



Friends of the Metolius

Dedicated to Protecting The Metolius Basin since 1990

Winter Newsletter, 2018 – 19 Highlights in this Issue:

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Prescribed Fire Returns to the Heritage Forest Demonstration

On October 14, the Sisters Ranger District conducted a successful, well controlled, 171 acre prescribed broadcast burn at the junction of the Forest Service Roads 1216 and 1419, the Four Corners, west of Camp Sherman. Heritage Forest Demonstration plots burned included the Larch Restoration plot (Plot 1A) on the southwest side of the Four Corners and the thinning plot south of 1A, as well as the thinning plots on the northwest side of the Four Corners. For information about the Heritage Demonstration Project see <https://www.metoliusfriends.org/news-and-updates/metolius-heritage-demonstration-project-prescriptions/>.

On October 17, a second burn totaling 140 acres took place at the junction of the 1217 and 1420 roads about a mile southwest of Allingham Bridge. This one included the Turn of the Century plot on the northeast side of the junction and the Mow and Burn plot on the northwest side of the junction.

These plots were burned in 2002 or 2003. Burning them 15 years later is intended to mimic the naturally occurring ground fire return interval of about 8 to 25 years. These burns consumed down branches, needles, duff, brush, and a few small trees that could potentially fuel a catastrophic wildfire.

An additional objective for the larch restoration plot included consuming enough needles and duff to

create the bare mineral seedbed that larch needs to naturally regenerate. Branches, needles, and duff were cleared around planted larch to improve their chances of surviving the burn. Most of the planted larch appears to have survived.

The Forest Service has a fall 2019 burn planned for the area east of the 1420 road between the 1216 and 1217 roads. Actual burn implementation will be dependent on favorable weather, smoke dispersion, and fuel moisture conditions and may or may not actually happen in 2019. The Prescribed Burn Only plot, the Pre-Commercial Thin plot, and the new Uneven-Aged Management plot are supposed to be burned in conjunction with this larger unit. This will finish out the current round of Heritage Forest Demonstration burning.



President's Corner

Every winter as our spring, summer and autumn projects tail off and we find ourselves with some welcome spare time, the Friends board of directors takes time to reflect on our accomplishments for the year and to look ahead to the year to come. Always informed by our mission – to protect and preserve the Metolius Basin – we have dual roles: as a watchdog to insure that bad decision-making is challenged; and as a conservation group to engage in restoration and education. I personally perceive our role as a watchdog as being the role with the highest priority. The successful 2009 challenges to proposed destination resorts is a prime example of Friends in its role as a watchdog. Others on our board perceive our role as a conservation group as being of utmost importance. As a result, every board member has dedicated countless hours to both education and restoration projects. From the perspective of being a watchdog 2018, thankfully, has been a quiet year with few challenges. From the view of the conservation side of our mission, the number of restoration projects worked on in 2018 was high; it was a busy year and a lot of good work was done. Some of that work is highlighted in this newsletter.

I have said it many times before and it is worth mentioning again: we are an all-volunteer organization. All of our work is funded by you, our members. We have no staff and the board receives no compensation. We do this because we have a passion for preserving this small, beautiful area. But we rely on your generosity and ask you to continue to support Friends with financial donations. And if you have some time and are interested in getting engaged in on-the-ground projects, there are volunteer opportunities available, including:

- Weed warriors
- Trail crew
- Interpretive Walk Leaders

You can always contact us at friendsofthemetolius@gmail.com.
Doug Hancock

County Land-Use Update

Friends stay in touch with, and monitors Jefferson Co. to assess any land use issues or code changes that would adversely affect the Metolius Basin. Since the unsuccessful proposals for major destination resorts in 2009 there have been no significant issues or controversies.

We continue to monitor the actions of the County Commissioners and Planning Commission. A major overhaul of the County's web site has recently been completed, making the monitoring much easier. Friends are now being notified of meeting agendas so we can review proposed actions and respond as appropriate.

Recently the county initiated a survey asking for county residents' opinions on shipping containers. The survey may be found here: <https://www.jeffco.net/cd/page/shipping-container-survey>. The county is considering zoning changes that would allow containers on rural lands. If you are a resident of Jefferson County, please take a few minutes to express your opinion. The survey closes on December 21.

Continued Work Restoring the CCC Shelters in the Campgrounds

Working in coordination with the Camp Sherman Historical Society and the U.S. Forest Service, Friends have spent several years restoring the shelters that are found at the river campgrounds at Camp Sherman, Pine Rest and Pioneer Ford. The shelters were built in the 1930s by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) and are historical treasures.

The most recent effort included the installation of chimney caps on the three shelters constructed by the CCC, which should help preserve the chimneys from the winter freeze-thaw that has resulted in past damage. Friends members and volunteers helped secure a new cap on the Pioneer Ford shelter this past summer. And this fall they installed a chimney

CCC Shelters, continued

cap on the Pine Rest shelter. The firebox at the Pine Rest shelter was also rebuilt.



Metolius Restoration

Real progress was made this year in our long-term effort to restore native plants to the Metolius River. About 90% of the populations of ribbon grass and yellow flag iris (the two predominant invasives) was sprayed from the tract C bridge to Bridge 99 with an approved herbicide mix. This project was overseen by the US Forest Service and the application done by the Oregon Dept. of Agriculture. Friends has been an active proponent of control for over 10 years and assisted with public outreach and monitoring of water quality. Next year we plan on re-treating this entire stretch of river including populations on private lands and plants that were missed or survived.

Native plants will move into the habitat that was once occupied by the noxious weeds. We have witnessed this along parts of Lake Creek; it takes a few years but it happens. Recently The Nugget had a comprehensive article about the very invasive spotted knap

weed. The Camp Sherman Weed Warriors have been attacking this and other invaders (Scotch broom, false brome) for about 20 years. Cooperation and collaboration of the private land owners, summer cabin owners, Forest Service, the Oregon Dept. of Agriculture and the Friends is instrumental to this success, and here too we are making real progress.

And now we have another problem plant to contend with. Perennial peavine (*Lathyrus latifolius L.*) has been slowly spreading in tracts H and I. The most obvious population is just below the Camp Sherman bridge on the west bank. There it is intermixed with the recently sprayed ribbon grass. Cabin owners, hikers, the Forest Service and Friends have known of this attractive flowering plant for years but we have decided to do something. This spring the Weed Warriors will start hand-pulling the plant and will ask neighboring cabin owners to join in. We'll see how this goes, but it's a difficult plant to control. The roots are long and it's tenacious. We could use your help. If you would like to help out, send us an email at friendsofthemetolius@gmail.com.

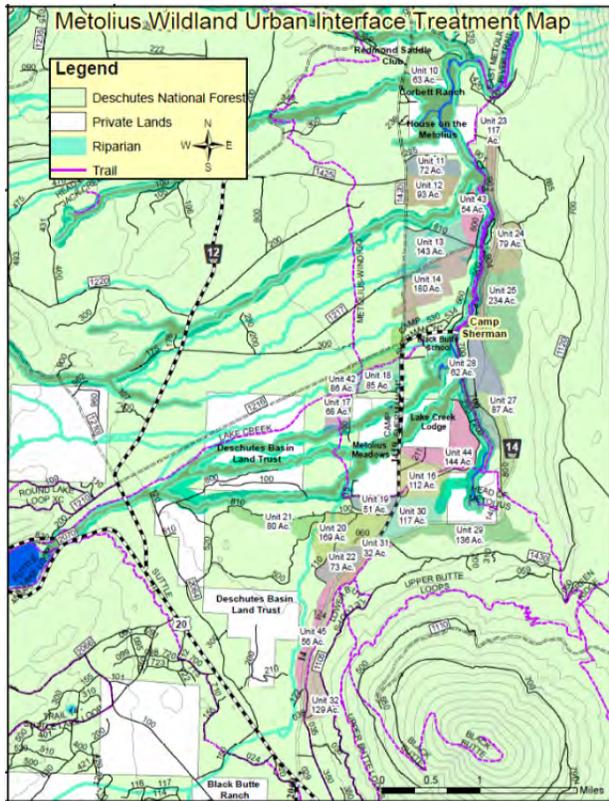


Prescribed Fire Updates

As most of you know, the conditions this past fall were ideal for prescribed burning and the Forest Service conducted prescribed burns on several locations in early October. The primary purpose of the burns was to reduce fuel loads, mimic historical high-frequency, low intensity fire regime, and maintain the sites with intermittent fire. The fires restore ponderosa pine ecosystems to a more natural healthy stand density and remove excess material from the forest floor to better allow for natural seedling establishment, especially for western larch.

Friends have always supported prescribed burning as a component of good forest management. Prescribed burning can be inexact and sometimes tree mortality is higher than desired. And we have to put up with a few days of smoke. But hopefully that isn't too much of an inconvenience considering the ecosystem improvements.

The Forest Service plans to continue the burns in 2019 if conditions are right:



Metolius Wildland Urban Interface Treatment Plan		
Unit Number	ACRES	Projected Treatment Date
10	63	Prescribed Fire 2019/20
11	72	Mow 2018/19, + Prescribed Fire later date
12	93	Prescribed Fire Spring 2020
13	143	Prescribed Fire 2018/19
14	180	Prescribed Fire Fall 2019
16	112	Prescribed Fire May 2018
17	68	Prescribed Fire Fall 2020
18	85	Prescribed Fire Fall 2018/19
19	51	Prescribed Fire 2019/20
20	169	Prescribed Fire 2019/20
21	80	Prescribed Fire 2019/20
22	73	Mow 2018/19 + Prescribed Fire later date
23	117	Prescribed Fire Fall 2019
24	79	Prescribed Fire Spring 2020
25	234	Prescribed Fire Spring 2020
26	88	Prescribed Fire 2019
27	87	Prescribed Fire 2019
28	62	Prescribed Fire Spring 2020
29	136	Prescribed Fire Fall 2019
30	117	Prescribed Fire May 2018
31	32	Prescribed Fire Spring 2020
32	129	Prescribed Fire Spring 2020
42	86	Prescribed Fire Fall 2018/19
43	54	Mow only due to phone lines 2018/19
44	144	Mow only due to phone lines 2018/19
45	56	Mow 2018/19 + Prescribed Fire later date
Phase One		
Phase Two		
Phase Three		

Trail Updates

Ken Amman continues to do an amazing job of coordinating the Friends trail crew in partnership with Trout Unlimited and the Forest Service. We can't thank Ken and each of his volunteer crew enough for the work they do each summer to keep the local trails in good shape.

Ken also stepped up to help the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife to plant native plants around the Camp Sherman fishing pond and to seed the area with native seeds. He put together a volunteer crew and on November 5 they planted plugs of sedges and rushes in the pond outlet area, transplanted sedges from Spring Creek to the pond, seeded native seeds and weeded teasel, thistle and mullein.

If you are interested to adopting a section of trail, please contact Ken by email to ken@kenammann.com.

Interpretive Walks

Every summer Friends organizes a series of interpretive walks in order to educate visitors and locals about many of the fascinating features found along the Metolius. Friends believes that the more we understand about the area the more we enjoy and appreciate it and are willing to protect it.

Each walk has a theme and our experienced leaders are well acquainted with their specialties, from birds to plants to history and current challenges and changes on the river. We welcome all comers on Saturday mornings from the Fourth of July week-end to Labor Day week-end. There is no sign-up or fee. Kids are more than welcome. We have led groups from as few as two to more than thirty.

We all know things about life along the Metolius, but there is always more for each of us to learn, and more to appreciate. Here's a quiz that covers a smattering of the information that our leaders share. Gauge your knowledge and consider how you could benefit from and enjoy a two hour friendly, morning walk.

- Can you name 5 types of birds along the river that eat fish?
- Why are there some recent bare spots showing up along the river banks and some islands?
- Which riparian zone plant has a doppelganger on the drier side of the river trail?
- When was the last time hatchery trout were planted in the river and how have the native red-band trout been doing since?
- How many examples of the works by the 1930's Civilian Conservation Corps camp at the current Riverside Campground still exist in the area?
- Where is the turkey vulture roosting spot in the busiest part of Camp Sherman? (Around a dozen of them spend each summer night there.)
- Where is the 'tree cave'? The base of this large ponderosa pine is mostly

burned out, forming a cavity that easily fits two standing adults. Yet, amazingly, it still holds up the rest of this tall, healthy-looking tree.

- Have you witnessed the life and death drama (on a small scale) of an ant lion in action?

Can you answer all of these? Want to learn the answers? Just join us next summer to find out!

Our Saturday morning schedule can be found on our website and on flyers posted at the Camp Sherman Store, local campgrounds and resorts. Or if you have a group of friends or a local organization that would appreciate learning more about the basin, call Walks Coordinator Scott Blau (503-730-8034) to arrange a customized walk at a convenient time, or get in touch through friendsofthemetolius@gmail.com. Our leaders are out walking the river regularly anyway and we welcome having people join us.

Website Updates

We continue to improve our website at www.metoliusfriends.org. Among other things, this year we adopted new mapping software that implements the search and graphing functions for our water quality data (www.metoliusfriends.org/metolius-map/). If you ever want to investigate water quality information for the Metolius, our mapping pages are the best source available. With great thanks to our mapping expert, Rick Thomas!

You can find information about our many activities on our site, which we try to update regularly. And if you find it easier to make donations online rather than with a check, we've made it easy to donate online, too.

Finally, if you are a photographer and would like to have some of your images of the Metolius Basin highlighted on our website, just get in touch. We have photos from several photographers uploaded and can always use more.