

CoosCurrents

Coos Watershed Association

June 2009

Coos Bay, OR

Coos Watershed Association
P.O. Box 5860
Charleston, OR 97420
541-888-5922
<http://www.cooswatershed.org>

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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Executive Director

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CoosWA Now Offering: Volunteer Opportunities

The Coos Watershed Association is now offering a variety of volunteer opportunities coordinated by their AmeriCorps volunteer.

Opportunities include becoming a **Volunteer Outreach Assistant** and helping out with our tables at local community events such as Watershed Awareness Days last month and the Concerned Citizens of Empire’s “Clamboree!” later this month.

Other fun opportunities include volunteering at clean-up days on an adopted stretch of river or an adopted stretch of highway within the Coos watershed as a **Watershed Stewardship Volunteer**. Contact Marley if you are interested in helping decide what stretch of river and/or highway to adopt.

You can even do watershed research from your own back yard by becoming a **Storm Water Watcher**. We are developing a reporting system where you can observe and report on storm water patterns in your neighborhood during and after a rain event. The information collected will help us determine where storm water remediation projects, such as bioretention ponds or rain gardens, would be most effective in reducing sediment inputs to the Bay.

Another great way to help out is to become a **Watershed Ambassador** and make a five-minute presentation at



The Watershed Awareness Days booth at the Pony Village Mall May 28-30 introduced over 50 people to the Coos watershed and the Coos Watershed Association.

meetings of other local groups that you belong to. This will help us get the word out on what the Coos watershed is, what the Coos Watershed Association is, and what landowners and community members can do to help out. Contact Marley if you are interested in making a presentation. She can give you all the materials and even attend the meeting with you if you prefer.

You can contact Marley at mbice@cooswatershed.org if you are interested in any of these projects or have any questions. Also, check the volunteer opportunities webpage for updates and new opportunities: <http://www.cooswatershed.org/volunteer>.

Restoration Program Highlight: Invasive Plant of the Month: Japanese & Himalayan Knotweed

What is it?

There are two types of invasive knotweed in the Coos watershed: Japanese knotweed, which is characterized by a wide, heart-shaped leaf, and Himalayan knotweed, which has an elongated leaf. Knotweed is characterized by bamboo-like, green or reddish stems, and bright green leaves 1-12" wide with smooth edges. This invasive plant begins its growth in April and by July, it can reach a height of 12 feet! Large spikes of small, white flowers bloom in late summer. In the winter months, although the plant lies dormant and dead, brown stems may remain standing.

Where does it grow?

Knotweed is most commonly found in the flood plains along rivers and creeks. However, it will thrive in any moist soil or river cobble in full or partial light.

How does it spread?

Much of the knotweed in the Coos watershed, especially along the Coos River, was spread during the 1996 floods. Knotweed spreads through rhizomes - root and stem segments - which transport easily in tidally-influenced river systems. Fragments as small as 1/2-inch can start a new plant and just one patch of knotweed can produce hundreds of new plants. Stream banks were rapidly colonized by the weed, and if not carefully controlled, will continue to spread. Beavers also contribute to the spread of knotweed because they cut it down and promote the spread of rhizomes.

Why do we need to get rid of it?

Knotweed is an ornamental plant native to Asia. When it colonizes in areas such as the Coos watershed, it out-competes and permanently displaces native vegetation. It grows extremely fast - one small plant can grow up to a foot a week. Native animals and fish cannot use it for food or shelter. Therefore, knotweed destroys terrestrial and aquatic habitat that would otherwise be suitable for wildlife. The food chain could also be disrupted because knotweed takes nitrogen out of the soil without replacing it with leaf litter.

What is being done to control it?

Knotweed threatens current and potential restoration planting sites on the Coos River, Millicoma River, and their tributaries. Past experience has shown that plantings need to be maintained for 3-5 years after establishment before they are self-sustaining.

The Coos Watershed Association treats knotweed with an aquatic-safe herbicide cocktail that can be applied to the foliage from May to October. The herbicide will be applied on the knotweed leaves by a licensed applicator with a backpack sprayer, and every precaution will be taken to avoid spraying the surrounding trees and shrubs. Treating knotweed earlier in the growing season prevents a dense canopy from forming. Patches that are successfully treated and killed can be re-vegetated with native conifer and hardwood trees. *Continued on page 3.*



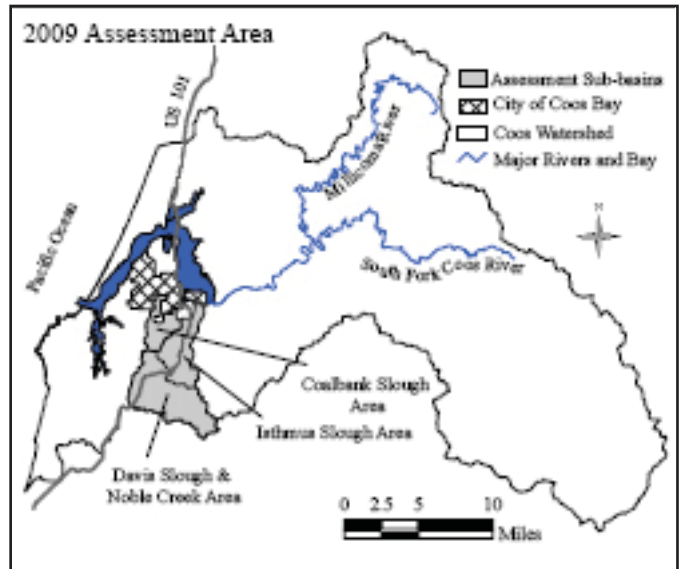
Photo by Britt Slattery, USFWS

Japanese knotweed is characterized by wide, heart-shaped leaves and has white blooms during July through October. Call CoosWA today to learn how to have this invasive removed from your property free of charge.

Assessment Highlight: Isthmus Slough Assessment Will Begin this Summer

CoosWA will be starting an assessment in the Coalbank and Isthmus Slough sub-basin areas, including Davis Slough and Noble Creek drainages, which lie south of Coos Bay, in June. The Association will be exploring habitat and water quality restoration opportunities. During neighborhood Coffee Klatch meetings CoosWA will explain more about the assessment and restoration process, and gather landowners' property management concerns and goals. Postcard invitations to Coffee Klatches are being mailed to many residents, and everyone owning land in the assessment area is invited to attend.

There are three Coffee Klatch meetings planned in June. The dates and locations for each meeting can be found on our website and you can pre-register by calling 888-5922 or e-mailing cooswa@cooswatershed.org.



Many residents in the area have also received letters about our stream surveys beginning this summer in the Isthmus and Coalbank sub-basins. Stream surveys inventory salmon habitat features and gather information about road drainage features, culvert conditions, and riparian shade.

Bessie Joyce, CoosWA's outreach and assessment coordinator, contributed greatly to this article.

Monitoring Program Highlight: Knotweed Cont.



Photo by Glenn Miller, ODA

Trees provide shade for fish habitats and have root structures that help slow erosion, and filter toxins.

What can you do?

The Coos Watershed Association offers a knotweed control program during the summer months at no charge to the landowner. If you find knotweed on your property, no matter what size, call (541) 888-5922. It is important that you avoid cutting down the knotweed because it can regrow even stronger and small cuttings of the plant can resprout elsewhere if not contained.

Last year, with the permission of 25 landowners, CoosWA was able to spray knotweed along several rivers in the Coos watershed and are currently treating additional properties this season. CoosWA is also able to consult with you about what native plants to plant after invasive plants are removed and can help with restoration projects on your property when funds are available.

Himalayan knotweed has more elongated leaves. More views of both types of knotweed are on our website.

Tyler Pedersen, CoosWA's lowlands restoration projects manager, contributed greatly to this article.

CoosWA Receives Two Important Grants in May

On Monday May 11, 2009, the Directors of the Laird Norton Family Foundation voted to approve a grant for \$75,000 for the Coos Watershed Association (CoosWA) to begin implementation of their Model Watershed Program (MWP). The MWP is a 10-year program designed to “apply rigorous project standards and support only long-term and science-based restoration initiatives.” According to Nick MacPhee, Managing Director of the Foundation, “The Coos Watershed Association was at the top of our list because of its commitment to long-term monitoring and evaluation”.

From an initial pool of 70 applicants, the Coos Watershed Association was selected partially due to the productive partnerships they have and continue to pursue with landowners and managers throughout the watershed. “We have demonstrated that successful restoration programs can involve partnerships with industrial timber companies, state land managers in the Elliott State Forest, Coos County, cattle ranchers, small woodlot owners, rural residential “hobby farmers” and the South Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve.”

Approximately half of the funds will be used to sub-contract with the StatNat (Statistics in Natural Resources) group at Oregon State University to help create effective study designs. A large portion of the grant will be used to collect and analyze data in the Bottom Creek and Coos Bay Lowlands focus areas of the Model Watershed Program study. Additionally, \$5,000 of the grant will be used to support a University of Vermont student to prepare a report on environmental indicators for the Coos watershed as part of her Master’s thesis (see story on page 5).

On May 22, CoosWA was notified of their approval for a \$25,000 joint-use space planning grant from the Meyer Memorial Trust. This grant is part of the Meyer Memorial Trust’s non-profit capacity building program.

CoosWA plans to use these funds to collaborate with the Wetlands Conservancy, the Cape Arago Audubon Society, the local Boys and Girls Club, and Boy and Girl Scouts on the Matson Creek Wetland Preserve. We believe this space could be used for CoosWA offices as well as an interpretive center with educational trails throughout the wetland. Meetings with all parties have begun and CoosWA’s AmeriCorps intern, Marley Bice, has begun extensive research into what programs geared towards scout-aged children could be offered at the wetland preserve site.



More details about the Meyer Memorial Trust and the programs they offer can be found at www.mmt.org



LAIRD NORTON
FAMILY FOUNDATION

The Coos Watershed Association recieved the largest of the Laird Norton Family Foundation’s 2009 Watershed Stewardship grants. They can be found on the web at www.lairdnorton.org

University of Vermont Graduate Student to Join CoosWA for the Summer

Autumn Foushée will be joining the Coos Watershed Association this summer through the generous support of a recent Laird Norton Family Foundation grant (see story on page 4). Her work will focus on the preparation of a report on ecological indicators of climate change and land use impacts to inform monitoring and management of the Coos watershed as part of her Master's thesis.

Autumn is a native of Kentucky where she grew up on a cattle, vegetable, and tobacco farm. She followed her passion for working outdoors and bringing science to the public by pursuing an undergraduate education in Natural Resources Conservation and Management, and Journalism. Autumn is currently a graduate student in the Field Naturalist Program in Plant Biology at the University of Vermont in Burlington, Vermont. Autumn has experience with both environmental non-profits and the Pacific Northwest.



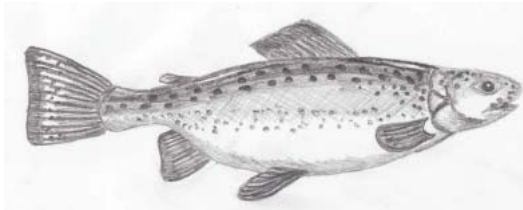
Autumn is excited to return to the Pacific Northwest this summer where she will have opportunities to enjoy her passion for water sports.

**Visit
CoosWA On the
Web Today!**

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.

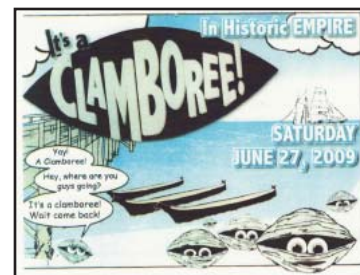
Become a Stormwater Watcher!

Observe and report on stormwater patterns in YOUR neighborhood!



Contact Marley for more info or to volunteer: mbice@cooswatershed.org

**It's a Clamboree!
You can't miss this one!
June 27th 10 am - 6 pm**



CoosWA will be there with new information on clams and water quality.

Contact Marley for more info or to volunteer: mbice@cooswatershed.org

**Organized by the
Concerned Citizens of Empire**

Event Round-up: Subs & Smolts? Green Night? Watershed Awareness Days?

If you haven't been to any of CoosWA's events this Spring, here's what you missed:

On a brisk Thursday evening, 45 people gathered in the South Slough NERR Interpretive Center to share subs and presentations about "the State of the Watershed," restoration plans in Bottom Creek, and research about fish behavior around tide gates as part of the 2009 Annual Meeting.



The 2009 Annual Meeting was held March 19 at the South Slough NERR Interpretive Center.

On tax day, Marley presented a colorful introduction to the watershed presentation at Java Jones Coffee House's popular Green Night event.

On a sunny Thursday afternoon in April, Bessie and Marley helped out with a 2nd grade Forestry club at Madison Elementary School. The eager seven and eight year-olds learned about watersheds, what defines the Coos watershed and then planted some trees.

The last weekend of May included a series of successful Watershed Awareness Days at the Pony Village Mall. Mall-goers got to learn about the watershed, why it is important, and share stories about living in the Coos watershed.

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.

Mark your calendars: Upcoming Events

June 9: CoosWA board meeting (open to the public)

June 27: Help the *Friends of the Coos Watershed* at their outreach booth at the Clamboree. RSVP to mbice@cooswatershed.org

July 14: CoosWA board meeting (open to the public)

July 25: Tentative field trip to the Matson Creek Wetland Preserve with the Cape Arago Audubon Society

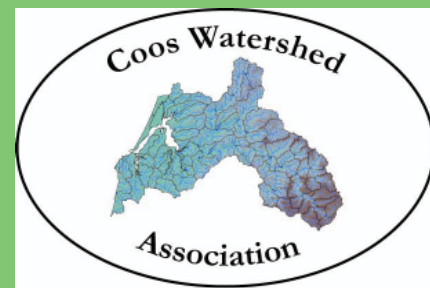
August 11: CoosWA board meeting (open to the public)

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.

We would like to thank the following individuals and businesses for renewing their *Friends* membership this quarter: Annie "Follows Heart" Chilla, Brad Carlson & Margaret Ann Anderson, Toby W. Floyd, Norma Kline, Mark May, Steven L. Sadler, Lysbeth Toribio, and Ken Ware Chevrolet-Cadillac.

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



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