



Molalla River Watch is dedicated to the enhancement, restoration, protection, beautification, and preservation of the Molalla River Watershed

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# Splashes from the Molalla River

Fall 2015

## Executive Director Year End Wrap Up article by Kay Patteson

As fall colors fade into winter's beauty, we reflect back on our accomplishments in 2015. Molalla River Watch (MRW) has again received support from Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB) as the Molalla River Watershed Council. This will allow us to continue to work on projects to enhance and protect the Molalla River Watershed. Activities included numerous restoration projects, environmental education, fish population surveys, stream surveys, organizational improvements, and community outreach. Our signature events included two River Cleanups held in spring and fall along with many trail improvement events for hiking, mountain biking, and horseback riding on public lands in the Molalla River Corridor.

Over 150 MRW Board, staff, members, and volunteers contributed approximately 1,100 hours of volunteer time. The fact that the amount of garbage collected during each of our two annual river cleanup events has been greatly reduced confirms that persistence will eventually provide positive results. We still refer to the April Earth Day event and October Adopt-A-River event as Cleanups but have added native tree plantings or trail improvement activities to each event.

We continued to monitor projects like the fish barrier removal project on Cedar Creek (Molalla tributary) and began working with another Cedar Creek landowner to help them develop a habitat improvement



Poker riders got to enjoy local trails, learn about sharing trails, and raise money for trail maintenance. Photo by Mark Schmidt.

project for their property. They provided pictures of native winter steelhead spawning a short distance below the new Forest Road Bridge. The young of these adult fish now have access to 2.5 miles of Cedar Creek for rearing before they travel to the ocean.

The Board of Directors of Molalla River Watch is made up of folks that live, work, and play in the Molalla River Watershed. Please consider becoming a member and/or serving on the Board of Directors to help guide the organization to enhance and protect fish and wildlife habitat, water quality, and the quality of life for all residents of the Molalla River Watershed.



Diligent volunteers restored this heavily used dispersed campsite into a native plant riparian zone that will create wildlife habitat and make the river more beautiful!

## Volunteers Help Cleanup River for People & Wildlife

**M**olalla River Watch and volunteers have been cleaning up the Molalla River since 1992 and it shows! Trash levels have significantly decreased since we adopted 12 miles of the Molalla River through the SOLVE Adopt-A-River program 23 years ago.

We had great turn outs for our annual spring and fall Molalla River Cleanup and Corridor Enhancement Events. The April 18 Cleanup had 45 volunteers who collected 1,020 pounds of trash (including a mattress, a huge pile of household garbage dumped into a creek, and 3 tires). Some volunteers cleared branches and trees from 8 miles of the Molalla



Hardworking cub scout learned how to plant trees and become a steward for his local watershed.

River Corridor trail system. Thirty-seven volunteers came out on October 17 and collected 680 pounds of trash, including a couch. Volunteers also cleared debris from an illegal camp and shooting area. Some volunteers (including Cub Scout Pack

161) planted 60 native trees and shrubs to restore former campsites.

After working hard to keep the Molalla River healthy and beautiful, everyone returned to Feyrer Park in the afternoon for a River Cleanup Celebration and Volunteer Appreciation Barbecue.

We would also like to give a special thanks to Ellen Thronson for volunteering to barbecue every cleanup (yum!), Dumpstoppers for hauling the trash, and Bonnie DePriest of Johnson Controls for coordinating a \$1,000 donation and 5 volunteers through their Blue Sky program.

**“One touch  
of nature  
makes the  
whole world  
kin.”  
- William  
Shakespeare**

## 21<sup>st</sup> Annual Poker Ride Fundraiser for Trails

On September 17<sup>th</sup>, happy people and horses got to enjoy a nice day on local trails, play poker, win prizes, and raise money for trail improvements. Sixty-four people participated in Molalla River Watch’s 21<sup>st</sup> Horses, Hikers, and Mountain Bikers Poker Ride. This fundraiser



Mountain bikers visiting a card drawer station to help complete their lucky hands! Photo by Olivia Thomas.



Poker ride participants enjoying a hearty lunch after a ride on Molalla River Recreation Corridor Trails. Photo by Mark Schmidt.

raises money for trail work within the Molalla River Recreation Corridor and brings all user groups (equestrians, mountain bikers, and hikers) together to share the trails harmoniously.

Thanks to all of our participants and sponsors who provided prizes for our raffle. A special thanks to the Valley View Riders who donated the \$100 top prize for the best poker hand.



Jim and a volunteer scoping out western painted turtles in a pond near Molalla River State Park.

*“I go to nature to be soothed and healed, and to have my senses put in order.”*  
 - John Burroughs

## Turtle Surveys Have Been Completed for 2015

Did you know that some ponds in the Molalla River Watershed are great turtle habitats and some have potential to be great? In June, we finished up turtle surveys with Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW). They are interested in finding where turtles are living within Clackamas County.

Molalla River Watch asked locals to contact us with tips on where to find ponds that may have turtles. Jim Holley, a volunteer coordinator and experienced turtle surveyor for ODFW, led

volunteers to find turtles around Molalla and Canby. We were able to find native western painted and western pond turtles, in addition to non-native red-eared sliders.



Western painted turtles have a colorful plastron, or bottom shell.

- Turtles like to bask on warm days in spring and summer because they are ectotherms and need warmth for metabolism, growth, and development. However, if it's too hot out, they hang out in cool places like muck at the bottom of ponds. Turtles are uncomfortable if it's too hot or too cold because they can't regulate their body temperature.



Western pond turtles are listed as critical on the State Sensitive Species list.

Since this was Molalla River Watch's first season surveying for turtles, we learned a lot about them.

- Turtles are very skittish and can hear you coming. They will dive underwater before you see them.



Non-native red-eared sliders, usually former pets, are released in ponds where they compete with native turtles for food and territory.

**Jim Holley** will give a public presentation on the amphibian egg mass & turtle surveys on Tuesday, March 22nd, 2016, 7pm at the Molalla Library. **Please join us!**



Wilderness International Youth Conservation Corps.

## Notes from the Chair article by Bill Taylor

**T**his past year has been rewarding for me as Chair of Molalla River Watch Watershed Council and I am looking forward to more projects in the coming year. This fall, we will finish work restoring former dispersed campsites with funding help from a DEQ 319 Non-Point Source Implementation Grant. Volunteers planted 60 plants at two sites during the fall SOLVE river clean up and restoration event. Current-

ly, we are preparing a large site for planting several hundred trees in early December. Canby Utility Board has generously donated equipment and two staff crew members to help get the site ready for planting.

This past summer, I worked with Wilderness International Youth Conservation Corps crews to build over one mile of new trail. I will be working with the International Mountain Biking

Association's (IMBA) Trail Solutions Crew to plan and implement additional upgrades and new trails within the Molalla River Trail System. The Trail Solutions team has experience on over 350 trail projects in the US and eight other countries. Thanks to the Salem District Bureau of Land Management recreation planners for supporting new recreational trails and making the partnership with IMBA possible.

## New Fish Data on Small Streams Around Molalla

**W**e have new information on small streams in the lower portion of the Molalla and Milk Creek Watersheds. Ted Labbe, a fish biologist, was hired by Molalla River Watch to complete fish

surveys in April and May. We wanted a more accurate picture of where fish live by looking at smaller streams that have never been surveyed, correcting map errors, and surveying road crossings (potential passage barriers).



Volunteer learning how to survey fish. Photo by Ted Labbe.



Ted Labbe and volunteer surveying small streams that may never have been surveyed before.

Ted did a great job of recruiting volunteers from local community colleges to help while he taught them his survey techniques. Ted and his volunteers spent 17 days in the field and documented 7 miles of new fish-bearing streams, mainly with resident cutthroat trout. This is a 10.7% increase in the length of cutthroat trout-bearing streams (above the anadromous zone) within the Lower Molalla and Milk Creek Watersheds. They also documented 3 miles of new streams, not on the Oregon Dept. of Forestry maps.

Thirty-six road crossings were surveyed, concentrating on locations where Oregon Dept. of Fish & Wildlife indicated there was uncertainty about fish passage. Ted classified 14 of these as not barriers, 10 as partial barriers, 11 as full barriers, and one as a potential barrier needing additional survey work.

This new information on fish habitat is vitally important in making effective restoration and conservation decisions in the future.

***Ted Labbe***  
***will give a***  
***public***  
***presentation***  
***on his fish***  
***surveys on***  
***Tuesday,***  
***January***  
***26th, 2016,***  
***7pm at the***  
***Molalla***  
***Library.***  
***Please join***  
***us!***

## 15 Water Saving Tips When Flows Are Low in the Molalla River

Oregon experienced a drought this past summer. Keeping more water in the rivers will buffer salmon and trout from high water temperatures and low water levels. Drought conditions cause stress and increase disease susceptibility, force fish to seek out remote cooler waters, and can cause an increase in pre-spawn mortality. Low flows in the Molalla River Watershed caused water use restrictions for some area residents.



Oregon showing severe drought (orange) and extreme drought (red) for September 8, 2015. <http://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/>

Here are some water saving tips that we gathered from <http://wateruseitwisely.com>:

### TO SAVE WATER OUTSIDE YOUR HOME:

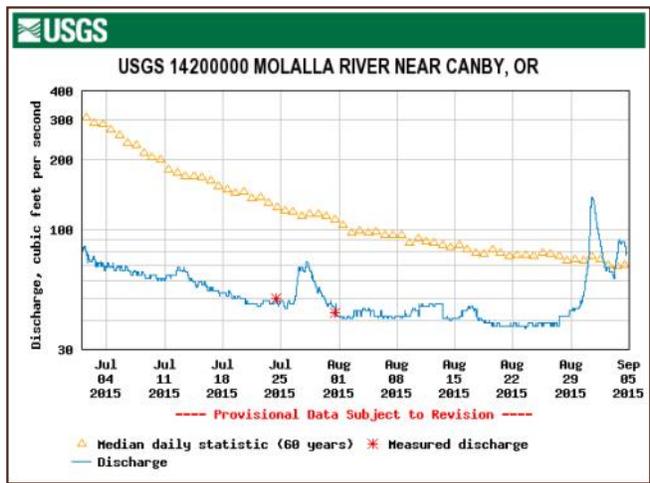
1. Use 2 to 4 inches of mulch around plants to reduce evaporation.
2. Catch water in an empty tuna can to

measure sprinkler output. 3/4 to 1 inch of water is enough to apply each time you irrigate.

3. Use a trowel to examine soil moisture depth. If the top 2 to 3 inches of soil are dry, it's time to water.
4. Group plants with the same watering needs together to avoid overwatering some while underwatering others.
5. Use a broom instead of a hose to clean patios, sidewalks and driveways.
6. Use a hose nozzle or turn off the water while you wash your car.
7. Wash your pets outdoors, in an area of your lawn that needs water.
8. Aerate your lawn periodically. Holes every six inches will allow water to reach the roots, rather than run off the surface.
9. Plant in the spring and fall, when the watering requirements are lower.

### TO SAVE WATER INSIDE YOUR HOME:

10. Collect the water you use while rinsing fruits and vegetables. Use it to water house plants.
11. Turn off the water



Gaging station data from Canby showing low flows (blue) for July and August 2015, below median flow for past 60 years (orange).

12. Designate one glass for your drinking water each day, or refill a water bottle. This will cut down on the number of glasses to wash.
13. Shorten your shower by a minute or two and you'll save up to 150 gallons per month.
14. While you wait for hot water, collect the running water and use it to water plants.
15. When you give your pet fresh water, don't throw the old water down the drain. Use it to water your trees or shrubs.



Molalla River upstream of bridge by Feyrer Park on August 20, 2015.

## The Molalla River Steps Closer to Becoming an Oregon Scenic Waterway

The upper section of the Molalla River may be preserved for future generations to enjoy its outstanding natural and recreation values. Molalla River Watch Chair, Bill Taylor, is part of the Advisory Committee that worked with Oregon Parks & Recreation Department to draft a Molalla River Management Plan for the potential designation of the upper Molalla River, from Table Rock Fork downstream to the Glen Avon Bridge, as an Oregon Scenic Waterway.

### What is an Oregon Scenic Waterway?

An Oregon Scenic Waterway is a stretch of river that is protected to preserve its existing scenic, natural, and recreational values. The Oregon Scenic Waterways Act was voted on and established in 1970 by the people of Oregon and there are currently 20 designated waterways. The area protected is the river, its shoreline, and all tributaries and land within one quarter mile of its banks.

### Who is in charge of administering protection?

Oregon Parks & Recreation Department (OPRD) is in charge of administering the Oregon Scenic Waterways Act. Through a notification and review process, OPRD determines whether new developments along the waterway fit in and are concealed to protect natural and scenic diversity.

### Why the Molalla River?

No new waterways had been designated since 1988 and in 2013, Governor Kitzhaber directed OPRD to look into new potential waterways every two years. Based on waterway eligibility findings and public support, the OPRD



Common mergansers enjoying the spectacular Molalla River.



The Rosette Basalt formation is one of many scenic views along the Molalla River.

Commission narrowed their search and recommended designation of sections of the Chetco and Molalla Rivers in 2014.

### Where are we in the designation process?

The Oregon Parks & Recreation Commission and the Oregon Water Resources Commission is reviewing the Molalla River Management Plan and public comments to make a recommendation to designate the waterway.

### What's next?

The Governor can choose to designate the Molalla River as an Oregon Scenic Waterway.



## FUN FACTS ABOUT ANIMALS FOUND IN THE MOLALLA RIVER WATERSHED!



**Sculpin** lack a swim bladder and live in cover on the stream bottom. Photo by Ted Labbe.



**Pacific giant salamander**, the largest native amphibian in Oregon, can grow up to a foot long. Some eat insects, snails, lizards, rodents, snakes, and other salamanders. Photo by Ted Labbe.



**Lamprey** have cartilage instead of bones, and are the oldest fish alive today (found in 500 million year old fossils). Photo by Ted Labbe.

# GET INVOLVED!

## HELP ENHANCE AND PROTECT THE MOLALLA RIVER



You can also become a member and make donations on our website: [www.molallariverwatch.org](http://www.molallariverwatch.org)

Please print \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email (for event contact) \_\_\_\_\_

Area of Interest \_\_\_\_\_

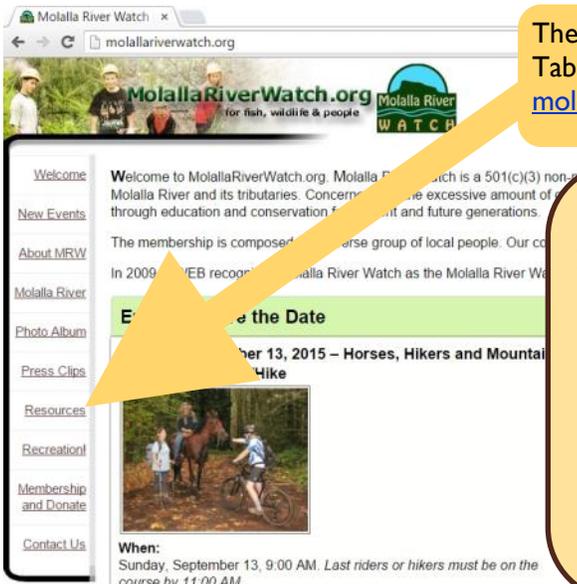
- Volunteer
- Donate services, equipment, or materials
  
- \$20 Individual
- \$25 Family
- \$50 Friend
- \$100 Steward
- \$250 River Patron
- \$\_\_\_\_\_ Other
  
- New Member
- Membership Renewal
  
- I would like information on corporate/business membership

**Make Checks Payable,  
Detach, and Mail To:**

**MOLALLA RIVER WATCH, INC.**  
P.O. Box 867  
MOLALLA, OR 97038-0867

Phone: 503-824-2195    Email: [riverwatch@molalla.net](mailto:riverwatch@molalla.net)    Website: [www.molallariverwatch.org](http://www.molallariverwatch.org)    *All Contributions are Tax Deductible!*

## ON THE WEB



The Molalla River Watch website has a new **RESOURCES** Tab & Page! Check it out on our website, <http://molallariverwatch.org/resources.html>

Our new **RESOURCES** Page has links to general resources, gardening in the Pacific Northwest, and attracting wildlife to your Pacific Northwest backyard.

- *Who do you contact about your backyard weed problem?*
- *Ever wonder why native plants are important to plant in your backyard?*
- *Have you tried to attract birds to your yard, but not sure why you don't see more?*

You can answer all of these questions, ***and much more***, from our new **RESOURCES** Page on our webpage.

Please like us on Facebook and get Facebook updates on our upcoming events and see what Molalla River Watch is working on now!



Molalla River Watch, Inc.  
P.O. Box 867  
Molalla, OR 97038-0867

## UPCOMING EVENTS

- **Jan. 26th** - Ted Labbe presentation on local fish surveys & Molalla River Watch Board Meeting 7pm at the Molalla Public Library
- **Feb. 23rd** - Molalla River Watch Board Meeting 7pm at the Molalla Public Library

See website for more details

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**Follow us on Facebook,  
too!**



# MOLALLA RIVER WATCH, INC.

## Purpose

- To promote and encourage the enhancement, restoration, protection, beautification and preservation of the Molalla River for the educational, recreational and monetary benefit of the community and public and for the benefit of future generations
- To promote and encourage interest in watershed preservation and ecological matters, particularly as such matters pertain to the Molalla River or to the Molalla River Corridor
- To conduct meetings, seminars, events, outings and educational activities for the purpose of fostering and promoting public interest in and knowledge of the Molalla River Watershed

## Mission Statement

To preserve, protect and restore fish and wildlife habitat and water quality of the Molalla River Watershed through education, conservation and restoration activities for present and future generations