



Slough News

Newsletter of the Columbia Slough Watershed Council

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Rain Garden Installation in Progress By Nathaniel Talbot

Plink. Plunk.....plink. plink. Once again, the late autumn rains trickle down through the roofing and plaster of the CSWC office, dripping steadily into a handful of strategically placed metal catchment bowls. Opportunistic mold species begin to reclaim their favorite corners and window sills. To slough staff, this is yet another reminder of the pressing need to relocate into their new and improved headquarters, the Watershed Education Center (WEC), located on the southwest corner of Whitaker Ponds Nature Park. In addition to providing much more space for staff offices and classroom programs and workshops, the WEC and its roof will provide reason to celebrate, rather than dread, the power of Oregon's wet season.

Instead of finding its way into the building's interior, the rain falling on the WEC and its adjacent parking garage will be channeled via a system of gutters and piping to a newly installed rain garden located directly between the two structures. The WEC rain garden will drain 1,200 square feet of roof and collect over 27,000 gallons of rain annually. Two of the three inlets of the rain garden will be fed by underground pipes connected directly to the WEC's downspouts. Water in the third downspout will openly cascade onto a large stone which will direct the flow into a snaking, above-ground channel toward the main bowl. And what timing for a rain garden, as the drywell that historically captured this roof water has reached the end of its lifespan causing the water to backup and overflow along the foundation of the buildings. Now, this redirected water will provide nourishment to a suite of wetland plants and shrubs as well as enhance the aesthetic appeal of the new Slough headquarters.

Amidst the many species to be planted

within the bowl of the rain garden are Douglas spirea, swamp rose, slough sedge and camas, wet-loving plants that thrive on episodic flooding. The dryer fringes will be adorned with snowberry, red-osier dogwood, Oregon grape, and red flowering current. Low growing strawberry, Oregon iris and



Danny Kapsch of the City of Portland and Nathaniel Talbot, Stewardship Coordinator for the Council, work on diverting downspouts for the new rain garden at Whitaker Ponds.

bleeding heart will also be found scattered about while sword fern and fringecup huddle in the shadier regions. A small walking trail will circumvent the main bowl, allowing the botanically-inclined to explore these plants up close. And for those just looking for a place to rest or ponder the wonders of rainwater, a cedar bench will be waiting along the path.

We must extend a huge thank you to Danny Kapsch for his technical assistance with the installation of the piping system and to Amy Whitworth for her botanical guidance. Volunteers, stay tuned to the CSWC winter event schedule for an opportunity to help plant and decorate the new site. Happy rainy season!

"Rain gardens hold stormwater runoff and allow it to soak into the ground naturally. This helps reduce the amount of pollution that gets into our streams. It also maintains the natural hydrology so streams don't go dry during dry spells."

From East Multnomah SWCD's website, www.emswcd.org

Pirates Gather for Groundwater

By Melissa Sandoz

What do pirates and groundwater have in common? This question is asked every year at Aquifer Adventure, our family festival that celebrates both pirates and an important drinking water resource.

“Pirates are known for seeking hidden treasure and groundwater is a natural hidden treasure. We challenge kid pirates to discover the mysteries of groundwater through fun hands-on activities,” said Rebecca Geisen, Program Manager for the Portland Water Bureau. “Besides, the staff and volunteers really enjoy saying things like ‘avast’ and ‘shiver me timbers’.”

Co-sponsored by the Portland Water Bureau and the Columbia Slough Watershed Council, Aquifer Adventure was held on Saturday, September 12th. Around 350 intrepid pirates of all ages met up for a canoeing treasure hunt, live music, and hands-on groundwater education activities.



A young pirate pretends to be a water droplet as he moves through the “rocks” underground. It’s never too early (or too late) to learn about groundwater!

At Aquifer Adventure, as well as Explorando, the canoe trips on the Slough are guided by professionals from Northwest Discoveries and skilled volunteers. The canoes are strapped together to make canoe “bimarans,” a stable and safe way for people of all ages and abilities to explore the Slough. Infants and grandparents can paddle together and enjoy the great blue heron, otter, and cormorant frequently seen at the launch site off of Airport Way.

This seventh annual event focused on groundwater and water conservation, and provided groundwater protection tips that can be implemented at home. This important groundwater resource serves as a supplemental and emergency drinking water supply to over 700,000 people in the Portland metropolitan area. As part of the activities, children made an edible aquifer in a cup, using layers of cereal, ice cream, and soda to represent the layers of rock and water underground. Adults made a groundwater-friendly cleaner with the help of Patrick Morgan from Metro. “They’re good for people with allergies, [who] care about the environment, and don’t want to be putting harsh chemicals into the environment,” said Morgan.

In the spirit of this pirate-themed event, volunteers dressed up in their swashbuckling finest. Portland Water Bureau Administrator David Shaff even signed up to be the King Pirate for the day, and held several mock sword fights throughout the day with young challengers. The pirate theme is a big draw for families, and they get to enjoy some groundwater science and the Slough at the same time. And for anyone who missed this fun event, don’t worry! Like International Talk Like a Pirate Day, Aquifer Adventure comes around every September for more fun and prizes.

Groundwater-Friendly All Purpose Cleaner

1/4 c vinegar

1/2 t phosphate-free dish soap

3/4 c warm water

2-3 drops of your favorite essential oil

Mix gently, use often!

Tadpole Tales for Preschoolers

By Haley Dillon

This October debuted the Columbia Slough Watershed Council's very first "Tadpole Tales," an education program for children aged 3 to 5 and their parents. Haley Dillon, the Council's fall education intern, planned and led the program each Wednesday during the month of October.

The program included the reading of a short children's story and a guided walk around Whitaker Ponds. Different themes such as frogs, leaves, birds and spiders were the focus each week as the tiny tots explored Whitaker Ponds and learned how great it is to enjoy nature, rain or shine. The little ones practiced jumping like frogs, learned to eat like different birds, built a sticky spider's web and even made their own leaf rubs. An emphasis of hands-on activities kept the preschoolers engaged and having a great time for the entire hour and a half. Most programs ended with a fun arts and crafts project that left the youngsters with a take-home keepsake of what they experienced.

Tadpole Tales was an experiment for Council's education program and proved to be a great success this past October. Over thirty 3-5 year olds and their parents attended the program over the span of the month, many of them returning week after week. Next spring will bring a new season of Tadpole Tales, so keep your eyes peeled for upcoming dates that will be sure to be a success with your little tadpole! Topics will vary, so check out the website for more details in the spring.

Tadpole Tales

Spring 2010 Schedule

Wednesdays from 10:00-11:30am

February: Whitaker Ponds Nature Park

March: Smith & Bybee Wetlands

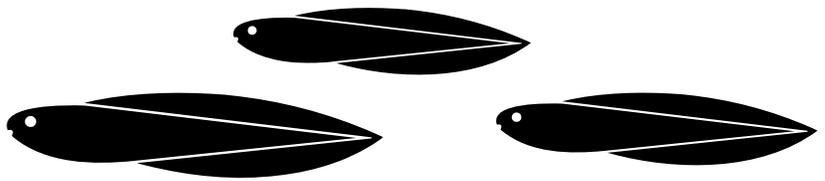
April: Salish Ponds



Education Intern Haley Dillon shows interested preschoolers a bird's nest at one of October's Tadpole Tales. Topics in October included frogs, leaves, birds, and spiders. With so many eager 3-5 year olds, Tadpole Tales will return in the spring on Wednesday mornings at 10:00am.

"Thank you for the Tadpole Tales event on October 7th. Our guide, Haley, was excellent. She'd obviously thought a lot about how to really engage the kids and share some wonderful things with them. Bravo!"

--Mother of a Tadpole Tales participant



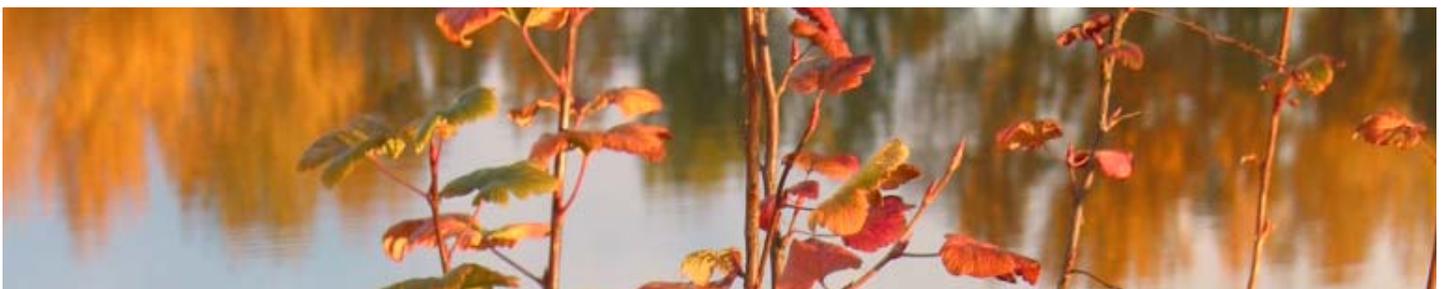
2010 Calendar of Events

By Melissa Sandoz

Event	Month	Date	Day	Time	Location
Slough Celebration	January	29	Sat	6:30pm - 10pm	Acadian Ballroom
Slough 101	March	13	Sat	8:45am - 1pm	Multnomah County Drainage Districts
Brunch with the Birds	April	24	Fri	10am - 1pm	Columbia Slough WQF in Gresham
Wetlands 101	May	1	Sat	8:45am - 1pm	TBD
Evening Canoe the Slough	May	26	Wed	6pm - 8:30pm	Whitaker Ponds Nature Park
Cycle the Well Field	June	5	Sat	8:45 - 1pm	aloft Portland Airport Hotel
Explorando el Columbia Slough	June	19	Sat	1pm - 5pm	Whitaker Ponds Nature Park
Great Slough Clean Up	July	10	Sat	9am - 12pm	Whitaker Ponds Nature Park
Columbia Slough Regatta	July	25	Sun	9am - 1pm	TBD
Subs on the Slough	August	13	Fri	11:30am - 1pm	Columbia Slough WQF in Gresham
Mystery Moonlight Paddle	August	20	Fri	10pm - 12am	Whitaker Ponds Nature Park
Aquifer Adventure	September	11	Sat	12pm - 4pm	Portland Water Bureau Canoe Launch
Evening Canoe the Slough	October	6	Wed	6pm - 8:30pm	Whitaker Ponds Nature Park
Owl Prowl	October	22	Fri	7pm - 9pm	Whitaker Ponds Nature Park
Brew on the Slough	October	28	Thur	6 - 7:30pm	TBD
Groundwater 101	November	13	Sat	8:45 - 1pm	NECA-IBEW Training Center

With the exception of the Slough Celebration, all events on this calendar are free!

To learn more or to sign up, visit the Council's website at www.columbiaslough.org. You can also sign up for our monthly e-newsletter for updates!



Kid's Corner

By Sheilagh Diez

See what five students had to say about their experience with Slough School! These students are part of Slough Award Winner Cathy Rodger's second-grade class at Chief Joseph Elementary this year. They first had a classroom visit with the new Watershed Puppet program, and then came to Whitaker Ponds for a field trip all about aquatic macroinvertebrates and a nature hike. (The field trip essays have been edited.)



To much people ar lidoring. If uoy throe to munch litor in the bird girn gras wonet groe. If uoy throe lidirin the lake anumus drik it so if uoy bo thet anu anumolse get sik and die. If uoy donet lidir j the wirlid wode be a beter plase. Wode it be gud if thre wes mor frttreas. Then dnont lidir.

By Aiden

A Fun Place

By Amedeo

It was so fun when we went to Whitaker Ponds. We went to the pond and caught fish and brought them back and looked at them. Then Nathaniel took us on a big nature walk. We saw a tree that beavers chewed on. We went inside a big tunnel made by tree branches. I also saw a cool mushroom, a big beaver, and a few birds. I want to go there again.

A Visit to Whitaker Ponds

By Crystal

We had so much fun. Tailor and I caught a bunch of snails. We caught a baby fish. It was cool. We saw snowberries. We saw lots of duckweed. We saw lots of spider webs. All of us took a nature walk. We were going to see a beaver, but we didn't get to see it. We saw lots of crows. It was a great day.



Yesterday after lunch a girl named Shilagh into our classroom and let us do a puppet show. I did it with Natalie and Lizzy. Ours was do not cut down trees. I was a tertel and a spider, Natalie was a dragonfly and Lizzy was a frog. We all lafted and had fun. When it was our turn I was so afraid that our puppet show wouldt't be good, but we went up anywas.

By Loan

Awesome Whitaker Ponds

By Dyllan

Last Friday we had a great time at Whitaker Ponds! We got to do a nature walk and we got to capture aquatic bugs. That was my favorite part. We got a lot of snails. I found one aquatic worm and I got to hold it! It felt slimy and it tried to get under my fingernail, but I had to let it go. After a while we got to go on a nature walk. We got to have our bird guide! We saw a hawk, but that wasn't the first time I've seen a hawk. My Uncle Sam has hawks. Anyway, back to the nature walk. Wait until you hear this: we saw a beaver and it wasn't even in a cage! It was a great field trip.

GET INVOLVED - VISIT, PARTICIPATE, VOLUNTEER, ENJOY!

Volunteer at Stewardship Saturdays!

On the second Saturday of each month, from 9am until 12pm, volunteers gather to do great things for the Slough!

Help work on the City of Portland's multi-year effort to restore the natural juvenile salmon habitat at the confluence of the Columbia Slough and the Willamette River. Join Portland Parks and Recreation and the Council for a morning of riparian native plantings at Kelly Point Park. Plant perennial herbaceous plants trees along the banks of the slough, with a particular focus on pollinator-attracting flowers. Come with a friend, dressed for the weather. Snacks, drinks, tools and gloves provided. For day-of-event questions or concerns, call Marissa at (503)415-1037.

For more information: Call (503) 281-1132 or email nathaniel.talbot@columbiaslough.org

Mark your calendar for Stewardship Saturday fun!

December 12, January 9, February 13

Upcoming Events Calendar

For more information about Columbia Slough Watershed Council events, visit our website at www.columbiaslough.org.

Friday, January 29th, 6:30—10:00pm

Slough Celebration

Our annual evening of food and festivities is on January 29th! Tickets are only \$40, and include an hors d'oeuvre buffet, champagne toast, award presentations, and a live swing band. You'll also have the opportunity to win one of four fabulous raffle prize packages by purchasing one of a limited number of raffle tickets. Don't miss our fanciest fundraiser of the year! Tickets are available on our website at www.columbiaslough.org, or by mailing a check to the Council at 7040 NE 47th Ave, Portland OR 97218.

For more information about the Slough Celebration: contact Melissa at 503-281-1132 or Melissa.sandoz@columbiaslough.org.



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Jane Van Dyke, Executive Director
Melissa Sandoz, Outreach Director
Sheilagh Diez, Education Director
Nathaniel Talbot, Stewardship Coordinator
Haley Dillon, Education Intern



Council Wish List

The Columbia Slough Watershed Council is on the hunt for:

- Well-functioning binoculars
- Rakes
- Tool sharpener
- Child-sized PFDs

If you have something in good condition to donate, please contact us at 503-281-1132!