



Fall / Winter Newsletter, 2016

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Heritage Forest Demonstration Project Update

Friends of the Metolius has been supporting forest restoration in the Metolius Basin for many years. The Heritage Forest Demonstration is a collaboration between the Friends and the US Forest Service Sisters Ranger District that implemented examples of forest restoration treatments in 2001-2003. Thanks to funding provided by Friends and collaborative work from the Forest Service, those treatments are now being updated. They were, and are, intended to show Metolius basin residents and visitors what forest restoration treatments might look like.



Girdling an Infected Tree

Visitors to the basin may have noticed forest workers last month in the forests adjacent to the Four-Corners in Camp Sherman. Friends provided the funding for tree climbers from the

Redmond Smokejumpers base and Sisters Ranger District to climb larger western larch trees and prune off mistletoe infected branches in stands on the west side of the road in the vicinity of the Four-Corners. If trees were too badly infected to benefit from pruning, the bark was stripped away all the way around the trunk (girdled) at the base of the live crown.

Mistletoe is a parasitic native plant that germinates and grows in western larch. It weakens and eventually kills infected trees. Mistletoe can rain seed down on small regenerating trees. In the very open stand at the Four-Corners, regeneration of larch seedlings is desired. If mistletoe is allowed to remain in the older trees, the larch seedlings will most likely become severely infected and die. The pruning is intended to remove mistletoe infected branches and girdling of badly infected trees is intended to kill the tree and thus the mistletoe, which requires a live host.

Another goal of the Demo project is to show how the health of forests in the basin, and larch in particular, can be improved. Forest health can be improved by giving trees more room to grow. For that reason, small trees, meaning those less than 16 inches in diameter, will be thinned in the stands on the east side of the 1420 road at the Four-Corners later in the winter or in the spring.

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Mistletoe infected larch are the highest priority trees to thin. Workers from the Sisters Ranger District will be completing the thinning at their expense.

On the uneven-aged management plot, which is located off the southeast corner of the junction of the 1420 and 1217 roads, most of the removal of trees less than 16 inches in diameter at breast height has been completed. Removal of some sapling sized trees will take place after the plot is burned.



Hazardous work!

Other planned updates to the Demo plots include:

- Re-burn most of the plots along with adjacent restoration units when they come on line for burning. Burning is intended to reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfire by consuming readily flammable needles and branches;
- Re-mow parts of two of the plots; and
- Retain the two untreated plots as a reminder of what the unrestored condition looks like.

President's Corner

Many of us in the conservation community woke up on the morning of November 9 with concerns and trepidations that went beyond the usual worries about what the next four years will bring. With a conservative in the White House

and both houses controlled by conservatives, what will the future bring for the environment? What will happen to funding for the federal agencies that manage huge parts of the country? Will there be cutbacks in enforcement of, or amendments to important legislation like the Endangered Species Act, the Clean Water Act or the Clean Air act? Will the US pull away from the Paris Agreement on climate change?

The answers to these and many other important questions will reveal themselves in the years to come and we should all watch closely and be ready to do everything that we can as individuals to protect and maintain our environmental safeguards. What we as a people do in the coming years will have a direct impact on our country, and indeed, the world.

While these big picture questions are of critical importance, I find the view from a more local perspective far more optimistic. An individual's ability to foment large-scale change can often seem impossible. But individuals can have a direct, important and lasting impact on a local basis. Friends of the Metolius keep this truism in mind with everything we do. Even though we watch state and national events and politics, it is at the local level that we make the biggest difference. Working collaboratively with the US Forest Service on forest and water health; working with state agencies on water quality and fisheries, and working with volunteers in the community to preserve and enhance the Metolius basin are activities that are within reach and which make a real difference.

I have always felt that for most people, me included, making change at a policy level is very difficult. But being active at a local level can and does have a real and measurable return. We encourage each of you to become active locally. There are several ways that you can volunteer to help in the Metolius basin and some of them are detailed in this newsletter. And we encourage you to make an annual donation to Friends of the Metolius. We are an all-volunteer organization (502(c)(3)) and every penny of your donation goes directly toward funding projects that further our mission of protecting and enhancing the Metolius basin.

Invasive Weed Control on the Metolius

The Oregon Dept. of Agriculture (ODA) with oversight and planning by the Sisters Ranger District re-treated, with approved herbicides, ribbon grass and yellow iris along two sections of the river on October 11, 2016. The population near Gorge Campground has been reduced by 95% after three years of spraying. Each year's treatment requires much less chemical mix than the previous one. The section from the Camp Sherman Campground downstream to just above the Allingham Bridge was treated for the second time and the population was reduced by 70-75%. The treatment areas were monitored for herbicide presence. Grab samples just downstream from the treated populations revealed trace amounts of herbicide after 5 minutes and none after one hour. The trace amounts were well below acceptable limits.

In 2008 Friends of the Metolius received a grant from ODA and ribbon grass populations were treated along the Lake Creek system that fall. Ninety percent of the ribbon grass and yellow flag was eliminated with that first treatment. A few populations persist even after repeated treatments but they were small, isolated patches perhaps overlooked or had reseeded the area.

Friends supports the Forest Service's effort to control invasive aquatic plants. Together since 2006 we have tried different control methods and have concluded that judicious herbicide application is the best control. In the years to come we should witness effective control of these two exotic, invasive plants that are choking out our native ones.

Metolius Youth Fishing Pond

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife continues work on the youth fishing and acclimation pond at the old hatchery site adjacent to Cold Springs resort. The wet fall slowed things up a bit but excavation of the 0.6 acre pond should be complete in December. Brett Hodgson and Jen Luke, who oversee the

project expect most everything will be completed by late summer 2017, with full operation expected in 2018.

When completed the site will be open from May to September and closed for the remainder of the year except for organized educational trips. For more information contact Jen jennifer.a.luke@state.or.us

2016 Water Quality Update

Friends began water quality testing in coordination with the Sisters Ranger District in 1996 in response to concerns about the water quality of the Metolius River. Initially, with the cooperation of the Forest Service the testing was done year around but when, because of budget restrictions the Forest Service was forced to discontinue their contribution, Friends continued the testing from May through October, the season when pollution would be most likely.

Water samples are collected from six sites from Lake Creek to Bridge 99 and are tested for Nitrates, Phosphorus, pH, dissolved Oxygen, and E. coli. These studies have been remarkably and consistently in the low normal range. Over the past summer we had a single E. coli sample which was elevated but it was felt to be a sampling error since it was not found in adjacent samples or in repeat specimens. The pattern of repeat testing over a long section of the stream allows prompt detection and location of pollutants so they can be quickly corrected.

Friends had water data analyzed by a research laboratory in Portland in a form that allows addition of equivalent data from other sources such as the Forest Service, and DEQ. The conclusion of the extensive analysis was that the Metolius River remains one of the two cleanest rivers in Oregon. The data collected should be of high interest to water researchers in the future and continuing the testing will be an important factor in keeping it healthy. For those interested in the comprehensive analysis, including all test results over the past 20 years everything may be found on our website at www.metoliusfreinds.org.

Campground Shelter Restoration

If you've had an opportunity to walk along the Metolius this fall you might be asking what's happening at the Camp Sherman Campground Picnic Shelter. The fireplace in Camp Sherman Campground picnic shelter is being restored in order to avoid its future collapse and assure the continued viability and safety of this shelter. Over the past month, the fireplace at the shelter has been deconstructed. This effort included marking every fireplace stone so the mason could mortar the stones back into their original locations. Reconstruction of the fireplace began last week and will continue until the winter weather arrives; resuming again in the spring. The fireplace is made of stones of welded tuft quarried from Green Ridge; this is a soft stone which makes it a bit difficult to work with. Thank goodness we're using a talented mason, Morgan Griffin, who by-the-way attended Black Butte School in the late 1980s.



The restoration effort is spear-headed by the Camp Sherman Historical Society in collaboration with the Forest Service and Friends of the Metolius, with a matching grant from the Oregon Cultural Trust and a grant from the Jefferson County Cultural Coalition. This work follows on efforts in 2006 to complete a partial repair and restoration of the picnic shelters in the Camp Sherman, Pine Rest and Pioneer Ford campgrounds, including roof repairs, replicating the doors and stove plates for the cooking facilities and interpretive signs. All

three of these shelters were constructed by the Civilian Conservation Corps in the 1930s. Also, work was completed last spring on the cooking facilities in the Camp Sherman shelter. If you want to learn more about the project, volunteer your time, or make a donation in support of the project, contact the Historical Society, campshermanhs@gmail.com.

Friends Interpretive Walks



Friends Interpretive Walks program had a good summer and the number of participants was up. We'd like to thank Susan Prince and Carol Wall for serving as walk leaders this last season. Susan's long time family cabin connection to the Metolius gave her walks an extra depth of knowledge. And Carol's deep background in birding and experience with the Deschutes Land Trust hiking program were much appreciated by the participants on her walks.

We were also fortunate to have ecologist Maret Pajutee heading up a walk about the battle with invasive ribbon grass along the Metolius. After doing it last year as a long time Forest Service employee, she returned this year as a retiree. As we can see, her interest in the river was not just part of a job. She truly cares about the basin and will not just disappear now that she is out of her familiar green uniform.

Friends board member Scott Blau continues to coordinate the walks program, as well as leading groups himself. There were a couple of extra walks this year by request. If any Friends members would like to have one of our leaders provide a walk for a small group of friends or family, contact Scott to see if arrangements can be made to do that (scblau@comcast.net). Make plans now to join a walk next summer to learn more about the ecology and culture of the Metolius.

Time to Renew Your Membership!

Your board of directors has been working hard pursuing our organization's mission, to preserve and protect the Metolius Basin. As an uncertain future looms, our rank and file members become even more important to this mission, for financial as well as moral support.

We on the board are all volunteers; the organization has no paid employees. Even so, we get a lot done in pursuing our mission, as you can see from the other articles in this newsletter and we always do our best to husband your donations and spend them wisely.

If you have been waiting until the end of the year to accomplish your charity goals, now is the time the think of Friends and make a donation.

Given the present political climate in our country, it is likely that public lands are going to be assailed on all sides by forces that would privatize and develop. The agencies that manage our public lands will likely suffer even greater financial cutbacks, even though their budgets have already been pared down to pitiful levels. This will necessitate expanding and strengthening our partnerships with them.

If these clouds on the horizon are of concern to you, help us remain strong by supporting our organization financially and helping us recruit new members.

Please renew your membership today!

FRIENDS OF THE METOLIUS
P.O. Box 101
Camp Sherman, Oregon 97730

Membership Application – Renewal
2016 – 2017

Name: _____
Address: _____
City, State, ZIP: _____
Email: _____

Membership Category: (Please circle your level of Contribution)

Penstemon: \$25
Kokanee: \$50
Ponderosa: \$100
Cougar: \$100
Mt. Jefferson: \$1,000
Metolius River: \$1000

Friends Goals and Activities

Friends of the Metolius is a nonprofit conservation corporation that serves to protect a legacy of Oregon's heritage, the Metolius Basin, with its unique qualities of water, forest and wildlife, its diversity, and its spiritual values, for future generations.

To achieve this Mission, *Friends* undertakes educational, advisory and restoration activities including the following:

- Monitors and advises the US Forest Service management activities within the Metolius Basin;
- Monitors and participates in Jefferson County land use planning for private lands in the basin;
- Conducts interpretive activities to encourage gentle and respectful human use of the land;
- Promotes an informed, positive response to land use issues from its members and the public.

Friends is a membership based organization that relies on your generosity to continue its work to protect the basin. There are many challenges to protecting the Metolius Basin for this and future generations and our success depends on you.

Please support Friends of the Metolius – renew your membership today or become a new member.
Or send this newsletter to a Friend who might want to join!