



Long Tom Watershed Council

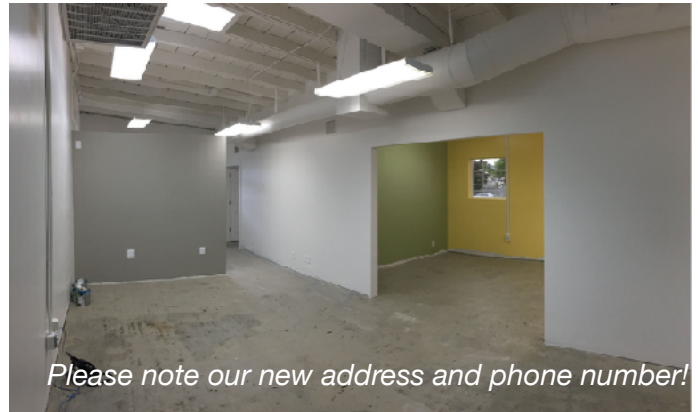
August 2020 Newsletter

**Action
Through
Understanding**

New Address, New Phone, New Office!

****We are now at 11 East 27th Ave., Eugene, OR 97405 | 541-654-8965****

We have moved! As many of you know, LTWC has operated out of two donated office spaces since we launched the Urban Waters & Wildlife Program over seven years ago and opened an office in south Eugene. Since then, the council has seen tremendous growth of our talented team and impact in the watershed. And, with growth comes new challenges. As far back as 2016, LTWC staff and board identified critical drawbacks of having our team, divided by program areas, in separate offices. In 2019 the board supported a staff-driven plan to consolidate our two offices into a single location in a space adjacent to our Urban Waters Program office. In early February Pasquarelli Construction began demolition and construction of some important, but modest, renovations on our new home base! Little did we know at the time that our investment of a central office space was launching on the eve of the “work from home revolution” spurred by COVID-19. Our vision for all staff working under one roof, fostering the natural innovation and team building that emerges from working together, has required some creative adjustment in recent months as people balance time teleworking with time in the new office. Fortunately, there is so much work happening on the landscape that many staff are in the field managing projects anyway! Nonetheless, we are grateful to have completed this important step to supporting our team’s effectiveness on behalf of the watershed, and look forward to a ribbon cutting to welcome partners and supporters whenever it becomes responsible to gather again. **Stay tuned for more photos once we’re settled!**



Please note our new address and phone number!

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The Long Tom Watershed Council serves to improve water quality and watershed condition in the Long Tom River basin and surrounding drainages through education and collaboration among all interests, using the collective wisdom and voluntary action of our community members.

www.longtom.org  [Like us on Facebook](#)

11 East 27th Ave., Eugene, OR 97405

Phone: (541) 654-8954 Email: coordinator@longtom.org

We are Better, and Stronger, Together

Over the last three years the Council has invested significantly in exploring what diversity, equity, and inclusion mean for the soul of our watershed community, and our mission. We have had meaningful dialogue with partners, staff, board, community members, foundations and donors, and have explored deeply why these principles are foundational to the health of the communities we serve in the Long Tom, and to our work.

The truth is that it should not be that complicated, because our message to Black, Indigenous People, and People of Color in our watershed community is so simple: **we see you, we need you, we support you, we can't do this without you.**

Our watershed needs diverse voices from all people leading and participating in conversations about watershed health. That cannot happen when some voices are routinely and systematically excluded, suppressed, or silenced. Black, Indigenous People, and People of Color are disproportionately affected by poor air and water quality, negative health outcomes and chronic illness, and racially biased police brutality. These injustices, including recent incidents impacting Black Americans recreating in the outdoors, are directly connected to our mission and affect our Long Tom community.

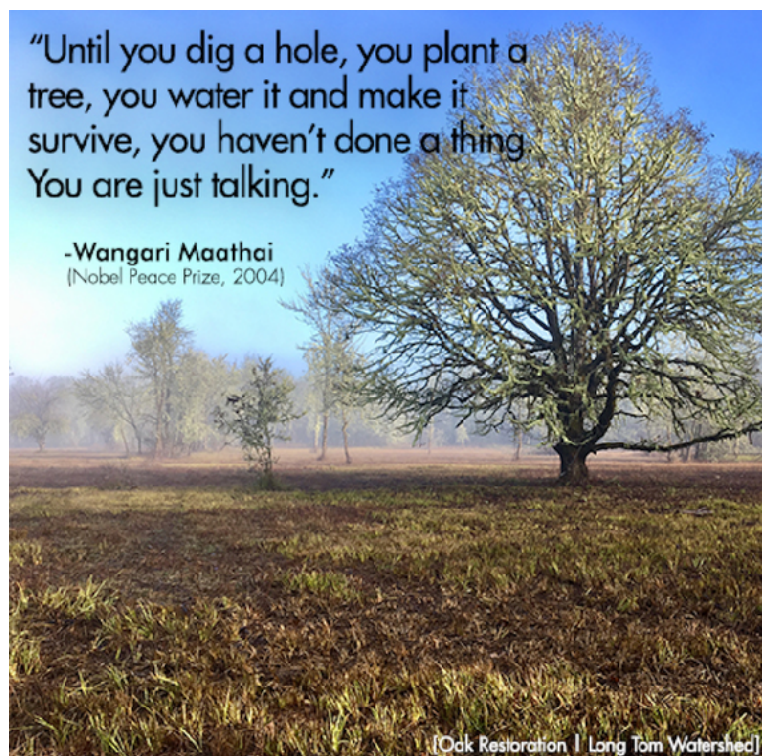
In 2019 board and staff came together to develop the council's equity statement:

"We believe the health of the watershed is dependent upon the contributions of all people. The Long Tom Watershed Council recognizes the disproportionate impacts systems of oppression continue to have on People of Color and Indigenous People. We believe the organization's strength depends on breaking down implicit, systemic inequities. We strive to create an inclusive and welcoming environment that grows our collective wisdom."

But these are just words, and must be backed up with action. In an age of hashtags masquerading as action, we feel it is important to share where we stand, and that we are striving to show up differently for the most vulnerable in our communities every day.

So what are we doing?

In 2017 we began working with the Center for Diversity and the Environment to deepen our team's understanding about equity and why it is essential for our mission. Together we began building a foundation for exploring the challenges of incorporating diversity throughout our work. In 2018 we reached out to partners and community members like you, and you told us loud and clear why leading with equity is important to you. Today we are putting your money to work on what you care about. We are supporting our staff and Tribal partners to learn from Indigenous people and support them in leading land management dialogue and activities. Additional dollars have been committed to directly support voices and expertise from Communities of Color to guide and strengthen our mission. **Together we are addressing the systems that exclude, and rebuilding anew with all voices involved.**



This letter is about demonstrating how we are showing up for our community so that we can be held accountable. We have made mistakes. We will make mistakes again. But this journey is long and we need your help. Compared with the scale of challenges our nation faces together these actions are small. **But working together we can make a real change for the communities we serve, and the health of the communities we serve is essential for the health of this watershed.**

We urge you to give generously in support of these and other local organizations addressing racial injustice today:

[NAACP of Lane County](#) | [Civil Liberties Defense Center](#) | [Black Led Action Coalition](#)

- Clinton Begley, Executive Director and Shelly Miller, LTWC Board Chair

We'd also like to share the thoughtful words of Joe Scott, Curriculum Director for the Traditional Ecological Inquiry Program (previously Team TEK). This was shared on the TEIP Facebook page in June.

“Greetings, TEIP friends and family!

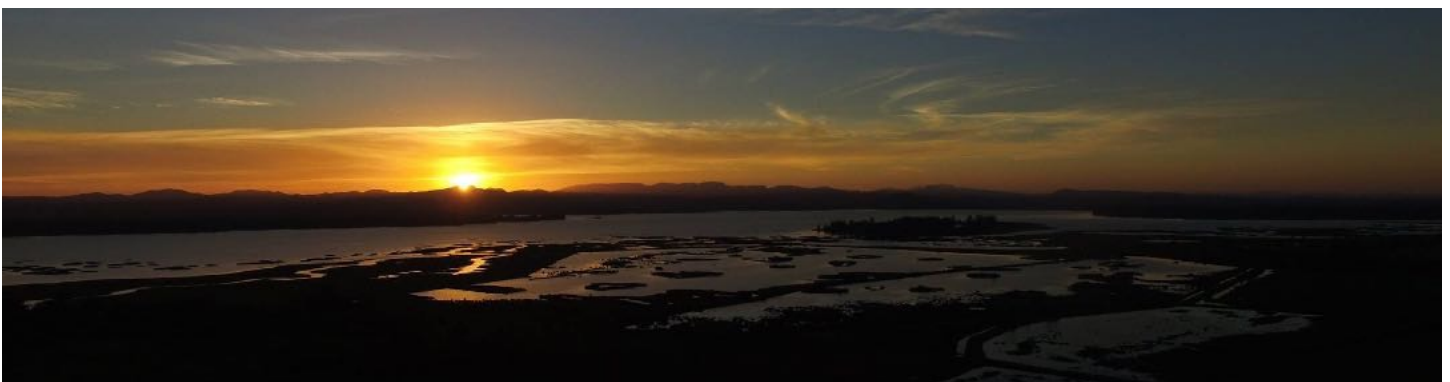
Our Spring Round is drawing to a close; a new focus on remote learning and social distancing, along with a vigilant focus on the success and well-being of our Interns has led us to this time of transition to Summer Rounds. We're looking forward to the continued participation of our existing families, and perhaps the prospect of taking on some new faces.

Please take a moment to read the following:

As people of good faith who work with, represent, and serve Indigenous communities, we feel we cannot fail to acknowledge painfully exposed social injustice; nor can we fail to acknowledge the peaceful protests taking place here and abroad.

In such turbulent times as these, we can find comfort in the belief that all beings are related. We are family. Together as such, we will confront and overcome injustice, ignorance, and hate. We will help to make this a world of safety and hope for all beings. We find in the wisdom and insight of our ancestors that it is our responsibility to demonstrate the resilience, resolve, and bravery modeled for us. We believe that their shared insights - carried on through our hearts, minds, and voices - will ultimately bring our communities together, strengthen confidence in our leadership, and reinforce our core values of kindness, compassion, and love. In speaking from a place of kindness and understanding, we bring light to issues affecting the general well being of underrepresented Peoples, including the communities with which we work so passionately. We all deserve to live with dignity, and without fear; this is what we must seek to share.”

- TEIP Curriculum Coordinator Joe Scott



Join LTWC's Board of Directors!

Do you care deeply for the health of the lands and waters of the Long Tom watershed? Are you interested in the human and social systems that support watershed health?

We have openings on our Board of Directors!



(From left): board members Al Hrynyshyn & Jamie Newsome, and Taylor Evans & Jabrila Via at LTWC's 2019 Annual Celebration

We are seeking candidates who can meet 10 times a year for our general board meetings, participate in at least one sub-committee, and bring your lived experience and expertise to the table for the health of our watershed, and the diverse communities that depend on it.

If you are interested and would like to learn more about board service with the Long Tom, or let us know about someone you think we should reach out to, you can send a letter of interest to info@longtom.org (or mail to 11 East 27th Ave., Eugene, OR 97405) with your name, why you're interested in being on the Long Tom Board of Directors (or why someone we should reach out to might be a good fit), and a short bio about yourself and what you might bring to benefit the lands and waters we share.

We can bring board members on anytime throughout the year. To be considered for our upcoming slate that will be voted on by the council membership, please send in your interest letters no later than September 1st.

You can read our bylaws regarding board membership, and the most recent annual report on our website (longtom.org).

“Relating with Fire as Our Guide” Project

We are grateful to our strong partners at McKenzie River Trust for their support of an emerging project that LTWC is committed to, and one you may have heard mentioned at the beginning of MRT’s recent Upstream event featuring Indigenous writer and plant ecologist Robin Wall Kimmerer. Net proceeds from this event are being directed to two local projects centering Black and Indigenous voices in our community, and MRT has generously “Relating with Fire as Our Guide” as one of the project recipients. MRT will be donating at least \$5,000 of your gifts to this project, and every dollar will go to Tribes and Indigenous experts in our region.

The project supports LTWC working in collaboration with Tribes in our region to heal relationships among each other and the land for a healthy landscape and community. The project centers Indigenous voices, relationships, and bringing back good fire to the land together.

The Long Tom Watershed Council is committed to learning how to relate to the First Peoples of this land, give back to Tribes, and have their consent on land work we carry out.

Kalapuya people shaped the lands we care about with cool fires that kept the land healthy, productive, biodiverse, and open. Because of Indigenous people and the reciprocity they established with the land, the Willamette Valley attracted European colonists, who forcibly removed Indigenous people and cultural burning. For more than 150 years, we have excluded Indigenous people and fire from the land we care about and advocate for. This history has severely affected and continues to affect the health of Indigenous people and the health of the lands and waters that are at the core of our mission. This work is essential for a healthier Long Tom Watershed.



LTWC Ecologist Katie MacKendrick talks about LTWC’s approach to this important project.

“Relating with Fire as Our Guide” is grounded in relationships and centering work in the Willamette Valley to reintroduce fire across land ownership boundaries on learning what the Tribes want to teach us about cultural burning so we can best support their empowerment to manage their lands and lands within their historic territories. We have work to do yet to hear from the Tribes how they’d like to use the funds.

Because we need each other and the land, and the land needs fire. We ask for your support of this emerging project to reorient land work to center Native voices, and heal our relationships with each other and the land.

Visit our website at longtom.org/community to hear more about the project from LTWC Ecologist Katie MacKendrick. You can also donate online at longtom.org/tribalengagement. Every dollar will go directly to Tribes for this work.

Volunteers Participate in Socially-Distant Activity

Thank you to the handful of volunteers who participated in last month's Ludwigia pull! In cooperation with the Mallard Lake Estates Homeowners Association, LTWC Habitat & Water Quality Specialist Amanda Reinholtz led volunteers in hand pulling Ludwigia, an invasive aquatic weed from the small lake in north Eugene, just south of Golden Gardens. This effort is part of our multi-year effort to actively remove and treat populations of Ludwigia and limit its downstream spread and proliferation. Check out the before and after photo below! It was a very successful morning, all while wearing masks and maintaining safe, physical distancing!



Survey: How Would You Like to Stay Engaged?

Due to COVID-19, we haven't had an in-person public meeting since February, and we miss seeing you!

We're considering creative ways we can continue to safely engage our community in learning opportunities during the pandemic. So we can better gauge interest, please share with us your comfort and interest in participating in different types of meetings, tours, and other engagement opportunities.

Visit our website (longtom.org/engagementsurvey2020) to take a quick (~2 minute) survey to help us craft our upcoming meetings and events!

Your input is valuable and appreciated!



Native Turtle Sightings in the Watershed!

Summer is here, and these watershed residents really know how to soak it in! The Northwestern pond turtle (NWPT) is our local native turtle, and we've been seeing them out and about around the Long Tom Watershed.

Northwestern pond turtles are considered a "species of concern" federally due to a combination of habitat loss, predation, and competition with non-native turtles, and are currently under review for listing under the Endangered Species Act. The pond turtles we do see are pretty special, and our watershed hosts some of the most important remaining habitat for them. That means we, collectively, have a big role to play in pond turtle conservation.

What can you do to help?

- Report the pond turtles you see! Try to get a clear photo if you can and jot a few notes on the time of day and what the turtle was doing.
- Never keep a wild turtle as a pet, and never release a pet turtle into the wild.
- If you see a turtle out and about, leave it alone. It knows where it wants to go! You may move a turtle out of a road in the direction it was going, but resist the temptation to take it any further.
- If you own or manage a pond, help support turtle habitat there.

The Oregon Native Turtle Working Group has a wonderful website that can help with all of the above: oregonturtles.com.



HWQS Amanda Reinholtz spotted this NWPT on Amazon Creek's Clear Lake where LTWC has been doing invasive aquatic species removal for the past five years - the first confirmed NWPT sighting there!



Amanda Reinholtz also had the pleasure of helping to release baby NWPTs from protected nest sites into Golden Gardens ponds in northwest Eugene.



Gene & Lisa Bennett found this 3-legged turtle near their home next to Bennett Vineyards. LTWC helped them enhance NWPT habitat in their pond as part of an ongoing restoration project on their property.

Thank You for Giving to LTWC!

April - July Giving

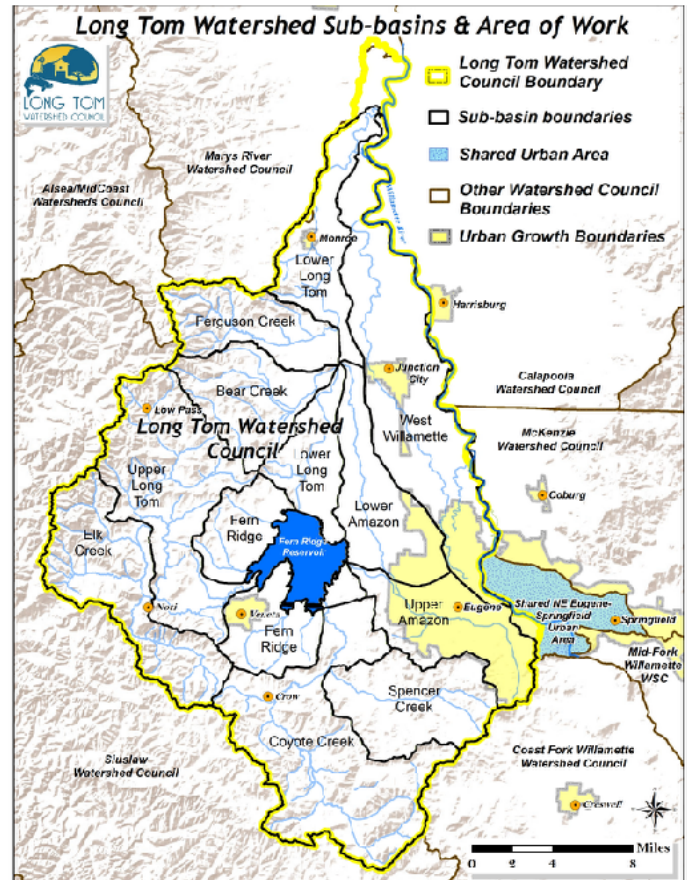
Bill Allison, Amazon Smile,
Don & Janet Blair (project match),
Dan & Jennifer Clausen (project match), Paula Conn,
Lee & Veronica Davis (rent donation),
Dedrick Family Fund,
Len Gillette & Pennie Spraggins-Gillette, Nikolai Hall,
Hal Hushbeck, Shelly Miller,
One Tree Planted (donation for Earth Day event),
Anami Ridge, Ryan Woolverton, Peg Wyse,
Richard & Ty Zeller (Faith Community Fund)



These Willamette River Agates started their lives much higher in the system than where they were found. These common treasures are created through volcanic and metamorphic processes and can be found along many rivers and beaches in Western Oregon. Our fish biologist Jed Kaul found these on a section of river not far from one of our Willamette Project sites in April.

LTWC Board of Directors

Chair: Shelly Miller
Vice-Chairs: Pat McDowell and Alec Hrynshyn
Treasurer: Taylor Evans
Secretary: Lindsay Reaves
Members: Jabrila Via, Jamie Newsome,
Jodi Sommers, Nikolai Hall



LTWC Staff: info@longtom.org

Abby Colehour, Restoration Projects Manager
Amanda Reinholtz, Habitat & Water Quality Spc.
Clinton Begley, Executive Director
Dana Dedrick, Special Projects Lead
Heidi Heisler, Fiscal Manager
Jed Kaul, Fish Biologist
Katie MacKendrick, Restoration Ecologist
Lorette Waggoner, Operations Coordinator
Miranda Hawkes, Stormwater Drafter & Designer
Rob Hoshaw, Operations Director
Sarah Whitney, Urban Stormwater
Sydney Nilan, UWSN Network Coordinator