

SIUSLAW

WATERSHED COUNCIL NEWS

What's Happening in Your Watershed?

Fall Harvest

Fall, truly my favorite season of them all! I love fall, and not just because of the beauty of the changing colors in the leaves or the cooler days and cozy nights, but because of the hunting and harvesting.

Hunting not just for big game, but for mushrooms. It really is my favorite fall thing to do! I could go on and on about the types of fungi I harvest this time of year, but I'm going to put all of the attention on the lobster mushroom, *Hypomyces lactifluorum*, which really isn't a mushroom at all...I'll get to that here in a moment. I'm not making the lobster the star of the show only because of the window of opportunity, but also because it really is a tasty and fun mushroom to hunt for.

What a lot of people don't know is that these mushrooms actually start popping up in summer. My family and I start picking lobster mushrooms as early as July; the same with chanterelles, which we tend to refer to as "summer chanteys." Like I mentioned earlier, lobsters are not a true mushroom; they're actually a parasitic ascomycete fungus that grows on certain species of mushrooms, turning them a reddish-orange color. It specifically attacks members of the genera *Lactarius* and *Lactifluus* (milk caps), and *Russula*.

I love picking and eating lobsters. There are always different shapes and sizes, and at times they can be tricky to find and won't always be exposed, which makes me feel like I'm a kid again on an Easter egg hunt. When they're not visible, I will have my eyes peeled for bumps in the ground or will look in between down logs or under debris. I will find some of the bigger ones growing right against a fir tree under a mat of fir needles and dirt. In my years of picking and eating, I've found that the best time to pick lobsters is July through October. Once the rain hits they start turning into mush. You can find them spread throughout the forest, but mine and my family's best patches seem to be right around the fog belt.



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When preparing and consuming I will slice the mushroom up and soak it in salt water. If there are worms, the salt will draw them out. I find that the best lobsters tend to be the smaller ones that are more of a white-orange color, and when I cut into them, it sounds like I'm slicing right through an apple!



A recent dish I prepared with lobster mushrooms is a lobster fettuccine with heirloom tomatoes. Very good! Remember when cooking these that they are a dense, meatier mushroom, so you will need to cook them longer to soften them up.

When foraging for any type of mushroom, make sure you know it with all certainty. A thought that stays in my mind when I'm out picking: "If I don't know the mushroom with 100% confidence, it's poisonous!" There are rules and regulations for gathering mushrooms, so make sure to check out fs.usda.gov for fees and closures. This all goes with being a responsible steward of the land. Have fun and stay safe!

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information



The phrase "fall harvest" elicits memories of family gatherings and holiday traditions. For me, the harvest is communal. I grow, harvest, fish, and forage to share with others. Perhaps this practice is an effort to make friends or increase my value in my community. Perhaps I share my bounty simply to bring a smile to a neighbor's face. It's probably both; and it's certainly because I enjoy the work, the "hunt," and watching things grow.

I've been a gardener for nearly a decade. I grew up a kid on concrete, so my appreciation for gardening and natural resources came late. I was fortunate in my first attempt. The soil was nutrient-rich and ready to provide, and all varieties of fruits and greens flourished with little effort on my part. With this success came the obligation to consume, without waste, the compensation for my chore. I quickly acquired new taste for previously unfavorable produce. Our pets and the chickens next

door were willing to assist to some extent. But still the soil and sun would not yield or even slow their production.

I started offering my surplus to members of my wife's church, gratis, after Sunday service. The proprietor of the local farmer's market offered me weekly table space as a profit-earning solution. Friends and friends-to-be were proposing trades for their own products and services. I soon learned that good food is itself a currency.

A decade later I still harvest for others, for their recognition, appreciation, and companionship. Who would refuse an invitation to share freshly-caught coho on the grill, or ripe red Mapleton tomatoes? Some are reluctant to accept without payment. However, the desire to reciprocate is the true cost, and gratitude with a smile an adequate fee. A sense of community is the reward.

Tim Moffett, Project Manager



Fishing Stories: Fall Chum

How many of you could name the four species of anadromous salmon native to the Siuslaw basin? Many, if not all, would begin by correctly listing the Chinook and coho salmon. The former, *Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*, is the “king” of all salmon. However, the latter, *Oncorhynchus kisutch*, has received a disproportionate amount of attention due to its being listed as an Endangered species. Another anadromous salmon in the Siuslaw Watershed is also well known, but many do not realize it is actually considered a type of salmon. That is the sea-run rainbow trout, more commonly referred to as a steelhead, *Oncorhynchus mykiss*. This species shows up during the coldest of winter months and can migrate the farthest into the steep headwater tributaries of the watershed. So that brings the count up to three native anadromous salmon. Anyone care to wager what the remaining salmon species is? If you guessed chum salmon, then you are correct.

Now on to the fishing story! This fall, lucky trout angler Michael Dollman was casting a home-tied October caddis wet fly into the Siuslaw River with the hopes of encountering a cutthroat when something much larger grabbed ahold of his line. After what must have been an epic battle on light line and a trout-sized fly rod, a chum salmon, *Oncorhynchus keta*, was brought to the net. A couple of glory pictures were taken before being safely released back into the river to continue its spawning migration. Awesome job, Michael, and thank you for allowing us to share your story and photo!



Photo by Michael Dollman

While this was a rare and amazing catch-and-release, archaeological and oral history indicate chum have been present in the Siuslaw River for eons. “Chum fry have been noted in the catch at the Knowles Creek smolt trap in recent years”, reports United States Forest Service fisheries biologist Paul Burns. If you are the next fisherman to encounter a chum salmon, please share it with the Watershed Council by sending photos to projects@siuslaw.org!

Caleb Mentzer, Project Manager

North Fork Indian Creek Road Receives Improvements



Through a partnership with the United States Forest Service and the Siuslaw Watershed Council, USFS Road 2116, also known as North Fork Indian Creek Road or Mann Creek Road, received 1.1 miles of road reconditioning and new ditch relief culvert installations with the intent of lessening fine sediment inputs into North Fork Indian Creek. This section of USFS RD 2116 was identified in the Indian Creek Landscape Analysis as a major contributor of fine sediment to anadromous fish habitat in the Indian Creek 6th Field Watershed, and lessening the input of fine sediments into North Fork Indian Creek will help improve the quantity and quality of coho salmon spawning habitat in the project area. The ameliorative actions performed during this project are consistent with goals and objectives of the Siuslaw Coho Partnership's Strategic Action Plan for Coho Salmon Recovery and other watershed restoration guiding documents. Additionally, the improved road system will benefit recreationalists who use the area for deer and elk hunting, camping, mushroom foraging, and accessing many other forest resources.

Specific project elements include: 1) installing three new ditch relief culverts and replacing five undersized ditch relief culverts to improve drainage 2) road shaping and installing a new aggregate course to lessen fine sediments and improve the traveling surface and 3) removing roadside brush to improve visibility. The project was conducted during the freshwater In-Water Work Period and outside of marbled murrelet timing restrictions. Funding was provided by the United States Forest Service, and the Siuslaw Watershed Council led the contract procurement process.

Future projects in this section of the road, which are also being planned around In-Water Work Period and marbled murrelet restrictions, will occur in 2023 and include replacing two fish-bearing road-stream crossings with Aquatic Organism Passage (AOP)-designed structures. For more information about the North Fork Indian Creek restoration work, contact projects@siuslaw.org.

Caleb Mentzer, Project Manager



Volunteer to Be a Siuslaw Steward!



I believe this newsletter's readers support the Siuslaw Watershed Council and its mission: restoring, enhancing, and maintaining our healthy water, forest, and air to the benefit of all inhabitants—humans, animals, and plants—while encouraging the sustainable use of our abundant natural resources.

Helping people care for the lands and waters they cherish, now and for future generations, is the goal of several local stewardship groups. I encourage readers to consider taking a more active role with projects that work towards watershed health. The fine folks, young and old, who participate as

watershed stewards, who see the tangible results of their projects, are rewarded heart and soul by giving back to the home they love...leaving a tangible legacy for a healthier future.

Here are the groups I volunteer with and how you can connect to join us:

The Siuslaw Watershed Council (SWC) offers many opportunities: monitor crayfish to detect invasive species early, conduct basic water quality tests, help with education/outreach events (like school field trips), participate in the annual Native Plant Distribution, or assist the new Business Stewardship Program by helping to contact local businesses to sponsor SWC efforts for watershed health. More information on these citizen stewardship projects is available by contacting the SWC at outreach@siuslaw.org or 541-268-3044.



Florence Salmon Trout Enhancement Program (STEP) is the volunteer organization that makes steelhead fishing possible on the Siuslaw River via its Whittaker Creek trap program. They also provide educational activities for our community's youth, including the popular Eggs to Fry classroom program. More volunteers are always needed! Go to their website, florencestep.com, to view the membership application, newsletter, and volunteer activities.

Oregon Dunes Restoration Collaborative (ODRC) consists of the diverse stakeholders who seek to preserve the precious treasure that is our unique Oregon Dunes. Primary volunteer opportunities are the invasive plant eradication events that take place on high-priority restoration sites, March-October. A gas stipend is available through a NOAA Planet Stewards grant to minimize that expense to participants. Look for the next "weed pull" at saveoregondunes.org.



A new team of volunteers is forming to help the Forest Service maintain some of our area's most popular trails, like Sweet Creek, Kentucky Falls, PAWN, and Sutton. Contact Mark Buehrig at forest6413@gmail.com to submit your contact info and join the crew this spring...tentative name: **Siuslaw Trailblazers**.

I hope to see many new Siuslaw Stewards participating in one or more of these important and rewarding volunteer experiences!

Jim Grano, SWC Board of Directors, Vice President

“Seek” and Ye Shall Find

Have you ever been on a nature hike, in a new or frequently explored area, and came across a species that you have never seen and would like to identify, but you're not sure where to start? Without a fairly advanced knowledge of plant and animal taxonomy and a well-stocked library of field guidebooks, attempting to ID a new species in the field is frequently a dead end. Even bringing the specimen home for further investigation (which is not a great practice if it is a potentially rare or endangered species) may lead the naturalist nowhere. If this sounds like a situation that you have encountered before, I have a great solution for you in the form of a downloadable application, or “app,” for your smartphone called Seek by iNaturalist. The app, which utilizes the camera on your smartphone to capture an image, is capable of analyzing and differentiating flora and fauna to the genus, and often the species level! On a recent trip to the Siuslaw Estuary, I was able to Seek and identify an invasive grass, *Spartina patens*, which I found to be amazing as many trained human surveyors frequently have trouble spotting and correctly identifying the estuary invader.

I am not one to jump on the bandwagon of every trendy new app (far from it!), but the free Seek app is so fun and easy to use that I highly recommend you download and start using it on your next hike. If you are tech savvy, you likely already know how to download apps from the “app store” on your phone. However, if you are slightly less technologically capable, here are a couple of resources to help get you on your way!

The Seek by iNaturalist Website

Complete user guide and web videos with detailed instructions

https://www.inaturalist.org/pages/seek_app

How to download apps to your phone

Android:

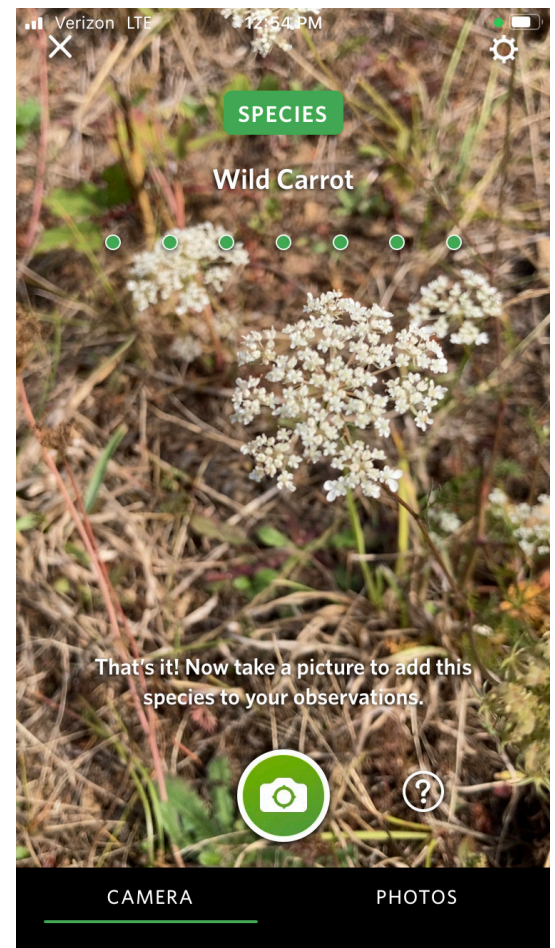
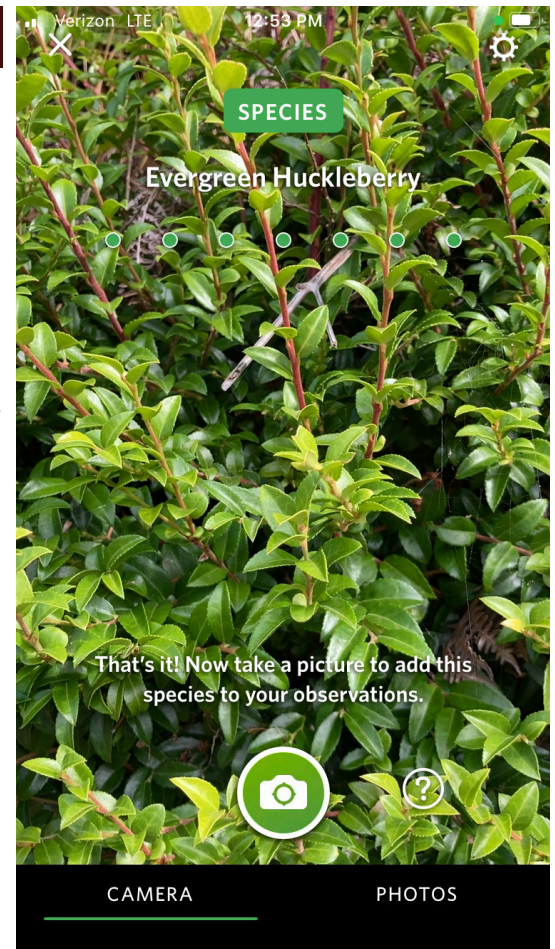
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6kEal8ckJZo>

iOS:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IYZzxpFMytg>

Don't hesitate to give me a call, or reach out via email, if you have any trouble downloading and using the Seek app. If there is enough community interest, the Watershed Council could potentially lead a nature hike with the goal of teaching folks how to access and utilize the app so you can start “Seek”-ing on your own!

Caleb Mentzer, Project Manager



Native Plant Distribution

The 24th annual Native Plant Distribution (NPD) is just around the corner. The Siuslaw Watershed Council (SWC) will once again provide free native plants for planting in the Siuslaw and Coastal Lakes watersheds. Trees and shrubs planted along streams support bank stability, filter nutrients, and provide shade, which helps keep our waters cool for salmon and trout. Increasing the abundance of native species also helps the local flora outcompete unwanted invasive plant species.

NPD is open for all riparian and lakeside landowners and offers a way to improve habitat without engaging in a formal restoration project. Assistance with site prepping is also available for free from SWC on a limited basis. Call our office at 541-268-3044 or email nativeplants@siuslaw.org to request help from SWC's restoration technicians. Below is a general NPD timeline. More detailed information will emerge as we approach the event dates.

October – Begin our NPD outreach.

November – Media release detailing the event times and resources. Plant ordering begins.

December/January – Volunteer recruitment. (Please contact us at nativeplants@siuslaw.org to volunteer.)

February – Distribution.

Plant requests will be accepted starting in late November. Here is a look ahead at our 2023 plant list:

Sitka Spruce (*Picea sitchensis*)
Grand fir (*Abies grandis*)
Western redcedar (*Thuja plicata*)
Black cottonwood (*Populus trichocarpa*)
Western hemlock (*Tsuga heterophylla*)
Incense cedar (*Calocedrus decurrens*)
Shore Pine (*Pinus contorta*)
Oregon white oak (*Quercus garryana*)
Bigleaf maple (*Acer macrophyllum*)
Oregon ash (*Fraxinus latifolia*)
Black hawthorn (*Crataegus douglasii*)
Cascara (*Rhamnus purshiana*)
Blue elderberry (*Sambucus caerulea*)
Red elderberry (*Sambucus racemosa*)
Bay laurel (*Laurus nobilis*)
Vine maple (*Acer circinatum*)
Osoberry (*Oemleria cerasiformis*)
Oceanspray (*Holodiscus discolor*)
Nootka rose (*Rosa nutkana*)
Mock Orange (*Philadelphus lewisii*)
Snowberry (*Symphoricarpos albus*)
Douglas spirea (*Spiraea douglasii*)
Red flowering currant (*Ribes sanguineum*)
Redosier dogwood (*Cornus sericea* ssp. *sericea*)
Pacific ninebark (*Physocarpus capitatus*)
Willow (*Salix* spp.)



Before and after planting with NPD plants



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Community - Economy - Environment



Join Our Team!

The Siuslaw Watershed Council is hiring for multiple positions.

The SWC is currently searching for candidates for open positions on our team. We are hiring two **Restoration Technicians** and a **Financial Manager**. The SWC offers excellent benefits after a probationary period including a 401k retirement plan; health, dental and vision insurance; vacation and sick leave; and paid holidays. Holidays are determined by individual employees and established upon hiring. We will likely be hiring for more positions in the near future. **We are always interested in talking to passionate river restoration practitioners. If you are interested, please visit Siuslaw.org/employment or reach out to us at watershed@siuslaw.org.**