



## WEST EUGENE WETLANDS

# THE WETLAND WORD

VOLUME 1

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ISSUE 1

### LEARN MORE ABOUT DRAGONFLY BEND

The Dragonfly Bend Project is one of the many resulting from a vision that began 20 years ago when the City of Eugene, businesses, scientists and citizens acknowledged something had to be done to save the wetlands of the Willamette Valley. The West Eugene Wetlands Partnership including several government and non-profit agencies formed and has since acquired more than 2,500 acres and completed several restoration projects. For more information about the history of the West Eugene Wetlands, visit [www.wewetlands.org](http://www.wewetlands.org)

Were on the Web!  
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### IMPROVED HABITAT AT DRAGONFLY BEND OFFERS SANCTUARY FOR WETLAND WILDLIFE

**S**unday nights ABC airs a show called Extreme Make Over: Home Edition, about a crew of carpenters, designers and contractors who reconstruct and improve the home of a deserving family. This concept is in action right here in the West Eugene Wetlands—for the deserving wildlife at Dragonfly Bend. The City of Eugene began two projects at Dragonfly Bend in the Summer of 2004 to recreate habitat for wetland and stream wildlife. The projects are planned to take five years and a budget of \$1 million to complete.

Dragonfly Bend, acquired by the City of Eugene in 2002, lies directly north of Royal Avenue and east of Greenhill Road. The Stream Enhancement Project was implemented the Summer of 2004, using a grant of \$750,000 awarded by the BLM. It is the West Eugene Wetland Partnership's second largest stream project ever conducted; the largest was the restoration of Meadowlark Prairie, just south of Royal Avenue. The City widened two points along the Amazon Creek for deep pools, and added log jams and boulders—conditions favorable to the rare Western pond turtle and life cycle of the dragonfly. They removed non native species, particularly the Himalayan blackberry and reed canary grass, and replaced them with native flowers and shrubs. This process will continue for the next 2-3 years.

During the Wetland Mitigation Bank portion of the project, the City focused on undoing the effects of human agriculture to the area since the 1970's. They removed non-native ryegrass and drainage ditches and created a berm along Greenhill Road to hold drainage slowly flowing northwest. For the next two years, the city will also restore five acres of upland prairie on the site. Native species such as Kincaid's Lupine, host plant of the endangered Fender's Blue butterfly, will be added.



*An employee with Oregon Woods plants bare roots along Amazon Creek at Dragonfly Bend. Photo: City of Eugene*



*Logs and boulders were placed in the widened channel, providing a favorable habitat for the Western pond turtle and dragonfly. Photo: WREN*

Wetlands Program Supervisor Eric Wold said it is remarkable how much work was done in so little time between the Spring of 2003 and Fall of 2004.

"We had a lot of work to do in just one year," Wold said. "By implementing a large acreage of enhancement at one time, it gave us a better chance to control the non-native vegetation. We'll find out if we succeeded over the next several years."

Dragonfly Bend connects the habitats from Willow Creek Natural Area to the north edge of Fern Reservoir. The 390-acre Meadowlark Prairie, with the Fern Ridge Trail, several benches and interpretive signs is a sanctuary for the public; and Dragonfly Bend comparatively will be a haven for the wildlife and native plants.



**Elmira Automotive** is located off of West 11th Ave. on Powers St. They offer regular tune-ups and repair.

Do you know of a business who should be featured in **The Wetland Word**? Contact us: [Windy\\_Hovey@or.blm.gov](mailto:Windy_Hovey@or.blm.gov)

The Wetland Word is published quarterly by the Willamette Resources & Educational Network. Its purpose is to inform the community of upcoming events and restoration projects and to increase understanding and appreciation of the West Eugene Wetlands. Stories and photos for this issue were contributed by Windy Hovey, WREN volunteer, and Pat Johnston, Program Director. Editor: Windy Hovey  
Comments?  
Questions? Email [Windy\\_Hovey@or.blm.gov](mailto:Windy_Hovey@or.blm.gov)

## ELMIRA AUTOMOTIVE SERVICES COMMUNITY AND CARS

The West Eugene Wetlands can cast a strange spell on its inhabitants—businesses and residents alike. LaDonna and Bruce Greenway, co-owners of Elmira Automotive, are good examples. They didn't choose their location beside Fern Ridge Trail when they started their business there in 1990 for the sake of being in the wetlands. Over the years, however, changes occurred. They began to feel a connection to their surroundings and an appreciation of the wetland wildlife. They began recycling anti freeze, engine oil, and 100 percent of the oil filters. Some of the used oil even serves a new purpose in heating their shop. They decided to use hot water and biodegradable soap to wash car parts. To filter oil and antifreeze from entering into Amazon Creek, they added a Gibson Steel Basin to their parking lot storm drain.

"We have become more environmentally aware," LaDonna said. "Whatever happens out here is going to affect us, too." That is exactly the knowledge that environmental scientists are hoping small businesses and residents are catching onto. According to a report by Kevin J. Coyle with the National Environmental Education and Training Foundation—"Understanding Environmental Literacy in America"—Americans still have a widespread belief that large industrial factories

have more effect on the environment than small businesses and individuals.

In 1998, the Greenways concluded that the trail needed a restroom for both the homeless and commuters. So they footed the bill for a porta-potty, and the service from Honey Bucket, and have continued to ever since. It is the only restroom available to the public along the trail between Alton Baker Park and Greenhill Road. The two are convinced the porta-potty has attracted new customers to Elmira Automotive because people seem to think that if they go out of their way to provide the restroom service, they must provide excellent automotive service.

"We have had such a positive response from our customers, that we wouldn't do without it now," Bruce said. Many times customers will drop their car off and ride their bike along the trail to work, or stroll along the trail while they wait for their car. "That's the beauty of the wetlands," La Donna said. "We're still in the city of Eugene, but we're also out in the country."



LaDonna and Bruce Greenway  
Photo: WREN

## EDUCATION CENTER UPDATE



Several small and large organizations are unified to create and support a world-class education center, located at 751 S. Danebo Avenue in Eugene. The City of Eugene, Willamette Resources and Educational Network (WREN), Bureau of Land Management, Bethel and 4J School Districts and Northwest Youth Corp are working together to realize a dynamic and accessible regional education center that will be a national model in the heart of the West Eugene Wetlands. This center will invite Southern Willamette Valley citizens, students, and visitors to explore the connection between the urban and wild environment and the intersection between science and society.

The City of Eugene is working with local WBGs Architecture and Planning, Balzhiser & Hubbard Engineers, and Satre and Associates landscape architects to refine the master plan that was developed in 2002. It is anticipated that infrastructure construction, including improved access and parking, would commence the summer of 2005. Brainstorm sessions regarding sustainable building practices and Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification have dominated and inspired participants in this project. This construction project is multi-phased, where distinct complete components will be built as funding is secured. 4J School 2002 Bond funds have been identified for this project. The Bureau of Land Management supports ownership transfer of the site to the City for the purposes of building and operating an education center in 2005. WREN will launch a capital campaign to fund the first building, a Field Science Laboratory to support the current education program. Learn more about the Education Center at [www.wewetlands.org/center.htm](http://www.wewetlands.org/center.htm).



*Creating and supporting an education program and center that celebrates and encourages stewardship of the West Eugene Wetlands using resources and support from our community...*

## TRACKING THE WINTER WILDLIFE OF THE WEST EUGENE WETLANDS

### MEET THE WREN BOARD

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WREN is a private,  
non-profit educational  
organization formed in  
2000

A dozen young detectives launched an investigation of the West Eugene Wetlands on a foggy November day under the guidance of WREN Education Specialist Holly McRae. Using their curious minds and clues such as bite marks, bones and scat, they tracked the wildlife of the wetlands. They first came across the commode of a raccoon. From the scat, they identified the creature's diet of berries and crayfish. Along the bank of Amazon Creek, the kids saw a tree that had been heavily gnawed—the incriminating evidence of a beaver's presence. The group spied through binoculars a great blue heron, who observed the group quietly from afar. There were several clues left from the nutria—some of the detectives even discovered a



WREN volunteer Elvira Muniz passes around animal skulls. Photo: WREN

fully intact nutria skeleton! During an earlier program that day, WREN volunteer Elvira Muniz taught a younger group ages 5-7 about how wildlife prepare for the winter in the wetlands.



A young detective examines the clues left by a beaver along Amazon Creek. Photo: WREN

They learned concepts such as bird migration, hibernation and food storage. The two programs were part of a series of informal education programs WREN presents seasonally in the wetlands. These programs are free to the public because of generous private donations as well as federal, state and private grants. To volunteer for a WREN education program contact Environmental Education Intern Liz Myers at [Liz\\_Myers@or.blm.gov](mailto:Liz_Myers@or.blm.gov) or (541) 683-6483. Check out upcoming WREN events on page 4 or visit us at [www.wewetlands.org/educate.htm](http://www.wewetlands.org/educate.htm).

### Volunteer!

Contact  
Environmental  
Education Intern  
Liz Myers at  
[Liz\\_Myers@or.blm.gov](mailto:Liz_Myers@or.blm.gov)  
or (541) 683-6483



Photo: WREN

### WREN VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT!

Some matches are just meant to be: ponds and turtles, plants and soils, volunteer **Elvira Muniz** and WREN. You might see Elvira pedaling along Fern Ridge Trail from her home near Westmoreland to the Red House for programs. Elvira loves being involved in the community, the outdoors and kids, so WREN is a perfect nest for her. She discovered WREN while surfing on the Internet one day. Already aware of the West Eugene Wetlands, she knew she had to be involved.

"There is so much wildlife out here, even with all the traffic," she said. Elvira serves as an Americorps member for the McKenzie River School District, working with all ages for after school programs. November 13 she lead a group of 5-7 year olds through the wonders of the wetlands in the winter. Watch for Elvira as she leads more WREN programs in the future!



WREN volunteer Elvira Muniz



## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### **Wetlands Work Day**—Saturday, January 22<sup>nd</sup> 8-10 a.m.

Help us to start off the new year by cleaning up the area around the West Eugene Wetlands Education Center. Meet at the Red House, 751 S. Danebo. Gloves and tools will be provided. Please dress for the weather and wear shoes that can get wet.

### **Winter Bird Walk**—Saturday, February 5<sup>th</sup> 8 a.m.-noon

Join naturalist Steve Gordon for a morning of winter bird watching. Meet at Stewart Pond parking area at 8 a.m. Wear appropriate clothing and boots. Bring a snack.\*

### **Feed the Birds**—Saturday, February 19<sup>th</sup> 10-11:30 a.m.

While some birds migrate out of Oregon for the winter, there are many that stay here and others that come here to winter over. Have you ever wondered how they manage to survive the coldest, rainiest part of the year? Come learn about some of their winter survival techniques and make your very own bird feeder to take home. Meet in the West Eugene Wetlands Yurt, and dress warm! Open to parents and children.\*

### **Volcanoes, Lava and...Wetlands?**—Saturday, March 12<sup>th</sup> 10-11:30 a.m.

What do the West Eugene Wetlands have to do with Crater Lake? Why do the wetlands have so much water in the winter? Come discover how the ground beneath us shapes our everyday lives through a morning of exciting geology activities. Meet in the West Eugene Wetlands Yurt. For ages 8-12.\*

**\*To register for the event contact Holly McRae at 683-6494 or [wew@wewetlands.org](mailto:wew@wewetlands.org)**

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WILLAMETTE RESOURCES  
& EDUCATIONAL NETWORK  
751 S. DANEBO  
EUGENE, OR 97402



*Photo: Brian Issa, Long Tom Watershed Council*

WE'RE ON THE WEB: [WWW.WEWETLANDS.ORG](http://WWW.WEWETLANDS.ORG)

VISIT OUR WEB SITE TO LEARN ABOUT WREN AND EVENTS IN THE WEST EUGENE WETLANDS

# Membership Form



Become a member of the *Willamette Resources & Educational Network!* Your membership with *WREN* makes it possible for over 2000 children a year to discover the wonders of wetlands first hand. In addition to the satisfaction of supporting our conservation and education programs, member benefits include home or internet delivery of *The Wetland Word* and priority notification of WREN field trips and events.

Please join our community of supporters! If you need more information please call (541) 683-6494 or visit us on the web at <http://www.wewetlands.org/aboutwren.htm>.

*I would like to be a friend of the Willamette Resources & Educational Network. Enclosed is a membership donation of:*

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\$1 Child       \$5 Student/Low Income       \$25 Individual       \$35 Family

\$75 Sustaining       \$300 WREN Club

I would like to receive my newsletter electronically instead of by mail

**We do not sell, rent, or trade membership information to outside parties!**

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Address

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Please make checks payable to WREN and mail to: WREN, 751 S. Danebo Ave, Eugene, OR 97402-9358

*We are a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, so donations are tax deductible. Thank you for your support!*