



Tapteal Greenway

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

Tapteal Talk

Prez Sez

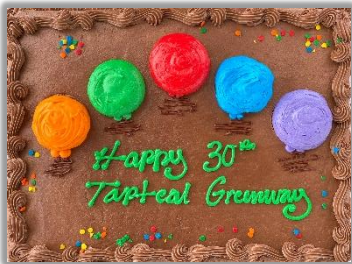
By Mike Lilga

Reflect. Envision.

Thinking big will bring big things!

Create Legacy.

Earlier this year we celebrated our 30th anniversary as an organization. TG30 we called it. It's good to honor our past, celebrate the progress we've made, and eat birthday cake. But the real value of TG30 is in taking stock of where we are and recognizing what still needs to be done. It's important now to envision what the next 30 years will look like. I call it TG60.



To be blunt, many of us won't get to eat cake at the TG60 event. So, our challenge is to set the stage and clear the path for Tapteal Greenway to move seamlessly into the future no matter who's driving. During my tenure, I'm hoping that we can resolve trail connectivity issues, ensure the Tapteal Trail has a place in the city park system, and streamline organizational functions. I'm all about enabling and empowering the board and volunteers to contribute to, and grow, the organization.

The next important opportunity to set ourselves up for the future is to participate in the City of Richland's update to its Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan. TG will be participating in a focus group to give input about opportunities for improving trail connectivity, preserving open space, and other issues of importance to the Greenway (see separate panel for a short summary). It's important to get our big-ticket items in the plan in order to enable the City to apply for funding and direct resources.

I hope, when the City's process opens up to the public, you'll make your voices heard. Your help getting TG priorities into the plan enables and empowers the board (and City) to move this project forward. This is the stuff of legacy and you get to help.

Mike

Here is a summary of a few of TG priorities for Richland's Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan, now being prepared:

- Ensure a permanent continuous Tapteal Trail from Bateman Island to the city boundary at Snively Rd.
- Acquire lands where necessary and make easements permanent along the Tapteal Trail
- Make the Tapteal Trail a city park
- Create a trailhead at Twin Bridges Rd for equestrian and other users of the Tapteal Trail
- The entire Tapteal Trail should be codified in the comprehensive plan and other planning documents and websites
- Create new natural open space parks to preserve habitat as development moves north along SR240
- Prevent damage to Amon Creek Natural Preserve being caused by inappropriate off-road bike use

~ Board of Directors ~

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Tapteal Water Trail – Event Recap

By Adam Fyall

We had our first supported Tapteal Water Trail paddle trip on our traditional first weekend of summer - June 21. There was trepidation. The weather forecasts for that day were sketchy all week, and we knew that flows down the Yakima River were also enough to make some people consider their options for the day. Still, we had ten paddlers on the water for what ended up being one of our best events over the past decade.

The June trip is our traditional Kiona-to-Horn Rapids Park affair. Yes, the water was low, but not the lowest we have seen. Nobody grounded-out or had to walk! The push was negligible however, so we ended-up with the slowest end-to-end time I can recall – about 3 hours, 40 minutes. Contrast that with the record 2½ hours we pulled a few years ago powered by a heavy river and spring freshet.

While the river was slow, the conditions were otherwise about perfect. Mild temperatures, but cloudy all morning so that sun wasn't beating down on us. What little wind there was pushed us from the back the whole time. A couple of keen observers logged 35 bird species which included a majestic bald eagle near the start to help to get us on our way.

As always, I want to thank the Board members who helped to organize and shuttle for this event. It is the shuttling that makes these trips easier and more accessible for a lot of people, as it allows participants to leave their cars at the finish and be transported back to the beginning.

Our next supported trip will be the lower section of the river (Tapteal Bend to Bateman Island) in September, and then we will finish up with the middle section (Snively Road to Tapteal Bend) in October. See you on the water!



Pre-paddle Pep Talk



Adam checking out the mature bald eagle overlooking the event



Passing under the old railroad bridge



Shout out to Drake for picking up some trash during the paddle

Update on Damage in the Amon Basin Preserve

by David McBurney

Many members of the Tapteal Greenway have contacted us over the past 18 months regarding damage to the Amon Basin Preserve from prohibited motorbike usage and unauthorized trail building including jumps, berms and carpeted landing areas. When the Greenway investigated this damage last spring almost all of the damage was on City of Richland property and there was very little damage on Tapteal Greenway property. Unfortunately, the illicit acts have continued and damage to the Natural Open Space within the City and Tapteal Greenway properties expanded. Earlier this year the Tapteal Greenway installed signs on obvious trails through Greenway property identifying it as a conservation area and stating that motorized vehicles and disturbance of the natural areas were not allowed. This was only the first step in our plan to address the issue.



The Greenway has been engaging with the City Parks Department throughout the year to address the continued damage in the Amon Basin Preserve on City property. We have had multiple discussions with Park Ranger Matt Navarro and Richland Parks Director Chris Waite on the topic. Several Greenway board members toured the damaged areas with Chris during his “52 in 25” parks campaign. We have encouraged the City to install more signs indicating motorized vehicles and disturbance of natural areas are prohibited within the Preserve. Additionally, we have requested the City have work crews remove the unauthorized trail features on City property in the Preserve.

This fall the Tapteal Greenway plans to have work parties to eliminate the jumps, berms, etc. on Tapteal Greenway property and possibly partner with the City to do the same on City property.

As the Tapteal Greenway continues work with the City to address these issues long term, we encourage concerned residents to report unauthorized acts to the Richland Police’s non-emergency number (509) 942-7360.

Woodward Scholarship 2025



This year’s Pamela & Scott Woodward Conservation Scholarship rolled-out a little differently than in the past – in a good way, though not by design. We made two awards for 2025. We had seven excellent candidates, but two really stood out and we wanted to reward them both.

Colin Ward was our 2024 awardee. He is continuing his education in Pullman at Washington State University, pursuing a declared major in Wildlife Ecology. Colin is from Richland.

Klara Hulick of West Richland is our other recipient. Klara is at the University of Washington in Seattle working toward a degree in Environmental Science.

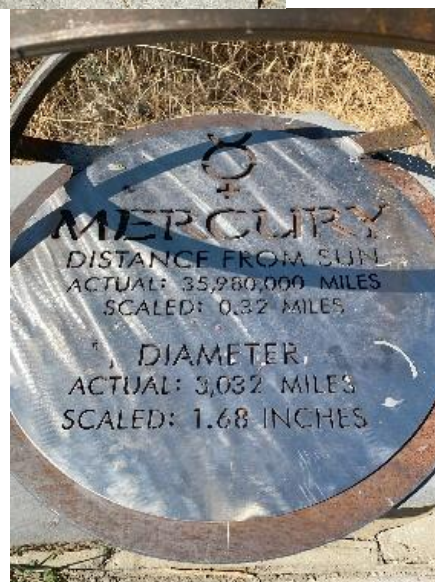
Both awardees will receive a \$2,000 scholarship from the Tapteal Greenway, made possible by you, our generous donors. Thank you.

Currently, our endowment balance sits right at \$50,000. Our intention this year was to give a single \$2,000 scholarship, but we felt compelled to do more this year with these two applicants. Though our goal over time is to give more scholarships in higher amounts, that is not yet possible and two \$2,000 awards would not be sustainable at our current financial position. As it stands, we will offer a single award in 2026 and for the foreseeable future. If you would like to help out, donations may be made at <https://www.3rcf.org/scholarships/>.

Planetary Alignment Along the Tapteal Trail

By Mike Lilga

Careful observers along the Tapteal Trail between Bateman Island and Chamna may be able to spot Mercury, Venus, Mars, or even Ceres. Less careful observers who are out on a clear night or looking up will miss them altogether. Amateur astronomers, look down in the light of day to see the planetary markers placed by Silas Education funded by Tapteal Greenway and a Richland park partnership grant in 2023. The markers were installed last month after fabrication and permitting and give trail users a fun opportunity to learn about our universal environment. The markers are part of a scale model of the solar system in which the sun resides at the Reach Museum (have you seen the arches?) and the planets orbit the Reach at appropriately scaled distances, mostly along riverfront parks and trails across the region ([Project Map](#)). For more information about the project and to contribute, see a recent [Presentation](#) and the Silas [Website](#).



Welcome Back!

The Tapteal Greenway Board welcomes back Scott Woodward.

Scott took a deserved break, but now returns with a wealth of TG experience and energy. Welcome back, Scott!

Hoofbeats on the Tapteal Greenway Trail

By Carole Schuh

In April the Purple Sage Riders “Trail Warriors” completed their second annual Family Campout at Camp Smith, Horn Rapids Horse Camp. There were eighteen in attendance – some staying Friday night and the rest arriving on Saturday morning.

Trail Warriors is a new collaborative trail riding project between Junior Back Country Horsemen and Benton-Franklin 4-H. There were 18 folks camping, 5 of those being TW youth. This event was sponsored by Purple Sage Riders and Rattlesnake Ridge Riders Back Country Horsemen Chapters. Families represented on this campout were the Kalingas, Yerbichs, Wallaces, Schuhs, and DeLeons. BCHW leaders helping and guiding were Gary Westergard, Beth Kalinga, Tawney Carrier, Melanie McKenna and Carole Schuh.

Fifteen horses were safely kept in panel pens, solar hotwire corrals and on highlines. Horses were calm and laid back – no issues. People camped in tents, campers and horse trailer campers. Folks were pretty laid back as well – also no issues. We all had a lot of fun together.

On Saturday we enjoyed an 8.8 mile ride from HRP to the first hill on Rattlesnake Slope (to catch the view) and back. Then on Sunday we took a shorter 3.5 mile ride to Wanawish Dam. The weather was great for riding all weekend.

One of the dads took all the kids fishing at least three times. It was a great experience for all of them. Thanks, Dave, for being such a patient man!

On Saturday after a hotdog dinner, Melanie McKenna gave a great, creative teaching on “Leave No Trace”. Besides teaching these kids safe trail etiquette, we also teach an appreciation for our world and the proper ways to care for it, especially when horse camping. Before breaking camp, we had a “camp sweep” to pick any bits of trash left behind.

This group rides at Horn Rapids quite a bit and really appreciates the Tapteal Greenway Trail. They also enjoy the TGT in Chamna and WE Johnson. Thanks so much for maintaining these great places for us. Happy Trails!!



Upcoming TG Events

Save the Dates:

Tapteal Water Trail Float #2 – September 20, 2025

Tapteal Water Trail Float #3 – October 18, 2025

Annual TG Celebration, Richland Community Center - Saturday, November 15, 2025 from 4:00 to 6:00 pm

Sign up to receive notifications:

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

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

Trail Maintenance - clean ups and restoration work parties – TBD, [Click to receive notifications](#)

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

30th Tri-Cities Conservationist of the Year

by Adam J. Fyall

Nominations are now open for the 2025 edition of the award, given every year since our organization's founding. It is a great honor and privilege for the Board to consider, vote on, and announce this recognition each year; but the making of nominations is open to all members.

If you know of an individual or an organization that has made outstanding contributions to conservation in our region that you would like to see recognized, please make a nomination. Send an email to taptealgreenway@gmail.com, tell us the name of your nominee and provide a few short sentences about what they do and why you are nominating them. Nominations can be made anonymously if you prefer. The Board will vote on the awardee at its September meeting. As such, the nomination deadline is August 31.

The 30th Tri-Cities Conservationist of the Year will be announced in September, with the award given at the Annual Celebration on November 11.

Watch the TG30 Webinar!

The recording of the TG30 webinar is now available for you to watch. Click the link below then enter the passcode to watch four excellent 20-minute talks on various nature topics. The four talks are:

- Recovering Salmon, Steelhead, & Bull Trout in the Yakima River Basin, by Alex Conley, Yakima Basin Fish & Wildlife Recovery Board
- Helping Salmon Thrive – Improving Amon Creek's Cool-Water Refuge, by Marcella Appel, Benton Conservation District
- Native Cactus of Washington State, by Ron Bockelman, Cactus Enthusiast
- Pygmy Rabbits, Sage Grouse, & Burrowing Owls in Washington State, by Jason Fidorra, Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife

[TG30 Webinar Link](#)

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The TG Board recently toured the Amon Creek Cool Water Refuge Site. Learn about this in Webinar TG30.