



Three Rivers Almanac

Issue No. 25

THE NEWSLETTER OF THREE RIVERS LAND CONSERVANCY

SPRING 2006

A DIVERSE NATURAL ECOSYSTEM WITH A COMPLEX CULTURAL HISTORY

On our way to conserving the next 100 acres

We are well on our way to preserving another 100 acres of beautiful natural land — land that also has an interesting and complex history. About a year ago, Three Rivers Land Conservancy began a conversation with Leon and Sen Speroff about plans to preserve their property.

The mostly forested land provides habitat for many species of wildlife. Streams run through the property, providing cool, clean water to Rock Creek, which eventually flows into the Tualatin River. Many animals come to the meadow that the Speroffs mow to keep the blackberries at bay. Coyotes, bobcats, red-tailed hawks, and a cougar have been spotted hunting in the field, which is prime habitat for many burrowing rodents and snakes. A herd of nearly 40 elk often graze in the meadow.



Meadow, streams, and forestland offer prime habitat for the area's native wildlife, such as the elk shown here grazing on the Speroff land.

In 1989 the Speroffs purchased an initial 40 acres and built their home. Two years later, they were able to obtain most of an adjacent 60 acres. What they purchased, they discovered, was an interesting piece of Oregon history. In 1909 the enterprising James Sargent bought 80 acres, subdivided it into 960 lots, had it platted with streets, and called the area Greenoe Heights. No one ever built on the lots, and none of the subdivision's streets were ever constructed. Although Greenoe Heights is on steep terrain and not adjacent to any functioning road in this semi-rural part of northwest unincorporated Multnomah County, county maps show 960 lots with a network of streets that look like any modern day subdivision.

The presence of a flume added complexity to the property. In the early 1900s, Lafayette "Lafe" Pence planned to build a flume to float logs down to

Linnton, a small town north of Portland on the Willamette River. In reality, Linnton is not downhill, but over Skyline ridge, then downhill about ten miles away. A local legend, which has not been confirmed, holds that Harry Lane, Portland mayor from 1905 until 1909, discovered that the flume was a scam and put an end to it. Still, the Pence flume was recorded with Multnomah County, and even though never built, it snakes its way through Greenoe Heights in the County records.

When the Speroffs purchased Greenoe Heights, they held the deeds to all of the lots but 32. Over the years, Leon and Sen have tried to purchase these remaining lots. Some became available when owners were delinquent on their taxes and the county put the lots up for sale at auction. The Speroffs usually were

(Continued on page 5)

Join us:

A Conservation Conversation



Tuesday, June 13, 8 - 9 am
Wednesday, July 12, 5:30 - 6:30 pm
Thursday, August 17, 8 - 9 am

- Learn about Three Rivers
- Take our virtual tour
- Meet other conservation supporters
- Learn how you can help

Light breakfast/refreshments will be served

Three Rivers Land Conservancy
1675 South Shore Blvd, Lake Oswego, OR
RSVP to Sandy at 503-699-9825



From the Executive Director

One night last November, I was walking home on a trail in Southwest Portland. Sporting

a headlamp and carrying a backpack loaded with goodies for an evening at

home, I traversed a small woodland. In the dark and quiet woods my senses came alive. I focused carefully on my footing and strained to see what was ahead. My ears were tuned to every sound. I was fully alert when I heard the owl hoot.

I paused. There it was again. How exciting! I walked further up the trail and heard the distinctive “Whooo Whooo” again. Ever since I was little, I’ve been afraid of the dark, so I didn’t linger on the trail with large Doug firs towering over me. I continued on my way.

A little farther down the trail, I heard the owl again. It followed me all the way home. It was truly a remarkable experience and reminded me that I live in the natural world; no matter how many cars and buildings tell me otherwise.

Even more amazing, this small woodland, where the owl lives, is a Neighborhood Special Place. A Neighborhood Special Place is what we call a small property, usually in a developed neighborhood, that Three Rivers helps preserve. This particular property was purchased by a dedicated group of neighbors who raised over \$200,000 to buy the lot, and save the owl’s home. The neighbors even agreed to chip in another \$10,000 to help offset some of the initial acquisition expenses. However, before Three Rivers can agree to hold the property, another \$15,000 to \$20,000 is needed to ensure adequate funds for maintaining it in perpetuity. We are on a daily hunt to find funding to preserve this Special Place.

There are many projects like this one, some large, some small, but all important for keeping our air clean, our water clear and nature close to home for generations to come. That’s why we re-

New Board Members Bring Expertise to the Conservancy

In January 2006 we welcomed three new board members to our team. *Dave Beckett*, a realtor with Prudential NW Properties and a resident of Lake Oswego brings experience in nonprofit management and fundraising. *Cary Strauch*, past member of the Lake Oswego Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, brings us planning experience. *Jennifer Thompson*, a wildlife biologist with the US Fish and Wildlife Service and a Portland resident, brings a wealth of experience to our stewardship program. These new members round out a very qualified eleven-member board.

cently completed a strategic planning process setting a goal to conserve 1,000 acres over the next five years. This is an aggressive goal considering we have conserved just 367 acres since our inception in 1991. However, the need for conservation in the region is far greater than our 1,000 acre goal. We plan to use these 1,000 acres to inspire and involve thousands of people in conservation, creating a ripple effect throughout our community that encourages even larger-scale conservation.

To reflect this change in strategy we recently changed our mission statement to emphasize people. Our mission is to inspire and involve people in conserving private land in Clackamas, Multnomah and Washington counties. Conserving land creates stronger, healthier communities now and for the future.

Visit our new website at www.trlc.org to find out how you can get involved and help leave a legacy for future generations.

— J.C.

Mission

Three Rivers Land Conservancy’s mission is to inspire and involve people in conserving private land in the watersheds of the Clackamas, Tualatin and lower Willamette Rivers. Conserving this land creates stronger, healthier communities now and for the future.

Executive Committee

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Three Rivers Land Conservancy

P.O. Box 1116
 Lake Oswego, Oregon 97035
 (503) 699-9825
www.trlc.org

Three Rivers Helps Battle Knotweed on Gales Creek

The Gales Creek watershed is one of the many large rural sub-basins of the Tualatin River. Over the last 100 years the landscape of the watershed has changed dramatically. Where there were once Oregon oaks and Douglas firs, there are now pasturelands, vineyards, Christmas tree farms and orchards. Where there were flood plains, there are now agricultural crops. Disturbances on the land have allowed non-native plants to take hold and threaten the health of Gales Creek.

Japanese knotweed, which thrives on stream banks, may be the most threatening of these intruders. Japanese knotweed has bright green heart-shaped leaves and hollow reddish colored stems. It grows extremely quickly and establishes extensive root systems. It is shade tolerant and reproduces from small stem or root fragments. The combination of these traits makes it a serious threat to Oregon's native plant communities.

Once established, knotweed can form dense patches 10 feet high that exclude native vegetation, including willows and cottonwoods. As it takes over, it can change the stream's character. Knotweed does not hold the soil well, allowing



Japanese knotweed has bright green leaves and fringe-like flowers. It grows rapidly, and can reproduce from stem and root fragments.



Japanese knotweed is increasing rapidly along Gales Creek. The non-native invasive plant displaces native vegetation, and degrades wildlife habitat and riparian ecosystems.

stream banks to erode and sediment to enter the waterway. It offers less shade than a native canopy, allowing water temperature to increase. Large wood in the stream, an important component of Pacific Northwest river systems, may become more scarce. Finally, a stream where knotweed is the only vegetation does not provide viable habitat for wildlife or support the aquatic food chain.

Three Rivers is helping address the problem of Japanese knotweed in Gales Creek. In partnership with the Tualatin River Basin Watershed Council and the Bureau of Reclamation, a crew surveyed four miles of Gales Creek to locate and document the extent of knotweed coverage. The survey found that 23 acres of the 97 mapped have some level of infestation. Within the infested 23 acres, approximately 11 acres are covered in 70% density. These facts will be used to recommend treatment methods and

strategies and to locate sources of funding for removal and control. If you'd like to know more, the report will be available on our website, www.trlc.org.



Three Rivers' mapping crew found widespread knotweed coverage and high density along four miles of Gales Creek.

PHOTO BY TOM GREY



The spotted towhee (*Pipilo maculatus*), a ground nesting bird seen on Keller Woodlands, benefits from an ivy-free understory.

Volunteers at Keller Clear Two Acres of Ivy

Volunteers are helping us first Saturdays of every month to remove English ivy from Keller Woodlands. Our goal is to remove an ivy desert, uncovering a diverse forest with a plethora of native plants, and the wildlife that depends on them. In the 18 months since the project began, we have exceeded all expectations, freeing more than two acres of weed-infested forest. With other efforts by Three Rivers and our partners, we expect to have the 40-acre Keller Woodlands almost free of ivy in the next year.

The Legacy Circle

You can preserve land for future generations by including Three Rivers Land Conservancy in your estate plans.

Please consider joining our Legacy Circle. You can remember Three Rivers in your will or living trust, or name Three Rivers as a beneficiary of your IRA or life insurance policy.

Contact Sandy Wright or Jayne Cronlund for more information
503-699-9825

Partners Help Battle Ivy

Thanks to the efforts of Three Rivers and partners, a more landscape-scale approach to English ivy control in the natural areas along Terwilliger Boulevard is under development. *Robin Jensen* and *Bruce Murray* of Friends of Marquam Nature Park, *Don Baack* of Hillsdale Neighborhood Association, and Friends of Terwilliger have joined us in strategizing and fundraising to win the ivy battles. By clearing 40 acres per year for five years, we plan to dramatically reduce the impacts of ivy on native plants and waterways, and protect the scenery and habitats provided by our beautiful native forests.

Monitoring Easements to Ensure Healthy Land

According to the Land Trust Alliance, our umbrella organization, a well run land trust monitors all of its easement properties every year. By the end of May, all 20 of our easement properties will have been monitored. Monitoring is done to ensure that the goals for each site are being met, such as protecting stream and forest corridors, and preserving scenic and historic values. Where goals are not being met, we strategize to address problems, such as soil erosion and trespass.

Volunteers Support Stewardship Committee with Talent, Expertise

A special group of volunteers with a variety of backgrounds, including program management, ecological restoration, and environmental education, are serving on our Stewardship Committee.

GET INVOLVED!



Join us on First Saturdays of every month at

KELLER WOODLANDS

to help remove

I V Y

9:00 am to 12:00 noon

Call 503-699-9825 or email info@trlc.org or visit our website for directions

The committee advises Three Rivers staff on ecological management, easement enforcement, and on generating support for the stewardship program.

In February the group reviewed and approved a prioritization guide for our properties, which ranks sites by both ecological and social values. The guide considers the ecological factors of landscape, habitat, streams, and invasive plants. Also considered are the sites' potential for public involvement and education, fundraising, and enforcement. This document guides stewardship activities.

Committee members joined easement monitoring visits this year, providing important insight and support for our Stewardship program.

Thanks to returning members *Stephanie Wagner* of Friends of Tryon Creek, *Jonathan Soll* of The Nature Conservancy and *Linda McNulty* of Lake Oswego. And welcome to new members *Peter Guillozet* of Clean Water Services, *Lucerne Curry* of Protiviti, Tribal Consultant *Michael Mason*, and *Suzi Cloutier* of NW Services Academy.

Volunteer Coordinator Energizes Program



Megan Barckert, a particularly talented AmeriCorps volunteer is working with us as Stewardship Volunteer Coordinator until December

of 2006. With her background in psychology/sociology and communication, she has leapt into environmental work, organizing first Saturday weed pulls at Keller Woodlands and Earth Day at Beth Ryan Nature Reserve. Megan has also enlisted special help from volunteers *Julie Reilly* and *Kyle Spinks* of Tualatin Hills Parks and Recreation District, and from *Molly Dougherty* of The Nature Conservancy, to survey wetlands, inventory birds, and organize volunteers. Special thanks for their support and expertise!



On Earth Day, nine AmeriCorps volunteers planted native plants and laid gravel at Beth Ryan Nature Reserve in Lake Oswego. The team was led by Alyss Broderick (3rd from left), assisted by Suzi Cloutier (far left) and Kevin Gaalaas (2nd from right).

Speroffs: Preserving the Next 100 Acres (Continued from page 1)

able to purchase the lots for about \$200 each, but ran into competition on one lot which cost them \$2,000. Several of the lots were purchased from a California man who said his grandfather had acquired the lots when he traded a pig for them. Some of the remaining lots may never be sold to the Speroffs because the owners consider them a part of their family's heritage. The Speroffs now own all but 22 of the 960 lots.

Managing this project has been challenging and expensive. "At one time we had 71 tax bills and each one required a fire fee of \$20," says Leon. Placing a conservation easement on the property has also been challenging. Three Rivers' Conservation Director, Virginia Bowers, has been helping with the process of va-

cating the streets, which means removing them from the plat. This is complicated by the requirement that the owners of the 22 lots not owned by the Speroffs have "accessibility" in and out of Greenoe Heights. Leon, Sen, and Virginia have spent many hours managing the reams of paperwork on the property and researching county records. Many more hours will be spent with surveyors, title companies, and public hearings before the project is completed.

As much as this story is about ownership of this land, the Speroffs do not feel they own it, but that they have been privileged to live on it. In the last 16 years, they have seen the growing demand by owners for land to become profitable. Both Leon and Sen were raised to think

about land in terms of future generations, not just short-term gain. Having a conservation easement will indeed limit the Speroff family's use of their own land, but they think this is well worth it. Owners in perpetuity will also be limited and will have to think of the land in terms of stewardship, wildlife, healthy flora, and a healthy watershed. It is hard to imagine what the adjacent area will be like in 25, 50 or 200 years, but the Speroffs hope that their woods will, in time, take on the characteristics of an old-growth forest — a forest that will contribute to a healthier environment for all.

Three Rivers plans to complete the conservation agreement with the Speroffs by the end of year.

New Conservation Strategies Plan Will Guide Three Rivers Projects for Next Five Years

Three Rivers Land Conservation projects are guided by our Conservation Strategies Plan (CSP). The CSP identifies the geographic areas where we focus our conservation efforts, and helps staff manage resources effectively. It also informs our partners and funders so they are able to work with us more effectively. In 2002 we developed our first CSP as part of the organization's overall Strategic Plan.

Since 2002, many changes have occurred that affect our work – some within Three Rivers, some without: Measure 37 passed, the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) expanded, several of our partners changed, and we set a new goal to conserve 1,000 acres in the next five years. These changes required that we update our CSP.

In evaluating new conservation focus areas, we identified watersheds that possessed high quality natural resources, serious ecological threat, and considerable opportunity. Areas with high quality natural resources contain intact wildlife habitat, presence of at-risk species, and/or good quality water resources. Areas with serious ecological threat have rapid development occurring, the UGB has expanded (or is likely to) into the area, and/or there is the possibility of logging or mining. Areas of considerable opportunity allow us to partner with other organizations working in the same areas, and access funding opportunities.

The new Conservation Strategies Plan identifies 12 focus areas. Of these, five are considered “primary focus areas” and seven are “secondary focus areas.”



Three Rivers new Conservation Strategies Plan outlines 12 focus conservation areas, with five primary focus areas: Upper Rock Creek, Clackamas River Bluffs and Canyons Natural Area, Council Creek, Stafford Basin, and the West Willamette Wildlife Corridor.

The five primary focus areas were selected based on the large acreages (relatively speaking) of undeveloped land with high quality natural resources. These areas give us the potential to conserve up to 200 continuous acres — a big step toward meeting our 1,000 acre goal. Primary focus areas are: **Upper Rock Creek** (near Forest Park), **Clackamas River Bluffs and Canyons Natural Area** (east of Carver, south of Damascus), **Council Creek** (near the city of Cornelius), **Stafford Basin** (south of Lake Oswego), and the **West Willamette Wildlife Corridor** (near OSHU). The map above identifies the 12 focus areas. Three Rivers hopes to own at least one property in each primary focus area for use as a conservation demonstration site.

A new aspect of this CSP is the inclusion of a focal species and a focal habitat, as found in other plans, such as the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife's (ODF&W) new Wildlife

Conservation Plan. A focal species is one in most need of protection because it is endangered or at-risk. A focal habitat is in need of conservation because it is rapidly disappearing. Our focal species is the **western pond turtle**, an at-risk species according to ODF&W, and found throughout the Portland metropolitan area. Our focal habitat is the **Oregon White Oak Woodland**, which has almost disappeared in the Willamette Valley. These woodlands are home to a number of rare and at-risk species, including the acorn woodpecker, western gray squirrel and a small bat, the California Myotis.

The biggest change we have made to our Conservation Strategies Plan is a shift from relying primarily on donations of conservation easements to more strategic purchases of easements and properties. We are currently writing grants and reviewing our ability to raise funds for these acquisitions.

Stafford Basin Trails Update

Luscher Farm Trail Complete: Come Celebrate!

A new 3/4 mile section of trail is now open around the Luscher Farm complex in Stafford Basin. The ten-foot wide asphalt pathway is an important step in completing Three Rivers' Stafford Basin Path and Trail Plan. Views from the trail include the historic barn, community gardens and fields being cultivated for organic vegetables.

The trail, built through the close partnership between the City of Lake Oswego and Three Rivers, will eventually connect West Linn and Lake Oswego.

We will celebrate the trail opening on National Trails Day, June 3, at 10:30 a.m. See box this page for more details.

The Next Mile

Now that the Luscher Farm trail is complete, the next step in accomplishing Three Rivers' Stafford Basin Path and Trail Plan is to extend the pathway all the way to West Linn's trail system. The trail will closely follow the north side of Rosemont Road.

Three Rivers hired George Hudson's

team from ALTA Planning and Design to complete a study of this section of trail. A group of local residents including *Duane Funk, Jay Minor, Thane Eddington, Mike Perkins* from City of West Linn, *Cary Strauch* from City of Lake Oswego, *Scott Hoelscher* from Clackamas County and *Jayne Cronlund* from Three Rivers provided input to ALTA.

The study, completed in April 2006, reviewed all trail options for the Rosemont Road area. The study estimated the costs for the next section of asphalt pedestrian trail, over one mile long, at \$550,000. Three Rivers and its partners will be looking to secure these funds.

With a Little Help from Our Friends: Purchase an Engraved Stone

Three Rivers is selling engraved stones to help raise funds for the Stafford Basin Path and Trail system. These stones will be located at the kiosk on Stafford Road near the dog park. The cost per stone is \$100. For more information on purchasing an engraved stone visit our website at www.trlc.org or attend the trail opening ceremony on June 3rd, at 10:30 a.m.



A kiosk on the newest section of the Stafford Basin Trail overlooks Luscher Farm's barn and fields.

Trail Opening Celebration!



***Come with your wagon,
stroller, or bike,***

***Your wheelchair, your horse,
or even your trike***

***Come Join us for
our inaugural hike***

***On a brand-new trail
we know you will like!***

Three Rivers Land Conservancy and the City of Lake Oswego invite you to the opening celebration of the new Stafford Basin Trail.

Time: 10:30 am

Date: Saturday, June 3rd

Location: Trailhead at Luscher Farm (next to the dog park)

Event Details: This family-friendly event will include a brief talk, activities for children, refreshments and a 1.5 mile hike. Event will be held rain or shine. Please dress for the weather.

Location details: From Hwy 43, turn onto McVey/Stafford Rd. and drive approximately 1.6 miles. Parking will be either at Bethlehem Church (17979 Stafford Road) or next to the kiosk. Follow signs for the event.

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Join Us for the 4th Annual Wine & Land Benefit

September 10, 2006 – 3 to 6 pm



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