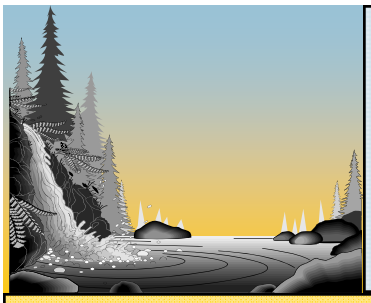


Curry Currents

Winter 2009-10

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

Cranberry growers explore new markets

Innovative cranberry growers on the South Coast are being rewarded with high demand for quality, sustainable products. This year, two growers joined forces to form ***Clearwater Cranberries***, an independent company that stresses sustainability and good management practices on the land.

Both Scott McKenzie, and the Farr Ranch on Elk River, have become *Food Alliance* certified to test the waters of value-added foods and the premium prices that food buyers may be wiling to pay for better quality food.

Clearwater Cranberries was born from an effort funded by the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB), the South Coast Watershed Council, and the Oregon Environmental Council to work with 10 cranberry growers on the South Coast.

Projects funded included:

- Experimenting with reduced-risk pesticides and herbicides
- Improving cranberry bog health with sanding and compost tea
- Irrigation efficiencies and tailwater recovery ponds
- Exploring new markets for locally-grown cranberries,
- Looking at certification as a way to enter new markets.

South Coast Coordinator Harry Hoogesteger helps with the cranberry harvest

Many cranberry growers on the South Coast have salmon and steelhead spawning and rearing very close to their farms. Efforts to improve water quality and reduce any run-off were funded by OWEB, which seeks to improve both the environment and economic opportunities in rural areas. Beth Pietrzak of the South Coast Watershed Council was the project manager for the cranberries initiative.

See Local Projects, page 3

Contents:

2010 Permitting Workshop

Builders
Contractors
Developers
Landscapers

Agency representatives will:

- outline why, where, when, and who needs a permit
- take you through the permit process
- offer a take-home resource guide

Does your upcoming project include disturbing land near a body of water? **You may need a permit.**

Come to the **2010 Permitting Workshop** for information about permits you may need before you begin.

January 30, 2010 • 9:00 AM to 3:30 PM

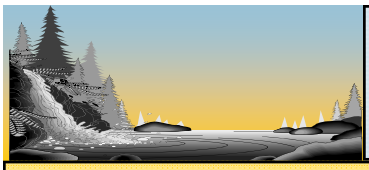
Best Western Beachfront
Brookings-Harbor, Oregon

Prior registration is required!

Registration fee is $15 and includes lunch.
To register, call Southwestern Community College or contact Margaret McHugh, Coordinator at maggie.mchugh@oacd.org or 541.247.2755, ext 4#.

Sponsored by:

Oregon State University Extension Service
Chetco River Watershed Council
Department of Environmental Quality & Department of State Lands
Southwestern Oregon Community College
US Army Corps of Engineers Portland District
Curry County Public Services



Local projects

Fall 2009 update

-Cranberries, continued from pg 1

Increasingly, consumers are asking questions about where their food comes from; how it is grown; what are the impacts of agriculture on the environment; and how safe is the food ? ***Clearwater Cranberries*** seeks to forge a different path from commodity-driven food production by emphasizing quality, care, and the high stewardship that comes from having a family farm — as opposed to an industrial farm.

In addition to *Clearwater Cranberries'* efforts at finding new, better-paying markets, the other 10 "early innovators" saw improved practices from activities funded by the OWEB grant. Another round of funding to continue funding and implementing BMP's (Best Management Practices) is being sought for the 2010 and beyond.

Email the author: harry@currywatersheds.org

Volunteers plant bioswales

This fall, over 50 volunteers planted three bioswales designed to filter storm-water —water that may have contained pollutants and toxins – before it entered our waterways.

The projects were funded by the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board; the Ford Family Foundation; and the City of Port Orford. The new bioswales are all adjacent to Highway 101 in the towns of Langlois, Port Orford, and Gold Beach.

Bioswales — also called constructed wetlands — consist of wetland plants that are specially selected for their ability to "uptake" and sequester both nutrients and pollutants.

Bioswales – also called constructed wetlands —consist of wetland plants that are specially selected for their ability to "uptake" and sequester both nutrients and pollutants.

Rushes; sedges; and dozens of other wetland species were planted at the three sites; in fact, over 1500 plants went in the ground over three weekends this fall. The plants absorb any toxic materials --- and help break them down – while preventing the pollutants from getting into adjacent streams.

The Gold Beach bioswale crew pauses after a job well done.

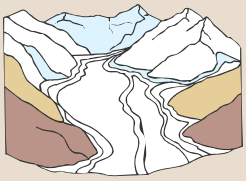
Each bioswale was constructed next to a parking lot and road; each one intercepts water flow before it can reach the near-shore area – or a nearby creek, in the case of Langlois.

These parking lots can accumulate harmful chemicals such as battery acids; oil; gas; radiator fluids; plus other trash. The bioswales can also sequester excess fertilizers and chemicals from nearby lawns.

-Continued page 5

Water cycle stories from Riley Creek
(as told by Mrs. Martin's 5th grade students)

Statia Ryder and Cathy Boden lead Watershed Education projects and classes in Curry County schools, including a 12-class watershed lesson package offered to 4th and 5th graders. The first class is called "Wonderful World of Water" (or Cathy prefers the name "Wacky Water!") in which students take an Incredible Journey through the planet's water cycle as a water droplet through a Project WET activity, then write about their journey…



My life as a rain drop

By Abby McKay

"Ahh" I said as I slowly fell to earth. Suddenly all that ended. I was jolted from my wonderland as an icy wind blew by, freezing me completely! I was so cold and frozen that I went *clunk* when I hit the ground.

I was miserable for months before I started to melt. Finally, I dripped into a tiny stream and began to flow faster and faster until I flowed into a bigger stream which turned into a river. My trip was cold and treacherous. I spend my time trying not to cry because I was already so wet.

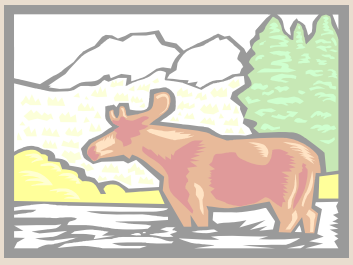
I suddenly rushed into the ocean. I felt more relaxed there, but not for long. I soon floated up towards the clouds as I got evaporated. But as soon as I started floating up towards the sky as a gas, I saw rain falling down to earth (just as I had almost a year before and soon would again!)

Finally, I got back home to a cloud where I will wait to fall back to earth again.

Water Droplet Journey

By Jessica

My journey began in a plant. The plant got tall and healthy and I got evaporated into the clouds. I felt like a weightless feather floating in the air… then no more. From the cloud I went to a glacier and soon melted into groundwater. I traveled underground and found a lake. From the lake, I drifted down to a river and then back into groundwater! Somehow, I found the river again and went downstream for 3 weeks straight. Then a big black bear drank me and I became an animal!! Soon, the bear went number 2 and I became soil… That's my journey of being a water droplet.



The Little Raindrop

By Brittany

I fell from the sky into the lake! Then I was in an animal's stomach. (I think the animal drank me up from the lake). Somehow, I ended up in the soil, it was very dark. A few minutes later I got soaked up into a daisy! Next, I went back into an animal. I went into the soil (again). I was waiting to get out but I couldn't! I tried three times but I still couldn't get out. Finally, I found my way to a river. Next, I evaporated into the clouds. After that, I precipitated into the soil. I stayed there again, and then goat soaked up into a plant. POOF! I was in the clouds again, which was very strange. Soon, I precipitated into the ocean. I tried to get out twice, but then I just decided to stay there.

Email South Coast & Lower Rogue Watershed Councils Education Coordinator Statia Ryder statia@currywatersheds.org

Local Projects: Bioswales, continued:

Langlois, Port Orford, and Gold Beach projects

The 3 bioswale project sites are:

- *Langlois Library*
- *Battle Rock State Park Wayside in Port Orford*
- *Gold Beach Visitor Center*.

The Ford Family Leadership Class for Curry County formed the nucleus of the planting crew. The class — 30 strong from all three communities —selected bioswales as visible projects with a strong community benefit. Watershed health and the health of our near-shore marine area are critical components in keeping our Wild Rivers Coast salmon and steelhead runs intact.

More than 35 volunteers helped plant the Port Orford bioswale site.

Email the author: harry@currywatersheds.org

ODA says "Prevent fuel problems": Prepare farm tanks for *2% biodiesel blend*

Biodiesel, a natural solvent, may loosen and detach old deposits in fuel storage tanks.

September, 2009

From *Oregon Department of Agriculture*:

As of October 1, Oregon's biodiesel renewable fuel standard takes effect, and agricultural producers throughout Oregon will receive 2% biodiesel-blended fuel from their suppliers for their farm tanks. ODA encourages farmers and ranchers to take a few simple precautions as they begin to store and use the fuel.

Agricultural fuel users can help prevent problems by taking the following precautions:

Clean your diesel storage tank to remove water and other contaminants prior to adding biodiesel-blended fuel to the tank. Biodiesel is a natural solvent and can loosen and detach materials deposited in your storage tanks. It can also absorb water.

Keep extra filters on hand for your diesel fuel tank pump and for your farm equipment during the first few weeks using the blended fuel.

Another potential concern with biodiesel, especially in the winter, is that it can gel at higher temperatures than the standard diesel. However, this shouldn't be a problem at the two percent blend level.

For more information about the renewable fuel standards, contact Renewable Energy Specialist Stephanie Page at the Oregon Department of Agriculture, (503) 986-4565.

Riley Creek project update: Quarry Road culvert replacement

By Maggie McHugh

The Riley Creek problem

Riley Creek is a small urban stream that flows through the town of Gold Beach directly into the Pacific Ocean. Until about the 1950s, approximately 3 miles of Riley Creek was accessible to anadromous fish species including winter steelhead, cutthroat trout, and Pacific lamprey.

The old Riley Creek culvert inlet at Quarry Road. The old culverts were undersized and contributed to erosion and degraded habitat on the creek.

As Gold Beach grew, Riley Creek was channelized and filled for development and roads which has decreased stream and habitat complexity and limited fish passage. The stream has degraded as a result of these modifications, resulting in erosion problems and subsequent bank armoring by property owners, including the city.

The south fork of Riley Creek, just 100 feet above the junction of the South and North forks at Quarry Road, passed through two undersized culverts that were very rusty and partially filled with concrete.

A cooperative effort

Thanks to a grant from the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB) ***the Riley Creek Restoration Team***, a partnership formed by the City of Gold Beach, Central Curry School District, Riley Creek School, OSU Extension, Oregon Fish and Wildlife, and Lower Rogue Watershed Council, was funded to design and install a 144 -inch half round pipe on concrete footings. Boulders and a natural stream bed material were placed through the culvert for a natural stream bottom.

An undersized culvert lower in the system was replaced in October of 2008 near the mouth of the creek by the City of Gold Beach, leaving the Quarry Road site as the lowest block-

Continued next page

The old culverts were rusty and partly filled with concrete, badly in need of upgrading and replacement.

Hard work, learning at Riley Creek

Continued from pg 6

age to fish passage in the watershed. Replacing the culvert at Quarry Road has opened fish access to an additional 0.35 miles of habitat.

Education on Riley Creek

The Education Program Manager for the South Coast and Lower Rogue Watershed Councils maintains a dynamic riparian education program throughout the County and is based at Riley Creek School. Students learn about watersheds, riparian health and function, and water quality. Riley Creek is their laboratory – not only do they go to the creek to learn, they also practice what they learn by helping with invasive plant removal, planting, and litter removal. They are learning good stewardship, and they help spread what they learn to the rest of the community. Students will help monitor changes to the stream after the culvert replacement, and have already reported a new resident – a very busy beaver.

Email the author: maggie.mchugh@oacd.org

The new Riley Creek inlet . Replacing the culvert at Quarry Road has opened fish access to an additional 0.35 miles of habitat.

The new culvert features boulders and bottom of natural stream bed material.

Lessons learned

This was a major project for the Watershed Council, and we learned many lessons. Some we would like to share with others doing similar projects are:

1. Require a geotechnical investigation for all large, open-bottom culvert or bridge installations.
2. Set survey limits at natural stream breaks to produce a longitudinal profile for both design and monitoring uses.
3. Have contracts reviewed by contract specialists and/or attorneys.
4. Allow extra funds for change orders when awarding contracts. There will always be change orders.
5. Engage partners early on, and keep them involved throughout the project.

Our conservation partnership

Who are we?

Curry SWCD

Following the erosion disasters of the Dust Bowl, the *Soil Conservation Act* established the Soil Conservation Service (SCS), which later became USDA's Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS).

Two years later, at the urging of President Roosevelt and following a model law provided by Congress, states began to create local Conservation Districts to help guide SCS programs and coordinate other assistance. NRCS remains a partner in local conservation efforts and funding private land stewardship projects today.

The Curry County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) was chartered by the State of Oregon on April 30, 1953 to assist landowners and local government in planning and applying resource conservation to maintain and improve the quality of soil, water, and related resources.

Curry County SWCD is led by a Board of five Directors elected from among local farmers, ranchers, and other landowners. Our function is to coordinate technical, financial, and educational resources from all sources to meet the natural resource conservation needs of our local land users.

Our staff includes an office manager, a riparian specialist, and a watershed technical specialist/farm planner.

Curry Currents ...

brings news to our community about a group of organizations working together to protect and enhance the natural resources of Curry County and its major watersheds. The common focus of our projects is natural resources: soil, water, air, plants, animals, and human life.

—We also share a central office, located in Gold Beach.

The watershed councils of Curry County

Lower Rogue Watershed Council

and

South Coast Watershed Councils

South Coast Watershed Council (umbrella group)

- Floras Creek / New River
- Elk & Sixes Rivers
- Port Orford Watersheds
- Euchre Creek
- Hunter / Pistol River
- Chetco River
- Winchuck River

Local voluntary Watershed Councils were authorized by the Oregon legislature in 1993. Since 1994 Curry Watershed Councils have been partners with the District--sharing an office, combining resources, and working towards mutual goals. Local Watershed Councils enhance the work of the SWCD by providing capacity, contributing grant-writing skills, and accessing salmon restoration dollars for on-the-ground projects.

In 2002, the SWCD formalized their relationship with the **South Coast Coordinating Watershed Council** and the **Lower Rogue Watershed Council** in two Memoranda of Understanding. The Councils set program goals and project priorities, while the SWCD serves as their administrative employer, contracting agent, and fiscal agent. Grants written for the Watershed Councils support the District through administrative funds, usually 10% of each grant.

The funds are used by the District for fiscal administration (bookkeeping, audits), rent, utilities, computers and software, office supplies, and other expenses of maintaining the office.

The Lower Rogue Council and South Coast Watershed Councils share an education program, vegetation restoration and noxious weed programs, riparian and in-stream restoration programs, water quality and monitoring programs, road inventory and sediment abatement programs, and a local foods program.

Our staff includes a Lower Rogue Watershed Council Coordinator and a South Coast Coordinating Watershed Council Coordinator, a Watershed Education Program Manager and a Watershed Education Specialist, a Vegetation Management Program Coordinator and a Vegetation Management Program Foreman. Program management is also contracted for Water Quality, Data Management, GIS, Project Effectiveness Monitoring, and Sediment Abatement.

— Who are we? Our USDA partners:

Healthy farms and ranches means excellence in resource stewardship

Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS)

Technical and financial assistance for conservation on agricultural land

Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP): Nation-wide competitive ranking for stewardship payments.

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP): Offsets the cost of operational ranching and farming practices that conserve soil, water, air, forestry, energy, and other resources.

Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP): Offsets the cost of creating and enhancing habitat.

Wetland Reserve Program (WRP): Helps restore wetlands for habitat.

Conservation Technical Assistance (CTA): Technical and planning advice is available to help land managers identify resource concerns.

Call our local NRCS staff for more information:
District Conservationist Tom Purvis

For USDA help in Coos and Curry Counties:

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

Farm Service Agency (FSA)

Financial assistance for farms and ranches

Conservation Reserve Program, Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program: A voluntary restoration and rental program to decrease erosion, restore wildlife habitat, and safeguard ground and surface water. The Oregon CREP is Federal-state partnership with enhanced incentive payments for riparian restoration.

Farm Loan Guarantees: (Loan limit increased to $1,112,000). Participating lenders can strengthen a loan's viability through a guarantee of up to 95 percent of the loan amount. Farmers interested in guaranteed loans should apply through a conventional lender.

Direct Farm Operating Loans: (to $300,000) In addition to other eligibility criteria, a direct loan applicant must have the training or experience to succeed in farming and be unable to obtain credit elsewhere. Operating Loans may be used to purchase farm items and to cover operating expenses including minor improvements to buildings, land and water development, family subsistence, and to refinance debts under certain conditions. Loan funds cannot be used to finance nonfarm enterprises.

Insurance and disaster coverage programs: Information on Federal Crop Insurance, covered crops, Adjusted Gross Revenue insurance, Livestock Gross Margin and Livestock Risk Management, Pasture, Rangeland, Forage Pilot programs, and other risk management assistance programs can be found at www.rma.usda.gov.

Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance (NAP) Programs: Reduce financial losses from natural disasters (droughts, floods, etc.) on crops not covered by federal crop insurance, including hay and grazing. Most FSA disaster programs require coverage (NAP or Federal Crop Insurance) to be eligible for supplemental help.

Livestock Forage Disaster Program: Compensation to producers who suffer grazing losses due to drought .

Biomass Crop Assistance Program: Financial assistance to collect, harvest, store and transport, to producers who deliver eligible material to biomass conversion facilities.

More information and FSA newsletters are available on the FSA website: www.fsa.usda.gov/or

ATTENTION Ag groups! *Would you like to have a presentation or more information on FSA and USDA programs? FSA and NRCS staff is available. Call Bret Harris, FSA, at (541) 396-4323, ext. 25.*

Curry Currents

Spring 2009

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

Curry Soil & Water Conservation District Board	
Chair	Michael Knapp
Vice Chair	Steve Kalina
Treasurer	Keith Smith
Director	Neil Walker
Director	Scott McKenzie

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

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

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

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

Coming soon:

The NEW www.currywatersheds.org for more great watershed information and news!