



The Green Heron Herald

The Quarterly Newsletter of the TUALATIN RIVERKEEPERS®

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TRK Fights Wetland Threats

With the construction economy rebounding, threats by development to wetlands are heating up. Section 404 of the Federal Clean Water Act requires developers to avoid impacts to wetlands, but it appears that several of these proposals are not doing much to avoid these impacts. Before a development can destroy any part of a wetland, the developer must receive permits from the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Oregon Department of State Lands (DSL). When applying for a permit, applicants are required to submit an analysis that shows all practicable alternatives to wetland destruction.

Beaverton School Challenged to Step-up and Protect Wetlands

Beaverton School District has applied to fill 2.6 acres of wetland on the site of the new South Cooper Mountain High School. The alternatives analysis prepared by the school district is required to show all practicable alternatives to wetland impacts. Athletic fields planned for the north end of South Cooper Mountain High School are an avoidable impact to wetlands. By moving these athletic fields to an adjacent property, the district can easily avoid wetland impacts. TRK has met with the design team and will continue to fight the destruction of these wetlands.

Tigard City Council Win for the Environment!

In March, Tigard City Council voted unanimously to reject a comprehensive plan amendment that would have allowed a proposed 215 acre apartment complex to fill almost half an acre of wetlands along Ash Creek. Neighborhood opposition to the project was strong, citing a long history of flooding in the area near Metzger Elementary School.

As quoted in The Times, Tigard Mayor John Cook explained that the project had alternatives to filling wetlands. "There are lots of other sites to put this on. *Continues on page 6...*



Above: This wetland on Rock Creek Unit of the Tualatin River National Wildlife Refuge is threatened by a proposed quarry on adjacent property that would drain water from surrounding properties.

The Green Heron Award Winner

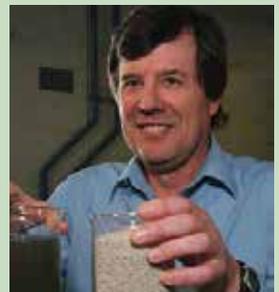
Carla Staedter-Green Heron Award

As Environmental Coordinator for the City of Tigard, Carla works countless hours mediating conflicts over wetlands with the public, advocates for our friend the beaver, and helps ensure a healthy TRK education program based out of the City's property, Dirksen Nature Park. She has also worked hand in hand with TRK as we've grown our restoration program, most recently out of Cook Park where we are planting 52,000 natives right next to our boat launch.



Rob Baur-Lifetime Achievement Award

Rob Baur is a co-founder of TRK, environmental chemist, owner of 2 patents that reduced chemical use in wastewater treatment, and most importantly was the heart and soul of TRK in our beginning years. He helped us to receive our first grant, designed our first Discovery Day T-shirt, and picked our logo the green heron! He continues to offer the public and our Board of Directors tours of the upper and lower Tualatin, educating the future staff of TRK.



GO PAPERLESS!

Write margot@tualatinriverkeepers.org to get this newsletter by email instead.

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OUR MISSION

Tualatin Riverkeepers (TRK) is a community-based organization working to protect and restore Oregon's Tualatin River system. TRK builds watershed stewardship through education, public access to nature, restoration and advocacy.

The Tualatin Riverkeepers became a nonprofit in 1992 and is tax-exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

Please join us by completing and mailing the membership application in this newsletter or by contacting us.

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The *Green Heron Herald* is a publication of the Tualatin Riverkeepers.

We welcome your comments and suggestions. Please let us know if we have misspelled your name or if we mis-addressed the newsletter or sent you a duplicate copy.

503-218-2580

www.tualatinriverkeepers.org



Tualatin Riverkeepers is proud to be a Waterkeeper Alliance Member.



FROM THE DIRECTOR



Dear Riverkeepers,

As you will no doubt notice this newsletter, 2015 is going to be a big year for our Watershed Watch program. There are many developments coming up that the residents of the Tualatin Watershed will need to weigh in on as we decide how to balance the protection of key habitat parcels with development needs in a growing Washington County. At the same time and in parallel to those efforts, we have the Tualatin Water Trail taking off this year and

new green spaces on it at Farmington Road in collaboration with Metro, showing us what is possible when we develop progressively.

The tug o' war between carving out spaces for nature and the public enjoyment and picking where we accommodate a growing population is exactly why TRK formed its Watershed Watch Committee. We want to channel the power and ingenuity of residents' voices in public forums to offer our own grass-roots solutions to the sustainability debate. I think it's important to recognize that as the Portland Metropolitan area develops, many growing urban areas all over the nation look to our chunk of Earth for inspiration on how to develop the right way, due to the implementation of the Urban Growth Boundary.

This is why we'll be surveying the state of the land, slipping down wet and steep slopes at sites throughout Washington County, analyzing stream quality, and debating the need for industry to usurp wetlands whenever we get the chance. We hope to see you at public hearings, residential development forums, and River Professor gatherings, as we seek to educate the public and learn from new networks. Most importantly, we want to see you April 18th at the Green Heron Gala!

Sincerely,
Mike Skuja, Executive Director

Board Member Appreciations

TRK would like to welcome its newest member to the Board, Alfred Dinsdale. Alfred has lived in Sherwood for the past sixteen years. He owns and operates McKay Creek Farm, Dinsdale Landscape Contractors Inc, and Dinsdale Nursery. Working as a landscape contractor for over twenty-five years, Dinsdales specializes in private gardens with an emphasis on native and woodland plants as well as installing rain gardens on residential properties under the city of Portland rain garden program. In addition Alfred owns and operates a 70 acre blueberry farm and was awarded the Tualatin Soil and Water Conservation District 2014 Conservation Farmer of the Year. As someone who makes his living from the land, he is acutely aware of the importance of water quality and availability going into the future. He is very

excited to be participating in the activities of TRK and hopes to add value to their ongoing mission.

Goodbye and thank you to four outstanding TRK Board members. Bruce DeBolt guided TRK through the financial world and often through the complicated legal world as well. Sue Manning helped establish our education program and was a tremendous mentor for our education staff. Stephanie Puhl poured her heart and soul into our Equity, Diversity and Inclusion program. Rich Lorimor shared his marketing know-how with us, always improving our events and outreach. Through these tasks and so many more, you have all helped us expand into new territories over the years. Thank you!

TRK NEWS



Restoration

During a community presentation a resident came up to TRK and asked us directly, “What do I do to improve water quality on the Tualatin”? Last year we would have said, “Join our Watershed Watch Committee” or “Advocate for sustainable development”. But this resident was looking for something immediate and tangible she could do, which is why we said, “Come plant a tree with us”! As many of you well know, tree planting not only helps filter toxins from water before it enters the river, but it also provides habitat for wildlife on land and in the water, when a tree is felled and becomes a refuge for migrating fish.

To TRK, planting trees is just one action embedded in a much deeper process. This process begins with expert level planning of how we want a sub-basin of the watershed to look: what processes do we want to bring back, what habitat parcels do we want to strengthen? What is the connection between this landscape and another for wildlife species?



From here, site plans for restoration are implemented and the last and most important piece comes into alignment: public engagement! TRK views its most critical role as bringing the public to the restoration process. And making this engagement fun, interactive, and unique, so they will want to plant more trees with us, or clear out weeds because they see the value in this hard work. We see our network within WA County as able to target a unique set of residents and our restoration sites as places that resonate with the public’s heart, places such as Dirksen and Cook Park. Local places we access and use every day.

TRK views restoration as an education opportunity. During events, we want to introduce groups to the history of the land and the ‘why’ we are doing this. What species are around? How do we use them? What is the contested history of this land? Industry, land use policies, past and present waves of immigration, and Native American perspectives all intersect in this one patch of land we are working on restoring. Most recently at our 130 person Cook Park restoration event, we hosted Professor Judy-Bluehorse of PSU Indigenous Studies to speak on Native American values surrounding restoration and the species we are planting. We heard rave reviews of the event, planted iconic species like mock orange, red currant and blue elderberry, all along our boat launch, a space that has launched kayakers into our river for decades.

We hope you join us in future events as we shape the land with our own hands. April 11th is our next event at Cook Park, see you there!



YOUTH EDUCATION

WORDS FROM THE WOODS

We are excited to announce that, in partnership with Friends of Trees and Stamberger Outreach, TRK is launching a new program for middle school students at Clean Water Services' (CWS) Tualatin River Farm. This working farm hosts a variety of habitats, including two ponds, riverside forests, seasonal wetlands, plus access to the Tualatin River. The free half-day field trip focuses on storm water management, sustainable agriculture and river health.

The three-hour adventure incorporates the story of dynamic and evolving habitats, projects, and communities that use the farm into an engaging and informative educational experience. Participants will leave with a better understanding of how their actions affect their watershed.

Spotted at the Tualatin River Farm



Rough Skinned Newts

Spring is mating season for Rough Skinned Newts, and the two love birds pictured here were one of dozens of couples found swimming in the pond at the Tualatin River Farm. Newts, a type of salamander, are primarily differentiated by their flattened tails and rougher skin.

Noble Firs

At the Tualatin River Farm, old Christmas tree farms are being converted back into healthy forest. The Noble Firs were planted extremely close together shading out understory thus preventing the diversity of plant life needed for a functional ecosystem. Removed trees are placed in other parts of the farm to create new habitat and stabilize the banks of the wetlands.



2015 Nature Summer Camps – Get Outside!

Ages 4-6

Tualatin River National Wildlife Refuge, Sherwood

Refuge Adventure

June 22 - 26, 9am-12pm

Hide in the tall grass to experience what it's like to be an animal in the park. Lay in the wildflowers and watch eagles soar above. Students explore the refuge from a bug's eye view and gain an appreciation for all living things, big and small. Each day campers investigate a new habitat while learning about all the amazing creatures that make our ecosystem work. On Bee Day, students learn the bee dance, gather pollen, meet a beekeeper, and taste fresh honey.

Ages 7-10

Dirksen Nature Park, Tigard

All camps include a full day of paddling on the Tualatin River with experienced river guides, building a Hazelwood boat, and exploring Summer Creek.

Hey Hey! Look at THAT!

July 6 - 10, 9am-12pm

Life isn't about knowing, it's about exploring...and no one knows that better than kids! Dirksen hosts seven unique habitats and supports robust plant and animal communities. With a focus on exploration and hands-on learning, campers get up close with what excites them and put their skills to the test with fun games like plant ID capture the flag and macroinvertebrate tag.

Sense of Place

August 10 - 14, 9am-12pm

Campers will touch, taste, smell, listen, and look their way to a deeper understanding of what keeps an ecosystem in balance. Discover the homes of wildlife living at Dirksen and learn how to protect this special urban habitat. Build a natural shelter, explore aquatic homes, create your own bird nest, and have fun while developing new friendships.

Ages 10-13

Amazing Adaptations

July 27 - 31

Includes Thursday-Friday overnight

Run, jump, swim, and play your way to a summer adventure with a week jam packed with fun! Spend a night at Dirksen Nature Park (Thursday-Friday), go fishing with an Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife Angler Educator, build a birdhouse, and so much more.

Living Water

August 17 - 21

Search for what's living just below the surface of our river. Learn to fish from an Angler Educator then put your knowledge to action with a full day of fishing. Search for what's living just below the surface of our rivers and creeks. Get a chance to swim with otters, discover beaver dams and search for crawdads. This camp includes a full day of fly fishing on the upper Tualatin at one of our river's iconic waterfalls.

Register at www.TualatinRiverkeepers.org/camp

TRIPS & TOURS

The Discoveries Continue

TRK's 26th Annual Tualatin River Discovery Day is upon us, and there are still so many things to discover in the Tualatin River watershed. Take a hike on one of the restored natural areas in the basin and discover a wildflower you've never noticed. Attend our History of the Tualatin River presentation and learn about the people who first lived on this land or see photographs of flooding from the early 1900s. Send a special child in your life to one of TRK's summer nature camps and discover how wondrous our nature world can be through the eyes of our future watershed stewards. Spend a day on the water with family and friends and join us at Discovery Day – what will you discover?



The perfect paddle trip for both beginners and long-time paddlers, Discovery Day will be held on **Saturday, June 27** and will launch from Tualatin Community Park. After being assisted into your boat by our helpful volunteers, you'll meander through a gorgeous stretch of the river to Metro's Wanker's Corner Field Station. We'll provide a shuttle back to the launch site, making this a near hassle-free excursion.

Reserve your launch time now for this popular event at www.tualatinriverkeepers.org!

Want to Help?

Over 80 volunteers help make this event possible each year. There's a role for everyone! Registration volunteers, shuttle vans and drivers, traffic control teams, safety boats, dock builders, and watermelon servers are all needed to make the 26th Discovery Day another one to remember.



For more information, contact:

Margot at 503-218-2580 or margot@tualatinriverkeepers.org



Cook Park Summer Boat Rentals Open July 4th!

Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays

9am to 6pm

Canoes, single kayaks, and double kayaks are \$30 per boat for up to 4 hours and \$10 per additional hour.

TRK members receive one free rental and \$10 off each additional rental.

2015 Paddle Trip Schedule

TRK trips are open to all members and the general public. Canoes and double kayaks are available for use on our trips for \$50 and single kayaks are \$40. Members at the \$50 level or higher receive a free boat rental! Space is limited and reservations are required online at tualatinriverkeepers.org.

Bird Fest Paddle

Saturday, May 16
9am – 12pm

Family-Friendly Paddle

Sunday, August 16
1pm – 4pm

26th Annual Discovery Day

Saturday, June 27
9am – 3pm

Tualatin River Clean-up

Saturday, September 19
9am – 12pm

Sunset Paddle

Saturday, July 18
6pm – 8:30pm

Autumn River Paddle Trip

Saturday, October 3
10am – 1pm

WATERSHED WATCH



What is a Wetland?

For regulatory purposes under the Clean Water Act, the term wetlands means “those areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or ground water at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions. Wetlands generally include swamps, marshes, bogs and similar areas.”

The Importance of Wetlands

Wetlands perform many valuable functions...storing floodwaters, filtering surface water, replenishing ground water that helps to regulate stream temperature and flow, providing wildlife habitat, fish nurseries and open space in urbanizing communities. Wetlands are considered public waters and are protected under local, state, and federal regulations.

Identifying Wetlands

In considering a land use application it is important to know if a wetland is present. There are many types of wetlands and identification may be tricky. Three characteristics are used to identify wetlands:

- **Vegetation** – a presence of wetland plant communities. There are nearly 5,000 types of wetland plants in the United States, known as hydrophytic vegetation.
- **Soil** – a presence of hydric soils. There are about 2,000 named hydric soils with characteristics that indicate they were developed in conditions where soil oxygen is limited by the presence of water for long periods during the growing season.
- **Hydrology** – presence of water during the growing season, although most wetlands lack both water and waterlogged soils during at least part of the growing season.

TRK Fights Wetland Threats

There are other alternatives, maybe they don't financially pencil out, or maybe the neighbors won't like having two more stories on the apartments, but it can be done.”

Quarry vs the Refuge: Making a Stand for the Tualatin's Natural Jewel

Another significant wetland threat is one TRK has been fighting for several years. Tonquin Holdings proposes to dig a 250' deep quarry on wetlands contiguous with the Rock Creek Unit of the Tualatin River National Wildlife Refuge. The quarry would drain some of the most pristine and unique wetlands on the refuge. While Clackamas County approved the quarry if 114 conditions are met, wetland removal permits from the Corps of Engineers and Department of State Lands have not yet been issued. We expect a public notice from these agencies seeking comments on the permits soon.



The public has a significant role in protecting wetlands. Please sign and share our online petition to stop the quarry from draining wetlands on the refuge. More information is on our website www.tualatinriverkeepers.org.

Channeling the Strength of the Law for our Wetlands

It can be expensive fighting wetland destruction. Ash Creek Advocates spent \$10,000 on attorney fees to stop Tigar's Oak Street Apartments from filling wetlands on Ash Creek. Friends of Rock Creek have spent thousands on legal fees in fighting the Tonquin Quarry and their struggle continues.

TRK is weighing in on state and federal wetland permits, but we expect that there may be some legal expenses before the refuge and Cooper Mountain wetland battles are over. We expect more and more wetland challenges as the economy improves and more development happens.

If you would like to help in the efforts to protect wetlands in the Tualatin River Watershed, please send a donation to:

Tualatin Riverkeepers
Wetland Protection Campaign
11675 SW Hazelbrook Road
Tualatin OR 97062

Or make an online contribution through our website at: www.tualatinriverkeepers.org

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



Portland General Electric



We would like to thank the following Riverkeepers who generously donated between December 1, 2014 and February 28, 2015. (* Indicates Monthly RiverBank donor.)

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Consider renewing or joining through TRK's RiverBank program, a convenient monthly donation program that will provide a stable source of funding all year long.

Visit www.tualatinriverkeepers.org to set up your monthly donations. For details contact Margot at 503-218-2580 or margot@tualatinriverkeepers.org.



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- \$50 Painted Turtle
- \$100 Steelhead
- \$250 River Otter
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- Please charge my CREDIT CARD. Contact Margot at 503-218-2580 or join online.

Join online at www.tualatinriverkeepers.org