

Curry Currents

Spring 1999

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Second Annual C~CREWS A Watershed Symposium - April 22

In May of 1998, Curry County hosted its first annual Research and Educational Watershed Symposium (C~CREWS). This event brought together students and teachers from schools throughout the county to share their discoveries related to watershed sciences. Approximately 35 students presented research projects to an audience of professionals representing various interest groups including state and federal government agency representatives. Also participating were local fishermen groups, local watershed councils, related organizations and businesses as well as interested citizens. Several of the interest groups provided informational booths to further community-based understanding of watershed issues and activities that affect residents of Curry County. This one day event, involving over 200 participants, was a great success, in large part because of highly motivated teachers such as Dan Leighton of Blanco Middle School.



As a result of last year's success and continued enthusiasm, Curry County will host the Second Annual C~CREWS on April 22, 1999. In an effort to address a concern addressed in last year's evaluation of the event, the planning committee is seeking greater involvement of student/booth interactions. The time and effort contributed on behalf of the booth participants did not go unnoticed at last year's event. We welcome and encourage everyone to return and help make 1999's C~CREWS even more successful!

Our guest speaker will be Bill Bradbury, Executive Director of For The Sake of Salmon. Mr. Bradbury is Curry County's former Oregon State Senator and acted as both Senate President and Majority Leader while in the Oregon Legislature. He is responsible for introducing legislation that established the Salmon Trout Enhancement Program (S.T.E.P.) and helped develop the watershed management strategies for the State of Oregon.

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This event will be open to the public. For registration and/or more information please contact Dan Leighton (541) 348-2326 or Bruce Follansbee (541) 247-2755.

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Watershed Projects Report - Harry Hoogesteger

This year, the last of the millennium, is shaping up to be a big one for watershed council restoration projects in the county. From Floras Creek to the Winchuck River, we are planning to continue the work of watershed restoration with cooperating landowners.

At the north end of the county, in Floras Creek, and Elk and Sixes River basins, we are planning a number of large wood and fencing projects. The addition of large wood, where appropriate, is one of the single most beneficial things we can do for salmon and steelhead. Large wood provides refuge for young fish, provides cover for adults, traps spawning gravel, creates pools, and provides organic material to the stream that young fish need for food.

Fencing projects also have multiple benefits – protecting riparian areas, allowing the natural vegetation to grow, reducing turbidity and erosion, etc. Often after a fencing project, we can come in and plant conifers to provide wood for the long term.

"We have an immediate need to do restoration now," says South Coast Watershed Coordinator Harry Hoogesteger. "But at the same time we need to think about the future. Fencing and planting will continue to provide benefits for many years to come."

Other projects include work along Euchre Creek, Pistol River, Winchuck River, and tributaries of the Chetco. One long-awaited project will be the replacement of an undersized culvert with a bridge on Deep Creek, five miles up Pistol River. Deep Creek has been one of the most productive tributaries on Pistol River. The new bridge will be installed during the summer of 1999, and will greatly aid fish passage up (and down) Deep Creek, according to Howard Crombie, ODFW habitat biologist.

On the Chetco River, we are working with the new Salmon Run Golf Course on Jack Creek to plant native trees and, where possible, improve fish habitat. There is even the possibility of sponsoring a fall golf tournament -- "Playing for Parr" -- to benefit watershed restoration.

Another important project will be the beginning of a county-wide watershed assessment, led by Mike Maguire, who worked with OSU Extension agent Derek Godwin last year on a number of watershed projects. The watershed assessment will outline priorities for restoration work for the next decade (2000 - 2010). Mike will be seeking watershed council involvement in some data collection and writing.

Watershed Council Meetings

Floras Creek - 1st Tues. 7 PM, Langlois School

Chetco River - 1st Weds. 7PM, 555 5th St.
Forest Service Building, Brookings

South Coast Coordinating Council -

1st Thurs. 7 PM, Extension Service Building,
Fairgrounds, Gold Beach

Lower Rogue - 2nd Thurs. 7PM,
Extension Service Building, Gold Beach

Port Orford - 3rd Weds. 7PM, City Hall

Elk / Sixes - 4th Weds. 7PM

Hunter Creek / Pistol - 4th Thurs. 7PM,
Extension Service, Gold Beach

Some special meetings are held at Gold Beach City Hall. Contact the watershed office for information - 247-2755

WWW Pages Go On Line!

A combined web page for the South Coast and Lower Rogue Watershed Councils is now up on the web and in the final stages of being edited. The address is

www.harborside.com/home/c/curswcd/restore/index.htm

The Chetco Watershed Council also has a new web site at

www.oregoncoast.net/chetco/home.html

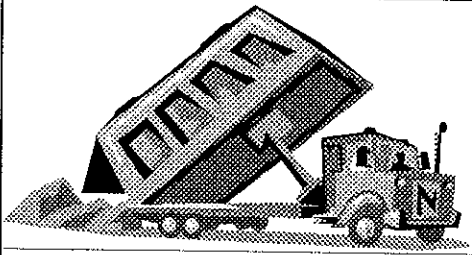
We would like to add links to the South Coast/Lower Rogue site for any other councils in the area that have web sites - please send Bruce Follansbee the address (541)247-2755.

State Climatologist to Speak

Dr. George Taylor, who presented the watershed councils with El Nino information last year, will be back this May. We are planning meetings in Brookings for May 5 (7PM Best Western Conference Center) and Gold Beach May 6 (7PM Gold Beach City Hall). Come and learn about the relationships between weather and fish!

Landowner Ted Freeman has Pioneer Roots

"The watershed council helps formulate a better path for the river and the land."



"How's it going Ted?" "We're staying pretty busy. There is a big slide up on Cape Sebastian and the Oregon Department of Transportation said it could take down a whole portion of Highway 101. They may have to divert traffic to the old highway. They called us to help so we have been hauling rock all week to shore it up."

Ted Freeman Jr., co-owner of Freeman Rock Enterprises, Inc., located on the Chetco River, has been involved with the Chetco Watershed Council since it was formed in 1994. He is 1/16th Native American with ancestry from the Talowa tribe, of Smith River, CA. on his grandmother's side of the family. His grandfather came by wagon from Texas at the turn of the century (but walked most of the way). Ted has lived on the Chetco River all of his life. His father was born in 1923, just up the ridge from where Freeman Rock was established. Ted is the Native American representative and Vice Chair of the Chetco Council. Ted believes the watershed councils are important for communication purposes. "The watershed council helps formulate a better path for the river and the land. The people on the council learn from each other., the various industries become more aware of fish needs, and others on the council learn about the industries."

Freeman Rock Enterprises is not located in the estuary or in the spawning ground so they are permitted to do limited gravel removal from the river. They work closely with Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife and the Division of State Lands to assure fish protection. They are permitted to remove gravel from 1 foot above the waterline and during specific times of the year. At the area of removal, the gravel is approximately 50 feet deep. At the Chetco River bridge, it is believed that the gravel is approximately 90 feet deep. "We do mine rock from a quarry resource, but we hesitate to do that. Quarry rock is not a renewable resource, whereas gravel from the river is replenished every year. The Chetco River is very gravel rich."

Ted navigates the river every year to observe changes. "The river has changed a lot since the beginning of our business in 1976. (Gravel has actually been removed from this bar by other businesses since the 1920s.) The river now takes longer to recede after a hard rain. The water remains clearer longer and clears faster after becoming murky. This indicates that the river has reestablished itself since the days of logging. In the 1980's, you could have driven down the river, but now the gravel that washes down is bigger boulder size, and deep water holes are growing larger. During the 1964 flood, the holes filled up with gravel and the gravel has slowly been washing down ever since. The river is becoming more like the Smith River system of deep holes and riffles. The riffles provide good spawning and the holes are good smolt rearing habitats."

The Chetco Watershed Council is always looking for expert speakers who can provide information about the watershed and its tributaries. The Council will have Richard B. Davis speak to them about the movement of gravel and bed loads. Ted contracts with Mr. Davis to do cross sections of the river to find out how much gravel is replaced and how much can be removed before and after operations. This is part of the permitting process with the Division of State Lands.

Ted thinks the river is very healthy, especially during fishing season. On a daily basis he sees no less than 100 drift boats float past his place of business with many of them stopping on the gravel bar to land fish. He says, "The fishermen who don't stop must already have caught their limit. The Chetco River is a very pristine river and we are going to do all we can to keep it that way."

Black Cottonwood (*Populus trichocarpa*)

by Bruce Follansbee



Introduction

Cottonwood, Poplar, and Aspen are all the same genus (*Populus*), but they have different common names because they were named in different parts of the world and the genus has a wide variety of forms. The local species is called black cottonwood, which is probably due to the older trees having a dark colored trunk.

Locally, the largest stands of black cottonwood are on the Chetco, Rogue, and Winchuck Rivers. Small numbers are scattered along most of the other rivers and large creeks in the area. They grow behind the spruce belt because of an intolerance to salt and other conditions found right along the coast. Black cottonwood grows to a large size - up to 100 feet tall and 4+ feet diameter. Cottonwoods grow fast and will produce a large tree in under 50 years. The trees are either male or female so only the females produce the seed, called "cotton", which blows around in the late spring.

The commonest hybrid poplar that is being planted for fiber production is a hybrid of black cottonwood and eastern balsam poplar. Because of its very fast growth, it takes more care to grow than native trees like any other crop species. The local black cottonwood is better for habitat plantings because it better withstands environmental extremes like freezes and high winds.

Cottonwoods are a pioneer species that establishes after a disturbance. On the inside bend of channels where the gravel bar forms, the first tree to establish is willow. As the bar builds higher after a number of years from the willows trapping sediment, cottonwoods establish in the gaps between willows. The cottonwoods shade out the willows after only a few years because of their fast height growth. The willows are replaced by a dense understory thicket formed by a variety of more shade tolerant shrubs and vines. The next community that follows cottonwoods after additional sediment accretion would be conifers and maples. This ecological process of different plant communities following each other on the same site is called succession. Succession occurs after every disturbance like floods, fire, clearcuts or glaciation.

Reproduction and Planting

Seed release is timed for late spring to follow receding floodwaters so that seed can land on bare mud and germinate. The seed can only be collected for a short period each spring because cottonwood seed only lives a couple of days. Black cottonwood seed can be collected and sown in flats on mud, then covered with a thin layer of sand to hold the light seed in place. After they are a couple inches tall, the seedlings should be transplanted to a pot to grow larger for outplanting. The seedlings can be planted after about a year during the early spring.

Like willows, cottonwoods can be planted from an unrooted cutting as well as seedlings. They are often planted as pole cuttings, which are commonly 6-8' long and about 2" diameter at the butt. Like willow, the cuttings should be placed a minimum of 50% in the ground and preferably 75% in the ground. This helps to keep too many shoots from developing so that you have a good "root to shoot" ratio on the new tree. This is very important during the first summer after planting when moisture stress is highest. The deep hole used for planting pole cuttings also helps them tap into ground water because the roots don't have as far to grow down to follow the water table as it drops during the summer. Pole cuttings should grow 3-5' per year after they are established, which takes a couple of years.



Black Cottonwood (*Populus trichocarpa*)



Habitat Information

During winter high flows flooded cottonwood stands are great habitat for salmonids because the stands have high biological productivity and provide shelter from the flood waters. The high productivity leads to lots of organic matter that in turn produces insects for salmonid food.

Although cottonwood is not a hard wood, it makes good large woody debris (LWD) because of its fast growth, size and position close to the channel. Cottonwood stands are sometimes damaged by flooding and undermined trees will be end up in the river or stream as do willows and alders. Large cottonwoods are also susceptible to windthrow, which can knock them down with the roots intact and produce good LWD.

Black cottonwood is a preferred beaver food and may attract beavers. Attracting beavers is a great habitat restoration tool and is very cost effective. Beaver ponds are excellent salmonid rearing areas and the beaver do all of the work for you. The ponds also trap sediment and provide habitat for a wide range of other water dependent species. Cottonwood can be used as a decoy plant when you are trying to plant conifers in a dense beaver population area. The beavers will concentrate their feeding on their favorite trees instead of cutting down less attractive trees like conifers.

Black cottonwood are great for providing shade to keep streams cool. For this function, they make a good team with willows. Willows are planted right next to the water and perform several functions including: bank stabilization, their branches hang in the water and provide excellent cover for fish near the bank, they provide some shade, and they add organic matter to the water to support the food web. Cottonwoods are planted higher on the bank or on the adjacent stream terrace and perform other ecological functions, which include: the tall trees provide very good shading, they produce LWD and lots of organic matter, and they provide good roosting habitat for a range of bird species.

For more information contact: Bruce Follansbee, Coordinator, Lower Rogue Watershed Council, P.O.B. 666, Gold Beach, OR 97444-(541)247-2755, email: curswcd@harborside.com (please write "Bruce" in subject line)

Glenn Miller - SWCD's Conservationist of the Year



As part of Curry Soil and Water Conservation District's continuing efforts to recognize outstanding conservation efforts and strengthen partnerships, each year the SWCD and watershed councils recognize a "Conservationist of the Year".

This award is presented to someone in the community who exemplifies the qualities of a proactive land and water steward. The latest recipient of this award is Glenn Miller of Gold Beach.

Glenn was born and raised on the lower Rogue River. As a boy, he lived on one side of the river and had to row a small boat across the river to attend a one-room school on the other side.

Glenn has been a central force for Curry Anadromous Fishermen and the Lower Rogue Watershed Council. He has been instrumental in maintaining Indian Creek Fish Hatchery, recognized statewide for its innovative and safe method of raising fish. He recently served as project manager for the Indian Creek Wetlands Project. He has assisted ODFW with manpower needs and has aided the SWCD with countless projects.

Glenn Miller is one strong and skillful man with a gentle heart. The SWCD and watershed councils recognize and appreciate Glenn's dedication and contribution to the enhancement of Curry County's Watersheds. Congratulations Glenn Miller!

1999 Tree Planting Report - Mike Maguire



The South Coast and Lower Rogue Watershed Councils' Tree Planting Crew recently planted over 23,000 trees along rivers and creeks located throughout Curry County. This marks the fifth consecutive year that local watershed councils have partnered with county landowners in an effort to address watershed issues related to lands adjacent to streams. The establishment of native trees in so called riparian zones provides a multitude of benefits to fish habitat and water quality. They also serve as a natural and effective means of stabilizing stream banks. Tree species planted during the months of January and February include: western red cedar, western hemlock, coast redwood, sitka spruce, shore pine and Douglas fir. Hybrid poplar, a non-native species, was planted in select locations with the intent to provide temporary protection from strong winds that impede the long term establishment of native tree species. The following is a summary of trees planted along county streams and their associated watersheds:

Watershed	Streams	Trees Planted (per watershed)
Four Mile	Mainstem	805
Floras Creek	Mainstem, Willow, N Fork, Langlois & Jenny Creeks	12675
Sixes River	Mainstem	1250
Elk River	Mainstem	3230
Garrison Lake	Driftwood Wetlands	30
Euchre Creek	Cedar Creek	525
Rogue River	Edson Creek & Squaw Creek	1725
Hunter Creek	Mainstem	14
Pistol River	Crook Creek	1200
Thomas Creek	Mainstem	300
Chetco River	Mainstem & Jack Creek	2325
Winchuck River	Mainstem	450
Total Trees Planted =		23,724

In an effort to address the success (and failure) of tree plantings conducted over the past few years, the South Coast and Lower Rogue Watershed Councils have developed a "Riparian Zone Field Survey". This survey, designed to evaluate and monitor tree plantings, is currently available to interested landowners who would like to become more active in the overall enhancement of their riparian zones. It consists of a one-page form that allows a landowner to assess the project site including soils, rock and fence types; general health and vigor of planted seedlings/saplings; type and severity of damages as well as maintenance needed.

The Tree Planting Crew, consisting of Cecil Ashdown and Mike Maguire, would like to thank all landowners for the opportunity to establish trees in their riparian zones. We recognize and appreciate the contribution of land set aside to restore our watersheds and realize it may take many years to actually witness a positive result. Funding for this project was provided by the Governor's Watershed Enhancement Board. For more information on tree planting in riparian zones please contact the Curry County Soil and Water Conservation District office at (541) 247-2755.

"A stream without large wood is not a natural stream."

Howard Crombie (Mr. Big), ODFW Biologist

A stream without large wood is not a natural stream.

Never mind the wall calendars with the pretty pictures of water cascading over bedrock. Never mind the mistakes of the past, when wood was removed from the streams and riparian areas. Wood, large wood, wood large enough to alter the course of streams, is essential to maintaining the variety of plants and animals that live in and around water. Streams need wood like bodies need bones.

Large wood slows the flowing water, allowing gravel to settle and stabilize. Large wood scours pools and provides cover for spawning salmon. Salmon dig redds, or nests, in this gravel, spawn, and then die (steelhead and cutthroat may spawn more than once). Large wood catches spawned out carcasses and retains those nutrients to supply the stream food web. The salmon eggs survive sheltered in the empty spaces between the pieces of gravel, as do aquatic insects which feed the young fry after they emerge from the gravel.

The fry find shelter in pools and meanders scoured by the large wood and under the cover of the large wood and the smaller wood which it has caught. These shelters are especially important during high flows, when the small young fry may not yet have the strength to swim against the current of the streams: if they are flushed out to the ocean too soon, they will die.

If they survive life in the river, estuary, and ocean, the salmon and trout will work their way upstream back to the streams where they were spawned. In the old days, large wood was removed from the streams to insure access to the spawning grounds. But while unimpeded passage



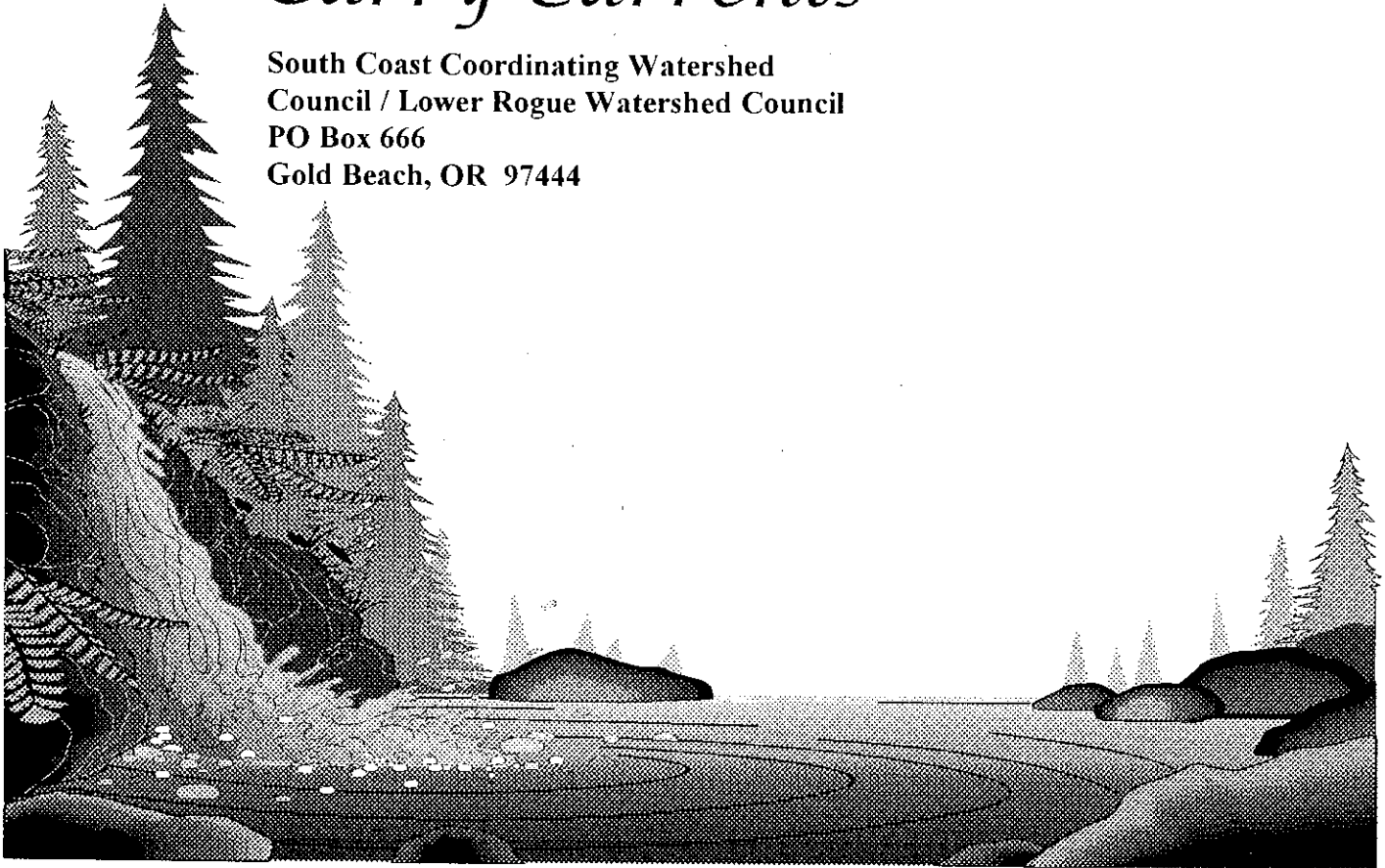
to spawning habitat was gained, the cost was degraded spawning habitat and ruined rearing habitat. Without wood in the streams, the streams tended to straighten out and cut down, often turning a river of life into not much more than a drainage ditch. Fast water sluiced out spawning gravel and destabilized the remaining spawning beds. "Cleaned" streams lost the slack water shelters of meanders, wood accumulations, and water backed into the floodplain.

Nature is rough. Irregular surfaces and flow patterns provide more habitat for a greater variety of plants and animals under a greater variety of circumstances than do uniform stream banks and beds. But the greater the value of capital investments in the land along streams, the greater the tendency to trade decreased biological diversity for increased bank stability. And understandably so. Most large wood restoration projects occur in forestlands, where the commercial value of riparian areas are limited by forest practice rules. However, some large wood placement projects have been done in smaller streams in agricultural bottomlands where the landowner allowed a wide enough riparian buffer to accommodate the inevitable migration of the stream, and some projects have been done in streams in rural residential land where the landowner appreciated the value of a natural stream.

There is a place for large wood everywhere. Snags provide habitat to raptors and songbirds, nurse logs on the forest floor nurture young seedlings and shelter amphibians, instream wood creates spawning and rearing habitat for salmon and trout, logs in lakes provide resting and basking spots for pond turtles, and even driftwood in the estuary, beach, and ocean is a valuable resource to many creatures. Large wood has its place, and the goal of large wood habitat restoration projects is to find its middle ground, where the people and all the other members of the watershed community can prosper and thrive.

Curry Currents

South Coast Coordinating Watershed
Council / Lower Rogue Watershed Council
PO Box 666
Gold Beach, OR 97444



CURRY CURRENTS

Who We Are

Curry County Soil and Water Conservation District: (541) 247-2755

Michael Knapp - Chairman, Earl Lang - Vice Chairman, - Don Smith Secretary/Treasurer,
Keith Smith - Director, Bob Pommarane - Director, Cecil Ashdown - Administrator

Oregon State University Extension Service: (541) 247-6672 or (800) 356-3986

Mike Maguire - Interim Watershed Extension Agent

South Coast Coordinating Watershed Council: (541) 247-2755

Lucie La Bonte' - Chair, Harry Hoogesteger - Coordinator, Cindy Ricks - Monitoring Coordinator

Lower Rogue Watershed Council: (541) 247-2755

John Lighty - Chair, Bruce Follansbee - Coordinator

Cindy Ricks - Monitoring Coordinator

Chetco Watershed Council: (541) 247-2755

Roger Thompson - Chair, Ted Freeman - Vice Chair, Angie Dillingham - Secretary

Port Orford Watershed Council: (541) 247-2755

Holly Witt - Chair

Elk/Sixes Watershed Council: (541) 247-2755

Joe Marsh - Chair

Floras Creek: (541) 247-2755

Joe Brown - Chair

Hunter Creek/Pistol River Council, Winchuck Council, Euchre Creek Watershed Council