



Rivers to Ridges Annual Report 2020



Section 1: Rivers to Ridges Partnership Background and Overview	1
1.1 The Rivers to Ridges Partnership.....	1
1.1.1 Vision Statement	1
1.1.2 Vision Refinements.....	1
1.2 Rivers to Ridges Online	2
1.3 Rivers to Ridges Annual Report and Accomplishments Reporting.....	2
1.4 Rivers to Ridges “Refresh” Process Underway	2
1.5 Partnership Accomplishments By The Numbers	3
Section 2: Land Protection	4
2.1 Land Protection in 2020	4
2.1.1 Black Oak Basin.....	4
2.1.2 Marvin and Marie Spores Conservation Area.....	4
2.1.3 Camp Creek Hills.....	4
Section 3: Habitat Restoration and Management.....	6
3.1 Partnership Members Respond to Holiday Farm Fire	6
3.1.1 Pure Water Partners Coordinates Response.....	6
3.1.2 McKenzie River Trust Supports Recovery Efforts	6
3.2 Controlled Ecological Burns.....	6
3.2.1 Howard Buford Recreation Area 2019 Wildfire Recovery	6
3.3 Habitat Restoration and Management.....	7
3.3.1 Northwestern Pond Turtle Success Story.....	7
3.3.2 Urban Waters and Wildlife Project Implementation	7
3.3.3 Empire Park Pond Habitat Restoration	8
3.3.4 South Coyote Unit Habitat Enhancements	8
Section 4: Recreation, Education, and Events	9
4.1 Recreational Improvements.....	9
4.1.1 Amazon Park Running Trail Reconstruction	9
4.1.2 Small Dog Park at Armitage Park	9
4.1.3 Hendricks Bridge Boat Ramp Improvements.....	9
4.2 Celebrations and Events.....	9
4.2.1 Wild and Scenic Film Festival.....	9
4.2.2 Willamette River Festival	10
4.2.3 First Virtual Mushroom Festival.....	10
4.2.4 On-Water Volunteer Safety and Training.....	10
4.2.5 Environmental Education at Mount Pisgah Arboretum	10
4.3 Education	11
4.3.1 Willamette Resources Education Network Education Program	11
4.3.2 University of Oregon’s Environmental Studies Program	11
4.3.3 UO Landscape Architecture Students Plan for the East Ridgeline	11
4.3.4 UO Landscape Architecture Students Plan for Mount Pisgah Summit	11
Section 5: Planning and Publications.....	12
5.1 Willamette Valley Oak and Prairie Cooperative Strategic Action Plan	12
5.2 Climate Research Effort Published	12
5.3 Mussel Mania – Working to Protect Oregon’s Long-Lived Freshwater Mussels	12
5.4 Pollinator Networks of Willamette Daisy to be Studied	13
5.5 Upper Willamette Soil & Water Conservation District Ballot Measure.....	13
5.6 Bradshaw’s Lomatium Delisting Proposed	13
5.7 Suzanne Arlie Park Master Plan Adopted.....	13
Section 6: Administrative Structure	14
6.1 Summary of Partnership Administrative Structure	14
6.1.1 Rivers to Ridges Executive Team (R2R XT)	14
6.1.2 Rivers to Ridges Implementation Team (IT!).....	14
6.1.3 Pollinator Networks of Willamette Daisy to be Studied	14

Rivers to Ridges Lands Acknowledgement

The Rivers to Ridges Partnership acknowledges the lands on which we work and live are homelands of the Kalapuyan people whose descendants may be members of the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde, Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians, and the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs. Indigenous people have stewarded this land for thousands of years before the land was taken from them. R2R partners support on-going indigenous stewardship of these lands and becoming better allies with all peoples of the Willamette Valley.

Note: This statement above is a working draft and will be refined by the Partners over time.

White oak on Mount Pisgah
Photo credit: MPA

Cover Photos:
Moon Mountain looking east (P. Gordon)
Mining bee on candy flower (A. Jackson)
Pond turtle at Golden Gardens Park (Eugene)
McKenzie River paddle (J. Nuckols)

Annual Report Produced By
Jeff Krueger and the City of Eugene
on behalf of the R2R Partnership

Rivers to Ridges
Annual Report 2020



1

Rivers to Ridges Partnership Background and Overview

R2R Partnership Organizations

- City of Eugene
- Coast Fork Willamette Watershed Council
- Friends of Buford Park & Mount Pisgah
 - Institute for Applied Ecology
- Lane County Public Works Department
 - Long Tom Watershed Council
 - McKenzie River Trust
 - McKenzie Watershed Council
- Middle Fork Willamette Watershed Council
 - Mount Pisgah Arboretum
- Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife
- Oregon Parks and Recreation Department
 - The Nature Conservancy
 - U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- U.S. Bureau of Land Management
 - U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
- Willamalane Park and Recreation District
- Willamette Resources and Educational Network
 - Willamette Riverkeeper



1.1 The Rivers to Ridges Partnership

The [Rivers to Ridges Partnership](#) is a voluntary association of nineteen organizations working collaboratively to advance the protection, restoration, management, and public use of open space resources in the southern Willamette Valley. The name Rivers to Ridges (R2R) emanates from a regional open space vision [document](#) which was endorsed by many organizations and unanimously by local elected officials from the Eugene-Springfield area in 2003.

1.1.1 Vision Statement

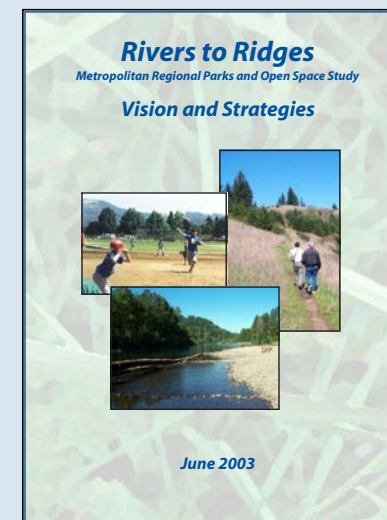
The vision for the Rivers to Ridges Partnership, as defined in the R2R Statement of Partnership is:

To improve the quality of life of residents in the upper Willamette Valley by working together to protect and enhance the region's land and water resources and their ecosystem functions and values, and to provide environmental education and compatible outdoor recreation opportunities as outlined in the Rivers to Ridges Metropolitan Regional Parks and Open Space Study - Vision and Strategies document (2003).

1.1.2 Vision Refinements

The 2003 vision was further refined by R2R partners in subsequent years and includes the [Ridgeline Vision and Action Plan](#) (2008) and the [Willamette River Vision and Action Plan](#) (2010). The Rivers to Ridges Partnership was formalized in 2010 through a Statement of Partnership (SOP), signed by all partner organizations. The SOP outlines the administrative structure of the Partnership and emphasizes the commitment to work collaboratively toward implementation of the vision.

The R2R Partnership mission is to advance implementation of the vision outlined in the Rivers to Ridges Metropolitan Regional Parks and Open Space Study – Vision and Strategies document.



Welcome Institute for Applied Ecology and Willamette Riverkeeper!

With formal approval by the Executive Team at its December meeting, two non-profit organizations officially joined the Rivers to Ridges Partnership. Both organizations have long been active in the region and will bring a great deal of scientific and community outreach expertise to the Partnership. The [Institute for Applied Ecology](#) (IAE) is based in Corvallis and boasts a diverse staff with expertise in habitat management, research, restoration, education, and planning. IAE has been particularly active in designing and implementation replicated field experiments and restoring habitat in the West Eugene Wetlands and elsewhere. [Willamette Riverkeeper](#) has been working toward protecting and restoring the Willamette River's water quality and habitat since 1996. In addition to overseeing river cleanup events, research, and habitat restoration efforts, Willamette Riverkeeper's signature Paddle Oregon event brings hundreds of people to the river every August to canoe, kayak, and paddle board.

1.2 Rivers to Ridges Online

The R2R Partnership maintains a web site at www.rivers2ridges.org where vision documents, maps, annual reports, outreach materials, and information about R2R Partnership organizations can be accessed.

1.3 Rivers to Ridges Annual Report and Accomplishments Reporting

The R2R Partnership has been producing an annual report since 2013. The purpose of the report is to document key decisions, track combined Partnership achievements, and highlight a sampling of individual partner efforts. In 2019, the Partnership produced a shorter 4-page infographic version and will begin alternating years between the longer more detailed annual report format being used for 2020 and the infographic. The full-format report provides the partners with an added opportunity of highlighting some of their own efforts and achievements from the year that have supported the implementation of the shared R2R vision. The shorter infographic version primarily focuses on reporting data on the shared accomplishments of the Partnership in a few specific categories. Both versions include a vision map with an overlay of land conservation accomplishments since 2003 and from the current year.



1.4 Rivers to Ridges “Refresh” Process Underway

Since its completion and endorsement in 2003, a great deal of progress has been made toward implementing R2R vision and the partnership is now turning its attention toward developing an updated (refreshed) vision to guide regional priorities for the next 20 years. At its December 2019 annual meeting, the R2R Executive launched the “Refresh” process and 2020 saw the completion of the first phase of that effort. Phase-1 focused on working with partner organizations to define partner priorities within the broader upper Willamette watershed context. Completed tasks included the reworking of the R2R guiding principles, an assessment of vision implementation progress, and completion of an in-depth partner questionnaire to begin defining future vision priorities. While undergoing the Phase-1 process, several partner organizations expressed a desire to take a fresh look at the overall partnership purpose and structure including a partnership review through a diversity, equity, and inclusion lens. The R2R Executive Team approved this additional step at their December meeting, now referred to as Phase-1.5, to be completed in 2021. Phase-2 of the Refresh process will focus on developing a refreshed and inspirational vision for the primary R2R planning area, building upon the findings from Phases-1 and -1.5. This Phase-2 visioning process is now scheduled to occur in 2022, pending funding. This will include a robust public process that celebrates 20 years of R2R accomplishments while looking toward what might be possible over the next twenty years. The [City of Eugene](#) has applied to the National Park Service - Rivers, Trails & Conservation Assistance Program on behalf of the partnership for support on completing the remaining phases of the Refresh Process.

1.5 Partnership Accomplishments By The Numbers

The R2R Partnership annually has been tracking data of accomplishments and activities of partner organizations within the R2R planning area (see map on page 5) since 2003 with additional tracking categories added in 2019. This data is collected directly from partner organizations in December of each year and is approximate. Tracking accomplishments will allow the partnership gain an understanding of general trends over time and quantify shared impact.

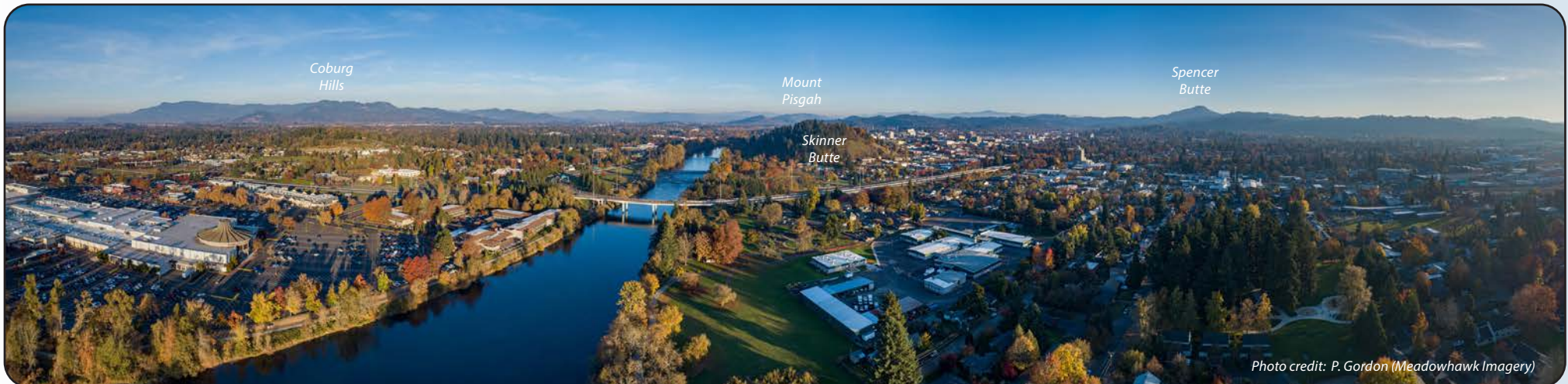
Tracking Category	2003-2018	2019	2020	Total All Years
Land Protected (acres)	6,213	2,024	752	8,989
Stream Miles Opened to Fish Passage	59	0	0	59
Miles of Trail Built (soft surfaced)	30	1	3.3	34.3
Miles of Path Built (hard surfaced)	15.6	1.4	0	17.0
Acres of Habitat Restored	6,736	452	567	7,755
Number of Plants Planted	2,000,000	499,280	170,310	2,669,590
Pounds of Seed Planted	unknown	1,685	1,031	-
Prescribed Fire (acres burned)	4,937	0	0	4,937
Volunteer Hours	unknown	42,271	18,898	-
Education and Outreach Events (people served)	unknown	24,984	11,969	-

Partnership Costs Associated with Unauthorized Camping Cleanup

	2003-2018	2019	2020
Estimated Hours of Staff Time	Unknown	21,567	21,647
Estimated Cost	Unknown	\$914,061	\$915,189



Willamette River looking eastward from Eugene



2

Land Protection

Conserved Lands within R2R Area

<u>R2R Partner Ownership and Easements</u>	<u>Acres</u>
Bureau of Land Management (WEW)*	1,305
Bureau of Land Management Easement	22
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers	3,870
City of Eugene	4,988
Friends of Buford Park & Mount Pisgah	63
Lane County	3,969
McKenzie River Trust	2,026
McKenzie River Trust Easements	1,131
Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife	607
Oregon Parks and Recreation Department**	1,943
The Nature Conservancy	3,028
Willamalane Park and Recreation District	1,622
Center for Natural Lands Management***	1,639
Confederated Tribes of the Siletz Indians***	504

Total: **26,717**

- * BLM owns and manages another 27,409 acres of land within the Rivers to Ridges planning area, mainly O&C land within the Coburg and Thurston Hills.
- ** Includes 120 acres of Oregon Department of State Land ownership.
- *** Not currently R2R Partnership organization.



Photo credit: CTSI

Camp Creek Hills

2.1 Land Protection in 2020

The past seventeen years has seen extensive land conservation efforts completed within the R2R planning area, with over 8,990 acres of permanently conserved land added to the regional system since 2003 (see table and map). 2020 saw the addition of three major parcels, all fee title acquisitions, by the **City of Eugene**, **McKenzie River Trust**, and the Confederated Tribes of the Siletz Indians (CTSI).

2.1.1 Black Oak Basin

The **City of Eugene**, in partnership with the Willamette Wildlife Mitigation Program (WWMP), completed purchase of a 128-acre site in east Eugene know as Black Oak Basin. The site is situated adjacent to existing City-owned parkland including Coryell Ridge, Moon Mountain, and Bloomberg Park. Combined, this block of contiguous open space now totals approximately 300 acres. The site contains significant areas of oak and prairie habitat, offers vistas, and makes key recreational connections to several nearby parks and neighborhoods. The City plans to begin habitat maintenance and restoration efforts in the coming years and eventually construct recreational trails including a key extension of the Ridgeline Trail system.



Photo credit: Jeff Krueger

Black Oak Basin

2.1.2 Marvin and Marie Spores Conservation Area

With a long legacy, the Spores family worked with **McKenzie River Trust** to preserve this Century farm property for habitat and open space conservation values. The 120-acre parcel lies in the Mohawk River Valley upstream from the confluence of the Mohawk and McKenzie Rivers and includes wetland habitat, natural springs, and history.

2.1.3 Camp Creek Hills

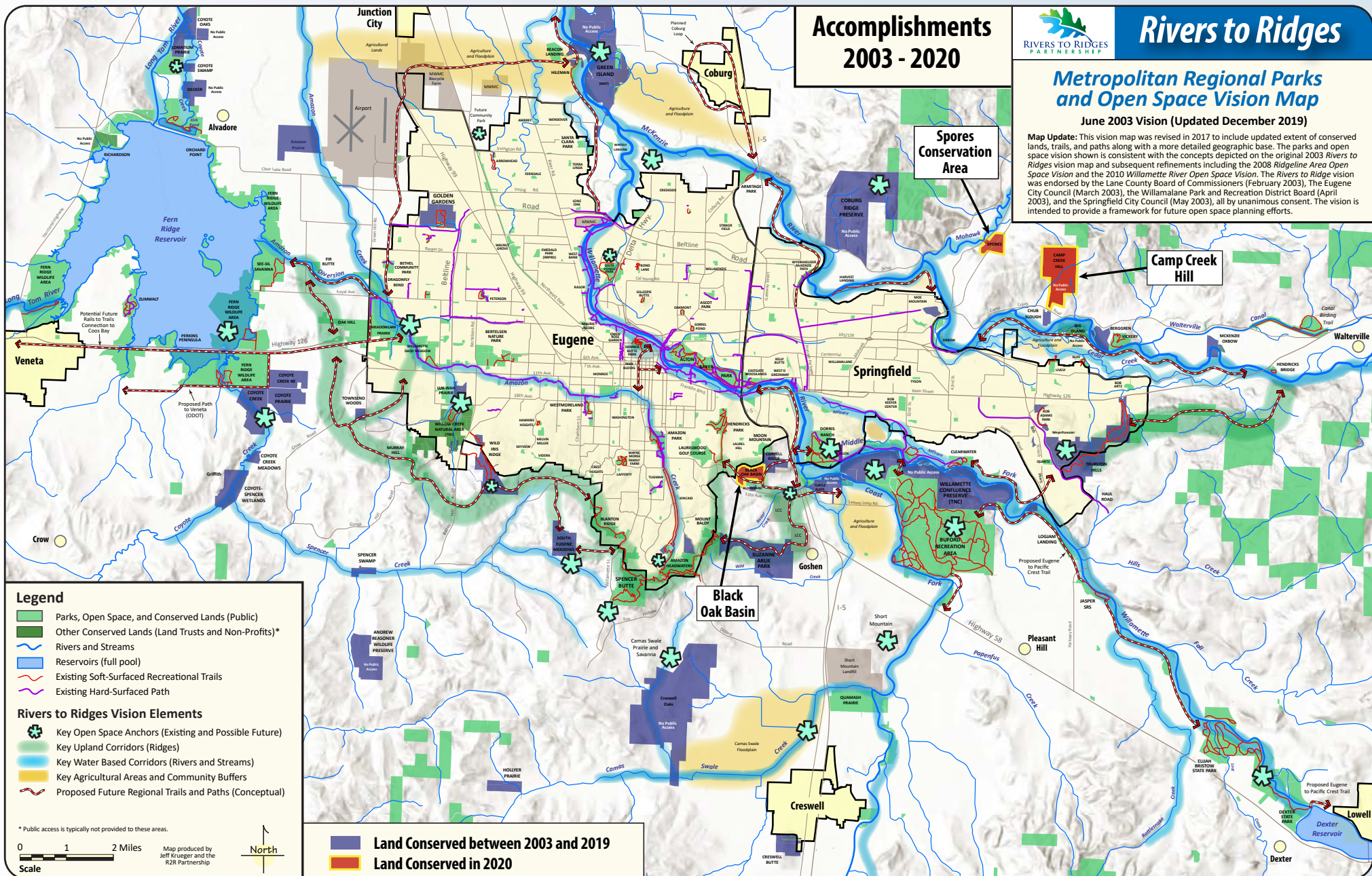
This 504-acre property, which was conserved by the Confederated Tribes of the Siletz Indians (CTSI) in partnership with the Willamette Wildlife Mitigation Program (WWMP), is situated along the Camp Creek Hills ridgeline near **McKenzie River Trust's** Chubb Slough and **BLM** lands. The site contains nearly 400 acres of Oregon white oak and prairie associated habitats as well as an abundance of plants species with traditional cultural value such as oaks, camas, tarweed, and hazelnut. CTSI plan to manage the site to improve the quality of the oak and prairie associated habitats as well as benefit culturally significant species and reduce wildfire fuels.



Photo credit: MRT

Marvin and Marie Spores Conservation Area

Rivers to Ridges Vision Map with Accomplishments and 2020 Acquisitions



The graphic above is a compilation of the Rivers to Ridges Vision Map that was endorsed by local elected officials in 2003 and an overlay of lands that have been conserved since that time in purple. 2020 acquisitions are shown in red. R2R partners and friends now own or hold permanent conservation easements on an estimated 26,717 acres of land within the R2R planning area (map window), an increase of over 50 percent in a period of 17 years.



Photo credit: MRT

McKenzie River near Finn Rock Reach following the wildfire



Photo points
Next Page

Photo credit: RaptovViews

Burned area at Buford Recreation Area shortly after the August 2019 wildfire

3

Habitat Restoration and Management

3.1 Partnership Members Respond to Holiday Farm Fire

3.1.1 Pure Water Partners Coordinates Response

Shortly after the Holiday Farm fire burned nearly 200,000 acres in the McKenzie watershed in September, the **McKenzie River Trust** and the **McKenzie Watershed Council**, along with multiple other organizations of the Pure Water Partners, came together to implement a collaborative, rapid response effort. Coordinated by the Eugene Water & Electric Board (EWEB), partner organizations worked together to respond quickly to assist residents and landowners to evaluate fire damage, develop restoration plans, and implement immediate activities to stabilize the riverbanks and protect drinking water resources.

3.1.2 McKenzie River Trust Supports Recovery Efforts

When the Holiday Farm Fire swept through the McKenzie River valley, **McKenzie River Trust** pivoted towards supporting recovery almost immediately. During the fires, MRT coordinated volunteer shifts at the Silke Field evacuation shelter and later at the donation center with Lane County. In the aftermath, MRT worked through the Pure Water Partners program to conduct land assessments and provide recommendations and information to landowners affected by the fire. In the coming months and years, MRT will stay committed and engaged with friends and neighbors along the McKenzie River to support community, forest, and watershed recovery.



Photo credit: MRT

Volunteers assisting with the Holiday Farm Fire recovery

3.2 Controlled Ecological Burns

After successfully implementing a record acreage of controlled ecological burns in 2018, the R2R Partnership has had two years of very limited success due to early fall rains in 2019 and the presence of catastrophic wildfires across western Oregon in the summer and fall of 2020. It remains a goal of the R2R Partnership to increase ecological burning over time as a tool to manage oak and prairie habitats and to reduce fuel loads in the wildland-urban interface.

3.2.1 Howard Buford Recreation Area 2019 Wildfire Recovery

In August 2019, a wildfire burned approximately 50 acres of **Lane County's** Howard Buford Recreation Area on the eastern slope of Mount Pisgah. With the arrival of spring in 2020 it became evident how the landscape had responded to the fire. A series of photos on the next page shows a pre-wildfire photo (June 2019) with a typical savanna and prairie habitat including a mixture of native and nonnative grasses, wildflowers, and shrubs. An October 2019 photo of the same scene shows significant vegetative regrowth with native and nonnative grasses and wildflowers recently sprouted. The same scene eight months post wildfire shows spring wildflowers are starting to bloom.



Photo points showing pre- and post-fire conditions at Buford Recreation Area with spring wildflowers thriving 8 months after the burn



Turtle hatchlings at Golden Gardens Park

3.3 Habitat Restoration and Management

3.3.1 Northwestern Pond Turtle Success Story

A great moment of hope took place in early April of 2020 when 18 juvenile Northwestern pond turtles (NWPT) emerged from three separate nests at Golden Gardens Park, a [City of Eugene](#) natural area in northwest Eugene. The survival of these tiny turtles was no doubt helped by over a decade of collaboration between the City of Eugene and Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife. Early efforts were focused on determining population size and structure, assessing habitat quality, identifying habitat needs, and mapping nesting activity. More recently, thanks largely to a multi-year [U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service](#) Competitive State Wildlife Grant (C-SWG) received by [Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife](#) in 2018, partners have been able to take the next step by protecting NWPT nests from predators, adding thousands of native emergent and aquatic plants to near shore juvenile rearing habitat, and adding micro-basking woody structures. Long Tom Watershed Council has also generously provided native plant material and staff time to assist with planting efforts and turtle nest surveys. While the emergence of 18 juveniles in 2020 (and 4 in 2019) was very exciting, the City of Eugene is especially hopeful that in 2021 anywhere from 50 to 70 juvenile turtles will emerge from the 9 NWPT nests protected by partners this past summer. This project is a great example of collaboration between dedicated local partners to boost the population of this Oregon Conservation Strategy Species.



3.3.2 Urban Waters and Wildlife Project Implementation

[Long Tom Watershed Council](#) has been growing its Urban Waters and Wildlife Partnership with other organizations in the metro area and shepherding several larger-scale industrial projects along towards implementation. LTWC also installed three smaller stormwater projects in 2020:

- HIV Alliance, phase II - added biochar to the central rain garden, and planted trees with the help of MRT's Watershed Wednesday;
- The Church in Eugene (near Hilyard Street) - in partnership with the City of Eugene and Eagle Scouts, a multifaceted project with an in-line swale, two connected rain gardens, and a filter strip; and
- OSU extension, phase II - front yard rain garden (high-visibility project on the corner of 10th and Jefferson).



First Christian Rain Garden



Photo credits: LTWC

Boy Scouts installing plants at Empire Park Pond

3.3.3 Empire Park Pond Habitat Restoration

Following five years of work to successfully control a severe infestation of the aquatic weed *Ludwigia hexapeta*, the **Long Tom Watershed Council** and the **City of Eugene** partnered to plant hundreds of native emergent and aquatic plants in and around the Empire Park Pond and native shrubs and trees at its perimeter. These plants will help filter pollutants out of the stormwater that feeds the pond, provide better habitat for local wildlife, and provide competition for any persisting *Ludwigia*. Plant purchases and weed control work has been made possible through a series of Oregon State Weed Board grants and extensive support from the **U.S. Army Corps of Engineers**.

3.3.4 South Coyote Unit Habitat Enhancements

In partnership with Ducks Unlimited, seven new water control structures are now installed and functioning in the Willamette Wildlife Mitigation Program (WWMP) funded South Coyote Unit at Fern Ridge Wildlife Area (FRWA). Located within a series of wetland cells constructed by a former duck club approximately 60 years ago, **Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife** now can manage water levels improving wetland habitat conditions for a variety of wildlife species. In addition to wood ducks, wintering waterfowl and migratory shorebirds, the following Oregon Conservation Strategy (OCS) species documented on the property will benefit from the project: Northern Red-legged frog, Dusky Canada goose, and the Western pond turtle. Through the control of water levels, non-native reed canarygrass can be more effectively managed resulting in native emergent wetland plant species.



Photo credits: ODFW

Marsh hydrology at South Coyote in fall 2020 after activation of the water control structures

Rivers to Ridges Featured Habitat: Quercus-Ceanothus Community



Photo credits: Ed Alverson

This Quercus garryana savanna-woodland with Ceanothus cuneatus in the understory at Buford Recreation Area is the best example of a Quercus-Ceanothus community anywhere in the Willamette Valley.



4

Recreation, Education, and Events



Photo credits: Jeff Krueger

Renovated Amazon Park Running Trail



Photo credits: Lane County

Newly constructed boat ramp at Hendricks Park



4.1 Recreational Improvements

4.1.1 Amazon Park Running Trail Reconstruction

The **City of Eugene**'s Amazon Park Running Trail has now reopened following a major upgrade implemented in fall 2020. Hiding under a fresh cover of bark is the new rock base that will provide long-term stability and drainage for the running surface making this a true all-season facility. Additional improvements based on community feedback included updated lighting throughout the entire trail, constructing a new shelter, and installing new distance makers. New lighting was also installed including habitat-sensitive lighting fixtures between the forested area and the creek.

4.1.2 Small Dog Park at Armitage Park

Lane County Parks recently opened a small dog park at Armitage Park for dogs less than 25 pounds. The new facility is adjacent to the popular existing fenced dog park that is open to all dogs. The small dog park was funded primarily by generous community donations and christened "Archie's Small Dog Park" in memory of a little dog with a big dream.

4.1.3 Hendricks Bridge Boat Ramp Improvements

The boat ramp in **Lane County**'s Hendricks Bridge Park reopened in November 2020 after a five-month closure for major improvements. The improvements included reconstructing and realigning the boat ramp, as well as expanding the parking area to reduce congestion and increase maneuverability. Prior to the improvements, the boat ramp had become badly deteriorated and there was a steep drop-off which could damage boat trailers. The previous alignment of the boat ramp, combined with strong currents, also made it difficult to launch and retrieve boats. Project partners included the Oregon State Marine Board and Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife.

4.2 Celebrations and Events

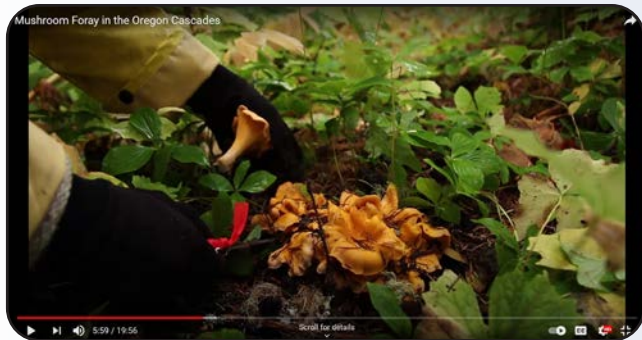
4.2.1 Wild and Scenic Film Festival

This second annual **Upper Willamette Stewardship Network** (UWSN) fundraising event successfully shifted to a virtual format this year and included a series of short films showcasing the earth's natural wonders and amazing stories of those working in conservation along with messages from Network partners. Proceeds from this year's event will be used for fire response and post-fire watershed restoration efforts in the upper Willamette Watershed.

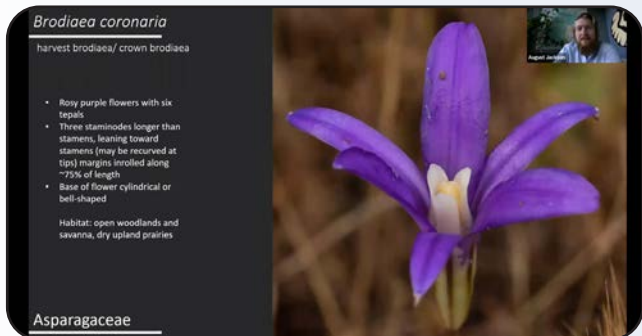




Sunset Over the Willamette



Virtual Mushroom Festival



Arboretum Virtual Classroom

4.2.2 Willamette River Festival

This event was presented in partnership with the [Willamette Riverkeeper](#), [City of Eugene](#), [Willamalane](#), [Willamette Resources Education Network](#), UO Outdoor Program, Willamette Kayak & Canoe Club, [Oregon State Parks](#), Oregon Wild, Wisdom of the Elders, The Stutzman Family Foundation, Citizen's Planning Committee of Whilamut Natural Area of Alton Baker Park, and the [Upper Willamette Stewardship Network](#).

The 2020 festival pivoted to a mix between virtual and in-person activities with the following:

- [PaddleCross Race](#): 25 official entries, plus many non-registered paddlers on Canoe Canal during the event;
- [Great Greenway Willamette River BioBlitz](#): 193 observers, 624 observations, 333 positive identifications - conducted through iNaturalist.org;
- [Facebook Live-feeds](#): 3,350 people reached / 597 engagements / A Beginner's Guide to PaddleSports was the most popular livefeed with 162 viewers;
- [YouTube](#): 202 video views - most popular: Intro to River Snorkeling with 102 views;
- [Trashy Tuesday Stewardship Event](#): Full with 16 participants;
- [Great Greenway Geocache](#): 62 finds; and
- [Western Peoples of Oregon Film Screening](#): 67 registered attendees.

Some of the more notable but less tangible benefits of the festival included the acquisition of a new website, social media, and video platforms – with year-round relevant content created for instructional purposes and indigenous education. Our relationship to the local Willamette Valley Indigenous Community was deepened through our work with the UO Native Student Union, Wisdom of the Elders, and the Stutzman Family Foundation, along with Native Restoration expert, Joseph Scott, an elder of the local Siletz tribe.

4.2.3 First Virtual Mushroom Festival

With an in-person event not possible this year, [Mount Pisgah Arboretum](#) transitioned the popular and long-running Mushroom Festival into a virtual event with the help of community partners (Cascade Mycological Society and Lane Community College). Over 700 people participated in the event, which consisted of an iNaturalist bio-blitz, and a full day of streamed recordings of cooking demos, mushroom forays, and presentations from regional and national experts. The event was well received and was attended by people from around the world.

4.2.4 On-Water Volunteer Safety and Training

[Willamette Riverkeeper](#) partnered with the American Canoe and Kayak Association in 2020 to offer free river safety education classes to on-water volunteer and worked with White Bird Medical Clinic to provide professional Trauma Informed Communications and Needle Safety Cleanup training. Willamette Riverkeeper believes that offering these high quality educational experiences to our volunteers helps everyone stay safer, whether recreating or stewarding on our Willamette River.

4.2.5 Environmental Education at Mount Pisgah Arboretum

[Mount Pisgah Arboretum](#)'s site-based environmental education programs got off to a robust start at the beginning of the year, before being put on hold and transitioning to mostly virtual offerings after March. The Mount Pisgah Arboretum provided virtual classes for adults on topics such as wildflower identification and pollination ecology, and a wide range of videos and activities for kids. In the fall, the Arboretum initiated a program of nature walks for kids and families with limited attendance. Though our usual programs were vastly curtailed by the pandemic, we were still able to serve over 700 people with formal educational offerings, as well as many others through self-guided activities.



Photo credits: WREN

*WREN and Lane Arts Council sponsored
Local Artists in Residence in local classrooms*



Photo credits: Jeff Krueger

ELP students in the West Eugene Wetlands



Photo credits: Bart Johnson

Landscape Architecture student presents Pisgah design

4.3 Education

4.3.1 Willamette Resources Education Network Education Program

In 2020, **Willamette Resources Education Network** served over 1,500 people with environmental education programming. Some highlights include piloting a new partnership with the Lane Arts Council where WREN educators worked with a local Artist in residence to infuse classroom art projects with science for Willagillespie second grade students. In response to the pandemic, WREN also pioneered virtual programming by filming two full-length educational videos for Eugene and Springfield's summer library program series. The education team also developed and shared a self-guided, virtual bike tour of the West Eugene Wetlands, and created an educational video about local Western Pond turtles that was used in 4J sixth grade student's remote learning classrooms and as part of the **Long Tom Watershed Council**'s September public meeting. The education team is currently working on developing two STEM activities that will be facilitated during four Family Math and Science Night events hosted virtually for local Title 1 schools.

4.3.2 University of Oregon's Environmental Studies Program

Leadership and partnership are pillars of the exemplary work that happens under the R2R Partnership umbrella and the University of Oregon's Environmental Leadership Program (ELP) exemplifies what that means within the R2R Partnership geography. ELP is a program that works to connect Environmental Studies Program students to real world projects. Partner organization's help students define a project goal and outcome based on a real challenge or need faced by the organization. The students then spend two terms working closely with the partner to address the project goal or outcome. Students not only learn from hands-on field studies, but also make a meaningful contributions to R2R Partnership efforts. ELP Co-Director Peg Boulay has worked directly with many of the R2R Partners over the past decade. Some project examples include creating a pollinator management plan Berggren Farm, implementing stream surveys for the **McKenzie Watershed Council**, assessing western gray squirrel habitat for **The Nature Conservancy**, conducting a replicated field experiments to evaluate wetland prairie restoration methods for the **City of Eugene**, and mapping legacy oaks for **Lane County Parks, Willamalane**, and **City of Eugene**. This year 2021, the students will be working with Willamalane again to create an assessment for monitoring trail impacts over time as well as working with the City of Eugene on a mapping and assessment of large-diameter Douglas-fir and other tasks at Hendricks Park.

4.3.3 UO Landscape Architecture Students Plan for the East Ridgeline

In spring term 2020, University of Oregon Instructor Jeff Krueger led a landscape architecture planning and design studio that focused on several of the **City of Eugene**-owned parks along the east Ridgeline system including Moon Mountain, Corryell Ridge, Black Oak Basin, and Bloomberg Park. The class, which was made up of fourteen first-year graduate students, conducted site analysis, identified target vegetation communities and species, proposed management actions, and developed proposed trail alignments. Each student also developed designs for a variety of site details of their choosing. Staff from several R2R Partners including City of Eugene, **McKenzie Watershed Council**, and **Willamalane** participated in mid-term and final reviews to provide feedback on the student work. The [final student design](#) work was compiled and shared with City staff for future consideration.

4.3.4 UO Landscape Architecture Students Plan for Mount Pisgah Summit

During winter quarter 2020, a group of University of Oregon landscape architecture students, led by Bart Johnson, studied the use of the summit of Mount Pisgah by park visitors in close collaboration with **Lane County Parks** and **Friends of Buford Park & Mount Pisgah**. The focus of the project was to develop proposals for design and planning solutions that can improve the experience of park visitors as visitor numbers continue to increase. The goal of the project was to develop scenarios for how the summit environment could be designed in a way that ensures visitors have a high quality experience and at the same time, improve the health of the native prairie and savanna habitats at and around the summit.

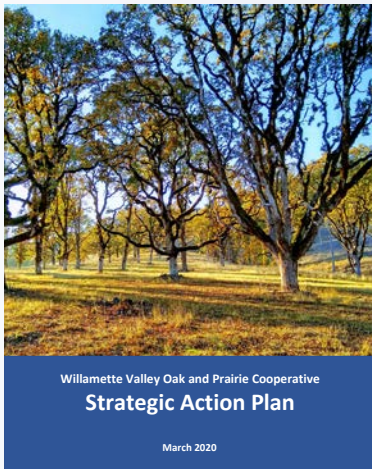


Photo credit: Willamette Riverkeeper

Freshwater Mussels



Photo credit: Willamette Riverkeeper

Willamette Riverkeeper Mussel Survey Crew Volunteers

5.1 Willamette Valley Oak and Prairie Cooperative Strategic Action Plan

[The Willamette Valley Oak and Prairie Cooperative](#) (WVOPC) is an emerging partnership with a long-term vision to conserve and maintain prairie and oak habitats within the Willamette Valley through a regionally-focused, collaborative, and sustainable program. The WVOPC finalized a Strategic Action Plan in March with the assistance of many dedicated natural resource professionals. The plan proposes set of high priority implementation strategies to address five major threat categories: Rural/urban development, woody encroachment, agricultural conversion, invasive species, and fire exclusion. The plan also includes a 30-Year Conservation Concept Map that depicts priority geographies, including numerous areas in the southern valley, where conservation and management activities will be focused. The WVOPC Steering Committee included local representation from the [City of Eugene](#) (Shelly Miller/Emily Steel) and [Long Tom Watershed Council](#) (Clinton Begley), plus a significant contribution by many R2R partner staff via Working Group participation. The Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians, the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde, and the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs were also represented on the steering committee.

5.2 Climate Research Effort Published

A decade-long effort by UO researchers to study how climate change may change Pacific Northwest grasslands have blossomed into global collaborations with two recently published reports and a third on the way. By comparing small plots of restored prairies under different temperature and precipitation regimes — from Southern Oregon to Central Washington — the study built a complex picture of how climate change may affect prairie ecosystem dynamics, from plants to soils and from above-ground to below-ground processes. [The Nature Conservancy's](#) Willow Creek Preserve was one of several physical locations used for this study. An [article](#) on the study was recently published in the Journal of Ecology.

5.3 Mussel Mania – Working to Protect Oregon’s Long-Lived Freshwater Mussels

Over the past five years, [Willamette Riverkeeper](#) (WR) has invested significant time and resources working to study and protect freshwater mussels in the Willamette River with significant emphasis placed on the Western Pearlshell (*Margaritifera falcata*), which in the right conditions, can live to be over 100 years in age. In the early 2000s, WR identified a massive assemblage of Western Pearlshell mussels on the side channel at Norwood Island near Monroe and Willamette Riverkeeper ultimately purchased Norwood Island in 2017 to conserve the resource. A study of the assemblage at the site identified over 40,000 live mussels. The general focus was to gain a population estimate, and to determine if reproduction was happening. What was an unfortunate circumstance, the same study indicated that the population is not reproducing. Given freshwater mussels have a relationship to wild fish in our rivers, the decline in Spring Chinook and Winter Steelhead could be in some way connected to the lack of reproduction. Freshwater mussels were elevated in conservation status in the Willamette Valley in 2016 when [Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife](#) designated three species of freshwater mussel as “Strategy Species” in the updated Oregon Conservation Strategy.

In the Summer of 2017, WR along with and multiple trained volunteers continued their effort to understand the status of freshwater mussels by snorkeled over 100 miles of the Willamette River in search of additional mussel beds. During this work, a significant assemblage was identified in the Eugene area. This bed was found to be relatively healthy with a reproducing population. In the summer of 2019, WR conducted a study just below Dexter Dam on the Middle Fork Willamette and identified a very large population of Western Pearlshells in a very dense assemblage, also reproducing. Additional surveys were conducted in 2020 on key tributaries with planned to continue in 2021 and beyond.

Photo credit: Institute for Applied Ecology



Sweat bee on Willamette Daisy



Photo credit: City of Eugene

Bradshaw's lomatium



5.4 Pollinator Networks of Willamette Daisy to be Studied

Pollinators currently face many stressors that are reducing their numbers in the wild with unknown, but potentially harmful consequences for federally listed plants. Willamette daisy (*Erigeron decumbens*), which is listed as an endangered species with the [U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service](#), occurs only in the Willamette Valley, with a substantial portion of its remaining populations on sites owned by the [U.S. Bureau of Land management](#) in west Eugene. Little research has been done to identify the pollinators of this flowering plant, their dependence on other plant species in prairie communities, and the dependence of Willamette daisy reproduction on these pollinators. The [Institute for Applied Ecology](#) will be leading a three year study beginning in 2021 to gather information on the identity of pollinators, their role in seed production of listed plants, and their dependence on other prairie plants for their full life cycle.

5.5 Upper Willamette Soil & Water Conservation District Ballot Measure

The Upper Willamette Soil & Water Conservation District, in partnership with a coalition of R2R and community partners, succeeded in passing ballot Measure 20-321 this November. This modest property tax will provide permanent funding for conservation in central and eastern Lane County. The coalition was able to garner the support of the public thanks to the efforts of many R2R partners who supported the SWCD in their strategic planning, informing the public, and generating support from a wide array of local organizations working in agriculture, forestry, conservation, restoration, education, clean water, and urban sustainability. More information on the measure can be found on the [UWSWCD](#) web site.

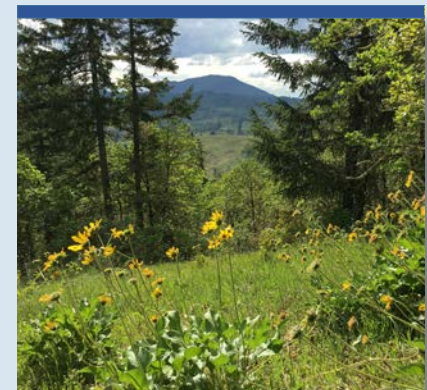


5.6 Bradshaw's Lomatium Delisting Proposed

The status of Bradshaw's desert parsley (*Lomatium bradshawii*), currently listed as an endangered species under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), has substantially improved since its listing in 1988. The conservation goals for the plant's abundance and distribution have been largely met or even exceeded, with much of the credit for the progress toward recovery going to the management efforts in wet prairie habitats by Federal agencies and other local conservation partners. The [U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service](#) has now proposed the delisting of Bradshaw's lomatium and is finalizing all requirements with a modified monitoring schedule.

5.7 Suzanne Arlie Park Master Plan Adopted

After several years of planning, analysis, and input from staff, interest groups, and hundreds of citizens, the [City of Eugene](#) adopted a Master Plan for the 564-acre Suzanne Arlie Park in October. Suzanne Arlie Park is the largest single park in the City's system and was purchased with the aim of accommodating the planned eastward extension of the Ridgeline Trail network, conserving high-value native habitat, and providing a large site for a wide range of nature-based recreational activities and facilities. The plan proposes approximately 14 miles of new trail to serve pedestrians and mountain bikers alike with multiple loop options and barrier-free trail segments providing access to the park's points of interest and viewpoints. Proposed park facilities include a primary parking area, a pavilion for staging educational and recreational activities, a 55-acre mountain bike park, an 18-hole disc golf course, a nature play trail, a site history interpretive area, restrooms, and a group camping area for City sponsored events. Substantial habitat management efforts have already begun and will continue to improve conditions for native vegetation and wildlife while reducing the threat of wildfire.



**Suzanne Arlie Park
Master Plan**

October 2020

6

Administrative Structure

6.1 Summary of Partnership Administrative Structure

Beginning in 2010, the Rivers to Ridges Partnership took over the administrative function that had been in place under the West Eugene Wetlands (WEW) Partnership since 1992. The WEW partnership had originally formed to oversee the implementation of the West Eugene Wetlands Plan but over time had expanded its focus to include a much broader geographic area representing a range of additional habitat types. The formation of the R2R Partnership, with the addition of several new partners, was an acknowledgement of this expanded reach. It is important to note that the R2R Partnership has no outside funding sources for the administration of the partnership and currently relies on voluntary annual partner dues, plus a significant amount staff time contributed by partners. The basic administrative structure used by the R2R Partnership, is described below.

6.1.1 Rivers to Ridges Executive Team (R2R XT)

The function of the Rivers to Ridges Executive Team (R2R XT) is to guide management of the regional open space system in a cooperative manner. The team includes at least one executive representative from each members of the R2R Partnership and typically meets once annually. The 2020 meeting was held virtually in December and was facilitated by Craig Carnagey from the [City of Eugene](#). The meeting included the addition of two Partners, overview of accomplishments, a report back on the Refresh process, and discussion of wildfire response efforts. Janelle McCoy of [Friends of Buford Park & Mount Pisgah](#) has agreed to coordinate the XT in 2021.

6.1.2 Rivers to Ridges Implementation Team (IT!)

The Rivers to Ridges Implementation Team (IT!) includes manager level representatives from each of the partner organizations. The IT! provides broad oversight for the implementation of the objectives of the R2R vision and will be overseeing the ongoing Refresh process. Daniel Dietz of the [McKenzie River Trust](#) served at the IT! coordinator for 2020 and will be replaced by Ka-Voka Jackson from the [Middle Fork Willamette Watershed Council](#) in 2021.

6.1.3 Rivers to Ridges Field Operations Group (FOG)

The Field Operations Group (FOG) is a multi-jurisdictional team that meets several times annually to coordinate on-the-ground activities and share technical information and experience. The mission of FOG, as defined by the IT!, is to “Effectively coordinate information sharing and provide professional development opportunities through educational presentations and project field tours.” Much of the coordination role of FOG has been delegated to subcommittees with general meetings dedicated to guest lectures, trainings, or site visits. Jennifer Weber from [McKenzie Watershed Council](#) served as the FOG coordinator in 2019 and 2020 and will be replaced by Reilly Newman from the [Coast Fork Willamette Watershed Council](#) in 2021. Additionally, several subcommittees meet as needed to help coordinate specific aspects of FOG. These include:

- [SPROUTs](#) (Seeds, Plugs, Rhizomes, or Underground Tubers): Coordinates native plant materials program.
- [Prescribed Fire](#): Coordinates and plan the annual controlled ecological burn program.
- [Acquisition](#): Coordinates on upcoming acquisition efforts and priorities.
- [Oak Folk](#): Coordinate son technical aspects of oak and prairie restoration.
- [Refresh](#): Provides oversight and guidance for the on-going vision refresh process.