

## UNWC Recaps Productive Year *continued from page 10*

“They’re primary inhabitants of our temperate rain forest,” says Peyton. “Beaver and coho have evolved together, so when the beavers colonize an area and create those backwater pools, that’s where juvenile coho and adults can thrive. We need to get our ecosystem back into balance, and helping re-establish beavers in the region is one way we can do that.”

In addition, Peyton says beaver dams can work to slow down stream flows in a particular small area during high water events and act as natural valley water storage areas. “These can help slow the water during heavy rains and help capture sediment, but we’re really working against years of history and the way our forests have been managed in the past.”

Peyton says the BDA pilot project was a partnership with ODF, NOAA, OWEB, NFWF, and the Wild Salmon Center. She says Rapid Bio Assessments were done prior to the BDA placement, which counts and documents the presence of juvenile fish, so effectiveness can be monitored.

“All the areas where we installed these BDAs show evidence that beaver colonies had been there before, and there is still some kind of a beaver presence,” says Peyton. “We have a monitoring protocol so we’ll be able to see what works and what doesn’t.” She notes that one site on Rock Creek has already been naturally improved by the work of local beavers and is now a functional dam.

Another ongoing UNWC

project is to help rebuild streams to a more natural setting. This past year the UNWC continued their work, placing 33 Large Woody Debris structures along salmon anchor habitat reaches and enhancing over two miles of streams on Olson Creek, the north fork of Lousignont Creek, Beaver Creek, and at Hyla Woods.

Logs for these projects include the root wads and are strategically placed in creeks and streams to form structures that assist in the creation of naturally forming log jams while interacting with the stream flow to create flood plain connection and sort the gravels that flow through. The log jams jump start the process of restoring a stream’s natural state after decades of intensive logging and help spread out fish habitat.

The placement of Large Woody Debris in streams also helps capture and slow the flow of water downstream during high water events, and allows water to soak in and recharge groundwater supplies.

The UNWC undertook a variety of other projects this year, including:

- participated in the process to get a 17 mile portion of the Nehalem River designated as a State Scenic Waterway
- continued riparian reforestation on 30+ acres in partnership with private landowners, the Columbia Soil and Water Conservation District, and the Columbia River Youth Corp crew
- supported riparian reforestation through the Nehalem Native Nursery, managed by the UNWC and located

on the Vernonia School District campus with the help of the Vernonia High School Forestry class

- managed about 50 volunteers from the Oregon Zoo who recently spent time working on a riparian restoration project in Vernonia, planting trees and vegetation

- collected water quality samples from 30 select locations in the Nehalem basin for turbidity testing (amount of sediment) during the winter rainy season, and at over 30 sites to record temperatures during summer low-flow season

The temperature samples were disappointing, says Peyton. “Temperatures in the summer are too hot, and often lethal on the main stem of the Nehalem. That seems to be the trend and I don’t see that changing anytime soon.”

According to Peyton, the temperature problem is multi-faceted. While the UNWC has been able to make a small impact, the problem really starts in the headwaters and is going to take some major changes in the way the state regulates forest management. Peyton says that currently under the Oregon Forest Practices Act the headwaters of streams do not have to be buffered when logged until they become perennial streams (streams that flow with water year round). “As a community and as a state I think we’re still trying to accept what it’s going to take to cool the Nehalem, and that is to start at the headwaters”

The amount of sediment in streams is also a result of the accumulative effects of forest, farm, residential, and urban land management practices over the last 150 years. “The temperature issues and the sediment is a direct result of the way the land is being managed,” says Peyton.

Peyton and the UNWC are


currently wrapping up their work on a Nehalem Strategic Plan with the Wild Salmon Center and their multi stakeholder team this winter. “This process lays the foundation for identifying current and future salmon anchor habitat improvement projects in high priority sub-basins and stream reaches throughout the Nehalem watershed,” says Peyton. “This process led directly to the BDA pilot project, and hopefully some ongoing funding and future projects.”

Peyton says the UNWC continues to improve their base operations, computer networks, outreach activities, and staff development with the support of the UNWC Board of Directors. Their website is back online at UNWC.Nehalem.org. The website is a great place to learn more about current projects and volunteer opportunities.

This summer Peyton says the UNWC will be partnering to install more BDAs in the region. “We’ve received another round of funding and identified several brand new reaches, plus we have funding left over from the original project that we can use to augment the first 27 we put in,” says Peyton. UNWC will also be placing Large Woody Debris structures around the region this summer.

Peyton says they are currently looking for more interested citizens to serve on their Board of Directors.

“We haven’t been able to cool the Nehalem River, so that’s still a big question,” says Peyton. “The level that we’re able to work at, compared to the magnitude of what has happened in this watershed over the last 150 years, is just too small, plus now we have these climate changes and our summer draughts are getting longer. We still have a lot of work to do.”



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**NOTICE OF BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING**

A public meeting of the Budget Committee of the Vernonia Rural Fire Protection, Columbia, State of Oregon, to discuss the budget for the fiscal year July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020, will be held at Vernonia Fire Station 555 E Bridge Street. The meeting will take place on April 9, 2019 at 6  a.m.  p.m.

The purpose of the meeting is to receive the budget message and to receive comment from the public on the budget. This is a public meeting where deliberation of the Budget Committee will take place. Any person may appear at the meeting and discuss the proposed programs with the Budget Committee.

A copy of the budget document may be inspected or obtained on or after April 9, 2019 at Vernonia Fire Station between the hours of 9  a.m.  p.m. and 3  a.m.  p.m.

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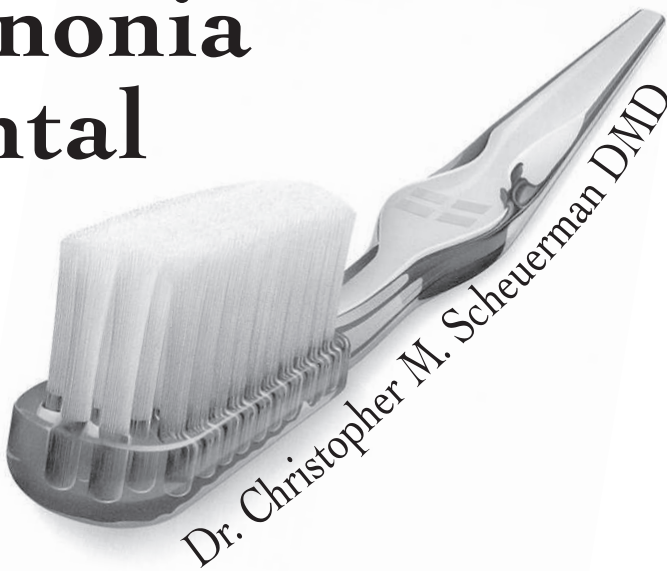
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