



# Tapteal Greenway

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

## Tapteal Talk

### Prez Sez

By Mike Lilga

**A Happy Birthday!**  
**Restore. Conserve. Provide. Care.**  
**30! And there's more.**

There's my haiku description of the Tapteal Greenway's past and future relationship to mind, body, and community. May 16<sup>th</sup> marks 30 years since TG was incorporated and there's plenty of reason to celebrate. From stewardship of our public lands, to conservation of many acres of natural habitats, to providing regional recreational resources, TG and its members have good reason to be proud of the services we provide to our communities and all we've accomplished - with an emphasis on service.

The Greenway was launched in 1995 with the intent of caring for ignored and trashed public lands and a vision of linking those lands with a continuous trail system from Bateman Island and Columbia Point all the way up the Yakima River to Benton City. The new organization made an early impact with our advocacy for the Chamna Natural Preserve, which resulted in its transformation from a dumping ground (an early cleanup removed over 16 tons of trash) and a not-very-pleasant place to be into one of the most popular natural areas in the area for nature study, mental decompression, and muscle-powered recreation.

A lot has happened since then to advance our 3-pronged mission - conservation, recreation, and education. We'll touch on some of our accomplishments during a week-long celebration in May we call TG30. The TG Trail through Horn Rapids Park will be formally dedicated by the Benton County Parks Board (recreation). We'll have a webinar with a series of short talks on topics relevant to the lower Yakima River (education). We'll do a small service project starting at Chamna where it all started (conservation). We'll have a social gathering to honor you. And we'll take a hike along Trail North including our Grayhawk restoration area in the Horn Rapids development and along the new Twin Bridges trail to show the future trail connectivity (recreation).

Most importantly, thank you for being dedicated members, volunteers, and donors. Your support means everything. Keep watch for upcoming volunteer opportunities and ways to participate. A long list of opportunities appears in this newsletter. As I said when we started this project, there's a lifetime of work and opportunity ahead. And that's still true today.

Mike

### ~ Board of Directors ~

*Mike Lilga – President*  
*David McBurney – Vice President*  
*Kit McBurney – Secretary*  
*Stan Kuick – Treasurer*  
**Members at Large:**  
*Adam Fyall*  
*Dan Hansen*  
*Aaron Pelly*  
*Dirk Peterson*  
*Peter Rieke*  
*Carole Schuh - Editor*



Our first ever cleanup near Duportail Street circa 1994 before the Greenway was incorporated. Can you remember the temporary name of the Greenway then, before it became Tapteal Greenway? Extra credit if you know why we needed to change the name, other than because we wanted a cool name. And where did Tapteal come from? Hint: it has nothing to do with a street or school. [president@tapteal.org](mailto:president@tapteal.org)

## Tapteal Turns 30!

By Adam Fyall

We reach a major milestone this spring as the Tapteal Greenway organization turns 30 years old. Our incorporation date was May 16, 1995. We appreciate all of you who have been along for some or all of that three-decade ride, and we hope you will celebrate with us during the second week of May during some of our commemorative events. Below is the lineup for the week. Start times in parenthesis. We will post more information on the website and Facebook page, as well as through additional email notices.

One item worth particular mention is the Benton County Park Board meeting where and when the Tapteal Trail will be officially designated as such through the length of Horn Rapids Park – about 5 miles. Even though we have many miles of the trail improved and observed as such in our own eyes, actually none of the local governments have officially recognized any of the trail. So, we are going to start changing that beginning the night of May 13 at 6:30 pm. You can join the meeting online as we make a short presentation to the Park Board in anticipation of their designating this section of trail.

Thank you again for thirty years of support and success.



## TG 30 Celebration Events Schedule

**MONDAY, MAY 12** – TG Board of Directors regular business meeting. (7:00 pm)

**TUESDAY, MAY 13** – Benton County Park Board meeting. The County will officially designate five miles of Tapteal Trail through Horn Rapids Park. Participate online via Webex at <https://bentoncounty.webex.com/join/adam.fyall> (6:30 pm)

**THURSDAY, MAY 15** – Online webinar featuring four topics presented by experts. Each short presentation will be about 12 minutes followed by a few minutes for questions before moving to the next item (about 20 minutes total each topic). There will be time at the end for extended questions/conversations for those who want to hang around. Watch for the Zoom link. (6:00 pm)  
Topics include:

- Status of Salmon Recovery in the Yakima River (Alex Conley)
- Amon Creek / Yakima River “Coldwater Refugia” Project (Marcella Appel)
- Native Cactus in Washington State (Ron Bockelman)
- Pygmy Rabbit, Sage Grouse, & Burrowing Owl Recovery in the Columbia Basin (Jason Fidorra)

**SAT, MAY 17** – Service project starting at the Chamna Natural Preserve “Back Door”; park at the [Back Door parking area](#) at the end of Carrier Road. Chamna is where it all started for the Greenway, and we’ve done more hours-of-service work there than anywhere else, including trail building and maintenance, restoration, weed control, cleanups, and more. This project will be a cleanup along the TGT/Sacagawea Trail. Your registration ([here](#)) provides more information and helps us plan for this event. (8:30am)

**SUNDAY, MAY 18** – TG 30 Hike... start location, approximate distance... TBD (12:00 pm)

Following our social gathering, we’ll take a short hike in the Trail North corridor. Starting at the [Twin Bridges trailhead](#) we’ll showcase the past and future with a variety of work from recent years from trail-building, to restoration, to securing the future trail corridor. Your [registration](#) helps us plan the event. (1:00 pm)

## Events and Volunteer Opportunities

Saturday, May 3, 9:00 -11:00 am, Chamna Trail Work, mid-point trailhead, spread chips, [Click to Register](#) to help out

Tuesday, May 13, 6:30 pm, **TG30**, Benton County Parks Board formally designates the Tapteal Greenway Trail through Horn Rapids Park at its monthly meeting. Participate online via Webex at <https://bentoncounty.webex.com/join/adam.fyall>

Wednesday, May 14, 10:00 am - 2:00 pm, CBC's Wellness Fair, CBC Pasco Campus, Student Recreation Center, come to the booth or [Click to Register](#) to help out

Thursday, May 15, **TG30**, Short seminars on topics relevant to the lower Yakima River, by zoom; link will be shared with members

Saturday, May 17, 8:30 am, **TG30**, TGT/Sacajawea Trail Cleanup, meet at the "[Chamna Backdoor](#)" at the end of Carrier Road [Click to Register](#) to help out

Sunday, May 18, 12:00 pm, **TG30**, [Twin Bridges trailhead](#), informal gathering to honor members, donors, volunteers, past board members, and Tri-Cities Conservationist of the Year Award winners, [Click to Register](#)

Sunday, May 18, **TG30**, hike to visit our Grayhawk restoration area in the Horn Rapids development continuing to the future Twin Bridges trail to the north, meet at the [Twin Bridges trailhead](#), [Click to Register](#)

Tapteal Water Trail floats – TBD, [Click to receive notifications](#)

Tapteal Greenway Trail hikes – TBD, [Click to receive notifications](#)

Trail maintenance and restoration work parties – TBD, [Click to receive notifications](#)

Also: [Park tours](#) with Chris Waite, Richland Parks Director:

Amon Creek NP, Claybell Park – Wednesday, April 23, 5:00 – 6:00 pm

WE Johnson Park, North entrance – Monday, June 23, 10:00 -11:00 am

## Chamna Chipping

On April 12, 111 youth volunteers from the LDS church (Thank You!) helped us put wood chips on trails in the Chamna Natural Preserve and along what we call the "Sandy Stretch" just upriver from Chamna. What used to be difficultly walkable and un-ridable by bike, the Sandy Stretch isn't quite as sandy today (at least as far as we got that day) and is a very enjoyable section of the Tapteal Greenway Trail right along the Yakima River. Check it out. We'll have future work parties to finish that stretch and have scheduled one May 3<sup>rd</sup> to continue in Chamna. [Sign up](#) to chip in!





## **Cut Sagebrush Seed Caching**

by Dirk Peterson

Last year Troy Maikis (WDFW) told us about a new experimental approach to sagebrush restoration. It involves taking cuttings of seed-bearing sagebrush from donor sites and laying them out at a restoration site, where they are held in place with chicken wire. This provides a source of seeds and, hopefully, an enhanced site for germination. The first week of December we trimmed back sagebrush that were overhanging sidewalks along our Amon Basin properties. The seed-bearing branches were then used to establish a total of eleven seed caches in four different restoration sites (Leslie Groves North, Rattlesnake Slope, Duportail Bridge, and Franklin Conservation District). It is too soon to tell if any sagebrush has germinated yet.

We also participated with a project organized by Troy. The donor site was the portion of Center Parkway that will cross the east edge of Amon Creek Natural Preserve. The cut sagebrush was dispersed at two different restoration sites (Rattlesnake Slope and the Paterson Unit of the Umatilla National Wildlife Refuge). Additionally, we collected sagebrush seed from our property adjacent to the Preserve. These seeds were spread directly and also incorporated into seedballs to compare their effectiveness with the seed caches.



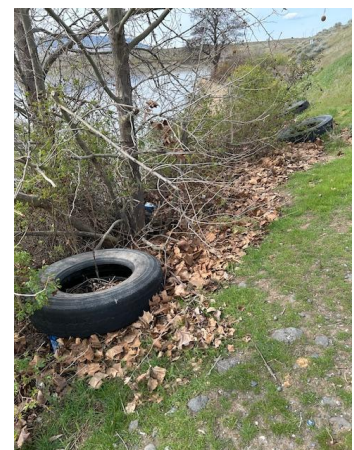
## **Horn Rapids Park Needs Some Cleanup**

By Stan Kuick

Recently I hiked HRP from Wanawish Dam to Omaha. A few flowers are making their appearance. I saw phlox and one wallflower. As a result of all the moisture this winter and spring, the shrubs look very happy.

Trash is building up at the dam, including three large tires. Also trash near Omaha Beach and a large plastic drum along the shore. The river was very high and brown, but not flooding.

A summer morning cleanup is being planned. Stay tuned...





## Recent Fall/Winter Eagle Scout Restoration – Three Projects

By Stan Kuick & Dirk Peterson

### Project #1 Rohan Nune Troop 190 Project – Amon Preserve

This project site is located at the west edge of the Preserve across from Rachel Road. The vegetation in this area had been highly disturbed during the Leslie Road sewer extension through the Preserve. A previous restoration project at this site had met with limited success.

In late September the scouts removed four packed trailers of mostly large tumbleweeds from the site. In late November a little over thirty native plants (mostly sagebrush and gray rabbitbrush) were installed along with watering tubes. The plants were purchased from Wildlands with a grant from the Columbia Basin Chapter of Washington Native Plant Society. The sagebrush plants were in 18" deep containers. This prompted us to add a battery-powered auger to our tool collection. We will work with Troop 190 to help with subsequent weeding of the site.



Rohan Nune project before and after weeding



Plants and watering tubes



Group picture



## Eagle Scout Restoration (continued)

By Stan Kuick & Dirk Peterson

### Project #2 Tyler Melvin Troop 248 – Rattlesnake Trailhead

This project had three phases: Weeding the planting area, seedball manufacturing and final planting and seedball dispersion. The project location was along the Rattlesnake Slope trail between Richland and Benton City. Initial weeding took place in late September, seedballs were made in October, and planting occurred in late October.

Smaller plants grown by TG board members plus larger plants purchased from Wildlands were planted in the weeded area along with watering tubes. Seedballs made during a troop meeting containing sagebrush seed were spread in the surrounding landscape. At a recent site visit all of the plants looked healthy.



Seed Ball Making



Seed Balls



Plants to be planted



Finished weeded and planted area  
with sagebrush cache (recent photo)

## Eagle Scout Restoration (continued)

By Stan Kuick & Dirk Peterson

### Project #3 Baine Galloway Troop 248 – Amon Preserve

This project site is located on the south end of the Preserve. It is a section of trail that tends to get overgrown with kochia (a non-native invasive weed). In previous years the weeds had been removed to clear the trail, only to return (although an annual plant kochia is a prolific seed producer). The first stage of the project to clear weeds from the planting area occurred in January.

Thirty large native plants purchased from Wildlands were installed in February. Winterfat and spiny hopsage were planted just below the trail where soil conditions are more challenging. A smaller number of sagebrush and gray rabbitbrush were planted above the trail. Use of our newly acquired auger made the hole digging a snap. After discovering animal damage to most of the plants during a subsequent visit, cages were placed around the plants for protection.



Removing the invasive non-native kochia weeds



After weeding



Planting with assistance of TG's new power auger



Blaine with caged plant



## Seedball Update

By Dirk Peterson

We first got involved trying to use seedballs in our native plant restoration efforts a couple years ago following a Zoom presentation by Dr. Elise Gornish of the University of Arizona. Dr. Gornish related her experience using seedballs in arid land restoration projects. Unfortunately, we have not had success using her recommended formula of three parts compost, two parts fireclay, and one part seeds. We found that in our climate the seedballs remained inert with no noticeable change after two years. So, this fall we started experimenting and came up with a new recipe: equal parts Sunshine Mix #4, biochar, native soil, fireclay and seeds (from left to right in the photo below). Our goal was to make seedballs that would more readily absorb moisture and dissolve. We used Sunshine Mix #4 in place of compost because I had a lot of it left over from making planter soil. Biochar was added to help absorb moisture and native soil was added to introduce some of the site biome. Crucially, we cut back from two parts to just one part of the fireclay.

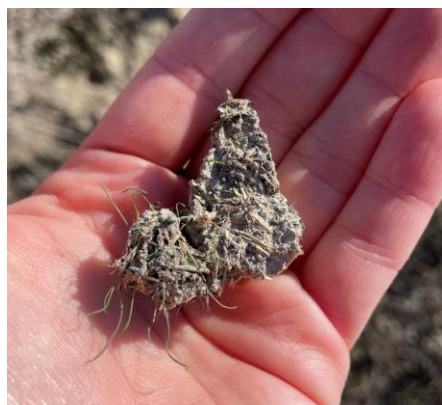
In collaboration with the Ecostudies Institute, we made roughly sixty pounds of seedballs for their restoration efforts at the Boardman Naval Bombing Range. These seedballs used a blend of native bunchgrass seeds and were placed in the field in late November. In late January they observed germination in many of the seedballs (photo courtesy Theresa Galhouse).

In early December we made a batch of sagebrush seedballs that were used as part of the cut sagebrush seed caching study. In early March sagebrush germination was observed in some of these seedballs.

In both cases we were surprised by the number of plants that had germinated in a single seedball. This suggests that just a half part of seeds should be adequate. We will continue to monitor these seedballs to determine if any of the plants take root in the soil and manage to survive.



Large seedball batch ready for mixing



Bunchgrass germination in Boardman



Sagebrush germination in Rattlesnake Slope seedballs