



crawlies without a backbone such as insects, worms and crayfish.

Aquatic macro-invertebrates can be used to assess wetland quality in the Willamette Valley based on an Index of Biological Integrity developed by the Xerces Society, an international nonprofit whose goal is to protect and conserve invertebrates and their habitat.

The final results for the West Eugene Wetlands, a rare wet prairie habitat, won't be known "until all the invertebrates have been identified and the data are analyzed and compared to the data we compiled from the wetlands we sampled in the Willamette Valley for the last four years," according to Celeste Mazzacano, staff scientist from the Xerces Society.

If you missed your chance to be a citizen-scientist, you can still go explore the wetlands at WREN's 5th Annual "Walkin' & Rollin'" event 10 am to 2 pm Saturday, May 21. The event encourages participants to celebrate American Wetlands Month by biking, rolling or walking the Fern Ridge Bike Path through the West Eugene Wetlands between Bailey Hill and Greenhill roads.

This free, all ages event will host local experts and organizations that will use educational displays to explain the many wonders of the wetlands. Those who plan to travel from booth to booth learning about the wetlands will receive a "wetland passport" they can have stamped at each station for a chance to win prizes.

Visit wewetlands.org for more information about this event and the history of the West Eugene Wetlands. — *Chelsea Fryhoff*

MORE PEOPLE THAN EVER HOMELESS

A record number of people showed up for Project Homeless Connect (PHC) this year, according to organizers who released statistics and survey results recently. The event March 17 at the Fairgrounds accommodated 1,595 guests, the highest number documented in the event's five-year history.

One third of guests spent the previous night sleeping outdoors or in an uninhabitable place; 27 percent were doubled-up with another household; and 22 percent reported being housed but at risk of homelessness.

PHC provides a broad array of services once a year to feed, clothe and otherwise assist people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. More than 800 volunteers are involved (coordinated by United Way), the Fairgrounds donates space, LTD offers free bus rides, and numerous agencies and health care providers participate.

"Project Homeless Connect is a day when transformations occur," says Richie Weinman who coordinates the event. "People with vision problems receive no-cost vision exams and eye glasses. People who are in pain receive dental care. People get haircuts and walk away feeling better about themselves."

PLANTS: SOME INVADE, SOME DON'T

April showers brought May flowers, and some flowering plants such as blackberries yield yummy fruit, but they also are a big headache for Mount Pisgah Arboretum. Daffodils on the other hand, are no big deal.

For the past 30 years the arboretum has been combating Armenian blackberries, (aka Himalayan blackberries), which can grow basically anywhere and everywhere, with manual labor and help from volunteer groups.

"If you want to get some aggression out, it's really great," said Ryan Heidt, site assistant at Mount Pisgah, of hand-pulling blackberry roots.

The staff at Mount Pisgah hosts at least two volunteer work parties every weekend to try and get rid of as many of these invaders as possible and also to work on other projects around the arboretum.

This old and pesky blackberry intruder can be seen lurking and creeping around almost every area on the grounds and has been for a while, which can't be said of the

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