



Wetland Word Newsletter



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Banner photo, Common Whitetail Dragonfly, credit Carrie Karl

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The *Wetland Word* is a quarterly publication from WREN.

If you prefer to receive an electronic version, or have any questions or comments please contact WREN. We greatly appreciate your feedback!

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Citizen Science Success!

By Alicia Lajeunesse, Outreach Seasonal Staff

The continued success of the Citizen Science program is due to the commitment of its volunteers and the leadership of Paula Graff, the program coordinator. The Citizen Science program in the West Eugene Wetlands is a unique collaboration of community stewardship. For those of you who are unfamiliar with the Citizen Science program it is generously funded by a grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation designed to involve volunteer community members in collecting valuable scientific data that will be used for a variety of important assessments. (cont.)

From Dawn 'till Dusk

By Alicia Lajeunesse with contributions from Carrie Karl

The wetlands are a happenin' place no matter what time of day you stroll through. There are differences in what you may see or hear depending on where the sun lays in the sky. Many critters are crepuscular, which means they are active at twilight, also known as dawn or dusk. This behavior reduces predation, since many larger animals are diurnal or nocturnal. It also helps to reduce thermal stress during the long hot summer days. Crepuscular animals can be active at other times. Considering different times of year and weather; you may be surprised by what you find! (cont.)

Play and Learn with Independent Discovery!

by Nancy Beth Wilson, Environmental Education Seasonal Staff

This summer the BLM has sponsored a Take It Outside grant to "promote and support outdoor activities and experiences of children on the public lands." Generated from Michelle Obama's *Let's Move* campaign to combat childhood obesity, this grant pushes the *Let's Move* mission in the direction of nature. By getting children as well as adults outside for unstructured outdoor recreation and exploration, we are not only promoting exercise and health, but connecting people with their natural environments. This latter step is so crucial in building human character of land stewardship by understanding the deep impacts that humans have on the natural world and visa versa. (cont.)



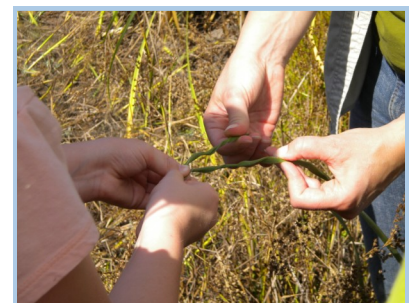
Alexis Geil, one of our awesome Citizen Scientist volunteers, read more about Alexis in the Volunteer Spotlight!

President's Message

by Mike Shippey, WREN Board President

Greetings from the West Eugene Wetlands!

The days continue to be warm, not hot, and the nights are fast approaching cold, not chilled. The daily shift in light period is noticeable now, and we have even had a little precipitation in September (although doesn't it always rain on Labor Day??). On a beautiful sunny late summer afternoon like this, my thoughts turn to the joys of the near past and the challenges of the near future. Perhaps summer seems so precious because it is so short. Turn away for a moment and it's gone! And so it is with life, where change is the only constant in this fast-paced swirl of activity, with comings and goings, constant evolution into whatever comes next. (cont.)



Citizen Science Success! (cont.)

Substantial projects were implemented and accomplished in 2010 through the Citizen Science program. WREN assisted the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) on a project where volunteers revisited historical Western Meadowlark survey sites in the Willamette Valley. Five Citizen Science volunteers accumulated over 139 hours collecting data on the presence or absence of the Western meadowlark, and the condition of its habitat and singing territories. These data will be used by ODFW to help formulate a management plan to help reverse the decline of this, our state bird.

Another bird project was in fact, a class that Paula Graff and Dave Bontrager conducted from June until August at an oak woodland site in west Eugene. Fourteen volunteer students learned about breeding bird biology, methods of observing breeding birds, and the type of data often collected. The volunteers then got to apply these skills on site during the class. The data they collected will be compiled in a report that can be used by the land manager for future management actions on site. These skills and knowledge may also be applied to future breeding bird surveys, helping to ensure that the best possible methods are applied to the projects.

Lastly, the Citizen Science program has just finished rare, threatened or endangered native plant surveys for the season that were conducted by six citizen science volunteers. Three different reports were generated by two volunteers for land managers. The Citizen Science program has been a great success and we hope it continues to further foster the practice and promotion of land stewardship through involved, direct, connected experiences of all its participants. For Citizen Science volunteering opportunities please contact Paula Graff, Citizen Science Coordinator, at paula@wewetlands.org



From Dawn 'till Dusk (cont.)

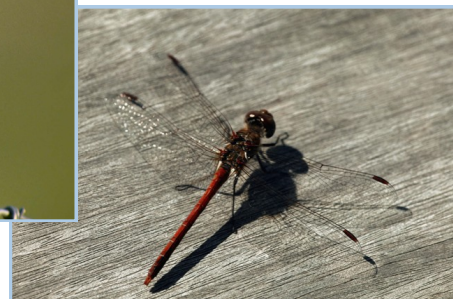
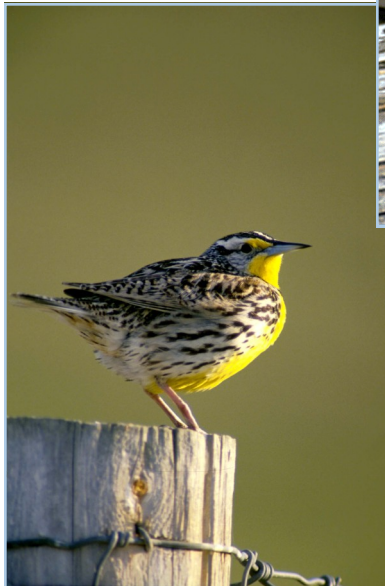
So who are these critters anyways? Well, first are the flocking birds, such as smaller song birds. I'm sure some of you have been up at dawn and been a witness to the most amazing symphony of chirps and calls. They are communicating to one another for many reasons; some are defining territories, while others are on look out for someone hiding in the brush. They are foraging while the sun is low and their food source of insects are starting their day as well. On the other hand larger birds that take residence here, such as great blue heron and many ducks, can be seen on the banks of the Amazon Creek feeding or taking a dip during late morning into the afternoon.

Snakes and other herps, such as the Western Pond Turtle, are great to catch a glimpse of in the early morning hours because they are usually found sunning themselves. They warm up from the cool night air before it gets too hot during midday, which is the time when they are slipping through the shaded grasses and wading in the waters feeding.

Insect activity also changes throughout the day. For the two months they are with us dragonflies and butterflies from dawn through early morning are still warming just like the snakes. So you are most likely to find them perching, making them most easy to catch. Before you know it they are buzzing all over the place and are more prevalently seen flying around in afternoon until dusk.

Again due to the heat index you will find mammals such as the mink, otter and beaver getting most of what industrious activity they can accomplish in the early morning and early evening. There are fox and coyote activity in the wetlands, although rare to see once light illuminates the landscape because they are mostly nocturnal, but the indication that they are here is in all the scat we find on our daylight observations through the wetlands.

So as you can see there are many things to observe anytime of morning, afternoon or evening in the wetlands. Our special animal partners here in the WEW have a varied display of natural activity that can mesmerize you for minutes or hours, take the time to be still and you'll have the best seat in the house.



Play and Learn with Independent Discovery! (cont.)

Everyone this year has heard about the devastating effects of the oil spill in the gulf. As we know, families, communities, and entire towns have been reliant on natural systems of the gulf ecosystems for their survival. The disregard and ravaging of our planet for cheap crude oil has not only spoiled the marine ecosystem, it has spoiled the lives of people. I mention this only to reiterate the true and important point that we humans are inextricably linked to our surroundings, and only by deeply exploring these surroundings may we develop a sense of responsibility and concern for our public lands. Many of the problems that we face today as individuals, communities, and as a nation, I believe, can be helped or solved by the simple acts of outdoor recreation and nature exploration.

As data continues to show how a rise in obesity, depression, and ADD is linked to a lack of outdoor activity, the time is now to go outside. Here in Eugene we are living within natural environments and urban forests that have fostered the growth of sustainable businesses and outdoorsy environmentalists. Living in the "Greatest City of the Arts and Outdoors" we are blessed with the natural beauty of the Mckenzie and Willamette confluences, where miles of bike and hiking trails venture along creeks, and through towering Douglas-fir forests right in town. The basalt columns at Skinner Butte downtown lend to the most urban spot for rock climbers. The West Eugene Wetlands and the Fern Ridge reservoir are more public lands that are only a short drive or bike ride away where students, educators, and other community members come to net dragonflies, or watch the sun set as a Great Blue Heron soars overhead.

We are privileged here in Eugene to be so close to such beautiful surroundings, and it is the goal of Mrs. Obama, the BLM, and WREN that we get as many stewards of the land outside in nature for recreation and hands on discovery this summer! It is my hope that these interactions with our public lands will inspire the minds of our children to carry on the respect and gratitude of our precious lands and all the species they encompass. Take it outside, explore, learn, and most importantly, have fun!

Join eScrip! It is a no-hassle, free program for you that sends money to WREN whenever you shop at a participating merchant. Log on to www.escrip.com to register and add WREN as one of your organizations!

President's Message (cont)

As it is with life, so it is with WREN. We have had many changes over the last several months and I would like to take a moment to recount some of them with you.

Pat Johnston, WREN's long time ally and West Eugene Wetlands Project Manager with the BLM, has taken an assignment in central Oregon. She has found her new position to be exciting and enjoyable, and we hope to see her back in Eugene soon. Thank you very much, Pat, for the energy and enthusiasm you brought to your position. You have been missed. The new West Eugene Wetlands Project Manager from the BLM is Chuck Fairchild, already an advocate and ally for WREN. Welcome aboard Chuck, we look forward to working with you!

Holly McRae, our Environmental Education Coordinator and stalwart defender of the Wetlands of West Eugene, has left WREN to devote more of her considerable energies to being a mom, being involved with the Eugene bicycling committee, and considering where she will grow next. Thank you very much, Holly, for your many years of dedication to WREN, your consistent efforts at constantly improving our education programs (WREN won many national awards under Holly and Pat's guidance), and your continuing interest in science-based community decision making. We all wish you the very best!

Windy Hovey, our Capital Campaign administrator and general go-to staff person, left for opportunities in the Portland area, and is now working for a Portland Arts group. Well done Windy and Best Wishes in your new position!

And we have added Alicia Lajeunesse and Nancy Beth Wilson to the staff, where they are already providing significant assistance in program delivery. Welcome!

We have had a number of Board members leave for various reasons and would like to thank them all: John Mercier, Paul Machu, Dena Zaldua-Hilkene. Thank you each for your efforts on behalf of WREN, and for your interest in continuing to be involved as needed. We have also added a new Board member, so please welcome Michael Roberts to the Board. Michael brings a significant expertise in non-profit management from his many years on previous Boards, and his insights are already proving very valuable.

This transitional time in leadership, coupled with the difficult economic times, has led to more than a little temporary chaos around WREN. However, thanks to the dedicated efforts of staff, the focus and commitment of the Board, and the support of the WREN membership and partners, we are making headway on many fronts. We continue to provide the high-quality environmental education programs that have been the hallmark of WREN, while making progress on establishing stable funding for the program and the Environmental Education Center. I believe good things are ahead for WREN and the Eugene community, and am glad to be a part of it.

So it is that, as fall is fast approaching, I see this as an opportunity to reduce the distractions that enticing weather brings, embrace the lengthening evenings, bundle up and focus energies on WREN. There are many opportunities for the community to be involved in WREN. We are on the watch for prospective Board members, and many volunteer opportunities exist. Join with us! The future is bright and needs our support to make it happen. What form it takes will be up to us.



WREN
Willamette Resources &
Educational Network

2010 New & Renewing WREN Members & Donors

Ted Carp, Ginny Reich, Dennis Hollenberg, Diane Steeck, Susan Castillo, Paul Machu, Suzanna Davis, Terra Smith, Diane Young, Herb Winsler, Barbara Holler, Holly McRae, Stacy Rathbun, Jules Abbott, Mike Shippey, Paula Graff, Steve Gordon, Megan Bernatzki, Michael Roberts, Georgette & Robert Silber, Ron Leonard, Rick Aherns, Jim and Pat Anderson

American Wetlands Month 2010 Supporters

Elmira Automotive, Fern Hill Nursery, Friendly Street Café, Paul's Bicycle, Paula Graff, Walk a Smile In, Euphoria Chocolate Co., WREN Welcome booth, City of Eugene Recreation Services, UO/ELP Student presentation, City of Eugene Wetland Restoration, Eugene Bicycle and Pedestrian Program, Lane County Audubon Society, Cascades Raptor Center, Citizen Science, Long Tom Watershed Council, The Bliss Cart

We would like to take the opportunity to welcome our newest board member Michael Roberts!

Michael has been in non-profit marketing and fundraising since 1996, with organizations such as United Way, Jewish United Fund, and National PTA. He has worked as a volunteer on trail restoration, strengthening fish habitats, and outdoor education for youth, prior to his affiliation with WREN. We look forward to having Michael assist WREN in continuing its success with protecting and promoting stewardship of the West Eugene Wetlands.

We are proud to announce that because of your past, present and future support of our efforts, WREN has been invited to join the Global Arc Sustainability Database!

"GARC sustainability database helps create groups for NPO leaders and emerging leaders with a process model that supports, educates, and challenges the leader to enable it to thrive." www.TheGlobalARC.org



WREN would like to give a big thank you to REI for supporting our National Public Lands Day 2010 event and our spring 2011 Family Exploration Day program series!

Upcoming Events

9/25 National Public Lands Day

Join the largest hands-on volunteer effort to steward

our important public lands!

11:00a.m.-2:00p.m. Stewart Pond

10/12 Wetland Wander

9:00a.m.-10:00a.m. Tsanchiifin Trail

10/19 Spider Talk

6:30-8:00pm Location TBA

10/31 Mushroom Festival

10:00a.m.-5:00p.m. at Mt. Pisgah Arboretum

11/6 A Beavers Tale

4:30-6:00p.m.

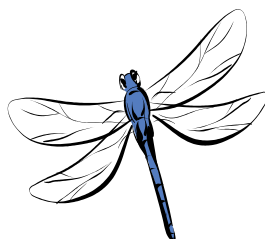
5\$ for WREN members, 7\$ for non-members

Meet at our Educational Yurt,

751 S. Danebo

Ave. Eugene OR, 97402

For more information visit us
@ www.wewetlands.org



Volunteer Spotlight



Alexis Geil is a graduate from the University of Oregon with a degree in Geography and a minor in Geology. She says the two subjects complement each other and their interdependency is fascinating to study. Here in the Citizen Science 'lab' she is learning how to identify species under the scope and also in the field. A set of valuable skills she is enjoying putting to use for our amazing program coordinator, Paula Graff, in our macro invertebrate study.

Alexis also has volunteered as a SMART reader with 4J school district for many years. And when she is not working, volunteering with Citizen Science or volunteering elsewhere, she enjoys listening to all types of music, cooking, watching movies and has a passion for cycling. Every year she takes a long distance cycling trip, about 350 miles. It feeds her need for exercise, being in the outdoors and inspiration to do work in programs like Citizen Science.