



*Dedicated to protecting
the natural resources
of the Metolius Basin*

FALL/WINTER 2023 NEWSLETTER

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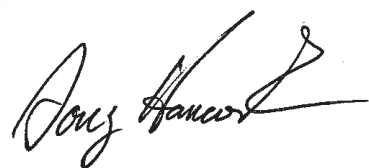
President's Corner

It has been over a year since our last newsletter, and it is high time to let you know what has been keeping us busy. It isn't that we've been idle. Quite the opposite, as we have been working hard with ongoing projects as well as several new endeavors. We highlight several of our current projects in this edition of the newsletter. You can read about other projects on our website. Speaking of our website, when the URL for friendsofthemetolius.org became available, we snapped it up and transitioned to that web address for our website. The old metoliusfriends.org address, and friendsofthemetolius.com both redirect to the new address, making it easy to find us online. While you're there, please click on the green "Donate" button to support our ongoing work.

- Working hard to maintain water quality in the Metolius is at the heart of our mission and in this issue we will update you on our ongoing and expanding efforts.
- Our Adopt-a-Trail program remains active, with many volunteers maintaining local trails.
- Our summer Interpretive Walks program was as popular as ever this year, and our Weed Warriors continue their tireless efforts to eradicate invasive weeds around the basin.
- Our Docent for a Day program at the Black Butte cupola is growing and is one of our most enjoyable projects.
- Friends objected to proposed zoning amendments in Jefferson County that could have allowed increased housing density in parts of the Metolius Basin. Consistent with State law, the amendment that was adopted excluded the increased density provisions from the Metolius Area of Critical State Concern.
- Along with other groups, Friends objected to parts of the Green Ridge Restoration Project, an enormous project that entails landscape restoration in very sensitive areas including Northern Spotted Owl habitat and riparian zones. In response to objections, the Forest Service has made significant concessions. We support the project because it will improve forest health. However, there is still room for improvement, and we will continue to work collaboratively with the Forest Service to get the best results possible.

As most of you know, summer is a busy time in the Metolius Basin, with thousands of visitors coming to the area to camp, fish, hike and enjoy the splendor of this marvelous place. As Sisters and Bend continue to grow, so does the number of visitors to the Metolius. While discovering the basin and its beauty is a great thing for visitors, the increased numbers strain the landscape and resources. As early as the late 1980s, the Forest Service recognized that the Metolius Basin was already at its carrying capacity for visitors. Visitor numbers have grown exponentially since then, as have the corresponding challenges. Friends will continue to work hard to keep pace with these challenges.

Many of the projects we work on need volunteers. If you have an interest in volunteering for any of our programs, please get in touch by email to friendsofthemetolius@gmail.com.



Doug Hancock,
Friends of the Metolius President

Keeping Watch on the Water

Of all the outstanding values found in the Metolius Basin, the river's pristine water is the most essential. Friends has been sampling and analyzing water in the basin continuously since 1990. In 2016 we compiled data from several other organizations with the data Friends had collected and sponsored a major analytical study. The study is available for downloading from our website under the "Water Quality" tab. In addition, all of the data Friends has compiled can be searched and filtered with our online interpretive tool.

Our water quality monitoring continues to expand, and we are now sampling and analyzing water in the Lake Creek system in addition to the sampling sites on the Metolius. We compile results over the summer months and upload those results to our website in November. Our board believes that water sampling and analysis is essential to our core mission, and your donations help us to continue expanding these efforts.



Photo by Rick Thomas

Summer 2023 Fishing Report



"Fortunate, indeed, is the trout angler who finds himself from June through October east of the Cascade mountain range in the Oregon country." Francis H. Ames, *Fishing the Oregon Country* (1966).

Anglers this summer on the Metolius were indeed fortunate, both because of the fine fishing and because the Basin was spared from any direct wildfire threats. Except for occasionally poor air quality levels caused

by the Lookout and Bedrock fires to the west, anglers did not face a repeat of 2020 when the Lionshead fire prompted major evacuation orders and campground closures along the river.

The Metolius, along with other local waterways, benefited from healthy spring runoffs due to high snowpack levels and colder, rainy weather patterns that persisted through the start of summer (East Lake was still partially frozen in early May). This translated into outstanding early summer trout fishing on Green Drake hatches that began late in June, and lasted almost through Independence Day. Through mid-July, dry fly fishing was reported as excellent in the middle river from Canyon Creek down to Bridge 99. During the hotter part of the summer – what Jeff Perrin at The Flyfisher's Place in Sisters refers to as "the July dry fly doldrums" – traditional nymphing and euro nymphing techniques produced first-rate catches.

Bull trout fishing was also exceptional throughout the summer and into August when the first runs of non-resident fish began moving up from Lake Billy Chinook. Anglers reported success using both conventional large streamer patterns and smaller euro-style streamers. The Bull Trout, which is a species of char most closely related to Lake and Brook Trout, will spawn multiple times during its lifecycle (unlike salmon). Although nationally the Bull Trout is listed as

Threatened under the Endangered Species Act, and in many areas cannot be targeted by fishermen, the Metolius' extraordinarily clean, cold water supports a healthy population and a robust fishery. In fact, in April of this year a Bend resident caught and released a potential state record Bull Trout in Lake Billy Chinook. The fish was measured at 33.5 inches long with a 26 inch girth and was estimated to weigh almost 30 pounds. You can read about the catch here. The current world record Bull Trout (32 pounds) was caught in 1949 in Lake Pend Oreille, Idaho. According to the angler, an Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife biologist informed him that the fish could have been over 20 years old. Likely this fish made multiple spawning trips up the Metolius during its lifetime. As Mr. Ames noted in 1966, Oregon anglers are indeed fortunate to have the opportunity to target these impressive fish.



Top Left Photo by Bret Campbell / Bottom Right Photo by USFWS

Docent for a Day



Working with the Sisters Ranger District, Friends initiated a beta docent program last summer at the Cupola on Black Butte. The docent program evolved after volunteers worked with the Forest Service from 2019 - 2021 to restore the 1920s lookout. As part of that effort, volunteers have continued to work to stage the cupola interior to look like a functioning lookout from the first half of the 20th century and have developed a binder of background information to assist the docents. The docent program operated on most Saturdays during July and August. Many visitors had hiked Black Butte in the past but had never seen the Cupola open; they were excited to look inside and learn about its history. Most visitors were from Oregon and Washington, but some came from as far away as Boise, Denver, Victoria B.C, and North Carolina. FOM is in the process

of installing an **Osborne fire finder** in the Cupola, so look for it next summer. If you would like more information about the program or are interested in learning about becoming a docent volunteer, please email blackbutedocent@gmail.com.

2023 End of Season Report; Camp Sherman Weed Warriors



The Weed Warrior team kicked off the season on May 18 and ended it on August 29. Volunteers worked a total of 133 hours over 16 days: 84 hours on USFS land, 12 hours on ODFW land and 37 hours on private land.

Spotted knapweed was the most common invasive plant encountered, but we also removed diffuse knapweed and a few Scotch broom seedlings. Most of those sites are along the 14 road, but others are in the Jack Creek and 1420 area. We visited the ODFW Youth Fishing Pond site three times, as well as a few sites in Metolius Meadows and a new site west of the fire hall on private lots.

Overall, the presence of invasive weeds at these sites is greatly diminished. A few years ago, there were hundreds, even thousands of invasive weeds, and now we encounter just a few. While we cannot claim to have eliminated all invasives, only one or two Scotch brooms were found at Riverside CG, Sheep Springs and near the ODFW house. False brome probably still lurks at the Head of the Metolius and maybe at Riverside CG. Our commitment to preserving the environment included the removal of litter along the 1419 road. If you are interested in helping with this important work, please get in touch by sending an email to friendsofthemetolius@gmail.com

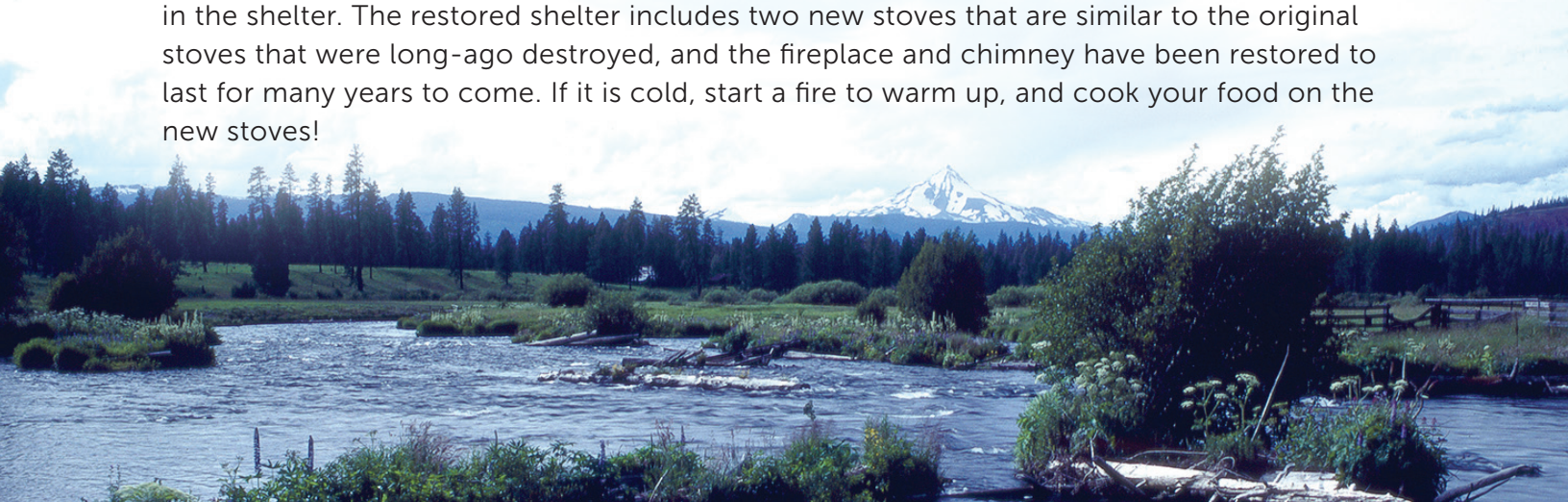


Pancake Breakfast

Friends teamed up with the Camp Sherman Historical Society to put on a Labor Day Pancake Breakfast at the Community Hall. This is an annual fundraiser for the organizations but had been curtailed the past few years due to public health concerns. Thanks to many hard-working volunteers, the breakfast was a great success and was greatly enjoyed by the community.

Suttle Lake Community Kitchen Restoration Project Complete

Thanks to a generous grant from the Roundhouse Foundation and a significant work effort by local volunteers, Friends together with the Sisters Ranger District was able to restore the historic Community Kitchen at Suttle Lake. Most of the Community Kitchen restoration was completed in Fall 2022. This Spring, some final tasks were completed and the restored shelter was open to the public at the beginning of Summer. Interpretive signs were installed mid-summer and final wrap-up work was completed a few weeks ago. If you are in the Suttle Lake area, stop by and enjoy a picnic in the shelter. The restored shelter includes two new stoves that are similar to the original stoves that were long-ago destroyed, and the fireplace and chimney have been restored to last for many years to come. If it is cold, start a fire to warm up, and cook your food on the new stoves!



The Oregon Bee Project



Bees are fascinating pollinators of many, perhaps most, flowering plants. They are needed for production of commercial crops as well as successful reproduction of many plants that are native to the Metolius Basin. Several recent events have led to concern about the future of bees in Oregon, including colony collapse disorder in honeybees, and a widely publicized bumblebee kill in Wilsonville in 2013 from an inappropriate application of a pesticide on linden trees. These concerns led to the initiation of the Oregon Bee Project. Friends has been an active participant in the Bee Project for several years.

The Oregon Bee Project is a collaborative effort between the Oregon Department of Agriculture, Oregon State University Extension Service, and the Oregon Department of Forestry to protect and promote wild and managed bees through education, pollinator-friendly practices, and research.

Oregon lacks information on the abundance, distribution, and even presence of different bee species and with this information, it's not possible to know whether bee populations are declining, thriving, or stable. For these reasons, the Oregon Bee Project developed the Oregon Bee Atlas.

The Oregon Bee Atlas enlists the aid of volunteer citizen scientists to document the bees of Oregon. Volunteers are trained by enrolling in the Master Melittologist (bee biologist) Apprentice Program. The program consists of six online modules, as well as field training on how to survey for bees and document collections. Students can start collecting bees before completing all of the modules. Many bees are extremely difficult to identify, so individual collections are sent to a taxonomist at Oregon State University for final identification.

If you are interested in these efforts to protect bees in Oregon, click on or copy the link for more information and for instructions on how to participate in the Oregon Bee Atlas: <https://www.oregonbeeproject.org/>

Introducing Friends of the Metolius Board of Directors



The board of directors usually meets once a month. We recently met at the now-restored Community Kitchen at Cinder Beach at Suttle Lake. As detailed in this newsletter, it is a beautiful spot to visit and perhaps have a picnic. Our meeting gave us a perfect opportunity to introduce our board to our supporters. Our board is small but is amazingly talented, dedicated and hard working. We're all volunteers with passion for protecting the Metolius Basin and we get a lot done!

Pictured from Left to Right: Bret Campbell, Scott Blau, Doug Hancock, Lorie Hancock, Dick Kellogg, Kathy Herrmann, Pete Schay, and Bob Ohrn.



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When it comes to supporting nonprofits you have many good choices; there are lots of conservation groups that do fantastic and necessary work. Among conservation groups Friends stands out. Our work is limited to protecting the Metolius basin and we have no paid staff and directors receive no compensation. We are all volunteers and your donations go entirely to supporting our mission.

Please consider supporting Friends by donating. You can mail a check to us or donate online:



Photo by Laura Callahan

Please mail donations to:

Friends of the Metolius

PO Box 101 | Camp Sherman, OR 97730

Or donate online at:

www.friendsofthemetolius.org and
 click on the green "Donate" button.

Sponsorship Levels



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Thank you for your support!