the organizations and making a clear argument for why *both* councils and districts are necessary for successful watershed restoration in Oregon. Councils and districts play different roles in different locations, so there is no “one-size-fits-all” answer to what each one does. The important point is that each serves particular needs in their community, and we need to reinforce the fact that when both councils and districts are well-supported, the local watershed is the winner—ecologically and economically.

As the effort progresses, we'll also be communicating with councils and districts to learn about what does and doesn't work in terms of local collaboration. The intention is to use that information to learn more about how we might support local efforts when it's appropriate. Feel free to contact me or your regional representative on the Interim Board if you have questions about this important initiative.

OWEB Local Innovation Fund- The Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB) is currently seeking funding proposals to its Local Innovation Fund. OWEB has established the Local Innovation Fund to support creative, innovative initiatives that benefit and provide connections between the local watershed, economy, and community. During this grant cycle, the Local Innovation Fund will only provide funding for on-the-ground watershed restoration activities that also benefit and provide connections to the local economy and community. Applications must be received at OWEB by 5:00 p.m. on June 15, 2006. Link to additional information at [the following:](http://www.oregonwatersheds.org/lif)

www.oregonwatersheds.org/lif

In the Next Issue of Network Update...

The Summer, 2006 Issue of *Network Update* will include articles on the statewide effort to define Regional Restoration Priorities, as well as other large scale planning and prioritization efforts. Please submit articles or Send submissions by July 15, 2006 to:

newsletter@oregonwatersheds.org

Visit the Network of Oregon Watershed Councils website at www.oregonwatersheds.org