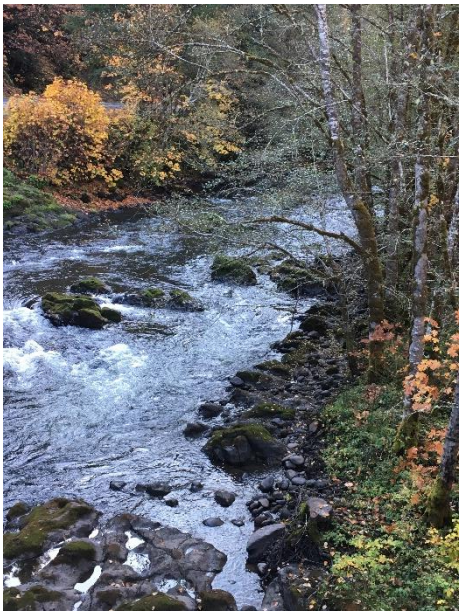
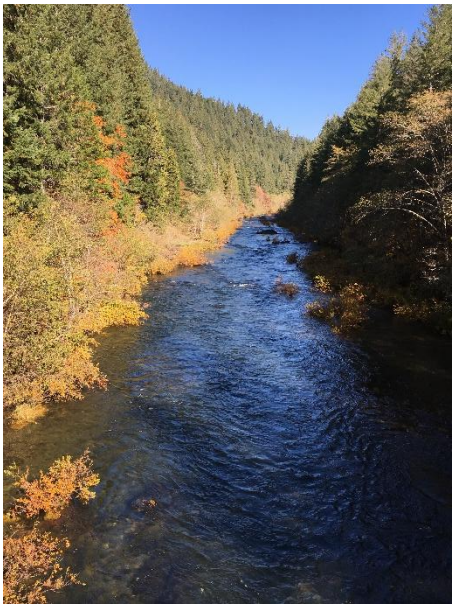
CASCADE CHRONICLES

Issue 10, 2026

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.

North Fork – Middle Fork Willamette River. *(Photos courtesy of Susan Tchelebi)*

Saying: Goodbye to Wenmi, Hello to Jennifer – *Stacy Rudisill*

A few weeks ago, *Wenmi* broke the news to me, rendering her two weeks' notice. She explained that life had taken an unexpected turn for her and she'd be returning to her childhood home, Puerto Rico. As upsetting as it was to hear, it was easy to understand. And although it doesn't feel like she's been with us for very long, *Wenmi* made a lasting impact in her role as **CV**'s Volunteer Coordinator.

Wenmi approached her position with patience, kindness, and confidence. I will particularly miss the serene and unflappable presence she brought to her work. During her last couple of weeks with us she created a series of much needed "Better Impact How To" videos for volunteers and administrators to reference via a shared Google album. These helpful videos will soon be available on **CV**'s website and in Better Impact and her influence will live on through them. **Thank you** *Wenmi*!

As hard as it is to say goodbye, we are fortunate to welcome a new *Volunteer Coordinator*, *Jennier McDaniel.* Jennifer is no stranger to *Cascade Volunteers*. She's been volunteering with us since 2023 and has logged over 178 hours during that time. She has adopted Eileen Lake, part of the Love Your Lake program, monitors phenology as part of the Community Science program & does trail work with the Scorpions, Camas Crew.

Jennifer will be taking on the Volunteer Coordinator role initially part-time, working 20 hours a week starting late August. She can be reached at the same Volunteer Coordinator email mailto:volunteer@cascadevols.org. We appreciate your patience as we navigate the transition process.

Welcome Jennifer! We're all looking forward to getting to know and work with you.

Upcoming Events

Volunteer Appreciation Night – Save the Date – *Stacy Rudisill*

The appreciation night is hosted by CV in partnership with the Willamette National Forest.

Please join us for a night of fun, food, drink and camaraderie as we celebrate and recognize **YOU** – Willamette National Forest's hard working and passionate volunteer stewards.

This is a chance to connect with old friends and an opportunity to make new ones from other program areas.

Event Times:

- **4:00 – 5:00 Social Hour, Appetizers and Drinks**
- **5:00 – 5:30 Dinner Served**
- **5:30 – 7:30 Presentation, Awards, Raffle**

Additional information can be found by logging into your MyImpactPage at that time.

Other News & Stories

Early History of the Taylor Burn Guard Station – *Gary Guttormsen*

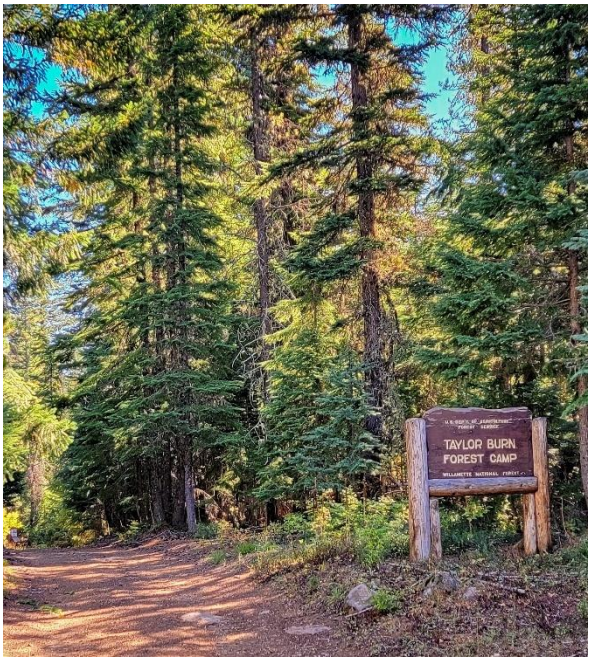
Before telling the early story of the Taylor Burn area and guard station, knowing where the area is, is a good starting point.

Taylor Burn is located north of Waldo Lake and sits on the northern boundary of the Waldo Wilderness and the southern boundary of the Three Sisters Wilderness. It is best accessed from Waldo Lake by taking FS Rd 516 and driving four miles until the road tees into FS Rd 514 and 517. Turn left onto Road 514 and drive four more miles to the Taylor Burn Guard Station and historic campground. These roads are not maintained and are extremely rough. They also travel through an area that has been burned twice, once in 1996 and then again, a few years ago by the CedarCreek Fire. (As of this writing, the Waldo Lake Road is gated just beyond the junction with Charlton Tie Road due to the restoration efforts being undertaken to repair the fire damage to both North Waldo and Islet Campgrounds done by the Cedar Creek Fire.)

It is also possible to get into the Taylor Burn area by driving FS Rd 4636 past Little Cultus Lake. That lake is accessible from the Cascade Lakes highway. Beyond Little Cultus Lake, the road is not maintained and is in horrible condition. I do not recommend it!

Click Here to read more of its history.

Taylor Burn Campground (Formerly known as Guard Station) – *Catherine Lindberg*



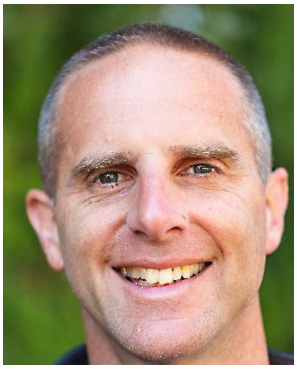
The question of Taylor Burn Guard Station being placed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) was recently asked because as defined by the Federal and State government regulations/policies, it is historic.

It was rated "not eligible" due to "significant material loss" and "architectural integrity loss" as evidenced by multiple modifications over time from the original (per historic photos). It was also documented that the guard station had been moved from its original location a few years after its construction. Thus, technically it did not qualify for consideration of its historic value when undertakings were proposed.

It is not clear if the requisite documentation was submitted since it was part of a Region-wide evaluation study of over 100 such structures administered by the regional office. An additional point of consideration is that IF restoration is done to repair or reverse incompatible modifications, the determination of eligibility to the NRHP could be revisited with the State Historic Preservation office (SHPO) and result in a determination of eligibility.

Some time ago, there seemed to be interest in pursuing the restoration of Taylor Burn, however, currently the status is undetermined. Click Here for additional information

Interview w/Adam Kirsch – *Rhonda Levine*



Adam is in his 26th year of teaching. He teaches mostly sciences (several) at Crescent Valley High School in Corvallis and is also skilled at woodworking and carpentry which he also teaches. Adam mostly grew up in Oregon and has a degree in mechanical engineering. He worked in a paper mill first and oversaw maintenance operations. There was a lot of info he taught to co-workers. And then he began to dread Mondays… It was time for a change and teaching seemed to be a good choice. He wanted his students to learn to do real things and have useable skills that would be of value to them and to the community.

About 2 years ago he was backpacking in the Jefferson Wilderness and came across a trail crew and they started talking. It seems there was and is a lack of trail signs out there. Everywhere. And he thought he might be able to help. Adam had knowledge, some materials and some equipment. He contacted David Alward in Redmond, who also makes signs, and they began working on this task. He mills his own wood and relies mostly on donations of materials. Adam began having his woodworking students create blanks with a CNC router using mostly white oak and then laser engrave them. Orders for signage sometimes come to him from the Ranger Districts but he has also reached out to let the Forest Service know that this service is available and it's at no cost!

To date he has made 342 signs. He also creates outdoor durable plastic signage. Most of the signs are oak though. He also does signage for places like Cape Perpetua. He and a small group of volunteers like to spend some weekends installing signs in various locations. He expects that as his program continues and the word of this program gets out there will be more orders. If you'd like to see Adam's work, click Here. And… if you know of a place in the National Forest in need of signage, send email to Adam.

The next time you're hiking in the Forest and see signage helping you not only navigate but helping you stay safe, thank Adam and folks like him who are making a huge difference in your enjoyment of the outdoor Forest experience.

Tallest of Tall to Tiniest of Tiny – *Cheryl Friesen*

The Willamette National Forest's rich landscape has provided opportunities for hundreds of researchers over the past century. Ecosystems are complex, and we have a lot to learn. 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. For more information on Willamette's Science-Management partnership, check out the H.J. Andrews Experimental Forest webpage.

Tallest of Tall to Tiniest of Tiny
Scurry. Scurry.
Snip. Snip.
Zip! Zip!
Chomp. Chomp. Chomp.

Two hundred feet above the forest floor, the tops of massive old growth trees sway resolutely in the morning breeze. **Red tree voles** -- brown-eyed residents with soft, reddish-fur -- pay no heed to the rocking. They're busy. Appropriately called "picky," they only eat one thing: Douglas-fir needles. Loaded with phenols that make them un-tasty and undigestible to most species, the voles unlock their nutrition by daintily stripping out the resin ducts running along each side of the needle. The discarded piles look like mounds of fine, cream-colored hairs. An observant hiker may spot them at the base of a tree, having tumbled from up high. Their presence alerts vole surveyors that a nest may be tucked in the canopy -- good to know before starting a grueling climb.

The tree-tops provide an all-inclusive package for the diminutive voles: comfy beds luxuriously lined with the softest lichens and mosses, and an endless smorgasbord of their preferred food. They slip out at night -- scurry, scurry-- evading owls and other predators, to collect small branches -- snip, snip. Safely back in the nest, they prepare each needle for consumption. Zip! Zip!
Like a miniature stalk of celery, their dexterous little digits push them one after another into their tiny mouths. Hundreds a day are needed to fuel their furry engines.

Scientists like Dr. Eric Forsman with the U.S. Forest Service spent years climbing massive old growth trees to video the life history of this rare mammal. The tiniest of radio collars showed they rarely leave the tree-tops, finding all their life-needs in the tallest of tall.

Lots of critters dine on vegetation, but why specialize on Douglas-fir needles? Researchers using sophisticated scanning electron microscopes and DNA mapping techniques may have discovered the answer. Thousands of tiny micro-organisms occupy the seemingly barren needle surfaces. Aptly called the "*phyllosphere*" algae, fungi, and bacteria have found a secure environment to survive and thrive, protected by the usually toxic phenol ducts. These life-forms create complex microbial "neighborhoods" that vary in composition at different tree heights and ages. Are the needles found in old growth tree-tops, where the voles have found their niche, the most nutrient dense? We don't know. It's one of many mysteries awaiting an answer.

Frank Egler said: *"Nature is not only more complex than we think, but likely more complex that we can think."*

But we do know the **red tree voles** thrive among the tallest of tall and the tiniest of tiny in Oregon's amazing old growth forests.

Scurry. Snip. Zip! Munch.

Phenology – *Cathy Summers, Jody Einerson* (CV Community Scientists Assist National Project)

For more than a year, some visitors have been going to the Willamette National Forest just to watch the plants grow. Although it might sound like a lyric from an old John Denver song about spending Saturday night in Toledo, Ohio, it's not boring at all.

Cascade Volunteers (**CV**) is now partnering with Oregon Season Tracker and The National Phenology Network to observe and report native plant phenology data on sites in the Willamette National Forest. Phenology is the study of regular seasonal changes like plant leaf-out and flowering, insect hatches, and animal migration. Reporting phenology into a national network provides researchers with data to study how the natural world responds to climate variability over time. This dedicated group of volunteers from CV is observing and reporting on plant phenology weekly at Cascadia Day Use Area, the McKenzie Ranger Station, and Fish Lake. This Spring the group of volunteers celebrated a year of collecting observation data and noted some interesting trends. It was no surprise, as this was an unusual winter, that by April some of the plant species were as many as 26 days ahead of the previous spring in leaf bud break.

Plant species observed at the three locations include vine maple and big leaf maple, snowberry, cottonwood, Douglas fir, osoberry (Indian plum), Oregon white oak, and huckleberry. The sites represent different elevations and experience different climatic conditions, and presumably, a range of dates on which the same phenological events will occur in the same species. Even within a single site, though, different examples of the same plant have leafed out or bloomed weeks apart, showing that sun exposure, rain, and other factors can vary significantly within a few hundred feet.

Now that the observers have been working at different sites for more than a year, they are becoming more familiar with the different phenological events and can identify them more easily. In the spring of 2026, observers were offered training to help them to identify difficult phenophases – such as pollen cones on Douglas fir.

The **National Phenology Network** has also offered live video training to help participants learn and become better observers.

To participate, each CV volunteer takes an online training course to learn observation protocol and is then matched with a mentor at one of the sites. Each site has multiple volunteers who may visit the site on an alternating basis. *Karol Schrems*, the lead on this project, hopes to open more sites as more participants are recruited. To find out more about the program, send email to *Karol*.

Willamette Pass Winter Trail & Shelter – *Lyndell Wilken*

Doug & Lauren Orwick, and their son, have adopted **Fuji Shelter**. They had made trips to **Fuji Shelter** when their son was very small, so when they read the appeal asking for a volunteer to adopt the shelter, they thought it was a perfect fit for their family.

In other winter trail developments, we have recruited some strong new volunteers to help with the winter marked trails at Willamette Pass. *Adam Steele* is taking on the Bechtel and Marianne Way Trails in addition to adopting the Bechtel Shelter.

Matt Miller, as shown in the picture, is being added to the team of *Mike Smith, John Hegg and Lyndell Wilken* in maintaining Rosary Lakes and Taits Loop trails. Other winter volunteers have been scouting diamonds along all the trails for improvements needed.

Love Your Lake Volunteers – *Lyndell Wilken*

Erika Everson and *Rebecca Rose* attended the training session for the **Love Your Lake** program in July. They plan on adopting Otter and Scout Lakes. Other **Love Your Lake** Volunteers have been busy visiting their lakes while the air remains clear of smoke. *Cheryl Myers* found a camp at Marion Lake with an abandoned toilet seat in addition to garbage scattered around the campsite. *Jeff Guckenberg* found a shelter that had been built at Marie Lake which he dismantled. Even though Jeff was not the adopter of Marie Lake he went ahead and cleared the area of campsite debris.

With so many volunteers having been trained for the **Love Your Lake** program we are finding that as they spend time in the woods, they also clean other lakes in addition to their own adopted lake if they see work that needs to be done. Over time the Forest Service rangers who patrol the Willamette National Forest should begin to see that the lakes are cleaner and more well-kept than in the past.

A Second Pair of Eyes – *Michael Smith*

"Glad to get that off my shoulder," I said to the trail, the nearby trees, and a woodpecker I could hear but not see. I put Brad's chain saw down on the ground by the junction of the Betty Lake Trail and its north spur to the lake. Lunch time.

An hour earlier, Brad and I were a mile further west at the fourth of six logs we had to remove on the Betty Lake Trail, an all-season path near Waldo Lake, joining Waldo Lake Road to the 20-mile Jim Weaver Trail that circles the lake. Our first log was head high over the trail and held in a notch of a pair of trees. When the log was cut, it went up like a teeter-totter. You find entertainment where you can when working trail. The current log was 20-22 inches in diameter, a straightforward cut. Standing on the opposite side of the log, I noticed a rock right about where Brad's cut was headed. As the cut came lower, I stepped over in front of Brad, waving my hands to get his attention.
"*Rock!"* I pointed down.

He looked over, gave me a nod, and later we finished the cut with a hand saw, which if it scraped the rock would be no big deal. Saw chains do not like rocks. He told me later he hadn't seen it. I was in much better position to see it and spoke up as is my job as swamper. Every part of trail work has had a steep learning curve for me, and swamping has perhaps been the most difficult.

Swampers, (the verb is to swamp) are those who help someone who is operating power equipment. A swamper can carry the power equipment, fuel, clears space, and when needed is there for safety or emergencies. Swampers for power sawyers are a pair of second eyes for obstructions or issues the sawyer might not appreciate, such as overhead dangers, hikers, or movement of nearby logs because of the current cut. The sawyer is concentrating on the cut; the swamper must be watching out for everything else in the surroundings, staying clear yet being aware of the cut's progress.

Two years back, a log lay across the Vivian Lake Trail a quarter mile from the trailhead. The log, nothing unusual, went uphill 30-40 feet where it disappeared in brush. There, a second log of similar size was perpendicular to and lying on it. I wondered whether the second log was a potential problem and might roll towards us. Maybe. Maybe not.

The sawyer arrived, and as he planned his cut, I called over: *"Note the log on top of this one. It might not do anything, but I want you to be aware of it."* My second pair of eyes were not confident in calling out what logs will do. But now there was a second brain involved.

The sawyer nodded, changed position so he faced me and further away. As he cut through the log over the trail, it dropped. The log perpendicular was suddenly free, started to roll, had a low friction surface, the log we had just dropped, and accelerated, crossing the trail in seconds, went airborne, and over the edge with a loud crash below.

"Thank you!"

ONC Willamette (Oregon Nordic Club Willamette Chapter) Winter Trail Maintenance

— Bob Young

The December wind event that did so much damage in Detroit as well as all the area trails heavily impacted the cross-country ski trails which had been cleared before last winter. Soon we will be starting our annual fall work sessions to get them back in shape in hopes of a better ski season this year. Undoubtedly, there will be a need for certified sawyers. In preparation for their work, the trails will need to be surveyed for the number of downed trees and the work prioritized. Work will also include brush and sapling removal, as well as removing limbs for diamond visibility and additions. None of this requires special skills, just willing hands to help us out and improve the winter sport experience for all.

Just another excuse to get out and enjoy the woods and great weather of the late summer and fall.

We'll be attacking Maxwell, Big Springs, Lava Lake, Potato Hill, and Ray Benson Sno-Parks. Little Nash and Ikenick Sno-Parks could likely use some attention as well. Later in the fall we will also be stocking firewood in the six winter shelters at Maxwell and Ray Benson.

Photo1 – Frank Hoffman, Jim Todd
Photo2 - Mark Olson, Beth Dayton

If any of you would like to help with these tasks, send email to Bob and we can include you in work party alerts or suggest trails to you that could use independent scouting. You can also check our website for scheduled events and contacts.
Photo – Dave Carter, Mark Olson, Jim Todd, Bob Young

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Closing Note – *Rhonda Levine, CV Editor*

Watch for the Newsletter the last week of alternate months. We encourage you to volunteer, as we are doing, to make a difference. And if you'd like to write something and include photos for **YOUR** Newsletter… please do.

When submitting photos, please ID the individuals, the location(s), and ensure that permission to use the photo(s) for publication has been provided.

Please send email with your articles and (photos) to Rhonda. We ask that photos be an attachment or shared link rather than embedded in the text of the article.

The deadline for the October Newsletter is Friday, 10/16/2026.