

LOWER NEHALEM COMMUNITY TRUST

beading the necklace of people and place

Summer 2015 Newsletter

Beautiful Addition to Estuary Conservation

A Wetland Worth Protecting

Wetlands are often called “the kidneys of the landscape” because of their unique role in maintaining water quality and keeping whole ecological communities healthy. Yet these crucial ecosystems that are so important to us and the natural world are often misunderstood and even targeted for development or agriculture.

The state of Oregon now has only 38 percent of its historical wetlands still intact, most having been drained for human uses.

Sitka Wetlands helps to protect water quality in Nehalem Bay.

So when LNCT was presented with the opportunity to place just over 5 acres of healthy, functioning wetland into conservation, we were excited and honored to do so.

Land owners Bob and Ruth Simpson generously offered the land to the Trust at a bargain sale price, and the land will now be managed as part of the Trust's Sitka Wetlands complex. This newly acquired property was identified as an area of importance in the Trust's 2013 Conservation Plan, and it increases the footprint of Sitka Wetlands to 24 acres.

As a healthy wetland the north edge has habitat value, serving as an elk migration corridor as well as a place for the

herds to feed and bed down. The property consists primarily of palustrine forested wetlands vegetated with Sitka spruce and alder plus a scrub-shrub understory, providing important habitat for a variety of birds and amphibians, too.

The preservation of an expanded Sitka Wetlands helps to protect water quality in Nehalem Bay, as well as the wildlife corridor from Nehalem Bay State Park to Alder Creek Farm and Dean Point. This wetland can be seen on the west side of Tohl Road in Bayside Gardens.



Sitka Wetlands sits on the north edge of the Nehalem Estuary where LNCT has preserved acres of open space.

photo by Gareth Ferdun

Neahkahnie Creek Needs You!

Over 7 acres of land along Neahkahnie Creek are being offered to LNCT by donors Tom Nash and Maureen McMahon for conservation and management. This beautiful

Alder Creek watershed is important habitat to a number of indigenous plants and animals, and plays a key role in protecting the creek for native fish.

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife lists the creek as “the highest priority for fish passage due to excellent spawning habitat within the upper reaches of Neahkahnie Lake.” Oregon Department of Transportation's Neahkahnie Creek culvert replacement to reduce fish barriers is underway, making the conservation of this parcel all the more urgent.

To accept this donation \$35,000 must be raised to cover costs such as surveys, property partition, tax assessments, title transfers, stewardship, and environmental reviews. \$18,840 in donations have already been pledged, leaving just \$16,160 remaining to see this project completed.

To learn more, share info with your friends, and join us in making the conservation of Neahkahnie Creek a reality, visit www.nehalemtrust.org/Creek.



From the Ground Up

As a community-based land trust we have the opportunity to tackle some pretty special conservation projects. In our experience even small projects make a world of difference. And this month you'll see the Neahkahnie Creek Initiative is no exception.



This stretch of deep ravine creek is only 2,100 feet long, but what a difference it can make if you're a native fish! In perpetuity this protected riparian zone will always be densely wooded preserving vital habitat on the fishes' journeys to Neahkahnie Lake.

Alder Creek Farm, Sitka Wetlands, and Vosburg Creek: looking at these you can see the impact of conservation projects we have increased in size in the last year alone through land donations and acquisition. To us humans these natural areas secure water quality and bring beauty and a sense of open space. To wildlife they provide protected areas; and for native trees and vegetation they safeguard undisturbed and life-supporting ecosystems.

Starting small is sometimes the best place to start. And the tremendous spirit of community that infuses everything we do is how good ideas grow into dreams and finally into dreams that come true. Thank you for dreaming with us.

13th Annual Harvest Festival!

Noon - 4:00 p.m.
Saturday, October 3, 2015
Alder Creek Farm

35955 Underhill Lane, Nehalem

Grab yer sweetheart, grab yer kids, and
grab yer neighbor, too!

- Live music
- Cider pressing
- Farmers' market
- Conservation tours
- Old fashioned bake sale
- Fun stuff for kids!

Be a Harvest Festival volunteer, call (503) 368-3203

Connect with Us Online!



Our home page features current events and more:
www.nehalemtrust.org



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Beading People & Place

Welcome Robert



The Trust is happy to welcome our new Development Director, Robert Wynia. With a storied professional background in the music business and the performing arts, Robert brings fresh, creative energy to the Nehalem Trust family.

Robert recently earned his M.S. degree in Environmental Science at University of Idaho. Throughout his studies he worked in outreach, education, and communications, areas of work he continues to enjoy.

Monica Gianopulos Departs Board



Monica has been a tireless and highly creative board member contributing untold hours on the ground as a stewardship and community garden volunteer, sharing her incredible culinary skills with the Trust, and also her positive energy and can-do approach to everything. We have been lucky to have her leadership, and we are delighted she will continue in her many volunteer pursuits with us. Thank you, Monica!

Stewardship Corner by Max Broderick



Every June since I was 13 I've escaped to Bristol Bay, Alaska, the last frontier. That's where my family's fishing operation sustainably harvests some of the world's most prolific wild salmon runs. While I was up north, I reflected with gratitude on my work with LNCT as Stewardship Coordinator.

It is important to monitor and maintain our lands, and in the last 6 months volunteers have helped with planting native vegetation, restoration projects, monitoring environmental conditions, and removing invasives. We've had many successful work parties with volunteers whose support and dedication are integral to my work, and for that I am thankful.

One great highlight was working with students from St. Mary's and Neahkanie Middle Schools and Nehalem and Garibaldi Grade Schools, who enjoyed learning while getting their hands dirty. Another highlight was working with Lower Nehalem Watershed Council on our Cedar Creek Wetlands preserve to improve the riparian habitat.

There are so many individuals, groups, agencies, and partnerships that make the stewardship program at LNCT effective and a pleasure to work with. And while I've been focused on the commercial salmon season in Bristol Bay, I've also been thinking of getting back out on LNCT's conservation lands to continue working for the benefit of our plants, animals, streams, and our community.

Living Locally Delights and Inspires

Summer 2015



photos by Max Broderick

For those who attended the 8th Annual Living Locally Gala & Auction, it was a night to remember. Nehalem Trust supporters, young and old, local and from afar, filled the hall for a night of food, friends, fundraising, and fun!

LNCT founders Georgenne and Gareth Ferdun celebrated Georgenne's birthday (with a rousing singing of "Happy Birthday" from the crowd) and Gwendolyn Endicott awarded local legend Doug Firstbrook the 2015 Ferdun Conservation Award. Recounting what inspires him to conservation work, Firstbrook's beautiful acceptance speech earned him a standing ovation.

Community gardener Karen Olson tugged at

everyone's heartstrings with her speech about family and the garden at Alder Creek Farm.

Chefs Tom Flood and Jonathan Hoffman presented mouth watering, locally sourced and inspired foods as bartenders poured regional beers and wines for the joyous gathering.

And of course there were the live and silent auctions! Bidding paddles flashed as everyone hoped to take home the art, gourmet foods, antiques, and amazing

experiences at auction. From exotic trips to Tuscany or Mexico to chef prepared dinners in your own home, from paintings to guided kayak tours and more, everyone was a winner. The auction's proceeds help us reach our goals of community, education, and conservation.

It was an inspiring and fun night for us all. The whole Nehalem Trust community came together, true to form, united by their connection with the land and people.

We owe a profound debt of gratitude to the many donors, sponsors, and tireless volunteers who all pitched in to make the evening so special. Plans for next year's Living Locally Gala & Auction are already brewing. Stay tuned!

Bringing the Tree Swallows Back

BY KAREN MATTHEWS

Encouraging a natural balance on our lands has long been a focus of LNCT, and our garden and orchard are no exception. This year we're working to provide tree swallows a place to thrive. These birds help balance the insect population, which benefits the fruit orchard at Alder Creek Farm and the Community Garden.

John Benson of the Nehalem Bay Garden Club built birdhouses aimed at attracting tree swallows and worked with us to install them throughout the Farm. It wasn't long before the swallows began to take up residence.

Tree swallow populations have declined 36% over the last 40 years as they have lost habitat to human uses. But thankfully they are adaptable birds and will take up residence in simple box birdhouses. They eat a high-insect diet and are effective in balancing pests in the orchard.

There are several species of swallows in our area, but the tree and violet green swallows most need our help.

John currently is making a few hundred more houses and would love to get these put up all around the three villages to attract and help the birds reproduce.



Campers Noah Herman, Nathaniel Tinnes, and Nick Jones paint swallow houses.
photo by Gary Seelig

Mission

To preserve land and nurture conservation values in partnership with an engaged community in the Nehalem region of the Oregon Coast.

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Forest to Sea Day Camp Connects Children with Nature

BY SPENCER THOMAS

The Lower Nehalem Community Trust's second annual Forest to Sea Day Camp was held recently at the Trust's outdoor classroom, Alder Creek Farm. The camp provides kids a unique opportunity to explore the splendor of the Nehalem River Valley on this former dairy farm, now preserved in its natural state by the Trust.



Campers say "Cheese!" photo by Gary Seelig

Alder Creek Farm "serves as habitat for elk, deer, many migratory and resident birds, and a full assortment of native plants," said Trust Education Co-Chair Gary Seelig. "It's a great place for children to explore."

"Most students hold an inner knowl-

edge of what we call 'conservation values' – caring for their place on this planet, understanding the basic habitat needs for all creatures," said Seelig.

"If we reinforce these values at an early age, children will carry with them a more comprehensive concept of wholeness and interconnectedness as they move along in life."

In addition to exploring the Farm, campers took field trips to local natural attractions Nehalem Bay State Park, Kilchis Point Reserve, and Oswald West State Park.

Run by educator and marine biologist Peter Walczak, the camp connects young students with the vibrant natural ecosystems of our region. Campers garden, study tide pools and freshwater marshes, collect plant samples, hike, and fossil hunt, and they keep nature journals of their experiences.

Forest to Sea Day Camp is made possible by the generous support of Juan Young Trust, Eugene Schmuck Foundation, and the Tinker, Ulwelling and Coleman families.

Countdown to Cape Falcon Marine Reserve

BY NADIA GARDNER

Fifteen years after marine reserves were first seriously proposed in Oregon, the Cape Falcon Marine Reserve will go into effect January 1, 2016. This underwater park is 6 miles long and 3 miles wide, from north Falcon Cove to the north end of Manzanita's beach (Neahkahnie). The ocean off the 2,500-acre Oswald West State Park is part of the reserve, extending the park from land to sea.

Marine reserves are conservation areas set aside to protect biodiversity, where human take of living and non-living resources is prohibited. These protected areas can serve as reference areas for scientific research. Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) are areas protected for a specific conservation purpose, allowing for some uses. In 2012, Oregon designated 5 MPA complexes down our coastline - from north to south: Cape Falcon, Cascade Head, Otter Rock, Cape Perpetua and Redfish Rocks (Port Orford). All of them are now in effect, except for Cape Falcon.

The second largest in Oregon's Marine Reserve network, the Cape Falcon complex consists of a marine reserve from

shore out to about 2 miles. It prohibits all take of wildlife and seaweeds as well as ocean development. West of that, only salmon line fishing and crabbing are allowed out to the state line, 3 miles from shore. The exception is along Falcon Cove beach, where you can recreationally clam, crab or fish from the sandy shore.

Friends of Cape Falcon Marine Reserve, a local group, has formed to help get the word out to the community and visitors. LNCT is an active member and the group's fiscal sponsor. The

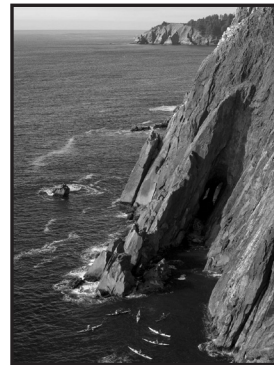


photo by Brion J Will

group is bringing in scientists to give talks about the marine environment, leading walks and hikes, and helping teachers educate youth. Science educator and marine scientist Chrissy Smith is the group's new Outreach Coordinator.

For more information, newsletter signup, and to get involved visit:

www.oregonmarinereserves.org, or:
www.facebook.com/CapeFalconMR

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