

Winter 2024

SIUSLAW

WATERSHED COUNCIL NEWS

What's Happening in Your Watershed?

Helicopter Restoration Project Recap

This past summer the United States Forest Service (USFS) and Siuslaw Watershed Council implemented a large-scale habitat restoration project in the Upper and Lower Deadwood Creek and Green Creek-Lake Creek sixth-field Hydrologic Unit Code boundary units with the purpose of increasing instream habitat complexity and restoring natural habitat forming processes. The long-term ecological goal of the project is to improve both the quantity and quality of coho salmon spawning and rearing habitat by providing access to key features such as clean spawning gravels, deep oxygen-rich pools, and connections to the floodplain and off-channel alcoves. While the primary focus of the project is to improve habitat for Endangered Species Act-listed coho salmon, the enhanced instream habitat will also benefit a myriad of native terrestrial and aquatic species that evolved in a landscape that contained complex niches and ecotypes. To achieve this goal, the project contracted with Columbia Helicopters to fly logs from USFS-owned tree sources on ridgetop locations to stream reaches that were identified through extensive stream surveys by fisheries biologists. Each placement site is composed of groups of eight to 15 trees based upon physical stream characteristics and channel geometry at the placement location. Specifically, the project placed 708 logs, many with rootwads attached, via a chinook helicopter into 69 sites spanning 6.5 stream miles. This required 58.6 hours of flight time over 14 operating days. The use of a chinook helicopter is required in these stream reaches due to the remote access and inability to use ground based equipment such as excavators or cable yarders. Additionally, the helicopter is very fast and averages 11.5 trees placed per hour!

The presence of large wood in Oregon Coast Range streams is a critical component of the establishment and maintenance of high-quality anadromous fish spawning and rearing habitat. Recent surveys by USFS fish biologists of West Fork Deadwood Creek, Green Creek, and Fawn Creek, including within the project area, found a range of large wood presence, with all stream reaches being well below the 80 pieces per mile that is recommended by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife's habitat guidelines. The placement of large wood into streams results in immediate habitat benefits by providing overhead cover from predation, but the real value is in the long-term natural processes that the presence of large wood helps create and maintain in the instream habitat.



STAFF

Mizu Burruss
Project Manager
restoration@siuslaw.org

Britnee Church
Project Manager
britnee@siuslaw.org

Adam Cook
Restoration Technician
adam@siuslaw.org

Austin Decuir
Crew Lead
crew@siuslaw.org

Caleb Mentzer
Project Manager
projects@siuslaw.org

Tim Moffett
Executive Director
tim@siuslaw.org

Linda Poppenheimer
Financial Manager
financial@siuslaw.org

Elijah Yager
Project Manager
elijah@siuslaw.org

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NEWSLETTER DESIGNER
Kate Harnedy

By adding roughness and complexity to the stream in the form of large wood, the spatial and temporal flow regime is altered to decrease velocity upstream of the log structures and aggrade spawning gravels while simultaneously creating localized scour that creates deep pools where juvenile coho can persist through the summer months. The accumulation and sorting of sediment is a key natural habitat forming process that over time can have the added benefit of increasing connectivity to the floodplain and improving food availability. This project is a priority investment at this time because natural large wood recruitment, and the suite of habitats associated with instream complexity, within the project area is greatly diminished due to historic land-use practices and are unlikely to reach desired conditions in a reasonable timeframe. Through implementing this project, the target metrics of large wood is reached immediately and the associated habitat forming processes begin their natural evolution.

This project is consistent with several local and regional habitat recovery plans, such as the Siuslaw Coho Partnership's Strategic Action Plan for Coho Salmon Recovery and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Final Recovery Plan for Coho Salmon. Project partners include the United States Forest Service-Siuslaw National Forest and the Siuslaw Watershed Council. This project was funded through a competitive grant offering from the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board as well as internal funding secured through the USFS as part of the Inflation Reduction Act.

Contributed by Caleb Mentzer, Project Manager

Welcome New Team Member: Austin Decuir

Hello, my name is Austin Decuir! I have a degree in Fisheries Science from the University of Georgia and eight years' experience working in fisheries field science. I'm excited to help out SWC with all the projects we have currently and in the future!



Being a Citizen Scientist is Fun, Educational & Useful!

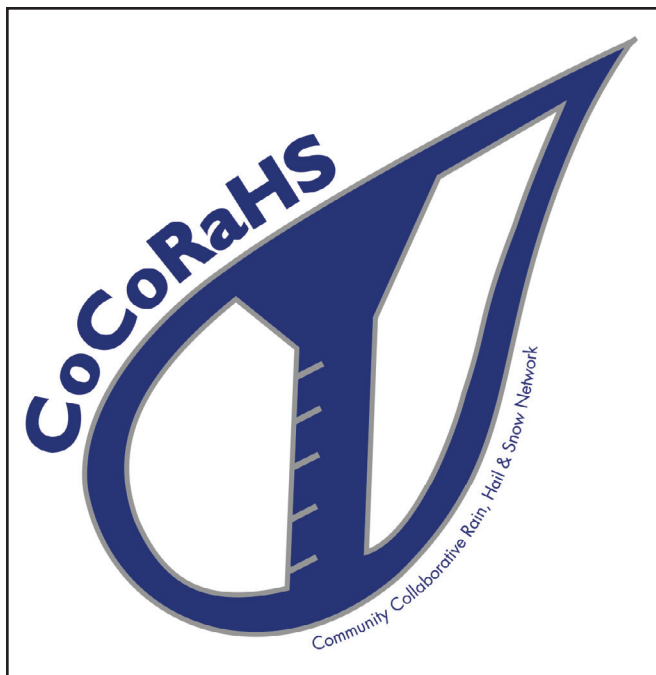
Originally from dry California, I was obsessed with measuring the little rainfall that fell on my parched land. After moving to rainy Florence, Oregon a few years ago, I often wondered how much rain I was receiving, especially the year a small pond formed in my backyard.

After reading Caleb Mentzer's interview with Aradia Farmer in our summer newsletter, I was inspired to join the Community Collaborative Rain, Hail & Snow (CoCoRaHS) network. The data collected by the thousands of CoCoRaHS citizen scientists across the country is used by a number of agencies and organizations to inform current and past weather conditions.

The CoCoRaHS website was easy to navigate. I filled out an application online, bought the requisite rain gauge, and watched a few animated tutorials about how to accurately measure precipitation. Thankfully, I will rarely be called upon to measure snow. I was fortunate that there was a handy post in my backyard near my composter to which I mounted my rain gauge.



I was assigned a station number and received a link to my station's webpage to enter my data on a daily basis. There are cool maps and different ways to look at data from all across the country. My first data entry was on October 2, 2023. Through December 19, 2023, I recorded 29.62 inches of rainfall. Wow, that is more than double the annual rainfall of where I used to live in California!



A few things I learned along the way include:

- It is very dark in my backyard at 7:00 a.m. I couldn't hold a flashlight and get the rain gauge off its holder, so I moved my time back to 7:30 a.m. for the winter.
- The plastic rain gauge is very cold in the morning so gloves are a must.
- When the temperature falls below freezing, the rain gauge freezes to its holder, requiring some extra effort to get it off to take the measurement.
- Retrieving the rain gauge for measuring when it is raining outside is not pleasant. On rainy days I don a raincoat and put on rubber boots that I keep near my garage door.
- My California rain gauge never filled up the small, inner 1" tube, so it was exciting the first time the rain overflowed into the wider, outer tube.

You too can be a CoCoRaHS citizen scientist. Check it out and sign up at www.cocorahs.org.

Contributed by Linda Poppenheimer, Financial Manager

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.

2024 Community Activities

January

SWC Annual Meeting

February

Native Plant Distribution

March

Willow Harvest

April

Estuary Clean-Up

May

Scotch Broom & Ivy Pull

June

Fivemile-Bell Stage Zero Restoration Tour

July

Waite Ranch Birding Tour

August

North Fork Paddling Tour

September

Baskets & Berries

October

Fall Art Workshop

November

Mushroom Foraging

December

TBD

(open to recommendations)

***Please note this list is still tentative and subject to change. For updates, please visit: www.siuslaw.org/events**



Poetry Contest

Greetings, wordsmiths, and thank you for all of your lovely submissions to our poetry contest! In the last issue of our newsletter we asked you to create your finest poems on the topic of our very own Siuslaw Watershed, and you delivered. We have now for your reading pleasure an assemblage of the poems we received!



I pick up a bottle, asking it
what are you doing here?
A glass shard (A disregard)
once one walked off in my friend's foot
There live Salmon people
in the cool waters down this hill
Their bellies rest on smooth stone
not on glass shard
And while the myth of pristine wild
has come and went
The forest remains a child
In its innocence
No thing sips an empty bottle
on an empty road
so I picked up the bottle, asking myself
who am I serving here?

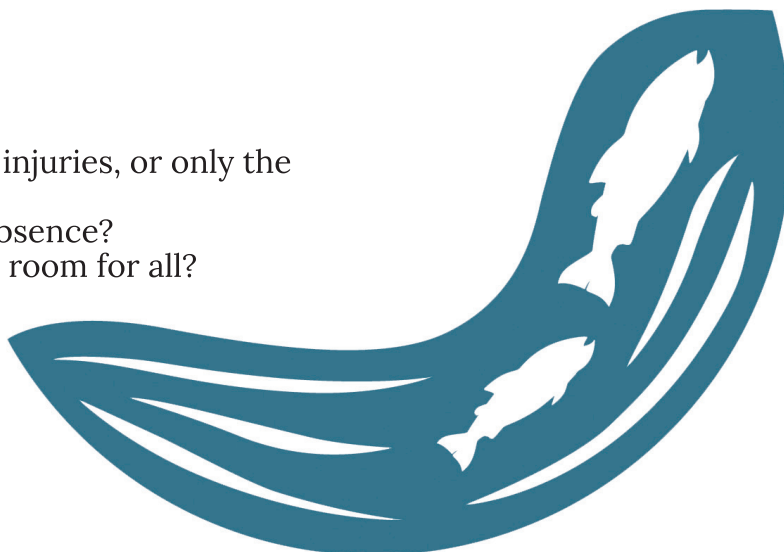
Glass Shard
by Adam Cook

A tree is planted
Roots dig like a hundred shovels without
displacement, binding soil, water,
fragments of life
A meal is slaughtered; gathered in laughter,
shared memories form in infinite webs
The roots dig deeper
Commuters rush upstream and
downstream, pursuing purpose
The roots dig deeper
More gatherings—a birth, a death
The roots dig deeper
A flood, a fire, a hundred storms
The roots dig deeper
Purpose ceases, yet the roots dig deeper

Untitled
by Anonymous

Do we have the knowledge to heal her injuries, or only the
sight to see her wounds?
Which is the better cure, our love or absence?
With balanced exchange, is there truly room for all?
Selfishly, we wish it ours alone

Untitled
by Anonymous



In mist, in fog,
Down forgotten muddy logging roads,
Through wended streams over rotten logs,
Where the fringe of daylight fades away
Before the inexorable skies of gray,
There are rare places, through the thicket,
Rare places where, by foot and sodden hand,
With shuttered eyes we might
push away,

Push away the wall of soggy green,
Push away the adolescent pines and rotten ferns,
Push away, through tangled huckleberry branches,
Push away, through mud and damp,
Push away all this weary world...



And come upon a
Somewhere altogether new,
To slip the surly bonds of fate
Into an endless emerald place
Of silent giants, glittering rain,
Where lakes might wend and wind
Beyond all horizons,
Where the flocks of geese ascend towards skies
with stars like shattered diamonds.
Where the salmon surge like hurricanes
Up brooks and inlets, glittering bays,
Where the berries hang like gemstones inlaid
And the elk parade like kings on Coronation Day.

Where you might go, no effluent may ever flow,
No planes with jagged edges gash the sky,
No black and gray incisions make the forest die,
No force of industry may ever last
In the vast untrammelled wilderness
Whose endless sprawl enthalls the mortal world,
Whose cliffs descend to oceans flush with rain
Whose depths are lower than the stars are high,
Whose waves crash avalanches
That wipe away all that's rotten in the waning day.

It is the Endless Emerald,
Where the old stories rule.
It is here where the nature spirits fled
When industrial hunger made our world red
With the blood of everything it ate,
Digested, spat out, and left for dead.
It is here the old stories rule,
Where the myths of Nations passed

Thunder down from heavens full of life
And love and mystery,
Where the birds and beasts still roam freely,
Where the world's heart still pulses
In the Old Tongues,
Older than the minds they spoke into being,
Older than the dreams we struggle seeing.

Laugh if you'd like, if you,
As many others do,
Believe that world dead and buried
Beneath however many miles of
Leaded glass.
But if you wander here, at the ends of the world,
Beyond the sight of lumber mills
And convenience store tills,
Where the sky vanishes and the trail ends,
Where the engines of industry
Fade into the wooded glen...

Don't be surprised if,
By the last of the forest's eyes,
You push against the huckleberry and stumble through

To something very ancient,

And altogether new.

Endless Emerald
by Adam Poppenheimer



Photos by Kate Harnedy



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MAPLETON, OR 97453
PERMIT NO. 5

P.O. Box 422 • Mapleton, Oregon, 97453
541-268-3044 • www.siuslaw.org • outreach@siuslaw.org



siuslawwatershedcouncil



@siuslaw_watershed

Estuary Cleanup

April 20th, 8am-1pm

Winter 2024 Newsletter

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Poetry Contest Submissions



Registration required: To register please visit
<https://tinyurl.com/bdmknu5t> or scan the QR code with your phone