



# Tapteal Greenway

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

## Tapteal Talk

### President's Message

by Adam Fyall

Welcome to fall everyone. Things have cooled off and the colors are starting to change. One thing that doesn't change, at least not in its entirety, is that fall means that it is once again time for the **Annual Celebration!** Hopefully members and some special guests have received their invitations to the event. Let me provide a few event details in this reminder.

Well, the time of year hasn't changed, but some other significant aspects of our event have. After several great years at Tucannon Cellars along the river at the base of Red Mountain, we are bringing the event back to Richland. We are also changing the day and time. We shall hold the Annual Celebration from **4:00-6:00pm on Saturday, October 12 at the Richland Community Center**. I hope you all can join us.

We will serve some light afternoon hors d'oeuvres and refreshments – no supper this year. The first hour will be a chance to mingle with old friends and check-out the displays. At about 5:00 the program will begin, followed by the presentation of the 2024 Tri-Cities Conservationist of the Year (see separate article below).

In addition to being primarily a social, informational, and celebratory event, we do include a minor fundraising component. There is no raffle or auction this year, but there will be opportunities to make contributions if you would like. Last year we took the approach of three specific appeals, and we are using that strategy again this year. We will be specifically raising funds for the Woodward Scholarship, habitat restoration work, and signage replacement. More information on these campaigns will be available at the event.

We look forward to sharing with you our activities and accomplishments of the past year and looking ahead to our upcoming endeavors. This all leads into 2025, which will be the Tapteal Greenway's 30th Anniversary Year. Thank you to all of you who have supported our work over these three decades.

If you have questions or comments about the Annual Celebration event, or anything else for that matter, please reach out to me on 509-942-0354. Thank you and we hope to see you on October 12.

### 2024 Tri-Cities Conservationist of the Year

It is always one of my annual highlights when we nominate, consider, and then select the Conservationist of the Year. We have had the opportunity over the years to recognize some amazing people in our community. This year is no exception. Our 2024 recipient is **Rachel Little**. Rachel recently retired from the Benton Conservation District, a station where I got to know and work with her for many years. We look forward to honoring Rachel at the Annual Celebration. Two of the more notable projects she worked on in her time at the Conservation District are development of the *Salmon in the Classroom* program and the community's Water Stargrass awareness effort. Rachel has had an outsized impact on the youth of our community, as well as on general environmental awareness; not to mention results on the ground.

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## New Tools in Action

By Dirk Peterson

At last year's annual celebration, we raised \$800 for the purchase of tools. We used those funds to acquire a mini-chainsaw, pole saw, hedge trimmer and string trimmer along with some spare batteries and other parts. For the string trimmer we bought a replacement head that uses two hard plastic blades that don't require constant feeding and are easy to replace when they wear down. We recently had the opportunity to use all of these tools along the River Trail in Chamna Natural Preserve. Our thanks to everyone that donated to the tool fund.





## Summer Tours

By Adam Fyall

The Board did some brief evening summer tours over the past few months and I think these worked out great. We talk about these places so much, but even amongst the Board members there are different levels of familiarity and it's good to get everyone in one place on the ground at one time. We did these about once-per-month on Monday evenings and limited the tours to about one hour. This year's site visits included Tapteal Bend, WE Johnson Park, Amon Basin Natural Preserve, and Bateman Island. I hope that we will do these short tours again next year, and I would like to open them up to interested members who would like to join.



Beautiful sunset at WE Johnson



Checking out the mitigation site @ WEJ

## Shrub-Steppe Mitigation Banking

By Stan Kuick

Tapteal Greenway is involved in a new community wide program called "mitigation banking". When a business or other organization clears shrub-steppe habitat for a new facility, both Benton and Franklin counties and their cities require that a financial compensation be made for the acreage that is cleared. Formerly, a specific project was chosen by the governments for mitigation funds from this program. A recent example was the planned "restoration" of parts of WE Johnson Park. Due to the uproar surrounding this project, which you may have heard about, our local cities and counties have decided to create a mitigation bank, which will collect all the funds from mitigation, and which will then be disbursed to projects based on community agreement.

Debbie Berkowitz spearheaded getting all the parties together to discuss what projects the conservation community would like these funds to go toward. A meeting was held on August 21 in the Richland Community Center that included virtually every Tri-City conservation group (TG, LCBAS, FOBM, SoS (Save our Shorelines) and WNPS) plus the WA Department of Fish and Wildlife, Benton County, City of Richland, and Benton/Franklin Conservation District. Each group presented their priority projects for the use of mitigation funds and later provided maps to the government organizations showing where their projects were located. Stan Kuick and Kit Steichen represented TG and Adam Fyall both Benton County and TG.

The projects submitted by TG were of two types: Acquisition or easement projects and restoration projects. Acquisition/easement projects that we presented included Fox Island (in West Richland along the Yakima River near the Van Giesen bridge), a buffer zone along the north side of the TG trail between Twin Bridges Road and Snively Road (this area is slated for near term development), and McDonald Ridge (across the Yakima River from Horn Rapids Park). Restoration projects that we recommended were the east end of Chamna preserve, the TG trail along the new development in the Horn Rapids community near Village Parkway, and continued restoration of the Rattlesnake Mountain trailhead area.

The exact system for choosing and prioritizing projects and disbursing funds has yet to be determined and will be discussed in a meeting of the same parties in October. We will keep you informed of this program as it develops.

## The Original Grayhawk Garden

by Dirk Peterson

As the pictures illustrate, what a difference five years makes! This site is located in the Grayhawk development in Horn Rapids. It is adjacent to a storm water retention feature and heads towards the Yakima River. It was graded over by the developer and left devoid of vegetation. In the spring of 2011, a large number of native plant seedlings were donated to us from Mission Support Alliance. Lingering February snows prevented them from completing a restoration project on the Hanford site so they donated the plants to local nonprofits. We used most of the plants we managed to keep alive over the summer for the first Grayhawk planting that fall. Since then, we have nurtured the site with supplemental watering (as necessary to get the plants established), weeding and additional plantings. The list of plants present now includes gray rabbitbrush, green rabbitbrush, snow buckwheat, Munro's globemallow, pale evening primrose, rock buckwheat, sand penstemon, purple sage, Columbia prickly pear, Sandberg bluegrass, Indian rice grass, needle-and-thread grass. Fiddlenecks are common in the spring and hoary aster in the fall.

We have expanded the planting area towards the river twice, but not with as dramatic of success. We will do additional planting this fall in all three areas.



Freshly planted garden in November 2019



The garden in September 2024

## Poison Hemlock

By Adam Fyall

We target a number of noxious and invasive weeds in our work, and arguably highest on our list is Poison Hemlock (*Conium maculatum*). This is largely because the plant truly is noxious as its common name suggests; and also, because it has become so prevalent in many of the Greenway's core areas. Over the last several years we have been actively trying to suppress Poison Hemlock at Chamna, WE Johnson, Tapteal Bend, and Horn Rapids.

At our October board meeting we will have a special guest from King County who will give a short presentation about their efforts combatting Poison Hemlock. It is one of those plants that thrives on both sides of the mountain. This meeting will be held online via Zoom, and we want to make it available for all who are interested. The presentation should last about 20 minutes with another 10 minutes reserved for questions. If you are interested in dropping in, the Zoom link is below and the meeting will begin at 7:00 pm on Monday, October 7. After a few housekeeping items the presentation should begin around 7:10, then you can drop-off any time you like.

Zoom Link: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84997322575>



## Fall Events and Scouting

By Adam Fyall

The Board will be planning some fall work parties and also refreshing our strategies for how we work with scouting projects and especially Eagle Scout candidates. It looks like we will be having a meeting on the early evening of Thursday, October 3 at Brickhouse Pizza in West Richland. If you would like to join for pizza and refreshments, and also maybe talk a little Greenway business, contact me directly and we will finalize details. We would love your input.

## Changing of the Guard

By Adam Fyall

This year I will be finishing my current term as the president of your Tapteal Greenway. It is my second three-year stint in 28 total years on the Tapteal Greenway Board of Directors. It has been important to me over these three decades to serve the organization and its missions in whatever capacities that I am able. I both enjoy this opportunity and believe I have value to contribute.

However, the time is upon us for a refreshment and a transition. To borrow from Lyndon Johnson, I have notified the Board that 'I shall not seek, and I will not accept' another term as president at this time. I fully intend to remain a member of the Board if you will still have me. So, there will be a bit of a shuffling come January, and this is another opportunity for me to let it be known that we always welcome new board members, committee members, and volunteer coordinators. Thank you for your continued support!