

Horizons



FALL 2004

BENTON SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT—SERVING BENTON COUNTY SINCE 1956

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Annual Report 2003 - 2004

2003-2004 Accomplishments

Benton SWCD Directors, Staff and Volunteers provided the following conservation services to the residents of Benton County between July 1, 2003 and June 30, 2004:

We worked with conservation partners in the following ways:

- Served as the Local Management Agency and worked with Oregon Department of Agriculture to implement the Agricultural Water Quality Management Area Rules (Senate Bill 1010).
- Participated in Steering Committee meetings on the Groundwater Management Area declared in Southern Benton County by Oregon Department of Environmental Quality.
- Active member of the Cooperative Weed Management Area group which identifies noxious weed hot spots in Benton County and seeks funding for inventory and control.
- Acted on the OWEB Small Grant Review team for three grant areas within our District.
- Served on NRCS Local Working Group to identify priority resource concerns for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program.
- Worked on various conservation and restoration projects with the Marys River Watershed Council, Greenbelt Landtrust, US Fish and Wildlife, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, and Oregon Department of Forestry.
- Assisted Jefferson School 4-H Wildlife Stewards to implement riparian buffer plantings and adopt a stream.
- Provided office space for Kelly Albers, Willamette Restoration Initiative (WRI) Conservation Specialist. Worked closely with Kelly to implement several water quality and stream restoration projects in Benton County.
- Assisted in securing 12 grants which provided \$211,816 for local conservation projects and education.

We provided direct landowner assistance by doing the following:

- Assisted over 15 landowners to apply for the OWEB small grant to help pay for various restoration projects which enhanced native wildlife habitat and improved water quality. Provided fiscal management to several of these grants.
- Worked closely with USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to implement federal farm programs in Benton County. These efforts assisted in conservation plan development for ten landowners for a total of 1,930 acres. Land uses include wildlife, crop, headquarters, and pasture.

~ continued on page 6 with Income & Expenses

*Watch for the
Native Tree and Plant Sale
order form*

in the
next issue of Horizons
distributed after
December 15th, 2004.

2005 plant categories
will include flowers
and an expanded
berry selection.



The Chair's Perspective

Tom Bedell

This issue contains our SWCD annual report for the fiscal year just completed in July 2004. We have had another productive year with more to do than time and resources allow, as the District's workload has increased without a concurrent increase in resources.

Last fall we conducted a survey among people who have cooperated with us to determine what they considered the most important resource concerns in Benton County. In addition, we asked them to prioritize the technical and educational services we provide to help us focus our work. The top four resource concerns were:

water quality, riparian/streamside areas, soil quality and invasive plants. The top three technical services were: technical assistance, cooperation with partners, fish passage barriers; and top two educational efforts were: workshops and the newsletter. We received quite a number of additional comments. Our plan of work is quite ambitious. Please know the District welcomes your comments on our work.

Between now and next June 30, the Upper Willamette West Small Grants Team would like to distribute the remainder (\$70,000) of the allocated OWEB funds available for restoration projects. Within our District, this small grant area includes watersheds draining into the Willamette River, excluding the Luckiamute and Alsea Rivers. Check with us for information, if you have a small project (\$10,000 or less) that fits the criteria of watershed improvement. It is entirely possible the Legislature will not include this in the OWEB budget allocation for the next biennium if they perceive an inadequate need for moneys to do conservation work on the ground.

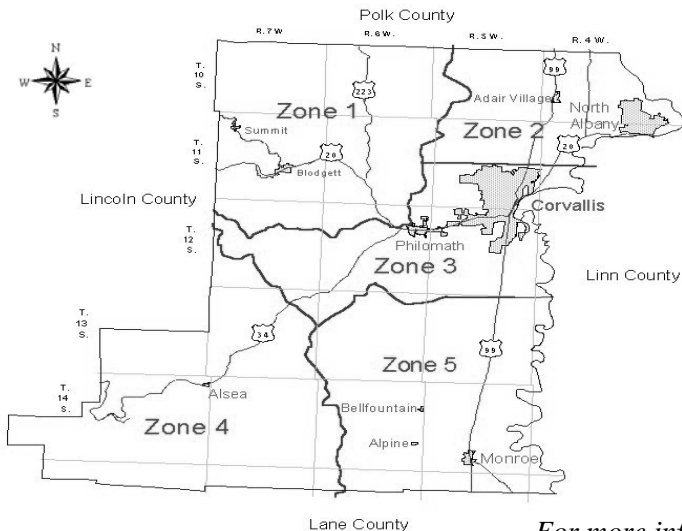
There will be four Director positions on your November ballot, two At Large and Zones 2 and 3. The four incumbents will be on the ballot. In addition, Bruce Reininger (Zone 4 Director) has resigned and will be moving to central Oregon. That zone covers the area west of the Coast Range, primarily the Alsea watershed. Criteria for qualifying as a director are: to live in the zone, and own/manage ten or more acres. If you are interested in serving the remainder of the term (expires 2007) or know of someone who would be a great addition to our District board, please contact our office.

Lastly, Measure Number 02-43 will be on the November ballot. The District is seeking voter approval for a permanent tax rate of five cents per \$1000 of assessed property value. The District is a local body established to serve its citizens. I hope you will consider the measure favorably as the District needs local support not only to maintain, but to improve its service to you.

Support BSWCD Director, Tim Dehne, on his



Tim Dehne, BSWCD At-large Director and dedicated 2004 Native Tree Sale coordinator, will take a bicycle tour of Benton Soil and Water Conservation District during the weekend of October 22-24. Tim's multi-fold mission is to hobnob with District citizens, listen to soil and water concerns, and promote BSWCD activities. Pedal along with Tim on his route or meet him for a chat at one of the destinations listed on the tour schedule.



Tour Schedule

Friday, October 22

Leave BSWCD office and bike on Hwy 20 to Hyak Park - 5:30PM meeting. Tim will proceed on to Kings Valley that evening.

Saturday, October 23

10AM meeting in the KV Charter School parking lot. Tim will pedal to the Blodgett Store for 2PM meeting, then continue on to Alsea to spend Saturday evening.

Sunday, October 24

10AM meeting at the Alsea Store parking lot.



Sunday schedule continued...
From there, Tim will head to Bellfountain, arriving about 2PM. Then, to Alpine, with an estimated arrival time of 4PM, then to Monroe arriving at 6PM in the Monroe High School parking lot.

For more information call Tim at 752-0246.

Calling all volunteers...

Teach 6th graders about soil during Corvallis Outdoor School!!!

- ✓ Volunteers are needed at Outdoor School on two Wednesdays: October 13 and October 20.
- ✓ Volunteers can work one or two shifts/day. Lunch will be provided for full-day volunteers.
- ✓ The two shifts are (1) 8:00 AM to 12:30 PM and (2) 11:20 AM to 4:00 PM.
- ✓ Designated shifts include travel time from Corvallis.
- ✓ To keep the volunteer-to-student ratio narrow, we need 12 volunteers per shift.
- ✓ Corvallis Outdoor School is located at beautiful Camp Tadmor, east of Lebanon.
- ✓ Carpooling will be available and encouraged.
- ✓ This is a great opportunity to learn about soil and share your knowledge with students.

For more information contact teresa.matteson@oacd.org or call (541) 753-7208.



Conservation Calendar

October

October 8—10

4-H Wildlife Stewards Volunteer Training from 9 AM to 5 PM each day at the Oregon 4-H Conference and Education Center, 5390 Four-H Road NW, Salem, OR 97304. Training Fee: \$89.00 includes 24 hours of hands-on interactive training; classes on insects, native plants, mammals, birds and reptiles; all training materials; 4-H Wildlife Stewards Project Handbook including classroom curriculum; and lunch each day. For more information and to register, contact: Maggie Livesay at Benton County – OSU Extension, (541) 766-6750 or 800-365-0201 or email wildlife.benton@oregonstate.edu

October 9 & 16

Visit Tim Dehne and Teresa Matteson at the **Saturday Farmer's Market**. Buy potted native trees and shrubs. We will have a hands-on conservation activity for kids of any age - 0 to 100+ years.

October 13 & 20

Corvallis Outdoor School Soil Field Study Program - we will teach local 6th grade students about soil color, texture, and water & soil interactions. If you are interested in participating, call 753-7208 or email teresa.matteson@oacd.org.

October 22 - 24

Tim Dehne's **Tour de Benton**...see page 2 for more details.

November

November 9 & 10

Integrated Pest and Nutrient Management Options: Practices and Tools to Protect Water Quality. This workshop is aimed at professionals with some experience in pest and/or nutrient management principles, such as crop consultants, field reps, SWCD personnel, Extension educators, and Technical Service Providers. For more information visit <http://cropandsoil.oregonstate.edu/nm/iSNAP.htm> or call Mary Staben, Workshop Coordinator, 541-737-2683 or email mary.staben@oregonstate.edu.

November 14 - 17

Team Oregon - Conservation is Our Game. Oregon Association of Conservation Districts 56th Annual Meeting to be held at Valley River Inn, Eugene, Oregon. Workshops, panel discussions, guest speakers, exhibits, food and successful partnerships. For more information visit www.oacd.org

November 17 - 19

Growing Healthy Watersheds—OWEB 8th Biennial Conference - for everyone interested in improving and restoring fish and wildlife habitat, water quality, watershed health and community health for current and future generations to enjoy. Held at the Windmill Inn and Suites of Ashland, in Ashland Oregon. For more information call 503-259-0838 or register online at www.oweb.state.or.u

December

December 7

Benton SWCD's Annual Meeting at the Corvallis Public Library meeting room at 7:00PM. Doors open at 6:30. Join district board, members, staff and volunteers for an informative presentation on Native Plants, exhibits, and silent auction.



Paterson's CurseEchium plantagineum**WEED ALERT****Common Names:** Paterson's curse, Salvation Jane, Riverina bluebell**Origin:** Paterson's curse is native to Western Europe and the Mediterranean region. First recorded as an invasive weed in Australia; introduced in the mid 1800s initially as a cultivated garden plant.**Oregon:** First detected in 2003 in Linn County, a second site was confirmed in Douglas County in 2004. Both Oregon sites are under intensive treatment.**Description:** An erect annual or biennial member of the borage family (*Boraginaceae*) generally 1-3 feet tall. Plants are often multi-branched with an abundance of stout hairs on stems and leaves. Reproduction and spread is by seed.**Stem** – erect, light-green, bristly, stout, branching mainly toward the top.**Leaves** – green to light-green, alternate, hairy and thick.**Flowers** – most often blue-purple in color, but may be pink or white. Flowers are borne on a fiddleneck-like inflorescence. Blooming usually starts in June, but some flowering plants can be found at any time of the year. Two of the five stamens in the flower, are longer and project significantly from the joined corolla.**Seeds** – each flower produces four brown or gray nut let seeds surrounded by a husk covered in bristles giving them a fuzzy appearance.**Impacts:** Paterson's curse is poisonous to grazing animals and a threat to natural areas. The plant contains pyrrolizidine alkaloids that cause chronic liver damage and death to susceptible animals. Paterson's curse is a prolific seed producer enabling rapid spread and displacement of pasture, range, and desirable plants. It is a threat to native habitat with the potential to invade oak woodland, native prairie, and dry upland slopes. Handling plants can cause mild to severe skin irritation, and hay fever in some individuals.**Dispersal:** Seeds are spread by vehicles, farm implements, humans, animals, water, wind, hay, silage, and as a contaminant of commercial seed. It has been found in wildflower mixes sold in Oregon.

Jon & Flip Anderson
 29730 Harvest Drive SW
 Albany, OR 97321
 Phone: 541-757-6520
 Fax: 738-2607
 sevenoaknn@aol.com
 www.SevenoaksNativeNursery.com

- Quality Bareroot & Potted Shrubs & Trees
- Wholesale trade only (\$200 minimum)
- Local source for 125+ species of native plants
- Advice freely given

Report suspect weed sites or finds to:

Oregon Department of Agriculture**NOXIOUS WEED CONTROL PROGRAM****503-986-4621 • 1-866-INVADER**

...Explore Native Plants.....
Benton SWCD Annual Meeting
December 7, 2004 at 7PM
Corvallis Public Library
Meeting Room

Join District staff, volunteers and directors for informative presentation and discussion on using native plants in your landscape. Meet with Directors, staff and volunteers and participate in the silent auction.

WANTED: Donations
 for the Benton SWCD Silent Auction

Share an item or a service for this annual fund-raising event...Past donations have included quality hand-made crafts, vacation rentals, books, plants, posters...

Robinson's Natives and Restoration*Providing jobs to mentally challenged individuals*

Nice selection of plants for landscaping and reclamation.
 We hire and train mentally handicapped adults for our nursery and reclamation work.

Call for prices

Ph. 541-757-7933 Fax 541-758-4258

NRCS Launches Conservation Security Program

by Gary Briggs

The Conservation Security Program (CSP) was authorized by the 2002 Farm Bill to reward farmers and ranchers who are implementing conservation on America's working lands. CSP is a voluntary conservation program that supports ongoing stewardship of private agricultural lands by providing payments for maintaining and enhancing natural resources. CSP identifies and rewards those farmers and ranchers who are meeting the highest standards of conservation and environmental management on their operations. In addition, CSP creates powerful incentives for other producers to meet those same standards of conservation performance. In short, CSP rewards the best and motivates the rest. Through these rewards and incentives, CSP builds a foundation of natural resource conservation that will provide benefits to the public for generations to come.

Through CSP, the conservation benefits gained will help farms and ranches be more economically and environmentally sustainable and will increase the natural resource benefits for all Americans.

How CSP Works

1. The CSP sign-up will be offered in selected priority watersheds across the Nation. We have submitted high priority watersheds in the Central Coast/Upper Willamette Basin for consideration in FY2005 and anticipate that one will be selected.
2. Producers complete a self-assessment to determine eligibility.
3. Eligible producers within these watersheds submit an application.
4. Based on the application, description of conservation activities, and a follow-up interview, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) will determine which program tier and enrollment category are available for the applicant. NRCS will provide the necessary materials for producers to complete the benchmark inventory.



To provide the best service possible to producers, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is implementing CSP on a watershed basis. Focusing on high priority watersheds allows NRCS to provide quality service to more applicants than if the program were implemented nationwide because of limits on both program and technical assistance funding in Fiscal Year 2005. This year CSP was offered in 18 watersheds in 22 states across the country. The Umatilla Watershed in Oregon was chosen as a CSP priority watershed for 2004.

Additional information on the CSP program is at <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/csp>.

Gary Briggs is the NRCS Central Coast/Upper Willamette Basin Team Leader



Fish Passage Map Data Now Available on the Web!

Access to the Fish Passage Improvement Program's (FPIP) latest on-line fish passage and fish habitat information is currently hosted by Benton County. You can get information on culverts, dams, and streams. You can also print your own maps!

Soon, the Fish Passage Improvement Program will manage a more robust site hosted at OSU library. **Stay tuned!** Please contact Chris Stebbins with any questions regarding this mapping site or the Fish Passage Improvement Program. Call (541) 766-6602 or email chris.w.stebbins@co.benton.or.us.

How to get the info? Visit this interim web address: http://gis.co.benton.or.us/v09_10/index.htm.



Click on the 'BentonMaps' links to load the mapping application. Then, select 'Fish Passage' in the drop-down menu on the left margin under 'Map'.

Also, visit the Program's web site for continuous updates: <http://www.peak.org/~bentoncd/fishpassage>.



**Benton SWCD Annual Report
Income and Expense Detail
July 2003 through June 2004**

Income Source	\$
Contributions/dontations	1,698
Equipment rental	25
OWEB Conservation Projects	119,367.58
ODA	48,346
LMA	1,360
Benton County	10,000
Title II	35,439
NRCS	10,707
5-Star	5,434
Annual Tree Sale	26,803
Newsletter Ads	205
OACD Workshop	8728
Interest Checking/Saving	227
Refund	225
Total Income	268,565

Expense Source	\$
Projects	130,926
Education & Outreach	15,426
Insurance	3834
Operations	24,000
Payroll	68,572
Annual Tree Sale	16,800
Total Expenses	259,558

Carryover to 2004 - 05	9,007
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Benton SWCD 2003—2004 Accomplishments ~ continued from on page 1

Our education and outreach efforts included the following:

- Participated in Kid's Day for Conservation where we highlighted the importance of planting native plants. Eight hundred children attended.
- Shared the Stream Simulator with 500+ students during Forest Expo.
- Supplied hands-on soil education to 30+ SMILE students at Lincoln and Garfield Elementary Schools.
- Provided "The Living Soil" curriculum to 9 teachers and 214 students during the annual Conservation Poster Contest.
- Four "Benton SWCD Horizons" newsletters were distributed to 1500 Benton County residents.
- Conducted survey of Benton Co. cooperators to prioritize resource concerns and project areas.
- Provided district resources to the community, such as the seed drill, stream simulation table, soil augers, tree planting equipment, conservation videos, ArcView soils map productions, and soil quality test kit.
- Recruited volunteers and participated in Corvallis Outdoor School where 6th grade students learned about soils and watershed processes.
- Over 150 Benton County residents received soil and water conservation technical assistance from the District during this year. Many more attended meetings and workshops sponsored by the District.
- Presentation of conservation job opportunities for Philomath High School Career Day.
- Presented 9 workshops to over 700 people on riparian buffers, wildlife restoration projects, soil and water quality issues. Set up displays at 11 venues, had contact with over 1200 people where we displayed and handed out materials on cost share programs, grants, Senate Bill 1010 program rules, District mission, educational programs and technical assistance.
- Worked with Oregon Department of Agriculture to present a conference for Agricultural Riparian Management and two day workshop for Riparian Site Capability. Fifty resource management professionals attended.
- Organized, led and evaluated a Kings Valley Restoration Tour. Twenty five landowners attended this tour.
- As our annual fundraiser, we sold over 21,000 native trees and shrubs to more than 250 residents, raising awareness on the use of native plants in restoration projects.

The Fish Passage Improvement Program did the following:

- Worked closely with Benton County Public Works to secure funding for replacement of two county culverts and a fishway around a private agricultural irrigation dam on Beaver Creek.
- Provided project management and administrative oversight of one county culvert and one private culvert replacement along Norton Creek. Funding was paid by Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB) grant.
- Managed eight volunteers in the inventory of over 200 Benton County culverts for fish passage problems.
- Presentations of the Benton Co. Fish Passage Improvement Program were given to Benton County Commissioners, Small Woodlands Association, watershed councils, Bureau of Land Management Resource Advisory Committee which granted continued funding for the program through Title II funds.



Cover cropping is an ancient practice which during the Green Revolution. The method deners. Lately, the world of agriculture has cropping offers a long list of benefits, including nitrogen fixation and trapping, weed suppression, air dust, improving field access organic matter.

Cover Crops

An age-old conservation practice revisited

lost favor in large-scale agricultural production was kept alive by small organic farmers and rediscovered the value of cover crops. Covering erosion control, improving water infiltration, attracting beneficial insects, decreasing during wet season, and increasing soil

Unfortunately, no one-size-fits-all cover crop scheme works for every situation. It is important to do your homework. One must consider cultivation practices such as mowing vs. discing, water availability and delivery system, soil characteristics, and field history as cover cropping is integrated into a growing system. On the down side, cover crops may increase frost damage by covering dark soil that can act as a heat sink for winter solar energy. Cover crops may also encourage gophers and some plant diseases. Increased residue from cover crops may impede the harvest of some crops, such as nuts. Some cover crops, like legumes, require inoculation with nitrogen-fixing bacteria before planting. Each cover species has particular considerations, such as planting time (cool vs. warm weather), removal (cutting time to insure or prevent reseeding), and how the cover will influence the water requirements in the field due to changes in water infiltration and soil moisture retention. Comparing strictly the nitrogen benefit, cover crop planting and management may cost more than the traditional fertilizer application. The benefits derived from cover cropping, such as water infiltration, nutrient cycling, and field access, are long-term results not developed with the use of conventional fertilization.

Most of the benefits of cover cropping occurs after the crop is cut, incorporated into the soil, and decomposed. Cover crops convert the carbon in CO₂ from the air into plant tissue. Once returned to the soil, these carbon compounds become the foundation of a food chain involving billions of soil organisms, like bacteria, fungi, and a full spectrum of bugs, from microscopic mites to earthworms. In fact, observing an increase in earthworms after cover crop use is a yardstick for measuring improved soil health.

Here are some suggestions to help the novice as they consider incorporating cover crops into their agricultural practices. First, identify your goals for planting a cover crop from the benefits mentioned above. Talk to neighbors and local experienced growers. They are usually happy to help you learn from their mistakes. Contact us, Benton SWCD, and ask Donna Schmitz for assistance. She works with the Natural Resource Conservation Service to develop detailed farm plans that use cover crops as a best management practice. Our conservation partner, Oregon State University Extension, employs a cadre of helpful Extension agents who have experience working with cover crops. The four agents listed below work in Benton, Lane and Linn Counties. More than 20 cover crop fact sheets are available from OSU Extension. Visit <http://extension.oregonstate.edu> to access those titles online or visit your local extension office.

Name	Title	Office location	Phone
Dan McGrath	Entension Horticulturalist	Linn County	541-967-3871
Mark Mellbye	Extension Agronomist	Linn County	541-967-3871
Ross Penhallegon	Extension Horticulturist	Lane County	541-682-4243
Garry Stephenson	Extension Small Farms	Benton County	541-766-6750

For an overwhelming look at an extensive collection of information on cover crop use and effects, visit a UC Davis website at <http://www.sarep.ucdavis.edu/ccrop>. They have constructed an impressive database including 32 types of cover crops with online access to over 400 images.

To assist in your cover crop planting...

Benton SWCD has a seed drill available for rent at \$5/acre or \$25 minimum with a \$50 deposit. It is a regular double disc opener, not a no-till drill. It disperses seed only and cannot be used to plant seed with fertilizer. Use of this 36" seed drill requires that you have a transportation trailer and a small tractor. It works well on ground that is already worked, for example between Christmas tree rows. For more information on the rental protocol, call Benton SWCD at 753-7208 between 9AM and 1PM.

Cover crop seeds are available at various local retailers, such as Denson Feed & Seed, Home Grown Gardens, Garland Nursery, Shonnard's Nursery, and Nichols Garden Nursery.

Cover Cropping as a Soil Conservation Method: pass it on to the next generation!

by Donna Schmitz, Watershed Technical Specialist

I consulted with Jim Hecker, the Benton County NRCS District Conservationist, on a cover crop recommendation for a local Christmas tree farmer. Our research revealed a NRCS conservation farm plan developed 20 years ago for the same farm. In the plan, we found grass seed recommendations, quantity of seed needed per acre, proper maintenance of the cover crop and lots of pictures of a successful conservation practice. We were able to copy off the pages for the son, who remembered that Benton SWCD and NRCS had helped his father with the same issue many years ago. **Cover cropping - pass it on!**



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This newsletter is printed on 40% recycled paper.
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 or better yet, pass this issue to a friend!

Enjoy life - volunteer with BSWCD!!!

Special Thanks to...

Bruce Reininger

Zone 4 Director, 2003 - 2004

Bruce has chosen to live the sweet-life in Bend where he and his wife have opened Pegasus Chocolates.

We truly appreciate the time and energy Bruce contributed to the District, working on the web page, helping when needed, and lending his knowledge as an elected Director.

We wish the Reningers the best of luck!



The Benton SWCD mission

is to provide leadership to Benton County residents through education and technical assistance for conservation and responsible use of soil, water and related resources through a balanced, cooperative program that protects, restores, and improves these resources.

Board of Directors

Tom Bedell, Chair
 Eric Horning, Vice Chair
 Cliff Hall, Treasurer
 Andy Gallagher
 Tim Dehne
 Anne Rigor

Associate Directors

Rana Foster
 Mark Taratoot



Employees

Jennifer Floro, Office Manager
 Donna Schmitz, Watershed Technical Specialist
 Chris Stebbins, Fish Passage Program Coordinator
 Teresa Matteson, Education and Outreach Director

The Benton SWCD is an equal opportunity employer, providing services to the public without regard to race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital or family status.

Benton SWCD Wish List

- Working 8-10 cup coffee pot that doesn't leak
- Volunteers for Corvallis Outdoor School - see page 3
- Donations for the Silent Auction - see page 4.

Thank you to those who have donated in the past.
 Your donations have supported our conservation services for 48 years!