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NEWSWORTHY

Official Newsletter of Worthy Environmental



Connecting people to the natural world and cultivating a community of environmental stewards working together to build a greener and healthier planet through advocacy, action, and education.

EARTH DAY OBSERVANCE

RICK MARTINSON, PHD
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
WORTHY ENVIRONMENTAL

The past year has been one of significant change and expansion for Worthy Environmental. One of the more visual decisions we made in cooperation with our Board of Directors was a name change from Worthy Garden Club to Worthy Environmental. We felt that our work and our mission had expanded beyond the original programs of the Garden Club, and that a new name was needed to better reflect the work of our rapidly expanding organization. You'll see references to our new name and our new logo throughout this newsletter. And we continue to grow.

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Over the winter we delved more deeply into the critical need to preserve old and mature forests for their benefits in biodiversity and carbon capture and storage. Our relationship with key scientists and researchers in forest ecology and fire behavior expanded in meaningful ways to help produce direction for a national rule to protect mature and old trees in numerous forest types across the country. And we became involved with many organized groups working to re-establish the Eastside Screens rule in eastern Oregon and Washington to protect large trees on six National Forests east of the Cascades. We also cultivated our relationships with the staff of Senators Merkley and Wyden, and worked with them to present the latest science to the Senators and other state and federal representatives. Our approach has always been to work collaboratively whenever possible, without becoming confrontational or self-serving.

The directors for each of our programs provided updates that you'll find in this newsletter and continue to increase their involvement and influence in local, regional, and national efforts, including the dark skies movement, food security issues, sustainability, and pollinator ecology. And our conservation director has developed working relationships with a number of groups to restore or rehabilitate natural areas in a variety of ecosystems across the state. That works continues almost daily!

As I write this, Earth Day 2023 is only a few days away: fifty-three years after Senator Gaylord Nelson created it as a way to force environmental issues raised during the late 1960's into the national agenda. Later that same year (1970), Congress authorized the creation of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to tackle those, and future issues.

Each Earth Day reminds us of that history, and celebrates our efforts to address current climate and environmental challenges.



Sometimes referred to as the “Golden Age” of environmentalism, substantial progress in environmental protection was made in the decade following the first Earth Day. Between 1970 and 1980 many of the basic legislation protecting the environment was enacted into law:

- The Clean Water Act
- The Water Quality Improvement Act
- The Water Pollution and Control Act Amendments
- The Resource Recovery Act
- The Resource Conservation and Recovery Act
- The Toxic Substances Control Act
- The Federal Environmental Pesticide Control Act
- The Endangered Species Act
- The Safe Drinking Water Act
- The Federal Land Policy and Management Act, and
- The Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act.



But one of the most significant environmental legislation in U.S. history – The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) – was signed into law on January 1, 1970 in response to the same public pressure that later produced Earth Day.

Each Earth Day reminds us of that history, and celebrates our efforts to address current climate and environmental challenges. We must not relent, but rather remain vigilant in our daily actions and aware of our cumulative impacts on our planet.



We at Worthy Environmental remain dedicated to expanding our influence in sustainability, ecology, and regional and national issues of climate change. Our advocacy work, and our on-the-ground approach to biodiversity, regenerative agriculture, and pollinator ecology continues to grow. And as Earth Day approaches, we are reminded of the importance of our work and the work of many others committed to making the world a better piece of ground.



Thank you for what you do, and for supporting our work at Worthy Environmental!

Springtime Gardening

LISA SANCO

It's been a long winter, and you're itching to get your hands in the dirt. We know the feeling!

If you haven't already, now is a good time to re-evaluate your landscape and decide if you'd like to make any changes to irrigation, plantings and hardscape this season. Ask yourself if your yard's current features serve you and your family, or if you're spending valuable time maintaining under-used areas that could be transformed into something more useful - a seating area, raised garden beds or a pollinator garden.

It was once common to blanket almost all outdoor areas with turfgrass, but is it actually getting used? Turfgrass requires a good chunk of money, water and time to maintain, so don't waste all three having grass where it's not needed.

Commonly overlooked areas where we see this issue is planting strips between sidewalks and streets, and alongside houses or lot lines. Even consider the amount of grass in front and back yards. Turfgrass is great when you have pets, small children and family members who like to enjoy time outside, but if entire areas aren't being used for recreation or lounging, take some grass out and landscape with natives instead!



Landscaping with natives, or creating mixed-use areas in your yard (like a paver patio and/or raised garden beds) increases the usability of your outdoor space and generates so many opportunities to get creative. While there is an upfront cost for lawn conversion, it saves you time, money and water in the long run, especially if you convert any remaining irrigation to drip. Landscaping with natives, of course, also creates valuable habitat for local birds, butterflies, bees and more.

Not sure where to get started? Check out the City of Bend's WaterWise program for guides, workshops and rebate opportunities. Worthy Environmental offers a handful of resources on native, edible and/or pollinator landscapes, and we also enjoy a good Pinterest search for design inspiration. The opportunities are endless!

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On The Farm

by Madi Steen, Farm Manager

Even with snow still on the ground and a chill in the air, nature is making its first stirrings, and we are getting excited about spring and fresh produce! Last week we planted our first round of greenhouse-grown transplants; seeds are germinating, and true leaves are unfurling. Early-season seedling propagation allows us to beat the winter cold and be ready to hit the ground growing once the ground thaws and the temperatures rise.



We follow a few basic concepts in order to germinate seeds successfully. We use a certified organic seed starting that features ingredients that balance drainage, aeration, and water retention. Most crops germinate best in soil around 70°F, so we use heat mats to efficiently warm the soil without heating the air as much and use a plastic cover called a propagation dome or humidome, which helps retain moisture and warmth. Lastly, we ensure proper air circulation to improve plant growth by decreasing stagnant moisture and the potential for damping off.

We are growing a lot of extra seedlings this year for a large plant sale this Summer with lots of healthy plants and fun varieties, so stay tuned for details!



HOPSERVATORY NEWS

by Grant Tandy, Observatory
Director

Spring hours at the Hopservatory start Wednesday, March 15th! Join us for public viewing Wednesday, Thursday nights from 8-9 p.m., and Friday, Saturday nights 8-10p.m. (weather dependent). Please keep in mind that we will be closed during the week of March 22nd to 25th as our observatory manager Grant will be out on vacation.

As we look towards the spring sky, we can recognize that our ancestors looked towards the same sky and noticed that with every season, new groupings of stars would appear. The predictable cycle of constellations repeated year after year as Earth continued on its orbit around the Sun. Using their vivid imaginations, *and drinking some strong wine*, stargazers viewed these groupings as patterns and constellations we now view today. The most popular springtime constellations can be seen in the night sky from about late March to late June. There are about fifteen springtime constellations visible in the Northern Hemisphere, seven prominent constellations stand out and are generally associated with springtime. These include: Ursa Major, Boötes, Cancer, Leo, Coma Berenices, Virgo, and Hydra.



Springtime is galaxy season, and there are many notable galaxies as well as open and globular star clusters, and double stars to observe. Some of our favorite telescopic objects for this coming season include: Alcor and Mizar (a bright binary pair), Bode's Galaxy & Cigar Galaxy (Messier 81 and 82), Globular Star Cluster (Messier 3), Beehive Cluster (Messier 44), Algieba (a fine double star located in Leo), and the beautiful Sombrero Galaxy (Messier 104).

Please join us on clear nights Wednesday through Saturdays starting at 8pm! Hope to see you all very soon.

Winter's Shoulder

BY HANNAH K JOHNSON

On bright days, the sun tumbles between a mosaic of naked aspen branches as it makes its way across the frozen lawn. It cascades onto neat rows of dormant plants, snowy seed trays, and tightly shut greenhouse doors. Despite the snow and the wind that bites your cheeks, when you lift your eyes towards the sky, you smile. Out here, the world is a wonderland. Woodpeckers break the silent mornings; blue jays add vibrant color as they fly past, and the snow seems to sparkle as it blankets the earth.



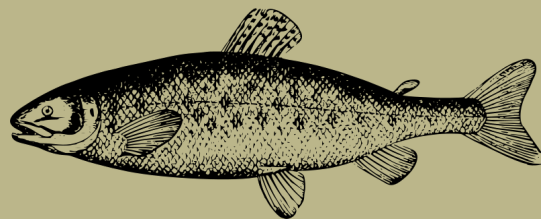
Life seems to be unfolding here, in every moment there is tremendous growth.

As you enter the nursery's propagation greenhouse (which is the heart of early springtime operation) a thick, humid, heat wraps around your body. Your fingers and cheeks may sting with the sudden rush of warmth, but you are grateful to be inside. Life seems to be unfolding here, in every moment there is tremendous growth. While the winter has seemingly stagnated life and slowed time outside, in here everything moves too quickly. These tiny plants insist on either leaping out of their dirt filled beds with youthful vigor, or sleepily stretching out their cotyledons throughout the month. During the week we play a delicate game of space and time: we try to catch each species as it roots out, then create a maze of potted plants around our feet.

Every species is different, and we must learn the intimate lives of each one. We have learned to recognize these plants as flowering adults, sleeping elders, seeds waiting to be sewn, and now as children who are impossibly fragile and temperamental. Every time we open the creaking greenhouse door we look forward to glimpsing another moment of a plant's growth stage. We cherish our moments at the nursery and would love to share them with you. Come visit us, see what's happening and get a peek at early spring.

Conservation Updates

BY EVAN HEEB



Over the past few months, Worthy Conservation has been working with Siuslaw Soil and Water Conservation District to restore 64 acres in Tenmile Valley, near Yachats, OR. Worthy Environmental purchased the property several years ago, but the global pandemic prevented any large-scale restoration until this year. This piece of upper Tenmile valley was once a farm and homestead, active until the early 1980s.

A legacy of this past land use is a series of old clearcut farm fields along the banks of Tenmile Creek. These fields, and this piece of property as a whole, were once used to produce food and timber for the people of the Oregon coast. Today, the needs of these coastal communities have shifted, and consequently, so will land-use patterns in Tenmile Valley. Worthy environmental believes that in modern times, the best thing we could do with this farm is restore it to a more natural state.



Consequently, we've partnered with Siuslaw Soil and Water Conservation District and Habitat Contracting, LLC., to begin the restorative process. Most of the current work has taken place in the riparian corridor and valley bottom. This first phase of restoration focuses on recreating natural conditions along the banks of Tenmile Creek. We've 'unleveled' the uniformly graded farm fields, placed hundreds of downed logs, and planted nearly 15,000 native plants. Restoring watersheds like Tenmile Creek is a small part of a larger regional effort to increase fish, bird, and small mammal habitat throughout the Pacific coast.

Next month, we'll take a group of OSU students out to the site for the first 'Tenmile Work Weekend.' They'll plant trees, place woody debris, and pull invasive species. This will be the first of many work parties in Tenmile Valley. Stay tuned for future opportunities to volunteer with Worthy Environmental in Tenmile valley!

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