



LONG TOM WATERSHED COUNCIL JUNE 2021 NEWSLETTER

ACTION THROUGH UNDERSTANDING



Spring camas flowering in an oak savanna

OREGON BLACK PIONEERS: THE HISTORY & STORIES OF BLACK OREGONIANS

Virtual Presentation

Tuesday, June 8 from 6 - 7 p.m.

We are excited to welcome Troy Tate of Oregon Black Pioneers for LTWC's June virtual public meeting. Troy will be presenting on Black history in Oregon, including in and around the Long Tom Watershed. Oregon Black Pioneers is a nonprofit organization founded in 1993 and is the only historical society in the state dedicated to preserving and presenting the experience of Black Oregonians by researching, recognizing, and commemorating Black culture and heritage throughout Oregon.

The history and contributions of Black and other People of Color are an important part of the story of Oregon and the Long Tom Watershed. Oregon has a painful history of exclusionary practices, displacement, and violence toward Black people, and Black communities still contend with systemic racism and injustice. Black and People of Color are also integral to the fabric of Oregon's society and have made, and continue to make, important contributions to our state and communities. This history and their stories too often go untold or left out of education entirely.

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We hope you'll join us for this special virtual presentation!

- No registration required
- You can view live or at your leisure by visiting LTWC's YouTube Channel: youtube.com/longtomwsc
- To watch live, click "live" at the top of the channel at 6 p.m. on June 8th.
- The video recording will remain up on both our YouTube page and our website.

Stay tuned for:

*Climate Change & Forestry 2-part virtual series
July 27 and August 10, 2021*

OREGON BLACK PIONEERS PRESENTATION CONTINUED

So how does this topic connect to the Long Tom Watershed Council and our work? Human health is inherently linked with water quality and watershed health. As we heard from Haley Case Scott's Climate and Racial Justice presentation in March, Communities of Color experience the impacts of an unhealthy environment and a changing climate at disproportionately higher rates. These disproportionate impacts felt by Communities of Color intersect with systems of oppression and social injustice. LTWC has long talked about the value of the collective wisdom of our community, and it's vital that this collective wisdom include, value, and lean into the perspectives of Communities of Color. It supports our mission to make sure that everyone has access to clean water as well as healthy places to work, and live, and play.



MEET THE SPEAKER

My name is Troy Tate and I'm born and raised in Portland, Oregon. I joined the Oregon Black Pioneers in 2018 after a visit to the DMV area (District of Columbia, Maryland and Virginia). While there, I visited

the African American Museum in Washington, D.C., and also the Reginald F. Lewis Museum in Baltimore, Maryland. The Reginald F. Lewis Museum highlights contributions of African Americans in the state of Maryland and sparked an interest in creating a similar legacy in the state of Oregon. That hunger led me to the Oregon Black Pioneers, whose mission is to highlight, document, and inform the citizens of the state of Oregon about the contributions made by African Americans in this state. I have since dedicated some time through this organization to that mission.



Historic Image (credit: Oregon Black Pioneers): Taken in the 1950's, this photo is of Robert & Deloris Reynolds carrying water back to their home in the West 11th Area. This was after the Ferry Street Settlement was demolished to build the Ferry Street Bridge. The Black community was forced to move to the West 11th area which lacked running water and was prone to flooding from Amazon Creek.

On a personal note, I am the owner/operator/founder of the Sunshine Center preschool in North Portland, and also the Associate Pastor of Christ Memorial Church. I'm a husband, and father of two young children. I enjoy making positive impacts in my community and have a passion for new adventures and experiences. I'm glad to have opportunities to inform the public about Black success in this region, as we have been a part of the fabric of this region since Lewis and Clark arrived on the Oregon Trail.



Thank you for subscribing to our newsletter.

IF YOU WOULD LIVE TO DONATE PLEASE CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE: WWW.LONGTOM.ORG

IMAGES FROM MAY 17 SCENIC SPRING WOODLAND WALK AT JOHNSON PROPERTY



A small group gathered on the evening of May 17th for a Scenic Spring Woodland Walk guided by local naturalist Rick Ahrens at a project site along the Long Tom River near the historic Coyote Creek Confluence. We had nearly 100 applicants for this limited space tour, and those who were drawn from a random lottery were treated with a moody and beautiful Oregon spring evening. We heard and saw lazuli buntings, yellowthroats, Swainson's thrush, northern harrier, hooded mergansers, redwing blackbird, great blue heron and many other birds. We also encountered plenty of elk sign, camas and numerous other flowering native plants like wild rose, California poppy, lomatium, and lupine. Due to the popularity of these tours and the limited space for this one, stay tuned for more tour opportunities this fall!



Lupines and California poppies



Osoberry shrub

A big thanks to Rick Ahrens for sharing his wealth of knowledge about birds and plants with our guests. We had fun learning from you! **We also want to thank our partners at WREN in the West Eugene Wetlands and McKenzie River Trust** for your help putting this together and having staff present to answer questions.

Visit our [YouTube Channel \(youtube.com/LongTomWSC\)](https://www.youtube.com/LongTomWSC) to watch a short video from May 17!

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT



The Long Tom Watershed lies within the traditional homelands of the Tribes and Bands of the Kalapuyan peoples. Following treaties in the 1850s, the Kalapuya people were dispossessed of and forcibly removed from their Indigenous homeland by the United States government.

Today, many descendants are citizens of the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde Community and the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians. We acknowledge that we are on occupied lands, and express our respect for Kalapuya and all Tribal Nations of Oregon, and the important contributions they continue to make to their communities, including to the stewardship of this watershed.

MEET THE STAFF

Abby Colehour - LTWC Restoration Projects Manager & Part-Time Weaver

I had the pleasure last week of talking with our Restorations Project Manager, Abby Colehour, about their work at the Long Tom Watershed Council and a bit about life in general. Rather than try to put our conversation into my own words, I thought it better to let you hear from Abby directly in a question and answer format. I hope you enjoy hearing from this talented professional and take your next opportunity to talk with Abby and get to know them even more.
~ Lorette Waggoner, Operations Coordinator

Lorette – What gets you out of bed in the morning?

Abby– I love walking out the door and putting my face in the morning sun, looking at the birds visiting the plants and the squirrels romping in the trees. Just seeing the natural world, the start to a new day, regardless of my feeling about things, about society or various human affairs. The sun rises and the dew lifts. I am just in love with that.

L – Do you have a motto, personal mantra or favorite quote?

There's a quote from Ursula K. Le Guin's *Wizard of Earthsea* book series, a poem called "The Creation of Éa":

“Only in silence, the word.
Only in darkness, the light.
Only in dying, life.
Bright the hawk's flight on an empty sky.”

L – Do you have a skill, or gift or superhero capacity that you would like to share?

A – Weaving, in all senses. Most of my coworkers know I weave willow baskets, but I also like to weave metaphorically through community building. Making connections between this person and that person. Finding skills in people that will come together to form a functional and interesting experience. Weaving together the right people to build the world I want to live in.

L– If you could snap your fingers and be an expert at something, what would it be?



A – Herbalism. And more generally, traditional British Isles forest practices. I want to be aligned with my heritage and what my ancestors were doing when they were more tied to the land.

L - Where did you grow up? Share with us an experience from your formative years that brought you to a love of nature (I assume you have a love of nature since you are in this field).

A - I grew up in Minnesota, in a suburb of Minneapolis called Minnetonka. We had a little woodland prairie, kind of a farmer's backyard. I used to play there with my neighbor friend. We spent a lot of time just romping around. Having the freedom to be in nature in a relatively protected space was wonderful and made a huge impact on my life. I recall often sitting under a favorite weeping willow tree with long branches. I figured out how to make willow crowns, how to bend one branch into a circle and then adding another branch to making these hoops or crowns. That experience of being immersed in the woods, having the freedom to explore, and let nature teach me had a huge influence on me. I still try to take that approach.

L – Is there anything else that drew you into this field?

A – I had an influential, enthusiastic high school biology teacher who loved nature. She was a big mushroom nerd. She invited me and other students into an after-school Biology club. She got us

(continued on next page)

gardening, getting our hands in the dirt. We went on a field trip to her cabin in Wisconsin where we got to explore nature and hear her talk about ecology. That was really engaging, not just through the academic lens on biology, but to see this teacher who was so passionate and caring for the land. She was a good role model. In college, I had the opportunity to do ecology field research, to live at a research station, and be totally immersed in the world of ecology.

In college I took a field botany class, which landed me in a research position with the professor over the summer. My first day on the job, my professor said: “Okay Abby, to be successful this summer, you need to learn every single plant in this wood.” That was his task for me, which was so daunting and yet so motivating. It was a very influential summer, and I have not stopped studying plants since.

L – What is something that surprised you about working for the Long Tom, that you did not expect when you started here?

A – The diversity of the collaborators that we work with at the watershed council. I knew there would be some partnerships and working with landowners, but the extent of the network we collaborate with is just so endless. That was a big and welcome surprise. It makes us stronger.

L – What energizes you at work and what drains you at work?

A – Being in the field as an active participant in the restoration is really energizing to me: clearing brush, making biochar, planting seeds, burning piles. While I am more often hiring other people to perform the physical tasks, it is an important way for me to stay connected with the work. The draining part of work is the grant reporting and grant administration: paperwork.

L – What is the coolest or most important trend you see out there today?

A – The unignorable need to adapt. The world is not static, it is a dynamic changing thing and people are being forced to realize this truth. I think that is exciting and it is important.

L – We talked about how you like to start your day. What is favorite way to unwind at the end of the day?



A – Stretching, meditating, reflecting on my day and things I am grateful for. And reading fantasy fiction novels like Ursula Le Guin.

L – What is something that you saw recently that made you smile?

A – Baby goats. Brand new baby goats eating blackberries. (To activate a smile yourself, see the photos and story about the Earth Day Forestry Event making biochar in this month’s newsletter, a project where Abby was active in the leadership and chief-in-charge-of-baby-goat-observing!)

Thank you to Abby for taking time for letting us get to know you better. They must be seeing a lot of baby goats eating blackberries, because they are nearly always smiling!

“Meet the Staff” will be an ongoing series – stay tuned for other interviews!

Thank you for giving to LTWC!

MAY 2021 GIVING

Apollo Actuarial Services

Paula Conn

Anami Ridge

PACIFIC LAMPREY (“EELS”) IN THE LONG TOM RIVER

While we may not have spawning populations of anadromous salmon in the Long Tom Watershed (just juvenile spring Chinook downstream of Monroe), recent environmental eDNA samples detected Pacific lamprey in Bear and Ferguson Creeks. While not technically considered an eel by scientists, the Indigenous peoples of the Northwest refer to them as eels, and they are an important traditional food. Pacific lamprey populations are thought to be in steep decline since the mid 1800s for many of the same reasons as our native salmon species.

These prehistoric fish spawn in freshwater and migrate to the ocean just like salmon, where they are parasitic on larger fish, dolphins, and whales. After spending a few years in the ocean they return upstream to spawn again. Don't worry, they won't latch on to you while you're swimming in the river this summer, as they stop feeding when they return to freshwater.

This is where the story takes a twist in our watershed. While these fish are known to ascend waterfalls on their upstream migration by using their mouth to attach to rocks, we had assumed that the three low-head dams on the lower Long Tom River were passage barriers to them since they are constructed features that have unnaturally uniform flow over them, unlike a natural falls that may have cracks in the rock or areas of less water velocity. The fish ladder on the Monroe Drop Structure has many right angles in it, which are typically unnavigable for eels. But fish have a way of surprising us!

With support from the Rocky Mountain Research Station of the U.S. Forest Service, LTWC staff joined our long-time fish research partner, ODFW biologist Karen Hans, to collect water samples from Amazon Creek, Bear Creek, Ferguson Creek, and the lower Long Tom River at High Pass Road in late April. We filtered five liters of water from each stream and sent the filters back to the lab to test them for the presence of Pacific lamprey environmental DNA, also known as “eDNA”. According to the U.S. Geological Survey, eDNA is organismal DNA that can be found in the environment that is shed by organisms (via skin, excrement, etc.) into aquatic environments that can be sampled using new molecular methods.



Photo: Jeremy Monroe, Freshwaters Illustrated

We just got the results back from the lab and while the signal wasn't very strong, Pacific lamprey eDNA was detected in Bear and Ferguson Creeks! We hope to conduct field sampling for them in the near future to confirm these results. They were not detected in Amazon Creek or the lower Long Tom River at High Pass Road.

This is exciting for us because we are working closely with the Confederated Tribes of the Siletz Indians, the City of Monroe, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to improve fish passage at the Monroe Drop Structure. While the eDNA sampling results indicate that eels are likely getting upstream of the Monroe Drop Structure, the signal was weak so it is likely that there aren't many eels getting up to the spawning grounds in Bear and Ferguson Creeks. We have heard stories of long-time residents seeing them stacked up at the base of the dam in the past decades, indicating that they were waiting for different flow conditions to make their way over the dam. Slowing down their migration makes them more vulnerable to predators and reduces the number of fish that make it to the spawning habitat in the headwaters. The Monroe Drop Structure is a total passage barrier for juvenile spring Chinook salmon and cutthroat trout that use the lower Long Tom for rearing habitat. Adult cutthroat trout can use the fish ladder at the dam under a narrow window of flows.

If you have any questions or have sightings of eels in the Long Tom Watershed get in touch with our fish biologist Jed Kaul at 541-654-8965 x102!

More: [ODFW Lamprey Brochure](#) | [USFWS Story Map](#)

EARTH DAY SOCIAL FORESTRY EVENT

On Earth Day in April, LTWC's Abby Colehour hosted a social forestry event alongside Lydia Scott of the Northwest Dog Project. The event brought neighbors together to work toward mitigating wildfire risk, restoring oak habitats, and upcycling forest biomass. This hands-on stewardship effort coincided with a fire mitigation and hazardous fuels reduction project funded by the Oregon Department of Forestry.

The historic oak-pine savanna on this privately-owned site was crowded with densely packed young conifers, fallen branches, blackberries, and underbrush that poses a fire hazard to residents and chokes out native plant communities. Volunteers helped by hauling brush out of and the rest was loaded into a steel kiln in preparation for making biochar.

The resulting biochar is mixed with compost and manure on-site and returned to the soil, enhancing water and nutrient storage capacity, facilitating a healthy microbial community and storing carbon in a long-lasting, stable structure.

Goats will be brought in to eat the resprouting blackberries and shrubs in the work area, after wildflowers have had a chance to set their seeds but



before winter rains saturate the soil.

Thank you to Northwest Dog Project, Wilson Biochar Associates, and to Firefighters United for Safety Ethics & Ecology (FUSEE) for their assistance. We especially want to thank Bonneville Environmental Foundation and One Tree Planted for funding the stewardship event and area neighbors for participating!

INTERESTED IN JOINING 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!

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. **We are currently requesting board candidates with connections to federally-recognized Tribes and members of the agricultural community. We're also searching for board members with an interest and expertise in fundraising.**

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 and currently have openings!

You can read our bylaws regarding board membership on our website (longtom.org)

NEW LOOK NEWSLETTER!

You may have noticed that our newsletter design looks a little bit different. Thanks to Natalie Reed at Creative Pollen for helping us come up with a refined look and feel! Would you like to receive our newsletter by email? Let us know at info@longtom.org.



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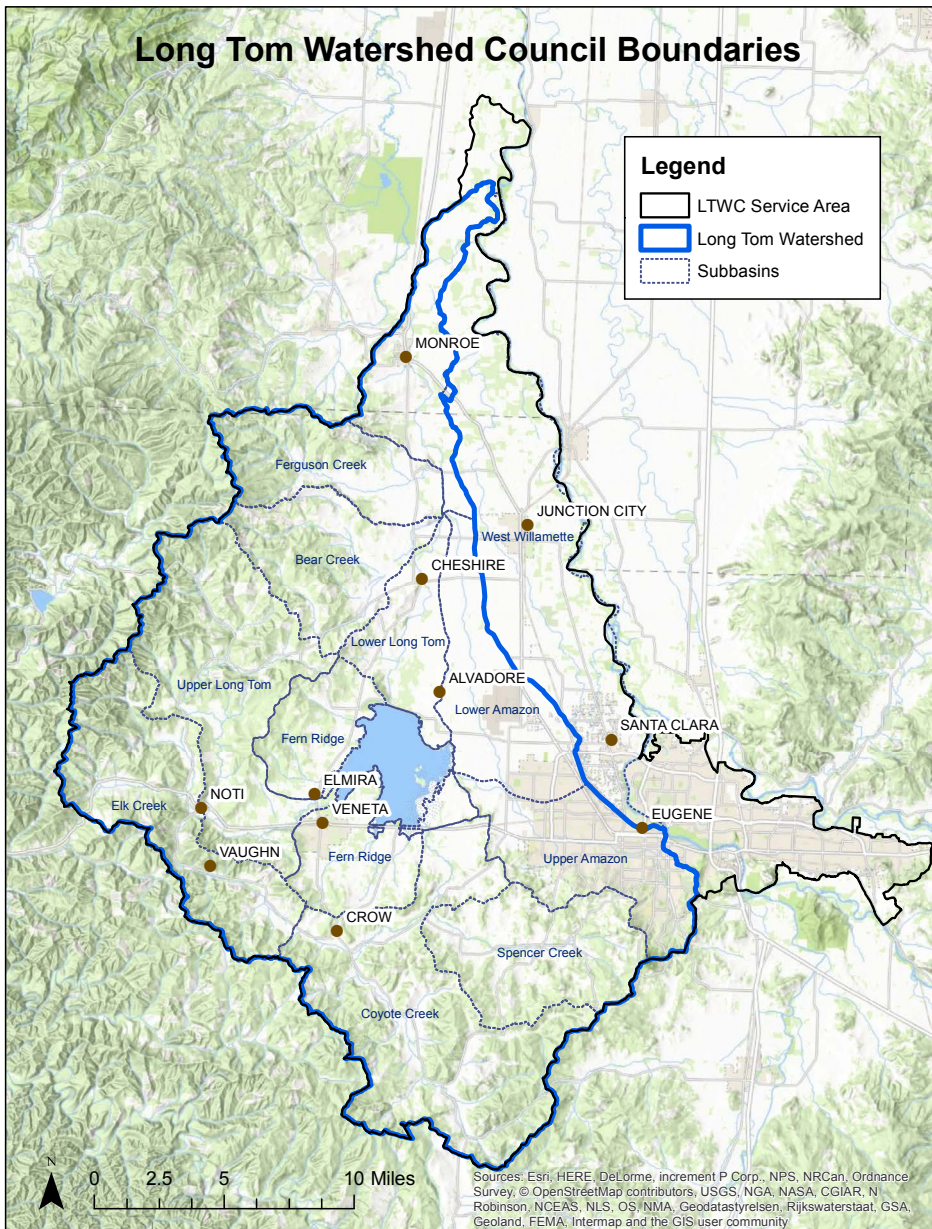
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Stewardship Network



We hope you'll tune in for our June 8th virtual event!

Mission: 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.