

# News



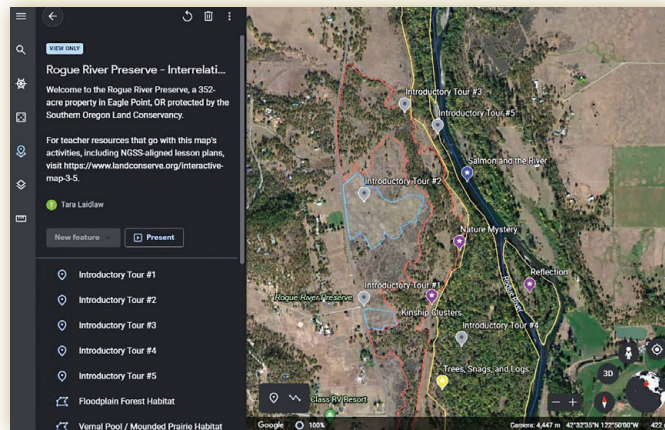
Southern Oregon  
**LAND**  
CONSERVANCY



## Land-Based Learning for the SOLC Community

**S**OLC has been protecting land in Southern Oregon since 1978, stewarding special properties to support biodiversity, resilience, and connectivity in our regional landscape. After years focusing on that aspect of conservation, we've begun opening the gates to a full suite of accessible, welcoming learning opportunities for local residents of all ages. Our education programs provide opportunities for participants to develop ecological and scientific literacy using SOLC's protected properties as living, breathing classrooms.

Among the first education offerings to launch was an interactive Google Earth map of the Rogue River Preserve. The map takes students on a self-guided tour of the property through photos, videos, and activities, introducing



[www.landconserve.org/interactive-map-3-5](http://www.landconserve.org/interactive-map-3-5)

*The interactive Google Earth map of the Rogue River Preserve takes students on a self-guided tour of the habitat through photos, videos, and activities.*

the Preserve's distinctive habitats, characteristic species, and dynamic interrelationships. The map also connects with standards-aligned science lessons for teachers to use during distance learning.

Even when schools can take field trips again, this digital resource will help us extend students' experience

of the Preserve by serving as pre- and post-visit content. This and other digital resources will continue to reach schools and students who are unable to come to the Preserve in person. And thanks to generous funding from the Avista Foundation, we are now embarking on translating  
*(continued on page 6)*

## From the Executive Director



Some of the biggest changes we're going through these days share a pattern. They seem to evolve slowly until, like buds unfurling from winter's dormancy—Kapow! We find ourselves in what may feel like a new world. Our relationships with climate and justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion are among those shifts gaining urgency in SOLC's work. These connections that bring us together are also front and center (again) in the national dialog.

The coming year we will also begin work to renew our strategic and conservation plans, formulated about four years ago, so that racial and social equity and climate resilience

help guide our next steps. These efforts will make our conservation more effective and help our organization better reflect the whole community, as we continue our mission, extend our impact, and adapt to a world of dramatic change.

As with all our work, we will accomplish more, and more quickly, with your help. If you have experience to share and a willingness to help guide our journeys toward justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion for Black, Indigenous, Latino/a/x, and people of color, along with other marginalized and underrepresented communities, get in touch about participating in SOLC's Equity

Committee. Later this year, we will be organizing a dialog with partner groups to align our conservation work with future climate conditions, another place where our community members' participation can help shape SOLC's actions in the coming years. Then one day, or perhaps many days along the way, our work will bloom in shared celebrations of lasting ecological and cultural diversity.

Steve Wise,  
Executive Director

### A Snag—Your Choice of Sacrifice

*"A dead tree is more alive than a live tree."*  
—Forest ecologist Jerry Franklin

**As a political prisoner,  
you choose to become a tree,  
face the sun.**

**To let birds nest and forage,  
you grow in a swamp,  
thus critters have shelters.**

**When you are turned to a snag,  
you still stand tall in the mud,  
to feed insects that feed birds.**

**After dying, you live for centuries.  
From your vantage, the birds still come,  
sunning, drumming and hibernating.**

**Even after you fall as a log,  
you are home to fish and mushrooms,  
that attract birds and keep them fly.**

—Xiaoly Li



Photo by Laura Molnar, Flickr Creative Commons



## Snags, Downed Wood, and Fire:

*What are wildlife-loving landowners and land managers to do?*



By Lyndia Hammer, SOLC land steward

Here in southwest Oregon we are surrounded by unparalleled plant diversity, stunning scenic landscapes, and never-ending outdoor recreation opportunities. We share this landscape not only with each other, a diverse human community, but with a diverse community of birds, insects, reptiles, amphibians, mammals, forests, grasslands, chaparral covered slopes, dynamic streams, and rivers.

We also share this landscape with fire: a destructive and dynamic force that shapes the plant communities and human communities we know and love. As citizens of this dynamic and diverse bioregion, what is our responsibility to each other? What is our responsibility to members of our varied human communities, but also to our wildlife and plant

communities? How can we balance our need to keep our human homes and communities safe from wildfire, while also protecting the diversity of structures in the natural landscape upon which wildlife depend?

In the blog "Snags, Downed Wood, and Fire: What are wildlife-loving landowners and land managers to do?", forestry concepts are introduced that can help you protect the wildlife you love while also reducing fire risk around your home and in the forest interface. Read on to learn more at [www.landconserve.org/news/snags-large-downed-wood-and-fire](http://www.landconserve.org/news/snags-large-downed-wood-and-fire).

*About the author: Lyndia Hammer holds a Bachelor of Science in Biology from Southern Oregon University and a Master of Science in Forestry from the University of Missouri Tree Ring Laboratory. She has worked as a biological and forestry consultant in the Klamath-Siskiyou ecoregion since 1996.*

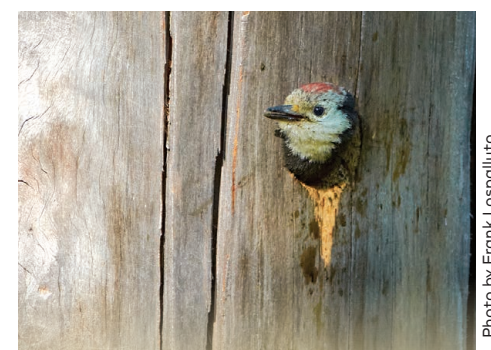


Photo by Frank Lospalluto

### FAST FACT

Jackson County, with 82 square miles, and Josephine County, with 119.1 square miles, have the greatest number of square miles of developed land in the urban/wildland interface in Oregon.

*Source: "Preparing for Climate Change in the Rogue River Basin of Southwest Oregon" report by The Resource Innovation Group, Geos Institute and the USDA Forest Service PNW Research Station*

## Chaparral is for the Birds

Walking through the buckbrush chaparral at Rogue River Preserve, you will encounter a unique group of birds that almost exclusively forage and raise families in the shrubs. Chaparral is a fire-adapted shrubland community found in Mediterranean climates. If you ride your horse through the pokey plants, wearing chaps is recommended—hence the name.

Deer and elk also forage on the buckbrush, creating unique woody shapes, some reminiscent of bonsai. At the base of the manicured shrubs, you may hear a soft metallic “chink,” the call of a skulking and elusive bird, the California Towhee. Take a breath, practice deep listening, and eventually you may glimpse this subtle beauty. Last winter, researchers from Arizona managed to capture one at the Preserve, took blood samples for a taxonomic study, and released the bird with an identification bracelet (pictured at right).



In early April, when the diminutive rare white fairypoppy flower is in bloom under the buckbrush, watch for a flick of feathers, listen for the squeak of a cat toy, and grin if you glimpse a small acrobatic blue-gray sprite, the Blue-gray Gnatcatcher. Truly one of the cuter birds of the world, this gnatcatcher is near the edge of its range at the Preserve and breeds in mature buckbrush. The Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board classifies it as a priority bird for conservation.

A perky long tail, all in a twitch, a dramatic white eyebrow, and a boisterous song are signs you have found a Bewick’s Wren, a year-round resident. If the bees are mobbing the buckbrush flowers, they also may be mobbed by herds of Yellow-rumped Warblers who dine on the insects visiting the flowers. These busy warblers are not chaparral-specialists but are commonly seen when the air is scented with buckbrush posies.

Remnant valley-floor chaparral continues to disappear, transformed into vineyards and subdivisions. But the chaparral at the Preserve is for the birds as well as for the bees, the deer, the moths, and the butterflies.

**Top left:** Bewick’s Wren on buckbrush.  
**Middle left:** Buckbrush chaparral shrubs in flower. Photo by Evan Barrientos  
**Bottom left:** Blue-gray Gnatcatcher.  
All bird photos by Frank Lospalluto



### UPDATE

## Upper Bear Creek Watershed Project

In our Spring 2020 newsletter we introduced the Upper Bear Creek watershed project which is identifying and cultivating opportunities for collaborative conservation in the watershed. Framed by the Cascade Mountains to the east and the Siskiyou Mountains to the west, the upper Bear Creek watershed includes striking rock outcroppings and a mosaic of grasslands, farms, and forests. Upper Bear Creek features outstanding scenic qualities, along with key habitat and water quality

that support recovering native fish populations.

Private lands in the watershed are important links in regional connectivity corridors that are essential to climate resilience. Securing conservation of larger tracts complements already protected areas of the watershed such as the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument and the U. S. Forest Service lands to the west.

All these qualities make Upper Bear Creek worth protecting. While COVID-19 limitations

required some adjustments to the project, we completed several outreach and analysis activities last year. We evaluated priorities with input from conservation professionals active in the watershed and we have updated our mapping files with detailed, current data describing the project area’s ownership and natural values. Those assessments have initiated potential pilot acquisition projects for conservation of lands in the project area and we are in discussions about others. Stay tuned!



### ➤ Calling all Upper Bear Creek watershed landowners

If you are a large-acreage landowner in the Upper Bear Creek watershed and are interested in learning how all or part of your land could be put into conservation, feel free to reach out to SOLC staff at 541-482-3069 or look at the project page on our website at [www.landconserve.org/news/upper-bear-creek-watershed-project](http://www.landconserve.org/news/upper-bear-creek-watershed-project). If your land meets our criteria, we may be able to partner with you.



### Land-Based Learning for the SOLC Community

*(continued from front page)*

the student-facing components of the map into Spanish so that people who are native Spanish speakers in our local schools can fully immerse themselves in la Preserva del Rio Rogue.

Another digital resource that we're excited to offer is a StoryMap focused on Oredson-Todd Woods, a park owned by the City of Ashland and protected by a conservation

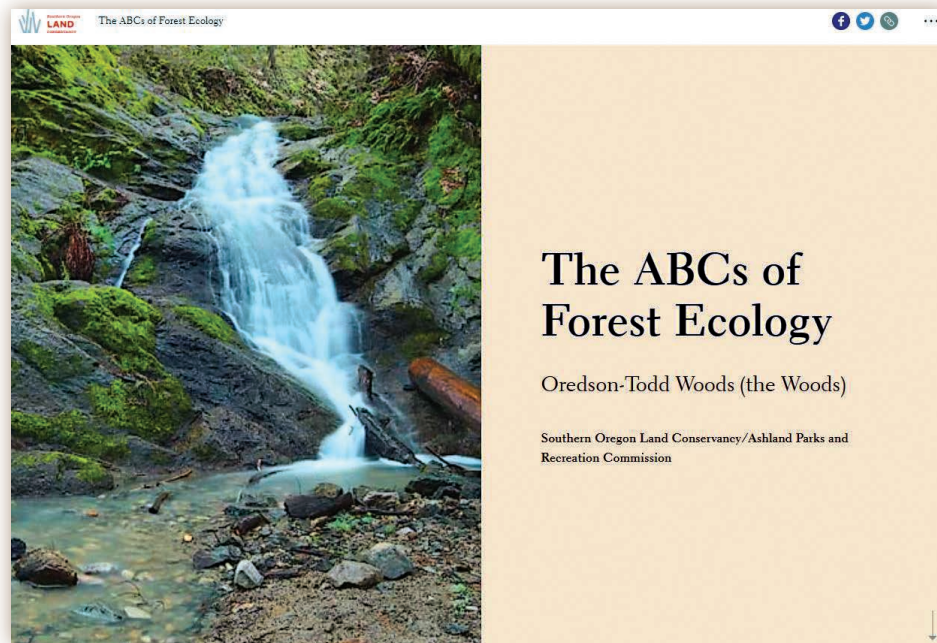
easement held by SOLC. For years, we have hosted springtime field trips for local 4th and 5th grade classes at the Woods. Demand for these trips outpaced our capacity, and the students who participated only got a short facilitated visit at the park.

Now, in partnership with Ashland City staff, we have published a digital trail guide that invites visitors to make close observations, activate their curiosity, and learn about dynamic relationships in ecosystems along a one-mile loop through the

park—or from the comfort of home. The resource helps locals connect with this gem of a park, and like the map of the Rogue River Preserve, we will soon translate the stories into Spanish for a more inclusive reach in our community.

Although pandemic safety precautions disrupted many of our in-person offerings this year, we successfully launched a volunteer docent program. Our docents have so far helped staff during the Open Lands Day we held at the Rogue River Preserve on January 20, welcoming visitors, encouraging them to get to know the floodplain forest's features and creatures, offering guidance on the trails, and sharing information about SOLC and our work. As our field trip programs ramp up—at the Preserve and at other publicly-accessible lands that SOLC protects like Oredson-Todd Woods, Jacksonville Woodlands, and some exciting upcoming acquisitions—we are looking forward to having our docents facilitate hands-on, minds-on activities for school groups to inspire the next generation of land stewards.

We are so excited to be implementing accessible and inclusive education opportunities that use conserved lands as living classrooms. Whether on foot or online, there's much more learning to come!



*In partnership with staff at the City of Ashland, we have published a digital trail guide focused on Oredson-Todd Woods that can be found on our website at [www.landconserve.org/education](http://www.landconserve.org/education).*



Photo by Linda Thomas

### VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT Liz Landreth, SOLC Docent

SOLC docent Liz Landreth loves the richness of Southern Oregon's biodiversity, the complexity of the underlying geology, and the region's countless hiking spots.

"It's just an amazing place," she says of the area that has been her home since 2013.

Since she volunteered at Yellowstone as a teenager, Liz has channeled her lifelong love of wildflowers into leading interpretive flower walks for a variety of groups and organizations—now including SOLC. Between her Master Naturalist certification, her experience facilitating learning for kids and adults, and her commitment to helping people get out and enjoy the outdoors, Liz is a fantastic addition to our docent team. For more information on the docent program, call 541-482-3069, ext. 111 or email [tara@landconserve.org](mailto:tara@landconserve.org).



### LEAVING A LEGACY

## The Microclimates Made Him Do It

For nearly 25 years, he was Southern Oregon's Chief Meteorologist on local ABC news affiliate KDRV-TV. Since then Scott Lewis has thrived as a real estate broker helping people with residential and commercial transactions. One of the things in his life that has not changed is his love and appreciation for the outdoors and open space. He and his wife Cherie enjoy hiking,

biking, rafting and skiing, all of which are in abundance close to their home in Medford.

As a meteorologist Scott traveled around the Rogue River region's microclimates and came to deeply appreciate the diversity and quality of the wildlands in this place we all call home. This is part of what inspired Scott to include SOLC in his and Cherie's estate plans, but Scott's curiosity and reverence for the land started long before he started telling us what to expect from the next day's climate. Scott's father was a member of the climbing group The Mazamas, and was a degreed zoologist.

"I didn't really play conventional sports. We looked at rocks, lizards, plants, tide pools and things like that for fun," says Scott.

And although his father passed away when Scott was just 10 years old, the times they shared clearly left a lasting impression.



#### Our Mission

To protect and enhance precious land in the Rogue River region to benefit our human and natural communities.

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[info@landconserve.org](mailto:info@landconserve.org)



"I love the mission of SOLC. I look to the future and am so pleased to think I cannot only help people now, but also generations to come enjoy what we love about natural Southern Oregon today," says Scott.

If you have already included SOLC in your estate plans, please let us know so we can ensure your wishes are honored. If you would like more information about how to leave a lasting legacy like this, we can help you. Call our Development Director Kelly Gonzales at (541) 482-3069, x104 or email her at [kelly@landconserve.org](mailto:kelly@landconserve.org).



Southern Oregon

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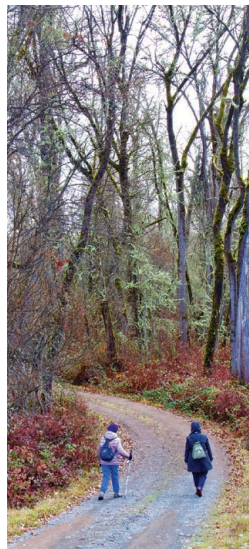
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# UPCOMING EVENTS

## Rogue River Preserve Open Lands Day

Saturday, April 17, 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m., Eagle Point

Stroll and explore the 354-acre Rogue River Preserve on Open Lands Day. Staff and volunteer docents will welcome you and offer guidance on where to explore and what to look out for on the trail and along the river. This is also a great opportunity to learn more about the work SOLC is doing to protect land, water, and wildlife habitat on the valley floor. To limit crowding on the trails and encourage social distancing, we are requiring registration for specific time slots for this event. Masks are required. For more information and to register for this event, visit the Events section of our website at [landconserve.org](http://landconserve.org), email [info@landconserve.org](mailto:info@landconserve.org), or call 541-482-3069.



Photos by Linda Thomas

## NATURE TALK

### Get No Respect

Wednesday, April 21,  
6:00-7:30 p.m., Zoom online

Increase your bioregional IQ during our spring virtual event entitled “Get No Respect.” Pour yourself a favorite beverage and join us in exploring the ecology of Southern Oregon with a variety of speakers. Inspired by the comedian Rodney Dangerfield’s tagline, we’ll highlight plants and animals that do not receive much respect such as chaparral communities, poison-oak, oak mistletoe, western rattlesnakes, millipedes, snags, and Turkey Vultures. Everyone will leave with new knowledge and respect for lesser-known and underappreciated species.

More information about this event and others can be found on our website at [landconserve.org](http://landconserve.org). You can also email [info@landconserve.org](mailto:info@landconserve.org) or call 541-482-3069.



Photo by Frank Lospalluto

SAVE  
the  
DATE

## 2021 Conservation Celebration Goes Virtual

Saturday, May 15, 6:00 p.m.

Save the date for SOLC’s annual gala and fundraising event on Saturday, May 15, 2021 from 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. This is our big night of fun celebrating conservation and saluting YOU with an evening of inspiring virtual presentations with special guests.

The week leading up to the event will feature a stellar online auction full of intriguing and adventure-filled items. All proceeds will be used to further our mission of protecting and enhancing precious land in the Rogue River region to benefit our human and natural communities.

Tickets are \$25 per guest or \$50 per household. Can’t attend? Sponsor a ticket for a student or volunteer. For more information and to register for this event, visit the Events section of our website at [landconserve.org](http://landconserve.org), email [info@landconserve.org](mailto:info@landconserve.org), or call 541-482-3069.

The week leading up to the event will feature a stellar online auction full of intriguing and adventure-filled items.



Photo by Joel Zwink

