

LIFE ON THE EDGE

A newsletter concerning all inhabitants of the south coast of Oregon

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 5

COLD MOON ISSUE

DECEMBER 26, 2022

CONTENTS

Elliott State Research Forest News -pp 1-2

How to comment on EIS and HCP for the Elliott Research Forest -p 2

Humor from SEPPO in Finland—p 2

Local Wet Prairies - p 3



A Western Monarch, refueling on Asters.

“The human race is challenged more than ever before to demonstrate our mastery, not over nature but of ourselves.”
— Rachel Carson

Support for Monarchs of our West Coast Flyway

Western Monarch butterflies travel a migration route that stays west of the Rocky Mountains. Also unlike their Midwestern counterparts, instead of going to Mexico, the western population winters along the central California coast in protected forested areas. Annual butterfly counts begin at Thanksgiving in California. In 2020, only 2,000 butterflies returned, raising the alarm regarding the possibility of extinction. Numbers have increased in the last few years but the overall average shows a steady decline since the count began in 1997.

As temperatures warm in late winter, the butterflies begin to migrate north and east. Up to six generations venture further and further, looking for nectar flowers to feed on and milkweed plants to lay their eggs on. An ability to ride the thermal wind currents can take them up mountain slopes and their extraordinary eyesight helps them locate the right flowers for their needs. Living only 2-5 weeks, it is the new eggs laid on milkweed plants that develop through the 5 stages (or instars), becoming adults and further fueling the migration. As fall approaches, the final super-monarch generation is born which live 6-9 months. The super-monarchs begin the migration flight back to the California coast. All manner of dangers await them throughout this annual journey: pesticides, forest fires, bad weather and more. Loss of habitat may be one of the greatest problems as humans have modified many areas of their flyways. ¹

A two-day Summit on Monarch Butterflies was held at the Capitol Building in Washington D.C. in June, 2022. Our own Senator Jeff Merkley, convened the Monarch Butterfly Summit, aiming to elevate the conservation issues facing western monarchs. Policy makers brainstormed in sessions looking for solutions to issues such as pesticides, lack of early emerging native milkweeds to fuel the spring breeding habitats, and the disappearance or degradation of sites where the western monarchs overwinter. “Protecting monarch butterflies is an urgent issue that requires sustainable solutions,” Merkley said. At the conclusion of the Summit, Merkley and Interior Secretary, Deb Haaland, announced that one million dollars would be invested into National Fish and Wildlife’s Monarch **Butterfly and Pollinator Conservation Fund**, and established a **Pollinator Conservation Center** in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWSUSF&W). The funds are earmarked for protecting and improving habitat in California and Oregon. Oregon will receive \$557,600 of this federal funding to bolster its efforts to help this iconic butterfly survive.

People wanting to sustain the monarch butterfly need to plant native milkweed varieties to provide what the butterfly needs for its offspring. Here on the south coast of Oregon plant Showy milkweed and Narrow leaf milkweed. For altitudes over 1000 feet, plant Heart leaf milkweed. More information for planting is at <https://somonarchs.org/resourcecenter>.

ELLIOTT STATE FOREST, ANOTHER FIRST

In 1930 the Elliott became the first State Forest in Oregon. Since that time, the sale of land and timber from the Elliott Forest was dedicated as revenue for the Common School Fund. For decades it has produced millions of board feet of lumber.

The Oregon State Land Board voted unanimously on Dec.13th to remove the Elliott State Forest from the Common School Fund. A heated debate has raged for years over how to manage this 88,000- acre forest. Less than half of the remaining forest is comprised of old growth stands. Species surveys have revealed that in those areas, at least 3 endangered species are found; the Spotted Owl, the Marbled Murrelet and the Coho salmon. Quite possibly the forest harbors other threatened species as well.

Those very large trees are really valuable as timber and so lawsuits were often the only thing preventing further clear cutting of

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¹ https://dfw.state.or.us/conservationstrategy/news/2016/2016_April.asp#MONARCH

(Elliott Forest con't .

stands. On the west side, 41,000 acres of the older stands of trees have been set aside as a "Preserve", to remain untouched.

The decisions of when and where to log in this forest will no longer be tied to a state school fund that always needs money for its education operations. Decoupling the economic need removes that topic from the debate over plans to cut timber here. Oregon state income tax and local property tax now serve as major funding sources for education. The decisions of when and where to log in this forest will no longer be tied to a state school fund that always needs money for its education operations.

Honoring all valid viewpoints, a nine-person board of directors has been appointed by the governor to provide oversight and give final approvals to what is now called the "Elliott State Research Forest". Work will continue to convert the forest's status through July of 2023. It is hoped to be official in January of 2024 and then it will be North America's largest research forest. A significant portion of the forest will continue to be logged to offset the costs of having a research forest.

Naming The Elliott as a Research Forest means it will be utilized to improve our understanding of many things, including how logging operations cause habitat degradation that contributes to species extinction. This is steep country and has a feeling of remoteness, perhaps because of its lack of development. Adjoining the Dean Creek Elk preserve on its north side, the crisscross of elk trails throughout the forest indicate it is well used by those herds. Although the state retains ownership, Oregon State University is tasked with managing it and is currently developing a forest management plan needing input and approvals, working toward a final Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP). This plan will spell out how the threatened or endangered species will be protected. Both the HCP and a draft Environmental Impact Statement are open for public comment until January 10, 2023.

See blue box below for directions on how to make comment



Comment Period: The comment period for the draft habitat conservation plan and draft environmental impact statement, notice of which was published on November 18, 2022. Comments submitted online must be received by 11:59 p.m. EST on January 10, 2023. Hardcopy comments must be received or post-marked on or before Jan 10, 2023.

Submitting Comments:

You may submit comments by one of the following methods:

Internet - <https://www.regulations.gov/document/FWS-R1-ES-2022-0029-0081>

U.S. mail: Public Comments Processing; Attn: Docket No. FWS-R1-ES-2022-0029; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Headquarters, MS: PRB/3W; 5275 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church, VA 22041-3803.

USF&W requests that you submit comments by only one of the methods above.

NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY -

POTLUCK JAN 9

PORT ORFORD

If you're connected to or love the flora of Oregon's South Coast, you're invited to join the ! South Coast Native Plant Society of Oregon. A kick-off potluck celebration and meeting will be held at the **LDS church, 2000 Jackson St. In Port Orford.**

Memberships at <https://www.npsoregon.org/membership.html>

HUMOR Cartoon courtesy of : Seppo, www.seppo.net



Bandon's Wet Prairie Planting

Wet prairies are a type of ecosystem occurring in lowlands, especially in floodplains. Unlike wet meadows which are surrounded by forest, these wet prairies are dominated by grasses, sedges, and wildflowers. These areas can be defined by their functions; prevent soil erosion, enhance water quality, and provide habitat for a wide variety of wildlife including waterfowl, upland game birds and song birds. The wildflowers flourish in the sunny damp habitat and so the pollinators will flourish too. They are irrevocably tied together.

*"Native prairies are a severely endangered habitat in western Oregon. They cover less than 1% of their former area because of conversion to agricultural use, fire suppression, urbanization, and invasion by non-native plants."*¹, according to a brochure prepared by Melissa York and Daniel Rosenberg, Department of Fisheries and Wildlife, Oregon State University. Settlers found that with diking and draining, this land was the easiest to convert to agricultural uses. Native American elders indicate that fire would have kept prairies and meadows free of forest trees and therefore the smaller flowering shrubs are allowed to prosper and provide food, shelter and breeding habitat to many animal species.

The Johnson Creek sub-basin in Bandon, Oregon was first converted to a farm by settlers and grazed by livestock until 1927. People needing recreation converted it into a nine-hole golf course. Over the years it has had a variety of owners but currently it is owned by the City of Bandon, holding it for its function in storm-water services. "Wetlands improve the quality of surface runoff water that flows through by filtering, absorbing, and settling out soil particles, organic matter, and some nutrients such as phosphorus. These removed materials provide a rich environment for algae and bacteria, which can actively degrade organic waste matter and remove or transform chemicals arriving from upstream natural and human sources."² These rare wet prairies occur mostly on lower elevations on bedrock or clay loam soils that have a seasonally perched water table. It is a Sandstone layer that the locals refer to as "hardpan" and it occurs on the 38 acres enveloping Johnson Creek, right before it dives into the Pacific Ocean.

In November, the day after Thanksgiving, a group of South Coasters planted 50 native Ninebark shrubs, donated by Stillwater Natives Nursery, at the old golf course. This Ninebark, *Physocarpus capitatus*, is a high value plant for beneficial insects, including pollinators and for songbirds. The planting followed along a row of Red cedars planted in 2021. All plants are protected from mowing by the city maintenance crew. Ideally, volunteers will introduce a missing component species each Fall. Planting day was dubbed "Green Friday" by the volunteers and most of them agreed that they would enjoy the opportunity to have this type of event every year. Being outside and participating in a meaningful event to restore habitat can do wonders to lift the spirit.

Multi-generational fun planting on "Green Friday".



Northern Red-Legged Frog needs more habitat

"Life on the Edge" is a monthly newsletter, written by local people and hosted by STILLWATER NATIVES NURSERY in Bandon, Oregon.
Contact: Stellaray60@yahoo.com
Submissions of news that relates to our natural local world accepted- cite sources .. To unsubscribe from this newsletter just click reply and type "No".

1 http://www.oregonwildlife.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/Prairies_brochure_web2.pdf