



TRUST TALK

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Conserving signature landscapes and vital habitat together with the communities of the Columbia River region

Schoolhouse Creek wetland conserved

Restoration of salmon rearing habitat in a high quality wetland brings conservation groups and community together at Schoolhouse Creek on the Washougal River.

By Matthew Jones

In April of 2002, the Columbia Land Trust acquired 24 acres of critical riparian habitat along the Washougal River. Washington Trout bought the land with a grant from the Washington State Salmon Recovery Funding Board and donated it to Columbia Land Trust to conserve. The site was acquired to re-establish the only remaining large, high quality wetland and stream ecosystem left in the mainstem Washougal River that is accessible by salmon and steelhead.

"...so that future generations will be able to see wild salmon in a wild setting."

~ Tony Meyers, executive director

Lower Columbia Fish Enhancement Group

Schoolhouse Creek enters the Washougal River 12 miles up the river. The property consists of high quality forested wetlands important to a large variety of fish and wildlife.



Schoolhouse Creek on the Washougal River

Development in the 60's created a road that separates much of the wetland from the river and diverted the stream flow, but several springs and a gentle stream grade make the property ideal for restoration. The Land Trust is working in partnership with the Lower Columbia Fish Enhancement Group, Ducks Unlimited, the Clark-Skamania Flyfishers and Washington Trout to bring about the restoration of this critical spawning and rearing habitat for salmon and steelhead. The restoration plans include replacing a culvert that currently blocks fish passage and creating several rearing pools and spawning beds. Other species to benefit include beaver, eagle, heron, turtles, wood ducks, brook lamprey and a host of

invertebrates.

A major partner that will be involved in the future of the project is the Washougal School District through the adjacent Cape Horne-Skye School. Elementary and middle school students will have a great learning tool literally at their doorstep. "We will teach them and work with them to create a watershed stewardship program that can be taught in the class room and put to use just outside the classroom door," says Tony Meyers, executive director of Lower Columbia Fish Enhancement Group. "We will work towards a common goal that ensures the long-term maintenance of the project so that future generations will be able to see wild salmon in a wild setting. The only way we can ensure the long term success of salmon restoration projects is by

encouraging local citizens to take ownership once the construction phase is completed.”

Plans for the future of the Schoolhouse Creek Basin also include a barrier free interpretive trail with schoolchildren leading tours of the watershed. By including the students in the ongoing management of the watershed we will be instilling an ongoing sense of ownership for the project in each successive generation and creating a legacy of caring for the land and its complex web of inhabitants.

Spiderman

Glenn Lamb's Musings

I've got a new little brother, thanks to the [Big Brother Big Sister Program](#). Mitchell and I get together every other week to do something fun. We've gone to the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry, we've played basketball, and I've taken him to the mall for him to select a birthday present. He selected *A Pocket Guide To Spiders*. I felt good that I might be an important friend for Mitchell.

Last weekend we went to Alan and Bernice Johnson's 40 acres, conserved through a conservation easement as "Enchanted Acres." We arrived and rang the doorbell. Bernice answered, and standing there with the screen door open I introduced Mitchell to her. Even before greeting Bernice, Mitchell asked "Would it be okay if I collected bugs?" He asked the question timidly, as if he were asking the keepers of the art museum if he could take a few Van Goghs home with him. Bernice was taken aback for a moment, then laughed and waved her hands out to the many spider webs and said that he could fill his knapsack with bugs as far as she was concerned.

We walked the land, where I've seen deer bounding away through thickets, red-tailed hawks circling slowly overhead, and mallards poking around on the edges of the ponds. But we hardly walked 10 yards when Mitchell was down on the ground identifying bugs. Over the course of the afternoon, we saw millipedes, centipedes, caterpillars, butterflies, beetles, dragonflies and at least six different kinds of spiders. Once I started paying attention, I saw them everywhere! In the meadow, I am usually looking far afield to see if I can catch a glimpse of ducks on the pond. With Mitchell, my eyes were looking down for bugs. We saw dozens, maybe hundreds of spiders all creeping along in the same direction, a mass migration. I saw one, then two, and then soon I didn't even want to step out of fear of stepping on one!



Crab Spider, misumenooides formocipes

Maybe I'd never really looked.

Mitchell even found a crab spider hiding out in a foxglove flower, waiting for a bee to arrive for pollination duty. Mitchell showed me in his well-worn spider book, and then in the flower, the big pincer claws that the spider will use to capture the surprised bee.

Mitchell has a big brother now, and I am better off for it.

If you'd like to see some of our conserved lands, send me an email at glamb@columbialandtrust.org.

It's amazing what the lands can show us.

New additions

Matthew Jones

Matthew joined the Land Trust in May as the new Development Director. A native of the Pacific Northwest, Matthew grew up on the banks of the East Fork of the Lewis River in Ridgefield, Washington. Matthew received his B.A. at Western Washington University in not-for-profit

management and studied Public Policy at the University of Washington. In addition to hiking and mountain-biking with his wife, he also enjoys playing jazz and blues on his bass.

Aliens Among Us

By Ian Sinks

One person's flower is another person's weed. A Finnish nature calendar hanging on my wall artfully demonstrates the beauty of yellow flag iris, a species native to Europe and Scandinavia but a serious weed here along the lower Columbia River. In an age of rapid development, global warming, catastrophic forest fires and the four "H's" (habitat, hydro, hatcheries, harvest), one of the gravest threats to the biodiversity of our region is not always what we think. In fact, it may be that showy plant growing along our waterways, the evergreen vine crawling up the trees, the diminutive striped mussel making its way east, the green crab hitching rides on ocean-going vessels from Asia to U.S. waterways. Only now are we starting to understand the ramifications of these aliens among us.

A drive from Astoria to The Dalles through the heart of the Columbia Land Trust region is an ecological cross section of the Pacific Northwest. Without a significant change in elevation you can travel from coastal estuary with more than 120 inches of annual precipitation to dry canyons and grasslands of the East Cascades with less than 15 inches of precipitation. The country is diverse and spectacular but the beauty and richness of this region is threatened by invasive vegetation.

Along the lower river there is gorse, yellow flag iris, purple loosestrife, Scot's broom, Himalayan blackberry, English ivy, Japanese knotweed and clematis. On the drier east side of the Cascades we find many of the same species, but add in yellow star thistle, yellow hawkweed, leafy spurge, diffuse knapweed, hound's-tongue, and kochia just to name a few. These are exotic players representing a significant threat to agriculture and conservation alike.



Hound's-tongue seeds, cynoglossum officinale

A recent report on the decline of North American Biodiversity identifies the spread of non-native species as one of the most serious threats to natural biological diversity. This 'bio-invasion' of invasive species introduced to North America through increased travel and trade results in increased species competition, predation, disease, parasitism, habitat degradation and hybridization.

Without additional safeguards and vigilance, it is almost inevitable that increased international trade and travel will also increase the rates at which alien species are introduced.

There are innumerable means of introduction and spread of invasive species of plants and animals. Stowaway plants and animals arrive unintentionally on ships. Nurseries continue to sell English ivy as a landscape plant. We track seeds around on our shoes and car tires. And visitors from the east coast will arrive to celebrate the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial with Eurasian milfoil hanging off their motorboat propellers. We all have a role in controlling the spread of these species.

Weed management is a significant issue for Columbia Land Trust's Stewardship Program. Part of our responsibility in stewarding conservation lands is to contain the spread and in some cases to eliminate these species from the property. Allow these species to continue to proliferate and the problem can be overwhelming.

Limiting the opportunities for invasive species to spread is one approach to address the problem. Controlling those aliens that have already arrived is the other half of the equation. There are a variety of methods and tools available to control invasive plants ranging from hand pulling to careful application of chemical herbicides to biological control methods. Hand removal is the favored method employed by most conservation groups, including the Land Trust. It is very labor intensive and requires years of consistent effort to work through not only the live plants but also the seed base in the soil. Through the commitment of the Land Trust to be good stewards of our lands, and the enthusiastic support and hard work of our volunteers, we are committed to controlling the alien species that threaten the habitat, agriculture and forests of our lands. □
Hound's-tongue seeds

Volunteer day

By Joe Buttafuoco

On Saturday June 22nd, the stewardship department staff and 10 volunteers traveled almost 2 hours away from Vancouver to the Columbia Land Trust's Dillacort conservation area. The 580-acre Dillacort property is the trust's largest single holding and runs for about one mile up Dillacort Creek, a tributary to the Klickitat River in the East Cascades of Washington. For four hours, we hiked up the creekbed in search of invasive weeds and pulled them out of the ground. Some of the weeds targeted were diffuse knapweed, yellow starthistle, hound's-tongue, St. John's wort, and mullein.

Poison oak, ticks, rattlesnakes, loose rocks, steep terrain and the burning sun made for challenging conditions, and our volunteers are to be commended for the thorough and cheerful manner in which they carried out their task. "It was actually a great deal of fun," says volunteer Theri Humes, "what a beautiful place to spend the day."



Volunteer Kurt Koenig uses his back and a heavy duty "weed puller" to unearth a mullein weed

A great many noxious weeds were removed on this volunteer day and the Columbia Land Trust sincerely thanks all of those who helped out. Our volunteers form an integral part of the successful management of Columbia Land Trust land.

Thanks to our June 22nd volunteer day volunteers:

Kurt Koenig, Leandra Cleveland, Theri Humes, Sara Hartung, Lisa Zack, John Sinks, Catie Pazandak, Ellen Coyne, Mathew Jones, and Jim

Columbia Heritage Circle

Join with a gift through your will



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Conserving Land Forever**

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For information on including Columbia Land Trust in your estate planning, check the box on the enclosed reply envelope, or call Matthew Jones or Glenn Lamb at 360-696-0131.

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*Ray Hickey Foundation matches membership donations up to \$50,000.
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Columbia Land Trust, a private, non-profit organization, was founded in 1990. We're dedicated to conserving signature landscapes and vital habitat together with the communities of the Columbia River region. Questions, comments, or concerns may be directed to info@columbialandtrust.org

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