

CoosCurrents

Coos Watershed Association

December 2009

Coos Bay, OR

Coos Watershed Association
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<http://www.cooswatershed.org>

Water Quality Discussion Brings Out A Crowd

The Coos Watershed Association is a local 501(c)(3) non-profit organization formed in 1993 as a way for people with a wide range of interests to get together and discuss the “big picture” of the conditions in the Coos watershed. The Association also helps individual landowners decide how to manage and restore the watershed’s natural systems.

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Jon Souder, Ph.D.
Executive Director

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On Wednesday September 30th, 15 people gathered at Java Jones Coffee House in Empire for a “Green Night” discussion based around local water quality issues. This evening was a follow-up public discussion to two free screenings of the PBS Frontline documentary *Poisoned Waters* on Saturday September 26th as part of National Estuaries Day.

Panel members, including Mike Graybill and Joy Tally of South Slough NERR, led discussions on where municipal water in the Coos watershed comes from, how land use affects water quality, and whether there is a smarter way to grow.

Attendees were disturbed to hear about the myriad of chemicals found in many municipal water supplies. The *Poisoned Waters* film discussed the prevalence of dangerous chemicals called endocrine disrupters in public water supplies around the Chesapeake Bay. Endocrine disrupter chemicals are found in all plastics and rubber products and many



household cleaning and beauty products. Municipal water for the towns of Coos Bay and North Bend is drawn from the Pony Creek Reservoir. This is an upland, surface water source that has no one living in its drainage basin. Therefore, it is very unlikely that chemicals such as endocrine disrupters are in the Coos Bay municipal water. However, where the water goes after we have used it, and what is in it then, is also an important discussion topic. Many stormwater drains empty directly into the Coos Bay and household water passes through one of three water treatment plants on the shores of the Coos Bay, and is then dumped into the Bay itself.

You should know that as a citizen you have the right to follow up to make sure places like landfills and water treatment plants are complying with permits and regulations. You can call the Coos Bay office of the Department of Environmental Quality at 541-269-2721. When you inquire, they are required to follow-up on your inquiry and enforce all permits and regulations.

Monitoring Program Highlight: Monitoring of Riparian Projects Guides Future Plantings

Shortly after starting work at the Coos Watershed Association as the Lowlands Restoration Projects Manager, Tyler Pedersen dove into a 13-acre planting project on the Dellwood Log Yard owned by Weyerhaeuser Timber Company. In December of 2008, the site was mostly cleared of invasive blackberry before a 100-foot wide buffer area on the north side of the Coos River was planted with 8000 trees.

Planting on this site will continue this winter with planting of mostly willows on an 8-acre oxbow downstream. These planting projects are part of spotted owl conservation requirements on the Weyerhaeuser Timber Company land, but the projects provide other benefits including erosion control and nutrients. The combination of invasive blackberry plant removal and riparian vegetation planting and maintenance reduces bank erosion considerably, provides shade and improves habitat for the aquatic food web.

In September, Tyler and Mike Lester returned to the Dellwood planting site to monitor the progress of the riparian planting project. Tyler and Mike followed a monitoring protocol set out in the Coos Watershed Association's *Coastal Oregon Riparian Silviculture Guide* published in 2009, to take a close look at approximately 10% of the trees planted, chosen randomly.

It took them 4 days to evaluate 640 trees based on species, height, current condition (live, dead or unknown), competition from grass, overstory and brush, and protection (vexar tube, weed mat, tin foil). Additionally, damage is noted in these surveys. Damage ranges from being blown over by wind, eaten or trampled by animals or diseased.

Species survival and growth rates are estimated from these surveys and are used to determine the number and type of species to be used in future plantings.

Top photo: Tyler (right) and Mike (left) evaluated hundreds of trees on the Dellwood site this year. Bottom photo: Plant protection, including vexar tubes, weed mats and tin foil, is designed to prevent damage from animals and wind.



Marley Bice - CoosWA



Marley Bice - CoosWA

Isthmus Assessment Update: Larson Slough Restoration Project Tour

On a sunny weekend in September, several Isthmus Slough residents, community members, and CoosWA staff took a tour of watershed restoration projects in Larson Slough, near North Bay.

The purpose of the site tour was to share a variety of on-the-ground watershed restoration project types, familiarize residents with the CoosWA approach to restoration, and discuss potential ways to improve local conditions. The site tour featured stops to look at a riparian or stream bank stabilization project in a rural residential area, rural road drainage features, and a salmon life-cycle research project based at the tide gate.

Road drainage projects on a forest road along Sullivan Creek illustrate how the installation of properly sized, cross-drain culverts can prevent road flooding and help stabilize road surfaces. The creation of road-side ditches that drain onto vegetated slopes allow excess sediment to filter and disperse rather than be directed into the stream where fine sediments can suffocate eggs and young fish.

The installation of live woven willow-walls along actively eroding stream banks helps to protect and rebuild banks. The willow stakes sprout live roots that stabilize the soil while increasing shade and habitat. Planting native plants along the riparian area also helps to



CoosWA Staff



CoosWA Staff

This section of Larson Creek was unstable and eroding in January of 2007 (top photo). However, after just one growing season with woven willow walls and native plants planted along the stream bank, the creek looked much more healthy (bottom photo taken in July 2007).

stabilize floodplain soil and provide shade. Additionally, native plants replace noxious weeds, enhance habitat and provide future large wood.

At the tide gate at the mouth of Larson Slough, Art Bass, an OSU graduate student, discussed the hydrologic differences between top-hinge and side-hinge tide gates and how that may impact the migratory patterns of juvenile and adult anadromous fish.

The assessment of Isthmus and Coalbank Sloughs will continue into 2010 with additional aquatic habitat inventories, landowner communication, and data analysis. Please contact Bessie Joyce at 541-888-5922 with any questions about this assessment.

Two Easy Ways to Donate

There are now two easy ways to make a monetary contribution to the education and outreach efforts of the Coos Watershed Association. Visit the *Friends of the Coos Watershed* webpage and click the Donate button to make a secure online contribution through PayPal, or print out a paper form and mail it in with your cash or check contribution. Please make your checks payable to "Coos Watershed Association"

Visit <http://www.cooswatershed.org/friends> to make your contribution today.



Restoration Program Highlight: Research Into BioControls for Knotweed

An innovative study sponsored by the Northern Rockies Invasive Plant Council, the Washington State Department of Agriculture, USDA Agricultural Research Service, and the University of Idaho is working to better understand the distribution of species, biotypes, hybrids, and reproduction strategies of invasive knotweeds in the western United States and British Columbia through DNA analysis. This genetics study will benefit knotweed biocontrol methods. The Coos Watershed Association participated in this study by collecting 5 samples of Japanese, Himalayan, and Giant knotweed in the Coos watershed. CoosWA has an ongoing knotweed control program that involves education, removal, and replanting.

In 2009, the Coos Watershed Association sprayed knotweed patches for almost 30 individual landowners and 8 businesses along the Millicoma and Coos Rivers and in the towns adjacent to the Coos Bay. Tyler Pedersen, the Lowlands Restoration Project Manager, has received a grant from the Oregon Department of Agriculture to revegetate knotweed patches that were sprayed in 2009. **Tyler is looking for volunteers to help plant trees in December and January. No experience is necessary. Contact Tyler at tpedersen@cooswatershed.org or 541-888-5922.**



Tyler Pedersen - CoosWA

Knotweed is extremely invasive. In the winter months the plant lies dormant and dead but brown stems may remain standing. Knotweed will begin to grow in March and April. Here is a picture of Himalayan Knotweed resprouting.

Please report any sightings. 541-888-5922

For more information and photos please visit <http://www.cooswatershed.org/knotweed>.

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed people can change the world. Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.

~Margaret Mead

That was the quote I chose to represent why I became an Ameri-Corps volunteer. But, I didn't know then how much I would accomplish and how much I myself would change. I have learned, explored, and created so much in these short ten months. I may not be a west coast girl, but Oregon will always have a special place in my heart.

**Marley Bice
Watershed Outreach Organizer
Coos Watershed Association
NWSA IP 2009**



Photo courtesy of Marley Bice



Rainy Season on the Oregon Coast: What You Can Do to Help Protect the Bay

- Reduce sediment inputs from your property by planting native vegetation and covering bare ground with mulch or gravel
- Apply fertilizers and other chemicals to your lawn only as directed using the minimum amount necessary
- Be sure to always properly dispose of pet waste, automotive materials and household hazardous waste
- Maintain healthy stream-bank vegetation around any water bodies on your property. This promotes stream bank stabilization and cooler water temperatures through shading.
- Reduce your household's use of water (and electricity) by only running the washing machine and dish washer when you have full load, take shorter showers, and don't run sprinklers or faucets unnecessarily.
- Have a sunny day? Organize a trash pick up event with your family or neighborhood.
- Remember, the watershed is completely connected; upstream conditions affect downstream conditions. If you would like to discuss watershed restoration projects on your property call CoosWA at 888-5922.



Marley Bice - CoosWA

Board Room Update

Paul Merz, an active CoosWA board member since 2005, and a commercial fisherman since 1970, is also active in the ProjectCROOS which stands for Collaborative Research on Oregon Ocean Salmon. In this project, the fishermen are the researchers collecting data that allows geneticists to better understand salmon travel patterns during their ocean years. The project, sponsored by the Coastal Oregon Marine Experiment Station (COMES), recently won the Oregon State University Oldfield-Jackman Award for a team project that showed ingenuity, productivity and impact. Congratulations to Paul, and the whole CROOS team! Learn more about the project at: <http://www.projectcroos.com>.



Betsy Hartley - CAS

Above: CROOS team members (Paul is second from the right in the back row) with their award. Below: new CoosWA board member Susanna Noordhoff.

The Coos WA Board of Directors is proud to welcome Susanna Noordhoff as their newest director. Susanna graduated from Portland State University and moved to the Bay Area from Vancouver, WA in 2005. Susanna has a civil engineering background in the water- and wastewater-consulting field, experience as a hydroelectric and nuclear power plant operator, and will be taking the professional engineer license exam in April. Susanna is the President of the Southwestern Oregon Chapter of the Professional Engineers of Oregon and a Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee Member for the City of North Bend.



Photo courtesy of Susanna Noordhoff

Event Round-up: Cleaning Beaches, Pulling Blackberry, and Discussing Local Water Quality Issues

On September 19, over 3700 SOLV volunteers cleaned up 362 miles of Oregon's coastline, including Bastendorrf Beach.

The *Friends of the Coos Watershed* sponsored two screenings of the PBS Frontline documentary *Poisoned Waters* at South Slough as part of National Estuaries Day.

The film screening was followed by a public discussion of water quality issues in the local watershed (see story on page 1).

On September 30, a dozen high school students from the Harding Learning Center volunteered 2 hours at the Matson Creek Wetland Preserve pulling invasive Himalayan blackberry and learning about native plants.

The Bay Area Rotary Club and the Coos Bay Garden Club both enjoyed outreach presentations this fall.

On November 3, 35 people gathered at the Coos Bay Library to learn more about federal, state, and tribal permitting processes.

If you think that sounds cool, make sure you get on our website: <http://www.cooswatershed.org/events> so that you don't miss the next great event.



Marley Bice - CoosWA

On, Tuesday November 3rd, the *Friends of the Coos Watershed* hosted a permitting workshop that highlighted the programs of seven different agencies - perhaps the first of it's kind on the Oregon Coast.

Mark your calendars: Upcoming Events

December 8: Public Board meeting

December 25: CoosWA office is closed

January 1: CoosWA office is closed

January 12: Public Board meeting

January 21: Meredith Pochardt begins a 10-month AmeriCorps internship with CoosWA

February 9: Public Board meeting

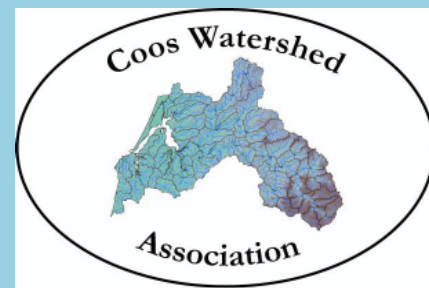
Friends of the Coos Watershed Update

Your involvement in the Coos Watershed Association does not need to end with a monetary donation. Be sure to check out our events page and volunteer page for any upcoming events and volunteer opportunities.

Thank you to Karen Bice and Lysbeth Toribio for their generous contribution to the *Friends of the Coos Watershed* during this quarter.

Thanks for your continued support of local action for watershed education and restoration!

If you would like to receive this newsletter through e-mail; you can subscribe to this quarterly newsletter for yourself at http://www.cooswatershed.org/enews_subscribe.html.



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