



# CURRY CURRENTS

WINTER 2007

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

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## Blanco, Betz, BEEP, and Boots!

By Statia Ryder



Driving north along the coast road in Curry County, Oregon, if one blinks their eyes they will likely miss the small town of Langlois. But one is even more likely to miss the small K-8 school of 107 students called Blanco School. With small class sizes and a forest behind the school, referred to as BEEP, this makes for wonderful opportunities for students to study their local environment. The middle school science teacher, Mr. Betz, leads projects with his students in BEEP, such as tree planting and adoption, bird counts, and erosion studies to name a few.

There is a small headwater stream running through the BEEP forest which empties into a small beaver pond before it drains out into the New River Watershed. This feature became a focus of study for Mr. Betz's 6th grade class during their watershed unit of 10 lessons delivered by Statia Ryder, Education Coordinator for the South Coast & Lower Rogue Watershed Councils.

Statia presents many aspects of watersheds in the classroom with hands-on activities and students then take it to "the field". A highly anticipated day for Mr. Betz's class was when everyone "rubber booted-up" and hiked up to the small stream for macroinvertebrate collection. Students learned in class that these macroinvertebrates (a.k.a. aquatic insects) are divided into 3 classes. Each class has a different tolerance to environmental stressors, or pollution, in their habitat. Class 1 is very sensitive to environmental stressors and Class 3 is very tolerant. With mostly forested land in the headwaters of this stream, the class hypothesized that they would find species from Class 1. The highlight of what they collected is mayfly and stonefly nymphs (class 1), crane fly larvae, scuds, gill snails (class 2) and aquatic earthworms (class 3). This biological sampling of water quality proved the water was clean!

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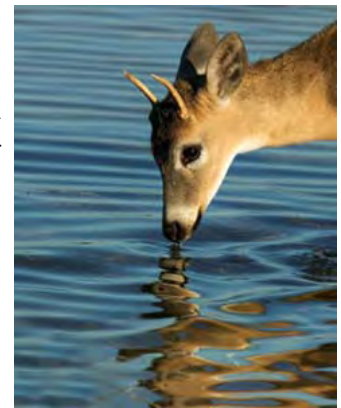
# My Life As A Raindrop

Coordinated by Statia Ryder  
with Riley Creek School 5th  
Graders.

One day in a rainstorm, I dropped from a cloud. Yes I am a raindrop, so you must think my life is boring. Well you are wrong. This is my story. I dropped from a cloud and the wind blew me so hard that I didn't land on the ground. Instead, I traveled all the way to New York at Christmas. When I got to New York, I was transformed into a snowflake. As it turns out, it was a cold life as a snowflake, just like humans are cold in the snow. Well, I was lighter now and the wind kept blowing until I finally landed... in the Atlantic Ocean. So now I am a part of the ocean! I was dropping down when suddenly, a whale opened its mouth to eat a fish and it swallowed ME! Now I'm in a whale and am thinking that I never know where I am going to go next. Just then, it spat me out through the blow hole on its back! Next thing I know, I am in Antarctica getting so cold. I see some icebergs as I move toward one and then touch it! I froze to the iceberg, but not for long. I melted quickly and now am part of the ocean again, never knowing what adventure will come next. I have a great life. That is my story. —by Justis Snook, Riley Creek Elementary School 5th Grade Class



When I was groundwater, it took a long time before I got anywhere, but finally ended up in a lake. But just when I was finally getting comfortable, I got sucked up into a cloud! Then, I ended up in groundwater again. I hated it in groundwater. Finally I was in a river, but quickly got evaporated and went back to a cloud. It was nice and fluffy there, but then I got rained into the ocean. I saw lots of different things in the ocean, like weird fish. Then back to the clouds I went. So this time I jumped down from the clouds because it got boring up there. I landed in the soil. I saw lots of worms. Then, a flash flood happened and I flowed into a river. I didn't like it because the river was cold, so I jumped into a deer's mouth. I saw the inside of its mouth and stomach. It was green-yuck! Then I came out the other end-sick! Then got evaporated into a cloud only to wake up and find myself in a lake! I must have been sleeping. Ever since then, I have been happy at the bottom of the lake.—by Garrett Litterell, Riley Creek Elementary School 5th Grade Class





## Blanco, Betz, BEEP, and Boots!—Continued from page 01

In the following lesson, students learned how to test the water quality through chemical lab testing. Students tested water from BEEP's small stream, beaver pond, and also the school tap water for pH, dissolved oxygen, and temperature. Students guessed the dissolved oxygen content would be highest in the stream because the water tumbled over rocks through riffles and there was more shade which keeps the water cooler. Their guess was tested and then proved correct after testing the samples. Throughout this watershed unit, students learned over and over that colder water holds more oxygen, which makes for happy fish (40°-66°F, fish get their kicks!). The results fell within the parameters of supporting healthy aquatic life (and the pH of the school tap water was almost neutral-6.8!).



The class reviewed what they learned throughout the unit during the final lesson of the presentation of The Stream Trailer! This is a watershed model which one can easily see “the anatomy of a watershed” and learn terms such as ridges, valleys, uplands, riparian zone, and aquatic zone. The model also addresses land uses within a watershed and their impacts on water quality while stressing the function and the importance of a healthy riparian zone.

Mr. Betz’s class put this knowledge into action as they participated in a riparian tree planting project on a section of Fourmile Creek, in the New River Watershed. Students from 4th grade through 8th grade “rubber booted-up” to plant over 300 shore pine and sitka spruce trees to create a 100 foot riparian buffer along the creek.

Blanco, Betz, BEEP and Boots is just a glimpse of the South Coast & Lower Rogue Watershed Council’s education project, which is now in its 3rd year. Thanks to funding from Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board, support from the watershed councils, and other partnering agencies, watershed education and stewardship continues to grow in our schools and communities on this *Wild Rivers Coast*!



**D**riving along the Curry County coast, a sign in the window of the Port Orford Ocean Resource Team reads: “Port Orford depends on salmon fishing.” Port Orford is just one of scores of towns along the Oregon and California coast affected by dwindling salmon stocks returning to the degraded Klamath River watershed.

The lives of those dependant on the commercial fishing industry have always been challenging. Long hours, bad weather, and grueling work pose everyday difficulties – as well as satisfactions. In addition to these everyday issues, fishers are subject to constantly changing regulations, closures, and catch limits. These regulations are set to ensure a sustainable future for the fishing industry. But often the immediate impacts are felt by families dependant on a paycheck.

The virtual shutdown of the 2006 commercial salmon season has been especially hard to swallow. From boat owners and their crew, to the businesses that depend on their patronage, virtually everyone in fishing communities have felt the economic effects. It is estimated that the final economic impact of the season closure could reach a whopping \$81 million.

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Fisherman Anthony Mijs assists the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife with seining in the Rogue River.



There may be precious few salmon to catch this year, but some local fishers are getting a chance to apply their hard work ethic towards restoring fish habitat, encouraging the health and prosperity of local fisheries.

In an effort to ease the blow of this year's commercial salmon season closure, the South Coast and Lower Rogue Watershed Councils have begun work on a 'Hire the Fishers' project. Local fishers have been hired to do a variety of work. They are re-vegetating and maintaining streamside planting sites, removing noxious weeds, collecting water quality and salmon spawning data, restoring and maintaining fish hatcheries, as well as performing forest management activities.

"This type of work is crucial to developing and maintaining good fish habitat," said Harry Hoogesteger, South Coast Watershed Council Coordinator. Streamside trees create shade needed to cool fish-rearing waters, reduce sediment input, stabilize stream banks, and create spawning habitat. The data collected will be utilized in learning more about the quality of the county's waterways as well as current spawning behavior. "This program is enabling us to learn about the importance of our waterways, and then to implement projects that improve the quality of the rivers, the land, and our community," says fisher crew member Brenda Burkhaw.

While funding provides for just three people to be hired, ten fishers are on the payroll. They work as their schedules allow. "We are doing our best to work with ever-changing fishing schedules. The last thing we want to do is keep these folks off the water," says project manager Chris John. "We want to offer work to as many as we can." Fisher crew member Jacquelyn Aiello enjoys the flexible work schedule: "When we are able to, we can fish. When we can't, we work towards restoring areas that provide for our livelihood."

Funding for this project, and others like it around the state, is being provided through the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB). Lottery dollars were made available to OWEB soon after Oregon's Governor declared a state of emergency due to the impacts of the salmon season closure.



Fisherman Tom Dahl and Jimmy Keeler plant trees along a streambank.

## Cost-share Available for Noxious Weed Control in Curry County

The Curry Weed Advisory Board is pleased to announce the availability of cost-share dollars for noxious weed control in Curry County. Landowners can complete a short application that describes the problem and proposed solution for a weed management project on their property. Applications will be reviewed by the Noxious Weed Advisory Committee. Weeds to be managed must appear on the Curry County Weed List. The program includes cost share of up to 75% for weed management plans, and up to 50% for on-the-ground weed management projects. A maximum grant amount of \$500 per landowner per year is in place and funding is limited. Funding is secured through Self-Determination Act funds managed by the Coos Bureau of Land Management.

Separate funding is available to the Sixes River Watershed. This watershed includes all lands that drain to the Sixes River. Landowners and land managers have worked together over the last year to form the Sixes Weed Management Area and to write overall management goals. "Targeted weeds are Japanese knotweed, Gorse, and Brooms, all of which are decreasing the productivity of the land and rivers in the basin," says Kean Fleming, Noxious Weed Board Coordinator. A cost-share application and the Curry County Weed List can be found at [www.currywatersheds.org/agriculture.php](http://www.currywatersheds.org/agriculture.php), or call 541-247-2755.



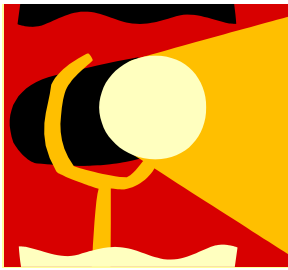
## SOUTHCOAST LANDOWNER RESOURCE GUIDE COMING TO COOS & CURRY COUNTIES

In keeping with their responsibility to preserve and protect soil and water resources in their counties, the Coos and Curry Soil and Water Conservation Districts are joining with the Oregon Department of Forestry to develop a South Coast Landowner Resource Guide and Directory. "Many rural landowners are unaware of their basic responsibilities or available local resources for forest and watershed management," reports Pat Jones, Watershed Technician for the Coos District. "They lack awareness of and access to the basic concepts and contact information to undertake the needed work. The result is that many private lands are not well managed, creating increased erosion potential, increased fire hazard, and increased spread of insects, diseases, and weeds. These problems impact other well-managed properties and become a community problem."

The Resource Guide will contain up-to-date information on basic forest, riparian, and watershed management concerns, contact information for federal and state agencies, and recommendations on planning work and hiring contractors. A supplemental Directory publication will list submitted contractor contact information as well as more detailed information about the services, equipment, etc. that each contractor or consultant provides.

The guide and directory will be published this spring and distributed to forest and private landowners in Coos and Curry Counties. If you are a landowner interested in receiving a copy of the Guide or a contractor or consultant interested in having your information listed in this free publication, please call Liesl Coleman at the Curry SWCD: (541) 247-2755 or Pat Jones at the Coos SWCD: (541) 396-2841x28.





## Curry County Weed Advisory Board

### Noxious Weed Species Spotlight

#### Portuguese Broom (*Cytisus striatus*)

By Kean Fleming, Noxious Weed Board Coordinator

Images by Glenn Miller, Oregon Dept. of Agriculture



Native to Europe, Portuguese broom was introduced to North America as an ornamental and soil stabilizer. Like other brooms, Portuguese broom is an evergreen, perennial shrub that blooms from April to June. Unlike other brooms, Portuguese seed pods are inflated and hairy all over, making them look like pussy willow buds. Stems are also more silvery than other brooms, but this is not noticeable until the leaves and flowers fall off.

The ecologic effects of Portuguese broom are similar to that of Scotch broom with two notable differences – Portuguese broom grows much larger and lives longer – making it even more pernicious. Infestations in Douglas County are highly competitive in commercial timberland with the canopies of individual plants reaching almost 20 feet across.



Thus far, infestations in Oregon are limited to Douglas and Lane counties, with the first known site documented in 1982. On account of Portuguese broom's limited distribution and extremely destructive capacity, it is both a B-listed and T-designated noxious weed in the State of Oregon – which means that controlling its spread is a high priority.

If you believe you have spotted Portuguese broom, please call **1-866-INVADER** and the Curry SWCD office at (541) 247-2755 to report its location.

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website at  
[www.currywatersheds.org](http://www.currywatersheds.org) for  
more great watershed information  
and news!**



We dedicate this issue to Cecil and Robert Ashdown. Rob worked on projects in Port Orford early in the watershed council's existence and was a wonderful figure in the Port Orford community. Cecil Ashdown started with us during the first Hire the Fisherman program. She planted thousands of trees over her 8 years with the District, and served as tree planting foreman and office manager. Our sympathies go out to Cecil and her children, and the other families of the *Ashdown* crew.