

# OXBOW: ‘Our restoration site is not going to be doing well once this takes over’

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and try to contain it, she said, to keep the scourge from spreading.

Laramore, who has partnered with SOLVE and Columbia Riverkeeper to adopt this stretch of river, is now looking for volunteers to create a containment zone to prevent garlic mustard from taking over the floodplain at Oxbow. She especially wants to shield the weeds from more than 7,000 trees which were planted in 2014 as a community project.

Garlic mustard was discovered that same year in Hermiston, likely hitching its way down from Cabbage Hill where infestations had previously taken hold. Brought over to North America from Europe, garlic mustard is a nefarious intruder that thrives under trees and releases a toxin in soil that prevents other native plants from growing. Seeds are inadvertently picked up and moved around by humans and animals, or swept down by floodwaters within a drainage.

If the weed spreads out at Oxbow, Laramore said it could be game over for rehabilitating the former working ranch.

“Our restoration site is not going to be doing well once this takes over,” she said.

On Wednesday, Laramore and Richard Stormont followed beaver trails into the dense riparian vegetation where garlic mustard was already in bloom. Seed pods are developing early, which will soon release hundreds of tiny seeds per plant. Laramore figures there are hundreds of thousands of first-year plants lurking in the cool shade



Staff photo by E.J. Harris  
**Eileen Laramore holds an example of garlic mustard’s s-shaped root on Wednesday in the Oxbow property in Hermiston.**

along the river.

Laramore, 66, serves on the Umatilla County Weed Board and said the Weed Department is supportive of their project, but doesn’t have the funding to assist. The Weed Department does contract with the Bureau of Reclamation to spray for weeds at Oxbow, but the area along the river where garlic mustard grows is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to access. Boris Belchhoff, Umatilla field manager with the BOR, said his office also doesn’t have manpower to aggressively target the weed.

That leaves Laramore, Stormont and the rest of their environmental-minded group, known as the Tour of Knowledge, to tackle the problem themselves. But Laramore said they need help, if they hope to keep the 20-acre containment zone fortified.

“We’re the only line of defense down here,” she said.

Laramore is worried about seeds traveling farther down the Umatilla River, but around the mouth of the

Columbia is much drier with less dense vegetation, where the weed can get established. Garlic mustard has also been a major concern down the Columbia River Gorge and forests around Portland.

Garlic mustard is edible — it can be used in pesto and salads — but has few natural predators locally. Dealing with an infestation means pulling and bagging the plants by hand. Laramore has bags and tools she carries in a red wagon, and said she’d welcome anyone who wants to come lend a hand.

Laramore said she will hold work parties on the second Saturday and third Wednesday of every month, from 1-3 p.m. The group meets at the Riverfront Park parking lot before heading off into the property.

“It just seemed like a logical thing to do, to set up a containment zone,” she said. “And we’re doing it. We’ve caught the little devils.”

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# COUGAR: Female weighed about 110 pounds

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series of calls. After 10 or 15 minutes, he heard a quiet response from about 500 yards up the canyon.

So he put a little more volume in his calls, and sure enough there was an answer. This time it was closer. Maybe 300 yards. Soon enough the responder was “gobbling his head off” 200 yards away, still out of sight but easily heard. Then 100 yards.

Jamison’s instincts keyed in. Turkeys can cover that last 100 yards pretty quick if they think an interested female is right over the next ridge.

The excitement rose as he put his hand on his gun, then his finger on the safety, and brought the gun up.

“I was sitting, just waiting. Scanning the brush for any kind of movement,” he said.

The turkey went quiet. The wait only increased the intensity. He described himself as hyper alert.

“Then boom, I see something move,” said Jamison.

Whatever it was, it didn’t have feathers. Jamison’s first thought was that it was a fox. It was too big, though. A coyote? Still too big. Then it clicked: It was a cougar, and it had pounced off the ridge onto his decoy about 25 feet away. The cougar knocked over the fan then turned toward Jamison’s spot in the trees — where those turkey noises had been coming from. Jamison said the whole experience took about 2 seconds. The cat jumped down, turned toward him, charged. Jamison had his rifle at the ready and he estimated the cat was only a foot away from his barrel when he fired into its front left shoulder.

“I was falling backwards as I touched off the shot,” he recalled. “I thought it was going to land on me. I ended with my elbows up ... and then nothing.”

He looked up, saw no cat and no blood. He was so shook he scurried back to the car and drove right to the CTUIR’s natural resources office to talk with program manager Carl Scheeler. Jamison purchased a cougar tag within 72 hours of his kill, which is the rule for tribal hunters on the reservation, and went back to the scene with friends to see if he could find it.

It didn’t take long. Just 25 yards from where Jamison had shot the cat, it lay dead

in a pile of brush. It was a female weighing about 110 pounds. It had a puncture and exit wound in its left shoulder, each one burned and almost cauterized, which showed how close the animal had been to the end of the barrel.

Jamison said he doesn’t eat cougar, but friends do and they butchered the animal. Jamison said he will keep the skull and paws and will probably make a necklace out of the claws.

He remains traumatized by the event.

“I just keep seeing that face and paws. Keep seeing it coming at me .... It was a rough couple days. I couldn’t tell the story hardly, because of the intensity of the experience. It was a life and death test. It was no joke. I got put on a different level of life than everybody else that day.”

**“It was certain. There was no guessing about that. It was going to kill me.”**

— Malvin Jamison, hunter

He said there is no doubt in his mind that if he didn’t pull the trigger and connect, he wouldn’t have survived.

“It was certain,” he said. “There was no guessing about that. It was going to kill me.”

Tim Trainor is outdoors page editor of the East Oregonian. Have an adventure story you’d like to tell? Email him at [trainor@eastoregonian.com](mailto:trainor@eastoregonian.com) or call 541-966-0835.

# ART: Would be installed as funding came available through grants

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other displays typical of a city its size.

While many people think of public art as statues and murals, Couch said a public art plan can help a city think outside the box with things like decorative trash cans and benches, metal etchings attached to buildings, colorful vinyl wraps around the utility boxes on street corners, decorative signage or artistically sculpted bicycle racks.

Couch said she has also spoken with the Community Enhancement Committee about an “outdoor rotating gallery” that would install permanent plinths that could then host local artists’ sculptures temporarily.

Whatever does make it into the final plan approved

by the city council, Couch said the plan will be general suggestions about locations in town ripe for public art and the mediums that will best fit there. It won’t be a set of directions that say “Place a bronze statue of a cowboy here.”

Art would be installed as funding came available through grants and other means.

Because tastes in art tend to vary so widely (one person’s “modern” is another person’s “tacky”), public art projects can draw controversy.

Pendleton learned that when disagreement erupted over the proper location for a bronze statue of former Pendleton High School football coach Don Requa, and citizens in Hermiston complained so much over the design painted on the side of the water tower

that it sparked an entire rebranding process for the city. But the process can also be fairly benign, such as Echo’s proliferation of metal bike racks and flower pots.

Hermiston’s Community Enhancement Committee recommended the city go through a public process facilitated by a consultant. Citizens who want to comment on possible locations for public art can come to the Eastern Oregon Arts Festival reception from 6-8 p.m. on May 6 on Northeast Second Street in front of city hall, the festival from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. May 7 in front of city hall and during the Saturday Market at McKenzie Park in mid-May.

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# COUNCIL: Fairley currently serves on city’s airport commission, planning commission

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esty or misrepresentation, failure to provide competent representation, neglect of a legal matter and failure to cooperate and respond truthfully to the disciplinary authorities.

More specifically, the complaint states Ehmann failed to carry out his duties in a 1999 bankruptcy case and lied multiple times to a client and the Bar’s disciplinary counsel about a file that may have contained the client’s will and deed to her house. Additionally, the Bar had publicly reprimanded Ehmann in 1991 and 1994.

Ehmann did not respond to a request for comment as of press time.

Fellow candidate Rex Morehouse has logged plenty of hours at city council meetings on the other side of the dais.

Since moving to Pendleton 30 years ago, Morehouse has spent time campaigning against city tax measures, criticizing the

city’s spending habits and generally being a thorn in the side of the council.

Morehouse spent plenty of time railing against government spending prior to moving to Pendleton, but he also served as the police commissioner and mayor of Spirit Lake, Idaho.

As a Pendleton City Council candidate, Morehouse has promised to advocate for his conservative causes, including cutting taxes, growing the private sector and hiring an “efficiency expert” to find out whether the city can cut operational costs.

Scott Fairley has the most recent experience amongst the Ward 2 candidates, currently serving on the city’s airport commission and chairing the planning commission.

Fairley led historic and natural history tours of Eastern Oregon and Pendleton before embarking on a career in state government, including stops at the Department of Environmental

Quality and Department of Transportation.

Now the Eastern Oregon coordinator for the state office of regional solutions, Fairley said he’s ready to commit to the council.

Fairley said his job, which requires he help coordinate economic development initiatives in 10 counties, has given him perspective on some of Pendleton’s issues.

“Pendleton is not unique across Eastern Oregon and probably most of rural Oregon,” he said. “We have this real kind of workforce shortage issue.”

Fairley said one way to solve a workforce shortage is to invest in amenities like parks and the downtown area.

Fairley also supports a gas tax because non-citizens subsidize a portion of the revenue. He also supports using community surveys to gauge the city’s needs.

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