

SUMMER/FALL  
2023

# CURRY *Currents*



29286 Ellensburg Avenue  
PO Box 666  
Gold Beach, OR 97444  
(541) 247-2755  
info@currywatersheds.org  
www.currywatersheds.org

## IN THIS ISSUE

Youth Education Program (YEP) .....	2-6
Spotlight on Staff .....	7
Get Involved .....	8
Upcoming Events .....	9
Weed Alert! .....	10-15
Reports from the Field .....	16-22

# Youth Education Program

Curry Watershed Partnership's (CWP) Youth Education Program (YEP) is a hands-on, outdoor based education program that engages K-12 students across Curry County. YEP meets students in their classrooms to prepare for outdoor inquiry and align topics with grade-level standards. Students steward school gardens, visit local beaches, rivers, wetlands, farms, forests, and ports within their watershed.

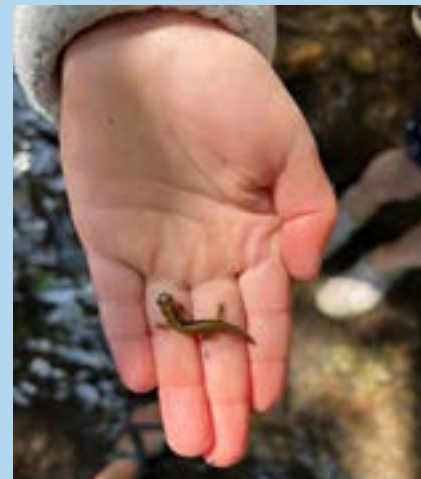
Experiential outdoor learning inspires the next generation of citizens, scientists, landowners, and explorers to prioritize stewardship and appreciation of the lands and waters we interact with. The YEP program increases the efficacy and longevity of other CWP programmatic components (such as monitoring and habitat restoration) by engaging our communities early in their lives, and recognizing them as a critical part of the important work in our environment!

Since the program's start in 2004, teachers at all schools in Curry County have welcomed YEP activities, in-class and in the field.

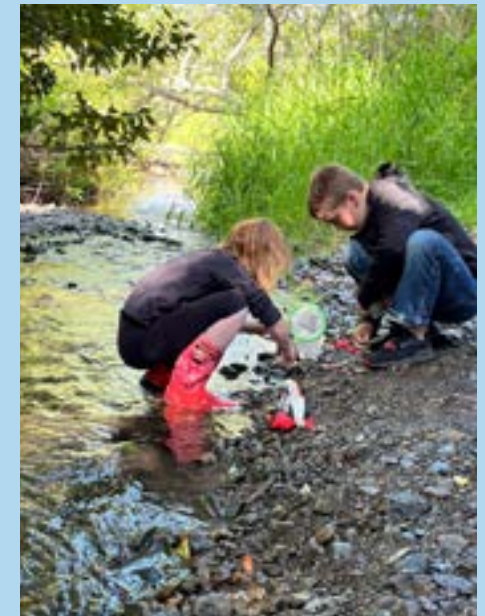
## YEP, having a blast!

The 2022-2023 school year was full of activities across Curry county for students of all ages.

This year was the pilot year for our High School Outdoor Leadership program, which recruited high school students interested in outdoor education and leadership. Eligible students participated in group training sessions that introduced the Beetles learning cycle, outdoor school curriculum, leadership development, and teaching strategies. High school student leaders then put this training into practice while attending outdoor school with 6th grade students as mentors and teachers.



*Creek study find.*



*(Cover photo)  
2nd graders investigate Riley Creek.*





*High School  
Student Leaders*

A favorite aspect of the YEP program among K-5 students in Gold Beach and Port Orford is the school gardens, and this year was no exception! In the summer, the Riley Creek garden opened to students, families, and community members once a week for crafts, learning and harvest. In Port Orford, 3rd-5th grade students participated in a week-long summer program that covered soil, seeds, flowers, and pollinators. During the fall and spring, students at both schools came to the garden as an outdoor classroom, to learn about cycles, ecosystems, and stewardship, and to help stock the cafeteria salad bars. This year we had particular success with vermicomposting in both gardens, and the students love feeding the worms!

5th and 6th graders in Port Orford spend time weekly in the wetlands behind Driftwood school studying the importance of wetland ecosystems and practicing stewardship by building trails and removing invasive species. 5th grade conducted a monitoring study using photo points across the wetlands to investigate seasonal and human-made changes between the winter and spring. 6th grade created a collaborative book with scientific information about the wetlands, and art and poetry expressing their experiences over the last two years of wetlands study.



*2nd graders investigate Riley Creek*



*6th grade at work in the wetlands.*

The rest of the year has been filled with exciting projects, like working with ODFW to reinstate the annual Fish Eggs to Fry program in 3rd grade classrooms, taking the Stream Trailer on outings within the community, leading field trips with the after-school ASCEND program, planting trees, Art and Ecology workshops with Washed Ashore, and playing outside!



*Releasing steelhead fry in Riley Creek.*

## Looking Ahead

As the summer kicks off, YEP is looking forward to summer camp activities, community events, and preparation for the school year to resume. Come visit community garden time in Riley Creek, and keep your eyes peeled for upcoming information about new YEP staff being hired this summer!

# Spotlight on Staff



*Annika Bratton, YEP Coordinator*

Annika joined CWP's team as the Youth Education Coordinator in March of 2022 and has been having the time of her life in the role so far! She joins CWP by way of classrooms, summer camps, college readiness programs, streams, forests, and long walks on the beach. Her favorite aspect of coordinating the YEP program is the opportunity to work with so many different students in so many different environments. She loves learning from students and exploring new places with them!



# Get Involved

## LOCAL BOARD MEETINGS

Please contact us  
for information on how to join.



Curry Soil and Water Conservation District  
Last Tuesday of the month at 7:00 pm  
at the Curry Watersheds Partnership Office.

Contact Liesl Coleman for more information:  
[liesl.coleman@currywatersheds.org](mailto:liesl.coleman@currywatersheds.org)



Lower Rogue Watershed Council  
3rd Tuesday of the month at 3:30 pm  
at the Curry Watersheds Partnership Office.

Contact Kelly Timchak for more information:  
[kelly@currywatersheds.org](mailto:kelly@currywatersheds.org)



South Coast Watershed Council  
4th Thursday of the month at 3:00 pm  
rotating location between Port Orford, Gold Beach,  
and Brookings.

Contact Miranda Gray for more information:  
[miranda.gray@currywatersheds.org](mailto:miranda.gray@currywatersheds.org)

# Upcoming Events & Community Resources

Contact Miranda Gray at 541-373-3127  
or [miranda.gray@currywatersheds.org](mailto:miranda.gray@currywatersheds.org)  
for more information and to register.

**AUG  
12**

## 'Cherish the Chetco'

Saturday, August 12, 2023 9am - 2pm  
Alfred Loeb State Park, Brookings

Help us cherish our Chetco River by cleaning up trash at gravel bars and along the river. Sign up ahead of time to rent a kayak for free or bring your own to help us collect trash inaccessible by land. Self-guided litter patrols on gravel bars of your choice are also an option. Experienced river guides and shuttles will be available, and no kayaking experience is necessary.

**AUG  
19**

## 'Experience the Elk'

Saturday, August 19, 2023 10am - 2pm  
Elk River Fish Hatchery, Port Orford

Come experience the Wild and Scenic Elk River by bike, while cleaning up trash at gravel bars and along the river. You can rent an e-bike for free or bring your own bike to help us collect trash along the Elk River Scenic Bikeway. Staff from Curry Watersheds Partnership and USFS will be on hand to control traffic and haul away trash.

# Weed Alert!

## It's Jubata Time!

Say What!?! Late summer is when the jubata grass (pronounced 'jew-bah-ta' grass, aka purple pampas grass) puts up its showy plumes to catch a coastal breeze and send seeds up to 30 miles away. So why do we call it jubata grass instead of pampas grass? Well, there are two species of Andean perennial grass that have heavily invaded Northern California. One species can produce viable cloned seeds and the other needs male and female plants in close proximity to make viable seeds. The species you see around our area is almost always the former, jubata grass, and not pampas grass (*Cortaderia selloana*). Telling the difference is really hard unless you have seen both and know a thing or two about botany.



*Jubata grass*

The rate of spread is very indicative of jubata grass, given that each plume or flowerhead can produce upwards of 100,000 seeds that are a genetic clone of the mother—that's a million seeds per jubata grass each year! It only takes one to quickly have an infestation.

## Things to know...

- Germination of seeds begins after the first fall rains and can occur anytime through the spring.
- The edges of the grass blades are finely serrated and razor sharp. TAKE CARE to wear proper PPE like gloves and long sleeves when handling.
- The seeds are nearly mature by the time the plume erupts from the stalk. So, care must be taken not to spread those seeds.
- As the plant grows numerous layers of dead leaves accumulate in the base creating a real fire hazard and a great place for rodents to make their home!
- It can start flowering and producing seed after only 1 year. While an individual typically only lives for 20 years, once it dies others will colonize right on top of the dead one making it seem very long lived.
- It heavily outcompetes native coastal plants, reducing habitat for our native pollinators and wildlife.



Jubata Grass (Cortaderia jubata)

# STOP!

## How you can help:

- **Cut your plumes.** Cutting plumes can help stop the spread and is the least you can do if you can't part with the plant. Double bag the seed heads and dispose in landfill, not green (yard) waste.
- **Hand pull seedlings early.** Feel the edges to distinguish from other early grasses. Once you get your eye trained there's no going back--you will see them everywhere.
- **Get rid of it.** Both chemical and mechanical methods work, but there are some tricks to both. Curry SWCD pursues grant funding to help landowners with small infestations, if you want help give us a call or email to see if we have funds to help.

*Mechanical: The window for hand pulling is short. Then, the window for hand digging them out is also short before you have to resort to more intensive tools like pulaskies, saws, and pick axes. After that you will need a small tractor, excavator, or backhoe like machine to dig them out. They grow very quickly and in 2-3 years manual removal will be beyond most people's ability. You must remove the whole crown or it will grow back. It is best to then grass seed or mulch the disturbed area so any residual seeds or other weeds don't grow in its place.*

*Chemical: A targeted spot application of herbicide in late summer once they start to send up the plumes is the best time to treat. The plant needs to be thoroughly coated to wet, but not dripping, getting all the leaves. If treated late in the fall beyond October it can take months to die. Glyphosate is an effective herbicide, but a surfactant is needed to help make sure it gets into the thick leaves. Always read the label and follow safety rules when self-applying. Otherwise, always hire a licensed herbicide applicator.*

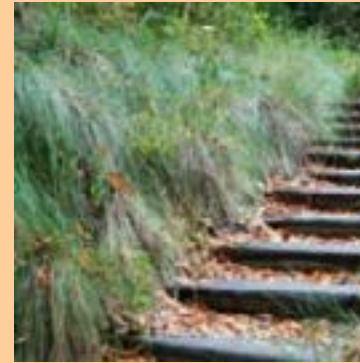
# GO!

These natives don't get nearly as big but can be interesting in the landscape nonetheless:



*Roemer's Fescue*

Roemer's fescue  
(*Festuca roemerii*)



*Photo by Pete Villeaux, East Bay Wilds.*

Left to right:  
Tufted hairgrass  
(*Deschampsia caespitosa*)

California fescue  
(*Festuca californica*)



*Photo by Bri Weldon.*

## Looking for something a little taller?



Feather Reed Grass  
(*Calamagrostis x acutiflora*)

*Calamagrostis x acutiflora 'Karl Forester'*  
*Form Jim Robbins'*



# Reports from the Field



*A kayak 'litter patrol' getting ready to launch on the Chetco River as part of last year's Cherish the Chetco river cleanup.*

This summer, Curry Watersheds Partnership will be hosting three recreational river cleanups to help protect the Wild and Scenic values of the Elk, Rogue, and Chetco Rivers. These special rivers are part of the 'National Wild and Scenic Rivers System' that was created by Congress in 1968 to preserve certain rivers with outstanding natural, cultural, and recreational values in a free-flowing condition for the enjoyment of present and future generations. The Act is notable for safeguarding the special character of these rivers, while also recognizing the potential for their appropriate use and development. The System protects 226 rivers in the US and three of them are right here in our backyard!

We host these river cleanups every summer to give community volunteers an opportunity to learn and experience why these rivers are special and to help protect them. Participants pick up trash along the river's edges, gravel bars, swimming holes, campsites, and river roads. They also have the opportunity to participate in these free and unique recreational opportunities offered by local businesses: jet boating, kayaking, and e-biking. The events are free and open to the entire community – see the Events and Community Resources Page for more information on this summer's river cleanups!

If you want to help us out and become a Storm Chaser reach out and let us know!



## Monitoring

The Monitoring Program has been busy with a winter of Storm Chasers, a spring of road surveys, and is now gearing up for a summer of temperature monitoring.

We just successfully wrapped up our second season of Storm Chasers. A total of 18 volunteers collected 114 water quality samples spread out across 3 storms throughout the winter and spring in the New River, Floras, Sixes, Elk, Hubbard Creek, and Rogue watersheds. These samples are helping us understand how sediment moves throughout these watersheds during large storm events, which we'll be using to identify potential areas of concern that will guide our work moving forward. This fall we'll be expanding our Storm Chasers program to cover the entirety of Curry County, so if you want to help us out and become a Storm Chaser reach out and let us know!



*Our road survey crew was working rain or shine. Here they're battling the elements at the start of the surveying season back in March.*

We also just wrapped up our first season of road surveys using the Forest Service's Geomorphic Road Analysis and Inventory Package, or GRAIP protocol. We conducted GRAIP surveys in sections of both the Chetco and Sixes watersheds on both public and private forest roads. GRAIP surveys identify every location where water drains off a road, what kind of drain it is, any problem areas related to drainage, and where that water goes. Those data are then used to model sediment runoff from the road network to identify any areas where the roads may be damaged or poorly functioning. We can then work with landowners to get those sections of roads repaired so excess sediment from those roads doesn't flow into streams where it can cause problems such as degrading aquatic habitat or increasing the risk of erosion.



*A temperature logger deployed in a stream. Loggers are attached to weights or rocks to suspend them within the channel.*

Now that summer's here we're gearing up for another season of summer water temperature monitoring. We'll be deploying almost 60 continuous temperature loggers in streams throughout the New River, Sixes, Elk, and Rogue watersheds. These loggers collect temperature readings every 30 minutes all summer long. At the end of the season, the data from these loggers gives us a very clear picture of water temperatures throughout the season. This helps us identify areas where we could do work to help cool off water temperatures, or protect and enhance already cold temperatures that juvenile salmon need to protect them as they rest and grow in preparation for their journey out to sea.

## Education & Outreach

### Adults Can Learn Too!



*Dr. Stewart Reid presents at the Curry Public Library on Pacific Lamprey populations.*

Education is a treasure that no one can take away from you. Here at the Curry Watersheds Partnership we are all believers in lifelong learning. We believe it is extremely important for each individual on earth and fortunately, it has no time or age restriction. Our ability to continually learn to adaptively manage the changing landscape is our key to success in watershed restoration.

Over this year, the Lower Rogue Watershed Council is working on increasing the amount of adult education that we bring to our communities by providing presentations from outside experts about our natural world. We trust that these informal gatherings with your community will help to promote social inclusion, personal growth, and active stewardship of our lands. After all, our communities and landowners are our biggest partners in watershed restoration. Subjects already presented this year were Oregon Seals and Sea Lions, Pacific Lampreys, and Oregon's Beaches and Dunes.





*Dr. Susan Riemer, with OR Department of Fish & Wildlife, presents on her latest data with seal and sea lion populations.*

Stay tuned for more exciting presentations through 2023, including Pacific Martens, Invasive Weeds in Curry County, a Rogue River Assessment, King Tides, and more! Feel free to reach out to Kelly Timchak if you would like to request a topic. As Brian Herbert said “The capacity to learn is a gift, the ability to learn is a skill, and the willingness to learn is a choice.” Practice lifelong learning alongside us at the Curry Watersheds Partnership!

**“The capacity to learn is a gift, the  
ability to learn is a skill, and the  
willingness to learn is a choice.”  
~ Brian Herbert**



## Curry Watersheds Partnership Staff & Contractors

Annika Bratton Youth Education Program Coordinator  
Liesl Coleman Curry Soil and Water Conservation District Manager  
Barbara Grant NRCS Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) Technician  
Miranda Gray South Coast Watershed Council Coordinator  
Matthew Hubbard Field Technician  
Drew Harper Riparian Management Coordinator  
Erin Minster Technical Coordinator  
Robbie Lascheck Monitoring Coordinator  
Statia Ryder Seasonal Plover Monitor  
Mary Spini Seasonal Plover Monitor  
Matt Swanson Contracted Restoration Project Manager  
Kelly Timchak Lower Rogue Watershed Council Coordinator  
Dustin Williams Vegetation Management Program Project Implementation Manager  
Tammy Wills Operations Coordinator

## Acknowledgements

Funding for the work mentioned above has come from the Bureau of Land Management, National Ocean and Atmospheric Administration, Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board, National Association of Conservation Districts, Gray Family Foundation, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Combs Family Memorial Fund, Wild Salmon Center, Wild Rivers Coast Alliance, US Forest Service, and Oregon Parks and Recreation Department.



29286 Ellensburg Avenue  
Gold Beach, OR 97444  
Phone: (541) 247-2755  
[info@currywatersheds.org](mailto:info@currywatersheds.org)  
[www.currywatersheds.org](http://www.currywatersheds.org)

Curry Watersheds Partnership includes the Curry County Soil and Water Conservation District, the South Coast and Lower Rogue Watershed Councils, and the Curry Watersheds Nonprofit, working together to support our communities to care for our lands and waters, now and into the future. We rely solely on grants and donations and you can make a donation by visiting our website or contacting us at the information listed above.