



## February eBulletin

*"O, rapture of mud!  
We return to a full-bodied waltz  
in your damp embrace  
- Louisa Lovelidge Gallus*



Botts Marsh at low tide. Photo: B.P.



*In December I walked our recently-acquired McCoy wetland property with a review team from the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB). That property has been diked off from active tidal cycles for at least ninety years. We have asked OWEB for a grant to conduct studies that will guide us in determining how best to bring back active tidal flow to restore it as healthy habitat for young coho salmon.*

*This restoration project is a prime example of what we do. We protect and restore lands to ensure they support native species that are under threat in the Nehalem River watershed — an ecosystem that, until recent times, supported coho in healthy and abundant populations, for many thousands of years.*

*Not long ago I overheard someone ask why we focus so much on one fish (coho). That's an excellent question that restoration biologists, land owners and managers, developers, politicians, and their lawyers have been asking for a long time. One answer is that the coho salmon and the Nehalem watershed ecosystem evolved in balance with each other, and if the coho isn't doing well, then we know the system is also having problems. That's what makes coho an excellent "indicator species," or a species whose overall condition (health and population) serves as a proxy, to illustrate the overall health of the ecosystem in which it lives.*

*A healthy ecosystem for any species must contain enough food and shelter for the species to thrive at each and every stage of its life. If the habitat where it spawns, or where it spends its first year or two, or where it feeds as an adult, is limited in size or quality, then too many fish won't survive that stage and a healthy population will no longer be supported by the system. Habitat limitations can result from blocking part of the habitat with dams, levees or impassable culverts. Other harms to the system can kill off a food source or destroy the conditions necessary for spawning.*

*Wetlands with regular tidal flushing are rearing habitats where juvenile salmon find shelter and food during at least one summer as they mature and prepare to migrate to the sea. Without such refuge they have less access to food and they become vulnerable to strong currents and predators. Their ability to survive is diminished.*

*Scientists who have studied Oregon's coastal tidal wetlands estimate that since the 1850s our tidal wetlands have been reduced by over 70%, with the loss slightly higher in the Nehalem watershed. That is why I was excited to walk the McCoy property with the hope that we may soon be able to restore its tidal wetland character. It is one small step in our process to reestablish daily tidal influence, and thereby re-create a little of what has been lost of the Nehalem estuary's coho rearing habitat.*

*Ben Pittenger*

Ben Pittenger  
Executive Director  
ben@nehalemtrust.org

**Join Ben this month for a "Winter on the Wetland Walk"!**  
[February 24, 10AM-12PM](#)



## Glimpses of the Garden

**'Feed your Soil and it will Feed you'**



The Community Garden is preparing to welcome new and returning gardeners for the 2023 season. While the coming Spring growing season is anticipated with energy and eagerness, we take care to not disturb the soil too early. Many key garden pollinators hibernate in the garden during the coldest months, either as larva or as adults, and emerge from underground tunnels, leaf litter, and decaying wood to begin foraging when temperatures warm. A few will emerge when daytime temperatures are consistently above 40 degrees, but most wait for temperatures in the 50s. While our pollinator friends lie dormant in wait, procurement and preparation of composted manure from local partners allows us to nurture our soil from the beginning and on through the growing season. An estimated 10 cubic yards of compost will be produced by the garden itself once the season is underway. This month garden volunteers are already busy readying the greenhouse and starting seeds so that our onions, shallots, peppers and tomatoes will get a head start.

There is still time to join the Community Garden! Applications and Info can be found [here](#). Registered gardeners, please mark your calendars for Tuesday Feb. 28 or Saturday March 4, our Community Garden Kick-Off dates. See you there!

Janice Soots  
Community Garden Coordinator  
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Emma Sutton caring for a plum tree during the February Community Garden pruning workshop led by Herck Floriken. Photo: Phyllis Thompson



Harvesting Willow for riparian restoration along Alder Creek.

## Stewardship Our Lands



Stewardship work this month continues to be all about restoration work along the fence line at the entrance to Alder Creek Farm. If you have driven in to the farm lately, you would have noticed the gigantic pile of cuttings on the east side of the road. It may just look like a pile of sticks and roots to the casual passer by, but it is actually a giant stewardship trophy representing many laborious hours of laughing and digging at holly, and blackberry, and others. Beaver bandits are actually the ones having the last laugh, as they have been sneaking up from the creek in the dark of night to steal English holly off the pile. We can only assume that they have developed a taste for this invasive.

Have a glance at the west side of the drive and you'll see our wispy orange flagging tape attached to hopeful native seedlings. Volunteers continue to brave deluges of rain interspersed with optimistic blue skies to make significant headway on this project. A huge THANK YOU to all who have participated! And if you see those sneaky beaver bandits, tell them thanks for the removal services (and to also please stay away from the teaching trail...).

Stewardship "Rain or Shine" Fridays  
Every Friday, 10:00 am - noon  
See you on the land!

Shane Sjogren  
Stewardship Coordinator  
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## Upcoming Events

**Love Your Land Trust: Valentines Willow Planting and Crafts**  
Sunday, February 12, 11:00 am - 2 pm

Join us at Alder Creek Farm this Sunday! We'll be planting Willow along Alder Creek and making groovy sustainable valentines in the barn with Jessi Just from [Heart of Carm!](#) Drop in anytime between 11 and 2. Gloves and tools provided. B.Y.O. mug for hot beverage. No RSVP necessary.



Please RSVP for the following events at the links below:

**Winter on the Wetland Walk**

Friday, February 24, 10:00 am - noon

Grab your boots and binoculars and join Executive Director, Ben Pittenger out on LNCT's Botts and McCoy Marshes to enjoy wintering wildlife and learn about restoration efforts underway and in the works. Please dress for the weather and be prepared to walk on uneven and wet ground.

**Pacific NW Plant Communities: A Window into the Ecology of the PNW**

Wednesday, March 8, 4:30 - 6:00pm @ Manzanita Library

Join Hope and LNCT at the Manzanita Library for a talk about Pacific Northwest Ecology. Hope Stanton is a member of the Native Plant Society of Oregon, a volunteer with both LNCT and the North Coast Land Conservancy, and the North Oregon Restoration Partnership (INORP). Hope has a degree in Natural History from the University of Wisconsin, is the owner of Alderale Native Plants, and has lived on the coast of Oregon for 22 years.

**Let's Go Birding with Hannah and Erik!**

Saturday, March 11, 10 - 11:30 am @ Alder Creek Farm

Come check out the birds around Alder Creek Farm! Join local birders, Hannah and Erik (from the popular podcast "[Hannah and Erik Go Birding](#)") for a bird walk to look and listen for resident and migratory birds. Bring binoculars if you have them. We'll have some to loan. Be prepared to walk on and off of developed trails in a moderately strenuous 1-mile hike. Waterproof boots are recommended as we'll venture out to see what birds are visiting the seasonal wetland in the middle of the refuge. All skill levels welcome!

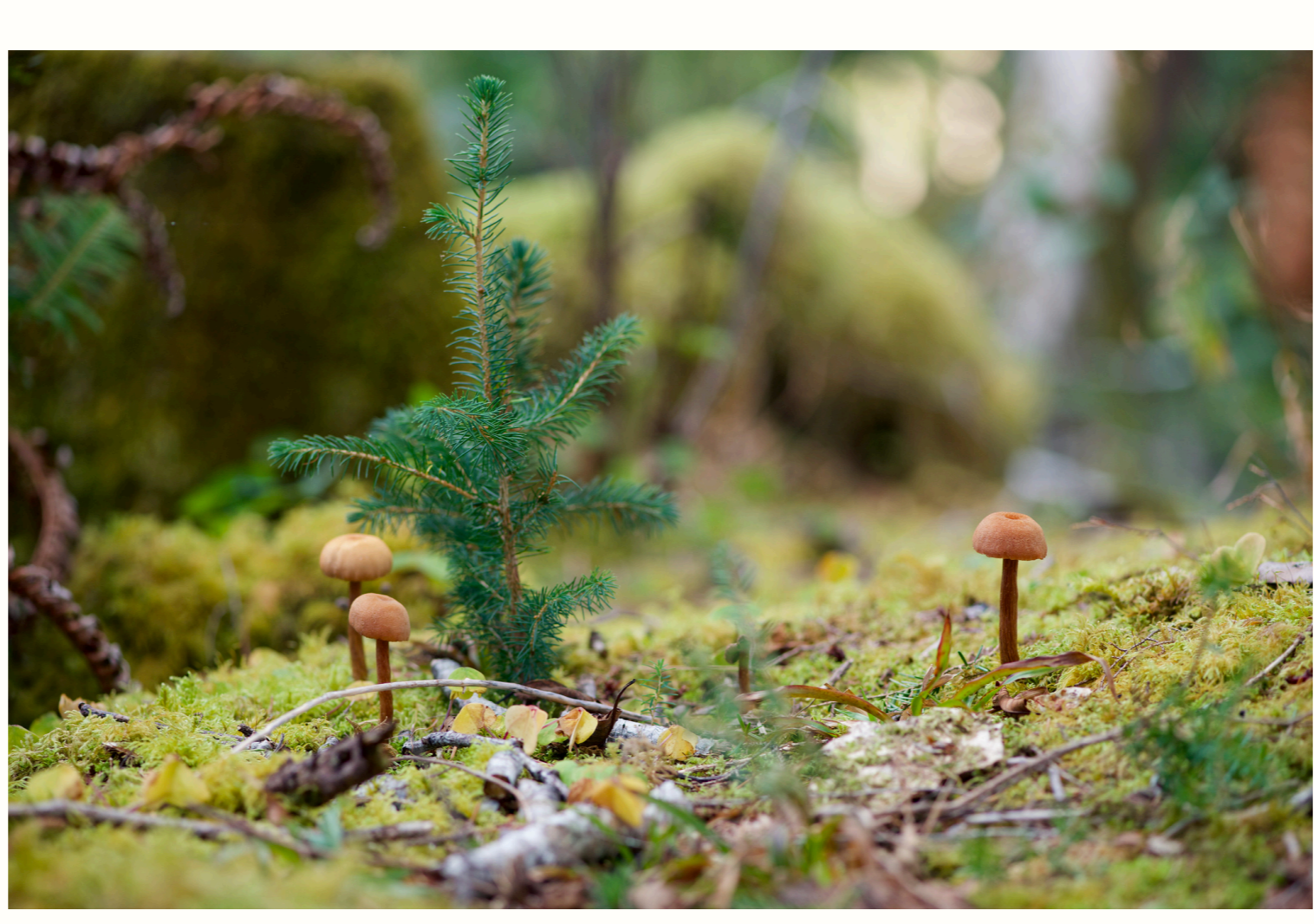


Photo: B.P.

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