

SUMMER/FALL  
2020

# CURRY *Currents*



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YEP Students 'In the Field'



Check out the Strategic Plan for  
Youth Education 2020-2024 here:  
[http://www.currywatersheds.org/  
education\\_outreach.aspx](http://www.currywatersheds.org/education_outreach.aspx)

# Youth Education

## YEP... WE ARE GOING OUTSIDE!

Curry Watersheds Partnership's (CWP) Youth Education Program (YEP) meets 3rd-8th grade students and teachers in their classrooms to prepare for outdoor inquiry. Outside, students discover natural processes and make meaningful connections to their community. Students visit gardens, forests, streams, farms, and fishing ports to learn how natural and human systems interact. Enthusiasm for hands-on education guides youth to make observations, ask questions and engage in science. Students examine scientific processes, career paths, and begin to construct an understanding of how humans impact their world. This may inspire behavior change and ignite their curiosity to learn more...



It is through knowledge, skills and greater awareness that we believe students will become better stewards of Curry County's watersheds and natural resources; whether as the next generation of family ranchers, loggers, and commercial fishermen, future guides who lead visitors along the Wild Rivers Coast, entrepreneurs who invigorate the local economies, or leaders of our local governments and organizations. Through hands-on watershed science and agriculture education, we are making the rest of the CWP's programs (habitat restoration, monitoring, etc.) more resilient and effective.

## YEP BACKGROUND

Since 2004, teachers in every Curry County school district have enthusiastically engaged with their students in CWP staff-led classroom and field science activities, utilizing outdoor learning spaces such as school gardens, farms, forests, and streams. Program activities are consistent with state requirements, such as Oregon's Next Generation Science Standards.



Stream Study

## STRATEGIC PLAN FOR YOUTH EDUCATION 2020-2024

During the 2019-20 school year, YEP staff Statia Ryder and Cathy Boden worked with a consultant to take a step back and identify the program's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. This process involved interviews with Curry County teachers, administrators, program partners, and CWP staff, eliciting invaluable feedback that was the basis of a new Strategic Plan.

To read the full Strategic Plan, please visit:

[http://www.currywatersheds.org/education\\_\\_outreach.aspx](http://www.currywatersheds.org/education__outreach.aspx)



The Strategic Plan for Youth Education serves in part to ensure that our educational services remain consistent with CWP's over arching mission. The Plan sets guideposts in the form of a mission, vision, and goals for educational services, along with a written statement of the fundamental values that have guided and will continue to guide implementation. It includes a process forward that includes partner collaboration to strengthen the YEP education goals.

"In every walk with nature,  
one receives far more  
than he seeks."

*John Muir*



Swamped Boots





Soil Science Ag Ed



Ag Ed Potato Planting



Farm Field Trip

# Strategic Plan for Youth Education

## YEP MISSION:

To provide hands-on youth education in outdoor settings, promoting curiosity, critical thinking, and community connections.

## YEP VISION:

Those we serve are equipped to recognize and participate effectively in decisions that impact dynamic relationships connecting ecosystem, community, and individual health.

## YEP GOALS:

Goal 1: Support schools' achievement of state and national educational goals relevant to Curry Watersheds Partnership mission.

Goal 2: Structure education program to enhance cumulative learning and encourage broad skill development.

Goal 3: Establish foundation for program sustainability and growth.

## YEP VALUES:

- ◆ Assure educational value through collaboration with local educators.
- ◆ Maximize impact through alignment with state educational standards.
- ◆ Assure equitable learning opportunities in all approaches to program delivery.
- ◆ Promote critical thinking and individual initiative by encouraging problem analysis, and development and evaluation of proposed solutions.
- ◆ Regularly measure effectiveness through objective means, and adjust accordingly.
- ◆ Acknowledge and honor traditional cultural values with respect to the natural world, and traditional applications of natural science principles.



# Youth Education

## CONTINUED...

### HOW WE PLAN TO IMPROVE OUR STRATEGY

**Integration~** Foster an integrated approach within school districts to align with Next Generation Science Standards that meets teacher and student needs, and that includes working collaboratively with teachers to develop a widely understood sequence of science education.

**Conservation Practices~** Highlight more conservation practices and partnerships while teaching field science in a variety of settings on agricultural and forestry lands.

**Partnerships~** Build partnerships with agricultural and forestry landowners to better understand and teach the science and engineering behind how they manage their lands for production and for conservation.

**Increase viability with diverse funding~** Collaborate on grants with community partners, perform community outreach and fundraising, continue to serve as an Outdoor School provider using Coos/Curry county sites, and develop shared value statements with potential local donors.

### 2020-2021 UNCHARTED TERRITORY

As we talk now with our school partners, there is a resounding sense that what the next school year will look like is very unknown. With that comes caution and uncertainty for how to move forward into this collaborative vision outlined in the Strategic Plan for Youth Education. The YEP will keep its mission, values, and strategic vision in mind as we move forward, but with the understanding that the school community needs time to adjust to the new circumstances.

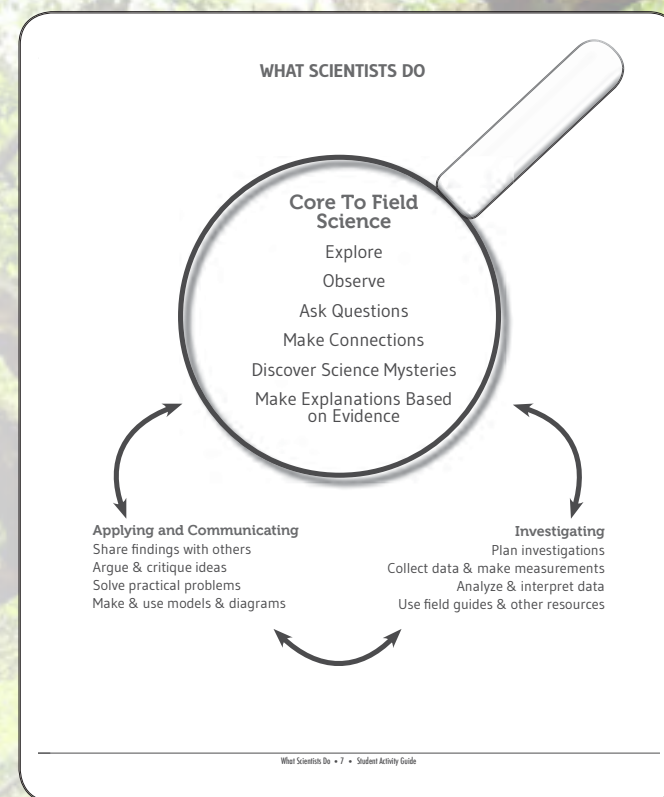
It is our hope that our school communities will find even greater value in the Schoolyard Habitat projects, such as school gardens, pollinator gardens, stream habitats, and other local project sites that students have participated with over the years. These ecologically diverse, outdoor learning spaces, can be used to support not only SCIENCE, ART, MATH, ENGINEERING, and WRITING, but may also help support the mental, physical and spiritual health of students and school staff during these challenging times.



Forestry Science Skills



Hiking with Trees and Shovels



"What Scientists Do" graphic courtesy of [www.beetlesproject.org](http://www.beetlesproject.org)



# Get Involved

## LOCAL BOARD MEETINGS



Currently being held via video tele-conference.  
Please contact us for information on how to join.



### Curry Soil and Water Conservation District

Last Tuesday of the month at 7:00 pm  
Contact Liesl Coleman for more information:  
[liesl.coleman@currywatersheds.org](mailto:liesl.coleman@currywatersheds.org)



### Lower Rogue Watershed Council

3rd Tuesday of the month at 3:30 pm  
Contact Kelly Timchak for more information:  
[kelly@currywatersheds.org](mailto:kelly@currywatersheds.org)



### South Coast Watershed Council

4th Thursday of the month at 3:00 pm  
Contact Miranda Gray for more information:  
[miranda.gray@currywatersheds.org](mailto:miranda.gray@currywatersheds.org)

## Resources FOR OUR CURRY COUNTY FARMING AND RANCHING COMMUNITY

Two separate USDA assistance programs are available to help with the COVID19 market disruptions and the ongoing severe drought in Coos and Curry Counties. Each program has slightly different rules and benefits. For more details call Farm Service Agency County Executive Director Bret Harris at (541) 396-4323, ext. 2.

1. Livestock Forage Program (LFP) provides payments to ranchers with weaned livestock on non-irrigated pasture located in drought-stricken counties, including both Coos and Curry.
2. Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP) helps farmers and ranchers affected by the recent pandemic-related market problems (crops and livestock, all counties). For CFAP details see [www.farmers.gov/cfap](http://www.farmers.gov/cfap).

*The best way to start the application process for either program is email a request to [bret.harris@usda.gov](mailto:bret.harris@usda.gov). Alternately, you can call Bret at (541) 396-4323, ext. 2 or send a fax to (877) 855-8382, Attn: Bret Harris.*

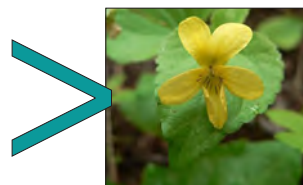
## Weed Alert!

With my children home with me we take daily walks around our new neighborhood in Gold Beach. We moved in a year ago and hadn't really explored things. Recently, as we made a loop we've made a few times before I noticed a small, low growing plant along a building. The plant had bright green foliage, orderly leaves, and a few small pink flowers. It looked familiar, similar to the noxious weed Herb Robert or 'Stinky Bob', but different. Then it dawned on me - I had recently received an email asking for updated distribution information for shiny geranium, and here it was. I took pictures and checked with colleagues and sure enough, this

was the first reported case of shiny geranium in Curry County. I went back to assess the extent and found that at least three properties in the neighborhood were infested. Once you know a weed - how hard control can be, how to spot it from a mile away, how it takes over in such a short time, how wildlife lose their food sources to a monocultural invader, how it is an inherited problem for landowners, how it has very tricky ways of spreading itself, how extreme measures are needed to eradicate it - you can't unknow it. You can help prevent the spread of shiny geranium in our county by going native!  
- Erin Minster



**STOP!** Shiny geranium (*Geranium lucidum*, shown bottom left) and Herb Robert (*Geranium robertianum*, shown top left) – Annuals or biennials up to 1.5 ft tall, typically as low-growing rosettes. Herb Robert has fine white glandular hairs covering the entire plant, deeply divided dark green-red leaves, and flowers are pink to purple. Herb Robert is easily recognized by its unique strong, unpleasant smell. Shiny geranium is hairless with yellowish-green shiny leaves that are lobed and have tiny pink-to-purple flowers. Both plants generally spread by seed.  
*Photos: top courtesy of kingcounty.gov, middle credit Erin Minster, bottom courtesy of oregon.gov*



**GO!** Native replacements – Stream violet (shown left), Beach strawberry. Each of these native alternatives serve a fuller purpose than Shining geranium and Herb Robert. They serve as ground cover, pollinator habitat, and provide berries for wildlife.



# Reports FROM THE FIELD

## RESTORATION

The coronavirus pandemic arrived in the midst of a busy spring field season, with multiple contractors mowing gorse, field technicians inventorying gullies and spraying weeds, surveyors mapping topography for future project sites, and workers wrapping up the planting season and starting in on maintenance. Initially there was a flurry of uncertainty and anxiety when the Governor issued Oregon's Stay-at-Home Order, because it was unclear whether our business or those that we rely on for materials, supplies, and services, would be considered "essential" and allowed to stay open. In anticipation for the worst, we decided to stock up on the essentials: cases of two-stroke and bar oil, flagging, chains and blades, a new saw and weed trimmer, and protective supplies... where we could find them. After a frantic weekend, the Governor issued details on the Order and it became apparent that, at least for the time being, our work could continue. So, we turned our attention to developing a system and policy that would allow us to proceed safely and efficiently, and in the end, that didn't require drastic changes because our work is done individually, or in small teams, and social distancing is easy to do in the field and virtually. All said and done, we've been incredibly fortunate through the pandemic. Our work has continued with only minor disruptions, and because most of our project funding was already secured, we've been able to remain financially solvent and honor our contracts and commitments.

Thankfully, technology has provided us with a number of ways to creatively solve some of the issues these abnormal times have presented us. Web-based video tele-conferencing apps have made it possible to still meet "face-to-face", and open-source versions of GIS software have allowed us to continue planning projects and creating maps from home. We even hosted a "virtual field trip" for multiple partners, that included photos, a fly over of sites using applications such as Google Earth, and other resources. While not a 1-to-1 replacement for visiting a site in person, this alternative allowed us to get creative in how we presented information. We were able to use maps and aerial imagery to focus on more large-scale issues and highlight efforts across the watershed that would be harder to show and explain standing in a field at an individual site. And since no one had to travel for this, a larger number of people were able to attend and provide thoughts and feedback.



In most cases, field work and site visits with landowners have been able to proceed effectively, albeit with some awkwardness resulting from the inability to practice the social norm of a handshake. We've kept up as our agricultural cooperators implement pasture renovations, irrigation efficiency projects, sudden oak death and other forest health work, and brush management to control noxious gorse and improve native pollinator habitat. Foresters and ranchers are working harder than ever, and we have helped landowners earn Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) payments from the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) in excess of \$998,000 so far in 2019-2020.

Whether it's more time spent at home or the mild winter and superb growing season, this spring has brought more interest in our gorse control program than ever before. Small outlier gorse sites have gained high priority as we strategically plan our treatment schedule. Recent reports of new gorse sightings just south of Gold Beach have quickly made it to the top of the list. It's these areas of limited distribution that we are committed to, by keeping gorse in check before it becomes a serious issue. Other areas like Elk River and heavily infested locations to the north are properly defined as containment zones. It is our goal to "hold the line" as we put out the small fires or outlier sites. This strategy has served the program very well over the years and we will continue to adhere to this method.



Above left: Pasture Grass  
Above right: Irrigation  
Bottom left: Outlier Gorse



# Reports FROM THE FIELD

## RESTORATION CONTINUED...

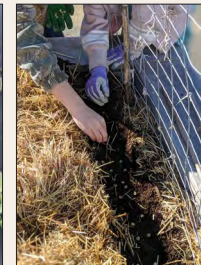
Overall, it's become apparent that watershed restoration and natural resource management is a good way to keep people working, in a way that's safe and leads to meaningful outcomes for the rural landscapes of Curry County. Some of the adaptations that are being made in order to continue working as effectively as possible may be incorporated into normal work life going forward, but we look forward to the day when the handshake comes back.

## EDUCATION & OUTREACH

When schools closed this spring, we worried what would happen with the school gardens. But persistence is a talent that gardens teach us in life. At Riley Creek School, we worked out a schedule with dedicated Master Gardeners to maintain the garden safely. At the Driftwood School, the food had been going directly to the salad bar for students to eat during lunch, but now is getting distributed to families once a week. Amidst this food distribution shift, we've ramped up the growing operation to continue throughout the summer and provide abundant veggies in the fall when we hope students return. Everyone has been most grateful for the free, garden fresh food during these challenging times. We believe this community offering will add more value to school gardens, and will inspire more of the community to give back and be involved when the time is right.



Riley Creek Garden



Driftwood School Garden  
broccoli  
harvest and  
pea planting

We also watched as events and fundraisers were being cancelled left and right this spring, and began dreaming on how we may still be able to pull off our annual Rogue River Cleanup “from a distance.” Enter Rogue River Cleanup 2020 – an event where you and your family were



Rogue River 2020

able to participate on a specific day, at a specific time, and even receive a prize for helping your watershed. We were blown away by all the support from the community after this special event was announced. Our community reached out and asked if they could clean up “hot spots” they already knew of, if they could pull invasive weeds we didn't know about, and if there were other ways they could be helping. This community came out shining, and rallied around the Rogue watershed.

We continued with our annual Snowy Plover outreach and education at the Floras Lake/New River area this spring. We hosted an outreach table display on Memorial Day weekend while social distancing, allowing for plenty of room for people to pass on the trail but still stop and ask questions. There are already active nests on the beach, which is why we educate visitors about



Plover on beach

snowy plover habitat and ask people to walk in the wet sand only. This small threatened shore bird builds its nest, also called a scrape, in dry open sandy areas and may abandon its nest if disturbed.



## EDUCATION AND OUTREACH CONTINUED...

And lastly, in May, we celebrated Riley School Garden Coordinator Ali Mramor's new daughter Indigo! But with this news we learned that Ali and her new family would need to leave the area for a new job. Ali was a wonderful Garden Coordinator and we will miss her greatly! In order to fill her big shoes, Master Gardeners, Curry Watersheds Partnership's YEP, and the administration at Central Curry School District are all working to secure funding to provide a position for our next School Garden Coordinator. Please contact us if you, or someone you know, might be interested in coordinating volunteers, teachers, students, and plants in an outside learning environment.



### FARM TO SCHOOL GRANT AWARDED FOR 2020-21

The YEP is pleased to announce that they have been awarded an Oregon Department of Education "Farm to School" grant for the 2020-21 school year that will serve all Gold Beach and Port Orford-Langlois k-8 public school students. It is an ambitious project that includes 10 hours of natural science and agricultural education for each k-8 student, delivering Next Generation Science Standards, math, engineering, social studies and art projects. Activities include school garden projects, farm field trips, visits to community ports, stream restoration projects on agricultural lands, a North Curry 'agricultural timeline', and more. While the YEP team is eager to get started, there is a strong sense that much of the planning and implementation of this project will be slow to start in the fall, as schools adjust. *Stay tuned!*



### Curry Watersheds Partnership Staff & Contractors

**Cathy Boden**, Foodshed Education Coordinator  
**Liesl Coleman**, Curry Soil and Water Conservation District Manager  
**Barbara Grant**, NRCS Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) Technician  
**Miranda Gray**, South Coast Watershed Council Coordinator  
**Matthew Hubbard**, Field Technician  
**Drew Harper**, Riparian Management Coordinator  
**Erin Minster**, Technical Coordinator  
**Robbie Lascheck**, Monitoring Coordinator  
**Statia Ryder**, Youth Education Coordinator  
**Mary Spini**, Administrative Assistant  
**Matt Swanson**, Contracted Restoration Project Manager  
**Kelly Timchak**, Lower Rogue Watershed Council Coordinator  
**Dustin Williams**, Vegetation Management Program Project Implementation Manager

### Acknowledgements

*Funding and other support for work mentioned above has come from the Ford Family Foundation, National Association of Conservation Districts, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board, Curry County Master Gardeners, Bureau of Land Management, and YOU - the resilient community of Curry County.*





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Curry Watersheds Partnership is a partnership of the Curry Soil & Water Conservation District, the Lower Rogue Watershed Council, and the South Coast Watershed Council, inspiring conservation and stewardship for the economic and community well-being of Curry County.