



# Curry Currents

Winter 2010/11

Lower Rogue Watershed Council, South Coast Watershed Councils  
and Curry County Soil and Water Conservation District

## AgriMet: Funded for another year of service to local agriculture!

**AgriMet** is the satellite-based network of automated agricultural weather stations operated and maintained by the Bureau of Reclamation throughout the Northwest. For Internet access to local AgriMet information see

<http://www.usbr.gov/pn/agrimet/agrimetmap/banoda.html>.

### More than a weather station

The Bandon AgriMet station (BANO) provides area-specific and crop-specific data that helps our local cranberry farmers, blueberry producers, and pasture irrigators use water and energy efficiently. Data is collected at the station every 15 minutes, and uploaded to the network every 4 hours for nearly real-time access. The information is translated into crop-specific water use (ET) on the website.

**BANO AgriMet station** provides data on specific crop water usage, solar radiation, relative humidity, wind speed and direction, precipitation, air temperature, soil temperature, and dew point.

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Efficient irrigation depends on good crop demand data.

—photo courtesy NRCS

# BANO: Local AgriMet data for efficient irrigation, pest management, frost control, more

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## How much to water, and when?

Growers use AgriMet data to determine how much water is drawn from the soil (referred to as Evapotranspiration, or ET) in given conditions. ET varies with weather, soil temperature and moisture, and crop characteristics. Scheduling irrigation according to actual crop demand reduces wasted water, energy, and money.



## Who is using Bandon's AgriMet data?

More than 100 Coos/Curry cranberry and blueberry growers use AgriMet to estimate crop water needs in our specific climatic conditions. Data is also useful for pasture irrigation planning and lawn care. Other uses of AgriMet data include integrated pest management, fertility management, frost protection, and other crop management activities. Agricultural researchers also use AgriMet data in crop science and crop water use modeling.

## How is Bandon's AgriMet station funded?

Primary sponsorship of the AgriMet network is provided through the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation and the Bonneville Power Administration. Other cooperators include the Natural Resources Conservation Service and other agencies of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the National Weather Service, and other State and local agricultural organizations and water resource agencies. Ongoing operation and maintenance of the BANO AgriMet station is sponsored through a memorandum of agreement (MOA) with Curry SWCD requiring \$1,600 in annual contributions from users and supporters of our local agricultural community. If the required amount had not been raised this year, re-launching the BANO station would require a new MOA at a new, higher annual rate.

**Thanks to these 2009-2010 contributors**  
***the Bandon AgriMet station was funded for another year of service to our local agricultural community!***

US Bureau of Reclamation

Bonneville Power Administration

US Department of Agriculture

US National Weather Service

Curry County Soil and Water Conservation Service

Oregon Cranberry Growers Association

Ocean Spray—Bandon Local Advisory Board

Coos Curry Electric Coop



***... and special thanks to private landowners who also contributed. As of publication, permission to use these names has not arrived but their contribution is very much appreciated!***

# Beavers and damage control: can we keep the beavers, lose the headaches?

Our relationship with the American beaver (*Castor canadensis*) can be complicated. The beaver is a keystone species, essential to natural habitat for fish as well as other wetland and riparian values, such as flood control and ground water recharge. However, beavers can also be an expensive problem for landowners.

At the **February 2011 “State of the Beaver” conference** in Canyonville, controlling beaver damage was a hot topic. Experts from as far away as Norway shared ground-proven insights and peer-reviewed research.

## Alternatives for life with beavers:

**Trapping them out?** A major deterrent to new beaver colonists is the presence of an established beaver pair. If we keep a home colony in place while preventing damage, human land use and beaver ecological benefits can coexist on many sites.

When it comes to property protection, an established beaver that has learned the water “can’t” be raised over a set depth, and who will drive off young eager beavers, may be an asset worth keeping around.

Experienced beaver trappers and beaver relocation experts shared this insight: trapping “most” of a beaver family group prompts earlier reproduction in remaining females with larger litters of kits. Where beaver colonies must be removed, therefore, the whole family should be captured.

**Dam removal:** Since beavers move into appropriate habitat quickly, dam removal is typically at least an annual chore.

**Road and crossing design:** Annual maintenance can be reduced by considering beaver activity in road and crossing designs. Oversized culverts, arched culverts, and bridge crossings are all less likely to be dammed and clogged by beavers than any culvert that constricts stream flow. Beavers tend to dam on narrow “pinch points” on a stream, so artificial structures for dam anchoring may help lure a beaver to build elsewhere.

## Flood control on a beaver stream

**Culverts:** Beavers clog culverts in an attempt to stop the “leak,” prompted by the sound and feeling of water flowing through a constriction. Innovations in culvert protector designs vary, but the best-documented options feature a triangular or trapezoidal barrier that keeps beaver debris at a distance from each opening, rather than a screen tight against the culvert intake. More information on fish passage and culvert protectors is coming soon.

**Beaver ponding and flooding:** Beavers dam streams to provide foraging cover and to conceal lodge or den openings. The wider and deeper they need this cover, the higher they build to raise water levels. Water level control designs feature a pipe inserted through a notch in an existing dam, with one end set to drain any water exceeding a desired height. The beaver keeps his dam, but is not able to raise the level of his pond enough to encroach on roads and pastures no matter how high he builds. A mesh enclosure (or, in older designs, a long perforated intake pipe) prevents beavers from clogging the intake, and other tricks are used to damp the trickling sound of water.

## ... beavers and damage control, continued

Both culvert protectors and water level controls need to be adapted to each site, and monitored frequently to be sure that drainage is adequate. We're working with ODFW and other groups to find which designs might work here on the Oregon coast without creating fish passage barriers.

### Planting to beat the beaver:

Beavers cut trees to create dams, and they harvest trees and chew saplings to eat the tender cambium layer of bark. They also chew by instinct to help keep their large rodent teeth from overgrowing. Along a stream inhabited by beavers, humans sometimes find that attempts to create good wildlife habitat are actually thwarted by one of the most important species we want to accommodate—beavers.

**Planting densely:** One feature of a multi-pronged approach is to plant a lot. High density planting isn't cheap, but it is usually more cost-effective than replacing trees over and over again, even if later thinning is needed where trees become crowded.

**Planting selectively:** While detailed beaver foraging studies are not available for our immediate area, willow, maple, pines, some birches, cottonwoods, western redcedar, and alder are all native species that are frequent beaver prey. Tender young growth on various shrub species, rush, cattail roots, grasses, and sedges are also likely beaver foods.

Common knowledge says beavers don't chew Sitka spruce. Some beavers haven't heard that and try it anyway, but generally it's a good idea to include spruce on appropriate sites in Coos and Curry counties. Other native species unlikely to suffer ex-

cessive beaver browsing (though they will be snipped to provide dam materials) include the following:

- **Cascara/Chitum**
- **Salmonberry**
- **Elderberry**
- **Paper birch**
- **Red osier/Creek dogwood**
- **Ninebark**
- **Indian plum/Osoberry**
- **Port Orford cedar**

Some planting projects cluster spruce and other chew-resistant plants around more susceptible specimens, with mixed results. If you plan this kind of clustered camouflage, budget time to return and release the protected plant from the competing species. Results are mixed and depend on how desperate beaver are to reach the desired seedlings.

### Plant protection:

Where beaver pressure is heavy, tree protection is crucial to establishing a new riparian planting. Solid 3 foot tall sheets of metal or plastic installed around each tree, sturdy metal fencing around each tree (leaving room to grow), fencing clusters of trees, and applying textured paint (30 mil masonry sand mixed into paint) have all been used with some success at discouraging beaver chewing. Chemical repellents have not generally worked well for beaver and are not always appropriate for stream-side sites.

*If you have a problem site in Coos or Curry County and would like to be considered in future damage control efforts, email the author at [barbara.grant@or.nacdn.net](mailto:barbara.grant@or.nacdn.net)*



# Keeping it local: Know Your Foodshed!

By Harry Hoogesteger, South Coast Watershed Council

Students in Curry County are being introduced to an exciting new program in the schools: **"Know your Foodshed."** Led by watershed educator Cathy Boden, students in Port Orford, Gold Beach, and Brookings will all be learning several things about the local and national food industry. For example: Where does the food we eat come from? Where does the food we grow in Curry County go? What challenges do farmers and ranchers here face? And finally, students will have a chance to tackle those challenges themselves by growing food at a school garden in each community. Already, students in Port Orford are beginning to contribute greens to school lunches.

With the average American dinner traveling 1500 miles from farm to plate, the entire food distribution system in this county is undergoing quiet (and sometimes not-so-quiet) scrutiny. Recent food scares and recalls in vegetables, beef, and other products have made consumers hyper-aware of who is growing their food, and are asking themselves: "How safe is it?"



Prodded by books like Michael Pollan's *The Omnivore's Dilemma*, more people are looking for local options to buy sustainably-produced food grown by people they know and trust. In response to that need, another sprout of the Foodsheds program is new web-site sponsored by the watershed council and SWCD. **Curryfoods.org** debuted last year, with funding provided by the Curry Economic Development Dept. This website seeks to connect growers of high quality foods with consumers who want to eat locally. Say someone wants free-range chickens. They can go to **curryfoods.org**, and find out who in the county has

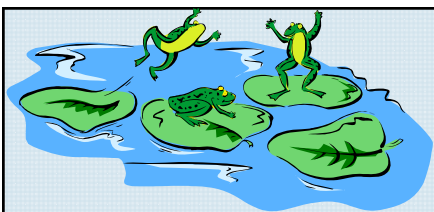
free-range chickens. They can then contact the farmer directly. It is a low-key, but effective way to market local foods. Other products listed on the web-site include beef, cranberries, honey, eggs, vegetables, and lamb.

The Foodsheds Program is funded by the Meyer Memorial Trust, the Gordon Elwood Foundation, and the Oregon Community Foundation. The program is expected to continue in 2012, as well.



Email the author: [harry@currywatersheds.org](mailto:harry@currywatersheds.org)





# News from our Education Team

## Driftwood Students Visit Local Farms

By Cathy Boden



Heading out in the bog at Winsmuir Farm

*Few know more about our local agriculture than Mrs. Weinblatt's 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> grade class at Driftwood School.*

Did you know that Port Orford Ray's sells local organic cranberries from Mary Margaret & David Smith's **Winsmuir Farms**, an organic, local, small, one acre bog? Or that these berries are dry harvested to ensure the best quality fresh berry? Maybe you'd be interested in knowing that Oregon's cranberries are redder and have more flavor than those grown on the East Coast.

These growers also earned certifications awarded for their use of agricultural practices with an eye on watershed health.

These students found that this year's cranberry harvest was down about half from normal and learned that a wet spring made hard work for bees pollinating the blossoms. A cold early summer also



Bussmanns' cranberry processing plant

affected the berries. The kids learned that a diversity of crops help growers with other incomes during difficult berry seasons.



Learning how to run the dry harvest Furford machine

Winsmuir Farms was just one cranberry bog the students visited. They also saw the larger operations of Scott McKenzie's **Clearwater Cranberries** and the **Bussmann brothers** (Jim, George & Pete) packaging plant. The students will tell you that even these larger local businesses are still family owned and run.



Clearwater Cranberries' wet harvest

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# Driftwood students discover: ...growing food is not easy work!

## Speaking of diversity...

It was nearly 100 degrees when the kids visited **Valley Flora Farm** on the banks of Floras Creek, where the Bradbury family grows over 100 different kinds of crops. Zoe Bradbury graciously showed the kids much of what goes into running the farm. The kids enjoyed picking strawberries right from the field!



Zoe Bradbury shows how corn grows on her farm



Zoe Bradbury & Mrs. Weinblatt with students picking strawberries at Valley Flora Farm



Deb Lohry shows 2 & 3 graders different kinds of Alliums.

Next a visit to another family-owned farm, **Jensen's Blueberries**, where the kids picked and ate till their tongues were blue. Nancy Jensen explained that the same wet spring effected blueberry blossoms, and an invasion of non-native doves reduced blueberry yields. The kids realize that growing food is not easy work!



Michele is excited about the blueberries!



Students draw a leek in garden journals before planting

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# The Foodshed program, cont.

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Grades 3-5 are learning to grow food in their own school gardens. Starting with 4 raised beds and a portable cold frame build by Pacific High School students, the kids have expanded their gardens to include individual pots for each student. Determined to grow veggies through winter, growing tables are being used in the classroom.



New cold frames built by Port Orford Rotary

*Come by the school and check out our garden beds! Lettuce, leeks, and soon we plant our prize-winning garlic!*

*While at the School — think about donating to our garden fund. If we get enough support we'd like to buy a garden cart. Buckets of soil sure are heavy!*



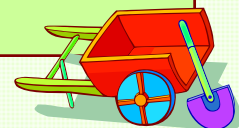
Every student 1st - 6th planted their own garlic



Everyone at work in the school garden beds



Cold frame with lettuce starts



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Driftwood students learn how growing food affects their watershed

*My 4th and 5th grade students visited three very different cranberry operations recently, to learn about the diversity of farming operations in our community.*

*The Agricultural Science the kids gained from this outdoor experience is priceless.*

—Mrs. G Weinblatt

## Foodsheds according to Mrs. Weinblatt's class ...

Foodshed class teaches about food and about our community. It also teaches us about diversity, and how our world is an important environment.

— Ashley

We are learning about food, soil, compost and more!

— Alex

The Foodshed class is very fun because we get to learn about food so we can know more about the food we eat.

—Jesse

I learned a lot of things about cranberries, farming, blueberries and a lot more things

—Joshua

What I like about Watershed & Foodshed classes is because Cathy Boden talks about planting crops and where we can't grow crops. We go to organic farms with cranberries, blueberries and vegetables. We all learned about organic products too.

—Sarinna

When really bad pests come to your crops it might convince you to use pesticides. But when it rains the results add up to water pollution.

—Gabriella

I like Foodshed a lot because I learned a lot that I didn't know. I especially want to thank my teachers, Mrs. Weinblatt and Cathy Boden. They help me understand things better.

—Caitlin

Continued next page

# The Foodshed program, cont.

## The Foodshed program

is brought to Driftwood through *South Coast Watersheds* and *Curry Soil & Water Conservation District*. Three grants were awarded, Oregon Community Foundation through the Gray Family Fund, Gordon Elwood Foundation, and the Meyer Memorial Trust. Cathy Boden, Watershed Specialist works closely with Mrs. Weinblatt, who incorporates Foodshed education into most classroom activities. John Shipp & Deb Lohry, experienced gardeners, add to the garden and food activities.

## What's next?

*Learning ways to irrigate with our precious watershed in mind, and a trip to Rick Hazard's Cedar Grove Farms to learn about soil and chickens! Braackkkk!*

### The Foodshed program

Brought to Driftwood School by

- South Coast Watersheds
- Curry Soil & Water Conservation District
- The Oregon Community Foundation through The Gray Family Fund
- Gordon Elwood Foundation
- The Meyer Memorial Trust

## Poetry from Driftwood

*In* my garden I will grow  
A Halloween pumpkin as  
you know  
Can you see through my window?  
Can you feel the mighty wind blow?  
As you know I have a garden,  
And I hope you have a bargain.  
Because I am willing to sell or trade  
Anything but my best spade  
Would you like anything from my  
garden?  
**Alex – 5<sup>th</sup> Grade**

*In* my gardens I will grow  
Beautiful vegetables that I  
can sow  
Carrots, green beans, strawberries  
too  
Most vegetables make good stew  
I like to grow carrots, yellow, orange  
& red  
Dig deep in my garden bed  
**Deserae – 4<sup>th</sup> Grade**

### Using our Senses

Peas look like green boats  
And inside they look like jewels  
Peas taste like sweet candy or ice  
cream  
Peas feel like smooth silk  
Peas smell like candy  
**Atticus—3<sup>rd</sup> Grade**

*C*arrots are good for you  
Carrots can be red and purple  
Orange and yellow.  
Carrots are crunchy  
When I bite them, they taste just like  
a carrot  
**Kristin—3<sup>rd</sup> Grade**

### A Halloween Greens Feast

Tomato, lettuce, pumpkin and beans,  
I feel so good when I eat my greens.  
But tonight I found a different recipe  
Of werewolf hair and fiery tree.  
A witch's nose  
A rubber hose  
Throw it all into a boiling pot  
Which is quite steaming hot.  
But should I throw in my greens?  
**Gabby – 4<sup>th</sup> Grade**

*One* morning I went to  
school  
Came back, picked up my garden  
tool  
Down to the garden I go  
Looking for a harvest to sow  
Picked pumpkins to roast the seeds  
Once in my stomach they'll fill my  
needs  
Beans, cabbage, carrots and peas  
Let's pick them all before a big freeze  
**John**

### The Magic Purple Beans

Down to the garden I go  
Tilling, digging, and seed to  
sow  
Sunshine, compost, water, and  
time  
Purple beans sprout up just  
fine  
Vines are climbing, pods are  
ripe  
Harvest time is in my sight  
Heat the water, snap the beans  
Drop them in the boiling steam  
Just like magic: purple to  
green  
**Mrs. W**

### My Reason for Weeds

In my backyard there is a garden  
If you see weeds, please beg their  
pardon  
I use no chemicals to kill them  
dead  
But pull them out by hand instead  
Some time is spent pulling the  
weeds  
But I also need to plant some  
seeds  
Till the soil, thin, and fertilize  
So the plants can grow to be full  
size  
Lots to do till harvest season  
If there's a weed, well that's my  
reason  
**Ms. B**



# Farm Bill programs update 2011

## Environmental Quality Incentives Program: Funding pools are set!

Thanks to hard work by our local NRCS office and many hours contributed by land-owners and agency staff, the Coos and Curry area funding priorities for the Natural Resources Conservation Service's **Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)** have been set for 2011 and future years.

Identified through the Local Work Group process and honed by state and regional inputs, funding pools have been established for projects intended to address the following resource concerns .

1. **Surface Water Quality:** This pool provides financial assistance to eligible applicants to reduce point and non-point source pollution, improve plant cover and soil quality and increase the quality of water in impaired stream segments.

2. **Irrigation Water Conservation:** This pool provides financial assistance to eligible applicants with valid irrigation water rights in order to increase the overall efficiency of sprinkler applied irrigation water, save energy, reduce utility costs and increase stream flows.

3. **Forest Land Health and Water Quality:** This funding pool provides assistance to eligible owners of nonindustrial private forest land to improve the productivity and diversity of forest vegetation, protect and enhance the basic resources of air, soil and water, and enhance the aesthetic and wildlife habitat values.

### Application process and deadlines:

Applications are accepted year-round at the Coquille USDA Service Center and ranked annually. Qualifying project participants will be notified and receive Conservation Plans of Operation and specifications by about March 2011.

Sometimes additional funds become available, allowing lower-ranking projects to be funded as the year progresses.

For EQIP and other NRCS program information, call District Conservationist Tom Purvis.

*For Farm Bill program help in  
Coos and Curry Counties:*

**USDA Service Center**  
382 North Central Blvd  
Coquille, OR 97423  
541-396-2841

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# “Weeds and Trees” gets a new manager: *Welcome Lisa Ward!*

Our new ***Vegetation Management Program Coordinator*** is **Lisa Ward**, who moved to Curry County last summer. Lisa has a Ph.D in water quality, several years of field study, and grant-writing experience. She has received a Fulbright Scholarship and an Environmental Health Sciences Outstanding Student Award during her studies.

Lisa was a Peace Corps volunteer in the Solomon Islands, and has done graduate work in water quality in Haiti and Uganda. Her doctorate is from Tulane

University School of Public Health. She has studied water quality in estuaries, and has extensive experience in protecting public water supplies.

Lisa will be supervising the vegetation management program for the SWCD, which includes noxious weed removal and planting riparian areas. The SWCD has planted over 100,000 trees during the past 15 years. Her first SWCD grant was written to EcoTrust, and she is aiming for several additional grants over this spring and summer. *Welcome, Lisa !*

## *Curry Currents ...*

*brings news to our community from a group of organizations working together to protect and enhance the natural resources of Curry County and its major watersheds.*

*We work with agencies, private landowners, agricultural operations, and non-profits to put conservation practices on the ground and to provide public education about natural resource conservation and protection.*

*The common focus of our projects is stewardship of natural resources: soil, water, air, plants, animals, and human life.*

*We also share a central office, located in Gold Beach at 94181 4th Street.*

Our partners include

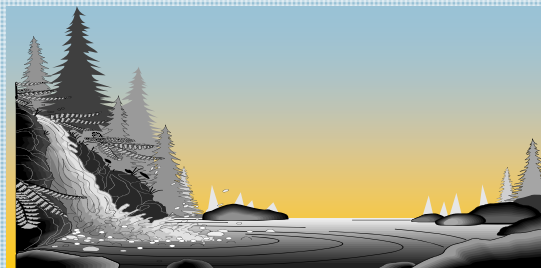
Curry County Soil and Water Conservation District,

Lower Rogue Watershed Council,

South Coast Watershed Councils.

For more information about our projects and programs, please call 541-247-2755.

Coming soon: new content for our ever-evolving website: [www.currywatersheds.org](http://www.currywatersheds.org)





# Curry Currents

Winter 2010-11

PO Box 666  
94181 4th Street  
Gold Beach, OR 97444  
541-247-2755

## Program Managers and Staff

|                   |  |
|-------------------|--|
| Maggie McHugh     | Coordinator,<br>Lower Rogue Watershed Council  |
| Harry Hoogesteger | Coordinator,<br>South Coast Watershed Council  |
| Cindy Myers       | Water Quality, Data Management, GIS  |
| Matt Swanson      | Project Effectiveness Monitoring,<br>Sediment Abatement, Watershed<br>Restoration Technical Assistance |
| Statia Ryder      | Watershed Education<br>Program Manager   |
| Cathy Boden,      | Watershed Education<br>Specialist  |
| Lisa Ward         | Vegetation Management<br>Program Coordinator   |
| Dustin Williams   | Vegetation Management<br>Program Foreman   |
| Beth Pietrzak     | Conservation/Farm Planning   |
| Liesl Coleman     | Office Manager   |
| Barbara Grant     | CREP Riparian<br>Specialist  |

## Watershed Councils

|  |                        |
|--|------------------------|
| South Coast Coordinating<br>Watershed Council  | George Fleming, Chair  |
| Lower Rogue<br>Watershed Council               | Peter Aspinwall, Chair |
| Chetco Watershed Council                       | Carl Page, Chair       |
| Port Orford<br>Watershed Council               | Steve Taylor, Chair    |
| Elk/Sixes Watershed Council                    | Joe Marsh, Chair       |
| Floras Creek<br>Watershed Council              | Steve Kalina, Chair    |
| Hunter Creek/Pistol River<br>Watershed Council | -                      |
| Winchuck Watershed Council                     | -                      |
| Euchre Creek<br>Watershed Council              | -                      |

## Curry Soil & Water Conservation

### District Board

|            |                |
|------------|----------------|
| Chair      | Michael Knapp  |
| Vice Chair | Steve Kalina   |
| Treasurer  | Scott McKenzie |
| Director   | Neil Walker    |
| Director   | Keith Smith    |

**To receive our newsletter  
please contact us and provide  
your name and email address.**

**Curry SWCD**

**PO Box 666**

**Gold Beach, OR 97444**

**Email and phone contact:**

**Liesl.coleman@oacd.org**

**541-247-2755**



Statia Ryder, Liesl Coleman, Cindy Myers, and Cathy Boden enjoy a moment on the river.