

Winter 2022

# SIUSLAW

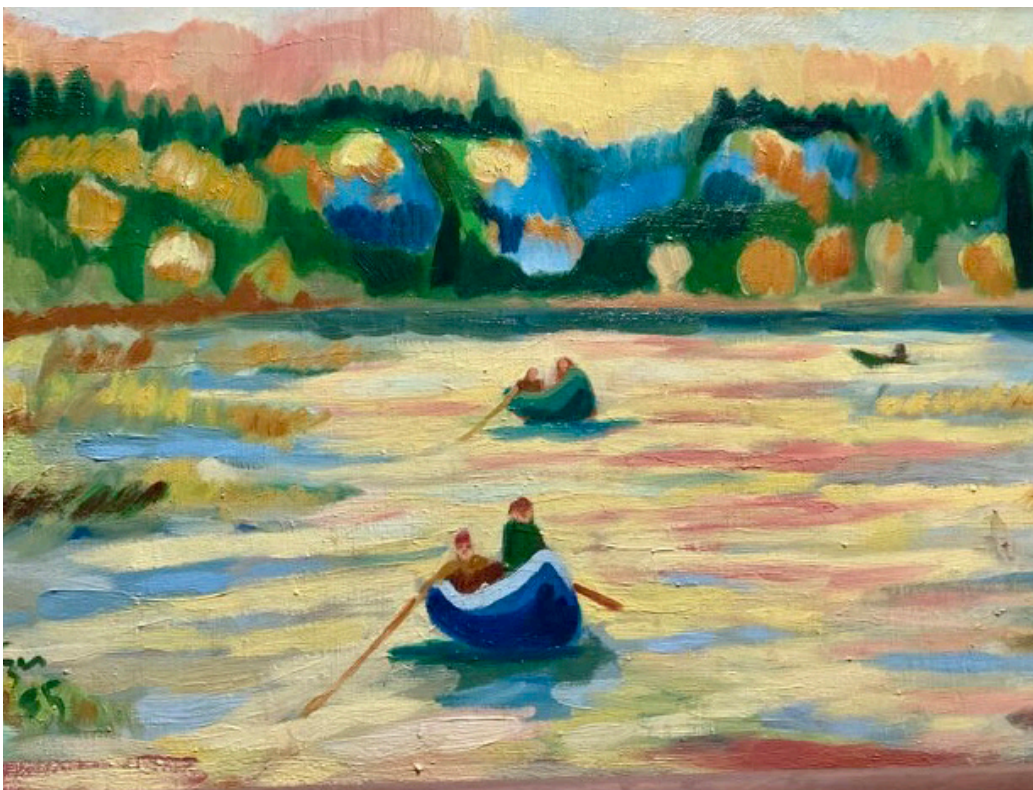
## WATERSHED COUNCIL NEWS

*What's Happening in Your Watershed?*

### Winter Drift Boating on the Siuslaw River & Lake Creek

There are few Northwest pastimes more nostalgic than river running, and few boat designs more iconic than the McKenzie River drift boat. As rivers begin to rise in the late fall, many anglers winterize their estuary-trolling powerboats and dust off their drift boat for a winter season of cold-weather rowing and steelhead fishing. And every veteran steelheader knows that the best seat to have on the coldest of days is that of the rower's seat, where each passing oar stroke slightly warms the chilled angler. When properly outfitted and with necessary knowledge acquired, winter boating on the Siuslaw River can be a safe respite from the digital world into a simpler time where you, literally, must go with the flow.

Drift boating on the Siuslaw River and Lake Creek during the winter months is not an activity to be approached, especially by the beginner, without a solid game plan and advanced knowledge of navigational river hazards and current water levels. Navigational river hazards come in two primary forms: rapids and downed logs/debris. Rapids are most commonly dictated by instream geomorphic features and are legacy of the stream reach, meaning that the location of specific rapids does not usually change dramatically from year to year. However, rapids do change dramatically with increases or decreases in stream flow, and the small class 1 drop you encountered at a low flow may become a big aggressive "keeper" hole during a high-water event.



Downed logs and debris, while great for rearing salmonids and other aquatic organisms, offer an entirely different, and in this author's opinion, far greater navigational hazard.

#### Inside the Winter Newsletter

**Pages 2 & 3** Cover Story  
(continued)

**Page 3** Spirit of the Siuslaw  
& Welcome New Staff

**Page 4** Reminder: 2022  
Native Plant Distribution

**Page 5** 2022 Activities &  
Events

**Page 6** Annual Meeting



## STAFF

**Mizu Burruss**  
Project Manager  
[restoration@siuslaw.org](mailto:restoration@siuslaw.org)

**Britnee Church**  
Restoration Technician  
[britnee@siuslaw.org](mailto:britnee@siuslaw.org)

**Jesse Jones**  
Project Manager  
[jesse@siuslaw.org](mailto:jesse@siuslaw.org)

**Caleb Mentzer**  
Project Manager  
[projects@siuslaw.org](mailto:projects@siuslaw.org)

**Tim Moffett**  
Project Manager  
[outreach@siuslaw.org](mailto:outreach@siuslaw.org)

**Rosemary Pazdral**  
Executive Director  
[coordinator@siuslaw.org](mailto:coordinator@siuslaw.org)

**Kathleen Watson**  
Financial Manager  
[financial@siuslaw.org](mailto:financial@siuslaw.org)

**Kevin Whittaker**  
Restoration Technician  
[kevin@siuslaw.org](mailto:kevin@siuslaw.org)

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President: Margaret Corvi  
Vice President: Jim Grano  
Secretary:  
Wendy Farley-Campbell  
Treasurer: Rodger Bennett  
Representatives:  
Kevin Carroll  
Les Fetter  
Carollee Howes  
Roselynn Lwenya  
Vevie McPherren  
Erika Wagner

## NEWSLETTER DESIGNER

Kate Harnedy



Following each major winter storm, you can not only expect to see a rise in the water level of the Siuslaw River and Lake Creek systems, but also an influx of downed trees and other large woody debris. Occasionally the downed logs can become trapped in locations that make navigation a hazard and require the necessity of a river portage to continue your downstream float. It is not uncommon to observe a hopeful steelhead angler loading a small chainsaw in with their rods and reels in anticipation of having to remove river-spanning sweepers from their path. With that said, removing hazard trees from a swiftly flowing river is an extremely dangerous proposition and should not be approached by anyone other than a trained expert. If you are curious about current river obstructions, or would like to report a new obstruction, the Oregon State Marine Board keeps an interactive map, found at <https://www.oregon.gov/osmb/pages/reported-obstructions-alerts.aspx>, which allows the user to visualize hazards that have been reported to the Marine Board. This is an excellent tool to start your education about current river obstructions but should not be assumed to be comprehensive and, under no circumstances, used as a stand-alone guide to assess current river obstructions.

In addition to navigational hazards, one must keep an eye on current water levels as some flows are too low to successfully navigate boulder gardens, and some high flows are such that they create dangerous river hydraulics and unpredictable eddies. Fortunately, the United States Geological Survey maintains a real-time stream hydrograph on the Siuslaw and many other Pacific Northwest rivers, which can be found at [water.weather.gov/ahps/](http://water.weather.gov/ahps/), and allows current water level and CFS of flow to be quickly identified. It is important to note that an acceptably safe water level will differ greatly with the ability of the rower, and a beginner drift boater should not make the fatal mistake of thinking that just because they see another boat on the water that their personal skill level is sufficient to safely run that stretch of river.

It is difficult to trace the precise genesis of the McKenzie River-style drift boat, but, as the name implies, the emerald gem of the Willamette Valley likely had a large role to play. Some oral accounts credit master boat builder Woody Hindman with adapting a previous dory design, which was used primarily in coastal waters of New England, to create what we now call the drift boat. But, undoubtedly, some Southern Oregon craftsman could also lay claim as a very similar style of boat was pioneered on the Rogue River.



The McKenzie River drift boat and the Rogue River dory are both incredibly capable whitewater crafts that, while different in some regards, share the similarities of being highly maneuverable and having the ability to hold in strong current. Both properties work in tandem to make the drift boat, or river dory, an ideal craft for fishing our fast-moving coastal and canyon streams. Nowadays, drift boats come in many different sizes—from large guide boats that reach 20' in length to relatively small 13' crafts—and materials—including wood, aluminum, and fiberglass—but all can trace their roots to hardy innovators and boat builders on the McKenzie and Rogue rivers.

There are many resources to learn more about how to scout and run rapids and the mechanics of rowing, but perhaps the best way to learn about a new stretch of river is to hire a professional guide who makes their living by having an intricate knowledge of the safety concerns and interesting local history and ecology. There are many excellent local guides who contribute greatly to watershed enhancement and river clean-up events. Whether you choose to hire a guide or embark on an adventure yourself, remember to always wear a life jacket and let a significant other know your float plan, with information such as what boat ramps you plan to utilize and anticipated on/off river times. Be safe and happy drift boating on the Siuslaw River and Lake Creek in 2022!

*Contributed by Caleb Mentzer, Project Manager*

*Painting of driftboats by Douglas Menzter. Photo of rapids at The Horn on Lake Creek by Tim Moffett*

## Spirit of the Siuslaw 2020



After searching nearly every stream, canyon, and mountaintop in the Pacific Northwest, we were finally able to track down Eli Tome and present him with his Spirit of the Siuslaw Award for 2020—an authentic beaver-chewed driftwood carving and maple burl stand collected in the Siuslaw Watershed.

Our sincere thanks go to Eli for his leadership and tireless effort to grow our organization and expand our restoration work!

## Welcome Kathleen Watson, Financial Manager

Kathleen has over 30 years of experience in financial management. She was born and raised in Newberg, Oregon and relocated to the coast in January 2018, in Lakeside. She lives there with her husband, Ted, and her rescue pug, Dottie. She is the mother of two and a grandma too! Her personal goals include spending more time on the lake and in the forest, but her favorite is the dunes! She is thrilled to be able to serve the Siuslaw Watershed Council's mission, as it aligns so well with her personal goals and focus.





## Reminder: 2022 Native Plant Distribution

The 23rd Annual Native Plant Distribution will take place on **Saturday, February 5th**. Be sure to mark your calendar and collect your order from your chosen pick up location!

**Mapleton**  
10AM—12PM  
SWC Office  
10868 E Mapleton Rd

**Deadwood**  
10AM—12PM  
Deadwood Community Center  
91700 Deadwood Creek Rd

**Lorane**  
11AM—1PM  
Alesong Brewing & Blending  
80848 Territorial Hwy

**Blachly**  
1PM—2PM  
Lake Creek Fire and Rescue  
20451 Hwy 36



Photos by Kate Harnedy

## Siuslaw Watershed Council Mission Statement

SWC 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.



## Activities & Events Schedule 2022

Thanks to a grant received from Braemar Charitable Trust, 2022 brings the return of SWC's monthly community activities. These funds will support recreation, education, and volunteer events throughout the Siuslaw Watershed. We hope you can join us to share the beauty, resources, and lessons of the land!

Registration is required and more information will be shared as each event approaches. Contact [tim@siuslaw.org](mailto:tim@siuslaw.org) to learn more.



### January

#### **Tide Pool Exploration (Negative Tide)**

Cape Creek Beach, Heceta Head

### February

#### **Forest Succession and Recovery Tour**

Private residence, Deadwood

### March

#### **Invasive Species Removal (with ODRC)**

Coastal Dunes, Florence/Dunes City

### April

#### **Siuslaw Sauntering**

PAWN Old Growth Trail, Minerva

### May

#### **Fly Tying Workshop**

Private residence, Mapleton

### June

#### **Birding Walk & Talk**

Waite Ranch, Cushman

### July

#### **Stream Cleanup**

Location TBD

### August

#### **Invasive Species Removal Paddling Tour**

Siuslaw River, Mapleton

### September

#### **Fall Picnic**

Private residence, Deadwood

### October

#### **Mushroom Hunt (& Culinary Demonstration)**

Location TBD

### November

#### **Waterfall Photography Workshop**

Sweet Creek Trail, Mapleton

### December

#### **Salmon Viewing & Sauntering**

Location TBD







NONPROFIT ORG  
U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
MAPLETON, OR 97453  
PERMIT NO. 5

P.O. Box 422 • Mapleton, Oregon, 97453  
541-268-3044 • [www.siuslaw.org](http://www.siuslaw.org) • [outreach@siuslaw.org](mailto:outreach@siuslaw.org)



[siuslawwatershedcouncil](https://www.facebook.com/siuslawwatershedcouncil)



[@siuslaw\\_watershed](https://www.instagram.com/siuslaw_watershed)

*Community - Economy - Environment*



## **Join Us For Our Annual Meeting on January 19th!**

- Presentation on crayfish of the Pacific Northwest by Rick Reynolds of The River Mile Network
- Leadership Body election
- Board of Directors election
- \* Visit the Events page on our website to register via Zoom



Staff at large wood debris placement, Upper Deadwood Creek; Photo by Mischa Whittaker