



Protecting Special Lands in Western Oregon

CURRENTS

Fall 2012

Dynamic Future for New Acquisition

RAILROAD ISLAND – 63 ACRES IN THE WILLAMETTE RIVER NEAR HARRISBURG

LEFT: MARTY MILL, RIGHT: RAPTORVIEWS BY PHILIP BAYLES



Railroad Island, recently purchased and protected by MRT, is blanketed with cottonwood and ash forest, gravel bars, and backchannel sloughs, prime habitat for native fish and wildlife.

What does a living river mean to you?

To Wayne and Pam Swango, whose family has lived along the Willamette River since the 1800s, a living river is a vital source, providing abundant clean water and rich, well-drained soil that's perfect for raising sheep and grass seed. It's also a river that takes whatever it wants.

"It can be a challenge," Wayne Swango says. "We've lost some sheep that were stranded in high water. And part of our

property is eroding – the river gives and takes whatever it wants to."

It was partly this recognition of the river as a powerful, dynamic force that caused the Swangos to sell a 63-acre island to the McKenzie River Trust. The Swangos live on and farm 200 acres that they own on the east side of the river south of Harrisburg.

Railroad Island, named after the railroad bridge that crosses the Island's downstream end, is

exceptional habitat for native fish and wildlife. With a network of complex gravel bars, side channels, and sloughs on the mainstem Willamette, Railroad Island is a refuge for Chinook salmon, steelhead, and migratory birds. As a natural area, the Island can also absorb high flows and lessen the impact of floodwaters. Without the help of private landowners like the Swangos, these types of habitat are threatened to not last into the future.

continued on page 2

Restoration Makes Dollars and Cents

According to a new report by NOAA and Ecotrust, restoration projects in Oregon generated \$977.5 million in economic activity and as many as 6,483 jobs between 2001 and 2010. For a local example, look no further than MRT and the Siuslaw Watershed Council's (SWC) Waite Ranch Tidal Wetland Restoration Project on the Siuslaw River near Mapleton.

MRT recently awarded a \$22,000 contract to Leisure Excavating Inc.,

a Florence-based company, for work on the Waite Ranch project. Gary Rose and his team will remove aging buildings to make way for the re-establishment of 211 acres of tidal wetland habitat near Highway 126, important for salmon, steelhead, and sea-run cutthroat trout. The SWC has also received contracts and secured grants for the Waite Ranch project, enabling them to hire new staff and work with local businesses.

Healthy estuary habitat is often described as a nursery for economically important fish and other marine creatures. Not only is local economic benefit being provided now through these contracts and the resulting jobs, but in the future, Siuslaw and coastal recreational and commercial fishing industries could benefit from the habitat improvements.

Learn more about Waite Ranch by visiting our website: mckenzie.com

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Making an Impact

If you were out swimming, fishing, or bicycling along the Willamette River on a hot afternoon in July, you may have glimpsed an innovative partnership that's cleaning up some familiar recreation and conservation sites.

This summer, crews from the Willamette Stewardship Partnership removed key infestations of invasive weeds like Himalayan blackberry and English ivy on MRT's Green Island, several Lane County boat landings, state parks, and nearby private properties. Six non-profits and agencies make up the partnership, which is also targeting purple loosestrife, Japanese knotweed, and traveler's joy. The goal is to improve the health of floodplain forests for recreation and conservation of native fish, western pond turtles, and migratory birds.

"We're trying to prevent a takeover of these lands by invasive species," said Nicole Nielsen-Pincus, Willamette Program Manager for the McKenzie River Trust and a coordinator of the multi-partner effort. "But projects that help steward the Willamette River are just one piece of the puzzle. For landowners who want to conserve the natural areas that can still thrive along the Willamette, conservation easements or fee title land sales can offer permanent habitat protection."



NICOLE NIELSEN-PINCUS

In July, high school students from the Northwest Youth Corps pulled ivy on Hileman Landing County Park and several state parks including Christensen Boat Landing.

Willamette Stewardship Project Partners:

McKenzie River Trust
 Long Tom Watershed Council
 Northwest Youth Corps
 Oregon Parks & Rec. Dept.
 Lane County Parks
 Oregon Dept. of State Lands

A National Fish and Wildlife Foundation grant through the Oregon Governor's Fund for the Environment is funding the partnership's outreach and technical assistance efforts with 16 public and private landowners. Funds were also provided by the Oregon Department of State Lands and Lane County. The total project will cost about \$52,000, and the partnership will continue on-the-ground work through at least 2013.



NICOLE NIELSEN-PINCUS

Landowners Pam and Wayne Swango

Dynamic Future for New Acquisition *continued from page 1*

The purchase of Railroad Island extends the McKenzie River Trust's conservation lands in the upper Willamette River basin. The property is several miles downstream of Green Island, a 1,000+ acre complex of fish and wildlife habitat that MRT owns and has been restoring since 2005.

Recent statewide focus on the river in our own backyard helped attract the Meyer Memorial Trust to award a grant for pre-acquisition costs through their Willamette River Initiative. The Bonneville Power

Administration contributed the additional funds for MRT to buy Railroad Island.

"Railroad Island is a place for fish and wildlife where the dynamic river can move around without causing harm or loss of livelihood," says Nicole Nielsen-Pincus, MRT's Willamette Program Manager. "Gravel bars and floodplain forests provide a buffer from where people are trying to live or farm. That's part of what makes this such a great conservation project."

The LIVING RIVER FILM FESTIVAL



Through film, our 2012 Living River annual event celebrates the connection between Oregonians and the lands and rivers that surround us. *Join us!*

FRIDAY / OCT. 12 WILDISH THEATER 6:00 PM / OPENING NIGHT - MEET THE FILMMAKERS

You're invited to an intimate evening mingling with Living River filmmakers and special guests, and a sneak peek at the new documentary film *Willamette Futures* (currently in production). A panel of festival filmmakers to follow. Enjoy delicious savory hors d'oeuvres by Heidi Tunnell Catering Co. and Sweet Life desserts, with a cash bar featuring Oakshire beers and regional wines.

**\$45/
PERSON**



WILLAMETTE FUTURES *Director: Jeremy Monroe*
Experience the struggles and victories of the people working to protect the river in our own backyard.

OPENING NIGHT TICKETS SOLD ONLINE UNTIL OCT. 5

SATURDAY / OCT. 13 BIJOU CINEMAS ALL DAY / FESTIVAL SCREENINGS

Seven films with a connection to Oregon landscapes—including inspiring documentaries and Hollywood features—many paired with post-screening speakers. Continue the conversation at *The Confluence Festival Hub* outside the theater.

**\$10/
FILM**



1:30 PM: SOMETIMES A GREAT NOTION

Director: Paul Newman, 113 minutes
Ken Kesey's acclaimed novel comes to life. Filmed on the Oregon Coast.



2:00 PM: MCKENZIE MEMORIES HISTORICAL FOOTAGE

Speakers: Roy Pruitt, Dave Helfrich, Ken Engelman, and Dr. Alan Dickman
Rare historic footage of life up the McKenzie in the 1900s-1960s.

Saturday's Screenings, continued:



4:00 PM: GREEN FIRE: ALDO LEOPOLD AND A LAND ETHIC FOR OUR TIME

Director: Steven Dunksy, 80 minutes
Speaker: Joe Moll, MRT
Inspiring documentary about a legendary environmentalist.



5:00 PM: LETTERS FROM THE BIG MAN

Director: Christopher Munch, 115 minutes
Speaker: Christopher Munch
Experience Bigfoot like never before. Premiered at Sundance.



6:00 PM: A RIVER RUNS THROUGH IT

Director: Robert Redford, 123 minutes
Celebrate the 20th anniversary of this fly-fishing classic.



8:00 PM: SOURCE TO SEA: THE COLUMBIA RIVER SWIM

Director: Andy Norris, 90 minutes
Speaker: Robin Cody, author
Activist swims 1,243 miles for fishable, swimmable, drinkable waterways.



8:30 PM: SELECTIONS FROM UNCAGE: THE SOUL VIDEO PRODUCTIONS

Director: John Waller, 45 minutes
Speaker: John Waller, filmmaker
Cutting edge short documentaries exploring Oregon landscapes.

SUNDAY / OCT. 14 EWEB PLAZA 2:00-5:00 PM / FAMILY FILMS & ACTIVITIES

An afternoon of family-oriented short films (*Beavers, Canopy Connections, Mossgrove*) along the Willamette River, tree climbing with Pacific Tree Climbing Institute, crafts with the Slug Queen, free popcorn and more. DONATIONS WELCOME.

**FREE
EVENT**



PHOTO: SEAWATER PHOTOGRAPHIC

Tickets and details:

MCKENZIERIVER.ORG

Questions? Call us at 541-345-2799

JOIN US TO CELEBRATE OUR OREGON LANDSCAPES THROUGH FILM



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T. GIRAUDIER



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OUR MISSION

The McKenzie River Trust protects and cares for special lands and the rivers that flow through them in western Oregon.



BRUCE NEWHOUSE

Upcoming Events

The Living River Film Festival October 12 – 14

Don't miss our annual event, a weekend of films and events that focus a lens on the amazing landscapes of Oregon, and beyond. For details, see page 3.

Two-Fly Tournament October 19 – 20

Space is limited for the 5th annual fishing and fundraising event organized by the **Caddis Fly Angling Shop**. Get all the details and sign up at mckenzieriver.org/events/2fly or visit the Caddis Fly in downtown Eugene.



MATT STANSBERRY

Two Fly Tournament fishing on the McKenzie



We send a monthly e-newsletter with our latest list of events, free guided tours, and volunteer opportunities.

To subscribe, visit our website: mckenzieriver.org.



BRANDI FERGUSON