



Tapteal Greenway

Conservation-Education-Recreation on the Lower Yakima River Since 1995



The Bateman cleanup garbage ready for pickup by the City



Amon Elementary tour of Amon Creek Natural Preserve



Our four intrepid paddlers on June 5

Tapteal Talk

President's Message

By Dirk Peterson

Group Activities Are Back!

We held our first large group event in over a year in May with a Bateman Island/Wye Park cleanup. The weather turned out to be unsettled, but we still had twenty-two volunteers collect about thirty bags of garbage. The next week we lead all four fifth grade classes from Amon Creek Elementary on a brief field trip in Amon Creek Natural Preserve. That was a group of roughly one hundred students and staff! We look forward to participating in more school activities this fall. On June 5 we held our first recreation event with bird watching, hiking and paddling at Horn Rapids Park. Turn-out was disappointing but all attendees had a good time. We ended up with only four paddlers as several canceled due to predicted winds. Although it was a bit windy the paddling conditions turned out to be good. One of the paddlers was an avid birder who sighted thirty-four species during the paddle from Benton City to Horn Rapids. The sightings included bald eagle, osprey, American kestrel, Cooper's hawk and red-tailed hawk. Additionally, three night hawks and three great horned owls were spotted in Horn Rapids Park.

Our next event will be our second Tapteal Water Trail paddle on July 10. This paddle will be from Hyde Road to Bateman Island. Our final paddle of the season will be from Snively Road to Hyde Road and is tentatively planned for mid to late September. Be sure to read Adam's article about his favorite section of the water trail.

As mentioned in our previous newsletter, we will be holding our Annual Celebration on October 15. The event will be held at Tucannon Cellars event center again, but the format will probably be a bit different from past years. We are still working out the details.

Special Visitors to the Tapteal Greenway

By Mike Lilga

Who do you suppose visited the Tapteal Greenway this June? Owls, that's who.

One adult and two juvenile Great Horned Owls attended our National Trails Day event at Horn Rapids County Park on June 5. GHOs are considered uncommon, but can be found in various other places along the Greenway, such as Bateman Island and W.E. Johnson Park. They're big, but can be difficult to find because they sit still and look like a tree limb. They also fly silently because of special feathers on their wing edges that decrease air turbulence.

The other very special visitor was a Long-eared owl, captured by a trailcam at Amon Creek Natural Preserve. LEOs are rare and not often seen. There are also reports of them being heard recently in W.E. Johnson Park. Several years ago, a family could be found on Bateman Island but a large fire took out the Russian Olives where they could often be found and the owls disappeared.

Long-eared Owls might be misidentified as Great Horned Owls at first because of the prominent ear tufts, but upon closer examination LEOs are smaller than GHOs. LEOs are medium-sized and slender, about the size of a crow, whereas GHOs are large, between the size of a crow and goose. The breast of the LEO has vertical streaks, but the GHO has horizontal bars. The shape of the facial disk is also different. Check out <https://www.allaboutbirds.org/> for more information about identification, habitat, and behavior.

On June 12, Eagle Scout candidate Joseph Tuura (Troop 248 in Richland) completed a project to install three artificial owl nests at three different locations at Horn Rapids County Park. The idea came from Tapteal board member Adam Fyall and the project was mentored by Tapteal treasurer Stan Kuick. The design was based on internet research performed by Joseph, and consisted of a chicken wire cage lined with tar paper, which was fastened into a crook in a tree with stout wire using a lift truck. The three Great Horned Owls watched the installation with great interest and will let us know if they approve next spring!



Adult Great Horned Owl (Stan Kuick)



Juvenile Great Horned Owl (Diana McPherson)



Adult Long-eared Owl (TG Trail Cam)



Artificial Owl Nest (Stan Kuick)



Installation of Artificial Owl Nest (Stan Kuick)

Inaugural Tapteal Greenway 50K Run and Paddle

By Dan Hansen

The inaugural Tapteal Greenway 50K Run and Paddle was put on by the local Nomad Trail Runners group (<https://www.facebook.com/nomadtrailrunners/>) on May 15. The route for both the runners and the paddlers started at the Benton City boat launch at 7:00 am and finished at Bateman Island. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, participation was capped at 40 for each event. The weather was warm and clear and made for great running/paddling. Thirty-six paddlers finished the course, with the first place finisher coming in in 4:08:00. Thirty-five runners completed the course. The top male finished in 3:56:00 and the top female finished in 4:14:00. The Tapteal Greenway Board helped at two of the aide stations. The first was at the Wanawish Dam aide station/portage to help guide the paddlers out of the water and show them the put-in point. Tapteal Greenway also supported an aide station at the Duportail Bridge for the paddlers. Dirk Peterson, Adam Fyall, Mike Lilga and Stan Kuick helped at the aide stations. Dirk had a portable fan mister at Duportail that one runner especially liked (me). Road construction on Columbia Park Trail made the finish area at Bateman Island a bit of a challenge, but everyone managed to get into and out of the finish area. Next year will be a lot easier! There were two separate medals for the finishers - one for the runners and one for the paddlers. Pictured below is the runner version. Many thanks to Jason Reatherford (Race Director), the Nomad Trail Running Group, and all of the MANY volunteers that helped put this race on.



Socially distanced race briefing



Off they go! Runner start



Paddler start



Paddlers on the Yakima

50K Run and Paddle - continued



Paddlers on the dam portage



Runners going through Duportail



Duportail Paddler Aide Station



Runner version of the finisher's medal

Educational Activities

By Diana McPherson

A Hop and A Slither for Science

Reptiles and amphibians are fun and exciting to find along the trails. They occupy neighboring habitats (aquatic and terrestrial) within an ecosystem, often crossing temporarily to their neighbors' habitat for a quick meal.

Both species are susceptible to a variety of environmental changes which includes food shortages, extreme temperature fluctuations and habitat loss. Determining the distribution, diversity, and declines for both amphibians and reptiles is important for the overall health of the entire ecosystem.



By providing your observations, you become an invaluable tool to scientists to further their research, education and conservation efforts. Two organizations you can submit data to are H.E.R.P. and iNaturalist.

H.E.R.P. (North American Herpetological Education and Research Project) is free to use and provides valuable data to educators, scientists and the public. At least one photo is required along with the date, time and location of the sighting. Your observations are available to the public, but the location of the species of interest is only provided to the county level. This is to protect the more sensitive and vulnerable of species. Sign up for free at www.herp.com. Their app, *Mobile Mapper*, is available for iOS and Android and is also available through Google Play and the App Store.

iNaturalist is another data app, started as a joint effort of the California Academy of Sciences and National Geographic Society, which also provides valuable data to educators, scientists and the public. Photo observations are verified by scientists and shared with the Global Biodiversity Information Facility. Check out iNaturalist at www.inaturalist.org and download their free app for iOS and Android.

Being a "citizen scientist" is not only helpful to scientists, but increases your connection to nature.



Tapteal Water Trail Guided Paddles Return

by Adam J. Fyall

We generally support three guided paddles on the Yakima River each year to promote the water trail and enjoy some camaraderie and these have been getting more popular each year. Of course, this was completely off the table in 2020 as all three paddle events were cancelled.

We're back in 2021! We held our first guided paddle in the spring on the upper section of the water trail between Benton City and Horn Rapids Park. We are using the same rotation as usual, which has the upper section first, the lower section next, and then the middle section last. This is usually in October. In due course, we will explore that lower section on July 10 as our second event for 2021.

Each of the three sections has something different to offer. They travel in different directions, have different river characteristics, and flow through different parts of town. The three reaches are interesting and scenic in their own ways – similar, but distinct.

My particular favorite of the three is the middle reach, the one we do in the fall. For this section we generally put the watercraft in at Snively Road boat launch and take-out at Hyde Road. It is usually a bit cool in the morning, but this is also a predictably clear and calm time of the year. The river is narrower through this section with several islands. It has a more closed-in and intimate feel, flowing past The Barker Ranch and mostly through large-lot suburban residential areas. What passes for “fall color” in the Tri-Cities displays well through this section at this time. I encourage you to try this section out either with us or on your own.

As noted above, the middle section will be paddled on July 10. We have not yet set a date yet for the fall paddle. If you would like to be notified about these water trail events contact us and we will put you on the email list.

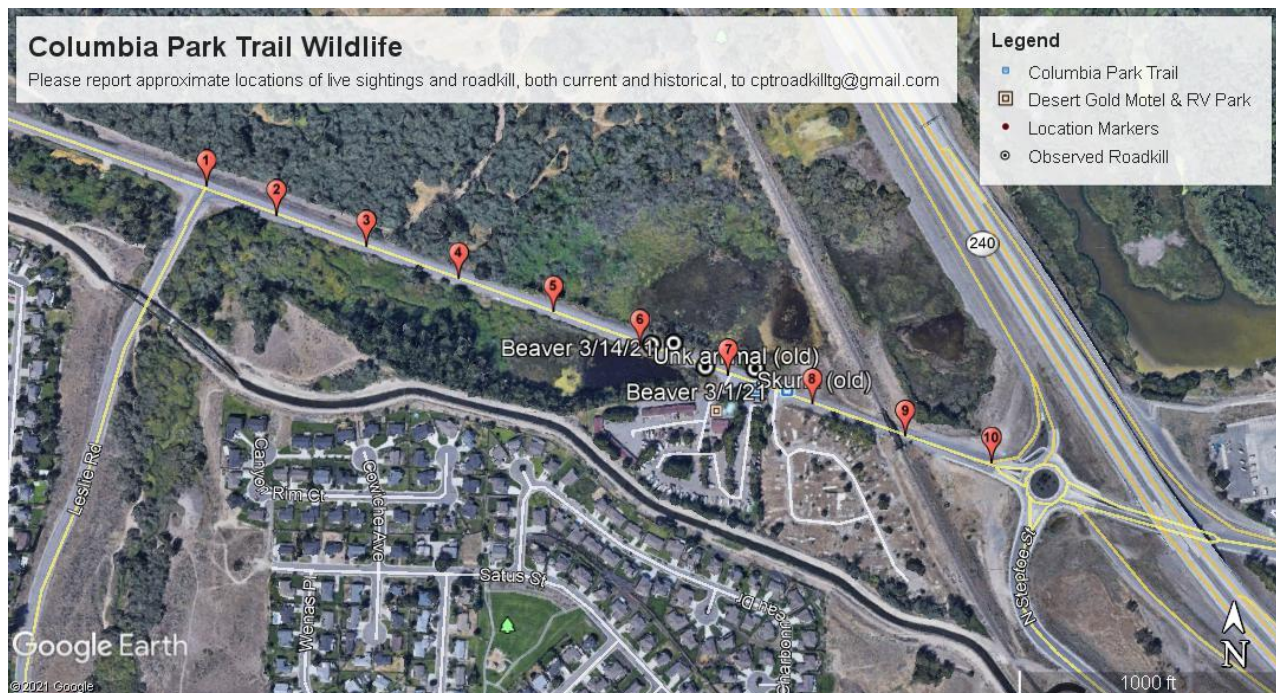
And remember – *always wear your life jacket!*



Update - Columbia Park Trail Wildlife Crossing

By Mike Lilga

The Greenway met with most of the important players in deciding the path forward to construct a wildlife crossing of Columbia Park Trail, including USACE, WDFW, KID, City of Richland, and LCBAS. While the need is recognized and there is interest, funding is the main issue, as you might expect. And there are complications. Although animals cross from Corps land to Corps lands, the crossing would not be a Corps structure since the City of Richland owns Columbia Park Trail. These details can be worked out. In the meantime, your contributions of sightings of dead and alive animals and the locations you see them is still really important. See the map below for a key to locations or you can give an approximate location between Leslie and Steptoe Streets. Report sightings to cptroadkilltg@gmail.com. Since March, there have been 5 beavers, 3 skunks, 1 raccoon, and 2 birds killed along this stretch that we know of. Thanks for supporting wildlife.



Unusual Eagle Scout Project

By Adam Fyall

The Greenway works with several Boy Scout 'Eagle Scout' candidates each year on their project of choice. The Eagle Scout rank is the ultimate fulfillment of the scouting experience and for those that chase the badge, they must have it completed by their 18th birthday when they age-out of scouting.

We had one of our more unusual projects this past spring. Treasurer Stan Kuick worked with the young man and coordinated with Benton County for the installation of three artificial nest platforms at Horn Rapids Park. Nest platforms in general aren't all that unusual. In fact, another candidate did wood duck boxes at Horn Rapids earlier in the year. Osprey/hawk platforms are also fairly common. What made this project different was that it was the installation of three nesting 'pouches' targeting great-horned owls.

The County had this one on its list to try, and this scout was ready to take a bite at the apple. Great-horned owls don't do much in the way of making their own nests. They generally commandeer abandoned nest of ravens, magpies or hawks. So to make that easier, the scout built the abandoned nests for them! After some research about designs and locations, three pouches were installed at the park in mid-June. We know these owls like Horn Rapids, and we are eager to see if these nest structures will be used. (See pictures on page two)

Woodward Scholarship

By Adam Fyall

In 2016, the Greenway reached a major milestone in fulfillment of the education pillar of our mission with the establishment of the "Woodward Scholarship" program intended to financially assist post-high school scholars in their pursuit of advanced training or higher education. As most of you are by now aware, the program is named in honor of Pamela and Scott Woodward, lifelong Richlanders who have dedicated their personal and professional lives to education and conservation. The scholarship is administered by the Three Rivers Community Foundation, but the selection committee is appointed by the Tapteal Greenway Board and the Greenway is solely responsible for fundraising.

Woodward Scholarships are intended to be funded through a perpetual endowment that should spin-off enough proceeds each year to fund the award(s). It is through the generosity of our members and other community donors that we have been able to steadily grow the endowment and raise the amount of the award. While that award amount remains modest at \$2000, each year we review our ability to either raise that amount or increase the number of scholarships awarded.

2021 saw another good response with six applications. Our committee is currently reviewing the applicants and will announce an awardee soon. Thank you again to all who have contributed toward the success of the Woodward Scholarship.



Special Equestrian Usage of the Tapteal Trail

By Carole Schuh

On May 1 the Rattlesnake Ridge Riders' Chapter of Back Country Horsemen of Washington held their first annual Prize Ride at Horn Rapids Park. Fifty members of the RRR came together to staff this special fundraising activity. One hundred and fifty riders of all ages took part in the fun. There were two trails to choose from. The Park Loop Ride was 5 miles long and started out at the north end of Horn Rapids Park following along the Yakima River to the south for 2.5 miles then looping back on the west side of the park through the shrub-steppe (sagebrush) country. The longer Hill Loop Ride kept going along the river to the south, crossed the highway at the Rattlesnake Slope parking lot, went up into the hills and then back to the park for a 10 mile ride. The weather was beautiful and everyone had a great ride. When they got back to the park, there was a giant raffle. Various prizes totaling over \$7500 were raffled off with almost everyone winning something. Many folks from as far away as Sequim and Carmano Island spent multiple nights in the Horse Camp and enjoyed re-riding the Tapteal Greenway trail and up the hill on Rattlesnake Slope. The income from this event will be used to fund the Ridge Riders' annual work party to clear trails in the Wenaha/Tucannon Wilderness. Thank you, Tapteal Greenway and Horn Rapids Park and Facilities for making this event possible.

