

# Marys Peak Group

## THE BENCHMARK

Winter 2011

MPG established 1970

[www.oregon.sierraclub.org/groups/marys\\_peak](http://www.oregon.sierraclub.org/groups/marys_peak)

### Why are we drinking Eugene's Sewer Water when we could be drinking our own?

There is an elephant in our living rooms here in Corvallis, and it is water. Where does it come from, how much is there, and what do we do with it when we have used it? Oregon's Department of Environment Quality (DEQ) has told us we have to mend our ways.



*Lon Otterby*

Here are the three challenges we face as we look at our consumption of water over the next 50 years.

1. Corvallis is still polluting the Willamette River in spite of great improvements with our waste water system. Oregon's DEQ tells us that the treated waste water that we dump back into the Willamette is far too hot, too full of nitrates, too full of pharmaceuticals, and too full of personal care products for a healthy river.

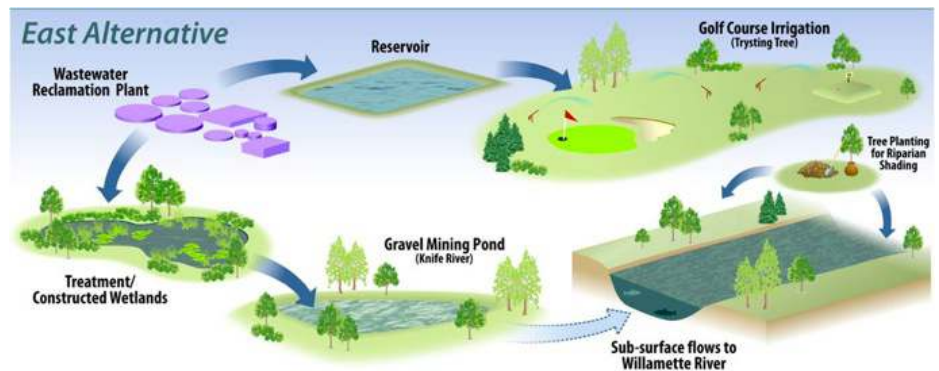
2. The water we treat for dumping into the Willamette comes from two main sources, our sewers and our storm drains. We receive our drinking water from two sources; the Taylor Treatment Plant south of town pumps 60% our water from the Willamette, and the Rock Creek Treatment Plant pumps 40% our water from the Mary's Peak Watershed. The water we get from the Willamette includes treated sewer water from all the cities and towns up stream including Eugene.

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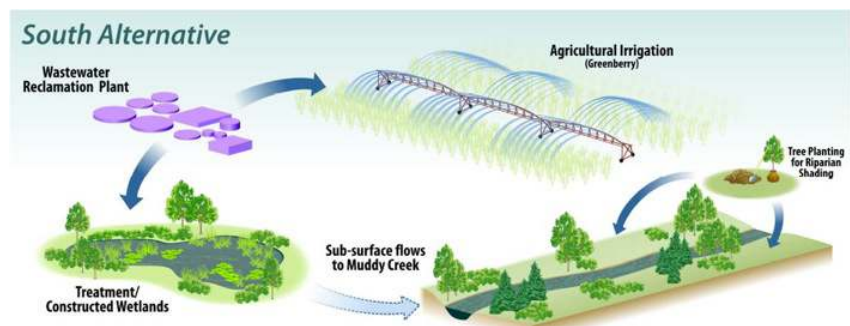
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3. Worldwide drinking water is getting increasingly contaminated. In addition, there is a problem of availability. While water availability is growing at 0.5 per cent annually, the demand is increasing by 10.5 per cent. Completely new technologies are needed for clean water and such technologies have stringent conditions. No/low energy demand, no environmental impact, lowest cost and adaptability to local conditions are some of those conditions. There is an urgent need to look at new approaches.

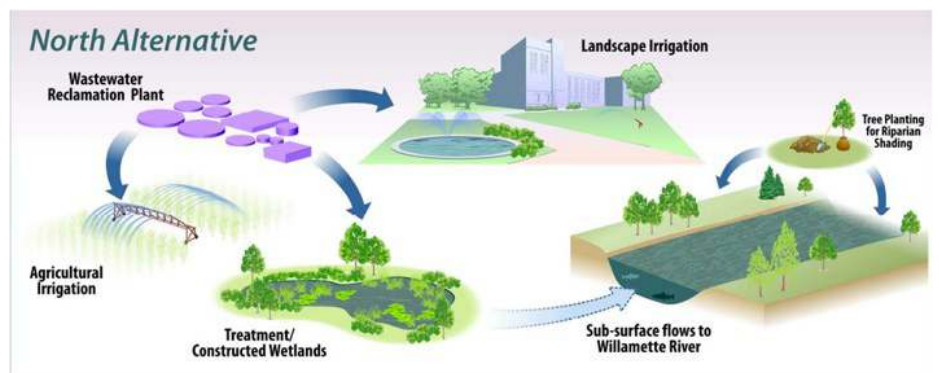
The City of Corvallis has come up with three solutions to the treated water discharge problem. They are based on historically and ecologically sound solutions shown in the diagrams below. However these solutions show no imagination or use of new technologies available. They do include some water temperature mitigation by planting trees along riparian corridors. However how many problems can we solve by just planting more trees? Also, the city does not address the problem of where we will find our drinking water in the future or how will we keep personal care products and pharmaceuticals out of our sewers with these plans. These plans are scored on a magic scored card by the city's hired analysts.



This plan scores highest on the city's score card with the estimated 50-year lifecycle cost of \$14.9 million; the TBL score is 84, and the carbon footprint is 130 metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub>. Notice that the reclaimed water must be piped across the Willamette River.



This plan scores third on the city's score card with the estimated 50-year lifecycle cost of \$45.6 million; the TBL score is 55, and the carbon footprint is 580 metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub>. This plan pipes the reclaimed water 12 miles south of town to Muddy Creek.



This plan scores second on the city's score card with the estimated 50-year lifecycle cost of \$25.9 million; the TBL score is 71, and the carbon footprint is 130 metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub>.

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There are many other possible solutions for the treated water discharge problem, some very expensive, some not feasible for our environment, and there is one new player on the block that answers several of our present and future needs. It is the new technology of using nano-filters and reverse osmosis to turn sewage water into, **yes, drinking water**. This technology is innovative, it requires little energy to operate, and it gives some truly amazing possibilities to our community.

One, it gives us a new source of drinking water so we do not have to rely so heavily on the reclaimed water from the Willamette. Two, it gives us a great opportunity to join

## MPG Executive Committee

Bruce Encke, Chair  
Debra Higbee-Sudyka, Vice  
Chair  
Julie Arrington  
Bob Custer  
Ray Drapek  
Marcia Shapiro  
Irene Schoppy

### Non-Excom:

Leslie Hogan, Secretary  
Denise Cooper, Treasurer  
Janet Lincoln, Membership  
Chair

[www.oregon.sierraclub.org/groups/  
marys\\_peak](http://www.oregon.sierraclub.org/groups/marys_peak)

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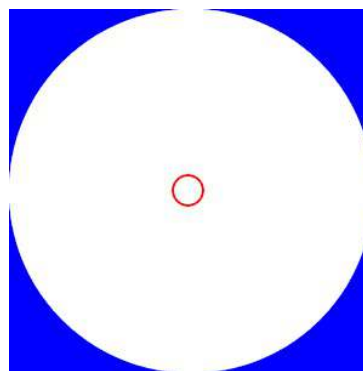
Dave Hackenyos  
Benchmark Publisher  
[hackenyos@me.com](mailto:hackenyos@me.com)

with Oregon State University and the business community to perfect a new technology.

Three, it gives us the opportunity to create a viable light industry of building these filters for ourselves and to sell this product up and down the Willamette to other water treatment facilities facing the same dilemma. And four, maybe best of all, it solves our problem of discharging treated water into the Willamette. We instead keep and

reuse this water. A side benefit of this solution is the jobs created by this new light industry in or near Corvallis. This is a crucial plus in a sagging economy and a devastating job market.

Okay what is nano and what is the big deal? A nano is one billionth, so a nano-meter is one billionth of a meter. This



The large circle represents current filtration size of .3 microns (300 nm).

The smaller circle represents nano-filtration size of a .027-micron (27 nm).

comparison shows the difference of micron-filters and nano-filters. Examples of viruses that can pass through current micron-filters but not nano-filters are: Hepatitis B, HIV, Ebola, Hanta, Influenza A/B/C, and SARS.

Whatever solution the city opts for we must re-use the water, re-charge the water table, and move all treated discharge water out of the Willamette and Mary's Rivers.

Thanks to Tom Penpraze, Utilities Division Manager, and City of Corvallis for the drawings and data.

For additional information, go to:

[ExecutiveSummary.pdf](#)

[Commercial Reverse Osmosis](#)



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## Chair Retrospect

So what does it take to make Marys Peak Group what it is.... All of you !!!

It is the friendship that we share and the time we spend together that makes it all fun. We come together each with our own individual ideals and perspectives, and we share a common goal to explore, enjoy, and protect the world around us.

As we come to the end of 2010, I would like to pause to thank the many people who have done so much to make this year such a great year for all of us in Marys Peak Group. Many thanks go out to all who take the time to lead an outing and share your favorite place or trail or river. There is no way to list you all here – but I thank you. Of course, there was the 2010 MPG Executive committee, consisting of Debra Higbee, Bob Custer, Doris deLespinnasse, Ralph Nafziger, Leslie Hogan, and Ray Drapek. All worked well together to make this year a great year for MPG.

A few special individuals who deserve thanks for their contributions and achievements include: Debra Higbee, our vice ex-com chair and political/environment team coordinator, who knows how to pick the right candidates for the right actions; Doris deLespinnasse, our outings chair, who manages to organize ten times more outings per year than any other group in Oregon; Marcia Shapiro, our evening programs coordinator, who brings interesting and relevant speakers to enlighten Corvallis; Ray Drapek, our nominations committee chair, who found the right people to help us in 2011; Janet Lincoln, our membership chair, who is at the table sharing MPG with everyone she meets; Denise Cooper who keeps track of our finances; Leslie Hogan, our ex-com secretary, who tells us what we really said; Jane Luther, our “track and help with everything” chair, who is really behind most of what gets done around here; Barry Wulff, our chief communications chair, who

pulls together the Benchmark and Peak View and all that we all depend on (of course he has the publishing help of Dave Hackenyos and all of you who send articles and pictures - special thanks to

Ricardo Small ); Tom Bucht, our web master, who maintains our website but also is a huge help with trail work and overall keeps us on track and in the black (financially); David Eckhart, our arboretum guru, who has done so much in 2010 to lead our efforts in establishing a native tree arboretum at Corvallis High School; and Lon Otterby, our water conservation lead, who gained so much local support for establishing marine reserves here in Oregon that resolutions were approved by the Benton County Democrats and Linn County Democrats and so much more still to come. I am sure there are others who are not listed here but who have helped in many ways to make MPG great.

For the year to come, I hope that each of you will bring your talents and experiences and get more involved with Marys Peak Group. If you like to hike, then lead some hikes. If you care about the wilderness or environment, get involved to help protect them for generations to come. There are some difficult elections coming up, and we need to be prepared and get active now, way in advance. Help! Get Involved! Whatever your talents, bring them on and see how much of a difference you can make and how much fun it is in the process. Marys Peak Group is a great family of people who share a common goal to explore, enjoy, and protect the world around us. Come join the fun!

See you on a hike soon, *Bruce Encke*



*Bruce Encke*  
Chair, Marys Peak Group

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## *Politics, Spirituality & the Environment*

by Debra Higbee-Sudyka

If ever there was a time to be politically active, it is now. Equally great is the need to supply what's missing: a spiritual understanding, an understanding that we are all connected, as well as a politics of gratitude, humility, reciprocity, and simplicity. Because what is at stake is not only the water we drink, the air we breathe, the soil in which we grow our food, but the beautiful landscapes that feed our spirit.

This assertion is not well received in certain circles. Therefore, mentioning that spirituality is a vital part of effective political work never enters into my conversations, despite my being MPG's political chair and having earned a degree in the subject<sup>1</sup>. My hesitation may stem from the issue of separation between "Church and State," which has strong and important historical roots. However, separation was not meant to be banishment. When we leave out the spiritual component, many environmental issues become unworkable.

I'm not advocating that what's missing is a certain religious orientation. Rather, it is a frame of mind, a mindfulness of one's actions, and an understanding that all things are connected. For example, in the act of obtaining resources, without our having a spirit of gratitude, humility, reciprocity, or simplicity, we may deplete those resources

because we don't have an interrelative awareness or personal relationship with them. Without this understanding, we may take things for granted.

Mindfulness can change our consciousness. For example, when considered from a perspective of gratitude, a river's presence becomes more than just a thing to us: it becomes something to be valued. A more reverent relationship helps us to see interconnections – that the quality and quantity of the water in a river is related to



Debra Higbee-Sudyka

everything along its path. A denuded hillside along the riverbank lacks the root system and canopy that were provided by trees. It therefore cannot retain and clean the water flowing down the hillside. This, in turn, affects microorganisms in its soil, the

river and its wildlife, and the people who depend upon them. A shift in how we view things, from unrelated to interrelated, has ecological and social benefits.

Political engagement in the world is needed now more than ever, because our impact seems to be going up exponentially because of the ever-increasing size of our

Photo by Paul Shively



Coal pit at Powder River Basin

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machines<sup>2</sup>. Consider, for example, how we are mining coal and shale. With a perfect storm brewing that includes loosening regulations, lax EPA standards, modified or unenforced Clean Air Act, Safe Drinking Water Act, and Clean Water Act,<sup>3</sup> we are interfering with natural systems on a scale never before realized. A few examples:

**Mountaintop Mining:** Coal companies remove entire mountaintops to extract coal, using machines that weigh up to eight million pounds, can be as tall as a 20-story building, and have a base as big as a gymnasium. A small crew can tear apart a mountain in less than a year. Excess rock and soil laden with toxic mining byproducts are often dumped into nearby valleys.<sup>4</sup>

**Hydraulic Fracturing:** This involves drilling 8,000 feet into the Earth and injecting one to eight million gallons of pressurized water to fracture shale deposits. For each frack, 80-300 tons of chemicals may be used.<sup>5</sup> This inexcusable practice exposes people to illness from polluted water seeping into their wells; it also sacrifices mountain streams, and precious plant and animal ecosystems in some of our nation's most beautiful regions.

**Oil Shale/Tar Sands Mining:** Canada, the Great Plains, and the Rocky Mountain West, hold vast oil shale deposits. With astonishing speed, U.S. oil companies, pipeline builders, and investors world-wide are rushing in and spending billions to extract oil from these deposits. If these deposits are mined, the ensuing environmental devastation will be unprecedented. Processing the shale creates huge reservoirs of toxic byproducts or tailings. It takes four to six barrels of water to produce one barrel of tar sands oil.<sup>6</sup> "Oil sands production will probably climb from 1.2 million barrels a day to about four million barrels in 2025,"<sup>7</sup> It's easy to realize

that water supplies will be hugely affected. Our advanced ability to extract the earth's resources gives sorely needed jobs and resources to a people and an economy in recession. This hushes the questions: "at what cost to the environment, to us, or to future generations?" A lot of these projects are in states and regions profoundly affected by recession and in sparsely populated areas where the misrepresented rural poor or subsistence populations reside. The pressure to go forward is enormous. Yet even though the sites are far away from us – in the Appalachian mountains of Kentucky or in Alberta, Canada, an interconnective understanding joins the loss of their land and its healthy ecosystems to our ultimate loss.

Photo by Paul Shively



Open pit mine at Powder river Basin, where Oregon gets its coal

A spiritually-oriented frame of mind is essential in changing our relationships from an egoistic, materialistic, or thing-oriented relationship to one that is, as Martin Buber explains it, an I – Thou relationship.<sup>8</sup> This way of "seeing" takes practice, choice, and consciousness. We are used to seeing things as separate, not interconnected, to look at it again, to re-View it with an I – Thou vision, is to re-Spect it, which is a very important part of any relationship.



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To take this spiritual perspective into the world is a challenge. Nevertheless, to leave it out produces an incomplete picture. And it is sorely needed, especially given our sophisticated ability to draw resources from the earth at a long-term cost that is not worth the short-term gain.

If you are interested in getting politically involved, come join the Political/Environmental Team as we explore what's happening and what we can do about it. Contact Debra Higbee-Sudyka [dwhigbe@juno.com](mailto:dwhigbe@juno.com) to find out when the next coffee/tea get together will be.

<sup>1</sup> Masters Degree, "Ecological Spirituality," University of Oregon, 2004

<sup>2</sup> Gigantic machine parts (for machines as big as five-story buildings) are unloaded in Vancouver, barged up the Colombia to Lewiston, Idaho. "Oil sands work hits an Idaho roadblock: Lack of road permits halts massive modules rolling north to produce oil for the U.S. in Alberta," by Richard Read, The Oregonian, December 6, 2010

<sup>3</sup> For example the Bush/ Cheney Energy Bill exempted natural gas drilling from the Safe Drinking Water Act. It prevents the Environmental Protection Agency from protecting us from fracking or oil shale mining.

<sup>4</sup> [what-is-mountaintop-removal-mining](#), and see The Sierra Club's position at [Coal\\_Mining\\_Tracker](#)

<sup>5</sup> [gaslandthemovie.com/whats-fracking](http://gaslandthemovie.com/whats-fracking)

<sup>6</sup> [www.gao.gov/products/GAO-11-35](http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-11-35)

<sup>7</sup> "Portland pump maker sitting pretty," by Richard Read, The Oregonian, December 6, 2010

<sup>8</sup> Martin Buber, I and Thou, translated by Ronald Gregor Smith. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958

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Article and photo submission guidelines: MPG welcomes your articles and photos. Please keep articles to a maximum of 1,500 words. Photos should be in jpg format, 300 dpi when possible.

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## Leader Profile: Jim and Nancye Ballard

by Lori Fluge-Brunker

For more than ten years, Jim and Nancye Ballard have teamed up to lead hikes for the Marys Peak Group.

Given their experiences growing up, it's not surprising that they both became outing leaders. Surrounded by the natural world, Jim was born in Wyoming and raised on his family's farm and ranch in southeastern Colorado. He hiked and explored the local canyons in his teen years, searching for Indian artifacts.

Nancye is from a military family, and lived in several different places throughout her youth. She was active in Girl Scouts from second through ninth grades, and participated in several camp outings.

Both greatly enjoy the outdoors, and say the Sierra Club motto perfectly describes their beliefs on the value of spending time in nature: Safe, Happy, Inspired. For Jim and Nancye, the inspired part is what makes the Sierra Club more than a recreational organization.

"Being outdoors offers me an opportunity to see different places and enjoy the natural surroundings,"

says Jim. "I particularly enjoy taking pictures outdoors."

Nancye finds the time she spends outside as therapeutic. "Unless the weather is truly dreadful, I never regret a moment I spend on the trail," she said.

After graduating from the University of Arizona in 1965, Jim went to work as a seasonal ranger and naturalist at Petrified Forest National Park in Arizona. After returning for a second season in 1966, he met Nancye, who was also working there.

Jim's first boss at Petrified Forest, Larry Henderson, was inspirational to him as he was the first person Jim knew to promote the Sierra Club.

"That job provided me the opportunity to work with groups," said Jim. "The first tours I guided were walks around the 'Big Log' behind the museum at the south end of the park. I realized I had the chance to open others' minds to things they might not have thought of before. I worked two summers at Petrified Forest and two more at the North Rim of the Grand Canyon."

Nancye's inspiration came



*Jim and Nancye*

from a brother and sister pair, Stanley and Adeline. "Stanley and Adeline participated in the first national outing that Jim and I led to Stehekin near Lake Chelan, Washington," says Nancye. "Adeline celebrated her 80th birthday while on that outing. She didn't hike fast, but she was relentless. Stanley, two years younger, was one of the strongest hikers we've ever been around."

Other inspirational people in their lives include park ranger Doug Follett, whom they met in 2009 at Glacier National Park. Doug worked as a seasonal ranger and naturalist at Glacier for 50 years, and is still going strong; and Bill Gifford, a Portland resident who has organized and led at least one backpacking trip yearly for more than 25 years through the National



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Outings program.

The first MPG hike Jim and Nancye participated in was their most memorable. As they recall, the hike took place in October 1996 at Opal Creek and was led by the late Phil Schary.

“We were out of shape and poorly outfitted, and, not surprisingly for the time of year, it rained steadily most of the way. That was back before the bridge near Opal Pool had been constructed, meaning that hikers walked on the road to Jawbone Flats and back part way, at which point they could cross a different bridge and head to Opal Pool on the trail. To get back to the cars, it was necessary to retrace one’s steps on that trail, cross the bridge, and then walk back on the road—a considerably longer route than it is now.

“Once the hike was completed, two exhausted, soaked hikers—us—dragged themselves to the car and headed for home. Stopping in Scio to get a drink at a small grocery store, we realized we could barely walk across the street from the car to the store. And because of the rain, we’d really not seen that splendid forest. However, we came back for more and have led many groups to Opal Creek. In addition to the MPG trips at Opal Creek, we’ve guided

exchange students with the AFS program and their host families at least four times.”

And as it turns out, their favorite place to hike is none other than Opal Creek. Jim and Nancye also enjoy the Southern Oregon coast.

And they hooked their daughters on the outdoors as well. “When we took our daughters camping as children, they complained about having to hike, one of them in particular,” said Jim and Nancye. “Oddly enough, our efforts succeeded. Now both daughters love the out-of-doors, enjoy camping and hiking, and are passionate about environmental issues.”

When not leading a hike or participating on one, Jim works as a senior product specialist for AGCO Corp, and Nancye is a part-time editor for COMCOA, Inc. Jim still enjoys collecting native arts and crafts, including Navajo rugs, and, more recently, pottery by Pueblo artisans. Nancye is a lifelong reader.

As an outgrowth of an MPG “historical” outing that they led in March 2008, Jim and Nancye have begun volunteering as costumed interpreters at Champoege State Historical Area. They volunteered there during the summer of 2009 and the summer and fall of 2010, and

plan to return next summer. They find it rewarding to acquaint visitors with facts of Oregon’s history.

As an added note, Jim and Nancye both feel that without MPG member Sue Johnston, neither probably ever would have led an outing. “When we first started hiking with MPG, Sue was one of the most active leaders,” said Jim and Nancye. “She encouraged us along the way when Jim expressed a desire to lead hikes. Sue also led National Outings. In 2001, she suggested that we attend a training session in the Bay Area run by National Outings, and after doing so, we felt better equipped to handle leadership duties at any level. This same training session has since been held in Oregon twice, attracting many current and past MPG outings leaders.”

In September 2000, Jim and Nancye participated in a National Outing led by Sue – to Stehekin – and in June 2001, they participated in a National Service Outing led by Didi Toaspern, whom they’d met at the training session the previous year. Eventually, Jim assisted on one National Outing and they went on another one led by Sue as trainees. To date, Jim and Nancye have led four National Outings.

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## MPG/Sierra Club 2010 Annual Report

### **Outings and Programs**

Offered 118 different outings and 147 days of outings  
Hiked a total of 716.7 miles and over 103,522 feet of elevation gain  
More than 480 different individuals participated in MPG outings in 2010  
There were 1,547 participation days on our outings in 2010  
Five backpacks around Oregon, including a backpacking class  
Three wonderful rafting adventures on the Rogue, Willamette and McKenzie Rivers  
The 9th annual Memorial Day weekend car-camping trip in the Siskiyou had 12 participants  
Nine people enjoyed on the Southern Oregon Coast Lodge Trip in September  
The 11th annual February three-day weekend Mt. Bachelor ski trip had 17 participants  
The 10th annual Summer Solstice party at Dancing Oaks Nursery was attended by almost 100 people  
Four snowshoe/cross-country ski outings in January and February  
Earth Day tour of Corvallis sites, plus a tabling event for Earth Week  
Four successful trail workdays with over 73 participants on Benton County trails  
Four field trips to local environmentally friendly business enterprises  
Over 20 outings with a significant emphasis on conservation or nature education  
Six evening programs presented in Corvallis with an average of 85 people in attendance

### **Community Events**

Major contributor of volunteers and funds to Crescent Valley High School Native Tree Arboretum program  
MPG representation at several coastal Marine Reserves meetings  
MPG participation in the SOLV Beach Cleanup in March  
Supported the Corvallis Community Services Consortium Youth House irrigation project  
Co-sponsor of the Corvallis Sustainability Coalition

### **Political**

Interviewed and endorsed four candidates (state senate, state house, commissioner)  
Endorsed Ballot Measure 76 (Stable funding for Water, Parks and Wildlife)  
Introduced a Marine Reserves Resolution that was passed by the Benton County Democrats, the Linn County Democrats, and the Benton County Commissioners  
Held three phone banks for a MPG endorsed candidate running for Oregon State Senate  
Letter writing party to support proposed marine reserves at Cape Perpetua, Cascade Head and Cape Falcon

### **Fundraising**

Ended 2010 "in the black" for the tenth year in a row  
Sponsored a Misty River Benefit Concert Fundraiser attended by over 300 people  
Sold Sierra Club calendars and MPG T-shirts

### **Newsletter / Publications / Outreach**

Published three highly-acclaimed electronic editions of the Benchmark magazine  
MPG activities written up in the Salem Statesman-Journal several times  
Maintained an up-to-date website and weekly "Peak View" email posting  
2,051 individuals on weekly email list - a 5.5% increase over 2009

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## *MPG 2011 January-April Sierra Club Outings and Beyond*

Delights of winter and early spring outings include wildlife tracks, snowflakes and raindrops sparkling during a sun break, soft and glowing mosses and lichen on big trees. Later we discover swelling tree buds, new leaves, and the earliest wildflowers.

Even as the weather cools and Oregon rains begin, we have a wonderful time on MPG outings. But winter and early spring outings require dressing for all kinds of possible weather: cold winds, rain, and snow, especially at the coast and in the Cascades. Good foot gear, rain gear, and plenty of water are essential. Don't hesitate to ask your leader any questions you have about which outing is right for you or what you should wear and bring. Watch the weekly email for additions and changes, since winter scheduling involves uncertainty.

### New to MPG Outings?

We're a friendly group that goes out of its way to welcome newcomers. Come alone, or with a friend. Contact the leader with questions. Non-members are always welcome to attend.

**For additional outings, see our weekly email.**

Please contact [maryspeakgroup@peak.org](mailto:maryspeakgroup@peak.org) to be added to this email list for weekly updates. In it we announce upcoming outings and other events. These include added activities, changes, and cancellations.

Often, space is limited, so check with the leader in advance of an outing, and then be sure the leader knows if you must cancel. Always fun, MPG outings also provide opportunities to explore our natural environment, learning more about the unique flora and fauna of our region and how they can be preserved.

**Important: For General Outing Policies, see page 24. Please read them with care.**

**Saturday, January 1 – New Year's Day Walk.** A New Year walk is a Marys Peak Group tradition, usually followed by a social gathering – watch the weekly email for details. We'll walk interesting neighborhood streets and paths, probably in the Skyline/Witham Hill area. Easy/moderate, not more than 5 miles, with some uphill, less than 1,000 feet of elevation gain. Meet at MLK Park parking area, on Walnut, across from Elmwood (formerly Walnut Park) for a 1:00 p.m. departure. Contact leader: Doris deLespinasse, 541-753-4775, [ddeles@proaxis.com](mailto:ddeles@proaxis.com)

**Saturday, January 8 - Peavy Four Roads and Calloway.** The hike will introduce folks to a lesser known part of Peavy Arboretum. The first of four 3/4-mile segments, Road 540, starts at the Adair Village entrance and climbs gently (200 ft elevation gain). The second, Road 543 / Banzei Trail, climbs steeply (600 ft elevation gain). The third, Road 560, is flat as it follows along the ridge top. A walk down Road 500 (part of Patterson Rd) for 1.5 miles takes us to Cronemiller Lake and the upper part of Calloway Trail (the fourth segment, back to the entrance). Moderate, but with one more difficult climb, about 5 miles, 800 ft elevation gain. Meet at the First Street parking area behind the Super 8 Motel for a 1:00 p.m. departure. Contact leader: Robert Verhoogen, 541 745-5185, [rverhoogen@mac.com](mailto:rverhoogen@mac.com)

**Sunday, January 9 – Cross-Country Ski and Snowshoe, Santiam Pass.** We'll have both a snowshoe group and a ski group at one of the Santiam Pass area snow parks. Intermediate level; not for first time skiers; first time snowshoers who are reasonably strong hikers are welcome. Contact leaders for information about the outing, including clothing, equipment rental, and departure time from Corvallis. Larry Davis, 503-390-8210, [LarryDavis@peak.org](mailto:LarryDavis@peak.org) and Richard Seekatz, 541-230-1107, [Seekatz@comcast.net](mailto:Seekatz@comcast.net)



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## *MPG Club Outings (con't)*

**Sunday, January 16 – McCulloch Peak and Martin Luther King.** We'll climb from the Soap Creek trail head to the highest point in McDonald Forest, where we'll have a few readings in memory of Martin Luther King, whose birthday is celebrated Monday. Beautiful woods, ferns, mosses, even in the rain. Difficult, 7.7 miles, with 1,600 feet of elevation gain. Meet at the Wilkinson Hall parking lot (Arnold & 27th) for a 10:00 a.m. departure. Contact leaders: Irene and Armand Schoppy, 758-8591, [iameyers@yahoo.com](mailto:iameyers@yahoo.com)

**Saturday-Sunday, January 22-23 – Overnight Ski.** Take in spectacular views of Cascade peaks on this overnight cross-country ski trip. We'll leave Corvallis about 9:00 a.m. on Saturday, ski up a moderate trail to Mountain View or another shelter, set up camp, and perhaps build an igloo. The following morning we'll explore some of the trails in the area, then head for home. This trip is suitable for intermediate level skiers. Contact leader: David Anderson, 541-758-7602, [DAAMP1@MSN.com](mailto:DAAMP1@MSN.com)

**Sunday, January 23 – Vineyard Mountain Loop.** A brisk loop walk on Vineyard Mountain gravel roads from the Lewisburg Saddle in McDonald Forest. Good well-drained gravel roads; pleasant forests; occasional vistas over the Coast Range. Perhaps a detour down the newly rebuilt Old Growth Trail. Moderate, 7 miles, with 650 feet of elevation gain. Meet at the Lewisburg Saddle north of Corvallis for a 10:00 a.m. departure. Contact leader: Loretta Rivard, 541-753-6884.

**Friday, January 28 – Chemeketan Backpack Potluck.** Our backpacks are almost always conducted jointly with the Salem Chemeketans. They will host a potluck for those interested in backpacking, with information about 2011 trips. It will be at Morningside Methodist Church, 3674 12th Street SE, Salem, 6-9 p.m.

**Sunday, January 30 – A Winter Walk at Peavy Arboretum.** We'll take a winter walk in the area of Peavy Arboretum, north of Corvallis, with exact route depending on weather and trail conditions. Big trees draped with moss and lichen, ferns, a look at Cronemuller Lake, possible Soap Creek Valley views. Moderate, up to 6 miles with 900 feet of elevation gain. Meet at the Wilkinson Hall parking lot (Arnold & 27th in Corvallis) for a 1:00 p.m. departure. Contact leader: Randy Rasmussen, 541-745-5452.

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**Friday-Sunday, February 4-6 – Clear Lake Resort Ski/Snowshoe Weekend.** Join us for a weekend of skiing, snowshoeing, and jollity at Clear Lake Resort, near Santiam Pass. We will be staying in one or more basic but comfortable 6 person "barrier-free" cabins. Skill level: experienced beginners and up. Cost per person for the weekend is \$30 to \$50, depending on the size of the group. A full deposit is required to hold your place. Contact: David Anderson, [daamp1@msn.com](mailto:daamp1@msn.com), 541-758-7602.

**Saturday, February 5 – Dimple Hill Loop.** We'll hike to Dimple Hill from Lewisburg Saddle Parking area and return on an unusual combination of well graveled roads and good trail. Views to the valley if the weather permits. Moderate, 6.5 miles, with approximately 900 feet of elevation gain. Rain or shine, meet at Wilkinson hall parking lot (Arnold and 27th) for a 9:00 a.m. departure. Contact leader: Brian Briggs at 541-730-0253, [goober1958@gmail.com](mailto:goober1958@gmail.com)

# THE BENCHMARK

## MPG Club Outings (con't)

**Saturday, February 12 - Timberhill Loop.** We'll walk in the Timberhill area of Corvallis on paved paths, sidewalks, and a section of gravel road. Includes an extensive "secret" walkway in a green corridor along a stream, higher streets, interesting architecture, and a more natural area with potential views of the valley and even the Cascade foothills. Easy, but with some hills, 3-4 miles, with 350 feet of elevation gain. Meet at the Wilkinson Hall parking lot (Arnold & 27th in Corvallis) for a 1:00 p.m. departure, or join us in the park at the NW corner of Walnut and 29th at about 1:15. Contact leader: Randy Selig, [rselig@peak.org](mailto:rselig@peak.org), 541-738-0753.

**Sunday, February 13 – Decker Ridge.** A new MPG destination located off of Decker Road in a Starker forest. This well maintained trail winds through lush undergrowth of Douglas Fir. Vista views are possible on this 6-7 mile, moderate walk with an 800 foot elevation gain. Meet for an 11:00 a.m. departure from the northeast corner of the BiMart parking lot, Philomath Blvd. and 53rd Street in Corvallis. Contact leader: Richard Seekatz, 541-230-1107, [Seekatz@Comcast.net](mailto:Seekatz@Comcast.net)

**Friday-Monday, February 18-21 – President's Holiday weekend in snow country.** This outing is designed for beginning snowshoers or people who just want to enjoy a winter wonderland by the fireplace. We're spending a weekend in the comfort of a rental home at Black Butte Ranch, near Sisters. We'll offer some easy snowshoeing. Or, perhaps you'd just like to enjoy the comfort of the fireplace or a walk in winter wonderland. Shared cost for accommodations and meals. If this outing would appeal to you, contact leader now. Space is limited. Contact leader: Christy Stevens at 541-753-4353, [Christy.Stevens@linnbenton.edu](mailto:Christy.Stevens@linnbenton.edu) Full - wait list only

**Thursday-Sunday, February 24-27 – Sunriver Winter Sports Trip.** Full; wait list only. Tom Bucht, 541-738-1333 or [TomBucht@gmail.com](mailto:TomBucht@gmail.com)

**Sunday, February 27 – Alsea / Green Peak Falls.** After an easy 0.2 mile round trip to admire 20-foot Alsea Falls, we'll follow the main trail upstream, cross the South Fork Alsea River steel footbridge, head downstream past Alsea Falls for a mile, and then climb 0.8 miles to the pool below Green Peak Falls' 60-ft waterslide. Vegetation along the trail includes second-growth trees, sword ferns, vine maples, and oxalis. Moderate, 5.0 miles round trip, with cumulative 650 feet of elevation gain. Meet at the NE corner of the Bi-Mart parking lot (at 53rd & Philomath Blvd. in Corvallis) for a 1:00 p.m. departure. Contact leader: Robert Verhoogen, 541 745-5185, [rverhoogen@mac.com](mailto:rverhoogen@mac.com)

**Saturday, March 5 – Archeology trip to Willamette Bluffs with Greenbelt Land Trust.** Willamette Bluffs is a scenic private property near Buena Vista. Greenbelt Land Trust has protected this property at the confluence of the Willamette, Santiam, and Luckiamute Rivers in perpetuity, and is working with the landowner to restore native habitats. With leaders from MPG and Greenbelt, we'll walk along an actively farmed area to the 100 foot sheer bluffs overlooking the confluence. Dave Brauner, OSU archeologist, will discuss the rich history of the region, from Native American to western settler uses, and the dynamic history of the river. We'll also tour an actively restored wetland. Bring water, light lunch or snack, binoculars; wear durable footwear for farm roads and grass. Easy, 1.5, miles, with a 100 feet of elevation gain. Meet for a 10 a.m. departure at the GLT Office, 101 SW Western Blvd. in Corvallis. Preregister; number is limited. Contact MPG leader: Linda Seekatz, 541-230-1107, [Seekatz@comcast.net](mailto:Seekatz@comcast.net)

# THE BENCHMARK

## *MPG Club Outings (con't)*

**Sunday, March 6 – Silver Falls.** This tree-lined trail to ten waterfalls is one of Oregon's premier sights. We'll walk the Canyon and Ridge trails, with a stop by the fire in the classic lodge. Good rain gear and water-resistant boots or sturdy walking shoes are essential. Moderate, 7.1 miles with 1,000 feet of elevation gain. Meet at the Wilkinson Hall parking lot (Arnold & 27th) for a 9:00 a.m. departure. Preregister; number is limited. Contact leaders: Armand & Irene Schoppy, 758-8591, [iameyers@yahoo.com](mailto:iameyers@yahoo.com)

**Saturday, March 12 – McCulloch Peak from Oak Creek.** We expect to see some signs of spring as we climb to the highest point in McDonald Forest. We'll pass big leaf maples beginning to show green, rushing streams, mosses, and ferns. If weather cooperates, we'll have views of the Willamette Valley and foothills, perhaps even the Cascade Peaks still draped in snow. Moderate/difficult, 7-9 miles, with 1,700-2,000 feet of elevation gain, depending on exact route chosen. Meet at the Wilkinson Hall parking lot (Arnold & 27th) for a 9:00 a.m. departure. Contact leader: Ralph Nafziger, 541-926-4245, [nafziger@peak.org](mailto:nafziger@peak.org)

**Saturday, March 19 – SOLV Beach Cleanup.** For the tenth consecutive year, we'll join other Oregonians for the annual SOLV spring beach cleanup. Dress in warm layers; bring rain gear, sturdy shoes or boots. Lunch at a Newport restaurant. Meet at the Wilkinson Hall parking lot (Arnold & 27th in Corvallis) for an 8:30 a.m. departure. Contact leader: Bruce Encke, 541-974-3439, [bruce.encke@hp.com](mailto:bruce.encke@hp.com)

**Sunday, March 27 – Oak Creek Watershed Tour.** In McDonald Forest, we'll explore the upper Oak Creek watershed with local hydrologist and GIS professional Diana Sharps. We expect to examine features that make a healthy waterway, good for fish, other wildlife, and people. Easy, not more than 4 miles, 400 feet of elevation gain, but could be muddy and slippery in places. Preregister; number is limited. Meet at the Wilkinson Hall parking lot (Arnold & 27th in Corvallis) for a 1:00 p.m. departure. Contact leader: Doris deLespinnasse, 753-4775, [ddeles@proaxis.com](mailto:ddeles@proaxis.com)

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**Sunday, April 3 – Rooster Rock.** Weather conditions allowing, we'll hike this challenging but beautiful peak in the Menagerie Wilderness beyond Sweet Home. We'll pass through lush woods which should have signs of spring to the site of a former fire lookout, with Cascade views if we're lucky. We expect to go up the very steep Rooster Rock trail and return by the more gradual Trout Creek trail. Difficult, 5.4 miles, with 2,300 feet of elevation gain. Pre-register; wilderness limit of 12. Meet at the Wilkinson Hall parking lot (Arnold and 27th in Corvallis) for a 9:00 a.m. departure. Contact leader: Randy Rasmussen, 541-745-5452.

**Saturday, April 9 – Row River Trail.** This trail follows the route of the now abandoned Oregon Pacific & Eastern Railroad line. Starting at the Mosby Creek covered bridge east of Cottage Grove, we'll walk through fields until we reach Dorena Reservoir. For the second half of the hike, we'll follow the scenic north shore. Easy/moderate, 5.5 miles, paved, mostly flat. Meet at Wilkinson Hall parking lot (Arnold & 27th in Corvallis) for an 8:00 a.m. departure. Contact leader: Jim Ballard, 541-752-4441, [ballardjn@gmail.com](mailto:ballardjn@gmail.com)

**Sunday, April 10 – Dunn Forest Hike 1: Soap Creek Loop.** Dunn Forest is an OSU research forest, north of McDonald Forest near 99W. Most hiking is on exceedingly quiet gravel roads; we rarely meet anyone. Over the next couple of months, we'll have a series of explorations here. This loop has mixed forest, some reasonably big old trees, a section classified as old growth. If weather allows, we'll



# THE BENCHMARK

## MPG Club Outings (con't)

have excellent views into the coastal foothills, the valley, and even the Cascades. Moderate, 6.4 miles, with 1,150 feet of elevation gain. Meet at the First Street parking area behind the the Super 8 Motel in Corvallis for a 12:30 p.m. departure. We will carpool to the trailhead. Contact leader: Robert Verhoogen, 541 745-5185, [rverhoogen@mac.com](mailto:rverhoogen@mac.com)

**Saturday, April 16 – Earth Week Walk.** Start Earth Week with a forest walk somewhere near Corvallis, interspersed with poetry and readings celebrating our planet. Moderate to difficult. See the weekly email for details. Contact leaders: Armand & Irene Schoppy, 758-8591, [iameyers@yahoo.com](mailto:iameyers@yahoo.com)

**Sunday, April 17 – Salem Urban Parks Loop.** Wander in Salem's Bush's Pasture Park, with forested natural areas, early wildflowers, botanical gardens. Then walk through historic districts, parkways and interesting city streets to Riverfront Park with its carousel and Eco-Earth Globe sculpture. Cross the Willamette on the historic Union Street Railroad Bridge, restored for pedestrian and bicycle use. On the easy side of moderate, 6-7 miles with a few small hills. To car pool from Corvallis, meet in the Wilkinson parking lot (Arnold and 27th on OSU) in time for a 12:00 noon departure. 1:00 p.m. start time in Salem; see weekly email or ask leaders for meeting place. Contact leaders: Doris deLepinasse, 753-4775, [ddeles@proaxis.com](mailto:ddeles@proaxis.com); Elizabeth Seibert.

**Earth Week Activities.** Corvallis and other area communities will have Earth Week activities during this week and on Saturday. See the weekly email for announcements.

**Saturday, April 23 – Woodland Walk.** Celebrate the day after Earth Day with a forest walk somewhere with wildflowers near Corvallis. Easy to moderate. See the weekly email for details. Contact leader: Lelia Barlow, [lelia.trips@gmail.com](mailto:lelia.trips@gmail.com) (e-mail preferred); 541-758-8279

**Saturday, April 30 – Family walk, Avery Park Nature Trail.** Join us as we explore our own back yard. This family-friendly hike takes place on a 1.3 mile loop in Avery Park, where we will look for wildflowers. There's no significant elevation gain on this gravel and packed earth trail. Have you seen the 85-foot long picnic table made from a single slab of wood? Bring a lunch. If the weather cooperates, we'll have a picnic after the hike and let the kids play. All children must be accompanied by an adult. Children who are not with their parent or guardian must bring a signed release form which can be obtained from the leader. Meet in time for a 10:30 walk, just to the west of the Rose Garden at Avery Park. (If you come in from 15th Street, turn right and park in the first places available.) Contact leader: Julie Arrington, 541-752-6052, [Julie.seahorse@gmail.com](mailto:Julie.seahorse@gmail.com)

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**Sunday, May 1 – Wildflower Walk.** We'll look for early wildflowers near Corvallis with Laurel Moulton from the Native Plant Society, our popular resource person for the past two years. Probably one or more trails in McDonald Forest or on private property. Moderate, not more than 6 miles with 1,000 feet of elevation gain. Meet at the Wilkinson Hall parking lot (Arnold & 27th) for a 1:00 p.m. departure. Preregister; number may be limited. Contact leader: Doris deLepinasse, 753-4775, [ddeles@proaxis.com](mailto:ddeles@proaxis.com)

**Thursday, May 5 – Backpack Class.** Guidance on current backpacking equipment and practices for beginners and experienced backpackers. Information on MPG and Chemeketan backpacks planned for 2011. Chemekeden, 360-1/2 State Street, Salem, 7-9 pm. Contact Bob Custer, 541-745-3994, [laststand@exchangenet.net](mailto:laststand@exchangenet.net) for information on car pooling from Corvallis area.

# THE BENCHMARK

## *MPG Club Outings (con't)*

**Saturday, May 7 – Santiam Little North Fork trail.** This much loved Cascade foothills hike is east of Salem, near Opal Creek, in mossy old growth forests with spring flowers. It passes emerald pools and a waterfall. Steep and rocky in places; probably muddy. Moderate, 9 miles with 900 feet of elevation gain. Meet at the Wilkinson Hall parking lot (Arnold & 27th) for an 8:00 a.m. departure. Contact leader: Bob Custer, 745-3994, [laststand@exchangenet.net](mailto:laststand@exchangenet.net)

**Sunday, May 8 – Wildflowers at Fitton Green.** Take an easy to moderate walk at this Benton County park east of Corvallis. Lots of May flowers expected. See weekly email for details of distance and elevation gain. Meet at the Wilkinson Hall parking lot (Arnold & 27th) for a 1:00 p.m. departure. Contact leader: Loretta Rivard, 541-753-6884.

### A SAMPLING OF PROBABLE FUTURE EVENTS

(Details and more events will be added in the late April Benchmark and in our weekly emails. For summer, expect more backpacks, camping trips, lots of hikes and other kinds of outings.)

**Saturday, May 14 – Trail work,** probable date.

**Sunday, May 15 – Dunn Forest Hike 2: Forest Peak Loop.** Robert Verhoogen, 541 745-5185, [rverhoogen@mac.com](mailto:rverhoogen@mac.com)

**Sunday, May 22 – Marys Peak Geology Walk.** Ralph Nafziger, 541-926-4245, [nafziger@peak.org](mailto:nafziger@peak.org)

**Friday-Monday June 3-5 – Beginner Backpack, Boulder Creek Wilderness.** Joanne Demay, 971-237-9775, [jodemay@comcast.net](mailto:jodemay@comcast.net); Allan King, [allan\\_b\\_king@msn.com](mailto:allan_b_king@msn.com), 503/399-9990.

**Saturday, June 4 – Trail work,** probable date. National Trails Day.

**Saturday, June 11 – Opal Creek.** Jim & Nancye Ballard, [ballardjn@gmail.com](mailto:ballardjn@gmail.com), 541-752-4441.

**Saturday, June 18 – Dunn Forest Hike 3: Berry Creek Loop.** Robert Verhoogen, 541 745-5185, [rverhoogen@mac.com](mailto:rverhoogen@mac.com)

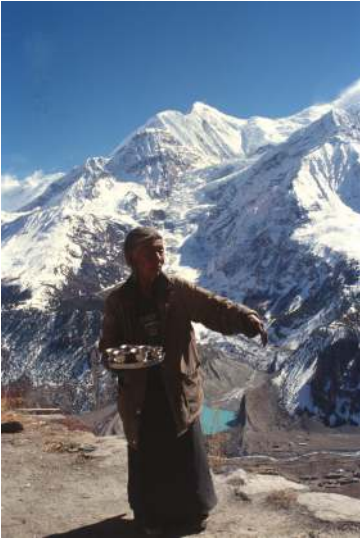
**Friday-Sunday, June 24-26 – Rebel Creek Backpack.** In the Three Sisters Wilderness. David Anderson, [daamp1@msn.com](mailto:daamp1@msn.com), 541-758-7602.

**Sunday, June 26 –Annual Solstice Party.** A wonderful party for all at beautiful Dancing Oaks Nursery. Watch for details.

# THE BENCHMARK

## MPG Evening Public Programs January

### CIRCLING ANNAPURNA



At the end of 1996, MPG Executive Committee Member and ardent backpacker Bob Custer was invited by his son, David, to join in a 3-week, 125-mile trek around the Annapurna Massif in Nepal. The trek crosses the Thorung La pass at 17,769 feet and provides views of some of the world's highest mountains. Recently, road and bridge construction work was started to drastically shorten the route. Join us to see Bob's photos of the longer trek, as it was, before



all of the "improvements" began to turn a 3-week adventure into a 4-day hike. Thursday, January 27, 2011, 7:00 p.m., Corvallis/Benton County Public Library.

## February

### POPULATION GROWTH AND CLIMATE CHANGE



The world's population is expected to increase from 6.9 to 9.1 billion by 2050. Combined with increasing per capita rates of carbon emissions (almost 2 percent per year between 2000 and 2008), this population growth will complicate efforts to curtail emissions and control global climate change. Dr. Paul Murtaugh of OSU will explore the link between human population and climate change, and attempt to quantify the additional carbon emissions caused by an individual's choice to reproduce. Wednesday, February 10, 2011, 7:00 p.m., Corvallis/Benton County Public Library.



# THE BENCHMARK

## MPG Evening Public Programs

### March

#### THE STRUGGLE FOR SUSTAINABILITY IN RURAL CHINA



Dr. Bryan Tilt of OSU, and author of the book “The Struggle for Sustainability in Rural China: Environmental Values and Civil Society,” will discuss pollution in China's rural industrial sector and its implications for the environment and community health. Drawing on recent ethnographic research in an industrial township in rural Sichuan Province, he explores how

community members understand the linkages between air and water pollution from nearby factories and their health and well-being, and how they focus on the mobilization of civil society to address industrial pollution and its health effects. Thursday, March 10, 2011, 7:00 p.m., Corvallis/Benton County Public Library.



## April

#### CROSSING THE GATES OF ALASKA

For a combined six months in 2007 and 2009, Dave Metz endured a 900-mile journey across one of the Earth's last great wildernesses, the Brooks Range of Alaska. Traveling completely on foot, with his two dogs, he followed torrential rivers, crossed wind-scoured mountains, faced tormenting hunger and isolation, and marched across vast tundra and trackless woodlands. In 2008 Dave recounted the first part of the journey for one of our programs. Now he's coming back to tell “the rest of the story.” On the 2009 portion of the trek, he trudged on for nearly sixty days, crossing countless rivers and fighting plagues of mosquitoes, arriving in July at the Sheenjek River. One of his dogs had been seriously injured in an encounter with a porcupine, and he decided to abandon the trek to save the dog. He built a log raft and attempted to float 100 miles down the river to Fort Yukon. After 2 very difficult days on the river, he had the amazing good fortune to come upon a helicopter sitting on a gravel bar and was able to abandon the raft and save the dog. Wednesday, April 14, 2011, 7:00 p.m., Corvallis/Benton County Public Library.



# THE BENCHMARK

## Pacific Crest Trail Adventure 2010

by Joanne DeMay

### Diamond Lake Highway 138 to Dead Indian Highway

Leader: Ray Drapek

In 2004 several MPG and Chemeketa backpackers were inspired by Ray Drapek to hike through all of Oregon on the Pacific Crest Trail (PCT) from the Columbia River south to the California border. Though at first our progress was limited by the constraints of work and other obligations, we began to increase our yearly mileage when it became clear that we might not reach our goal while still able to carry packs. Our first section in August 2004 ended at Wahtum Lake; the 2005 section ended at Timberline Lodge in a Labor Day sleet storm. A Mt. Jefferson wildfire in 2006 brought year three to an abrupt and sad end at Olallie Lake after 50 miles. The following September, we came out at Santiam Pass. In 2008 we covered the 100 miles between Santiam and Willamette Passes, in 2009 another 100 miles brought us to the Diamond Lake Highway, and on September 11 of this year, we emerged from the talus slopes of Brown Mountain onto the Dead Indian Highway south of Fish Lake, after eight days and about 90 miles.



Joanne DeMay

There has not been a bad year. Because we keep our daily mileage fairly low, we've experienced Oregon in a unique way. We meet northbound thru-hikers with thousand-mile stares, find hidden gems of lakes and waterfalls, pick huckleberries, and sometimes see an early season snowfall. Ten backpackers have joined in this project; three have walked every year.

Photos by Joanne DeMay and Barry Wulff



Allan King, Joanne DeMay, Ray Drapek, and Heather Stark on the Crater Lake rim

The seventh PCT expedition had shrunk to four (Ray Drapek, Allan King, Heather Stark and myself) by the time we arrived at our campsite near Grouse Hill off the Crater Lake entrance road on September 3, 2010. Barry Wulff joined us for two nights. He provided shuttle service to the Diamond Lake road where we had ended in 2009 so we could hike the first day without heavy packs. Barry's invaluable help also solved our water problem. There are no convenient water sources between Thielsen Creek and Dutton Creek, our next campsite. Ray, Allan and I finished the first 12-mile stretch, from the Diamond Lake Highway to a Crater Lake overlook on the rim trail. The rim trail provides an alternate stretch of the PCT for hikers. The main equestrian trail is quite far from the lake.

The night was cold, so cold that water spilled on a fry pan at breakfast froze instantly. But there was no chill on the enthusiasm to set out. Even though I wouldn't have another cup of good coffee for more than a week, I was ready to hit the trail. Barry drove the four of us to the overlook parking lot on the rim drive where we had ended the day before. As we headed



# THE BENCHMARK

south, he tried to slip leftover pizza into our packs.

We anticipated that our first day with full packs, 2nd on the trail, would be a relatively short and easy one – only 8.5 miles. So much for optimism. The rim trail is a continual up and down proposition, and it wore us out. We hiked from viewpoint to viewpoint, through crowds of mostly foreign tourists. Luckily it was a perfect cloudless day at Crater Lake, and we found a secluded lunch spot on a rocky cliff where we could sit for a while and admire one of Oregon's premier attractions.



Map of 2010 route

We returned to the official PCT trail by way of the Crater Lake Rim Village and hiked to a peaceful camp at icy-cold Dutton Creek. Another chilly night made the campfire feel very good. This was the only night on the whole trip when we had neighbors camping at an adjoining site.

Day 3 was supposed to be fairly easy too, but our anticipated water source did not materialize. We decided to turn off the PCT on the Stuart Falls trail and head for an area of creeks and meadows. The first few creeks were dry, but after about three miles we ended up at one of Oregon's hidden gems, Stuart Falls, and a beautiful campground in the Sky Lakes Wilderness all to ourselves.



Ray Drapek and Heather Stark drying out wet gear by a fire

The next morning we hiked up and out of Lucky Meadow and back to the PCT, expecting to stay at Jack Spring, just a few miles away. I should have been wary of this optimistic expectation. Through the Oregon Desert we went, only to find a nice note left by a recent thru-hiker saying don't bother going down to the spring, it's no more than a mud puddle. Nice to save us the trip off the trail, but the next water was a long way off. We hiked through a big burn area, an old fire and a fairly recent one on the slopes of Maude Mountain. We decided not to risk a side trip to Ranger Spring but head for Grass Lake on the Seven Lakes Basin trail instead. Not only did this almost double the mileage we had expected, but also the

weather started to go downhill around midday. Talk about optimism. The long-range weather forecast had mentioned a weak low-pressure front affecting us for about a day.

Monsoon rains swept in during the night at Grass Lake. We had a break, which allowed us to pack up our wet gear after breakfast and begin what should have been a spectacular view day over 7500-ft Devil's Peak. Once in a while a blue hole would briefly open in the clouds, giving us hope that the weather would change. We all want to revisit this section of trail because we could not see a thing through the low clouds and rain. Devil's Peak is home to an unusual number of plants unfamiliar to me, but no photos exist because our cameras were safe in waterproof bags.



# THE BENCHMARK

Our day 5 destination, Fly Lake, did not appear (it, too, had dried out over the summer). We had no choice but to continue to a dark, dreary camp a mile off-trail at Deer Lake. This was another hard day. It had started with a 1,500-ft elevation gain over the peak, and then lasted about 14 wet miles. I don't think anyone had an ounce of energy left when we stumbled in to camp. The only saving grace was that we could get a fire, a real bonfire, going. For a couple of hours we kept stoking the fire and holding tents, groundcloths, thermarests, boots, socks close enough to dry. For the most part pack covers kept the contents of our backpacks dry, but anything that had been exposed to the weather the night before, or while hiking during that day, was drenched. The fire enabled us to have a relatively dry night in our tents before heading out again into an even wetter day.



Allan, Joanne, and Ray

On Day 6 I began to worry about the continued rain and danger of hypothermia. We hiked past our intended destination, Squaw Lake, because no one wanted to sit around in the rain for the afternoon. We even considered the possibility that we would have to hike out to Fish Lake Resort. The combination of long miles and rain made it hard to stay positive. By mid-afternoon though the sky started to lighten, brightening our spirits. We decided to try to find a small lake we saw on the map close to the McLoughlin climber's trail. There is no official trail to it now, but Freye Lake was another gem. It might have been on the old Skyline Trail. I found old blazes near the lake, and there are still old mileage signs for it both north and south. The east side of McLoughlin rises up in full view from the lake, a much more interesting façade than the usual perfect cone. We managed to get another a huge fire going, dried everything out, and had a peaceful night with no rain. The weather cleared, finally.

We spent the next morning at our Freye Lake campsite with all our belongings spread out in the sun, and us too. This was our one respite day of the trip. What a treat to pack up dry tents and amble down the 4-1/2 miles to Highway 140 and a campsite by the Cascade Canal.



Allan King, Joanne DeMay, Ray Drapek, and Heather

Stark at the Fish Lake Resort

On our final hiking day, the 8th, Ray stayed in camp while Heather, Allan and I hiked without packs the twelve miles around Brown Mountain to the car we had spotted. The first few miles of this stretch are on a beautifully constructed trail through vast rockfalls. If it had not been for an impressive trail-building effort we would have spent many hours picking our way carefully from rock to rock.

We could almost smell California as we hiked those last miles. The transition to the Klamath-Siskiyou ecosystem from our more-familiar

Cascades was remarkable. Emerging from the forest to bright sunshine, we found Heather's car where she had parked it more than a week before on the Dead Indian Memorial Highway. Relaxed and relieved, happy to complete a successful adventure, we drove back around Lake of the Woods to the Cascade Canal, packed up, and headed to Fish Lake Resort for our traditional post-backpack burgers.

The bad weather on this trip was a surprise, and not a lot of fun. It reminded me how rarely I have experienced more than a day of rain or snow while on a backpack. It was a good test of gear, a reminder of how unpredictable weather can be. Next year we look forward to reaching the California border, another 75 miles or so. No telling what Ray might have in mind after that.

*PCT*

## *Bandanas, Revisited* by Irene Schoppy

I enjoyed Barry Wulff's article in the last edition of the Benchmark, which listed 55 possible uses for bandanas. He had some very good ideas, but due to gender differences, he left out one very useful bandana application. Emergency brassiere? No, he thought of that one (I never did...).

I suggest using a bandana as toilet paper replacement (for urinary purposes, I still recommend carrying a little TP for other bathroom uses). Bandanas are soft, reusable, and definitely "Leave No Trace". Whatever TP you carry into the backcountry, you must pack out. On shorter trips, this might not seem like a big deal, but on longer trips it adds up! You bury your TP, you say? That might seem to do the trick, but all sorts of animals can dig it up, leaving the next hiker to come by with a view they didn't expect. Now that I've hopefully convinced you to pack out your TP, what about switching to a bandana? TP is only good for one use, isn't recyclable, and



*Irene Schoppy*

conventional brands aren't made with any recycled content. Where is the reduce-reuse-recycle in TP? It is a loser when compared to the bandana. So take the plunge, tie an extra bandana to your pack and you will be good to go – literally!

Beware the red bandana!



# THE BENCHMARK

## Crescent Valley High School Native Tree Arboretum Planted & Growing

by David Eckert

On November 9, 2010, the Marys Peak Group presided over the groundbreaking of the first native tree arboretum for the Corvallis 509J School System at Crescent Valley High School. It was a cold and rainy 8 a.m. outdoor event, attended by CV students, teachers, and Principal Cherie Stroud, as well as the Chair of the School Board Anne Schuster, Superintendent Dawn Tarzian, and Facilities Manager Kim Patten. The MPG was well represented with Project Leader Dave Eckert and MPG Vice-President Debra Higbee speaking, plus a number of other MPG volunteers.



Following the planting of the inaugural Oregon white oak, five student classes (about 100 students) and volunteers from the Marys Peak Group and the Corvallis Odd Fellows Lodge embarked on planting 51 additional trees and shrubs. The following were planted: nineteen canopy trees, including four Oregon white oaks, three big leaf maples and two each of white alder, red alder, Pacific madrone, black hawthorn, Oregon ash, and Willamette Valley ponderosa pine; thirty-one small trees & shrubs, including ten red osier dogwood, four vine maple, three California hazelnut and two each of cascara, Pacific dogwood, ocean spray, Pacific ninebark, snowberry, mock orange and Indian plum.

One MPG volunteer commented that the most rewarding part of the experience was the intergenerational camaraderie and the work ethic exhibited by all. In ten years, we all expect the greatest reward will be the maturity of the trees and the diverse native environment on school grounds. We also expect that a new generation of Corvallis residents will enter adulthood with a greater awareness and appreciation of the natural world right here in the Willamette Valley.



David Eckert

This project also demonstrated the value of the MPG working in concert with the schools, other NGOs and local businesses. The MPG spearheaded the program and developed relationships with these groups that help to bind our community.

Follow-up work still required on the arboretum includes completing installation of the deer fencing around individual trees, construction of two Douglas fir rustic benches, and the design and installation of



Photos by Barry Wulff

Newly planted arboretum



# THE BENCHMARK

interpretive displays. The students are continuing to do their part by observing the trees as they grow and noting how they are affecting the surrounding environment.

The MPG is currently negotiating with Cheldelin Middle School to plant the second arboretum on that school's grounds.

For further information or to join the Tree Team, contact project leader Dave Eckert at [deckert@willamettewatershed.com](mailto:deckert@willamettewatershed.com).

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## General Outing Policies

**YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES:** If you attend an MPG Outing, you are responsible for your own care, including but not limited to making sure that you are sufficiently fit and equipped for the event. Talk with your leader if you have any doubts about whether you can handle the outing, or any questions about what to bring. Tell your leader about medical conditions which could affect your participation and safety, including but not limited to diabetes, heart conditions, insect allergies.

**ARRIVING FOR AN OUTING:** Please contact the leader before an outing. Then arrive at the start point a few minutes early; we leave on time. Unless otherwise stated, carpool departures are from the parking lot between Wilkinson Hall and the Asian Cultural Center at Arnold and 27th Streets, on the OSU campus in Corvallis. Contact the leader to meet the group at a point other than the start point.

**CANCELLATIONS:** If you are unable to attend an outing you have signed up for, please let your leader know. Often the number of participants is limited. You could be preventing someone on a waiting list from joining the outing if you don't notify. Occasionally MPG has to cancel or change an outing, usually for safety reasons. If you have given the leader an email address and/or phone number, you will be notified if at all possible.

**CARPOOLS:** Suggested driver reimbursement is \$2.50 to \$3 for every hour driven; perhaps more when the roads are difficult or the number of riders is small.

**DOGS:** Dogs, other than certified assistance dogs, are allowed only on designated dog walks.

**WHAT TO WEAR; WHAT TO BRING:** Dress for the weather, with sturdy boots or walking shoes, usually rain gear, no jeans or heavy cottons for extended outings. Bring water, sunscreen, snacks, lunch if outing starts in the morning, any medications you might require. For longer outings, especially in wilderness areas, you should consider bringing the [Ten Essentials](#).

**LIABILITY WAIVER:** All participants must sign a standard Sierra Club liability waiver before each outing. To read the liability waiver before you choose to participate on an outing, please see [www.sierraclub.org/outings/chapter/forms](http://www.sierraclub.org/outings/chapter/forms), or contact the National Sierra Club Outings Department at (415) 977-5528 for a printed version. Neither the Sierra Club nor the Marys Peak Group is responsible for participants during the trips to and from the trailhead.

**MINORS ON OUTINGS:** People under 18 are welcome on outings for which they have sufficient fitness, but must be accompanied by a responsible adult. A liability waiver (see above) must be signed by a parent or legal, court-appointed guardian.

## What is Ocean Acidification?

by Julie Arrington

The effect of climate change on land-based ecosystems has received a significant amount of press. But how have the oceans responded to the approximately 79 million tons of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) released into the air daily as a result of fossil fuel burning, deforestation, and cement production?

Since the beginning of the industrial revolution, approximately 50% of the CO<sub>2</sub> released into the atmosphere by the burning of fossil fuels has been absorbed by the oceans, thus mitigating some of the effects of global warming. Because the oceanic surface waters and the atmosphere are in equilibrium, when more CO<sub>2</sub> is pumped into the air, more CO<sub>2</sub> is absorbed by the seas. The carbon dioxide reacts with water in a series of chemical reactions to produce more hydrogen ions, thereby making the seawater more acidic and changing its chemical balance.

While the ocean is becoming more acidic, it is not turning into a cauldron of corrosive liquid. The current average pH of surface seawater is 8.1, which is about 0.1 pH units less than the estimated pre-industrial value 200 years ago. This may not sound like much, but in the logarithmic world in which pH is measured, this is a decrease of 21%. (The concentration of hydrogen ions in a solution is expressed as pH. A value of 7 is neutral. The lower the pH number, the more acidic the solution.)

### HOW IS THIS AFFECTING MARINE LIFE?

Researchers from the University of Chicago in 2008 showed that the waters off an island near Washington State are becoming more acidic at a rate ten times

more quickly than previous studies had predicted. Their data also show that mussel populations in that location are declining due to these conditions.

Here in the Pacific Northwest, the oyster industry has had problems with larvae reaching maturity, which appears to be linked to the change in pH. Dr. Francis Chin of the Department of Zoology at OSU has noted that increasingly acidified water is being driven into Oregon's bays during the summer and affecting oyster-growing operations.

A decrease in oceanic pH leads to a decrease in the rate at which reef-building corals produce and maintain their carbonate skeletons. Changes in pH not only affect mollusks and corals, but there is also an adverse effect on the ability of marine algae and free-swimming zooplankton to maintain their protective shells. Damage to these organisms will affect the rest of the marine food web. The survival of larval marine species, including commercial fish and shellfish, is reduced by the increased acidity.

There are some species that may benefit from these changed conditions. Seagrasses, which take up CO<sub>2</sub> during photosynthesis, seem to be more productive due to the excess CO<sub>2</sub> in the water. However, the effect of increasing acidification on reproduction, growth and photosynthesis of marine organisms is not fully understood. Currently, many researchers are trying to understand how the marine biological and chemical systems will respond to changes in pH.



Julie Arrington

# THE BENCHMARK



photo by Kay Yates

Large brain coral

## WHAT ABOUT THE OCEAN'S FUTURE?

Dr. Burke Hales of the College of Oceanic and Atmospheric Sciences (COAS) at OSU took part in a 2008 study along the west coast from British Columbia to Mexico. The acidified waters that he and his colleagues discovered were about 50 years old. This water was influenced by the atmospheric conditions of the late 1950s. It was then carried along in the oceanic circulation system, where it became deep water and eventually returned to the surface along the Oregon coast in a process called upwelling. In a similar scenario, today's surface waters, which are exposed to today's higher levels of atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub>, will upwell 50 years from now as the next generation's acidic seawater. It will be more acidic than that discovered by Dr. Hales. In other words, no matter what happens in the atmosphere now, we will still have to contend with a more acidic ocean in the future.

Greater changes will be in store for the marine ecosystem if the atmospheric concentration of CO<sub>2</sub> increases from the current value of 380 ppm (parts per million) to more than 750 ppm, the value projected by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change for the end of the twenty-first century. Such an increase would cause the

pH of the surface ocean waters to decrease by 0.3 to 0.5 pH units.

Other studies have determined that within ten years, as much as 10% of the Arctic Ocean could be corrosive to mussels and clams.

## WHAT IS BEING DONE ABOUT THIS ISSUE?

In the United States, the National Science Foundation, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and other organizations have been sponsoring research in this area for several years.

Studies are also taking place on a large scale in other countries. EPOCA (European Project on Ocean Acidification) was launched in 2008 and involves more than 100 researchers from 2 institutes and 10 European countries.

The Federal Ocean Acidification Research and Monitoring Act of 2009 created an interagency working group to coordinate ocean acidification (OA) activities across federal agencies.



photo by Barry Wulff

Sea grasses



# THE BENCHMARK

President Obama issued an executive order on July 19, 2010, to establish our first comprehensive national ocean policy for the stewardship of the ocean, coasts and the Great Lakes. One of its priorities is to develop strategy action plans for climate change adaptation and ocean acidification.

In November, the Environmental Protection Agency recommended that coastal states begin addressing OA under the Clean Water Act. This was in response to a lawsuit filed by the Center for Biological Diversity which challenged the EPA's failure to address OA under the Clean Water Act.

Research continues at OSU. Dr. Ricardo Letelier is the co-leader of a project to study the response of nitrogen-fixing organisms to increased ocean acidity. Studies have been conducted at sea and in the laboratory. Several other labs at OSU are also engaged in

research on this topic.

## WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Clearly, all the usual suggestions for reducing greenhouse emissions would help the oceans as well as the atmosphere. Additionally, pressure needs to be put on Washington, DC, to take this issue seriously. There may be more opposition than ever to climate change science with the new Congress. We need to make sure that Congress properly funds the governmental groups mentioned above and enforces existing laws to protect water and air quality.

The oceans cover 70% of the earth's surface. They affect our climate, our food supply, and our jobs. It is essential that we protect our marine world.



photo by Barry Wulff

Gulls weathering the storm

## Caught purple handed in pursuit of huckleberries!

By Laurel Moulton



Laurel Moulton

Botanist

Corvallis Chapter President, for the Native Plant Society of Oregon  
Graduate Research Assistant, Department of Horticulture, OSU

One of the joys of spending time in the outdoors in late summer and fall is the tart sweetness of huckleberries. Growing up in the lowlands of Washington State, I munched on red huckleberries (*Vaccinium parvifolium*) as I wandered the woods behind my house. On hiking trips and working as a botanist later in life, I discovered a bountiful diversity of huckleberries extending from the very edges of the coast up to the subalpine and alpine environments.

Huckleberries are members of the heath family (Ericaceae), closely related to cultivated blueberries and cousins of rhododendrons and manzanita. On the west coast, all huckleberries are in the *Vaccinium* genus. As reflected in the common names, there is no firm rule about which should be referred to as huckleberries versus blueberries. Some say that berries that are black or red in color are huckleberries, and the blue ones blueberries. Less common names such as bilberry and whortleberry can also be used. To me, they are all huckleberries.

Some of my favorites include the evergreen huckleberry (*V. ovatum*), the thin leaf huckleberry (*V. membranaceum*) and the Cascade blueberry (*V. deliciosum*). The evergreen huckleberry grows near the coast and has leathery evergreen leaves and small, almost black berries that cluster along the stem. These shrubs can grow in dense thickets and often dominate the understory in old growth coastal forests (though they rarely fruit in the shade). Native Americans often harvested evergreen huckleberries after the first frost, believing that the extra chill brought out the sugar.

The thin leaf huckleberry is common in conifer forest and openings in the Cascade Mountains. It has large, shiny, purple-black berries and often grows in mixed stands with other huckleberries, including the oval-leaf blueberry (*V. ovalifolium*). This berry is so popular in Oregon's National Forests that the Forest Service has begun managing picking areas and issuing



Huckleberries

# THE BENCHMARK

commercial permits.

The Cascade blueberry has dusty blue fruit, and is found in high mountain meadows, growing in dense low mats along the ground. This species has earned its species name “deliciosum,” with some patches yielding aromatic berries with notes of pineapple lingering in the sweetness. In all huckleberry species characters such as taste and berry color can vary subtly between patches and environments, so it is well worth the effort to taste widely as you hike.

Besides nourishing hungry hikers, huckleberries are important for wildlife. Huckleberries bloom in the late spring and early summer, making them an important nectar source for bumblebees and other native bees that are active in cool weather. Huckleberries are an essential food source for bears, chipmunks, mice and birds, as well. Grouse are especially fond of the leaves, flowers and berries-- one tiny red huckleberry that I enjoyed while hiking the Sky Lakes Wilderness in southern Oregon is commonly known as the grouseberry (*V. scoparium*).

Huckleberry seekers should keep an eye out for bears going after the same prize. While picking Cascade blueberries in the Olympic Mountains of Washington State, I often see black bears off in the distance “stocking up” for winter. In higher growing varieties where the visibility isn’t as good, it is wise to be more conscious of bears popping up unexpectedly. Though we’re out of luck for more huckleberries this year (except for the evergreen huckleberry!), we can reserve some time next year for late summer or fall hiking on the coast or in any of Oregon’s beautiful mountains. Until then, here are some resources that you can use to study up, plan and dream. Fresh off the bush, grilled into pancakes, whirled in a milkshake ... yum!

## Photos and descriptions of huckleberries:

<http://plants.usda.gov/java/factSheet>

Scroll down to “*Vaccinium*” under scientific names, and open the related PDF documents.

<http://www.oregonflora.org/gallery.php>

Look for “huckleberry” in the list of common names to access photos of each.

<http://biology.burke.washington.edu/herbarium/imagecollection.php>

Look for “*Vaccinium*” species under scientific names. These are great general descriptions, but the distribution maps are for Washington.

<http://www.fs.fed.us/gpnf/recreation/hucklesberries/>

Picking information for National Forest land.



# THE BENCHMARK MPG Past Outings

## Willamette Float and Potluck Sunday, August 22nd

Leader: Robert Verhoogen

What a perfect way to spend a summer afternoon and evening! After launching from Michael's Landing in Corvallis, we shared the river with otter, mink and beaver as our guides regaled us with interesting facts. Dinner was enjoyed ashore en route, and we watched the sunset before coming in at Hyak Park near Albany.



Getting ready

Photos by Ricardo Small



Patricia made this float a wonderful trip with her intimate knowledge of the Willamette River and its flora and fauna



We all helped



Potluck preparations



Sunset on the Willamette



Sit-down dinner!



# THE BENCHMARK MPG Past Outings

## Three-Fingered Jack Sunday, September 5, 2010

Leader: Ralph Nafziger

Ten hardy souls joined leader Ralph Nafziger on a rigorous 10.4 mile hike along the PCT scenic trail north from Santiam Pass, through the B&B burn and beargrass to the spectacular west cirque of Three-Fingered Jack, and were rewarded with magnificent views.



Photos by Lon Otterby



## Mt. Hood Car Camp Friday-Monday, September 10-13, 2010

Leader: Bob Custer

The weather was extraordinarily clear for this traditional Fall car camping trip, which was enjoyed by 12 individuals. One could easily see Mt. Rainier, Jefferson and the Three Sisters from the top of Tom, Dick and Harry.

On Friday everyone joined in a 4.4 mile hike at Timothy Lake; on Saturday, nine people climbed Tom, Dick, and Harry Mountain with an elevation gain of 1,500 feet and a distance of 6.4 miles, while the other three people climbed to Mirror Lake, 3.2 miles with an elevation gain of 700 feet. On Sunday all 12 hiked from Timberline Lodge to Zig Zag Canyon.



Photo by Mike Neeley-Brown

Left to right, back row: Lon Otterby, Brenda Summers, Mary Liepins, Doris deLespinasse, Marilyn Syverson, Richard Seekatz, Leslie Hogan; left to right, middle row: Bob Custer, Linda Seekatz, Pam Hood-Szivek, Julie Arrington; lying in front: Mike Neeley-Brown



# THE BENCHMARK

## MPG Past Outings

Clear Lake Overnighter - September 16-17, 2010

### Twenty-four Hours by Leslie Hogan

If you had a mere twenty-four hours in the waning days of official summer, where and how would you spend them? With temperatures in the 70's and just enough sun to make you appreciate it, heading to the hills to capitalize on the fineness of a late summer day certainly makes sense. Nothing heightens one's sense of gratitude for something more than its impending loss, so maybe we should sprinkle the panorama of our destination with vine maple red, the color of summer slipping away and of the fall to come. So as not to shock, we may as well place that red amongst the black lava of Clear Lake,

a place in late September where we totally expect it, even long for it. And then we find our decision is already partly made for us. We find ourselves at Clear Lake, the very headwaters of the McKenzie,

in the company of friends. We could call the clear, cold blue of Clear Lake "diatomaceous blue," since for thousands of years the silica of the diatoms that thrived there has settled to the lake bottom, a ghostly immortality for those organisms. From the lake floor, their remains reflect the sun back



*Leslie Hogan*

Photo by Barry Wulff



Left to right, standing: Hilary White, Brenda Summers, Shirley Schmidt, Ida Jewer, Charlotte Drost, Leslie Hogan, Jane Luther, Barbara Loeb; sitting in front, left to right: Mary Madison, Jim Hogan and Doreene Carpenter

up through the water, creating a turquoise blue that, as a backdrop for the intense greens, reds and the occasional yellow along the shore, is nothing short of breathtaking. Again, faced with such allure, the decision as to what to do with our hours almost takes care of



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## *MPG Past Outings*

itself; a 5-mile walk around the lake allows one to enjoy the colors from all angles. The beauty of the colors and of the lake is enhanced, certainly, by lava from an eruption of “Sand Mountain” some 3,000 years ago. The lava flow looks as if it had frozen in time as it spilled into the eastern lake side when, in truth, the lava is responsible for the lake’s formation. It dammed a spring that still burbles up from the northwest end of what is now, after all those years, a lake that can hardly remember a time when it wasn’t a lake.

It’s odd how one decision leads logically to the next. After a longish hike, surrounded by cheerful fellows, enhancing the cheer with an extended happy hour only follows, don’t you agree? A potluck has previously been agreed to, and one thoughtful guest, as her portion, has imported the happy hour in her picnic basket: wine, red and white: cheeses, hard and soft. She had even conjured up the idea of the willing amongst the group to read through copies of a play.

And since we are in a perfect realm, it seems, all are willing! Then, cozy in the bottom floor of our two-floored cabin, with the trunks of trees, as thick as the inner columns of a cathedral, soft in the light of late day outside our window, we have our potluck then break into groups: those who want a game of pinochle in which the bidding is bold and the meld flows like the McKenzie River itself; those who want a game of Quiddler, a word game which, since there is no dictionary to back-up a challenge, gives rise to strange words like “tay” that live afterward in infamy; and the group that only wants to go out on the sleeping porch or onto beds to rest up for the last portion of the allotted twenty-four hours.

Now we are hooked on good decisions. We’ve gotten into the swing of making them. In the morning, we are off to the north end of Trail Bridge Reservoir to hike for a couple of miles upstream to Tamolitch Pool. Rain had been forecast, but our karma is too strong for bad weather. We stay humble enough to pack rain gear, but we are on a good-luck roll, and there is just enough gray overhead to infuse the very air with the greens of the mosses, ferns, hemlocks and ancient firs along the trail. There are views down to the McKenzie over precipitous lava-formed walls. This lava is from an eruption of Belknap Crater a mere 1,600 years ago, and its flow actually buried the river. For two miles of its westward descent, the McKenzie now flows underneath this lava (the part of the McKenzie, that is, that isn’t diverted to the dams) and reappears, cleaned to the point of sparkling by its percolation through rock, at the base of a dry waterfall. It surfaces into the turquoise gem of Tamolitch Pool.

Again in our cars, we head just a few more miles west to visit the surprising Italian gardens hidden behind Belknap Hot Springs Resort and would have fit that visit, and lunch as well, within our twenty-four hours if the leader had not kept sailing past trailheads. Oh, well. The wasted time just reminds us that our twenty-four hour limit is just a conceit. If our luck holds, there will be other summers, and, until then, falls and winters and springs, and fellow hikers and the trails of Oregon outside our very door.

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# THE BENCHMARK MPG Past Outings

**Southern Coast Lodge Trip Thursday-Monday, September 16-20, 2010**

Leaders: Jom and Nancye Ballard



Photo by Nancye Ballard

Left to right: Jan Thornton, Larry Thornton, Mary Sherriffs, Ron Sherriffs, Jim Hecker, Bob Boyce, Lenore Bailey, and Jim Ballard

**Tahkenitch Dunes Overnighter Saturday-Sunday, September 25-26, 2010**

Leaders: Bruce Encke and Lon Otterby

On Saturday the group hiked through the huge Tahkenitch Dunes near Florence to the ocean, then looped back past 3 Mile Lake, camping overnight at nearby Sutton Creek. Despite the rain, all enjoyed a unique escorted visit to Audubon's Ten Mile Creek preserve on Sunday, a rich temperate rain forest area linking Cape Perpetua and Cummins Creek Wilderness. It is home for a wide variety of wildlife, including the federally listed marbled murrelet and northern spotted owl.



Photos by Bruce Encke





# THE BENCHMARK

## MPG Past Outings

### Family Outing on Bird Loop Trail in Beazell Forest October 10, 2010

Leader: Julie Arrington

A cool, rainy morning did not deter seven hikers from exploring Beazell Forest on October 10th. Four-year-old Eva White helped lead the family hike by pointing out the directions on the signs along Bird Loop Trail. A stop at the gazebo gave the group a chance to examine the changing colors of the fall leaves. One-year-old Liv, who knows sign language, delighted her family when she signed for "trees" when the adults were discussing trees.



Photos by Robert White

left to right - Alyssa (mother),  
Liv, Hilary (grandmother),  
Matthew, Eva and leader Julie  
Arrington.



Eva on the lap of her father  
Matthew. Leader Julie  
Arrington holds some  
maple leaves of different  
colors to show her how  
they change.



Eva is sitting on her father's  
(Matthew) lap. She is  
holding some maple leaves  
that were brought to show  
her how the leaves change.

### Trail Work at MLK Park Saturday, October 16, 2010

Leader: Tom Bucht

Twenty-three people, including several OSU students, helped finish a new trail climbing the hill west of the barn at MLK Park with gravel and base rock. The students set a new record for loading the gravel hauler - 28 seconds! Some of the crew removed non-native invasive plants and weeds in the landscaped area near the barn.

Photos by Doris deLespinasse





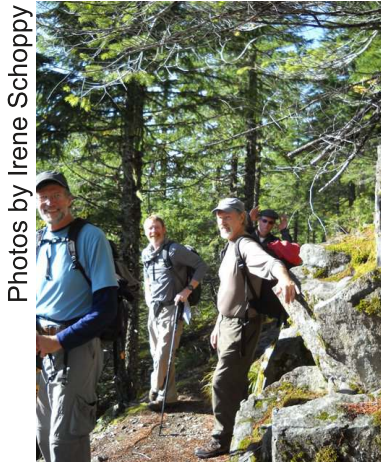
# THE BENCHMARK

## MPG Past Outings

### **“Trick or Treat” Hike to Henline Mountain Sunday, October 31, 2010**

Leaders: Irene and Armand Schoppy

The weather determined the location of this Halloween “trick or treat” hike, and luckily, it was a Treat for 11 people, with a hike up Henline Mountain, yielding some misty but sunny views. No report of ghosts.



Photos by Irene Schoppy

Shown left to right on the trail:  
Richard Seekatz, Dave Madison,  
Dave Hackenyos and Karl  
McCreary.



### **Mushroom Outing in the Alsea Falls Area Sunday, November 7, 2010**

Leaders: Marilyn Syverson and Marilyn Hinds



Leader Marilyn Hinds  
admires a beautiful  
chanterelle with Laurel Croft

Photos by Ricardo Small



OSU forest mycologist, Dr. Dan  
Luoma shows that (if you know what  
you're doing), tasting a mushroom can  
help identify it. Al Kitzman looks on.



Rain did not deter the group of intrepid  
mushroomers!

# THE BENCHMARK

## MPG Past Outings

### Hull Oaks Mill Tour Tuesday, November 9, 2010

Leader: Nancye Ballard

A group of ten experienced a fascinating tour of Hull Oaks Mill, one of the last steam-powered sawmills in the U.S.



Front: Pam Hood-Szivek, Nancye Ballard, Julie Arrington, Hilary White, Gael Miller, and Larry Thornton.

Back: Mike Neeley-Brown, Rob Blickensderfer, Joanne Fitzgerald, and Jim Ballard.

### Marine Reserves Letter Writing Party Friday, December 3, 2010

Coordinator: Lon Otterby

A dozen people gathered on a cold evening at the home of coordinator, Lon Otterby to write letters, letting the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) and Oregon's legislature know of their support protecting marine life and the livelihood of Oregon's fishing families with a network of marine reserves off the Oregon coast. The three proposed marine reserves are at Cape Perpetua, Cascade Head and Cape Falcon.



Photos by Ricardo Small



Shown standing in back, left to right: Lon Otterby, Leslie Hogan, Jim Hogan, Jane Luther, Sandra Verhoogen, Lee Lazaro, Robert Verhoogen. Kneeling in front, left to right: Dawn Jones, Laura Schmidt (Our Ocean organizer), Janet Wolf-Eshe, and Debra Higbee-Sudyka.



# THE BENCHMARK

## MPG Election Results 2010 Executive Committee

Four positions were filled on the MPG Sierra Club Executive Committee this year. Elected were incumbent Bruce Encke, Julie Arrington, Marcia Shapiro and Irene Schoppy. Each will serve two-year terms. Also on the committee are Debra Higbee-Sudyka, Bob Custer and Ray Drapek. Officers elected for 2011 are Bruce Encke as Chair, Debra Higbee-Sudyka as Vice-Chair, Leslie Hogan as Secretary, and Denise Cooper serving as Treasurer

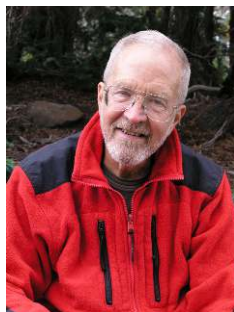


Bruce Encke,  
*Chair*-Member for five years. Hike leader and an active member of the HP Sustainability Network.

Debra Higbee-Sudyka,  
*Vice Chair*- Member for 24 years. Served as political chair for MPG working on energy, environment and politics.



Bob Custer, Member for 12 years. Hike and backpack leader. Previously served as backpack chair.



Julie Arrington, Member for 24 years. Family hike leader. Previously served on ExCom.



Ray Drapek, Member for 11 years. Leads the PCT backpack, McKenzie River rafting, cross country ski trips, and miscellaneous day hikes.

Marcia Shapiro, Life member of Sierra Club. Avid outdoorswoman. Organizer of MPG evening programs. Volunteer of the Year winner in 2009.



Denise Cooper, *Treasurer*

Leslie Hogan, *Secretary*



Irene Schoppy, Member for 11 years. MPG outings leader; helps with trail maintenance and tree planting efforts.



# THE BENCHMARK

## 2010 MPG/Sierra Club Award Winners



photos by Barry Wulff



### *Volunteer of the Year Award*

The MPG ExCom is pleased to announce that David Eckert has been selected for the 2010 “Volunteer of the Year” award. David has not only organized and managed MPG's involvement with the Corvallis School District Arboretum projects, and been a leader of the Group's involvement in water conservation issues in Benton County, he has also been implementing tree planting along Corvallis city streets for a number of years, and led the popular Earth Day bike tours to local ecological sites. This award, recognizing Dave's enormous contributions, is long overdue, and very well deserved.

### *Phil Schary Award*

Hilary White has received the MPG Phil Schary Award for 2010. The award was instituted by the MPG in 2007. Phil Schary, a long-time Sierra Club member and an early member of the MPG, was a major contributor to many facets of the MPG. Through the years, he led many outings. This award was named to honor the memory of Phil and his mentoring. It is presented to the MPG member who participated in the most MPG outings during the current year. Hilary announced to one and all early in the 2010 that she was out to win this award, and with fierce determination and spirit, regardless of weather or physical discomfort, she managed to participate in a total of 56 outings this year. Way to go, Hilary!



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## GET INVOLVED!

**Y**ou joined the Sierra Club because you like the outdoor life, or because you want to support the environment. The Marys Peak Group offers opportunities to engage more actively in both. Here are a few areas you may wish to involve yourself.

### Trail maintenance/Building:

Interest in working on local and regional trails? There's a regular schedule for trail building and maintenance here in the Willamette Valley. Contact: Denise Nervik at [nervikd@peak.org](mailto:nervikd@peak.org)

### Leading outings:

Enjoy working with people in group settings? How about leading an outing, such as a snowshoe or ski trip, hike, rafting adventure, backpack or special field trip of interest? Training is available. Contact: Doris deLespinnasse at [ddeles@proaxis.com](mailto:ddeles@proaxis.com)

**Conservation/Sustainability:** You may be interested in specific environmental issues, and would be willing to attend meetings of government agencies to monitor their activities and testify at hearings. Contact: Bruce Enke, 541-974-3439 [bruce.encke@hp.com](mailto:bruce.encke@hp.com)

**Political activism:** How about engaging in lobbying? Would you be willing to become involved in political issues relating to the environment or supporting a candidate for election? Contact: Debra Higbee-Sudyka at [dwhigbe@juno.com](mailto:dwhigbe@juno.com)

**Graphics/Illustration:** Have you graphics and illustration skills? Have access to desktop publishing software? Like making displays for events and booths? Contact: Barry Wulff at [wulffb@peak.org](mailto:wulffb@peak.org)

**Fundraising:** Do you like to promote activities for organizations? Like to meet people? How about producing concerts or managing a party? Do you have fundraising skills? Contact: Barry Wulff at [wulffb@peak.org](mailto:wulffb@peak.org)

**Membership:** Do you like to communicate with people? Are you able to organize tabling events? Help assure the future of the environment by getting more people interested and involved in MPG activities. Contact: Janet Lincoln at [Lincoln.janet@gmail.com](mailto:Lincoln.janet@gmail.com)

**Writing/Photography:** You like to write? Would you like to research an issue and then write about it? Are you handy with a digital camera? Want to show off your camera skills? Contact: Barry Wulff at [wulffb@peak.org](mailto:wulffb@peak.org).

### SIGN-UP FOR THE WEEKLY EMAIL

The Marys Peak Group offers many activities other than those listed in the Benchmark. Our weekly email announces upcoming events and activities with complete contact information. You may sign-up to receive the weekly email by sending a note to Jane Luther at [janeluth@gmail.com](mailto:janeluth@gmail.com).

Or, if you have a Google account, you can subscribe by going to: <http://groups.google.com/group/marys-peak-group/> subscribe and choose "E-mail - send each message to me as it arrives" (the message "Approximately 1 e-mail per day" is incorrect; MPG weekly email will be sent once a week.)

*Your email will not be shared with other entities.*



**We Need  
Your Photos!**