



# Tapteal Greenway

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

## Tapteal Talk

### President's Message

by Adam Fyall

Happy spring, soon-to-be-summer. It has been a bit cooler and wetter of late than was predicted, which hopefully has helped to extend what has been a magnificent wildflower season and soil moisture.

If you have great conditions for wildflowers, you probably have great conditions for growth of everything else as well, including weeds such as cheatgrass and knapweed. Let's hope to escape a big wildfire year.

As we come into the heart of the hiking and water activities season, please remember safety and best practices. The Greenway promotes use of the Yakima River very heavily. As also being a member of the Washington State Boating Program Advisory Council, I can show you the statistics regarding drownings and other on-water accidents, and the thing that will stand out the most is how many of those unfortunate deaths involve someone NOT WEARING A LIFE JACKET. Please wear your life preserver.

Now, speaking of opportunities to wear your life preserver and get out on the Yakima River, see the article below about our three guided paddles on the river beginning in mid-June. We always look forward to these events.

Also, I want to make an early mention of our Annual Celebration, which this year will be on Saturday, October 12. There are a couple of changes this year as we are moving back to Saturday from Friday, and we are moving back to Richland. We will be at the Richland Community Center that day.

Enjoy the rest of spring and summer. Send us your photos or post them to our social media sites. Thank you for all of your support.

### ~ Board of Directors ~

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### Tapteal Water Trail – 2024 Events

by Adam J. Fyall

We mentioned in the last newsletter and want to note again that we have set our dates for the three Greenway-supported paddling events for the year.

All are Saturdays:

- Jun 15 – Upper Section (Benton City to Horn Rapids Park)
- Aug 17 – Lower Section (Hyde Rd to Bateman Island)
- Sep 28 – Middle Section (Snively Rd to Hyde Rd)

By “support” we mean that we provide a shuttle, safety briefing, and information about the stretch of river we will be on that day and what participants can expect. We do not furnish gear, but we can help to put you in touch with companies locally who rent kayaks and paddleboards.

Check the website and your email inbox in the coming months for more information.



## May 4 Tapteal Greenway Flower Hike

By Stan Kuick

Well, after a beautiful, warm and sunny day on Friday, May 3 the next day for our hike dawned cloudy, cool, and breezy. On my way out the door, I was wearing just a long-sleeved tee shirt, but grabbed a hoodie at the last minute just in case. Even though it was 60 degrees, it seemed much colder. I wore the hoodie for the whole hike and didn't break a sweat.

Got to the Wanawish Dam about 8:30 am for our 9:00 start time, and the wind was 10 - 15 mph. Nice. Waited for the onslaught of hikers, but by 9:15 only five other people showed, so we took off. That's the bad news. We found out later that we were competing with Friends of Badger and the Native Plant Society who were having hikes at the same time. We were also competing with people's cozy warm homes.

The good news is that the flowers did not disappoint. Our wet, late winter and early spring has paid off with excellent flower production. We saw many species, including purple sage, phlox, pale evening primrose, prairie clover, tall hedge mustard, fiddleheads, locoweed, desert parsley, whitetop peppergrass, and veiny dock. We also saw a couple other flowers that we tried to ID, but that area has poor cell reception so our apps (or our memories later) didn't always work. The purple sage was especially impressive as it was in full bloom and the top of the hill between the dam and the park has the best stand of purple sage I have seen in our area. The one flower I expected to see more of but didn't was orange (or Munro's) globemallow. They were present, but barely starting to bloom. In general, I felt like everything was a little behind schedule this year.

As for wildlife we saw some raptors, the pelicans at the dam, and a nice bull snake, who was lying perfectly still next to the trail and didn't move until we had stared at him for a couple of minutes. A little cold for snakes that day.

We ended up hiking all the way to Omaha Beach and observed the memorial for the young man who drowned there last winter, so the hike ended up being five miles total.



## News from Horn Rapids Park

by Adam J. Fyall

As we increase our efforts to claim the upstream trailhead and formalize trail connectivity in Benton City, we need to remember what we will connect Benton City to. That would be Horn Rapids Park, which always shows itself off well in wildflower season, especially after a wet winter. We have some challenges at Horn as well. That same wet winter brought more weeds, and we are also seeing an uptick in garbage dumping and trail-cutting. Benton County is trying to step-up their efforts in these areas, and some relief may be on the way in the form of some assistance from the Noxious Weed Control Board and some changes at the campground. Watch for a work party at the park in the future to do some trash detail.

## Yakima Basin Fish and Wildlife Recovery Board

by Adam J. Fyall

Benton County and the Yakima Basin Fish and Wildlife Recovery Board had a tour of the Prosser fish hatchery on May 15, and I can recommend this tour highly to anyone interested in this topic. The hatchery is run by the Yakama Nation and specializes in salmon and lamprey. There is also a sturgeon exhibit onsite.

Also, there is an opening on the Board's Citizens Committee, which annually reviews projects for Salmon Recovery Funding Board funding. This is a volunteer appointment, and someone from Benton County is needed. The time commitment is not great and the work is interesting. Contact Adam for more information on both topics.

## Washington Invasive Species Council

By Adam Fyall

I am a member of the Washington Invasive Species Council representing Eastern Washington counties. We meet four times per year to share information and shape state budgets and policy in regards to blunting the impacts of non-native invasive plant, animal, and insect species in Washington. Usually, our meetings are based in Olympia and also available online, but once a year there is a field meeting and that will be in Walla Walla in June. This will give me an opportunity to put some added focus on some of the pests and problems we deal with in the arid lands, and I have found the Council to be a receptive group.

A nice project attached to WISC has been dissemination of 50 boot brushes for the shrub-steppe. This is through a small grant program funded by the US Department of Agriculture. I applied for a boot brush, was awarded one, then had my employer Benton County buy another; and finally, I am buying one more myself to donate; so, all three trailheads of Badger Mountain (2) and Candy Mountain (1) will be covered with boot brushes later this summer.

Contact me if you would like to know more about the Council or invasive species in general.

## 2024 Woodward Scholarship

By Adam Fyall

The 2024 Pamela & Scott Woodward Conservation Scholarship has been awarded to **Colin Ward**, who is a continuing student at Washington State University, originally from Richland. Colin is a 4.0 student at WSU with a declared major in *Wildlife Ecology and Conservation Sciences*.



The Woodward Scholarship is given annually to one graduating high school or continuing college student who is originally from Benton or Franklin counties and who is or will be attending an institution of higher learning in the state of Washington. We have a committee that reviews the applications, and the funds and paperwork are managed for us by the Three Rivers Community Foundation. This year, we had a record nine applicants for the \$2,000 grant.

Thank you to all of you who have donated specifically toward the scholarship. Scholarship funds are pooled in a managed endowment that we have been growing slowly over the past decade and currently sits at about \$40,000. The hope is that as the endowment grows, so too will the amount and number of awards.



## Damage in Amon Basin

By David McBurney

There has recently been significant damage to native shrub steppe in the Amon Creek Natural Preserve and adjacent properties. The damage includes trails made by motorcycles and four wheelers, the creation of jumps, carpeted landing areas and banked turns. Thank you to the many advocates for natural spaces that have contacted the Tapteal Greenway to ensure we were aware of the damage and the continued usage by motorized vehicles.

Operating unauthorized motorized vehicles such as motorcycles and four wheelers within the Preserve is not allowed. Unfortunately, signs at the main entrances to the Preserve are not clear that motorcycles and four wheelers are not allowed. Additionally, there are numerous entry points for motorcycles and four wheelers into the Preserve, other than the main entrances, that have no signage at all. For example, the area between Center Parkway and the Preserve has trails being wrongfully used by motorized vehicles to access the Preserve. This area has many jumps and banked turns, but no signs indicating that motorized vehicles are not allowed.

The Tapteal Greenway has been communicating with the Richland Parks Department about the damage to the shrub steppe and the increased motorized vehicle usage within the Amon Creek Natural Preserve.

**If you witness any unauthorized vehicles within the Preserve, please contact the Richland Parks Department at 509- 942-7529 with any details.**

Tapteal Greenway will be installing “No Motorized Vehicle” signs on Tapteal properties bordering the Preserve to heighten awareness for offenders. Additionally, we will encourage the Richland Parks Department to increase and clarify signs at the main entry points and social trails into the Preserve.



Damage to the shrub steppe within Amon Creek Natural Preserve

## Trail Warriors Camp Out at Horn Rapids Park

By Carole Schuh

On April 27 the Back Country Horsemen/4-H youth group, Trail Warriors, had their first campout with horses at Camp Smith, the horse camp in Horn Rapids Park. Trail Warriors is sponsored by Purple Sage Riders and Rattlesnake Ridge Riders Back Country Horsemen Chapters.

Seventeen folks (six youth, six parents, and five leaders) spent the night in tents, campers and horse trailers. A great time was had by all! There were two great trail rides along the Tapteal Trail, lots of hot dogs and marshmallows, and plenty of guitar music with singing. One of the leaders gave a wonderful teaching on "Leave No Trace".

Another very important aspect of this campout was to learn how to safely contain horses overnight. Some used the highline poles in the camp, others used hot wire pens or panel pens. All of the horses were kept safe and comfortable for the night.

In March the Trail Warriors' group worked together with PSR, RRR and Tapteal Greenway to clean up and prepare the campground. Last November we also had a trash cleanup along the river and on some of the trails. We care about HRP.

We all have fallen in love with Camp Smith and look forward to the possibility of another campout this fall.

Thank you to all who made this great weekend possible.

