



THE WEST EUGENE WETLANDS

Wetland Word

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Issue 1

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Quick Facts

Vernal pools are ponds that disappear in the summer. Macroinvertebrates have all developed ways to deal with the dry period. Many have eggs which are resistant to drying and simply lie on the surface until the return of the winter rains when they hatch. Next time you are out hiking or biking through our wetlands, look at the vernal pools and imagine the life going on there just below the surface.

Life Aquatic

A West Eugene Wetlands Citizen Science Project explores what's lurking in vernal pools

By Cary Kerst, photographer and entomologist

We all see them—those low places in our wetlands that collect and hold water for varying periods of time in the winter. Did you know that there is a world of activity below the surface of that water even on these cold, wet winter days? Vernal pools are the habitat of many macroinvertebrates. Our waterfowl and shorebirds know about the life in these pools. You might see them picking or filtering things from the water and mud. They may be small, but macroinvertebrates are still visible to the naked eye.

Vernal pools are teeming with tiny shrimp-like copepods and ostracods which are similar but have a clam-like shell. These are very small organisms (.02-.03 inches) that feed on particles suspended in the water. Larger crustaceans in the pools include the amphipods, which are commonly called scuds, the case building caddisflies, beetles and their larvae, fly larvae such as midges, water boatmen, and backswimmers. The caddisflies and scuds feed on litter in the pool, including decaying leaves and grasses. Their predators include beetles and their larvae, backswimmers, and water boatman.

Read about the Vernal Pool Citizen Science Project on page 2...



*Caddisfly. Photo:
Cary Kerst.*

*One of the caddisflies in Willamette Valley vernal pools, *Grammataulius betteni*, builds a case of overlapping pieces of grass or sedge. They have developed a unique way of surviving. They emerge from the pupa to fly and find a protected spot to hide. Then they go into diapause through the hot summer months. When the weather cools and the rains begin, they become active and lay their eggs to start the cycle again.*

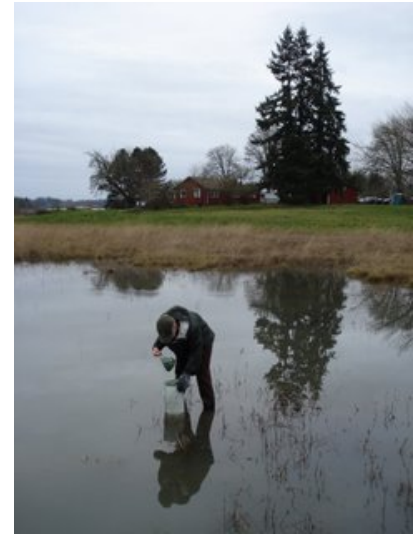


Continued from page 1: Vernal Pool Citizen Science Project

Now if just imagining what's going on below the surface isn't enough for you, there are opportunities to see the action up close! WREN is partnering with local scientists, including Cary Kerst, and community volunteers, for a new Citizen Science

Program. As the name implies, citizen science will gather scientific information around west Eugene to give us a better understanding of this area. Our first project in this program is the Vernal Pools Project. This winter we began a qualitative study of three vernal pool sites in west Eugene. We are looking for folks that have some field science background or a strong commitment to learn sampling protocol to join us in this endeavor this spring and fall. Call 683-6948 for more information-*Jules Abbott, WREN Environmental Educator.*

Photo (above, right) by Rick Ahrens. Vernal Pool studies have begun at ponds near the West Eugene Wetlands Project office off of Danebo Ave.



Blog Spot by Jules Abbott

The West Eugene Wetlands are alive with the sound of music! Chorus Frogs, a.k.a Pacific Tree Frogs, are getting ready for the warmer weather. As early as January, males begin to call to the females to breed. They are one of the smallest amphibians around with one of the loudest voices. They have a distinctive, two-part call that is sung in unison to let the females know they are available. Share your wetland experiences and photos at [wewwild.blogspot.com!](http://wewwild.blogspot.com)



Pacific Tree Frog. Photo: John Applegarth

We want to hear from YOU! We want to know how we can improve the newsletter of the West Eugene Wetlands for you. WREN is working to enhance the quality of this quarterly publication in content, design, and production. **You can save WREN money by opting to have a free, full color issue emailed to you instead of mailed.** Please send your name, requests, comments, and questions to info@wewetlands.org.

The *Wetland Word* is published quarterly by the Willamette Resources & Educational Network. Its purpose is to inform the community of events and restoration projects, and to increase understanding and appreciation of our local natural ecosystems. If you would like to be removed from the mailing list, please contact WREN. Contributors to this issue were: Cary Kerst, Rick Ahrens, Holly McRae, Liz Myers and Jules Abbott. Editor: Windy Hovey.

This newsletter is printed on 100% recycled paper!



Final presentation of the West Eugene Wetlands Education Center Master Plan

Public Meeting scheduled on St. Patrick's Day will have attendees seeing *GREEN*

March 17, from 6:30-8 p.m. in the Eugene Downtown Library, Rowell Brokaw Architects and the Miller | Hull Partnership will present site plans, building plans, renderings and a physical model for the Final Master Plan of the West Eugene Wetlands Education Center. Susan Castillo, State Superintendent of Public Instruction and Chair of the West Eugene Wetlands Education Center Capital Campaign, will open the public meeting with words of support for the project. The design team will explain how the project evolved in response to the excellent input of public participation and show how the Master Plan proposes to restore and transform the site. If you participated in focus groups or public meetings for the project, come and see how your ideas had a positive impact on the design. If you are new to the project, come and see the exciting vision for the this state-of-the-art facility!

West Eugene Wetlands Education Center Capital Campaign surges forward: \$1.4 million remains to be raised to complete the first phase

WREN has now reached 67% of our fundraising goal to build the first phase of the West Eugene Wetlands Education Center, which will include the Invitrogen Field Science Laboratory room, resource library, interpretive exhibits, green roof, and classroom. Pledge your support today! Visit www.wewetlands.org to make your pledge or join as a Capital Campaign volunteer.

Thank you to these recent West Eugene Wetlands Education Center Capital Campaign Supporters!

The Henry Lea Hillman Jr. Foundation
The Reeney Foundation
The Rockwood Trust

Coyote Creek Environmental Services
Cross Country Products
Hi-Tech Heat
Imagine Graphics

Public Affairs Research Consultants of Oregon (PARC)

Anonymous, Jules Abbott, Jim & Pat Anderson, Mel Bankoff, David & Judy Berg, Susan Castillo & Paul Machu, Vicki Singer & David Von Hippel, Josephine and Peter Von Hippel, Bill & Teresa Mason, Elisa Mason, Layne Mason, Holly, Matt & Avery McRae, Edgar Peara, David & Kitty Piercy, Charles Quinn, Pam Whyte & Ron Saylor, Tom & Victoria Schneider, Lauri Segel, Clare Sterling, Tim Whitley, Herb Wisner, Alan Zelenka & Susie Smith



Winter Astronomy Report with Rick Ahrens

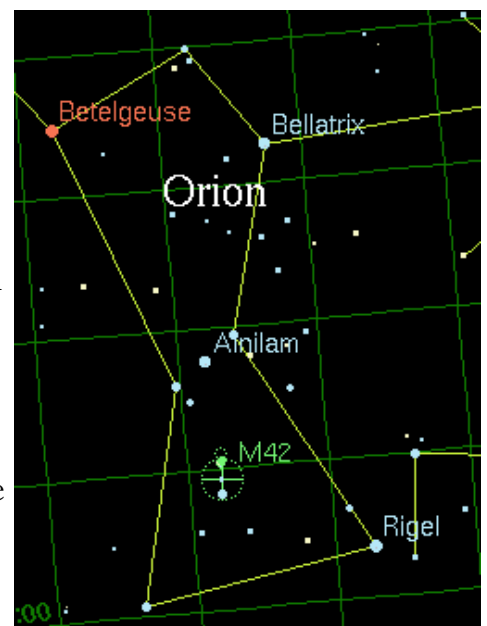
Whether you are a lark or an owl, now is a great time to tell your stars from your planets. Head out as soon as it's dark any clear evening (which is not too often this time of year) and face southeast. First, locate the very distinctive constellation Orion. Directly above Orion you will see what looks like a slightly yellow star. It's actually the planet Mars! If you watch it over the course of a few weeks or months you'll notice that it wanders against a background of "fixed" stars. In fact, *planet* is the Greek word for wanderer. Every two years Earth catches up to Mars and it appears very bright. The peak was in December so you can watch as the red planet appears to dim through spring.

Rising almost due east at about 9 p.m. is another wanderer – the spectacular ringed planet Saturn. It only takes a fifty power scope to see the rings. Saturn will reach opposition and be at its brightest in late February. For those of you who are larks, there is a wonderful early morning spectacle. About an hour before sunrise you will find the planet from where it has been determined that women come. Only the sun and our moon appear brighter than Venus, which is the brightest object in the southeast sky. This planet goes through phases like the Moon so watch it with steadied binoculars over the next couple of months. Below and not far from Venus is Jupiter, another bright wanderer. Its four tiny moons are visible through binoculars!

So...back to Orion and the winter hexagon of stars surrounding it. As you look at Orion, imagine a clock face around it. Follow his belt of stars down to the left at about 8 o'clock and you will see the brightest star in the sky, Sirius (I'm not kidding!). It is also called the dog star because it is in the constellation Canis Major. Continue on around clockwise and you will see Orion's other dog, the star Procyon. Continue around to 11 o'clock and you will see Castor and Pollus, the twins of Gemini. Keep going around and above and you will see Capella in the constellation Auriga, the Charioteer. Then come around past the Peides (which looks like a little dipper) to about 2 o'clock and you will see the reddish eye of the bull Aldebaran, in the asterism known as Hyades. (*Editor's note: an asterism is a pattern of stars that may, or may not, be a part of a constellation. The Big Dipper is a well known example.*) To complete the winter hexagon, come down from Aldebaran to about 5 o'clock and you notice the blue-white star Rigel, which is located at about the knee of Orion. There is also an interesting triangle of orange-red objects in the sky right now. From Mars, go to the right and down to find Aldebaran, then come down to the left to find a star called Betelgeuse (beetle juice) in the shoulder of Orion.

In general, stars scintillate (twinkle) because they are so distant from us. The light bends and distorts as it travels through the turbulent atmosphere surrounding Earth. Planets, however, are closer and produce a disk of light. Their more numerous rays of light combine to lessen the distortion.

Tip from the editor: The West Eugene Wetlands are a great area to escape city lights and gaze upon the night sky!



Orion. Image: Astronomy.net



West Eugene Wetlands Discovery Page

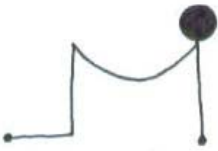


Wetland Yoga

Warm Up Positions



The Muskrat: Exhale, tuck the tailbone under, lift the navel to the spine and drop the head so it hangs loosely.



The Panther: Lift the tailbone up, drop the belly and lift the face and chest up to the ceiling. Alternate with the muskrat for 3-5 repetitions.



The Turtle: Sit on your knees with the hips over the feet. Lower the torso towards the floor with the arms to the side and your hands by the feet. Relax the head and neck.

The Heron: Stand straight and tall. Place the sole of the right foot against the inside of the left thigh. Use a wall or chair for balance if necessary. Repeat with left foot.



1) The Cattail: Inhale, lift the arms out to the side and raise up until next to the ears. Press the palms together.



2) The Willow: Exhale, lower the arms back to the sides, swan-dive the upper body forward and fold over the legs.



3) The Dragonfly: Inhale, step the right leg back behind you to a long lunge.



4) The Water Strider: Hold breath, step the left leg back to meet the right leg. Hold the body straight like a push up with straight arms.



5) The Snake: Inhale, slide forward along the floor. Keep the bottom ribs on the floor as you lift the chest slightly.



6) The Mangrove: Exhale, tuck the toes under and reach the sit-bones to the sky to make an upside-down V. Allow the spine to lengthen.



7) The Dragonfly: Inhale, step the right leg back behind you to a long lunge.



8) The Willow: Exhale, lower the arms back to the sides, swan-dive the upper body forward and fold over the legs.



9) The Cattail: Inhale, lift the arms out to the side and raise up until next to the ears. Press the palms together.

10) Repeat steps 1-9, switching the lead leg.



WREN prepares for another packed spring season with UO Environmental Leadership Program students

By Liz Myers, WREN Environmental Education Specialist

Although there is never really a “down” season for the West Eugene Wetlands Education Program, WREN staff and volunteers have been spending the winter developing new programs and preparing for a busy spring season. The spring program calendar is filling up quickly and we are excited to have a strong group of volunteers ready to jump in once education programs begin!

A big thank you goes out to all of our dedicated volunteers who helped with education programs last fall: Amanda Atkins, Carol Petty, David Levering, Gwen Ayres, Heidi Gillespie, Larry Von Seeger, Mary Morrison, Richard Hand, Rick Ahrens, Sandra Bronstein, Sandra Sterry and Steve Jang. We look forward to working with all of you again in the spring!

Additionally, we are excited to have a new team of University of Oregon students who will be working with us this spring. Through the Environmental Leadership Program at the UO, six students, plus one graduate student adviser, will be learning how to be effective environmental educators. Last year’s team was such an asset to our program, we look forward to meeting and working with these new students.

Of course, there is always room for more volunteers, and now is a great time to get on board as we gear up for a great spring. If you’re interested in learning more about our volunteer program contact Liz Myers at liz@wewetlands.org or 683-6483.

Recent support for the education program provided by...

Coyote Creek Environmental Services, Elmira Automotive, Great Harvest Bread Co.,
McKenzie River Gathering Foundation, Papa's Pizza Parlor

Thank you to our most recent new and renewing WREN members!

Jules Abbott, Jim & Pat Anderson, Judy and David Berg, Alex Bronstein, Judy Cottrell,
Tom Jefferson, Eric Jones, Pam Joslin, Cary Kerst, Dulcy Lee, Susan Castillo & Paul Machu,
Elisa Mason, Layne Mason, Holly, Matt & Avery McRae, Liz Myers & Jonathan Brown,
Edgar Peara, David & Kitty Piercy, Charlie Quinn, Kathleen Reinhardt, David Roepke,
Pam Whyte & Ron Saylor, Tom & Victoria Schneider, Lauri Segel, Mike Shippey & Mary Minniti,
Clare Sterling, Vicki Singer & David Von Hippel, Josephine & Peter Von Hippel,
Tim Whitley, Herb Wisner, Mark & Jennifer Wyld, Alan Zelenka & Susie Smith

Become a business donor or member today! Visit www.wewetlands.org



**Meet the
WREN Board!**

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**Eric Nill
Member**

**David Piercy
Member**

David Piercy joins the board of WREN



David Piercy

WREN was thrilled to welcome David Piercy to the board in December! His extensive experience with nonprofits and in education will prove invaluable. David has served as Retired Deputy Superintendent of the Eugene Public Schools, former special education administrator and school psychologist, member and former chair of the Board of Directors of Head Start of Lane County, and chair of the Institutional Review Board – Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects – at Oregon Research Institute. He has also taught Education Law and Governance at the University of Oregon, served as interim Executive Director for Centro Latino Americano, and was a member of the Lane County Mental Health Advisory Committee.

The Henry Lea Hillman Jr. Foundation awards grant to WREN for the West Eugene Wetlands Education Center

The Henry Lea Hillman Jr. Foundation in Pittsburgh, PA, has awarded \$10,000 to the capital campaign to build the West Eugene Wetlands Education Center. The foundation is the first to dedicate funds to the campaign, which entered its public phase in 2007.

"It was especially invigorating to receive this award," said Holly McRae, Environmental Education Coordinator for WREN. "This grant will allow WREN to leverage funds from many other regional foundations. We are confident it is the first of what will be many grant contributions to this project."

National Wetlands Writers Contest

In celebration of American Wetlands Month 2008, Environmental Concern is hosting the Write On! Wetlands Challenge to create a book written and illustrated by kids. The writing competition is open to all students in grades 7-9 and the deadline is April 1, 2008. Once the winning manuscript is chosen, a call for artists will be made inviting students in grades K-6 to illustrate the story's words. The theme for 2008 is Marshy Migrations: Journeys of a Lifetime. For details visit www.wetland.org.



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West Eugene Wetlands

Wetland Word Newsletter

Winter 2008 Issue



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Calendar of Events

Saturday, March 8, 10-11:30 a.m. - Eggs & Nests Family Program

Discover the beauty and wonder of wetland bird nests and eggs. Participants will also have the opportunity to paint an egg to take home. Meet at the yurt, 751 S. Danebo Ave. Suggested donation: \$2 for members and \$4 for nonmembers. Call 683-6494 to register.

Monday, March 10 - Program Fundraiser at Track Town Pizza

Join WREN at Track Town Pizza on Franklin Blvd. across from campus. All day long Track Town will be donating 50% of its on site sales to the West Eugene Wetlands Education Program. Print a flyer from www.wewetlands.org/wren.asp and bring it with you. It is a great way to cheer up your Monday blues, so eat, drink, donate with WREN!

Monday, March 17, 6:30-8 p.m.

West Eugene Wetlands Education Center Public Meeting

Rowell Brokaw Architects and the Miller | Hull Partnership will present site plans, building plans, renderings and a physical model for the Final Master Plan of the West Eugene Wetlands Education Center in the Eugene Downtown Library.

March 24-27 - WREN is hosting a National Association for Interpretation (NAI) Certified Interpretive Guide training in the West Eugene Wetlands. Cost: (NAI member) \$318 (non-member) \$363. Call 683-6948 for information.

Wednesday Wetland Wanders

These wanders through many areas in the West Eugene Wetlands are for those who are interested in taking casual walks just to get out and explore. Wanders will occur each second and fourth Wednesday of the month, from 9-10 a.m. WREN will provide binoculars. Wear shoes that can get wet and muddy. March 12 - Tsanchiifin Walk * March 26 - West end of Royal Avenue * April 9 - Willow Creek Natural Area * April 23 - Stewart Pond