



Mission: The mission of Cascade Volunteers is to connect individuals and communities to the Willamette National Forest and adjacent public lands through programs, stewardship, and education.

The Cascade Chronicle

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From the Desk of...a New Volunteer!

by Chip Coker

Hello to all the volunteers and friends and supporters of Cascade Volunteers!



Former Executive Director, Chip Coker, with his kids

This “**From the Desk of**” space at the beginning of each newsletter has given me an opportunity over the last couple of years to talk directly with you about the big picture themes and programs that CV has been developing in partnership with the US Forest Service leaders within the Willamette National Forest (WNF). I’ve also used it to push out important information, as well as to ask you to take action on various matters.

Now that I am no longer the Executive Director, and until there is a new ED named at some unknown point in the future, this space will be written by an assortment of CV leaders from the board of directors, the remaining staff, and other volunteer leaders. So instead of hearing from me each time, you will get a fresh perspective with each new edition!

And since this may be my last entry, I would like to go on record by saying that I enjoyed working here very much. I won’t soon forget all the amazing people I have met, and I will be hard pressed to find people who are as dedicated and devoted to the stewardship of our public lands. I am also happy to say that even though CV is facing significant challenges in the wake of the federal downsizing, the organization remains in good hands.

One of the very first important decisions I had to make as ED was to hire a volunteer coordinator, and I picked Stacy Rudisill. Stacy has been nothing short of amazing! She is smart as a whip and warm and friendly, and like all of you, she really cares about our local forest. In fact, she and her family live in the forest, up the McKenzie Valley. She will be the go-to person in the organization for the time being and will help you with anything related to the volunteer operation.



You can reach her at Volunteer@CascadeVols.org.

Stacy Rudisill, CV's Volunteer Coordinator

The board just recently added three new members and consists of a good mix of trail volunteers and business professionals. At their recent Strategic Planning Retreat, they decided to narrow CV's focus in order to navigate the current funding crisis and created action plans for each goal for the coming year.

Just a few weeks ago they announced a fundraising campaign that would help fund Stacy's position through the rest of the year. They set the highest fundraising goal CV has ever attempted, with the hope of raising \$50,000. And you, CV's friends and supporters, have risen to the occasion and opened your purses and wallets. In fact, just last week I gave a presentation about CV to a local hiking club and at the conclusion of the presentation a member of the audience wrote out a check for \$10,000 on the spot! The tally so far is now about \$48K. Whoohoo!! If you haven't yet made a donation, will you please consider doing so now? Help us reach our goal, so that we can keep the operation running smoothly while we look for new sources of revenue. Click on this link now to contribute:

<https://secure.givelively.org/donate/high-cascades-forest-volunteers/a-generous-donor-stepped-up-will-you>

Thanks so much, and I hope to see you on the trail...

2025 Cascade Volunteers Appreciation Dinner

The annual Cascade Volunteers Appreciation Dinner was held at the WNF headquarters building in Springfield earlier this spring. Approximately 115 people attended. Stacy Rudisill, CV Education

Coordinator, coordinated the event. The festivities included appetizers, beverages supplied by Falling Sky, and a dinner of pasta, salad, bread and dessert. Many volunteers came hours early to set up tables, decorations and the buffet.



Upon arrival, Folks were entertained by The Beat, a local, three-piece band. They played easy-listening and soft jazz while folks mingled and enjoyed appetizers. Also at this time there was a great slide show going on that featured many of the CV teams and volunteers out in the field from the previous year. After dinner, Chip Coker, the CV Executive Director, welcomed people, introduced the Staff and thanked the band.

Dinner is served! Volunteers enjoyed a meal, drinks and camaraderie

Next up was Forest Service representative Omero Torres who shared some amazing volunteer data from the prior year with the group: Over 600 volunteers reported working in the Willamette National Forest during 2024. Those volunteers logged over 26,000 hours, an amount valued at approximately \$900,000. Wow! He also spoke about the different ways folks volunteered and how valuable this is to the WNF. About eight Forest Service staff were on hand to chat, help with setting up and to thank the volunteers.

Three volunteers in particular were singled out for going above and beyond by receiving the following awards:

- **Steve Alloway**, the leader of the Friends of Willamette Cascades Watersheds, received *The WNF Lasting Impact Award*.
- **Andrea Bayliss**, the leader of the Camas Crew, received *The Cascade Volunteers Trail Stewardship Award*.
- **Karol Schrems**, a CV Board Member and Leader of the Huckleberry Crew, received *The Judy Mitchell Volunteer of the Year Award*.



*Backrow: WNF staff left to right Matt Peterson, Nikki Swanson, Omero Torres, Chloe Goldade-Holbrook, & Mckenzie Jensen
Front row: Award winners from left to right: Steve Allaway, Andrea Howell Bayliss, & Karol Schrems*

There were 27 nominations this year for 14 different people. Congratulations to all of the nominees!

After the awards presentation, Judy Mitchell, CV's Board President, spoke about the history and origins of our non-profit as well as her personal thoughts about the organization regarding her more than 20 years as a CV volunteer.

The event wrapped up with Chip and Stacy handing out door prizes as folks socialized, helped themselves to more food, listened to more music and helped break down the tables and clean up the venue. Thanks to everyone for an amazing year!

Volunteer Spotlight

Woody Jackson – The Little Train That Could

By Chip Coker

Woody Jackson is a bit of an enigma. He is short-statured, well-seasoned, bespectacled, shy and unassuming. And yet he is the leader of the Friends of the Breitenbush Cascades (FBC), a group that boasts upwards of 1000 members and supporters. FBC is one of the many organizations that are part of the Cascade Volunteers (CV) network of land stewards serving in the Willamette National Forest (WNF). Most of these organizations and crews are involved in helping the Forest Service to maintain the many trails, lakes and sites that are so important to the visiting public. A small handful of the organizations focus more on the heritage and interpretation aspects of land stewardship by preserving and providing education about the natural and cultural history of the area. Woody's group is proud to offer both!



Woody Jackson, President of the Friends of the Breitenbush Cascades

According to Woody, the mission of FBC is to strive to understand ecological forest processes and to protect the vitality and resilience of the lakes, streams, rivers, and forests within the Breitenbush watershed. They provide programming for conservation, recreation, interpretation, and community science projects that connect the public to nature immersion that goes beyond recreational consumerism by becoming vested in the landscape through volunteerism.

For Earth Day last month, Woody and the FBC co-hosted a clean-up event with Cascade Volunteers, the Breitenbush Hot Springs Retreat Center, and other organizations. The 25 or so volunteers that showed up from all over the state filled a Forest Service pick-up truck with dozens of bags of trash collected from the local streams and lakes. Woody helped to arrange perks for the hard-working volunteers, who were invited by the retreat center to a delicious vegetarian lunch as well as the opportunity to soak in the hot springs at the end of the day.



Earth Day Volunteers Power lifting garbage!

FBC was originally founded in 1988 as a local nonprofit that provided guided educational hikes throughout the area. Many of the members, including Woody, were cabin owners in a “cabin tract” section of Forest Service land near the hot springs. The devastating wildfires in 2020 burned down 70 of the 71 cabins and many of the retreat center’s buildings as well. Woody’s cabin was not spared. Since then, FBC has become an official 501c3 nonprofit and has added restoration of the fire-ravaged area to its list of stewardship activities.

Something you might not guess about Woody. Back in the early 1980s, Woody was part of a movement that was trying to prevent clearcutting in the forest. Woody was arrested for climbing up and camping out in a majestic tree that was slated to be cut down, and for refusing to climb down out of the tree. The charge was disorderly conduct. Many years later he ran into someone who recognized him. The person said, “Hey, I know you, you’re Woody. You caused a lot of trouble back in the day. The good kind of trouble!”

The broader movement of which he was a part was instrumental in a change to clearcutting policy within the government at the time. No small feat! Listening to him tell the story, it was not one of bravado or machismo. In fact, he came to tears several times as he recounted the tales. He does not view himself as a hero. He sees himself more in the way Joe Walsh describes in song, “I’m just an ordinary, average guy.”

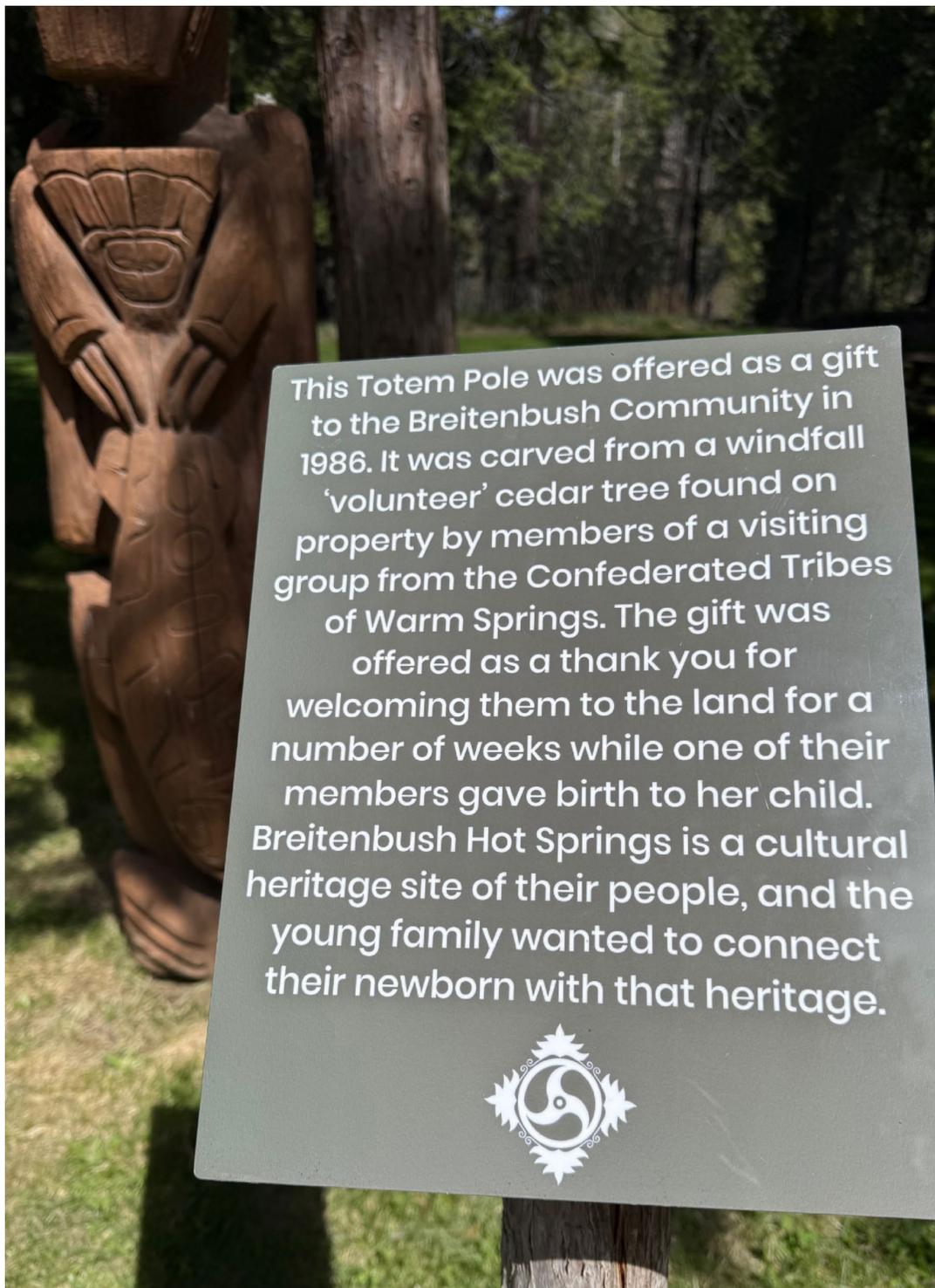
Woody, you are anything but an ordinary, average guy. You are like the little train in the children's book who in the face of an impossible task kept saying, "I think I can, I think I can," and then did! Thank you for caring so much about our public lands. You are an inspiration to so many. Keep up the good fight.

Author's note: Woody asked that I include FBC's Native Lands Acknowledgment, as well as contact information if anyone is interested in becoming more involved in the Breitenbush watershed. Both follow:

FBC Land Acknowledgment: In quietness, we listen for the heartbeats of the Northern Molalla, the Kalapuyans, the Wasco peoples, and others that lived and breathed the springs and forests of today's Breitenbush River. We commit to recognizing and honoring those whose ancestors were sustained by the huckleberry and salmon surrounding these healing mineral waters. To the resilient people who arose from those ancestors, we welcome you to your gathering place. Standing together, we respect the jurisdiction and voices of the Warm Springs, Grande Ronde, Siletz, and Klamath peoples as friends. We are ready to listen and grow. Today and tomorrow, we align to the possibility of a better world.

To get involved with or learn more about the Friends of Breitenbush Cascades, send an email to friends@breitenbushcascades.org or call 503-897-8575.





This Totem Pole was offered as a gift to the Breitenbush Community in 1986. It was carved from a windfall 'volunteer' cedar tree found on property by members of a visiting group from the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs. The gift was offered as a thank you for welcoming them to the land for a number of weeks while one of their members gave birth to her child. Breitenbush Hot Springs is a cultural heritage site of their people, and the young family wanted to connect their newborn with that heritage.



Volunteer Spotlight

Get to Know Robin Brandt...CV Board Member



Robin was born and raised in Central Oregon with parents who relocated here from other areas. They were outdoor folks... her father, in his early days, worked in the woods as a choke setter and powder monkey. Her early days found Robin often outside with a wide variety of family animals. She describes herself as very curious. She also reads a lot. She enjoyed gardening with her grandmother. Her father was a well driller as an adult and from him she learned about the importance of water.

She began her advanced education at Willamette University where she studied Political Science. She moved to Hawaii to attend grad school at the university there at their East West Center. She had only planned to spend two years working on a Masters but ended up staying for a PhD and well beyond. While there she spent about 15 years perfecting the Hula. She visited Norway and studied Energy and Environmental issues at the University of Oslo. Her love for travel has taken Robin to Yugoslavia, Tokyo, Taipei, Bangkok and Kuala Lumpur. Wow!

She eventually came home to Oregon and settled in Salem. Her home came with 2 acres... some is forested and the rest is a yard and pasture. She began working for the state of Oregon as a Policy Analyst and Legislative Analyst. She's good with detail and likes to do research.

When I asked how Robin became interested in Cascade Volunteers she explained that she comes from a family of volunteers. She was part of a hiking group and met someone there who knew about CV. She attended the Skills College in 2019 and offered to do volunteer work. Board Member Allegra Helfenstein asked her to consider being a Board Member 3 or 4 years ago and she accepted. Currently she works on the Board Development Committee which recruits new members, creates policy and assesses Board success. They are always looking for younger folks who are interested in joining their group.

Thank you to Robin for the time and energy you invest in CV and the Willamette National Forest!

Forest Service Spotlight

Lance Gatchell, WNF Hydrologist/Biologist



I grew up in Cottage Grove, OR and have lived in western Oregon my whole life except for a few years working in Micronesia, Southeast Asia, and Morocco. I have always been interested in rivers and streams and how they're supposed to function naturally as ecosystems for aquatic and terrestrial species. Working on restoring rivers for salmon habitat has given me a great opportunity to pursue my passion of restoring aquatic ecosystems.

I went to Oregon State University college of Engineering where I earned a B.S. in Agricultural Engineering and an M.S. in Bioresource Engineering. My coursework centered on Hydrology and Soils, and then Groundwater in graduate school all of which prepared me for a career in the Forest Service.

In my long and varied career I have worked with multiple private and governmental agencies but began working with the Forest Service in 2003. Since 2007 I have been a Hydrologist/Biologist with the WNF based out of the Sweet Home Ranger District where I have designed and implemented several

successful habitat restoration projects for the Upper Willamette River Winter steelhead and Spring Chinook salmon.



Habitat Restoration Team

In 2013 the district implemented the Soda Fork Steelhead Habitat Improvement Project. The stream had potential for steelhead spawning, but wasn't retaining the necessary gravel. We tipped over about 30 large trees from the adjacent stream bank into the river. Within one of these winter gravel had accumulated around the large wood, and the following spring steelhead spawned in the newly created habitat. This project involved working with volunteers from a local high school to measure the physical characteristics of the stream as they improved with the return of large wood. The students loved the work, and helped with documentation of the improvements. Here's a link to a video made before we knew the steelhead would return to spawn. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EOPVklullM>



Soda Fork Crossing

Other restoration projects in Canyon Creek, Moose Creek, and the Calapooia River have been successful in restoring salmon habitat. We hope all this work is helping the ESA listed salmon and steelhead recover their numbers. Thanks to the recent re-introduction of Chinook salmon over Green Peter Dam a few years ago these salmon got a big boost in the amount of habitat they have access to for spawning. In one of the first years they monitored about 10,000 juveniles going to the ocean after leaving below Green Peter Dam. It was volunteers that first spotted the spawning salmon in the Middle Santiam River. There's currently a lot of research focus on the Middle Santiam river and Quartzville Creek by other agencies focusing on stream habitat monitoring, like stream flow quantity and water temperature, as well as spawning success and survival of the Chinook salmon that have recently been re-introduced above Green Peter Dam.

Pub Talk



Dolores Niebergall, certified LNT instructor presents at Calapooia Brewing

In mid March there was a fantastic Pub Talk at Calapooia Brewing Company in Albany, Oregon hosted by Cascade Volunteers and Trails Club of Oregon. Dolores Niebergall presented the seven principles of Leave No Trace (LNT) ethics to a crowd of 20 people.



Melinda Martin with grandbaby greets guests at LNT event

There will be more pub talks in the future. Check CV's Facebook page for dates, times and locations.

Volunteer Fair



First Annual Volunteer Fair at the WNF Headquarters Building in Springfield, Oregon

On April 12th, 2025, the Forest Service and Cascade Volunteers co-hosted their first annual volunteer fair to attract volunteers to be a part of some of the many volunteer opportunities that are offered.

Tables were set up and several volunteer groups offered information about what/where/how they do their work within the Willamette National Forest. Forest example...there is a Love Your Lake program offering opportunities to adopt and care for a local lake. There is a Winter Trails group that spends time during the winter caring for, grooming and hanging signage along these hiking and cross-country ski trails. Another group is the Scorpions who go out once a week pretty much all year long to work on trails and bridges. They have been doing this work for close to 20 years.

The volunteer fair will be offered again next year to showcase not only what we do, but to give anyone interested a chance to be involved in any of these groups. It's important and necessary work, a chance to socialize with like-minded folks and a chance to give to these important groups.



April is

NATIONAL NATIVE PLANT MONTH

Cascade Volunteers is celebrating National Native Plant Month with TWO programs focused on native plants: our invasive weed removal efforts and our phenology community science program.

Our **invasive weed program** focuses on removing non-native species that compete with and threaten the health of native vegetation.

Meanwhile, our **phenology program** invites volunteers to observe and record seasonal changes in

native plants—things like leaf-out, flowering, and seed drop. This data helps track how plants respond to environmental conditions over time.

Right now, volunteers are collecting phenology data at two locations: **McKenzie River Ranger Station** and **Cascadia Day Use Area**—two sites that differ in elevation and watershed. After a small pilot in fall 2024, the program launched in earnest this year. And it's already thriving: **11 volunteers have submitted more than 3,600 observations in 2025 alone!**

Phenology work requires patience and consistency. Even recording that something *didn't* happen is valuable. For example, this year **vine maple leaf buds broke around February 19 at Cascadia**, but didn't appear until **two weeks later at McKenzie River**. Because volunteers visit each site every 1–2 weeks and track multiple plants, we can confidently say this is a consistent difference.

Want to learn more or get involved?

We're offering a **training session at Forest Skills College on Sunday, May 18**. As we grow our team of volunteers, we hope to expand phenology monitoring to other watersheds and elevations across the forest.

Annual Forest Skills College Coming Up Fast



Forest Skills
College 2025

MAY 16, 17 & 18
OUTDOOR RECREATIONALISTS!



Trail Maintenance Skills

Learn the fundamentals of trail maintenance, building trail structures, & trail sign installation. Learn what it takes to lead a trail crew.



Safety & Tool Maintenance

Learn how to not get lost in the woods, how to use a radio to communicate with dispatch, wilderness first aid basics, and the best tools of the trade & how to maintain them.



Stewardship Programs

Learn about CV's stewardship programs. Become certified to hike trails and collect data that gets uploaded to a national study.

REGISTER NOW

Free Training



HJ Andrews Experimental Forest, Blue River, OR

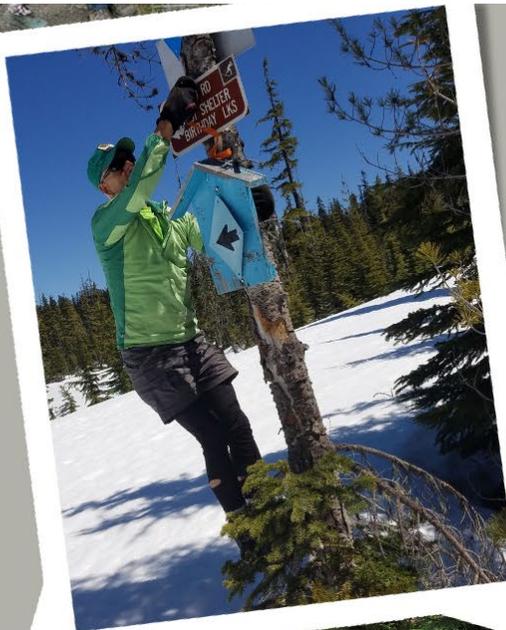


541-225-6348



<https://cascadevols.org/forest-skills-college-2025/>

**Offered with support from Travel Oregon
and the Oregon Trails Coalition**



Breathe

By Cheryl Friesen

Breathe in. Breathe out. Breathe in. Breathe out. So necessary for human life that our bodies do it automatically. In. Out. As you sit on a log aside a sun dappled trail, you can almost feel the oxygen coursing through your veins. In. Out.

We all learned in junior high that plants, including trees, also “breathe” – taking in carbon dioxide and

releasing oxygen and water through leaf pores called stomata. Known as “photosynthesis,” this is an essential process for life on earth.



Chris Still, a scientist at HJ Andrews Experimental Forest, did some deeper thinking on this phenomenon: he wondered, in a warming climate with very hot, dry summer days, do trees control their “breathing” to conserve moisture? When humans -- and trees -- exhale, water vapor is released with each breath (why we get dehydrated on hot, dry days). Chris found that trees have the ability to close their stomata pores when relative humidity falls to a critical level. Water is conserved, but at the expense of photosynthesis. The absence of evaporative cooling also puts their leaves at an increased risk of dangerous warming.

This begs the question: is there a threshold where this adaptation begins to work against itself? On hot,

dry days, are the trees feeling like an overheated asthmatic? Wanting to gulp for air, but unable, they patiently wait for nightfall, when temperatures drop and moistures recover.

Breathe in. Breathe out. Breathe in. Breathe out. Next time you sit in the shade on a hot day, along a sun-dappled trail, listen. Sense the effort being undertaken by the trees around you to survive. To thrive. To breathe -- in and out.

Author's Note: *The Willamette NF's rich landscape has provided opportunities for hundreds of researchers over the past century. Ecosystems are complex, and the depth of our ignorance is profound. But intrepid souls, armed with calipers and cameras and a variety of other recording devices have scrambled through the Forest seeking answers to often simple questions that, in aggregate, can lead to profound insights. This column will be a regular feature to highlight the often surprising findings from these endeavors. For more information on the rich Science-Management partnership on the Willamette, check out the H.J. Andrews Experimental Forest webpage:*

<https://andrewsforest.oregonstate.edu/>

CV's New Invasive Weeds Program

By Beth Suhr, Volunteer Program Manager

Our new invasive weeds program got 'on' the ground last fall. The volunteer crew, named the Willamette Weed Warriors, have been working at Cascadia Day Use Area outside of Sweet Home, Oregon. We have been focusing on the trailhead entrance area. This area has been neglected for years and thus the Himalayan Blackberries and English Ivy were taking over the park. The thorny thickets had grown to be over 5 ft tall and just as deep. Check out the before and after photos below.



Before



After: We power-brushed the canes and then used pick axes and shovels to remove the roots.



Before



After: We discovered hidden border posts under the thicket.

Recent Saw Certification Class A Huge Success

A big shoutout to everyone who braved the rain and snow on a recent weekend for our Sawyer Certification class, hosted by Oakridge Trails Alliance and Cascade Volunteers!



The training began in the classroom

A huge THANK YOU to instructors Beth Dayton, Brad Engelbert, and Nathan Frechen for their expertise and guidance throughout the class. We couldn't have done it without you!



Instructor with new sawyer

Thanks also to all the amazing volunteers who helped get our trail crew up to speed, as well as those from across the Willamette and Deschutes National Forests who came out to get certified or re-certified. You guys are the real MVPs!



Student adjusts the tension on his saw

It wasn't easy with the weather, but everyone pushed through together and got it done! Let's keep those trails safe and ready for the next adventure.

If you're ready to roll up your sleeves and join us next time, keep an eye out for more opportunities to get involved. We can't wait to see you out there!

Photo Spotlight on the Scorpion Crew

Building/Repairing Bridges and other Water Crossings



Brian McGinley and Andy Hamilton moving a stringer on the Cloverpatch Bridge



Mac Flood, Steve Deppert and Mike Nease assembling rails at Indian Creek Bridge



Jerry Stephens attaching rails to bridge at Fall Creek

New Local News Publication



Lookout Eugene-Springfield, a soon-to-launch local, nonpartisan news organization, invites the community to stay informed about its progress toward launch by signing up for its free insider updates newsletter at lookouteugene-springfield.com. Dedicated to supporting local nonprofit organizations, like Cascade Volunteers, Lookout’s community-focused news coverage aims to keep readers informed about what’s happening right here in Eugene and Springfield. We are thrilled to share that Cascade Volunteers will also be featured on the “Welcome, Lookout” page at launch!

A Shout Out To Our Sponsors

Special thanks to Falling Sky Brewery for donating beverages to our recent volunteer appreciation event, and to both Travel Oregon and the Oregon Trails Coalition for providing some budget for our annual Forest Skills College so that we can continue to provide this training for free.





Help Wanted

The Cascade Chronicle is looking for a volunteer Layout Editor. If you've ever put a powerpoint presentation together, or created a flyer on a computer, then you have the experience we are looking for. The Chronicle comes out every other month. The Editors in Chief, Rhonda Levine and Norma Massier, write and/or collect all of the articles and photos. We need someone willing to put all the pieces together in an attractive layout. The person selected as the Layout Editor will get credit for time spent working on the newsletter and be eligible to earn Forest Passes, CV swag, and other perks! If interested, please send an email to Rhonda Levine at: rhondaxo@comcast.net.

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