

Siuslaw WATERSHED COUNCIL NEWS

MAY 2007

www.siuslaw.org
watershed@siuslaw.org

P.O. Box 422 • Mapleton, Oregon 97453 • 541-268-3044

• Community • Economy • Environment

Message from the Coordinator...

Branding the Siuslaw

What does a restored watershed look like? Or more aptly, what does the Siuslaw Watershed on a restoration trajectory look like? These are questions continually pondered by partners working on watershed planning. For the time being, construe your own image in your mind. Moving beyond what the image is, picture driving into the watershed and knowing what it is. That is a concept I recently discussed with SWC Vice-chair, Dave Eisler, while preparing a grant proposal.

Perhaps the image is an amalgam of watershed scenery and subtle landscape elements. Highly-functioning salmon streams, late-successional forests, and interconnected wetlands may provide a sense of intact wilderness. Commingled in this backdrop could be sustainable timber operations producing Siuslaw wood products at local mills, alternative forest products harvesters and merchants, thriving sport fisheries and commercial fleets on the river, and kayak and canoe liveries on the estuary. Farms and ranches boasting watershed and salmon-friendly crops and products complete this watershed mosaic.

Will visitors and passersby ever get the clear visual sense that they are entering a restored, highly functioning watershed? I think so. Knowing exactly what that image is, or will be, may be hard to estimate and perhaps even unhelpful to distinctly create. But just as one can clearly perceive whether a place along one's route is an industrial center sullied by a century of activity, or is a fishing town, or is wilderness, or a farming center dominated by orchards, grains, or vineyards, a restored watershed must have a certain visual sense and flavor to it.

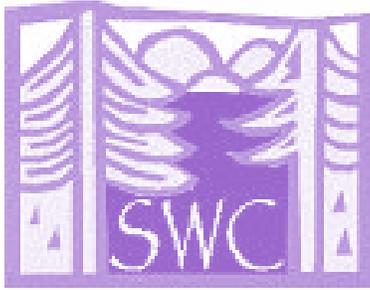
Surely the efforts of over a decade of stream restoration, forest habitat management, floodplain and wetland enhancement, and efforts to reinvigorate the natural resource economy should have some visible effect over a watershed where it has not been done. That is the driving vision for expanding the sphere of



community awareness of watershed health. Those headed to the coast from the Willamette Valley via the Siuslaw basin are already greeted with the stunning natural beauty of the Oregon Coast Range. Some note the patchwork of recent timber harvests, the legacy of the Austa burn, the idle mills in Mapleton, or the small fleet of fishing boats in Florence. Perhaps others note the planted streamside trees in Walton, the in-stream logs placed in Knowles Creek, or the reconnected wetlands along the North Fork. Potentially, the additive effect landscape of full-stream spanning culverts, native streamside vegetation, complex streams winding through floodplains, and mixed species forests could leave a more distinct impression of the Siuslaw Watershed.

The most important elements to complete the picture, though, will be those that evidence a restored economy and vibrant watershed communities. Restoration planners have been seeking the linkages between sustainable-forest and watershed-friendly products to local markets and the local workforce. A planning team from the Siuslaw Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) and Ecotrust recently pitched a creek system restoration concept that

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Siuslaw Watershed Council

Tel: 541-268-3044

Fax 268-3045

Staff

Coordinator: *Todd Miller*

coordinator@siuslaw.org

Administrative Assistant:

Ginger Fincher

watershed@siuslaw.org

Monitoring Coordinator:

Liz Vollmer-Buhl

monitoring@siuslaw.org

nativeplants@siuslaw.org

Executive Committee

Chair: Steve Elliot

Vice Chair: Dave Eisler

Secretary: Wesley Voth

Treasurer: Nancy Nichols

Representatives:

Barbara Beers

Paul Chapman

Jim Grano

Noland Huntington

Message... *continued from page 1*

included not only in-stream restoration but integrated agricultural production on the valley bottom and timber harvesting for long-term forest management in the uplands. The Siuslaw Basin Partnership is continually involved in efforts to foster small-diameter and alternative forest product harvest, milling, and value-adding industries locally. Part of this effort includes the concept of branding the Siuslaw.

Not only should there be an identifiable restoration image in the Siuslaw Watershed, but Siuslaw products could be valued for their label—much like organic or green-certified products are currently. As the state, region, and cities put more emphasis on localization, sustainability, and energy-independence, there is a growing potential for Siuslaw branded products to gain recognition and value. A clearly visible image of a restored watershed will be the ultimate Siuslaw branding.

Todd Miller

**Siuslaw Watershed Council
General Meeting Agenda
May 30, 2007
Mapleton Grange Hall
6:30 p.m.**



- 6:00-6:30** **Open for set-up**
- 6:30- 6:35** **Welcome and Introductions**
- 6:35-7:30** **Council Self-Evaluation** *please see page 4 for a detailed description of this process.*
- 7:30-7:45** **Break** *Displays about the Siuslaw Water Trail and Water Quality Monitoring will be available for viewing*
- 7:45-8:05** **Reports and Updates**
- 8:05-8:20** **Open Mic** *(3-5 speakers, 3-5 minutes each)*
- 8:20-8:30** **Announcements**
- 8:30** **Adjourn**

After the Herbicide Forum – *Where do we go from here?*



by Todd Miller, Council Coordinator

Last month SWC hosted the second of its two-part herbicide forum series at Mapleton High School. Including presenters and staff, 73 people attended the April forum. Guest presenters included Marganne Allen from the Oregon Department of Forestry, Jeff Jenkins from Oregon State University, Dick Ewing, a science consultant from Corvallis, Chauncey Anderson from the US Geological Survey, Gene Foster from the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality, and Tom Steinberg, the local scientific community representative on the SWC leadership board.

The theme of the forum was *Herbicide Fate and Toxicology in Aquatic Ecosystems – seeking solutions to healthy watershed resources*. The program was designed to follow up the March forum which provided an overview of the common herbicides in use locally and how and why they are applied, and to lead toward understanding what the potential impacts on aquatic resources are and to identify some of the opportunities for community solutions to the issue. Ms. Allen, Dr. Jenkins, and Mr. Ewing presented information on monitoring programs and research data indicating how herbicides are transported on the landscape and what concerns the chemicals pose to fish and other aquatic wildlife. Mr. Anderson and Mr. Foster presented monitoring results showing the presence of a variety of pesticides in the McKenzie, Willamette, and Hood River systems and the potential sources and controls for those chemicals.

One of the biggest suspected sources of herbicides in streams comes from roadways, where the chemicals are more quickly transported by runoff from the roads directly to ditches and conveyed to stream systems. Mr. Foster highlighted a program conducted in Hood River with local orchards, the watershed council, and the DEQ to reduce the potential for orchard pesticides from getting directly into waterways. The presentation rounded out the forum on a positive trajectory, noting that cooperative community solutions to pesticide issues is as attainable as other watershed stewardship efforts. Mr. Steinberg closed the presentations with an introduction of himself to present input from the educated professional citizen viewpoint.

One of the more curious elements brought to audience attention was the common detection of caffeine in our state's waters. Many wanted to know where the caffeine came from and what its impacts on fish and other wildlife is. Several colleagues of mine who work in the field of water quality and sediment research have mentioned the caffeine presence to me in the past. From what I understand, caffeine is ubiquitous in our waste stream, whether it is domestic leachate or municipal wastewater, and it is fairly persistent in the environment (that is, it does not tend to break down quickly). I have seen reference to research that indicates caffeine may be negatively affecting fish behavior and have other wildlife concerns. While this issue is a complete side note to the Herbicide Forum, I find it aptly demonstrated that we must continue to be cognizant of how we all contribute to environmental problems and solutions.

While the forums have been extremely informative and useful to most attendees, we are left with the same schism in the community that we started with: practitioners who have trust in the level of monitoring, regulation, and guidance on the proper use of herbicides and health advocates who see too many holes in the level of testing and protection to be comfortable with any use of herbicides on the landscape. The forums were not intended to provide any immediate solutions, but empower the community with a shared set of working knowledge about herbicide use and watershed effects to move toward a solution.

To assist in furthering this effort, SWC will be compiling many of the presentation materials and handouts brought by the guest presenters and providing them for viewing via our Web site. Included will be as complete a transcript of the question and answer sessions as we are able to produce. Many community members, including technical advisors and community advocates, have submitted additional information, including journal articles and news reports, on herbicides and aquatic resource impacts. SWC will not be making these other items available on our Web site, primarily due to the staff time required to facilitate such an effort, but also under the input of the Siuslaw Technical Advisory Team that was concerned about becoming a potential gateway for unreviewed material that was at odds with the SWC mission and spirit.

There are several promising discussions occurring in the wake of the herbicide forums. Agencies are continuing to open up to advisory groups, community groups and timber industry representatives are looking into co-sponsoring research that both can be invested in, and forest workers are looking into offering cost-effective mechanical release services to timber managers. What the outcome of any of these prospects will be is unknown. The key ingredient to our future successes as a watershed community is to continue understanding multiple perspectives and work toward finding common ground to develop collaborative solutions toward watershed health.

Supporting the Siuslaw Watershed Council

The approaching end of June marks the end of our current operating biennium. Starting July 1, 2007, SWC will begin operations for the next two years under the budget of our most important source of funding: OWEB's (Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board) Council Support grant. The biennial council self-evaluation is an important process to close out our current obligations for OWEB funding and is an important learning endeavor to start meeting our new obligations for 2007-2009 funding. We will conduct the council self-evaluation at our general meeting this month on Wednesday, May 30, 6:30 pm at the Mapleton Grange. Evaluation materials and instructions are posted on our Web site:

<http://www.siuslaw.org>

From the Siuslaw Web site, note the three documents available for download – Instructions, SWC Member Checklist, and SWC Member Evaluation. If there is any difficulty in opening those documents, OWEB provides all of the council evaluation materials here:

http://oregon.gov/OWEB/WSHEDS/wshed_council_forms.shtml

A thorough and formally conducted self-evaluation is important not only for us as a membership and organization, but is a required commitment to OWEB to exhibit we value their funding support for us and are sincerely interested in improving our operations and organization as we move forward under their funding. We scored highly in OWEB's review of our application for 2007-2009 funding; however, the summary of our council self-evaluation process was noted by reviewers as being unclear in how we conducted the evaluation and how we used the information gained from it.

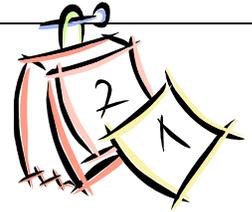
This is not to say that the last self-evaluation was not performed correctly or went unheeded. We use your feedback through the evaluation and other communication to focus attention on enhancing and improving our functions and efforts. We aim to be more transparent in the process and better document the outcomes during this round. Please help us with this endeavor by previewing the materials on the Web site, completing your evaluations and submit them to us, and attend the formal evaluation at our May general council meeting.

While the SWC scored highly on our biennial funding application, we rated with the bulk of statewide councils in the Very Good category, below those rated Excellent. A step up in the rating would mean a step up in the amount of funding received. For the past two biennia, OWEB has awarded the SWC funding of around \$83,000 for two years. We calculated that a full level of funding for two years of operations, given appropriate yet modest office and staff needs, would amount to over \$170,000. Needless to say, we struggle to make ends meet, but have found a way to function, at the lower level of funding. The coordinator position is part time, we are fortunate to have office space donated to us by the Forest Service, and we make do with aging and temperamental office equipment, trading productivity for cost-effectiveness.

The good news is that OWEB just adopted its biennial budget for legislative approval with a council support budget of just over \$5 million, providing SWC with \$86,000 in council support funds for 2007-2009. Even better, OWEB is dedicated to seeking funding of at least \$6 million for Oregon watershed councils by the fall of 2007. This dedication comes from recognizing the efforts and value of councils to the watersheds of Oregon. One way this recognition comes is through the biennial reports provided by councils to OWEB. SWC staff will be preparing our report in June and the council self-evaluation will be an important element of the report. Please weigh in on the evaluation effort. Every extra bit helps.

Please participate in the 2005-2007 council self-evaluation. Find information and evaluation forms at www.siuslaw.org and participate with your responses. Come to the May 30 general council meeting at 6:30 pm at the Mapleton Grange on East Mapleton Road and help make a good showing at the evaluation session to be held that evening. Thanks for your participation!

Siuslaw Watershed Council Calendar



**May 30—Siuslaw Watershed Council General Meeting: 6:30 pm,
Mapleton Grange, E. Mapleton Road.**

**June 4—Siuslaw Soil and Water Conservation District Meeting: 7:30 pm, SWCD office,
Florence Business Center, 1525 12th Street, Florence** (*Use main entrance, please call 997-1272 before coming so that the main door can be opened for you.*)

June 7—SWC Technical Team Meeting: 9:30 am, Upper Compound, Mapleton.

June 13—SWC Exec. Committee Meeting: 5:30 pm, Upper Compound, Mapleton.

June 19—Monthly Siuslaw Volunteer Water Quality Monitoring Day.

**June 27—Siuslaw Watershed Council General Meeting: 6:30 pm, Mapleton Grange,
East Mapleton Road.**



**PLEASE SEE PAGES 6 & 7 FOR MORE
WATERSHED ACTIVITY DATES!**

The Siuslaw Watershed Council is a non-profit , 501c3, organization . All donations are tax deductible to the full extent of the law.

Siuslaw Watershed Council Membership Form

Type of Membership:

Landowner _____ Community Member _____ Industry _____

Government Agency: _____ Tribal: _____

Name: _____ **Today's Date:** _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____ **E-mail:** _____

Please choose any of the following:

- Tax-deductible membership enclosed (\$10 regular, \$0 students).
- Additional tax-deductible donation enclosed. Amount \$ _____
- I am interested in volunteer opportunities with the Siuslaw Watershed Council

May 2007

Tech Team and Projects Update

The SWC Tech Team met on May 3 to review upcoming and ongoing projects and discuss other relevant technical matters. Listed is a summary of the discussions by topic.

Mill Creek Stream Enhancement: Team reviewed and approved with comment this stream enhancement project in the upper Siuslaw on industrial timber land prepared by ODFW. The project includes large wood placement and augments other stream restoration work, including culvert replacement, conducted on Mill Creek by the BLM. The project was submitted for OWEB Small Grant funding and has been reviewed, approved, and awarded.

Herbicide Subcommittee: Team agreed to Dave Eisler heading a technical subcommittee to look into herbicide issues including whether they are considered a limiting factor for salmon recovery and opportunities for meaningful monitoring, such as providing input to agencies that have budgets to do the monitoring.

North Coast Restoration Priorities: SWC accepted a funded task from OWEB to prepare prioritization information using existing assessments to create the Restoration Priorities for the Siuslaw Watershed that will be compiled with other data from the North Coast region. OWEB and others will use the resulting document to guide development and funding of restoration projects.

Walker Creek Effectiveness Monitoring: SWC and OWEB are working on the first full scale effectiveness monitoring program to assess the success and effects of the upcoming Walker Creek culvert replacements and large wood placements. The formal program will enable SWC to seek additional funding from OWEB for the project monitoring after the on-the-ground work is completed.

TMDL Sedimentation Sampling: SWC has completed the sampling plan for this summer's work on the TMDL project and will be contracting with Demeter Design of Tillamook to perform the stream survey and sampling work necessary for the project. Demeter will train interns recruited by SWC to complete other aspects of the project.

Siuslaw Water Trail: SWC will be administering the pilot trail project implementation under funding received by the Port of Siuslaw from Oregon State Parks. SWC will contract Tom Kartrude to facilitate trail markers and boat launches and Jordan Sexter to provide mapping, signage, and Web site element designs. The pilot trail work entails completing three loops: the Dunes Loop out to the Coast Guard Station, the North Fork loop up to Bender Landing, and the Cox Island loop which circumnavigates the island, all originating from the Port in Old Town.



Summer Volunteer Water Quality Dates

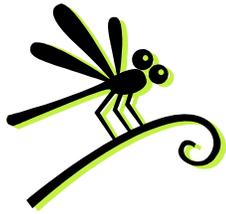
Tuesday, June 19, 2007

Tuesday, July 17, 2007

Tuesday, August 21, 2007

Check out www.siuslaw.org for VWQM data!

Contact Liz with any questions at monitoring@siuslaw.org.



Save the Dates—

Siuslaw Watershed Exploration CAMPS!

5th Annual

Intro Camp—Monday, July 23 – Friday, July 27, 2007

Open to youth entering grades 6 - 12!

Explore...

Geocaching, fish, macroinvertebrates, and hiking

Clamming and fish print t-shirts

Logging, motorboat tour, and more

Dead bird survey on beach, Honeyman S.P.

Native plant hike, leaf prints, and a treat

Advanced Camp—Thursday, August 9 – Friday, August 10, 2007

Open to all students entering 8th through 12th grades. Priority consideration given to past camp participants, Stream Team members, and SWC volunteers (*WQ, Native Plant Nursery, Knowles Creek, etc.*), and upper grade levels.

Explore...

Stream snorkeling, geocaching, photography, and more!

Siuslaw Kayak Tour

If you know a youth who would like to participate in the day camps, contact Liz at the Siuslaw Watershed Council, 541-268-3044 or nativeplants@siuslaw.org.



Additional Summer Workshops Available for All Ages

The SWC is planning three unique Saturday morning workshops for adults and youth for this summer. Workshops will be free and offered in different corners of the watershed. Tentative plans for dates and topics follow, stay tuned to the newsletter and website for updates. Email watershed@siuslaw.org with "SWC workshops" in the subject line with any questions.

Saturday, July 14, 2007: Noxious Weeds Workshop, Lorane

Saturday, July 28, 2007: Future Restoration Project Tour, Blachly

Saturday, August 11, 2007: Karnowsky Creek Birding and Restoration Tour, Mapleton

Native Riparian Plant Release

As the weather warms up, plants are coming out of dormancy or sprouting up, and growing tall. All the growth means that your native riparian plants have a lot of competition for sunlight, water, and nutrients. To help your native riparian plants succeed, clear away encroaching brush, grasses, and weeds. Cut back a five-foot diameter circle around the native plants.



If you are unable to release (clear brush around) your native riparian plants or need extra help, please contact Liz to be placed on the Release Assistance List. A release crew will reach as many sites as possible this summer, although they may not be able to help everyone. Contact Liz at nativeplants@siuslaw.org or 541-268-3044.

Siuslaw Watershed Council Mission Statement

The Siuslaw Watershed Council supports sound economic, social and environmental uses of natural and human resources in the Siuslaw River Basin. The Council encourages cooperation among public and private watershed entities to promote awareness and understanding of watershed functions by adopting and implementing a total watershed approach to natural resource management and production.

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What's Happening In Your Watershed?