

2023 ANNUAL REPORT

Neighbors Working Together for a Healthier Watershed Community



Groundbreaking & Breaking Ground

This year the Council completed a project that transformed a two-acre asphalt parking lot at the Willamette Christian Center, intercepting runoff with four 200'+ linear rain gardens. We greatly increased size of the planting areas and improved the existing soils – including the 20' wide mound of soil that separates the site from 18th Ave. This is the first Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board restoration grant supporting the Urban Waters program on private land for LTWC. Also, each facility has a separate soil mixture to test the efficacy of different types of biochar in stormwater management for plant health. Thirdly, this is the first local project to test the incorporation of biochar in a rain garden, courtesy of a partnership with the Metropolitan Wastewater Management Commission (MWMC). Biochar is a porous carbon produced from low-temperature burning that improves soil structure, fixes carbon, and fosters microbes in the soil for improved pollutant uptake.

Community members got a tour this summer at Willamette Christian Center where the Council removed nearly 12,000 square feet of asphalt and created four large, linear rain gardens. Here LTWC's Landscape Designer and Stormwater Specialist Miranda Hawkes and Urban Waters and Wildlife Program Manager Sarah Whitney explain how facilities like these function to filter pollutants and reduce the temperature and quantity of stormwater reaching Amazon Creek.



Ecological Burns: Records Set

In the short burn window of 2023, Council staff co-coordinated burns at three sites, totaling 114 acres! The sites were at Coyote Oaks, and private property, and lands of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde and Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians. The Council's roles included coordinating burn unit prep, neighbor outreach, volunteer coordination, post-burn seeding, and submitting grant proposals to fund burns, and pre- and post-fire monitoring. Working with our peer organizations in the Rivers to Ridges Partnership, we also successfully ignited 490 acres on 32 units, which is only 27 acres less than last year, but the greatest number of units ever – and the third highest number of acres in the history of the partnership! Long Tom staff participated in ignitions and holding roles on an additional six collaborative burns, totaling 237 acres.

The Council's new Restoration Project Manager Sara Worl in front of a prescribed burn.



Moving Forward in Monroe

We worked with amazing citizen volunteers in Monroe to move the fish passage enhancement project at the Monroe dam closer to implementation. They helped build support for the project by hosting an open house about it this year. LTWC also tabled at the Monroe Festival to engage with more community members to educate them about the project. We are hopeful that the project will hit another milestone and continue moving forward in early 2024, when the second phase of the US Army Corps of Engineers 1135 project could kick off, in which case the project would be implemented in 2025!




Above: Council Board Secretary Connie Peabody listens to an attendee at the Council's booth at Monroe Festival this summer.

Top left and below left: The Council's Special Projects Director Dana Dedrick and Monroe City Administrator Steve Martinenko point to an outmoded fish ladder at the drop structure on the Long Tom River in Monroe. Middle left: Attendees read the Council's info posters at the Council's booth at Monroe Festival.




Right: One of the Council's posters at the Monroe Festival booth explaining problems from the Monroe dam and the benefits to its removal.


CURRENT PROBLEM CONDITIONS




Fish passage blocked to upstream habitat



Pooled water reduces water quality




Drop structure near end of life



Official warns of 'drowning man' dams after river deaths, high water


Low-head dam creates serious water hazard

CITY PRIORITIES FOR THE RIVER




Improved Water Quality

- New in-flow drinking water intake
- Fire truck filling access for both banks
- Maintain access for agriculture & irrigation



Community Safety and Livability

- Remove debris and hazards for recreation
- Increased public access to river
- Seasonal water flow through slough



Attract Visitors for Local Business

- Retain fish ladder and points-of-interest
- Benches and kiosks
- Prepare site for future pedestrian bridge

They're Not Exactly Pretty



...But the Beavers
Love Them

Left: The Council's Aquatics Program Manager Jed Kaul—who celebrated his 15th year with us this year—at one of the log jams under construction on Luther's Creek. The resilient forest along the creek's banks will be replanted and will fill back in rapidly.

This fall we installed 20 log jams and beaver dam analogues in Luther's Creek, a tributary that enters the Upper Long Tom near Camp Lutherwood. Beavers are already using some of the beaver dam analogues that we installed! We worked with local contractor Trask Design and Construction to tip over 75 douglas-fir trees on this BLM land near Low Pass. Forty-five of the trees were used to create the log jams. The remaining 30 trees were hauled to Snag Boat Bend along the Willamette River via a self-loading log truck, where they will be installed next summer in side channels and alcoves to enhance habitat for native fish and wildlife, including spring Chinook salmon, Pacific lamprey, and northwestern pond turtles.



Left: Aquatics Program Manager Jed Kaul giving a tour at Snag Boat Bend to a class from Oregon State University.

Approaching a Million Trees Planted, 50,000 at a Time



Floodplain Restoration at Snag Boat Bend

In 2023 we continued work on a large-scale floodplain reforestation effort at Snag Boat Bend, by planting native trees and shrubs on 25 acres of low-elevation floodplain adjacent to the Willamette River. The area we planted is mostly shaded by majestic gallery cottonwood trees up to four feet in diameter, but the understory was nearly 100 percent non-native blackberry and reed canarygrass prior to our site preparations over the last three years.

After our understory plantings are established they will provide habitat for many native fish and wildlife species, including juvenile Chinook salmon, cutthroat trout, neotropical migratory songbirds, and bald eagles, which nest closeby.

We worked with Rosario and his amazing crew from R. Franco Restoration to plant 30,000 native trees and shrubs to restore floodplain forest at Snag Boat Bend and an additional 16,450 to enhance the riparian area of Bear Creek at Bennett Vineyards.

We are also continuing work on the capstone project at Snag Boat Bend, reconnecting a 1.1-mile-long historical channel of the Willamette River that was blocked in 1964 when a large revetment was built. The project is in its design and permitting phase and will be implemented in 2025.

In the photo above R. Franco Restoration workers gear up to plant at Snag Boat Bend. In the brown bags are the 30,000 bareroot trees and shrubs.



Algae blooms at Snag Boat Bend like the one below are expected to be reduced when the LTWC's multi-year project there finishes and flow is restored to the historical channel of the Willamette.

Traditional Ecological Inquiry Program



Traditional Ecological Inquiry Program Director Joe Scott, below, explains the history of the Tribes in the Willamette Valley at a program on decolonization in the spring and, left, distributes trees to attendees who planted them on a land preserve south of Eugene.

Since 2017, LTWC has provided administrative support for the Traditional Ecological Inquiry Program, which is a Tribally-led program supporting Native youth in the exploration of Traditional Ecological Science during seasonal learning cohorts.

The program continues to provide a whole-community approach where Indigenous people can meaningfully connect with the living landscape.

The Native educators, youth Interns, and Native families of the Traditional Ecological Inquiry Program help to transform human relationships to the land and water based on the wisdom earned since time immemorial by the Original Peoples who have and continue to live on and care for this land. This educational program is predicated on honoring and recognizing the unique ecological knowledge and traditions of Indigenous Peoples, and serves to preserve and uplift Indigenous cultural identities.

We are enormously grateful for the support of these grantors: Gray Family Foundation, Meyer Memorial Trust, Oregon Community Foundation, Roundhouse Foundation, Siletz Tribal Charitable Contribution Fund, and Spirit Mountain Community Fund.

The Traditional Ecological Inquiry Program relies on the support of community members—people like you! See the program's portfolio and how to support TEIP at longtom.org/teip.



Rain Gardens, Trees, and Business Lots Transformed: The Urban Waters & Wildlife Program

The Council's Urban Waters & Wildlife Program continues to expand the impact of our collaborative approach to serving the entire Eugene-Springfield metro area through the Urban Waters & Wildlife Partnership, involving an array of local agencies and organizations.

Check out what the Partnership has accomplished with funding from the Environmental Protection Agency, Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board—and you—in 2023:

- Number of Trout Friendly Landscapes projects either in design or construction : **23**
 - Project locations: **16 in Eugene, 7 in Springfield**
 - Number of trees planted in Eugene & Springfield in 2023: **30**
 - Number of businesses requesting projects or in the “pipeline”: **507**
 - Projects completely installed: **2**
 - Site surveys completed: **6**
 - Conceptual designs completed: **6**
 - Feasibility studies completed: **3**
 - Tours or site visits offered for the public or special guests: **7**
-
- Total impervious surface area treated since the program started in 2011: **4,859,966 sq. ft.**
 - Area converted to nature-scaping this past year: **242,488 sq. ft.**



Council programs all include opportunities for public tours and site visits such as these of restored urban landscapes led by Urban Waters and Wildlife Program staff and involving our partner organizations.

New Partnership Projects in the Works



Photo courtesy of Willamalane Parks and Recreation District

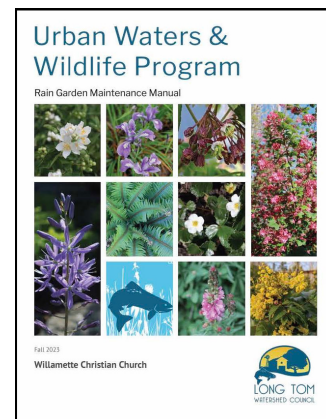
Island Park Slough

Another exciting partnership is in the works! LTWC, Middle Fork Willamette Watershed Council, Willamalane Parks and Recreation District, and the City of Springfield are exploring the opportunities to restore Island Park Slough, which is fed by the Springfield Millrace and several public and private stormwater pipes from the heart of downtown. The project

will entail LTWC leading the way on incorporating Trout Friendly Landscaping on business lots and public gathering spaces that are adjacent to, or pipe directly to the slough. Willamalane and MFWWC will focus on restoration opportunities on the slough. The City of Springfield will be exploring ways to mitigate public stormwater impacts.

New Rain Garden Maintenance Manual

Long in the works, the Trout Friendly Landscapes Rain Garden Maintenance Manual has been completed, and shared out to Urban Waters and Wildlife Partnership member organizations—and to Portland’s Bureau of Environmental Services. The maintenance manual was developed to address a universal problem of improper maintenance that is currently in practice region-wide. The manual provides images of Dos and Don'ts that several partners have asked to include in their own manuals, and some have printed them for use as posters in their staff lounges for easy reminders. LTWC and BES staff are collaborating on developing a Willamette Valley-wide program to train contractors on proper Green Stormwater Infrastructure maintenance. Stay tuned! Customized versions of the maintenance manual such as one on the right here have been developed and shared with property owners in Eugene and Springfield.



What Partnership Looks Like

The Council’s Urban Waters & Wildlife Program has been in existence since 2011 with a focus on reducing or eliminating pollution and runoff, improving water quality, and protecting habitat while promoting citizen engagement and knowledge. The Urban Waters & Wildlife *Partnership* is a more recently developed collaborative that has supported the expansion of the program throughout the Upper Willamette Watershed’s urban and rural communities. It is supported by a broad coalition of 13 governmental and quasi-governmental entities, utilities, watershed councils, and others active in their support of the UWWP, assisting in decision making, fundraising, education, monitoring, and other programmatic aspects of the work.

Left: an UWWP meeting at Doris Ranch in September

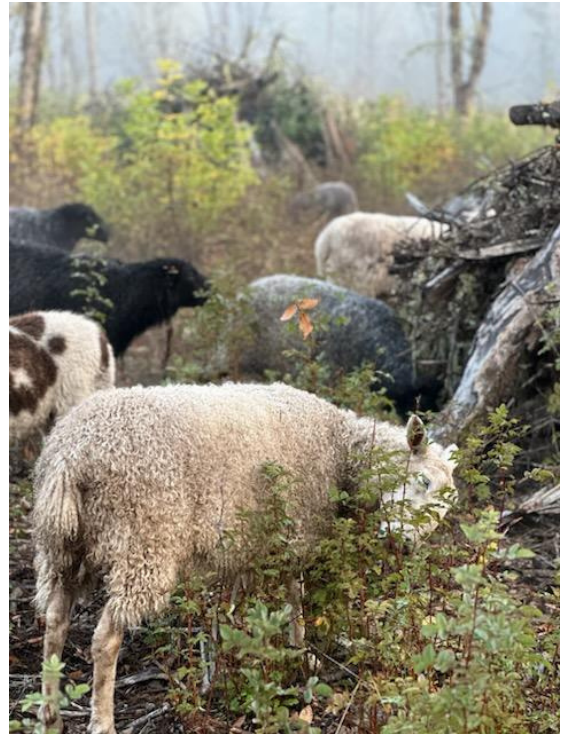
A Big Year for the Uplands Habitat Program

The Council's Uplands Habitat program staff wrapped up the final stages of a couple large restoration projects, (Greenhill, Coyote Spencer Wetlands), and initiated a 190-acre wetland and upland prairie restoration project on Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife's Northeast Coyote unit. The ODFW project includes construction of vernal pools and seeding diverse mixes of native grasses and wildflowers.

We rolled out our targeted grazing trials exploring the use of goats and sheep for vegetation management on oak and prairie landscapes on three restoration sites. We learned that the animals like to eat blackberries, reed canary grass, rose, and even some poison oak, and that seasonal timing is very important.

We partnered with Oregon Agricultural Trust, Coast Fork Willamette Watershed Council, Confederated Tribes of Grande Ronde, and the Willamette Valley Fire Collaboration (Ecostudies Institute) on a successful \$9 million cost-share allocation from the Natural Resource Conservation Service, which will fund six conservation easements on agricultural land supporting oak habitat, and the return of ecocultural burning, cultural access, and the revitalization of declining oak and prairie habitat ecosystems on upwards of 1,200 acres over five years.

We hired a Restoration Projects Manager, Sara Worl (see p. 1), and a new Restoration Projects Coordinator, Alejandro Meija (see p. 9), to support the program and its growing involvement with ecological and cultural burning.



Left: This year the Council and four families hosted two tours of a large oak habitat restoration project on the families' adjacent properties in the Greenhill community. These neighbors are cooperatively working to restore a total of over 300 acres of oak habitat in Southwest Eugene. The site is in the area where the hills begin rising from the valley floor at the southern end of the Willamette Valley. This project represents a history of relationship-building, grant writing, and the vision of landowner neighbors to restore a large oak uplands area. The families have worked for several years to cooperatively restore this large tract of acreage. Because much of the remaining oak woodlands are in private ownership and maintenance of these habitats requires active management, cooperative incentive-based approaches like this project, are crucial to conservation.





Above: The Council's Stormwater Drafter Greg Oldson taking a stream temperature reading as part of bacteria monitoring

Controlling Invasive Weeds

Thanks to our partners at the Junction City Water Control District, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and the City of Eugene, our Uruguayan Water Primrose control efforts continued strongly through 2023. Hard-earned progress over most of a decade has left only sparse populations in the watershed, and we hope to be able to carry this success far into the future. A huge thank you to Habitat Contracting and all the volunteers who pitched in this year.

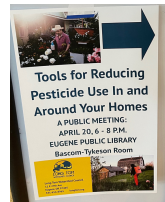


Above: A bumblebee visits some camas at one of the Council's pesticide sampling locations near the Beltline.



Three New Staff Positions! Restoration Projects Coordinator Alejandro Mejia (left) and Restoration Projects Manager Sara Worl (p. 1) both began at the Council this fall. In early 2024 the Council expects to hire an UWWP Partnership Coordinator.

Also, Haley Case-Scott started as the new Tribal Liaison shared across the Upper Willamette Stewardship Network. Haley works to advance the priorities of Tribes in the Upper Willamette Basin through identifying opportunities for relationship building and collaboration with Network organizations and other partners.



Community Learning Events: This year we celebrated our 26th anniversary (below) and delivered presentations on topics including overviews of the watershed (such as during the Oregon Country Fair, above lower left), reducing pesticide use at home, Integrated Pest Management for both English & Spanish-speaking landscapers, and efforts to reduce stormwater pollution in Eugene and Springfield (above right). About 500 people attended Council tours and speaking events involving Council staff.



Our Deepest Thanks to Our Donors and Partners!

Gifts Up to \$500

Rick Ahrens
Mary Allardt
Bill Allison
Amazon Smile
Rolf Anderson
Anonymous (5)
Anonymous (TEIP Program)
Anonymous (Earth Care Interfaith Fund)
Applegate Regional Theater (Benefit Concert)
Atkinson Memorial Farm Conservancy
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Al Hrynyshyn in honor of Donna Hrynyshyn
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Betsy and Andy Janeczek
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Tom Lively and Megas MacDonald
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Brenda Lowrey in honor of Meredith and Daniel
Lori Maddox (TEIP Program)
Pepper and Lee March in honor of Stephanie March
James and Laura Marshall
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Phyllis Weare (Earth Care Interfaith Fund)
Rudy and Susan Weidenbeck
Tanja Woitzczyk (TEIP Program)
Joan Wozniak and Jim Remington
Peg Wyse in honor of Leah Davis
Richard and Ty Zeller

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Gifts up to \$1,000

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Gifts up to \$2,500

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Gifts up to \$5,000

Apis Hyve LLC (Business League)
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Project Match Funding

Don and Janet Blair
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Funding Partners

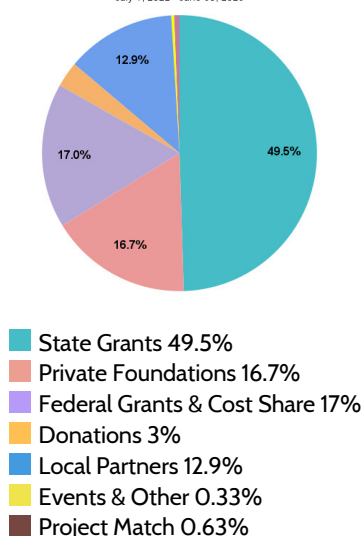
Benton SWCD
 Bonneville Power Administration
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 Ducks Unlimited & Pacific Birds
 Environmental Protection Agency

Eugene Water & Electric Board
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 Oregon State Weed Board
 Ore. Watershed Enhancement Board
 Resources Legacy Fund
 Roundhouse Foundation
 Sierra Pacific
 Springfield Utility Board
 Upper Willamette SWCD
 USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
 US Forest Service

Financial Information

Funding Sources

July 1, 2022 - June 30, 2023

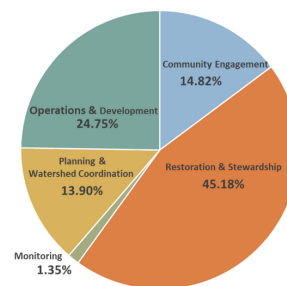


Dollars Invested in the Watershed

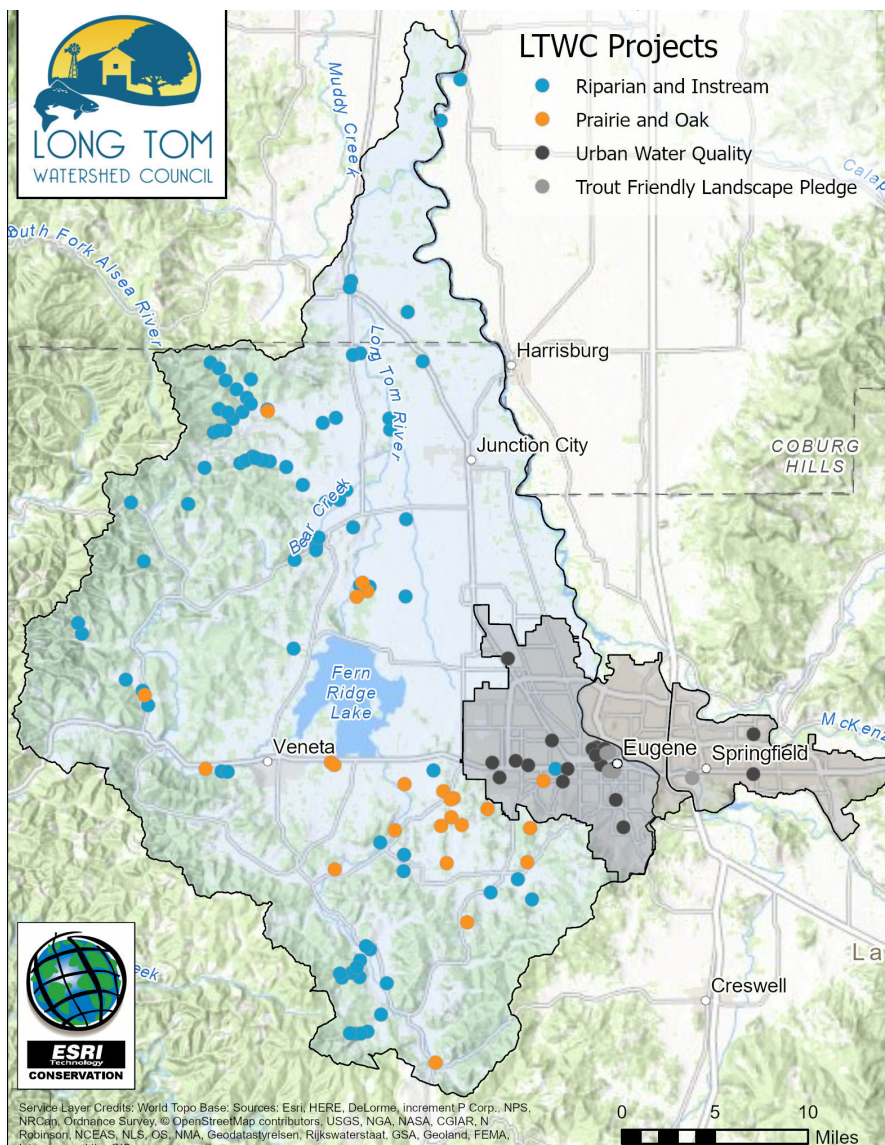
\$2,416,744

July 1, 2022 - June 30, 2023

- Community Engagement 14.82%
- Restoration & Stewardship 45.18%
- Monitoring 1.35%
- Planning & Watershed Coordination 13.90%
- Operations & Development 24.75%



WATERSHED MAP & PROJECTS 2023



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MISSION STATEMENT

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.

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.

longtom.org