

Wildlife returns to conservation area



The Eagle/Rylan Boggs

A man made log feature made to mimic natural fish habitat sits in the Oxbow Conservation Area on Thursday, Sept. 22.

\$11 million, 5-year project repairs mining damage

By Rylan Boggs
Blue Mountain Eagle

What was once a ditch surrounded by mine tailings is well on its way to being a fully restored habitat for salmon, steelhead and other wildlife.

The Oxbow Conservation Area was heavily mined in the late 1930s and '40s and was left in a state of destruction.

Mounds of leftover mine tailings were bulldozed flat in the '70s, and a straight, deep ditch was carved for the water to run through. The river was completely unconnected to the floodplain and provided no habitat for fish, according to Brian Cochran, a restoration ecologist with the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon.

The more than \$11 million dollar project consisted of five phases and began in 2011. Since then, a joint effort has removed mine tailings, restored vegetation and reshaped the river into a natural, productive ecosystem capable of supporting a variety of wildlife. The project



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Scott Turo, leader of the Fisheries Department for the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs Habitat Program, shows Lesa Stark some of the work done on the Oxbow Conservation Area on Thursday, Sept. 22.

has been a collaborative effort between the Bureau of Reclamation, Bonneville Power Administration Oregon, Watershed Enhancement Board, NOAA Fisheries, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Malheur National Forest, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife and the Oregon Youth Conservation Core.

Using heavy equipment, the stream has been changed from a straight, deep, fast-flowing ditch into a slow, meandering body of water, where fish have a variety of habitats to grow and spawn. Besides rerouting the stream into

a meandering path, old trees and slash have been placed at key points in the river to simulate log jams that provide critical habitat for aquatic species, according to Cochran.

Other wildlife has also moved back into the area. Beaver activity was apparent on the shorelines, and otters had been recently spotted enjoying the restored river.

An interpretive center and trail are planned for the area to better exhibit the new ecosystem, according to Cochran. As part of the project, vegetation like willows, cottonwoods and chokecherries are also

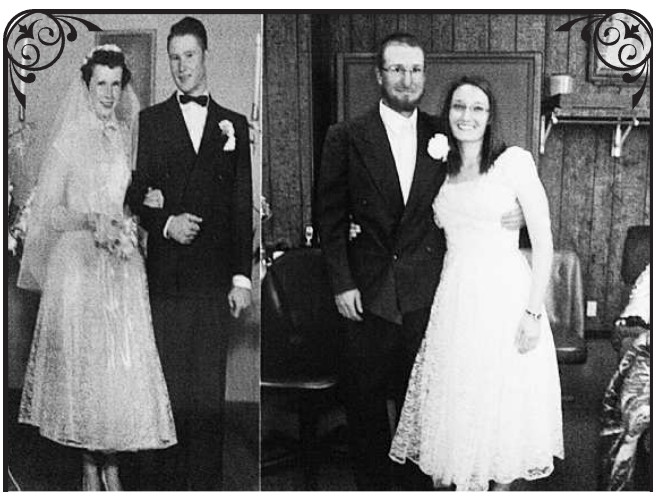
being planted. One particularly effective plant being reintroduced to this part of the river are torrent sedges, hardy tufts of grass give aquatic animals a sheltered habitat.

"Our goal is to have a fully shaded river corridor," Cochran said.

The area is almost entirely surrounded by 8-foot high fences to keep animals like deer and elk from stripping the recovering vegetation bare. There is a sizable gap in the fences that allows smaller animals to pass through so as not to hinder their movements.

A number of alcoves, sheltered areas in the stream without currents, are scattered throughout the project area and were designed specifically to foster growth of juvenile fish. Scott Turo, the habitat program leader for the Fisheries Department at the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, said the Bureau of Reclamation was key to getting the project done.

"The Bureau of Reclamation folks definitely deserve an extra thank you. There's millions of dollars of behind the scenes stuff, and the river is connected." Turo said. "... That's a good feeling for all of us, and the salmon are out there and using it and we're pleased about that."



We would like to thank our children, family and friends for making the celebration of our 60th Anniversary so special. We would like to especially thank grandchildren Sylvia and Toby for wearing our wedding clothing for a very special surprise. Thank you to everyone.
Ron and Joyce Dowdy.

SOPHIA

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According to the YES Abroad website, the program started in an effort to increase cultural understanding between Americans and people from other countries, especially those with large Muslim populations. Thirteen countries take part in the program, including Indonesia, Ghana, Thailand, Bosnia and others.

Pettit said earning good grades and being involved in school programs gave her application a boost.

"You're going as an ambassador of the U.S.," she said, noting it helps to be involved in activities which show leadership and independence.

Pettit started a blog called



Contributed photo

Sophia Pettit of Monument, third from right, sits with other students who are studying abroad this year in Sofia, Bulgaria.

"Sophia Goes to Sofia" with entries about her experiences in Bulgaria.

Her host family was waiting for her when she arrived in Sofia.

She wrote, "My host sister, Eli, was holding a rose, and Bobo, my host brother, was holding some sort of round loaf of bread with a jar of spices."

She said it is traditional for visitors to Bulgaria to eat the bread, dipping it in the spices.

So far, her favorite food is Shopska salad, which includes tomatoes, cucumbers, peppers, onions, oil, cheese and parsley.

She said she's learned to read and write in Bulgarian as well as greet and ask directions.

The hardest part about the

language, she said, is that some letters look like English letters, but are pronounced differently.

"It gets pretty complicated, but my Bulgarian is coming along," she said.

Her first day of high school at the American College of Sofia went well.

"To my surprise, I really enjoyed it!" she said. "The system here is nice and the campus of my school is absolutely beautiful."

Her classes, which are taught in English, include: math, sports, English, physics, ethics and law, Spanish, history, U.S. history, geography, biology and informatics.

"Your schedule is different each day," she said. "For example, Monday I'll have math for two class periods in a row, sports international for one class period, and English for two in a row. The next day, I'd have totally different classes."

Pettit discovered her U.S. history teacher is from Hermiton.

"Small world," she said. She hopes to join volleyball and basketball teams when they're available, as well as some clubs.

"Luckily, I survived my first couple days ... without too many crazy mishaps," she said.

She took the wrong bus stop traveling to school and was placed in Spanish II instead of Spanish I.

"I eventually found my way to school — without being late I may add — and my schedule got fixed," she said. "Here goes my sophomore year of high school at a new school!"

To view Pettit's blog, visit sophiagoesosofia.weebly.com.

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TAKE CARE OF YOU

October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month
and a time to think about your health

For breast cancer prevention and detection, Dr. Keith Thomas suggests:

- Have a yearly mammogram at 40 years of age and every year after. (Medicare and many insurances will pay for this.)
- Continue to do your self breast examinations at least every month.
- See your family doctor for a yearly check or even sooner if you haven't been feeling well.

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