

# CoosWAnews

Coos Watershed Association

Winter 2009

Coos Bay, OR

Coos Watershed Association  
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<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.

## STAFF:

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Jon Souder, Ph.D.  
*Executive Director*

Adam Weybright  
*Monitoring Coordinator*

## Coos Watershed Association Highlighted on KCBY

In case you haven’t heard, the Coos Watershed Association (CoosWA) was selected by the Bonneville Environmental Foundation (BEF) to be their sixth model watershed in 2008. BEF’s model watershed program is designed to “apply rigorous project standards and support only long-term and science-based restoration initiatives.” CoosWA was chosen for our commitment to the scientific evaluation of restoration activities.

The 10-year plan for this Model Watershed Program (MWP) was approved by the CoosWA Board of Directors in April, 2008 and involves assessment and monitoring, watershed restoration, and socio-economic goals in four focus sub-basins within the Coos watershed. The three main goals are summarized in the table below. A ten-year time scale is utilized in this project to allow for evaluation of cumulative progress and the opportunity to make improvements along the way. BEF’s support of this project will include technical assistance, scientific review and financial support in the amount of \$260,000 over 10 years.

The BEF web page announcing this collaboration describes the Coos watershed as an “extremely productive and important habitat for coho salmon.” Many of our efforts over the next ten years will involve evaluating coho salmon use of streams in the Coos watershed and measures to improve coho salmon spawning and rearing habitats.

Our full Model Watershed Program Plan can be found on our Publications web page at: <http://www.cooswatershed.org/publications.html>.



*The honor was highlighted on Coos Bay local news KCBY. Executive Director Jon Souder was interviewed on one of the Willanch Creek sites about stream temperature and coho salmon monitoring.*

The Goals
<i>Assessment and Monitoring Goal:</i> to gain an understanding of the status and trends of watershed characteristics and the cumulative effects of restoration projects and programs.
<i>Watershed Restoration Goal:</i> to restore sustainable, fishable populations of coho and other native species by improving freshwater and estuarine watershed conditions.
<i>Socio-Economic Goal:</i> to engage the local community to restore the Coos Watershed

# Restoration Project Highlight: Bottom Creek Large Wood Placement

Before humans began settling around and controlling streams, natural debris flows would bring large boulders and logs into stream beds. The shaded pools created by turbulence around large wood placed in streams are important rearing sites for young salmon and trout. Large woody debris (LWD) also add complexity to stream morphology, slowing down the stream flow and providing opportunities for gravel to fall out. Clean gravel beds are ideal spawning habitats for coho salmon.

Some streams need more help than others to recreate these conditions. Watershed engineers carefully design and install LWD sites and then allow them to interact naturally with the stream substrate and other debris in the stream to create complex habitats around the site. Slowing down the stream flow also helps to stabilize the stream bank by allowing riparian vegetation to be established.

In the summer of 2008, ten LWD sites were installed in a section of Bottom Creek that flows through Weyerhaeuser Timber Co. land. Large stretches of Bottom Creek consisted of exposed bedrock which does not provide good spawning habitat for the coho salmon. However, six months after the sites were placed, extensive gravel beds had developed, and spawning surveys and site visits showed that coho salmon were spawning in this section of Bottom Creek – a very encouraging sign.

There were many project partners involved in this important project. Oregon Trout's Stream Bank program funded these wood placements in 2008 and additional sites will be installed in 2009 using funds from the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB). Weyerhaeuser and OWEB have also funded fish passage and road sediment reduction projects in Bottom Creek in 2008 and 2009.



*Top: Logs being placed at a large wood site in Bottom Creek. Bottom: Six months later the substrate of Bottom Creek has been completely re-worked creating more suitable spawning habitat.*

## Fun Coos County Fact

**Did you know...the first automobile drove into Coos Bay on the Coos Bay Wagon Road in 1908?**

It took a week for this automobile to go from Roseburg to Marshfield. Now the CoosWA is helping to decommission unused roads that are contributing excess amounts of sediment to streams. The CoosWA is involved in road decommission projects – mostly in the local forests – in order to help speed their transition back to natural, stable ecosystems. The Coos Watershed Association also works with the local county roads department and other land owners to determine when roads should be relocated or if undersized culverts need to be upgraded to bridges to allow for improved fish passage.

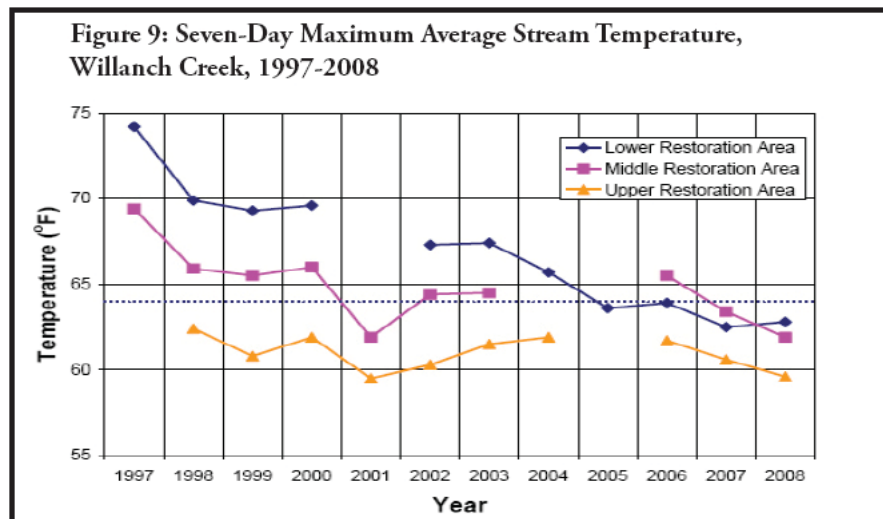
# Monitoring Project Highlight: Willanch Creek Stream Temperature Data in for 2008

This just in, the seven-day average maximum stream temperature in two of the three restoration sections of Willanch Creek was lower in 2008 than 2007. That makes this the third year in a row maximum stream temperatures have decreased and the second year in a row that all three restoration areas have had maximum stream temperatures below 64°F, an important habitat benchmark, in Willanch Creek. 64°F is used as the water quality standard in this analysis and is plotted in the graph below as a dark blue dashed line.

Various restoration projects; culvert replacement, large wood placement, and riparian planting and maintenance, have been done to Willanch Creek since 1995. Stream temperatures in the creek have been monitored since 1997 showing a greater than 10°F decrease in the average maximum stream temperature in that ten-year period.

The Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) states that stream temperatures greater than 59°F put a lot of physical stress on trout and the endangered coho salmon both of which are important to the Coos watershed's economy and ecology. Stream temperatures greater than 64°F are often lethal to both salmon and trout. In 1997, when stream temperature measurements began, the average maximum stream temperature in the lower restoration area was greater than 74°F; undoubtedly an extremely dangerous condition for all fish. CoosWA is proud that all of the aspects of this project have improved stream bank stability and the aesthetic appearance of the stream, in addition to making the entire creek a more viable and accessible habitat for salmon and trout.

There were many local project partners involved in the restoration of Willanch Creek including local landowners, the Lone Rock Timber Co., Menasha Corporation, Weyerhaeuser Timber Co., the Coos County Road Department, and the Coos Bay-North Bend Water Board as well as the Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife and the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board. Watch the CoosWA publications page (<http://www.cooswatershed.org/publications>) for the full Willanch Creek Case Study coming soon.



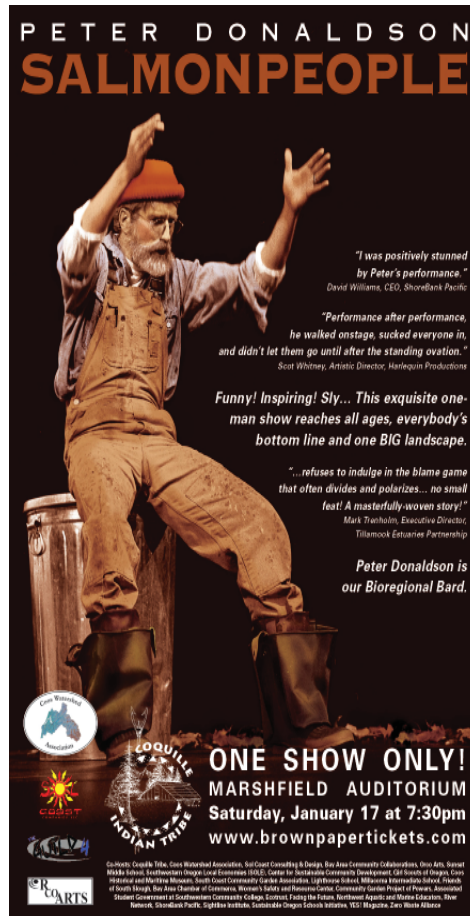
## What's New on the CoosWA Website? A Lot!

The Coos WA AmeriCorps intern, Marley Bice, has been working hard on making the CoosWA website more colorful, and interactive to better reflect the multi-faceted nature of the Association's activities and goals. You can now visit an "As A Landowner..." page that provides cost-effective, watershed-friendly solutions to common property management problems such as flooding of your yard during heavy rain events or erosion of stream banks running through your property. This page is under construction and needs more local examples of these project ideas in action so e-mail Marley at [mbice@cooswatershed.org](mailto:mbice@cooswatershed.org) if you have implemented any watershed-friendly solutions to problems on your property.

# CoosWA Helps Bring *SalmonPeople* Back to Coos Bay for A Full House Performance

You may remember that in November of 2007, CoosWA kicked off their new volunteer and donor networking group *Friends of the Coos Watershed* at two performances of Peter Donaldson's one-man show *SalmonPeople* at Little Theatre on the Bay. So when Donaldson brought the play back to Coos Bay in January of 2009, it is no surprise that Coos Watershed Association was there to help spread the message of the interdependence between salmon and people within the Coos watershed. 850 people filled the audience for Donaldson's January performance at Marshfield High School. Sixteen local organizations, including CoosWA, were co-sponsors of the repeat performance which was primarily organized by Suzanne Adams at Oregon Coast Arts.

If you aren't already a *Friend of the Coos Watershed*, now is a great time to join. In addition to knowing your donation is supporting habitat restoration and public education about the importance of the watershed, you could be involved in projects around town like working at the CoosWA nursery or helping to construct a rain garden to reduce storm water runoff. With just a little bit of your time you can make a big difference and have a lot of fun.



## UPCOMING EVENTS:

Go to the website: <http://www.cooswatershed.org/events.html> for details and updates

### CoosWA 2008 Annual Meeting:

March 19th, RSVP Required

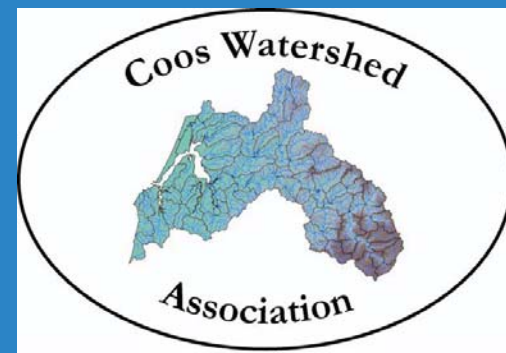
### April Board of Directors Meeting:

April 7, open to the public

## Friends of the Coos Watershed

Spring is coming and that means there are lots of volunteer opportunities at the busy Coos Watershed Association nursery. Become a *Friend* today to be kept updated on these and other volunteer opportunities. We have several donation levels to become a *Friend* ranging from \$10 for student or senior membership to \$100 for corporate membership. Visit our website <http://www.cooswatershed.org/donate.html> to learn more about becoming a *Friend of the Coos Watershed*.

If you were given this newsletter by a friend or colleague you can subscribe to our quarterly e-newsletter for yourself at [http://www.cooswatershed.org/news\\_subscribe.html](http://www.cooswatershed.org/news_subscribe.html).



## BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

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