

# *Straub Quarterly*

*Friends of Straub Environmental Learning Center*

*"In partnership with the community, we create awareness and understanding of our relationship to the environment."*

## 3rd Annual Family Nature Night a Success

By CASSANDRA COOPER

### Inside this issue:

Environmental Lecture Series Concludes	2
Volunteers Wanted!	2
<b>Feature Article:</b> End Your Hose Woes!	3
Calendar of Events	4
CALLING ALL VENDORS!	5
Don't Kill Your TV	5
Thank You Donors!	6

### Our Work

- Environmental Lecture Series
- Amateur Naturalist Series
- Sustainability Workshops
  - Family Nature Night
  - Environmental Youth Summer Camp
  - Site for community meetings on environmental and sustainability issues
- Native Plant Landscape Restoration Site

**O**n May 22 the Friends of Straub Environmental Learning Center (FSEL) hosted its third annual Family Nature Night at Salem's Hallman Elementary. Formerly known as "Family Science Night", the FSEL chose to change the name because of the program's strong emphasis on nature and the environment. Each year the FSEL gathers volunteers from surrounding community organizations with expertise in environmental education to present information to K-5 students and their families. Organizations included: Oregon Trout, Oregon Department of Forestry, City of Salem, Marion Soil and Water Conservation District (Marion SWCD), Willamette Mission State Park, Marion County Public Works, and individual volunteers Bill Hastie and Rachel Walker.

The objective of Family Nature Night is for families to accomplish sense of direction toward sustainability and to make informed decisions as a team. Recycling sorting, animal skull identification, and native plant stenciling were just a few of the many interactive activities families could enjoy. Susan LaFontaine of the Oregon Raptor Center in Mill City gave a presentation about birds of prey with two live birds as her assistants: a red-tailed hawk and a great horned owl!



*Ron Crouse of Marion SWCD teaches students and families about native plants.*

With over 180 participants attending Family Nature Night at Hallman Elementary, the FSEL deemed this year's program a success. Not only were the numbers impressive, but the interactions between students and their families created a more dynamic and educational event.

"Family Nature Night seeks to raise expectations for students, encourage questions, emphasize future education, encourage creativity, and connect students to career role models," says Jon Yoder, founder of the FSEL. The FSEL plans to host another Family Nature Night at a different Salem elementary school in the spring of 2009.

# Environmental Lecture Series Concludes with Pulitzer Prize Winner

By KAREN ARABAS



Pulitzer Prize winning journalist, author, and university professor William Dietrich wrapped up the 2008 lecture series, speaking on the future of Pacific Northwest forests on May 29<sup>th</sup>. Dietrich's lecture, titled "Seeing the Forest from the Trees: The Northwest in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century" outlined the challenges PNW forests face, but also provided an optimistic message regarding our ability to meet these challenges. Challenges include the susceptibility of forests to fire and insects, the lack of consensus on how to burn and thin, inadequate funding to maintain forest health, wildland-urban interface issues, and the lack of commitment to stewardship on the part of private landowners. His optimism for addressing these issues is three-fold. First, Dietrich believes that science and technology have already helped improve the conditions of our forests and that they will continue to do so. Second, lots of progress has already been made, a situation he finds encouraging given the lack of political leadership on environmental issues over the past 8 years. Finally, population pressures appear to be declining in the PNW.

"Given a wake up call, people respond," he told the audience, encouraging them to participate in improving our forests by adopting an ecosystem view of the PNW and by holding leaders responsible for environmental decisions. He also called for better monitoring of environmental legislation, a willingness to be adaptive and creative in our solutions to problems, and formulating clear goals. Dietrich's vision of the PNW in 2100 is that of a better place than it is now, one of linked ecosystems and a sustainable society. He hopes the PNW will be the place the rest of the world seeks to emulate.

**The 2008-2009 season of the Environmental Lecture Series begins  
October 23, 2008. Stay tuned for more information!**

## VOLUNTEERS WANTED!

The Friends of Straub Environmental Learning Center (FSEL) would not be who we are today without the help of volunteers. The FSEL is an entirely volunteer-based non-profit organization that needs your help!

If you would like to volunteer, but do not see anything listed that interests you, never fear! The list is endless!

*Below is a list of desired skills and/or tasks that would benefit us greatly:*

- RESTORATION!
- Newsletter Coordinator
- Office assistance
- Thank you letters
- Publicize/ promote programs
- Grant writing
- Create community Partnerships



To volunteer, please contact us [fselc@fselc.org](mailto:fselc@fselc.org) or call the Straub Center at (503) 391- 4145.

**THANK YOU!!!**

## End Those Hose Woes!

### How to design a water-efficient yard

By BECKI WALKER



It should come as no surprise that our water consumption spikes in the summer. As temperatures climb, we drink more, sweat more, and use plenty of water to soap said sweat off of us. There's washing the car, giving Fluffy and Rex their baths, and filling the pool, too. All told, the approximately 177,000 residents served by the City of Salem use 55 million gallons of water per day in the summer, compared with 17 million gallons per day in the wintertime.

Nationwide, less than 1% of our drinking water is actually drunk. Where does it go? Mostly, to our yards. Depending on which way the sprinklers face, we may also water our sidewalks, our parking lots, and our homes. The easiest thing you can do to reduce your water consumption is to take a long, critical look at your lawn. The option that will take the least amount of energy is giving up the illusion that summer yards in Oregon should be lush and verdant. That's right -- turn off the sprinklers. Your grass may look like toast, but that's how grass should be when it's not watered for months.

If you can't bring yourself to shut the sprinkler off, conduct a self-audit of your system. Does anything leak? How much water are you putting on the lawn each week? The City of Salem has free gauges you can use to determine whether or not your lawn meets the 1" per week standard we recommend. Check to see *where* the water is going – sidewalks don't need to be watered, but plants do. Set your sprinklers to run in the early morning or late evening. If your system is running in the middle of the day, half of the water evaporates before hitting the ground.

**“...177,000 residents served by the City of Salem use 55 million gallons of water per day in the summer...”**

If you're feeling more adventurous, start ripping your grass out. Typical yard grasses need lots of water to survive. If you're enamored of the idea of having a broad expanse of lawn, you can replace your grass with a slower-growing variety. There are a number of local companies patenting grasses that don't require much water to thrive. A bonus is the fact that these grasses don't need to be mowed as often – only about once a month. Now is the time to start reseeding, so if you'd like to spend next summer behind a book instead of the lawnmower, this could be an option.

If you're looking to get away from having grass in your yard, consider xeriscaping – that is, “dry landscaping.” Learn about plants you've already got, and group plants that need similar amounts of water together. Water any new flora with drip irrigation, instead of sprinklers. Stick to native varieties of plants, as they're already adapted to our climate and unlikely to need a lot of water or extra care. Water any new shrubs for the first 2-3 years after you plant them, if possible. Use mulch around your new plants – this will create a blanket that will help the soil retain moisture. Keep your soil strong with plenty of compost, too – healthy soil means healthy plants.

Whether you choose to simply switch off the sprinkler or decide to get your hands dirty with a major gardening renovation, consider doing something to reduce your water consumption. We all live downstream, and it's not very neighborly to let that stream run dry.

#### Resources:

- The City of Bend has a great website about xeriscaping: [www.ci.bend.or.us/depts/public\\_works/waterwise\\_conservation/xeriscape.html](http://www.ci.bend.or.us/depts/public_works/waterwise_conservation/xeriscape.html)
- Oregon State University's Extension Office has just put out a guide called “Garden Smart Oregon,” featuring native plant varieties, which may downloaded here: <http://extension.oregonstate.edu/catalog/pdf/ec/ec1620.pdf>
- If you'd like some design ideas for your garden, check out the demonstration gardens featured in this website: [www.ci.corvallis.or.us/downloads/pw/PGDemonstrationGardens.pdf](http://www.ci.corvallis.or.us/downloads/pw/PGDemonstrationGardens.pdf)
- Get a free rain gauge or other water conservation materials, call the City of Salem (503) 588-6323.

For a monthly email of events please send an email to [fselc@fselc.org](mailto:fselc@fselc.org) with "Monthly Reminder" in the subject heading.

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### June

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

#### Oak Savannah/Riparian Restoration

Restoration projects take place at the Straub Environmental Learning Center (SELC), in our beautiful native Oak Savannah and along the banks of Mill Creek.

#### YOUTH RESTORATION DAY!

**\*\*\*JULY 10, 8:30AM\*\*\***

Calling all YOUTH! Come help us with our restoration project! **Ice cream sundaes** and **FREE** swim at Olinger Pool provided after all of your hard work! Please contact Cassandra (503) 391-4145 or [cassandra@fselc.org](mailto:cassandra@fselc.org) if you plan to attend/ more info.

#### Other Restoration Dates:

**Saturdays, 9am-12pm**

June 21

July 19

August 16

Please bring gloves, a trowel, and a reusable mug if you can. These restoration events will continue into the fall, and hopefully become year-round!

For more information about restoration events, please contact the FSELIC at [fselc@fselc.org](mailto:fselc@fselc.org) (503) 391-4145.

### July

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

#### Amateur Naturalist Series

##### Urban Nocturnal Wildlife

**\*\*\* June 26, at 7 pm @SELC \*\*\***

Jon Mayer and Josh Travers of the Oregon Dept. of Forestry will lead a discussion about native nocturnal animals @ SELC. This lecture also includes a trip to Minto-Brown Island Park from 8:30 p.m. until 10 p.m. on June 28th.

Cost: \$5. Registration required.

##### Salem Paddle

**\*\*\*July 26, 9am-2pm @Wallace**

##### Marine Park\*\*\*

Join us for a paddle with the Willamette Riverkeepers! Explore six miles of river from Wallace Marine Park to Spongs Landing. Canoes and gear are free. You are welcome to bring your own craft or reserve a canoe and gear for free. Registration Required. Please Call: (503) 223-6418.

### August

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1 2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

#### Other Events

5% Solution to the Climate Crisis  
**\*\*\*June 17, July 15, and August 19**

**6:30pm- 8:30pm @ SELC\*\*\***

Oregon Peaceworks will discuss global climate change and what you can do to reduce your carbon footprint and make a difference in your community! Event is free, and open to the public. Please call the Oregon PeaceWorks office at (503) 585-2767 for additional information.

#### Eco-Bike Tour

**\*\*\*July 26, TBA\*\*\***

The Salem Art Association (SAA) is coordinating a bike tour of all of the environmental organizations around Salem. Check back on our website and monthly emails for more info!

#### Enviro Panel Discussion

**\*\*\*August 2, 2pm-4pm\*\*\***

Partnered with SAA, FSELIC will host a panel discussion on an environmental topic TBA. Check our website for updates!

## CALLING ALL VENDORS!

Register your booth for the Straub Sustainable Holiday Market NOW!

The Straub Sustainable Holiday Market is looking for SUSTAINABLE VENDORS to set up shop at our first ever eco-conscious holiday market!

**WHO:** Friends of Straub Environmental Learning Center (FSELc)

**WHAT:** Straub Sustainable Holiday Market

**WHERE:** West Salem High School Commons

**WHEN:** Saturday November 22, 2008

**WHY:** Fundraiser for the FSELc!

APPLY FOR YOUR BOOTH BY **JULY 22!!!**

If you are a producer/vendor who is interested in having a booth at the market or would like to recommend someone please contact Laurie at [fselc@fselc.org](mailto:fselc@fselc.org) or call (503) 364-4324.

Applications are available on our website at [www.fselc.org](http://www.fselc.org)



## Don't Kill Your Television (Just Yet)

Adapted from Portland Master Recycler Newsletter

There may be all sorts of reasons to hate your television (or at least unplug it when you are not using it). But the waste prevention community hopes you won't toss the tube just because of the upcoming federally mandated switch to digital. All U.S. television stations are required to switch from analog to digital only broadcasting by Feb. 17, 2009. The switch will free up airwaves for public safety communications (i.e. police, fire and emergency rescue) and wireless services.

There is public confusion as to what this means for those who do not own a High Definition Television. Reuse organizations are worried that they will be flooded with unwanted TV's. Waste prevention advocates are concerned people will believe they must replace perfectly functional televisions. Master Recyclers can be a big part of preventing unnecessary ewaste.

Here are a few quick messages you could add to your presentations and information booths this summer:

- Keeping your existing TV is the best option, both environmentally and financially.
- A cable or satellite subscription will allow your analog or digital television to receive digital broadcasting.
- If you use an antenna, you can purchase a converter box that easily hooks up to your television and will allow your analog TV to receive digital broadcasting. (You do need a good antenna.)
- Until March 31, 2009, households can request up to two \$40 coupons from the federal government toward the purchase of eligible converter boxes. To request a coupon go to: [www.dtv2009.gov](http://www.dtv2009.gov)
- If you do choose to replace your TV, the best choice is to give your old one to a friend or charity.
- If the television is broken, it can be recycled for free at the Marion County Recycling and Transfer Stations.

### Resources:

- [www.dtv2009.gov](http://www.dtv2009.gov) OR call 1-888-DTV-2009– to request a converter box voucher.
- <http://www.consumerreports.org/> - Search "DTV Converter Boxes".
- <http://www.dtvtransition.org/>
- <http://www.epa.gov/eCycling/tv-convert.htm>





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Visit us on the Web!  
[www.fselc.org](http://www.fselc.org)

## A SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR FABULOUS DONORS!

Please take a moment to read through these fabulous donors who have so graciously donated funds to the Friends of Straub Environmental Learning Center. These funds will help provide the continuation and growth of our programs and activities such as the Environmental Lecture Series, the Amateur Naturalist Series, and Family Nature Night.



Richard & Kath Abel  
Laurie Aguirre  
Marvin Baker  
Michael K. Becker  
George & Frankie Bell  
Joe & Edith Benninghoff  
Robert Bergstrom  
Ken & Linda Bierly  
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Rebecca Smith  
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Marie Stephens  
Mary Stillings  
Pat Straub  
Loraine Stuart  
Paul Suter  
Pat Tilley  
Pamela Triplett  
Alma Wells  
Karla Wenzel  
Sharon Wright

If you would like to donate funds to the FSELc please contact Cassandra Cooper, [cassandra@fselc.org](mailto:cassandra@fselc.org) or call (503) 391- 4145.