



## Tapteal Talk

### ~ Board of Directors ~

*Adam Fyall – President*  
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*Dirk Peterson – Secretary*  
*Stan Kuick – Treasurer*  
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*Mike Lilga*  
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### President's Message

by Adam Fyall

Happy New Year everyone. As I write this and as you read it, we have passed the average coldest day of the year in the Northern Hemisphere (January 20) and the days are getting “longer”. It won't be long now, folks. Spring is coming.

The winter season is slower in a number of ways, but we did begin the year with our annual Greenway-led New Year's Day hike. This year, we chose a 4-mile loop in Richland through Johnson Park and down to the Duportail Bridge. It was largely under gray skies offering little contrast, but we were able to evaluate stretches of the trail, assess needed maintenance and improvements, and evaluate the overall condition of things through that small corridor of the Tapteal Greenway.

Later in the month I hosted the Board of Directors in my home for a dedicated strategic planning session. We hadn't done that in several years, and it is an exercise that I think is good on an annual or biennial basis. We covered a lot of material in 2+ hours. I tried to frame our discussion with the following themes or intents:

- An evaluation of the overall state and condition of the Tapteal Greenway organization
- A focus on our purpose and goals, making sure that we understand what those are
- A discussion of our portfolio of projects, events, and activities to make sure those are still aligned with the purpose and goals
- A prioritization of those projects, events, and activities for 2023 and beyond

I thought our time together went really well, and “strategic planning” will be a small part of each board meeting throughout the year so that we can sustain the benefits of the exercise and keep them current.

In addition to general discussion, we concentrated on four main topics ~

**Projects:** We have a lot on our plate for a small organization. We discussed major projects for 2023 through a lens focused on urgency and need, our capacity for follow-through and completion, and how various projects address our purpose and goals.

**Events:** Events and activities require a lot of organizational throughput, but they are our best way of getting the membership and community involved. We are going to do a better job of maintaining and sharing our calendar so that all of you know what is going on and how you can participate.

**Policy:** We carefully choose which community debates and policy matters we get involved in. That approach has served us well over our first quarter-century. Nonetheless, there are some big issues coming in 2023, such as the disposition of the Bateman Island causeway, use and abuse of our public lands, and the use of electric bicycles on trails. We will do our best to keep you informed on these types of issues and how the Greenway may weigh in.

**Organizational Development:** Growth of the membership, the volunteer corps, and the board of directors are all goals of mine for 2023. We haven't made these a priority for a long time. We also are going to invest renewed focus on our relationships with partner organizations and with local governments.

Finally, we all concurred that we need to do a better job of communicating with the membership (YOU!). You will see four full newsletters this year, better and more focused email and social media engagement, and a general effort to get the Greenway name and purpose out into the community.

Thank you again to all of you for your continued support of the Tapteal Greenway. I look forward to seeing you on the trail, on the water, or in the classroom in 2023.

## Eagle Scout Grayhawk Project

By Dirk Peterson

During the Grayhawk development in Horn Rapids a large area heading towards the river was graded over and left devoid of vegetation. In the fall of 2019, we established the first native plant garden to restore a portion of this area. We expanded the planting area the following year. In 2021, we focused on replacing and adding plants in these two areas.

Aubrey Brandstetter of BSA Troop 2 expanded the planting area this past year for her Eagle Scout Project. Her first work day involved weeding and placing landscape rocks along the border. The actual planting took place during the second work party. The plants installed were Munro's Globemallow, Snow Buckwheat, Sand Penstemon, Common Yarrow, Sand Dropseed and Needle & Thread Grass.

The final touch was the 'planting' of about thirty seedballs. The plants seeded were Munro's Globemallow, Common Yarrow, Blue Mountain Prairie Clover and Green Rabbitbrush.



It's great to have a group of scouts do the weeding!



Stan Quick, TG board member, provides guidance on planting seedlings.



That is a seedball in the middle.  
The rocks were placed to help us monitor it.



## New Year's Day Hike 2023 – WE Johnson Park

by Stan Kuick

New Year's Day morning dawned bright and foggy for our annual "start-the-year-off-right hike". High 30's, overcast, and calm - pretty normal for our area for that time of year. At least it wasn't windy! Or raining! Or snowing! And it was warmer than the year before. So, we were feeling lucky.

Ten brave souls showed up at 10:00 am, which might be considered O-Dark-Thirty the morning after New Year's Eve. Half were TG board members. (Where were the rest of you?) We headed downstream from the Hall Road Trailhead, hoping to walk off the previous night's excesses with a four mile constitutional.

Well, the trail was a bit soggy in parts due to recent snowmelt and rain. Some areas in the shade still had a bit of ice and snow, but unlike a few years ago when the conditions were reminiscent of Alaska, none of us fell down. Regardless, I was still glad we had our insurance paid up. Hey, we all felt tough and resilient and that coffee with Bailey's sure tasted good when we got home.

We again had our Bird Meister and longtime board member, Mike Lilga with us. He dutifully identified some birds for the group such as robins, flickers and various waterfowl on the river. Thanks again, Mike. One of the more interesting sights was the large amount of ice piled along the Yakima River's banks. Obviously, the river ice had gotten very thick during our long cold spell, and when it broke up it was pushed up onto shore forming a huge wall in some areas. Another item of visual interest was the nice orange to red color along the trail from the dormant wild rose bushes.

We turned around at the Duportail Bridge and on the way back we intended to take a side trail to loop back, but were confronted with Lake Johnson spread across the trail. We retraced our steps back to the trailhead. Still, a good time was had by all, including our two canine companions, and the fresh air and exercise were excellent!

Hope to see more of you next year! ~ Stan



**Save the Date: Spring Hike on Saturday, May 6.**

## Pamela and Scott Woodward Conservation Scholarship

By Dirk Peterson

Applications for the 2023-24 academic year are being accepted through April 28 for the Pamela and Scott Woodward Conservation Scholarship. This \$2,000 merit-based scholarship was created by Tapteal Greenway in 2016 in honor of the years of dedicated service to the local community by Pamela and Scott, both as teachers and as active members of Tapteal Greenway.

Applications are available on the Three Rivers Community Foundation and Tapteal Greenway websites (3rcf.org under Scholarships and tapteal.org under Scholarship). Recipients have to be a resident of Benton or Franklin County and pursuing their post-high school education in Washington State (full eligibility requirements are listed in the application).

The scholarship's endowment is held and managed by the Three Rivers Community Foundation (they also administer the scholarship). The scholarship was created with an initial endowment of \$25,000. With last year's market downturn, the endowment has dropped from \$48,000 to \$40,000. Such market fluctuations are to be expected but as this scholarship is intended to be perpetually self-funding, we would like to continually increase the endowment. Donations can be made directly to the Three Rivers Community Foundation or through Tapteal Greenway. In either case, make sure to indicate that the donation is for the Woodward Scholarship.



## Birding the Tapteal Greenway

By Mike Lilga

Join the Lower Columbia Basin Audubon Society and the Tapteal Greenway in a series of joint bird walks in 2023. The walks will be once per month February through June in five of the pearls along the TG necklace. Except for the first walk at Bateman Island which will be on the first Saturday (2/4), walks will occur on the second Saturday of each month. All walks will start at 8 am because birds don't sleep in. Please go to the LCBAS website at <https://www.lowercolumbiabasinaudubon.org/birding> for more info about the start locations or email me at [mike.lilga@gmail.com](mailto:mike.lilga@gmail.com). The walks will be led by excellent birders so you don't have to be. This is a great opportunity to not only learn some birds, but also to see some of the interesting habitats and destinations along the Tapteal Greenway.

Bateman Island  
1st Sat., February 4, 8 am  
Wye Park

Amon Creek Natural Preserve  
2nd Sat., March 11, 8 am  
S. Entrance off Leslie Rd.

Chamna Natural Preserve  
2nd Sat., April 8, 8 am  
main parking lot

WE Johnson Park  
2nd Sat., May 13, 8 am  
S. Entrance on Tanglewood

Horn Rapids Park  
2nd Sat., June 10, 8 am  
Kiosk parking lot





## Youth Ecology Education Through Restoration

By Dirk Peterson

Two years ago the Washington Native Plant Society launched the Youth Ecology Education through Restoration (YEER) program. The YEER program integrates a four-to-six week middle school NGSS-aligned science curriculum with a field restoration project.

Last spring Tapteal Greenway made a donation to cover the cost of adding Ray Reynolds Middle School to the program. Over two days last November 100 7<sup>th</sup> grade students were bused from Ray Reynolds to the Rattlesnake Wildlife Area to plant almost 600 native plants for their restoration project. After plots were laid out for each group of four students, they weeded their plots (mostly removing tumbleweed and tumble mustard) and then each student planted four species from a list of sixteen native plants.

In addition to learning about our local shrub-steppe habitat, this program provides a rare field trip opportunity for the students. Thanks to Washington Native Plant Society for initial funding of the program, Gretchen Graber as the Eastern Washington Program Coordinator and Brandon Hoeft for taking on the challenge of adding the program to his curriculum.



Gretchen demonstrating proper planting technique.



Students working together to plant a seedling.



The first day's group of students



The second day's group of students

## Upcoming Races/Events on the Tapteal Trails

By Dan Hansen

May 13 - **Tapteal Greenway 50K Run or Paddle**. Come join the hardy souls who either run or paddle the length of the Tapteal Greenway trail starting in Benton City at the boat launch and ending at Bateman Island. This is the 3rd Annual running of the race which is again being organized by the Nomad Trailrunners of Eastern Washington.

September 15 - **Sole Survivor** (last person standing). Come join the endurance athletes as they endeavor to be the "last person" standing. Located in Chamna with 4.167-mile loop course, racers start each loop at the top of the hour. If runners don't finish the loop within the hour or fail to start the next loop at the top of the hour, they are disqualified hence the last person standing. This race is also being organized by the Nomads.

October 14 - **Chamna Chase**. A fun race that has different distances that will appeal to all levels of runners from 6K, 10K and half marathon. A Halloween run - costumes are encouraged and prizes given. This is another race organized by the Nomads.

If you are not interested in running any of these races, please consider volunteering at one or all of them. Help is always appreciated! Or come be a spectator and cheer them on!



## Upcoming Paddle Events on the Tapteal Water Trail

June 10 – Benton City Boat Launch to Horn Rapids Park

June 24 – Full Tapteal Water Trail Paddle

August 12 – Lower Section Tapteal Water Trail

September 30 – Middle Section Tapteal Water Trail

