



## Tapteal Talk

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### President's Message

By Adam Fyall

Welcome to spring, everyone. Perhaps some of you are feeling like spring hadn't really arrived until just the last few days. La Niña conditions have kept their grip on the Northwest well into 2022, meaning cooler temps and more precipitation than we are used to for April and May. The upshot has been pleasant conditions for trail work, a fantastic bloom season, and what should be healthy flows through the Yakima for the summer (see Water Trail article on the next page). Of course, all of that soil moisture means a good year for the weeds too, so we will be spending more time fighting those on our public lands and hoping against a bad wildfire season.

Be thankful for that water from the sky, folks. I just got back from a trip to Northern California where the situation is much more dire. For example, Shasta \*Lake\* isn't really a lake anymore. It's basically just the Sacramento River and its tributaries running their course. The water is so low that the boat launches are closed because the water line – in early June – is hundreds of feet below the bottoms of the paved ramps.

Another thing that Spring 2022 has ushered in is a return to more events and activities. It's been great seeing many of you out enjoying the trails and attending these events. As always, I want to thank all of our amazing volunteers who make so many of these activities happen and other recreational pursuits possible. You will read about some of these things in the articles that follow.

We are seeing a need to get back into the trenches to engage on a few issues as well. Notably, the proposed Willowbrook development that will abut the Amon Creek Preserve. I urge everyone to get up to speed on what is going on and if you want your voice heard on this matter, then make it heard. Be watching for our bulletins and other communications on other policy topics that have our attention.

In closing this month's "greeting" I also want to note that the Board will soon be taking our annual vote for the *Tri-Cities Conservationist of the Year*. That's my way of saying that nominations are open. We have been honored for over 25 years to recognize people in our community that work hard for conservation, and we look forward to doing this again at the Annual Celebration in October. If you would like to nominate a person or organization in the community for the award, please send us an email at [taptealgreenway@gmail.com](mailto:taptealgreenway@gmail.com) with "TCCOY" in the subject line. Provide us a few short sentences about this person or group and why you are nominating them. Thank you for your interest and nominations, and we hope to see you at the Celebration this fall and on the trails and water between now and then.

## 2022 Tapteal Water Trail Series

By Adam J. Fyall

This was covered at length in the Winter newsletter, so just a brief reminder here. We are back to organizing our popular water trail floats, with the first two of the four on the schedule coming up soon here in June. These are muscle (and current) powered trips down the river – kayaks, paddleboards, or canoes.

Greenway volunteers assist with transportation on the morning of the paddle. Remember that the Greenway does not supply or rent kayaks, but we can help facilitate a rental in Richland for you. You are required to wear a life preserver to paddle with us.

The following are the four scheduled paddle events. Three sectional paddles and one full-day paddle on a Friday. If you have interest in that full-day event (30 miles), contact us to discuss further. Check our website calendar or the Facebook page for updated information.

- **Jun 11:** Upper Section – Benton City to Horn Rapids Park
- **Jun 24:** Entire Water Trail – Benton City to Bateman Island
- **Aug 20:** Lower Section – Tapteal Bend to Bateman Island
- **Oct 08:** Middle Section – Snively Landing to Tapteal Bend



## Tapteal Trail Cleanups

By Dirk Peterson

It is an unfortunate fact that we have to perform cleanups on a regular basis. On April 30 we held a cleanup of the Yakima River shoreline above the Wanawish Dam. The bags of garbage filled the back of my pickup. On May 7 we held a cleanup of a section of the Tapteal Trail near Twin Bridges Road. This cleanup required a dumpster supplied by the City of Richland and the use of our new tractor. One of the attachments we acquired with the tractor was a set of forks for the rear three-point hitch. I could not think of a use for them at the time, but the picture below shows just how much garbage can be loaded on those forks. We ended up pretty much filling the dumpster in just two hours.



Yakima River cleanup above the Wanawish Dam



There is a tractor behind that pile of garbage

## Spring Wildflower Hike

By Stan Kuick

On Saturday, April 16 we held our annual spring hike in what we call the Grayhawk Area, named after the Horn Rapids neighborhood nearby. Of course, we picked an early date in the coldest spring in recent memory, but we know our members are tough!

Sure enough, it was cold, windy and rainy that day but 15 hardy souls turned out for the hike anyway, including a family with three young kids. Stan Kuick led the hike with board members Diana McPherson, Dirk Peterson, and Adam Fyall also participating. This stretch of the Tapteal Trail has great spring wildflowers, and even though the season came late this year it did not disappoint. The early spring bloomers were well represented including wallflowers, veiny dock, desert parsley, milkvetch, balsamroot, brodiaea, larkspur, and the bitterbrush was just starting to flower. Wallflower (yellow) and veiny dock (red) are shown below. The hikers also got to see our now extensive Grayhawk Native Plant Garden. We further visited what I call the “oldest rabbitbrush in the world”, a very unusually thick rabbitbrush that unfortunately died last year (old age?).

This was an out and back hike of about four miles, and on the return the weather deteriorated even more and we had horizontal rain and wind directly in our faces. The chatter dropped off and we mostly focused on getting back to our cars and some hot lunch. I didn't check it, but the pace on the return was probably significantly quicker than going out. The three young kids were amazing hikers and kept right up with the adults and never uttered a word of complaint. Thanks to all who joined the hike!



## Youth Ecology Education Through Restoration

By Dirk Peterson

In our last newsletter I gave a brief description of the **YEER** program. Since then, Tapteal Greenway has made a \$4,000 donation to support adding Ray Reynolds Middle School to the program. We are thrilled to be working with Gretchen Graber on this program. The Ray Reynolds students will need to be bused to a restoration site and the site chosen is the Rattlesnake Mountain Preserve. Because of the remote location of the restoration site the students will only be able to visit the site once. At present the plan is to bus the students in two groups over two days in early November to weed and plant. Volunteers will be needed to help supervise the weeding and planting. There will also be a need for volunteers to help with some maintenance of the restoration site.

## Earth Day Project

By Dirk Peterson

We were thrilled to be able to work with some of our corporate volunteers this year on an Earth Day project. This year we tackled a short section of the Tapteal Trail in WE Johnson Park. Towards the north end of the park there is a spot in the trail we used to refer to as the mud hole. This spot would occasionally fill with water and remain impassable to hikers for extended periods. A few years ago we had a causeway built up to cross this spot. While this fixed the mud hole problem the trail on both sides of the causeway was prone to getting wet and slippery. Our project this year was to lay down a layer of rock and then gravel to eliminate this problem. On April 21 we worked with volunteers from Framatome and Energy Northwest to dig down about five inches and place a three-inch layer of rock. On April 22 the project was completed by volunteers from PBS Engineering and Environmental by topping the trail with a layer of compacted gravel.



We used our new tractor to position material at the far end of the trail



Digging down



The base layer of coarse rock



Compacting the final gravel layer

# 2nd Annual Tapteal Greenway 50K Run/Paddle

By Dan Hansen

The 2nd Annual Tapteal Greenway 50K Run or Paddle was held on May 14. It was supposed to be a great day to run - short period of rain in the morning clearing to a nice day in the 70's. That short period of rain turned out to be 5 hours! The runners found impressive mud holes at several stretches along the course and the paddlers battled hypothermia. Eleven paddlers withdrew at the Wanawish Dam due to the continuing cold and rain. The runners got an interesting start. The runners leave the boat launch and head to Benton City and turn onto 7th Ave. And then turn back around and head to the main street as the road was blocked by police cars and a SWAT van! Apparently at 1:30 am a shooting had occurred and the road was still blocked. Again - thanks to the Nomads Trailrunners Of Eastern WA and Jason Reatherford for organizing and running the races and the many volunteers it takes to put on the race. TG Board members Adam Fyall, Stan Kuick, Mike Lilga, Dirk Peterson and Dirk's friends Jim and Cathy volunteered at two of the aide stations - the Wanawish dam portage, and the Duportail Bridge stations.

The first male runner Jesse Lang, finished in a blazing 3:28, while the top female(s) finished in 5:17. Kristi Geris, Sarah McCalmant, and Amanda Questel all finished together. The first paddler, Tracy Landboe finished in 3:26, beating the first runner by 2 minutes. Last year the runners finished first, so the paddlers got revenge! The first male paddler, Kristoffer Jonson, finished in 4:37. Overall, there were 26 runners all of whom finished. The paddlers had 24 registered, with 12 finishing.



Muddy Trail



Start Area



Benton City Highway



Kingston Road



Muddy Chamna Trail



Hansen & Hanses at the Finish

# Salmon Summits 2022

By Dirk Peterson

Salmon Summit was back on this year after a two-year break due to COVID. As mentioned in our last newsletter, Salmon Summit is the culmination of the Salmon in the Classroom program. To accommodate all of the schools that participate in Richland and Kennewick the local event is held over two days in Columbia Park, this year on April 26 and 27. The day starts with each student releasing a salmon fry into the Columbia River. After that the classes spend the day visiting a series of educational stations. As in past years, our station uses the salmon lifecycle bracelet to remind the students of key components of the salmon lifecycle.

This year we also branched out and took our educational collection of pelts and skulls to two of the mini-Salmon Summit events held in Prosser. In Benton County the Salmon in the Classroom program and Salmon Summit events are coordinated by the Benton Conservation District. Rachel Little does an awesome job of running this program and planning the Salmon Summit events.



Salmon fry ready for release



Stan talks with the class



The students construct their lifecycle bracelets



Our educational display in Prosser