



# THE WEST EUGENE WETLANDS WETLAND WORD

VOLUME 2

SUMMER 2006

ISSUE 3



Steve Gordon and Cary Kerst, local authors of "Dragonflies and Damselflies of the Willamette Valley" will be featured in an upcoming *Oregon Field Guide* program on OPB! Filming of the authors at their favorite dragonfly hotspots in the West Eugene Wetlands will take place in July. The date the program will air is yet to be determined. WREN sells their guidebook online and receives 100 percent of the proceeds.

## We're on the Web! [wewetlands.org](http://wewetlands.org)

Phone: 541-683-6494

Fax: 541-683-6998

Email:

[wew@wewetlands.org](mailto:wew@wewetlands.org)

Send mail to:

WREN

751 S. Danebo

Eugene, OR 97402

## WEST EUGENE WETLANDS PARTNERSHIP 2006 AWARDS

The West Eugene Wetlands Partnership (WEWP) presented three awards this year at the annual WEWP Awards and Recognition ceremony in May. Awards go to community members who show commitment to continued success in the wetlands.

Award recipients for 2006 were: Paul Severns, an OSU graduate in botany studies for his rediscovery of the Great Copper

butterfly in the West Eugene Wetlands in 2004, and the information about butterfly ecology he has contributed; the University of Oregon Research team members Ph. D. candidate Laurel Pheifer-Meister, and professors Scott Bridgham, Bitty Roy, and Bart Johnson for their work under an EPA grant investigating various preparation techniques for wetland restoration;

**continued on page 5**

## OREGON STATE BIRD RETURNS TO RESTORATION SITES IN THE WEST EUGENE WETLANDS

by Windy Hovey, editor

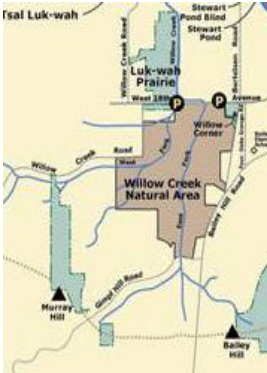
This photo of juvenile Western Meadowlarks at Willow Corner confirms that our state bird is benefiting from restoration work by the West Eugene Wetlands Partnership.

The Willow Corner Habitat Restoration Project, started in 2003, covers approximately 13 acres directly southwest of Bertelsen Road and West 18th Ave. This project illustrates collaboration between the BLM, city of Eugene and The Nature Conservancy. Adding to the success of the project are groups such as the NCCC Americorps, Northwest Youth Corps, Rachel Carson Natural Resources program at Churchill High School, Washington State University Vancouver students and numerous volunteers.



Photo: Rudy Salakory

**continued on page 2**



Willow Corner lies on the southwest corner of West 18th Ave and South Bertelsen Road

The *Wetland Word* is published quarterly by the Willamette Resources and Educational Network. Its purpose is to inform the community of events and restoration projects, and to increase understanding and appreciation of the West Eugene Wetlands. Dan Gleason and Jason Nuckols contributed to this issue.

Editor:  
Windy Hovey  
Comments?  
Questions? Email  
windy@wewetlands.org

## Willow Corner continued from page 1

The Willow Corner Project enhances habitat conditions for many native wildlife species associated with upland and wetland prairie habitats, including the Western Meadowlark. Site preparation included the removal of fill material spread on the site in recent decades in preparation for anticipated commercial development. After fill was removed, the native soils without the weed seeds were available for planting. Additionally, non-native plant species, like blackberry and Scot's broom were removed and replaced with native forbs and grasses. Management and monitoring of the site continue.

Although the North American Breeding Bird Survey data for the Willamette Valley shows a declining trend in the Western Meadowlark for the last 40 years, Western Meadowlarks are readily seen and heard at the Dragonfly Bend and Meadowlark Prairie restoration sites in the West Eugene Wetlands.

"The fascinating point to make is that we (the West Eugene Wetlands Partnership) are successfully restoring wetland and prairie habitat, and attracting the state bird back into areas previously unavailable or unsuitable for it," said Jason Nuckols, Willamette Valley preserve manager for The Nature Conservancy.

*Jason Nuckols contributed to this article*

## ALL ABOUT THE MEADOWLARK

*by Dan Gleason*

The Western Meadowlark is known to science as *Sturnella neglecta*, a name that was given to it by John James Audubon. It seems that when Lewis and Clark made their expedition, they simply referred to meadowlark, not recognizing that there were actually two species. Nor did later explorers and naturalists distinguish the two species. Audubon saw the subtle differences in color and pattern as well as the very different voices and named this species *neglecta* because it was neglected by so many. The common name is misleading, as it is not really a lark but a member of the Blackbird Family.

Early in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, this was a common bird of open lands throughout the state. Everyone was well acquainted with it and school children appealed to the Legislature to make this the state bird, and in 1927, it was officially designated as such. Since that time, the Western Meadowlark has undergone a serious population decline in the Willamette Valley. Although it is still very common in much of eastern Oregon, it is listed as a "sensitive" species in the Willamette Valley by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife. This decline is the result of increased agricultural lands displacing native grasslands, cattle trampling nests or young and the mowing of fields, most often timed just as these birds are on their nests. Undisturbed native grassland such as that now found at Meadowlark Prairie in west Eugene is what this species needs, and meadowlarks are doing well at this location. The population in west Eugene is one of the largest and healthiest now found in the Willamette Valley.

Like many other members of the Blackbird Family, Western Meadowlark males usually have two mates concurrently. These females are on separate nests within the territory of the male who defends them. Meadowlarks forage almost exclusively on the ground where they seek grains and seeds as well as a large variety of beetles, grasshoppers and other insects. The bright yellow breast, crossed by a broad black "V" makes this a striking bird to see but this pattern, combined with the brown streaks across the back, makes this bird difficult to see in a grassy field. While you may not see the birds, you can still hear their glorious songs ringing across the grasses as you enjoy our wetlands.



Illustration:  
Barbara Gleason



### MEET THE WREN BOARD

TIM WHITLEY  
PRESIDENT

ALLAN HUGHES  
VICE PRESIDENT

SUSANNE TWIGHT-  
ALEXANDER  
SECRETARY

BILL MASON  
TREASURER

JIM ANDERSON  
MEMBER

MIKE SHIPPEY  
MEMBER

WREN is a private,  
non-profit educational  
organization formed in  
2000.

### Volunteer!



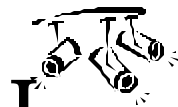
Contact  
WREN Volunteer  
Coordinator  
Liz Myers at  
[liz@wewetlands.org](mailto:liz@wewetlands.org)  
or (541) 683-6483

*Creating and supporting an education program and center that celebrates and encourages stewardship of the West Eugene Wetlands using resources and support from our community...*



Mike Shippey

**W**REN is excited to announce the addition of Mike Shippey to the board! Mike is the landscape ecologist and owner of Coyote Creek Environmental Services Inc., of Eugene. He has been involved with many projects to enhance the value of the landscape in the West Eugene Wetlands since 1988. Mike joined the board because he is eager to assist in the establishment of the West Eugene Wetlands Education Center.



### VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT ON LAUREN RODGERS

**L**auren graduated from Churchill High School this spring, and is now entering a new stage in life heading to OSU, where she will study environmental science and education. Lauren committed her time to assisting WREN staff for the past seven months with education about wetland habitats and animal food chains. She also helped with WREN booths, and led walking tours.

"When I began working with WREN I had considered environmental education as a career option, but didn't really know much about it. While working with WREN I learned so much about this field and will most likely study environmental education as a major," Lauren said. Lauren also enjoys designing clothes, hiking, riding her bike and identifying trees and flowers.



Lauren Rodgers in action. Photo: WREN

### WETLANDS MONTH 2006

MORE THAN 400 PARTICIPANTS CELEBRATE WITH WREN

**W**REN would like to thank the sponsors and all those who participated in American Wetlands Month 2006. More than 400 people attended wetlands month events or dropped by the WREN booth at local festivals throughout May. WREN celebrated with a variety of events including butterfly, wildflower and general nature walks in the wetlands, presentations on river otters and dragonflies, and a photo exhibit and reception in the downtown library. This year's sponsors were Eugene REI, Raven Frame Works of Eugene, BLM and the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board. We hope to see you in the wetlands again soon!



City of Eugene Wetlands Supervisor Eric Wold led a butterfly walk at Willow Creek Preserve June 3rd, wrapping up the 2006 American Wetlands Month celebration. Photo: WREN



## WREN MEMBERSHIP

Become a member of the Willamette Resources and Educational Network! Your membership with WREN makes it possible for more than 2,000 children to discover the wonders of wetlands first hand each year. In addition to the satisfaction of supporting WREN's education programs, members receive a *Wetland Word* quarterly newsletter delivered by mail or email, and email alerts of WREN events.

Please join our community of supporters! If you need more information please call 541-683-6494. Online membership sign up is available at [www.wewetlands.org](http://www.wewetlands.org). WREN is a 503(c)(3) non profit organization. We do not sell, rent or trade membership information to outside parties!

I would like to be a member of the Willamette Resources and Educational Network (WREN).  
Enclosed is a membership donation of:

\$1 child     
  \$5 student/low income     
  \$25 individual  
 \$35 family     
  \$75 sustaining     
  \$300 WREN club  
 \$\_\_\_\_\_ (other)

I would like to receive my newsletter by email instead of mail

I would like to be an anonymous donor

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip code \_\_\_\_\_

Phone/Email \_\_\_\_\_

Please make check payable to WREN and mail to:

WREN  
 751 S Danebo Ave  
 Eugene OR , 97402



### WEWP Awards continued from page 1

and Steve Gordon and Cary Kerst for their enormous success in putting the West Eugene Wetlands on the map as a dragonfly and damselfly hotspot. Their guidebook "Dragonflies and Damselflies of the Willamette Valley" was published in November 2005, and so far WREN has sold more than 800 books. All proceeds from the book sales support the WREN education program.

The WEWP also accepted two awards at the ceremony. The WEWP was recognized by the seven federal land management agencies for its partnership work in adaptive management. The award is an outcome of WEWP's participation in the Joint Ventures: Partners in Stewardship conference in Los Angeles in November 2003, where it was highlighted as a joint venture example.

The WEWP was also recognized as a case study at the 2005 White House Conference on Cooperative Conservation, another notable federal recognition. Last summer, under the leadership of the White House Council on Environmental Quality, the White House Cooperative Conservation Initiative (CCI) identified the WEWP as one of the nation's outstanding examples of principles identified within the Executive Order on Cooperative Conservation.

*Photos (right) : The Wetlands Executive Team; Steve Gordon and Cary Kerst; (left) Paul Severns (on the right in the photo) and the UO Research team*



## BRIGGS SITE OFFERS HABITAT FOR BUTTERFLIES AND NATIVE HOST PLANTS

**D**ick and Sally Briggs of Eugene have been working diligently to create 22 acres of wet and upland prairie paradise for the Fender's blue butterfly—and other wildlife—on their site in the West Eugene Wetlands.

Plantings on the site include most of the 22 butterfly host plants used by local agencies. In 2003, the Briggs began to plant Kinkaid's Lupine, the main host plant of the Fender's blue butterfly. This year, the Briggs noted 13 lupine flowering and more than 50 flower stems. Their plots on the site also now contain Willamette daisy, camas, yarrow, and other various grass and nectar plants

The Briggs Site, located west of Greenhill Road between Royal and Barger Ave, connects other nearby habitats in the wetlands: Fir Butte; Dragonfly Bend; Meadowlark Prairie; Luk-wah Prairie and Willow Creek Nature Preserve. These connected habitats reduce travel distance for the butterflies.

Dick Briggs said he enjoys contributing to the community through the project and notes that the work he does planting host species, and removing stubborn thistles and blackberries also proves to be good exercise. The North American Butterfly Association, The Nature Conservancy, and the Eugene Southtowne Rotary Club have also contributed to this project.



*Dick (left) and Sally Briggs (right)  
Photo: the Briggs*


**INSIDE THIS  
ISSUE:**

WEWP 2006 Community Awards and Recognition	1
Western Meadowlarks in the West Eugene Wetlands	1,2
WREN updates: new board member and volunteer spotlight	3
Briggs butterfly host plant site	5

## EVENTS

### **August 11, 10 a.m. Children's Dragonfly Walk**

What can streak like a fighter plane, hover like a helicopter, dive like a falcon and eat its lunch on the fly? It's not a bird, it's not a plane—it's a dragonfly! Join dragonfly experts Steve Gordon and Cary Kerst for a walk to learn about the biology, ecology and behavior of these ancient insects. Meet at the Wetland Project Office on the northeast corner of West 11th Ave and Danebo. Wear old shoes that can get muddy and wet. Bring sunscreen and water. Space is limited to 15.

### **August 12, 1 p.m. Dragonfly Walk**

Meet local experts, and authors of "Dragonflies and Damselflies of the Willamette Valley: A Beginner's Guide" Steve Gordon and Cary Kerst at the corner of Wallis St and 5th Ave We will have checklists, field guides, nets, and dip nets to give you an introduction to these fascinating and beautiful insects. Space is limited to 20.

### **August 23, 7 p.m. Family Marsh Walk**

Families are invited for an evening walk into the wetlands to discover the evening wildlife, enjoy the night skies and just listen to the natural quiet. Meet at the end of Royal Ave at the gate west of Fisher Road.

### **September 19, 6-7:30 p.m. WREN Volunteer Orientation**

Do you enjoy working with children outdoors? Do you want to learn more about the rare, native Willamette Valley habitat? Join us for an informal meeting to learn more about volunteering with WREN. Please contact Liz Myers at 683-6483 to attend or for more information.

\*Programs are free! To register, contact Holly McRae at [wew@wewetlands.org](mailto:wew@wewetlands.org) or 683-6494.

**WILLAMETTE RESOURCES &  
EDUCATIONAL NETWORK  
751 S. DANEBO  
EUGENE, OR 97402**