It’s a hard life, especially if you’re a Bee

By Ron Garnett

The dog stood in a patch of lush green clover and stared intensely down at the white flowers and dark foliage. Every once in a while she would jerk her head to one side then the other. Once focused, she sticks her snout down into the clover and darts about like her nose is pulling her. As her nose sweeps the ground bees swarm up and circle around her. She stops and focuses on the bees in the air. She nips at them as they move further up and away. She leaps into the air, with the agility that only dogs have, and nips at the bees as they move off, unharmed and unphased. In all her time of chasing bees she had never caught one or been stung.

If bees worried, the dog would be the least of their concerns.

Over the last few decades bees have seen massive declines in hive populations. Colony Collapse Disorder, CCD, has seen whole hive populations, some numbering as high as 50,000 bees, completely disappear. “Die-offs” are starting to account for a third of the population decrease of whole apiaries. And this is just in one season.
These abnormal die-offs and population decreases are a worldwide concern, that also affect Oregon and the Willamette Valley bee populations. There are those who estimate that as much as 80% of the total world population of bees is affected by the same elements that cause, in part or in whole, these declines. No species of bee is immune to all the elements causing the die-offs. The European Honey Bee, what we would call the common honey bee, is almost 100% of the standard American commercial apiary population that was exported by immigrants from Europe, and the American bee, the Bumble Bee, are all susceptible to one or all the elements that cause generalized bee population declines. There are as many as 20,000 different species of bee.

Paul Andersen, President of the Oregon State Beekeeper Association, has said that keeping accurate count of kept bees in the state is hard. He points out there are many different levels of beekeeping. There are private and commercial beekeepers in the valley that keep as few as one or two hives, in their back yards, to huge operations, like Olsen Honey Farms of Albany, Oregon, that maintain thousands of hives. Andersen estimates that there could be as many 200,000 hives in the entire state with 75% of those in the Willamette Valley. At the peak of seasonal operation a single hive could hold as many as 60,000 bees.

In the Willamette Valley, as well as the world, bee die-offs have been attributed to a combination four elements. According to Andersen they are; loss of habitat and the food and nutrition that habitat provides, chemicals in the environment, pandemics and infections, and stress conditions. You would think that any one of these conditions would be enough to cause a problem in a bee community, but taken together these elements are causing widespread concern. As has been pointed out, you can't keep losing a third of your apiary and stay in business long.

Most bee people will be quick to point out that you have to differentiate between natural die-offs and abnormal die-offs. Under the best of conditions a bee's life is short, in some cases numbering just a few days. Queen honey bees may live 3-4 years, worker bees maybe 6-7 weeks, some could live as long as 4-6 months. Drones live only 4 months. Andersen points out that the further bees have to go for food the shorter their lives will be. A bee will travel as far as five miles for pollen and nectar. But it will take a life toll traveling long distances on a constant basis.

In considering the loss of habitat, Andersen points out that both wild and domestic bees need the same nutritional opportunities. Bees need diverse sources of pollen and nectar. When local valley farmers convert huge swaths of land to single crop fields, that cuts back on the multi-cultural feed areas that bees can draw from. It’s like always eating one
thing, Andersen observes, it’ll keep you alive, but it will weaken your resistance to other factors. Andersen suggested that there was the possibility for state and private business to plant bee friendly habitats on road and highway right-of-ways, wildflower stands and diverse flowering plant species. Power companies can plant the same bee friendly habitats on power line cuts and rights-of-ways.

It has been observed, by Andersen and others, that bees tend to do better, nutritionally, in cities than in the “wild” or cultivated land, because of the diversity of plants that people grow in their personal gardens.

Another very serious element to bee existence is chemicals, in particular pesticides. Both Andersen and Dirk Olsen, owner/operator of Olsen Honey Farms in Albany, and one of the largest honey/bee operations in Oregon with over 8,000 hives, agree that it is becoming harder to find land that isn’t, to one degree or another, affected by chemicals, i.e. windblown fertilizers, aerial wind drift of sprayed pesticides and general application of herbicides with chemical elements harmful to bees.

And the worst of all situations is people who use chemical pesticides and herbicides “off label”. Andersen relates the June 19th 2013 die-off of 50,000 bumble bees, at one time, in the parking lot of a store in Wilsonville as an example of how the lack of knowledge, experience and awareness can be detrimental to bee populations. He also observes that for all the bee die-offs in the valley, directly related to the misuse of pesticides (and there have been many), nearly all were from “off-label” or misuse from the directions on the pesticides. He states that it would be hard to determine what the impact of pesticides actually is given that so much application is not in accordance with the label directions.

Dirk Olsen, owner of the Olsen Honey Farms since 1971, says he has seen a lot of change during his time as a professional beekeeper. He notes that a lot of these changes add “management cost” to his operations. These can be considerable, given he has 8,000 hives with maybe 40,000 bees per hive during the height of the honey season. He notes that his operation is constantly making, restocking, cleaning and disinfecting hives, sometimes in the hundreds to thousands of new hives because of die-offs, of the normal and abnormal types. During the season, he says, a hive can have as many as 60,000 bees at one time. But then during the winter that same hive will usually decrease to around 7,000 bees. Normally hives expand and contract given the availability of food sources.

Hives will literally starve to death if there are no close sources of pollen or nectar, causing the whole hive to become weakened. The hive will die off until the availability of stored food and pollen/nectar sources are in line with the hive population. But then, as if the weakened state of the hive from the lack of nutrition isn’t bad enough, another element takes hold. Mites.

In a little over a hundred years bee mites have spread from a single place in Southeast Asia to the infestation of 80% of Olsen Farm honey products in storage
the total bee population worldwide. This mite made its way to America in the early “80s” and has aided the devastation to hives and apiaries already suffering from mal-nutrition and pesticides. The mites attach themselves to the bees and slowly suck their blood, further weakening the bee and the colony. The mite also carries a virus, which infects the hives food stores, causing the bees to die from infections. Raider bees will attack the weakened hive for its food stores, be infected and take the parasite back to their hive and infect that colony, and the cycle continues.

Olsen observes that between chemicals, mites and the urbanization of natural bee habitats he considers himself lucky if 30% die-off is all he sees in his populations. To say nothing of the cost of rebuilding and repopulating new hives as well as disinfecting the colonies from the mites.

Sujaya Rao, Professor and leader of the Entomology Program and Associate Department Head for Crop and Soil Science at Oregon State University, (a bee person), further observes that with pesticide drift and habitat fragmentation, there is also stress from movement. Beekeepers from all over the country will truck their hives to areas were high-end crops are grown for the rental on hives. In some cases the beekeeper can rent out hundreds of hives for over $ 200 per hive per season. And during a growing season there can be different types and locations for crops needing pollination. Rao noted that some beekeepers move their hives from the east coast to the west coast for the high paying crops, like almonds in southern California. Every time bees are moved some are lost both coming and going. You expose your bees to possible infections from other bees, in different environments, and the bees that the hive produced while in a high food area now die off when they get back home to a possible lower food environment.

Bees are sensitive creatures and they work really hard to support their colony. Even under the best of conditions their lives are short but meaningful. There are those who say that for every three bites of food you ingest, at least one is directly produced by bee efforts. Perhaps we should be a little more bee friendly, plant some flowers. Be responsive to a creature that asks little and works hard in our interest. Just like the rest of us, all bees want is a nice place to live, some flowers and a sunny day. Dogs to play with are optional.

Seems almost human.

Note: All facts and figures are verifiable by simple web searches.
Looking ahead to 2015, I must admit, I see a challenging year on the horizon. Republicans control the majority in the House and the Senate. There is a stark division between the Democratic Party and the Republican Party. The Republicans maintain an open animosity for anything President Obama wants to achieve. All of this, put together, is going to make for a wild ride on the political roller coaster and it is going to be tough to make progress on any conservation or preservation issue to protect and conserve our dwindling wilderness and natural resources. In fact, we can expect to see many attacks being made to repeal long-standing advances that we fought so hard to achieve over the past years.

We have just had a great celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the Wilderness Act. Now we are facing a chasm that will block our future and possibly turn back the hands of time. What will be left of our natural environment if we do not take note of the special need for balance and protection of our land, water, air, forests – the world around us? We have a huge impact on our environment, and this impact can be good or it can be bad. We must choose.

In these challenging times we must not waiver from our mission. We must not give up. There is great strength and power in the combined voice of all of us who care and are willing to speak up and do something about it. We must work together in preserving, conserving and supporting our beautiful ecosystem for our children and our children’s children. You can help with an email or a letter or a phone call to let our leaders know what you support and what you do not support. We live in a democracy and this gives us a voice and we need to use it. Ask yourself, who will speak up, if not me? It always starts with one voice. Many will come but for each of us it is “my” choice to use “my” voice today, not tomorrow. Now is the time to speak out and let our leaders know what we care about and hold them accountable for their actions.

Want to get involved with a great group of highly motivated people who love the wilderness and care enough to speak out? Come bring your voice to Marys Peak Group – Sierra Club. We have many ways for you to become involved. Drop me an email at bruce.encke@hp.com and I will help you get connected. You can make a difference.

Hope to hear from you or see you on a hike soon,

Bruce Encke
Chair, Executive Committee

Non-Excom:
Robert Verhoogen, Outings Chair
Barbara Loeb, Membership Co-Chair

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Outings and Programs

Offered 116 different outings and 142 days of outings
Hiked a total of 686 miles and over 103,397 feet of elevation gain
More than 465 different individuals participated in MPG outings in 2014
There were 1,386 participation days on our outings in 2014
Four backpacks in Oregon and Washington, plus a backpacking class
Seven wonderful kayak trips on the Willamette River, Beaver Creek and Fern Ridge
A beautiful sunset rafting adventure on the Willamette
There were two great car-camping trips in Oregon
The 15th annual February three-day weekend Mt. Bachelor ski trip had 14 participants
The 14th annual Summer Solstice party was held at the beautiful Dancing Oaks Nursery
Held the first-ever and very successful Llama-People hike at Bald Hill
Two snowshoe or cross-country ski outings in February
The 8th annual Earth Day tour featured four residential large rainwater-harvesting systems
Held a weekend training camp where 16 MPG Leaders were trained in NOLS-certified outdoor leadership skills and Wilderness First Aid

Two successful trail workdays were held at Chip Ross Park and Marys Peak
Over a dozen outings had a significant emphasis on conservation or nature education
Six evening programs presented in Corvallis with an average of 85 people in attendance

Political and Environmental Action

MPG’s Environmental/Political (EnAct) Team:
~ Staffed information tables at seven local events
~ Conducted four public climate change conversation forums with expert presentations
~ Sponsored public forums on wildlife killing, nuclear power and coal to clean energy
~ Interviewed political candidates and obtained MPG and Oregon Chapter endorsements
~ Worked with Climate Oregon on a resolution in support of a carbon fee and dividend bill in the 2015 Oregon legislature

Community and Cooperative Events

Took 180 Cheldelin 8th grade Earth Science students, 30 parents, 6 teachers and 32 technical interpreters on a full day interpreted trip to Marys Peak

Partnered with the City of Corvallis, the Marys River Watershed Council and the Benton Soil and Water Conservation District to produce and manage the 7th Annual Corvallis Stream Tour, with a focus on Oak Creek
Established and/or updated Corvallis schoolyard native arboretums at Linus Pauling Middle School, Garfield Elementary School, Cheldelin Middle School and Crescent Valley High School

Joined with Many Rivers Group, Audubon Society of Portland, members of the Siletz Tribe, and a youth Natural Resources Crew in the 9th Annual Marbled Murrelet Citizen Science Survey at Cape Perpetua

Joined over 100 people to celebrate and walk the Greenbelt Land Trust inaugural hike on the new Fitton Green-Mulkey Ridge connector trail, which creates an unbroken 14-mile trail corridor through these beloved local natural areas

Active representation on the Corvallis Climate Action Plan Task Force
Participated in the SOLV Beach Cleanup in March
Continues to collect reusable grocery bags for the South Corvallis Food Bank
Partner organization of the Corvallis Sustainability Coalition

Fundraising

“An Essential Triumvirate”, reading to celebrate 50th Anniversary of the Wilderness Act
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 and Oregon Outdoors section of the Corvallis Gazette-Times several times
Maintained an up-to-date website and weekly “Peak View” email posting
2,505 individuals on weekly email list – a 4.9% increase over 2013

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Blue heron seen at Finley NWR

Photo By Robert White
Bruce Encke, chair of the MPG executive committee, does not mince words when asked what he thinks about Marys Peak Group (MPG). "We are a shining star in the Sierra Club (SC) organization." Of the six Sierra Club groups in Oregon -- Many Rivers (Eugene), Columbia (Portland), Loo Wit (Vancouver, WA), Juniper (Bend), Rogue (Ashland/Medford), and Marys Peak (Corvallis/ Philomath/ Albany/Salem/Newport) -- "we are the best, with an average of 123 outings per year." Bruce has been a big part of this success. An SC member since 2004, he has been a hike leader since 2006, and MPG Excom chair for the last four years. These days, hike-leading has taken a back seat to overseeing the MPG organization, and organizing statewide SC outdoor leader trainings and wilderness first aid certification classes. "These trainings have been key for the success of the Sierra Club in Oregon," he says. In addition, Sierra Club of Oregon appointed Bruce outings chair for the state, a job involving seeing that all six chapters have outings chairs, and helping them with their outings programs.

Father of three sons now in their 20s, grandfather of a new grandson, and full-time program manager for Hewlett-Packard, Bruce still managed to spend the month of September in Australia on the trip led by Barry Wulff. "I'm really glad I went, but when I got back I had 4,000 emails." Bruce depends on the people in MPG to get things done. "We have great membership. We have great leaders. We have a good time. Everybody chips in. Volunteers are what make it happen."

When time permits, Bruce loves to hike. Anywhere, anytime (even in the dark, without a head lamp), alone or with a group. His favorite hikes in winter are on Mary's Peak, in McDonald Forest, or at Silver Falls State Park. In the summer he heads to the coast or to the Cascades. Iron Mt./Cone Peak and Browder Ridge are two favorites. "There's not too much that I don't like to do outdoors. Downhill or cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, and I love the water."

Recalling his days as a lifeguard on the beaches of New Jersey he says, "They made us swim back and forth along the beach every morning for 45 minutes to an hour, no matter how big the surf. Not in truly dangerous weather, of course. We needed to be strong enough to save others without endangering ourselves."

Bruce was brought up as an outdoor buff. "My parents took the four of us kids camping at least once every year, to places like upper New York State, the Shenandoah Valley, the Poconos, and Florida. My dad died when I was nine, but my mom kept taking us camping. We all had our jobs, setting up the tents, arranging the kitchen, building a fire." Bruce gives credit to the step-father who entered his life when Bruce was a teenager. A private contractor, "he made me get up every Saturday.
morning and go with him to build houses. It was his way of having me earn my keep. From him I learned plumbing, electrical engineering, drywall installation, all kinds of maintenance. Now I can fix my washing machine if it breaks, or build a deck or other home project." Together they built the house that Bruce's family then lived in. That house is gone now, a casualty of Hurricane Sandy.

While earning a B.A. in the dual major of zoology and psychology from the University of New Hampshire, Bruce became an environmental activist fighting the Seabrook nuclear power plant with the No Nukes movement. After graduation he took off alone for a year of exploring the country from coast to coast. He drove around visiting, camping and hiking in as many of the national parks as he could find. He discovered a windy, rugged, and cold Oregon Coast, little knowing how much he would eventually come to love it. Returning to New Hampshire, Bruce earned an MBA from Southern New Hampshire University and began a lifetime career focused on the then-brand new idea of personal computing. The work involved international travel, and Bruce gained fluency in French and some Japanese. "One time I was in a bar in Amsterdam, and there was a very geeky-looking kid with glasses sitting on the next stool. We started talking about PCs, and the amazing thought of people actually having their own computers in their houses. I said, 'What would be even cooler would be combining the PCs with printers.' The kid said, 'That's a fantastic idea!'" The kid, if you haven't guessed, was Bill Gates. (Bruce notes, "I, too, was just a kid at the time.")

In 1997 Hewlett-Packard moved Bruce and his family to Corvallis. "They moved everything, including the trash in our waste baskets." At HP he has been active on the sustainability "green team", which devotes itself to being "environmental stewards for the products HP makes and the place where we work. This has led to great recycling programs for ink cartridges and other green initiatives," Bruce says. His three sons grew up with the same love of the outdoors that Bruce has, and all three were involved in Scouting. Currently one studies chemistry at Oregon State U., one studies international law in Germany, and one owns and operates the most successful eatery in the campus area of Corvallis, a food truck known as Cheesy Stuffed Burgers. Extremely popular with students, his truck is busiest from 10 p.m. to 3 a.m.

Bruce is passionate about MPG's mission. "Get people out there in the outdoors and they're going to want to protect it. We're more than a hiking group. We have the conservation and political side that focuses on local issues mainly, and MPG tries to make sure its members are aware of them. One important project we have is with the Juniper Group (Bend) on the Keep Waldo Wild effort to increase the amount of protected land around Waldo Lake to include the full watershed area."

How can we justify the carbon produced by the international travel promoted by the Sierra Club? "The world is getting smaller and more crowded. We need to work together globally and help each other in our conservation and preservation efforts. There is a real value in understanding and appreciating different cultures, languages and places. I believe we should travel, as long as we don't abuse the privilege. One of my mottoes is 'Plan for tomorrow, but live for today.' Let us share the natural beauty of the wilderness with our children today while protecting it for generations to come."
**THE BENCHMARK**

**MPG 2015 Sierra Club Outings, January-April**

**Thursday, January 1st – New Year's Day Walk, Northwest Corvallis Hills.** A New Year's Day walk followed by a social occasion is a Marys Peak Group tradition. We'll visit some older neighborhoods in the NW Corvallis hills, walking along quirky streets and on little-known pedestrian paths through green spaces. A visit to a small Sequoia grove in the middle of an urban neighborhood. Some discussion of what makes an area pedestrian and even wildlife friendly. Perhaps some high points with views if the weather is good. On the easy end of moderate, about four miles and 500 feet of elevation gain, but with some possible steep climbs. Mostly paved, some gravel, probably a little mud. Perhaps shorter if the weather's lousy. We hope you'll also join us after the walk for the optional post-hike gathering at the leader's home, near the meeting place. If you wish, bring a snack to share and/or a beverage of choice. Park at MLK Park (former Walnut Park) parking area, on Walnut Blvd. in Corvallis, and walk up to the barn for a 1:00 p.m. departure. Contact leader to register, with questions, or for directions to meeting place: Doris deLespinasse, at 541-753-4775 or ddeles@proaxis.com; Barbara Loeb, Julie Arrington.

**Important:** For General Outing Policies, see page 14. Please read them with care.

**Saturday, January 10th – Minto Brown Park in Salem.** Let's tour one of the biggest riverside parks in Oregon. Minto Brown Park on the south side of Salem is contiguous with the city and the multi-channeled Willamette River. We will walk largely on paved paths, 3-5 miles. Total mileage depends on river flow - at high water some trails are under water. A likely stop at a Salem eatery after hiking. 8:30 a.m. departure; 4:00 p.m. return. Contact leader: Randy Selig, 541 738 0753 or rselig@peak.org

**Saturday, January 10th – New Growth to Old Growth Trail.** Put on your rain gear and join us for a leisurely hike along the New Growth and Old Growth Trails in McDonald Forest. Suitable for folks who like a gentle pace and for families. We will walk among 200-year-old Douglas firs. Come see where a storm blew down three huge trees. The moderate, 2 mile downhill and uphill path crosses 2 streams lined with huge ferns. (260 feet of elevation gain) Although the trail is graveled, it can be muddy in spots. All children must be accompanied by an adult. Children who are not with their parent or guardian must bring a release form signed by a parent which can be obtained in advance from the hike leader. Meet in the Wilkinson parking lot (Arnold & 27th in Corvallis) in time for a 10:00 a.m. departure. Bring a lunch or snack, sturdy boots, hiking poles if you prefer. We should be back by 2:00 p.m. Preregister. Limited to 20 people. Led by Mike Neeley-Brown and Julie Arrington. Contact Julie Arrington, 541-752-6052 or Julie.seahorse@gmail.com

**Saturday, January 17th – MLK Hike.** We'll honor Martin Luther King, Jr. Day by taking a hike in the lovely Beazell Memorial Forest in Kings Valley. We'll hike up to the meadow and enjoy a reading or two from MLK, then down to the creek for another. Please bring a reading from MLK or a poem honoring his spirit to share if you wish. Meet for a 1:00 p.m. departure from Wilkinson Hall parking lot. Contact leader to register: Irene Schoppy, at iameyers@yahoo.com or 541-758-8591 (no calls after 9pm).

**Wednesday, January 21st – Greek to Me.** 10:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. This is a difficult 6.5 mile hike on a series of trails accessed from the Ridge Trail near the Lewisberg Saddle. Since these mountain bike trails include names such as Alpha, Beta, Gamma, and Delta, I’ve labeled this the ‘Greek to Me’ trail. From the Ridge Trail, it descends 600 feet into the Baker Creek drainage with a number of the trails following the drainage. Forest here is dense with young trees. Because of the rolling nature of the terrain, I’ve rated this hike as difficult. Some sections are muddy so please wear water-resistant shoes with good traction; poles are recommended. Bring water and a snack. Meet at 10:00 a.m. in the parking lot behind
**Saturday, January 24th – Dimple Hill from Oak Creek.** Starting out from Oak Creek on a less used trail we will be hiking through McDonald Forest on gravel roads, which tend to be less muddy this time of year, to a nice overlook above Corvallis. Moderately paced trip of 6 miles with 750 feet of elevation gain. Meet at Wilkinson Hall parking lot on the OSU Campus (Arnold & 27th) for a 10:00 a.m. departure / return approx. 2:30 p.m. Contact leader: Bruce Encke, at bruce.encke@hp.com or 541 230-1970.

**Sunday, January 25th – Forest Discovery / Calloway Creek / Intensive Management Trails.** Starting from the RD 500 Gate parking area in the Peavy Arboretum, we will follow a clockwise route along the three trails, including walking around Cronemiller Lake. The outing offers a sample of several forest habitats along the way and finishes in an area of forest genetics research. In between, per Margie Powell, “Calloway Creek is a truly wonderful trail that playfully curves and undulates through beautiful forest without gaining any serious elevation.” Easy, 4.65 miles, 300 ft elevation gain. Be prepared for wet and cold weather by dressing in layers and for occasional very short muddy stretches. Bring along a morning snack. Meet in the 1st Street/Polk Ave parking area behind the Super 8 Motel for an 9:30 a.m. DEPARTURE. Return by 12:30 p.m. Contact leader: Robert Verhoogen, 541-745-5185, rverhoogen@mac.com

**Saturday, February 7th – Peavy RD 510/ RD 514 / Section 36 Trail / RD 530 500.** The outing will introduce you to rarely traveled RD 510 in Peavy Arboretum and its connection with RD 514 or a short trail to the Section 36 Loop Trail, as well as a connection between the latter and RD 500 via RD 530. We will follow RD 500 back to the trailhead at the RD 500 Gate parking area. Moderate, 5-6 miles, going from the 400 ft elevation level to 1140 ft. Be prepared for wet and cold weather by dressing in layers and for occasional very short muddy stretches. Bring along a morning snack and ample water. Meet in the 1st Street/Polk Ave parking area behind the Super 8 Motel for a 9:30 a.m. DEPARTURE. Return by 1:00 p.m. Contact leader: Robert Verhoogen, 541-745-5185, rverhoogen@mac.com

**Saturday, February 14th – Oak Creek to McCullogh Peak.** Margie Powell’s Trail #11. This loop is primarily on forest roads which should allow passage regardless of the weather. We will start from the Oak Creek Trailhead and continue up to McCulloch Peak, the highest point in McDonald Forest. If the weather is clear we should have a wonderful view prior to our descent. With more interesting weather we will still have a great time. The hike is rated difficult at 9 miles with over 1,900 feet of elevation gain (there are steep portions). Dress in layers, bring rain gear, wear shoes with good traction; carry a lunch and ample water. Meet in the First Street/Polk Ave parking area behind the Super-8 for a 9:00 a.m. DEPARTURE. We should return by 3:00 p.m. Contact the leader to pre-register: Robert White at rlfwii47@gmail.com.

**Saturday, February 21st – The Beautiful Trail.** 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. North of Dimple Hill is a single-track mountain bike trail rightfully called the Beautiful Trail; it is one of the less-visited old growth areas in the MacDonald. That is the destination of this 7-mile hike. This is a difficult hike primarily on single-track trails that will gain 1100 feet. The hike will start at Sulphur Springs Saddle, ascend on the Ridge Trail, then pick up another trail (Bombs Extension) off Road 640. This trail will take us to Road 662, an overgrown road that will lead us to the Beautiful Trail. This trail will descend to the junction of Road 600 and 660, which is a short distance from Dimple Hill. If the weather is pleasant, we’ll stroll over to the Hill for lunch before heading back. Bring along lunch, water, poles (if you prefer), boots with good traction, and appropriate clothing. Meet in the First Street parking area behind the Super 8 Motel for a 9:30 a.m. departure. Contact leader: Ken Fitschen at k彭fits@q.com
Sunday, February 22nd – Baker Creek RD 800 & 870 to RD 870/680 Tie. The hike will introduce you to another rarely traveled out and back graveled road in McDonald Forest that will begin at the actual sulphur springs. The route briefly follows and crosses Baker Creek, then climbs to the second (RD 870) of three branches off RD 800, and continues for the most part gently uphill to the Tie. Two mountain bike trails cross RD 870. Easy to moderate, 3-4 miles, 500 ft elevation gain. Be prepared for wet and cold weather by dressing in layers and for occasional very short muddy stretches. Bring along a morning snack and ample water. Meet in the 1st Street/Polk Ave parking area behind the Super 8 Motel for a 9:30 a.m. DEPARTURE. Return by 12:30 p.m. Contact leader: Robert Verhoogen, 541-745-5185, rverhoogen@mac.com

Saturday, February 28th – Silver Falls Hike. This tree-lined trail to ten waterfalls is one of Oregon’s premier sights. A great opportunity to get intimate with some of the Columbia River basalt flows. We will start at the North parking lot and stop by the historic lodge to eat our lunches by the fire. Good rain gear and water-resistant boots or sturdy walking shoes are essential. Moderate/Difficult, 8.6 miles with 1,000 feet of elevation gain. Meet at the Wilkinson Hall parking lot (Arnold & 27th in Corvallis) for an 9:30 a.m. departure / return approx. 5:00 p.m. Contact leader: Bruce Encke, at bruce.encke@hp.com or 541 230-1970.

Saturday, March 21st – Sweet Creek Falls. Quoting Bill Sullivan, in 2007, “This sleepy coastal range valley...a dramatic new trail past a dozen falls. Four trailheads along the route make it easy to hike the path in segments...the trail hugs a cliff through a canyon full of punchbowl-shaped falls. Four-foot-thick Douglas-fir trees tower above the creekside alder and big leaf maple. Black, robin-sized water ouzels fly just above the creek’s surface before plopping underwater to prowl the creek bottom for insect larvae.” Possible stop afterward in Mapleton (46 miles west of Eugene on SR 126) for hot drinks at a unique coffee shop and bookstore. Easy/moderate, 5.2 miles, with 650 feet of elevation gain. Be prepared for wet and cold weather by dressing in layers, wearing shoes with good traction, and by using a trekking pole. Don’t forget to bring along a lunch and ample water. Meet in the 1st Street/Polk Ave parking area behind the Super 8 Motel for an 8:30 a.m. DEPARTURE. Return by 5:00 p.m. Contact leader: Robert Verhoogen, 541-745-5185, rverhoogen@mac.com

Saturday, March 28th - SOLV Beach Clean-Up. Each winter Oregon’s beaches accumulate lots of debris that the winter storms bring in. We Oregonians love our beaches. So let’s, once again, participate in the annual spring beach clean-up. While the weather may be dicey, we’ve never been frozen out, blown away by the winds, or washed away by the sea. In fact, it’s a real sporting event. Two miles of beach walking. Lunch at a local seafood restaurant afterward. Let’s have a good showing of members this year. Wilkinson Hall parking lot (Arnold & 27th in Corvallis) for an 9:30 a.m. departure / return approx. 5:00 p.m. Contact leader: Bruce Encke, at bruce.encke@hp.com or 541 230-1970.

Sunday, March 29th – Brice Creek. 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. This is a difficult but scenic hike with a 1000 feet of elevation, #85 in Sullivan’s Central Oregon Cascades. I have not seen this hike on MPG’s previous hikes. It is south of Doreena Lake in the Umpqua National Forest; the drive to the trailhead takes less than 2 hours. This trail follows Brice Creek in a scenic canyon within an old growth forest and multiple waterfalls including Brice Creek Falls, Trestle Falls and Upper Trestle Falls. The trail goes behind the 65-foot Upper Trestle Falls. We’ll start at the Cedar Creek trailhead, which provides quick access to the Brice Creek waterfall. Depending on the weather and the group, we may also visit the 2 Parker Falls which are a short drive away. More details will follow. Bring along a lunch, adequate water, good boots, poles if you prefer, and appropriate clothing. Meet in the First Street parking area behind the Super 8 Motel for an 8:00 a.m. departure. Contact leader: Ken Fitschen at kenfits@q.com
**Saturday, April 4th - Rooster Rock.** We will ascend via the Trout Creek Trail to an excellent viewpoint past Rooster Rock, a popular rock-climbing site, and a member of the Menagerie. A small fire lookout once stood on Rooster Rock. It is long gone. Bring lunch, water, good boots, and be prepared for adverse weather. Moderate to difficult, 6.6 miles RT, 2327 ft. elevation gain. Meet at the First Street parking area behind the Super 8 Motel for an 8:00 a.m. departure. Contact leader to pre-register: Ralph Nafziger, at nafziger@peak.org or 541-926-4245.

**Saturday, April 11th – Lookout Creek. 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.** “Stellar” is how Sullivan describes this hike through Old Growth near Blue River. The trail weaves through the stunning old growth including 450-year old trees with 7-foot diameters. This hike is part of the Andrews Experimental Forest, “the most studied primal forest ecosystem on this continent.” “Rugged” is another word I would emphasize in describing this hike because the trail requires regular attention as it twists, turns, ascends and descends through thick vegetation. The recorded mileage, thus, is not an indicator of the difficulty of this trail. Although Sullivan lists it as a moderate 7-mile out and back, it feels more like a difficult 9 miles. Similarly, the total elevation gained is approximately 2,500; much more than the listed elevation of 1,400. Therefore, the hike will likely take 5 hours including breaks. Plan on getting your boots and lower pant legs wet; the trail is wet and muddy in numerous spots, and the undergrowth will get your pants soaked. Bring along lunch, water, poles (there are a number of steep sections), good boots, and rain gear. Meet in the First Street parking area behind the Super 8 Motel for an 8:00 a.m. departure. Contact leader: Ken Fitschen at kenfits@q.com

**Sunday, April 19th – Cascade Head.** We will take the Nature Conservancy Trail from the Salmon River Estuary area up through a forest of large old Sitka spruce before reaching and climbing along a nearly two-mile long fragile meadow with breathtaking views of the estuary and the rugged, rocky coastline. The trailhead sign lists 14 wildflowers/grasses, 4 animals, and 6 birds that may be spotted during the course of the hike. Rain & wind gear, shoes for a muddy trail, and possibly 1-2 trekking poles advised. Moderate, 6.2 miles round trip, 1300 ft elevation gain. We’ll be driving to Cascade Head via SR 99W / 22 / 18. Meet in the 1st Street/Polk Ave parking area behind the Super 8 Motel for an 8:00 a.m. DEPARTURE. Return by 5:00 p.m. Contact leader: Robert Verhoogen, 541-745-5185, rverhoogen@mac.com

**Wednesday, April 22nd – 8th Annual Earth Day Tour – Far Out Buildings!!** Visit three Corvallis buildings that show us the future. Tour by bike or car-pool. 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. To register, contact Dave Eckert at deckert@willamettewatershed.com

**Sunday, April 26th – Spring Wildflower Walk.** 1:30 p.m. until about 4:00 p.m. Learn about some of the lovely spring wildflowers near Corvallis, or examine and admire what you already know. We’ll have the help of a couple of people who know local spring flowers quite well. The exact trail will be determined a few days before the hike, depending on where the blooms seem most plentiful - maybe at Peavy Arboretum. We’ll move slowly, making lots of brief pauses for a careful look. Moderate, not more than 4 miles with 600 feet of elevation gain. Preregister; number may be limited. Contact leader: Doris deLespinasse, at ddeles@proaxis.com
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 $3.00 for every hour driven; perhaps more when the roads are difficult or the number of riders is small; possibly a little less if a vehicle has 5 or more people in it.

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, 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.
January

Climate Change in the Pacific Northwest: A Tale of Carbon and Water

The climate is changing, mostly as a result of human activities. A changing climate will have far-reaching, and sometimes surprising, impacts across the Pacific Northwest. Darrin Sharp of the Oregon Climate Change Research Institute at OSU will review the science of climate change, examine projections of future climate in the Northwest, and also look at some of the potential impacts across the region (including changes in sea level, forest and agricultural productivity, the hydrological cycle, and the chemistry of the ocean). Wednesday, January 14, 2015, 7:00 p.m. Corvallis-Benton County Public Library.

Approaches to International Water Conflict Resolution and OSU’s Contributions

While press reports of international waters often focus on conflict, perpetually forecasting “water wars” on the horizon, what has been more encouraging is that, throughout the world, water also induces cooperation, even in particularly hostile basins, and even as disputes rage over other issues. This has been true from the Jordan (Arabs and Israelis) to the Indus (Indians and Pakistanis) to the Kura-Araks (Georgians, Armenians, and Azeris). Dr. Aaron Wolf of OSU will discuss conflict and cooperation over shared water resources internationally and in the US West, and OSU’s role in facilitating resolution. Wednesday, February 4, 2015, 7:00 p.m. Corvallis-Benton County Public Library.
March

**The Other Camino de Santiago**

Join Randy Selig and Joanne Fitzgerald as they describe highlights of their forty-three day, 1000 km trek, on one of the most important pilgrimage routes in Europe. Starting in the south of Spain, they walked through the sun-baked fields of Andalucia and the rain-drenched greenery of Galicia to arrive at Santiago de Compostela, site of St. James' burial at the Cathedral of Santiago. Many people know of the French Camino; Randy and Joanne walked the Via de la Plata, one of “other” caminos, in Spain. Thursday, March 12, 2015, 7:00 p.m. Corvallis-Benton County Public Library

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**Conserving Oregon’s Environment**

Michael McCloskey will speak about his book “Conserving Oregon’s Environment,” which traces the arc of success in Oregon conservation efforts, beginning in the 1880s and continuing to 2013. It answers the questions: Where did this program or reserve come from? Who led the way, and who opposed it? What difference has it made? The book deals with the breadth of modern environmentalism: protecting nature, habitat, purifying ambient media, eliminating unsafe operations, and promoting energy efficiency. It is organized around themes, such as public lands, state parks, rivers, wilderness, environmental laws, modern reserves, new refuges, and breakthroughs with national forests. It concludes that Oregon occupies a special place in the history of conservation because of the degree of innovation here and the continuity of progress. For its size, no state has done more to make history in protecting its environment. McCloskey's book will be available for purchase at the program. Thursday, April 9, 2015, 7:00 p.m. Corvallis-Benton County Public Library
Hard rock (metal), suction dredge (alluvial gold), and aggregate (sand and gravel) mining have been, and remain, economically and socially important land uses in Oregon. However, they can have substantial negative impacts on surface and ground water, water quality, hydromorphology, aquatic biota, and human health—and they all suffer from inadequate monitoring and regulatory enforcement.

Hard rock mining can eliminate extensive aquatic habitat, degrade water quality and quantity, result in perpetual water treatment needs, and reduce aquatic biodiversity and carrying capacity (Figure 1). Metals contamination associated with mining can be highly toxic to aquatic life, because the composition of metal-bearing rock often leads to acidic mine drainage and increased concentrations of dissolved metals. Also, mine-related disruptions to soil and water often produce excess fine sediments and altered stream flows. Such environmental degradation leads to large numbers of perpetually polluted streams and impaired aquatic life and fisheries. Metal mining and smelting are associated with increased incidence of deformed diatoms, indicating detrimental genetic effects, and sensitive algal taxa are replaced by tolerant taxa. The densities and assemblage structure of aquatic macroinvertebrates are altered by metal mines. Failures of mine tailings ponds have resulted in substantial fish kills, reduced fish biomass, and altered fish assemblage structure. Dilute copper concentrations can alter salmonid olfactory function, reducing their capacity to migrate and avoid predation.

The primary U.S. law governing mining, the General Mining Law of 1872, was passed during the pick-and-shovel era; however, modern mining processes are massive in extent, highly mechanized, and incorporate additional toxic chemicals for leaching metals from ores (Woody et al. 2010). The 1872 law makes mining a priority use on most federal lands, guarantees priority rights for minerals extraction, and was originally intended to encourage economic growth by conveying public lands to private owners for the purpose of mineral extraction. In practice, applications to mine public lands often cannot be denied despite deleterious impacts to other resources; however, there is a year-to-year moratorium on new patents. Needed improvements to the law include clear standards for protecting surface and ground water, fish, wildlife, and places having substantial ecological value; requirements for reclamation and revegetation; prohibitions against perpetual water pollution; fiscal reforms to increase permittee financial responsibility (e.g., end patenting, establish royalty fees, ensure reclamation bonding, fund abandoned mine clean-up); and improved monitoring and regulatory enforcement.

Aggregate mining within floodplains alters channel morphology, increases erosion and turbidity, reduces riparian...
vegetation, and impairs downstream water and habitat quality, all of which can stress fish and other aquatic assemblages. The biological effects of aggregate mining have been little studied. Reduced densities of macroinvertebrates and fish at gravel-mined sites on the Ozark Plateau and in Pennsylvania have been reported. However, proper rehabilitation projects have converted gravel mines into regularly inundated floodplains and floodplain lakes with restored riverine connectivity and highly productive habitats for Willamette River fish. The Oregon Water Resources Research Institute recommended that the Oregon Department of State Lands: improve its monitoring and database via increased staff and computer software; prohibit gravel removal from waters supporting sensitive species; limit aggregate operations that degrade salmonid habitats; and modify aggregate mining to improve over-wintering salmonid habitat.

Suction dredge mining, though typically occurring at a smaller scale and with much smaller machines than aggregate mining, can have similar ecological effects, plus it can re-suspend metallic mercury in waters where that metal was historically used for extracting gold particles. The biological effects of suction dredging have been studied even less than aggregate mining. However, there is evidence that suction dredge mining in California adversely altered food webs and the behavior, physiology, and survival of sensitive larval fish and other aquatic species. Therefore, in Oregon, suction dredging is restricted from digging into stream banks, altering or diverting water channels in any way, using dredging equipment larger than a diameter of 4 inches, moving logs and boulders with machines or explosives, removing riparian vegetation, or storing fuel adjacent to a waterway. Additionally, mining is prohibited when spawning salmon are present or in proximity to any salmon redds, miners may not camp in any one location for more than 14 consecutive days, and no more than 25 cubic yards of material per year can be processed. Miners must have permits from the Oregon Department of State Lands and the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality on-site at all times during operation. However, the permits are self-monitored because of the lack of agency monitoring staff, and researchers have observed violations. In addition, protecting salmon is no guarantee that other sensitive aquatic species (e.g., lamprey, aquatic amphibians, benthic macroinvertebrates) will be protected, and there is the threat of cumulative effects of hundreds of recreational miners focusing their efforts on a limited number of gold bearing streams.


Figure 1. Percent generally intolerant fish individuals as a function of mine density for the conterminous US (n=33,538; adapted from Daniel et al. In Press).
Dunawi Creek is a cherished, but little understood doubled-channel creek in Corvallis that springs from two sides of Bald Hill and ultimately empties into the Marys River across from Avery Park. Residents enjoy watching it passing through parkland, behind their houses and even through shopping center parking lots. Lesser-known creek portions pass under roads, through large private lands or are hidden in inaccessible public areas.

This small creek has been flowing for thousands of years, controlled by beaver dams and the resulting continuous jeweled string necklace of wetlands. At one time, the beaver dams controlled both floods during wet seasons and allowed sufficient water supply during summer droughts. The clear creek teemed with trout, lamprey and other large fish. Wetland edges supported land animals attracted by water and food.

Today, Dunawi Creek is a disjointed series of altered channels, wetlands, underground pipes, culverts or plowed field agricultural tiles. Regardless how damaged the creek has become, its aquatic life keeps struggling to survive and people continue to enjoy those sections that most resemble a natural waterway.

The changes to this formerly vibrant, healthy creek began with the extermination of the beaver in the 1800s. Neglected beaver dams deteriorated, and wetlands shrank into channeled creeks. Settlers expanded the channelization by clearing trees, plowing under the prairie grasses, and then deepening and straightening the channels for field drainage. In the 1900s, pavement and compacted soil caused an increase in both the volume and velocity of runoff. Underground stormwater pipes delivered stormwater quickly and directly into the creek channels. The increased force and volume of this high-speed stormwater delivery system further eroded the creek banks and beds and abnormally flushed out aquatic life with each rainstorm. Today, aquatic life in Dunawi Creek is primarily limited to small life forms that can tolerate pollution and trauma.

So, let’s take a trip down Dunawi Creek and visit some of the places that local residents love most and a few lesser-known places.

Because Dunawi Creek begins on two sides of Bald Hill, it has two widely separated channels that meet a few miles downstream. The North Branch drains the east slope of Bald Hill and is hidden from public view for most of its course. The South Branch drains the south slope and is highly visible along portions of its course. Because of this public visibility, most local residents believe that the South Branch is the only channel for Dunawi Creek.
The North Branch headwaters are about halfway between the “T” intersection on the Midge Cramer Trail at the base of Bald Hill, and the Bald Hill barn. To the west side of the paved trail, there is a boardwalk built over the North Branch headwater drainage. During the wet season, you can see the flow. In the dry season, the water invisibly flows under the surface. The City-owned agricultural field to the east has been plowed and leveled, causing the creek to flow underground through the field. West of the Fairgrounds, the North Branch is visible as a swamp dominated by Oregon ash. It flows south under the Midge Cramer trail near the entry gate and into a new channel that was created by Benton County when Reservoir Road was moved.

After draining under the new and old Reservoir Roads and the railroad trestle, the North Branch drains from west to east in a pipe under 53rd Street into a 100-acre undeveloped site. From the road you can see what appears to be evidence of beaver activity. (Beaver were reintroduced to the area in the 1900s). Only the private landowner knows the condition of the creek as it flows through this large site. There are local efforts to annex (to Corvallis) and develop this land as a “green” development. “Green” developments, however, rarely accommodate beavers, unless they attend OSU.

Further east of 53rd is one of my favorite places at 4515 SW West Hills Road. Along the bottom of a steep hill is the First Congregational United Church of Christ. Behind the church is a wooded floodplain called Hanson Grove, named after a former OSU professor who donated the land to the church. The creek meanders around this grove. During the wet season, this site provides a wonderful view of a modern urban creek. The creek then flows under West Hills Road and south across private land toward Philomath Boulevard.

Tucked away on the north side of SW Western Boulevard, just before it converges with Philomath Boulevard, are a small concrete dam and metal ornamental water wheel. The photo shows it fully exposed during a severe drought when this portion of the creek appears dried up, but is still flowing under the surface.
The final stretch of the North Branch flows in culverts under Western and Philomath Boulevards, through private property, under the Philomath bike path then above ground through a pleasant ash woodland between the bike trail and houses on SW Birdie Drive.

### Dunawi Creek South Branch

Similar to the North Branch, the South Branch creek flow is obscured as it drains off Bald Hill (now the south side) and crosses under Reservoir Road. The creek becomes obvious once it reaches the private land along northwest base of Grand Oaks Hill off West Hills Road between 53rd Street and Reservoir Road. It flows through a pipe under West Hills Road west of Grand Oaks at the base of a steep hill reminiscent of the North Branch crossing of West Hills Road about one mile to the east. It then flows through private woodland, under SW Winding Way and then into a large wetland near the northwest corner of 53rd and Philomath Boulevard. This area has been the site of a contested land-use battle. The Marys Peak Group joined with the League of Women Voters of Corvallis to protect the wetland from encroachment by a commercial building and inappropriate recreational development. A developer wants to build a Walgreens drug store on that corner, and the development will encroach into the “protected” creek corridor. The City also wants to install a multi-model path through the ash-dominated wetland. The path will disrupt the biological integrity of the wetland. The state Land Use Appeals Board agreed with the need to protect the wetlands and creek corridor, but the complexities of Oregon Land Use law allow an unclear future for the wetland.

The South Branch is piped under 53rd and then Philomath Boulevard to the Bi-Mart Shopping Center. While most of the site is pavement or building, city staff convinced the developer to build a constructed wetland to treat the stormwater runoff. The same result happened with the Safeway development. The two paved developments diminished the creek health, but the construction of artificial wetlands minimized that damage and provided some wildlife habitat and stormwater treatment.

After the South Branch drains under Technology Loop, it enters the crown jewel of Corvallis’s creek management – Sunset and Bruce Starker Arts Parks. Both constructed and natural wetlands and ash marshlands thrive in these parks. Ironically, the most significant pollution point source entering Dunawi Creek comes from the waterfowl pond at Starker Arts Park. The drainage from that pond into Dunawi Creek is loaded with bacteria from the concentration of waterfowl and impacts the South Branch water quality.

### Branch Convergence

Another favorite Dunawi site is the Philomath bike path west of 35th, east of SW Research Way and the connector path to 35th Street just south of Adams Elementary School. The North Branch flows along the northernmost portion of this path and under it at one point. The South Branch flows along the southern bike path portion and under a bike bridge along the connector path to 35th Street. The confluence of the two branches is just to the
north of the South Branch bike bridge. All of this activity occurs within a few yards of fast moving bikers and runners and sauntering walkers. Most are unaware of the creek life in the ash woodlands and the historic Dunawi convergence just a few yards off the path.

Dunawi Creek is then piped under SW 35th Street south of Adams School. It then flows behind backyards and enters an unused tract of OSU property to the west of Brooklane Drive. This property is ripe for OSU expansion, which could significantly impact the creek health and hydrology. The Dunawi final stretch is a pipe under Brooklane Drive and a rock embankment that drains the creek water into the Marys River across from Avery Park. Only about 100 yards to the south is the confluence of Oak Creek and the Marys River. Interestingly, during long droughts, the Dunawi is completely dry at the confluence with the Marys, whereas Oak Creek always has a healthy flow.

The Future of This Ancient Creek

The Dunawi has an uncertain future, especially when considering its water quality and the health of its aquatic inhabitants. More roads, buildings, stormwater pipes, people, off-leash dogs and recreational uses around the Dunawi Creek watershed will further degrade the creek water quality and the creek’s ability to support aquatic life. A growing community awareness of the value of this urban creek, however, may soften the degradation, and if we persevere and are strategic, we may even be able to improve the creek’s life-supporting opportunities. The choice is ours.

For additional information, contact Dave Eckert at deckert@willamettewatershed.com.
When asked to pick a “favorite” trail and write about it, I thought it would be relatively easy. I’d pick a trail that MPG has not visited a lot in the past few years and remind members of its beauty. However, deciding on one trail was not that easy. When I paused to recognize that the Lookout Creek Old Growth Trail in the H. J. Andrews Experimental Forest near Blue River had impressed me both with its natural beauty and its scientific significance, it became the easy choice as my favorite trail.

This trail through an old growth forest is a unique, rich and powerful experience. On October 15, 2014, six hikers soaked in the powerful vibrations that anyone must experience if they travel the 7 miles of this 450-year-old forest. The twists and turns force a hiker to frequently pause and “it” in. Those of you who have felt the palpable tranquility and rich beauty of the Old Growth Trail in the MacDonald Forest have had a taste of the much richer, satiating feast that is Lookout Creek.

“Stellar” is the adjective Sullivan selects to describe this trail. One reason, perhaps, is that the trees there are often more than 250 feet tall. The tallest species of spruce, hemlock, fir, cedar and pine trees coexist there. “Rugged” is another word I would choose to describe this hike because the trail requires regular attention as it twists, turns, ascends and descends through thick vegetation as it crosses 4 gullies and drainages. The recorded mileage, thus, is not an indicator of the difficulty of this trail. Although Sullivan lists it as a moderate 7-mile out and back, it feels more difficult. However, this rugged beauty warrants numerous pauses to take in the views both high and low. This out n’ back hike, therefore, will take and deserves 5 hours.

Lookout Creek is less than a 2-hour drive from Corvallis in a valley south of the Blue River and north of the McKenzie River. The trail starts just past the junction of Forest Road 1506 and 350 about 15 miles north of Blue River. Sullivan’s Central Oregon Cascades, as usual, provides clear directions. In his book, Sullivan combines the Lookout Creek trail with a short hike on Carpenter Mountain. Although combining these hikes is possible, it’s unnecessary for a number of reasons. The road to Carpenter Mt, as Sullivan notes, is extremely rough requiring a high-clearance vehicle while the road to Lookout Creek can be reached in any car. More important is that Lookout Creek is an incredible journey in itself. Like others, Sullivan’s description of the drive to

Photos by Ken Fitschen

Ken Fitschen
Carpenter Mountain made me ignore considering Lookout Creek as a hiking destination. However, when asked to identify some of his favorite hikes, Don Kuhns told me Lookout Creek, and in mid-August he showed me its unique beauty. Then, I had to share it with other MPG members.

The trail starts by plunging steeply for a quarter of a mile through the dense forest. At the bottom of this hill you walk under a few huge fallen fir trees and cross Lookout Creek on a 25-foot bridge. Once across the creek, the trail steadily ascends the hill on a series of switchbacks to a ridge above the creek. For the next 2 hours, you twist and turn your way through some of the tallest Douglas fir, noble firs, and western red cedars in the United States. The understory is dense with hemlock, yew, devils club, vine maple, along with dense sections of ferns, moss and mushrooms. Although the creek can be heard during the rest of the hike, you don’t see the creek again until the turn-around point 3.5 miles later. Some of the largest Douglas firs are at this point. Here you can pause for lunch, turn around and return the same way you came or you can take an easier option and return via the 1506 Forest Road. I, of course, recommend returning by the trail.

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Scientifically this trail is part of the H. J. Andrews Experimental Forest; the “most studied primal forest ecosystem on this continent” states Jon Luoma in The Hidden Forest. Each summer, researchers from a range of disciplines - botanists, entomologists, wildlife ecologists, soil biologists, and others - assemble to examine the role of every working element in the life of the forest. In 1948, the U.S. Forest Service set aside these 16,000 acres for scientific research. Now it is one of only 610 UNESCO International Biosphere Reserves. “Every genus of conifer found in these forests is the largest of its kind on the planet: the tallest spruce (Sitka), the tallest cedar (western red), the tallest hemlock (western hemlock), the tallest true fir (Noble), the tallest pine (sugar), and, most especially...the Douglas fir, the third tallest of the earth’s trees.” Average height of these trees is 250 feet!

This forest is noteworthy for more than tall trees. Researchers "have discovered a host of species previously unknown to science, and interactions in the forest ecosystem that no one previously imagined," Luoma wrote. Ground-breaking research on old growth forests was initiated in the Andrews Forest. In the mid-1970’s, OSU scientist, W. C. Denison, was the first to pioneer research into the
old growth canopy ecosystem. In the canopy, he discovered how these old forests get nitrogen to continue growing. His research proved the significant role of lettuce lichen (*Lobaria oregana*), the leaf-like lichen that we often see lying in clumps on the ground. Growing 150 feet up in the Douglas fir canopy, this lichen is the largest system for nitrogen fixation in old growth forests. Denison discovered that they make up 5% of a Douglas fir’s foliage by weight, with as much as a quarter ton within an acre. Because nitrogen is an essential element for plant growth, discovering the significant role of lettuce lichen helped explain how old trees continue to be fed and grow. Just as noteworthy was the discovery that lettuce lichen doesn’t grow in young forests less than 100 years old. Thus, Denison’s research initiated further studies of forest canopies in the U.S.A. and in the Amazon.

This is just another example of the many reasons for MPG groups to visit this unique area. Research into what is occurring on the ground is, of course, another vast puzzle to solve. With 5 tons of litter falling on a single acre each year, there are many systems to study. During our hike in October, we saw some indications of this on-going research as we spotted sensors for measuring light and temperatures in a number of places along the trail.

OSU along with 3 other agencies oversees the Andrews Forest. If you are interested in more information about this remarkable place, you can go to this website: [http://andrewsforest.oregonstate.edu](http://andrewsforest.oregonstate.edu). Since the trail is at 2400 feet and rises to 3400, it will be open most of the year and warrants visits during all seasons. The website includes a variety of web cams so you can check the weather conditions, particularly during the winter. I also recommend Jon Luoma’s very readable study of old growth forests, *The Hidden Forest*.

The Lookout Creek is less than 2 hours from Corvallis and is well worth the trip. I hope more of the Marys Peak members take the time to immerse themselves in this special place.
One of my favorite alpine hikes in Oregon is the segment of the Pacific Crest Trail that runs from Breitenbush Lake to Park Ridge. This portion of the PCT, northeast of Detroit and just east of the Warm Springs Reservation, is not listed in the guidebooks as a day-hike because of the difficulty in accessing the trailhead. A high-centered, four-wheel drive vehicle is recommended to access the trailhead. In other words – a truck, preferably one with good tires. I’ve been on this section of the PCT twice and been awed by it both times. In September 2013, I decided that it was time to do it again. I invited fellow hiker Ken Fitschen to join me. Ken is a recent transplant to Oregon and had yet to walk a section of the Pacific Crest Trail.

The Breitenbush Lake trailhead is accessed from the mid-Willamette Valley by driving to Detroit and then heading north on paved Route 46. At mile marker 16, the road makes a sharp U-turn and climbs steeply to a ridgeline. There on the right is a gravel road, known as Skyline or FS 4220, to the trailhead. The Skyline road is a good seven miles long, and it takes more than thirty minutes to drive in a 4WD high-centered vehicle. There is a tricky part to this drive. Along the one-lane of FS 4220, there is a section with a precipitous drop-off to the side. Upon entering this section, one has to hope that no other vehicle is coming from the opposite direction, because there are no pullouts. Reversing would be quite a driving challenge. Each time I make this mile-long passage, I grit my teeth and hope for the best. Yes, once again I made it and am here to tell about it and the hike on the PCT.

It was mid-September when we set off at 10:00 a.m. to hike in a heavy mist with a moderate breeze. Rain was not predicted, but the mist was very thick. The temperature was above 60°F. Thus conditions were quite adequate for hiking the Pacific Crest Trail, and we were prepared. We set out on the gradual 3.4-mile, 1,500-foot climb to the 7,000-foot ridgeline.

Several hundred yards along on the trail, we came upon a huge rock pile. Geologic forces had pushed up the earth, which then fractured into many pieces. As we marveled at the geologic formation, we heard the squeaking of a pika. It’s not often that one encounters a pika in Oregon, but the interstices of this rock pile would be the place to find them. Here they could gather plenty of grass during the summer months to cuddle up with and munch on during the coming long cold winter.

No sooner had we passed the pika’s rock pile than the trail entered the September 2010 Pyramid Butte burn area. The fire had been started by a lightening strike very near the trail and had swept up and over the trail. We think we saw the tree that had taken the...
initial strike, because the top was blown off and the remains twisted. The lower part of the bole sported a spiraling scar. The area’s once stately mountain hemlocks were scorched, and we could smell the charred remains.

Beyond the fire damaged area, the trail made many twists and turns over a rocky trailbed. Where the bed was soil, it remained dry and well tamped. As we climbed, we passed through areas forested with subalpine fir and mountain hemlock of varying ages, with a huckleberry groundcover. The heavy mist gave a feeling of closeness. We were at one with the trail and the alpine forest.

About a mile into our journey, there were breaks in the clouds as well as in the forest areas. The glades were filled with mountain heathers, *Phyllodoce* and a few *Cassiope*, both finished flowering for the year, with scattered mountain hemlock up to six feet tall. While admiring the landscape, we steadily moved onward and upward.

The beauty of this section of the Pacific Crest Trail is the open area above 6,000 feet. The area is a jumble of broken flat rock. As we scanned the landscape, we were looking at a terrain that had bubbles formed in its early development, followed by a fracturing of the rock into angular two-foot fieldstones. The rock piles are all platy Cascade andesite. The variation in color is due primarily to differential weathering. The andesite erupted from nearby volcanoes, solidified, weathered (mostly freezing and thawing), and formed plates from the resultant cracking.* The hiking was not difficult on the well-worn trial marked by cairns. We did, however, wonder what lay ahead. While the views to the west and upward were pretty much non-existent due to the on-coming and rising clouds from the Breitenbush Valley below, we could see great distances to the east, below the cloud layer, and out over the Warm Springs reservation. We felt as if we were above it all, whatever it may be. One feels privileged to be alone in these alpine environments.

Looking upward toward where the ridgeline would be, we could catch occasional glimpses of the trees as the clouds passed overhead. The trail would steepen near the end. I reminded Ken that we would cross a perennial snow bank, and if we were lucky, we would see the red snow algae, *Cryptomonas nivalis*. Now, only about 500 feet from the ridgeline, the rocky trail made a number of switchbacks. We’d walk 100 yards and stop – to look around and admire the breathtaking landscape, not because we were out-of-breath. The snow bank was there, but it pretty much had turned to ice with the summer’s heating and thawing. It was also much reduced from what I had seen in previous years. Hikers had worn a path around the fringe of the snow. Were the snow softer, we would have walked across it, but not on this day.
When we were about one hundred feet below the ridgeline, the wind picked up. Clouds whipped by. We were not deterred. In grand form, we trudged to the 7,000-foot mark, sporting smiles because of our position. I had told Ken that there would be a sign marking the crest, and that we’d take our picture there. Upon reaching our destination, I was disappointed to see nothing but some posts and a single well-worn board, remnants of the sign that had been marking the spot for years. Perhaps the weather had taken its toll.

We had hiked to this spot for the grand view of Mt. Jefferson with Jefferson Park in the valley 1,200 feet below. As we looked southeast, the view was nothing but a solid white. No mountain was to be seen on this day. This was Ken’s first visit to the area, and it was a disappointment for him after all the hype I had provided. This is a view not to be missed, if one is able to get to this point. Only occasionally did the clouds part below over Jeff Park to provide a view of the lakes. From the crest, the trail heads down into Jefferson Park. There was no point in doing it this day. Instead, we found shelter behind some trees, where we had great views to the northeast. In the rocky foreground, there were two tarns below, with the Warm Springs reservation farther afield. It was nearing 1:00 p.m., and wisdom told us that it would be prudent to begin our return.

Our descent back to our truck was equally stimulating. We were wowed by the grand panoramas of broken rock. I maneuvered my way down the rocky trail, carefully using my poles as braces at times. The clouds continued to lift as we went along. Looking back, however, Jeff remained occluded—perhaps another day. While some hikers prefer loop trails, I see new vistas, plants, mushrooms, wood formations, etc., no matter which direction I’m walking. If I keep at least one eye peeled for the unusual, the different aspect on the return trip brings surprises and pleasure.

September and October are the best months to be on the Pacific Crest Trail in the high Cascades. The threat of fire is down, most PCT through hikers are well into Washington State, and daytime temperatures are comfortable. I was elated to have been to the ridgeline once again, and being able to show a special place to a fellow hiker is gratifying. The rock-piled scenery is fixed in my memory. The high-pitched squeaks of that sole pika that welcomed my return will never fade. It makes no matter to me that I didn’t get to see Mt. Jefferson this time. I have a nice photographic image from years past and look at it occasionally. Here I share it with you. I’m reminded now and then that the joy of hiking as well as travel is, as someone once sagely observed, not solely in the destination but in the journey.

I thank Ralph Nafziger for the geological description of the area.
Harsh Indian paintbrush (*Castilleja hispida*) is a summery plant outfitted with spiky clusters of hairy red, orange or yellow flowers. Chances are you’ve seen at least some kind of paintbrush growing with other wildflowers on hiking trails. When I moved to Oregon twelve years ago, it was one of the first in the handful of flowers I got to know well while hiking on the coast and in the Cascades. There are somewhere in the neighborhood of 200 species in this genus, most of them in western North America. They are capable of interbreeding, which can make identification rather challenging.

The genus name, *Castilleja*, was named for Don Domingo Castilleja, a Spanish botanist, in 1782. The species name, *hispida*, means hairy. The origin of the common name of all of the species, Indian paintbrush, is in a Great Plains Indian legend about a boy who painted the sunset and brought these flowers to be here on earth.

This plant is hemiparasitic, which means it can perform photosynthesis, but is also parasitic on other plants when it needs to be. Indian paintbrush has been known to parasitize a variety of hosts, including grasses, buckwheat, sagebrush, penstemon, phlox and lupine. In our area, the host plant is usually a grass. The paintbrush latches on to the roots of the host plant and extracts nutrients and water.

Depending on the species and the host plant involved, Indian paintbrush can grow in a variety of habitats and elevations. They have a remarkable knack for growing in serpentine soils, which is tough for most plants. Many species are endemic, and some are threatened or endangered. When gophers and moles burrow into the ground, they till the soil in such a way that unique microclimates are created. Indian paintbrush that grows on these mounds tends to enjoy a longer flowering period than its nearby non-mound residing counterparts.

Hummingbirds, bumblebees and butterflies pollinate Indian paintbrush. Hummingbirds are attracted to the red, tubular flowers, and they buzz from plant to plant drinking the sweet nectar. Indian paintbrush is a very important plant for the endangered Taylor’s checkerspot butterfly, serving as a larval host. (There are many contributing factors to the butterfly’s decline, including habitat loss, pesticides and invasive species. Plans for species restoration are currently being considered, but the butterflies are unlikely to bounce back on their own.)

A variety of uses by humans for Indian
paintbrush have been documented. Like the pollinators, children have been known to suck the nectar from the flowers, which can also be used in salads, but it’s best to err on the side of caution and not partake, because Indian paintbrush has a tendency to absorb and concentrate selenium in its flowers. High levels of selenium can be rather toxic, but this tendency does help to explain some of the plant’s other uses by Native Americans, such as a rinse to make hair glossy, and also as a medicine to combat rheumatism. We know today that selenium supports a healthy scalp, and people with rheumatic diseases generally have low levels of selenium.

Indian paintbrush continues to frame countless mountains with its brilliant red colors in paintings and photographs. This iconic flower is as natural a part of the Pacific Northwestern scenery as anything else, and its associations with a variety of other native northwestern species in the natural world make it uniquely adapted to live here.

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Barry Wulff, Jane Luther and Dave Hackenyos:
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The Corvallis-to-Sea Trail concept is decades old, dating back to the early 1970s with the Siuslaw National Forest (SNF) by itself and, later, in conjunction with the Bureau of Land Management. Repeated failure to obtain passage over private lands killed each Federal effort for a Corvallis-to-the-Sea Trail over the decades up through 1997. In 2003, a citizen group was formed to pursue the goal of a non-motorized route from Corvallis to the Oregon coast. The “Corvallis-to-the-Sea (C2C) Trail Partnership” was formed and began working to develop a route for hikers, bicycles, and horses, a route with minimal motor vehicle conflicts.

By 2008, all landowner agreements were in hand permitting a critical route up the gated portion of Old Peak Road between Philomath and Marys Peak, although a decision on equestrian use of lands in the Corvallis watershed is still on hold. Exploration west of Marys Peak covered over 300 miles of potential routing over existing, decommissioned, and abandoned roads as well as new trail routes linking these roads. In 2009 the Partnership became a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Also in 2009, the SNF accepted the general routing we had proposed, grand-fathering the new trail miles into their existing trail system. They would also accept responsibility to complete the Environmental Assessment (EA) by 2012, if the Partnership could provide an exact (within 10 feet) trail route by the summer of 2010. In June, 2010, the detailed route was delivered to new SNF Supervisor, Jerry Ingersoll, and in January, 2011, Central Coast District Ranger Pam Gardner, announced the C2C trail was their number two recreation priority.

Subsequently, in 2011, the SNF announced that the Partnership would have to build and operate the trail under a special use permit (SUP), removing the route from the Forest Service trail system and treating the trail much as a commercial venture by the Partnership. The SUP contained several liability terms that were potential roadblocks including $1,000,000 liability insurance to protect against lawsuits from trail users and, more critically, requiring that the Partnership accept liability for damages to the Forest’s resources and costs to the Forest Service caused by the actions of trail users. In addition, a “cost-recovery” clause could require the Partnership to reimburse the SNF for the cost of the EAs.

However, the Central Coast Ranger District remained committed to conducting the EA for the three most critical segments of new trail totaling 2 miles on SNF lands west of Harlan, Oregon. While we struggled to investigate the SUP’s insurance and liability implications, the Forest Service began the three EAs in August, 2012. Then, in October 2012, new Central Coast District Ranger Michele Jones, announced that those as-yet incomplete EAs were essentially moot, as the SNF was changing the focus of the initial SUP to just the eastern portion of the route from Corvallis to the Harlan area. This half of the route to the coast has only a quarter mile segment of new trail.
requiring an EA and only about four miles on roads and existing trails crossing SNF lands.

One of the “facts of life” when dealing with the Forest Service is frequent personnel turnover. As current SNF staff contacts move on via retirement or transfer to other Forests, they take with them the relationships and understandings forged with the Partnership. New staff usually has no history with the Partnership, no knowledge of past SNF Corvallis-to-the-Sea trail efforts, and no personal commitment to past agreements with the Partnership. This gives the new SNF staff a fresh start in dealing with the Partnership’s C2C Trail project and, with increasingly inadequate SNF budgets and staffing, this reexamination usually presents problems for the C2C Trail effort. We have been pleased that the SNF has conducted the current EA for the route to Big Elk Campground without asking the Partnership to fund the EA effort, and that they also cooperated with us in securing a road routing solution in the Sugarbowl Creek area.

Throughout 2011, 2012, and 2013 as we struggled with the liability issues, we continued to keep the entire route open and identifiable with numerous work parties, an annual series of familiarization hikes, and a five-day backpack trip over the entire route. Then, in early 2014, the SNF offered to remove the liability insurance requirement for public lawsuits, and, most importantly, to remove the requirement that the Partnership accept liability for public-caused costs and damages. We needed only submit an approved operating plan and file the SUP application, they said. Later the SNF would consider a permit for the rest of the proposed route.

On January 31, 2014, we submitted both an operating plan (subsequently approved by the SNF) and a special use permit application for the four miles of SNF lands along the 32-mile portion of the route from Corvallis to Big Elk campground west of Harlan. As the EA progressed during the spring and summer, District Ranger Michelle Jones, announced that the EA should be completed about August 1 and the SUP available for signing by mid-August. Delays have since occurred with the EA process, which now requires a finding from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service regarding options presented by the SNF, possibly relating to the threatened marbled murrelet. We are not privy to the details of EA at this time or how they might extrapolate to the proposed routing over the 20-plus miles of route across SNF lands west of Harlan. The finding should be available before the end of the year.

We continue to keep the entire trail route marked and open for evaluation, which annually takes hundreds of volunteer hours of brushing, cleanup of windfall, and re-flagging under our adopt-a-trail program. In addition, we conduct our annual series of six “show-and-tell” familiarization day-hikes over most of the 65-mile route from Corvallis to Ona Beach and provide trail maintenance training opportunities for our volunteers. This year we again conducted a five-day outing to Ona Beach, but as a supported trek. We recruited ten individuals from outside of the C2C volunteer family to hike the route carrying only daypacks and with camping equipment delivered by pickup to near each night’s campsite. The group thoroughly enjoyed the experience, finding the outing “inspiring, challenging, and definitely worth the effort.”

As soon as the current EA issues are settled and the SUP signed we will begin constructing the only new trail segment required for the route to Big Elk.
Campground, the quarter mile segment on the headwaters of Sugarbowl Creek a few miles west of the Benton County-Lincoln County line. We are currently working with two graduate students at OSU to develop maps of the route. Probably our most critical activity for the next year will be obtaining and installing all the signs that will be required to mark the 32 miles of routing from Corvallis to Big Elk Campground.

With the concurrence of the SNF and Lincoln County, we would next like to promote a bicycle route over existing roads that would link the Corvallis-Big Elk Campground route with Ona Beach. This exact bicycle route was proposed by the SNF back in 1991 and would require only some signs and a map to become official. The primary future goal of the C2C is to raise enough funds to reimburse the SNF for conducting necessary EAs for the remaining trail route across SNF lands west of Harlan. Then we’d build the five miles of new trail required to link the roads and open up the entire 65-mile route that we proposed back in June, 2010. Today the only obvious impediments to the C2C Trail are funding the EAs and working out any issues raised by the EAs. As for the proposed Corvallis-to-the-Sea Trail: “you can get there from here today, so let’s get it done!”

To get on our e-mail list for meetings or to find out more about volunteering to help with the project, just send your request to info@c2ctrail.org. We are always pleased to accept tax-deductible donations via our website www.c2ctrail.org or via U.S. Mail to “C2C Trail,” P.O. Box 1562, Corvallis, OR 97339-1562.
Four positions were filled on the MPG Sierra Club Executive Committee this year. Elected were Julie Arrington, Bruce Encke, Marcia Shapiro and Robert White. Each will serve two-year terms. Also on the committee are Carolyn Kindell, Debra Higbee-Sudyka, and Marjean Austin. Officers elected for 2015 are Bruce Encke as Chair, Robert White as Vice-Chair, Carolyn Kindell as Secretary and Julie Arrington as Treasurer.

Bruce Encke, Chair.
Liaison with Oregon Chapter.
MPG outings leader.

Robert White, Vice Chair.
MPG outings leader.

Carolyn Kindell, Secretary, Conservation Chair.
MPG outings leader.

Julie Arrington, Treasurer.
Family hike leader.

Debra Higbee-Sudyka, Political Chair.

Marcia Shapiro, Program Chair.

Marjean Austin, Co-Membership Chair.

Robert Verhoogen, Outings Chair.

Barbara Loeb, Co-Membership Chair.
The MPG ExCom is pleased to announce that Dave Hackenyos has been selected as winner of the 2014 “Volunteer of the Year” award. He has been laying out and producing every issue of the Benchmark Magazine for MPG for the last five years. It has taken uncountable hours of work, and his eagle eye and good counsel has caught many a misprint. His efforts have gone unsung for the most part, but he has been an invaluable member of the team. This award is given to publicly acknowledge his multiple contributions of time, effort and caring.
Dimple Hill is an enjoyable destination for many local hikers who wish to avoid a long drive. This group followed Dan’s Trail from Chip Ross Park to Dimple Hill and returned via the Horse Trail Loop. They were blessed with temperatures in the 70s, and clear skies, affording a wonderful view of Corvallis and beyond while they ate lunch at the top.

Left to right, Ken Fitschen, Lynn Hall, Michael Fortune, Hilary White, Vic Russell, Linda Fortune and Robert White.

Salishan Spit Beach Walk
Sunday, September 28th, 2014

Beautiful weather accompanied this six-mile beach walk on the Salishan Spit in Gleneden. The group strolled beside Siletz Bay before reaching the beach, then headed north to the Siletz River. Along the way, they enjoyed the varied architecture of Salishan beach homes and numerous water fowl. (Participants in this outing represented a wide area: Three were from Corvallis/Philomath, one from Eugene, one from Toledo, two from Lebanon, one from Salem, and the leader from Lincoln City.)
The leader writes: “Not intimidated by the rainy and windy forecast, this intrepid group sallied forth and weather was never a factor. Certainly the rain forest was wet and drippy, but never heavy and never annoying. The cool temps made walking in rain gear quite comfortable.”

Photo by Robert White

Don Kuhns, Sandy Kuhns, Ken Fitschen, Pat Wray, Robert Verhoogen, and Robert White pause for a snack after 3.5 miles, the turn-around point on the Lookout Creek Trail.

Silver Falls State Park
Saturday, October 18th, 2014
Leader: Robert White

This tree-lined 9-mile loop trail to ten waterfalls is one of Oregon’s premier sights. There was good water flow on this perfect October day to enhance the waterfalls along with vivid Fall colors.

Photo by Robert White

Lower South Falls
On a blustery and rainy Saturday, Bob Smythe (foreground) and four others pitched in to work with the City of Corvallis on a trail maintenance work party at Chip Ross Park.

Lewisburg Saddle / Peavy Arboretum
Saturday, November 1st, 2014

This was a slow-paced hike linking Lewisburg Saddle to Peavy Arboretum. Starting from the Saddle, the group headed upward for about 1½ miles on Forest Road 500 and enjoyed a long, leisurely downhill to Peavy Arboretum via the Section 36 Loop Trail. A pre-positioned car shuttle brought all participants back to the starting spot.
Liz and Bob Frenkel converse with speaker Ron Eber at this function held at the Corvallis-Benton County Library. MPG’s series of six evening programs held during the fall and winter of each year are a very popular community event, and it is not unusual to see 80 people or more in attendance.

Snag Boat Bend
Wednesday, December 17th, 2014
Leader: Robert White

This small unit of the William L Finley National Wildlife Refuge is located southeast of Corvallis off Peoria Road. This riparian woodland provides us with a year round reference point for our diversified flora and fauna. Although it was winter and misty, this group of 12 saw an eagle, an osprey, a number of ducks, as well as a host of various other small birds.
You 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: Ray Drapek at raydrapek@gmail.com

**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: Robert Verhoogen at rverhoogen@mac.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: Carolyn Kindell at ckindell@yahoo.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

**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: Bruce Encke at bruce.encke@hp.com

**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. Contacts: Marjean Austin at marjeanaustin@gmail.com, or 541-752-0068; or Barbara Loeb at loebb@comcast.net, or 541-752-5081.

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**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 Barbara Loeb at barbaraloeb10@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.

Back to Top