

CELEBRATE THE MCKENZIE RIVER WITH BARRY LOPEZ

RECENTLY PROTECTED
SIDE CHANNELS OF THE
MCKENZIE RIVER WILL
BE CELEBRATED APRIL 1

PHOTO: TIM GIRAUDIER, BEAUTIFUL OREGON

The side channels of the upper McKenzie River near the town of Blue River are “magical,” Joe Moll says, draped in mosses and lined with massive cottonwoods. The channels are home to spawning spring Chinook and hungry bull trout.

The recent acquisition of these lands, known as McKenzie Camp, near Finn Rock Boat Launch, is one of the many reasons to celebrate at McKenzie River Trust’s fifth annual “McKenzie Memories” event April 1, says Moll, MRT’s executive director.

He says the event will feature nature writer Barry Lopez, a “fireside chat” by local storytellers Billie Ruth Rose and Doyle Hawks, music, historical photos and more.

Lopez, known for works such as *Arctic Dreams* and *Of Wolves and Men*, moved to the Finn Rock area in the early 1970s, Moll says, and MRT’s newly protected lands are on Lopez’s “home reach” of the river. After the land trust started work on the project, Lopez became “very engaged.”

Moll also credits Lopez for inspiring the land trust to use the concept of the “living river” to conceptualize the dynamism and living history of rivers in its work, after the writer made one of his rare public appearances at a 2009 MRT event.

MRT purchased the lands along the Hwy. 126 side of the river in December 2015 — 154 acres with side channels, ponds, wetlands and floodplain forest in the upper McKenzie from where Elk Creek enters the McKenzie down to the Finn Rock Grill.

Storytellers Rose and Hawks grew up in a logging camp that was started by Rosboro timber products in the 1940s, on the opposite side of the McKenzie. The camp, which became a “mini town,” was closed down in the 1980s, Moll says. On March 28, the group is also acquiring the side of the river where the old camp was, just in time for the McKenzie Memories celebration. The area includes the boat launch, which Moll says will remain open for public use.

The lands will be stewarded for clean water and fish and wildlife habitat.

Last year’s McKenzie Memories fundraiser sold out. The event is 7 pm Friday, April 1, at Venue 252, 252 Lawrence Street in Eugene. Contact MRT for more information at 345-2799 or go to goo.gl/ZhsHSu. ■

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