

Fish Tales

Maintaining water quality
and fish populations from
source to sea in the streams
of the Umpqua

9th Issue



Eric Himmelreich and
Eric Riley in West Fork
Smith River.

Upcoming Events

3rd Tuesday Every month
9:00 am **PUR General Meeting**
ODFW Offices
Roseburg, OR

April 18th Saturday
10:00 am **Earth Day Fair**
DC Fairgrounds

August 5th-8th **Douglas County Fair**
DC Fairgrounds

June 6-7 **ODFW Free Fishing Weekend**

June or July **PUR Annual Meeting**

July 1-September 15 **Instream Restoration in Water Work Period**



Since 2007, restoring and enhancing the Umpqua's tidal wetlands like Scholfield Creek has been a strong focus of PUR's mission.

PUR, MRT, and OWEB Receive National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grant!

PUR staff always await grant announcements with a certain sense of apprehension...days, weeks, and sometimes even years of work boil down to one day, one email or phone call, and one word - yes or no, was our grant funded? Months earlier we submitted our application, pouring over every last detail until it was as perfect as it could be, but was it enough? Our grant writing team is second to none, but did we miss something? Did all of our budget lines add up? Is the project not suitable for the grant? Did we forget to cross our t's or dot our i's? Modern word processing programs have made that last concern more or less irrelevant, but nothing is guaranteed in the grant world. That's what made the grant announcement for the largest conservation project ever undertaken in the Umpqua Estuary especially nerve-wracking.

The Scholfield Creek Tidal Wetlands project began in much the same way a grant award is announced - a single conversation, in this case between PUR estuary biologist Matt Ruwaldt and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) biologist Madeleine Vander Heyden. This conversation, more than five years ago, introduced PUR to the National Coastal Wetlands Grant program and set the groundwork for what was to become a diverse partnership with a

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Notes from the Executive Director

Well, time really does fly when you are having fun! It seems like we were just preparing for 2014 project work and now we are finishing up the reports for those projects and putting contracts together for 2015 summer project work; all while designing and strategizing for the next two years and beyond.

Last year was once again a tremendously successful year for PUR. Instream habitat restoration remains our bread and butter and we implemented several large restoration projects last summer. The highlight for me was the completion of two multi-year whole-watershed restoration efforts, one in Brush Creek and the other in West Fork Smith River, totaling nearly 40 miles of stream restoration.

PUR monitoring has continued to grow and develop into a top notch program that is well organized and recognized as a leader among like programs throughout the state. The Education and Outreach Program's Umpqua Basin Cleanup and Fish Eggs to Fry projects have really taken off and are poised for increased participation in the years to come.

2014 was also a year of growth and development for the organization and me personally as the Executive Director. Through extensive committee and staff work, PUR has completed a strategic planning process that will guide the organizational goals through 2019, developed and refined a five-year planning process, and initiated several organizational efforts to make the organization

more effective and efficient. With an extremely dedicated staff and an engaged Board of Directors, the sky is the limit!



Eric Riley
Executive Director
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A Beaver Story By Dave & Kristen Swartzlander

Beavers can be beneficial, or they can be destructive. My latest encounter with the furry creatures turned out to be more on the destructive side.



According to local landowner Dave Swartzlander, it's true what they say about beavers: no matter what you do, they ALWAYS come back!

We moved to our property on Olalla Creek in January of 2008. One sign of the previous beaver activity was the aluminum flashing around all the fruit trees. The spring after we moved in, the beavers started taking everything

they could, including some ornamental trees around the house and a plum tree that had been almost entirely girdled but survived. There weren't many options for control at that time, and the beavers were probably doing the same to other properties along our stretch of creek.

The activity slowed considerably. One day, as I was walking along the creek, I discovered a very large female beaver dead in the creek. I pulled her out and found a bullet hole. This was about the only thing homeowners could do at that time. I wasn't happy about that, but the destruction stopped. I didn't see any other beaver activity for almost six years. The one thing I was told time and time again was that the beavers would be back. They always come back.

In the spring of 2014, I noticed some new signs of beavers on our property. I had received a

trail camera for my birthday, and decided to capture some video of them at work. It was fruit tree pruning time and I thought that if I put some of the fruit tree trimmings along the creek, they'd take them instead of taking down any of the small trees that I had planted.

The idea worked great! I was able to get many videos of the beavers at work. I was able to follow their activity and found a couple of dens along the bank where they would take the fruit branches. They did get rid of all my trimmings, but during that time also cut down a 10-inch alder tree that fell into the creek at one end of the property. I put more flashing and cages around other vulnerable trees, and that must have kept them satisfied for a while, because their destructive habits trailed off until the beginning of October.

I had been using my trail camera to record wildlife just

A Beaver Story Continued...

outside our bedroom windows. There were deer, raccoon, possums and a gray fox eating the fruit that dropped to the ground near our window, sometimes climbing the trees to get more. One night I had the camera positioned to watch a Concord grape arbor that seemed pretty popular. The deer were helping themselves. So were some possums and a family of raccoons. The mother raccoon actually climbed the pole and got on the arbor to fill up. As I was watching these animals, I was surprised to see a fairly large beaver walk through the frame on the way to the creek. He didn't have any branches with him, so I thought he



Losing trees like this one prompted Dave and his wife to seek a non-lethal solution to their growing beaver problem.

was just doing a scouting mission. I went out and checked the entire property for damage, including the wire cages I had placed around some of the trees I had planted. I didn't see any signs of fresh activity. The next morning I looked out the window toward the creek and something looked different. I walked down there and discovered a very nice willow tree, probably 20 feet tall, that we had planted four or five years earlier had been cut down and the top half had been taken away. This was through a wire cage I had around the tree. I later learned that these cages need to be staked to the ground to be fully effective. This, of course, made me and my wife very very unhappy.

I am a PUR volunteer, helping with water quality measurements, and I had met and talked to Stan Petrowski about my beaver problems at the PUR monthly meetings. Stan told me about the Beaver Advocacy Committee of which he is a member. Their mission is to trap and relocate problem beavers to areas where they can be a benefit to the habitat. Leonard and Lois Houston are the couple that make this happen. They have an agreement with ODFW to trap and transport the beavers. This program had been talked about for a long time and was finally put in place.

I contacted Terry Farrell at ODFW. He made up the paperwork and the next day Leonard and Lois stopped by to get signatures and check out the creek for trap locations. They were in the process of trapping at another location, and said they would be back in a few days. They returned and showed me how the traps work, and how they are baited and set. They had a friend Jacob Shockey from the Applegate Watershed Partnership who was here to learn how to do the set up. Two traps were set, and the wait was on.

The next morning, Leonard, Lois, Jacob and Jacob's mother Kirsten Shockey, who is also of the Applegate Watershed Partnership, came by to check the traps. What a day for Jacob's first time trapping! Both traps had beaver in them: a large female and a medium-sized male. The beavers were given a health check, put in burlap bags and the traps were reset and re-baited. The beavers were then transported to their new homes. They're at a wetland area in Tiller that has several ponds and was at one time a home to other beavers. So these guys should have a good start for the winter.

The next day each trap again had a beaver in it. They were both very young and Leonard and Lois were both amazed that they were in separate traps. Usually the young ones stay together and sometimes end up in the same trap.



Beaver Advocacy Committee member Stan Petrowski directed Dave to Leonard Houston (left) for help relocating beavers. Jacob Shockey (right) came along to learn more about the relocation process.

The next two days the traps were empty, but the second day we knew we still had beaver. The willow tree that was cut down had been stripped of its limbs and what was left was a piece of the trunk that was maybe eight feet long with one end still slightly attached to the base. A six foot piece of that trunk had been cut



This juvenile is the seventh of eight beavers caught on Dave's property over several days. Most of the beavers caught were juveniles.

A Beaver Story Continued...

off and was dragged off, probably to their den, as we never saw it again. The wood chips left behind were bigger than any that Leonard or Lois had ever seen.



Home sweet home! This wetland in the Tiller area is now occupied by Dave's beaver family.

There were perfect teeth marks in those chips. The next day the traps were empty also. Then the following day we had a very large beaver, they thought it was 50 pounds or more. I had to get a wheelbarrow to transport it to their car! After having to carry the big one in a burlap sack some distance to the release point, they revised their weight estimate to over 60 pounds. It was the largest they had seen or trapped since the project started. He didn't get that large by easily being trapped!

There was a smaller one in the other trap. Over the next couple of days we trapped a couple more "teenage" beavers and ended up with a total of eight trapped and relocated. I put some new fruit branches down near the creek, and they were not touched, and I haven't seen any other activity since then.

I'm very happy that the relocation process is functioning so well. It is much better than just killing them. Also having such dedicated and caring people as Leonard and Lois implementing the program makes things easier for all. Their dedication to the health and welfare of these wondrous creatures and their unflinching support and long hours have truly made us beaver advocates. They are at the trap sites at the break of dawn, hav-



Off to find momma! This juvenile has happily joined his family in their new wetland.



Now that his trees are safe, Dave's mind is at ease and he can once again focus his attention helping PUR as a top-notch monitoring program volunteer.

ing to get up at 4:00 AM to be there. The last thing they told me was, "they will be back."

So if anyone has a beaver problem contact Terry Farrell at ODFW or Leonard and Lois at Beavers@surcp.org. You won't be disappointed.

Dave and Kristen Swartzlander
PUR Volunteer & Supporter
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Education Outreach Update

"We'd really like to help more with the Derby. What can we do?" For many years, PUR staff and volunteers posed this question mid-January. With good reason; the Umpqua Fishery Enhancement Derby is one of PUR's strongest supporters. Although Derby grants are small compared to OWEB and federal grants, the value of Derby funds to PUR is greater than just the dollar amount. Derby support helps PUR leverage grants from other sources because it shows local interest in our work, which

is just as important at the actual dollars given. So it's no wonder that PUR staff wanted to find a way to give back to our strongest local funder.

Some would argue that PUR has been a Derby supporter for many years; after all, we purchase a table, sometimes two tables, for the Friday night banquet, don't we? This is true, however, as ticket sales only cover the cost of each guests' food and drinks, attending the banquet only makes us strong partici-

pants, not supporters. For PUR to be a Derby supporter, we need to do more than purchase tickets to the banquet.

Four years ago, Derby coordinator Audrey Barnes asked me to volunteer for the event. Helping with the Derby put me in an excellent position to find practical, low-cost ways PUR could support the Derby. Last year, we finally found our niche by helping with the Derby's raffle ticket game. The game, which involves pulling a ticket of unknown price

Education Outreach Update Continued...

for the chance at winning a prize, is one of the many ways Derby guests can open their wallets to support our fishery. When this game was originally suggested, there was a problem: Audrey's storage space is limited to what she has in her office and anything that could attractively display 80 to 100 rolled-up tickets would be bigger than she could easily store.

This is where I suggested PUR could step in. We could make the ticket holder so it doubles a mason bee house. Blue orchard mason bees are Pacific Northwest native pollinators that depend on existing holes for nesting. If the ticket holder were constructed to be suitable for mason bees, it could be given away as the raffle game's runner-



Nancy Geyer and PUR Board member Richard Chasm with the 2014 raffle ticket holder/mason bee house made by Richard and Terry Woodall.

up prize, eliminating Audrey's storage dilemma and giving PUR

a way to make an annual contribution to the Derby.

And it worked! The game was a great success and this year the raffle ticket game was renamed the "The Mason Bee Game." PUR's involvement in the Derby continues to grow; this year we were invited to help with the Derby's electronic check-in, a role we will most likely take on next year, too. In the next few weeks, the Derby will have a full-page advertisement in the News-Review recognizing its sponsors and supporters; PUR is proud to have finally earned a place on this list.

Nancy Geyer
E/O Coordinator
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Contractors' Corner

Work at the Partnership for the Umpqua Rivers does not slow down during the winter months. In addition to preparing reports on completed work and meeting with partners to plan new projects, we are busy writing grants. This winter we are pursuing funding for restoration, monitoring and education projects throughout the Basin. Much of our funding comes from OWEB grants offered in April and October. Other important partners have included the Umpqua Fisheries Enhancement Derby, ODFW, BLM, USFS, Meyer Memorial Trust, NFWF Bring Back the Natives, Oregon Governors Fund for the Environment, Ecotrust, Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians, the Autzen Foundation and many generous private landowners. We are thankful for these supporters, as PUR would not have so many successful projects without them.

This is my 5th year working with PUR as a contract grant writer. My husband Gabe, a Fire



A fish biologist by training, PUR's grant writer, Amy Pinson Dumm, is a behind-the-scenes but very important member of our team.

Ecologist with the USFS, and I moved to Roseburg from central Idaho in 2007. We have two

young daughters, ages 6 and 9. Previously, I have worked with the Forest Service as a NEPA writer/editor and fish biologist and with the Idaho Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit as a fisheries technician tracking salmon on the Columbia and Snake River systems. My education includes a B.S. in biology and an M.S. in fisheries biology with a thesis focused on salmon migration and energetics.

We are continually searching for opportunities to expand and strengthen PUR's funding base. Please feel free to contact me through the PUR office, if you come across a funding opportunity that could be a good fit for PUR.

Amy Pinson Dumm
Grant Writer
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Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grant Continued...

common goal—conserve and protect the best remaining estuary wetlands in the Umpqua Basin (and some of the most intact on the Oregon Coast). Around the same time, Roseburg Resources Company staff contacted PUR with an interest in selling their properties in the Umpqua Estuary, as they are a tax liability.



PUR estuary biologist Matt Ruwaldt at the helm during a site visit with Scholfield Creek partners from OWEB, USFWS, and McKenzie River Trust.

A vestige from the river logging days, the estuary lands were no longer of use to the company and they thought the lands could be better managed by a conservation group. A significant portion of the lands are located in the Scholfield Creek watershed,



Removing invasive weeds and establishing native plants will be among the many restoration activities PUR will undertake in Scholfield Creek.

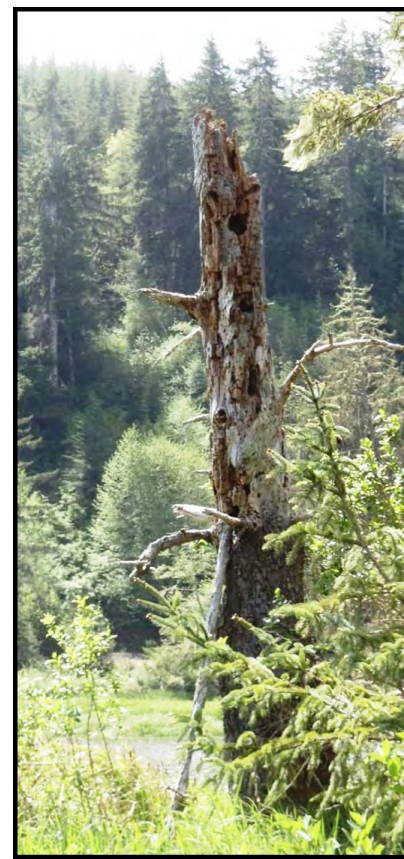
Photo Courtesy of MRT

which enters the Umpqua in Reedsport. After identifying the potential fish and wildlife benefits, PUR staff started looking for other parcels in Scholfield Creek that could be added to the project, and we didn't have to look very far. Three adjacent properties are owned by the City of Reedsport, and one additional property is owned by Douglas County. PUR staff began negotiations with both the city and the county and all parties agreed that the properties were unique and should be conserved and managed together as a shining jewel showcasing the productivity and beauty the Umpqua has to offer. It was also recognized that the payments the city and county would receive in exchange for the properties would be much appreciated.

The National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grant (NC-WCG) program provides up to \$1,000,000 per project for the acquisition and/or restoration of coastal wetlands. This grant is one of the few nationwide grants to which PUR has applied, competing against projects in all coastal regions of the country. Interestingly, while this obviously includes places like California, Maine, and Florida, the grant is also applicable to projects in Puerto Rico, the US Virgin Islands, Guam, and even the Great Lakes states. Funded by excise taxes on fishing equipment and motorboat and small engine fuels, and managed by the US Fish and Wildlife Service, this program was to be the backbone of financial support for the project. But, like many large grants, there was a stipulation—this grant can only be given to a state agency. The Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB), who PUR works closely with, has historically been the grantor in Oregon, and would be assisting us here as well.

PUR staff members are experts at what we do, but this project involved an aspect that was very much out of our comfort zone—acquisition. Numerous land trust organizations exist in the Northwest, but there are few, if any, active in the Umpqua. McKenzie River Trust (MRT), based in Eugene, has been seeking partners in the Umpqua for many years, and their outstanding record and experience with this sort of project convinced PUR that this was the organization to work with.

Throughout many, many meetings, field tours, and conference calls, a plan was hashed out: PUR and MRT would apply for a National Coastal Wetlands Grant



Tidal wetlands provide key habitat for more than just fish: this Sitka spruce snag provides valuable habitat for various species of woodpeckers and other wildlife.

Photo Courtesy of MRT

Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grant Continued...

through OWEB, with OWEB's acquisition program providing most of the required 25% match. The project would purchase 172 acres of tidal wetlands and 69 acres of adjacent uplands in Scholfield Creek. Beginning just outside Reedsport, the project area would extend nearly two miles upstream on both sides of the river. The properties would be purchased from Roseburg Resources Company, the City of Reedsport, and Douglas County. MRT staff was slated with the task of managing the acquisition, a complex procedure that they are highly capable of accomplishing. PUR, on the other hand, would be in charge of the enhancement of the wetlands, primarily through large woody debris placements in the tidal channels, as well as spruce plantings. MRT, PUR, and a new project partner - Umpqua Soil and Water Conservation District - would manage the properties, primarily for exotic species control. Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife

would help design sites for large woody debris placements and provide assistance during implementation.

Many weeks of writing followed, as this is a very involved grant application process. OWEB and USFWS staff reviewed the work that PUR and MRT submitted, and finally on a sunny day in mid-June 2014 the \$630,500 application was deemed ready to be sent to Washington, DC. And then all we could do was wait... and wait....

These years of hard work by numerous partners finally came to a culmination on a rainy day in January, 2015. It was on this day that we received an email from OWEB staff informing us that the project had been well received by the national ranking team, that they considered it a very strong proposal, and that, most importantly, YES, it would be funded!! We hope to have the acquisition portion of the proj-



With the Scholfield Creek project successfully funded, Matt will be waist-high in work for the next few years.

ect completed by the summer of 2016, and the enhancement portion completed by October 2016. Stay tuned for updates, as now the work really gets started...

Matt Ruwaldt
Estuary Biologist
(541) 662-0049

Sample Site Design

Site 6A: 6 Logs in channel, one with a rootwad
3 additional nurse logs w/ Sitka spruce saplings

The channel width at Site A23 is 12 feet wide and 8 feet deep at a 1.3 tide. Vegetation is dominated Softstem bulrush and reed canary grass.

Nurse Log

Log w/ Rootwad

Post Project Example

Current Condition

Site 6A

You can learn more about the National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grant program, see other successful projects, and see our project summary at: <http://www.fws.gov/coastal/CoastalGrants/>

You can learn more about the McKenzie River Trust at <http://mckenzieriver.org/>

Hours of field work and planning went into developing the National Coastal Wetlands Conservation grant. This Sample Site Design, developed by PUR and partners, was part of the package submitted to USFWS.

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To Contact any of our contractors Nancy Geyer - E/O Coordinator, Ann Kercher - Riparian Specialist, or Amy Pinson Dumm - Grant Writer, Contact Debbie Thornton at the main office.

February 2015

Our Mission

Through collaboration with diverse participants, the Partnership for the Umpqua Rivers maintains and improves water quality & fish populations from source to sea in the streams of the Umpqua.

We educate people about the value of healthy streams; we work with willing landowners to improve stream conditions; we monitor the health of the streams and their fish populations.

Through these actions the Partnership contributes to the ecological and economic well-being of the basin

Partnership for the Umpqua Rivers



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