



Tapteal Talk

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Prez Sez
By Mike Lilga

If jackrabbits ruled the world,
Would houses face extinction? Or ...
Would they choose sage balance?

Amon Creek Natural Preserve (ACNP) has some of the finest shrub-steppe habitat in our urban area. It's close association with Amon Creek wetland and riparian habitats make it extremely valuable for a wide variety of wildlife, like jackrabbits. That's why Tapteal Greenway, working with the Trust for Public Land, worked hard to protect the 75 acres that became the Preserve in 2007 - 2008. Funding came from the Greenway, City of Richland, and, significantly, WA Department of Transportation (WDOT) and the Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council (EFSEC). EFSEC funding was shrub-steppe mitigation for the Energy Northwest facility while the WDOT funding was wetland mitigation for Highway 240 work in the Yakima Delta. Additional lands adjacent to the Preserve were protected later by a Tapteal Greenway purchase (4.1 ac) and by donation to Tapteal Greenway by Hayden Homes (8.07 ac) to bring the total of protected lands to about 87 acres.

This history is important for two reasons. The first is that a bill was introduced by one of our local representatives in the last session (HB 2316 - 2025-26) that would threaten shrub-steppe habitat within an urban growth area and probably prevent mitigation for shrub-steppe habitat lost to development. Had this bill been in place in 2007, there would be no ACNP (or Badger Mountain Centennial Preserve, which was also funded with mitigation funds). The bill died in committee, but stay tuned because we doubt the idea is dead.

The second reason is that ACNP habitats are being ripped up by rogue bike trail building involving creation of jumps and berms. This activity is completely inconsistent with use agreements that establish ACNP as a nature preserve to be protected in perpetuity as mitigation for habitats lost elsewhere. The Greenway applied for and received funding from 3 Rivers Community Foundation to repair and restore some of this damage. We also applied for, and await a decision on, a Park Partnership with the City of Richland to expand our restoration activities.

We need your help and vigilance to keep our Preserve a preserve. Look for volunteer opportunities this fall when we will do our restoration work. If you see incompatible uses in any Richland park, please call the non-emergency dispatch at 509-628-0333 or Richland Park Ranger Matt at 509-578-9331.



Bicyclist damage in ACNP

An Opportunity to Donate



3 Rivers Community Foundation has launched “Trails for Tomorrow”, a community-wide effort to support local trail stewardship and land conservation across Benton and Franklin counties. During April, your donation to the Richard Smith & Elaine Chapman Conservation Fund will be matched dollar-for-dollar, up to \$50,000, creating ongoing funding in the form of grants for local conservation efforts, including trail maintenance and land stewardship.

To further extend the impact, your gift will be matched again, dollar-for-dollar, towards 3 Rivers Community Foundation's annual grantmaking. Each contribution strengthens both local trail stewardship efforts and the long-term sustainability of charitable giving in our community. We invite you to be part of this effort. Your support—at any level—helps ensure these spaces remain accessible and cared for generations to come.

Click the link below to learn more and donate:

<https://3rcf.us4.list-manage.com/track/click?u=c757d7f729df0d550ecc02751&id=d4118d70df&e=8ecc22727e>

History Runs Through It

By Scott Woodward

President Mike Lilga has a vision of the Tapteal Trail as “a storytelling entity” that shares the history of the Lower Yakima River. As you travel the same path followed by rivers, pioneers, Native Americans, early settlers, explorers, and fortune-seeking entrepreneurs, you can read, dial up a QR code to listen to personal accounts, or copy a link to the Tapteal web page to find out the rest of the story. “How would Ken Burns say it?” According to Mike, that is how we will develop this project. We are Mike, Dave Harvey, and I.

The task is to start at the beginning geologically, then collect stories and facts that define the culture of the Lower Yakima River. At this point, we are in the information collection and concept stage. As the Tapteal Trail advances upstream towards Horn Rapids Park and Benton City, we are aligning our interpretive points on the river with possible panels for a story to match that site. It really is quite an interesting story.

This is not a short work window. Maybe two years, maybe longer. We have been collecting data in anticipation of Tapteal Trailing into Benton City and meeting the Ridges to Rivers Trail on the east side of the old railroad bridge. What a day that will be when the Friends of Badger Mountain meet Tapteal Greenway and link the two trails. You can find the original RROSN story at <https://ridgestorivers.wordpress.com/> Recommendation OS6.2: Establish a connective trail system that links the Badger Ridges.

We anticipate that we will have three sources for each panel.

1. A site appropriate panel with a short story and pictures
2. A QR code for more details and a dialogue
3. A website link to a broader story

History doesn't flow like the river, but it indeed does run through the adjoining landscape. If you have ideas or want to volunteer to help with this project, contact Scott via the Tapteal website, <https://tapteal.org/>.



A ditch digger machine for a local canal

Ridge View Elementary Educational Visit

Submitted by Dirk Peterson

Last fall we were contacted by a first grade teacher at Ridge View Elementary requesting a school visit. The challenge was we needed to put on an event for all four of the first grade classes. We decided to set up four stations in the cafeteria and have the classes rotate through them in the course of an hour. Four stations on our own would be difficult, so I recruited some partners. We did a station on native plants and one with our riparian zone critters (beaver, otter and mink). Benton Conservation District did a station about salmon, and Reach Museum did a station focusing on the coyote (the school mascot). The event went well and the first graders were a joy to interact with.



The Native Plant Station



The REACH Museum Station



The Salmon Station



The Riparian Zone Critters Station

KID Semi-Annual Amon Partners Meeting

By Scott Woodward

A few years ago, during the intense development issues around Amon Creek, it was proposed that the Kennewick Irrigation District host stakeholders from the Amon Basin area to discuss issues related to the newly created and still threatened Amon Creek area. Those stakeholders are the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, KID, Tapteal Greenway, Lower Columbia Basin Audubon, and the City of Richland. The Partners Meeting had not been operating for a few years. With the recent invasion of Phragmites into the West Fork and the illegal motorized trespass and vandalism to native plants in Amon Creek Natural Preserve (ACNP), we felt it was time for stakeholders to check in.

The KID gave a very thorough report on drought conditions and ongoing KID projects. Tapteal reported on Phragmites and illegal activities in Amon. WDFW listened, COR reported on the accidental habitat destruction off of Bellerive and the East Fork of Amon.



Public Works decided they would clear an entire area the size of a Little League baseball field to do a very small project. The City will be restoring the mess. Tapteal questioned the City about the timeline for Center Parkway completion in the ACNP. The response was the project is working on an easement from the BPA substation. LCBAS asked about trail easements on canal rights-of-way. KID has already established a trail on a covered system in Kennewick to enhance kids getting to school and off the streets. There was no commitment by KID to continue this effort, but they were open to consideration.

You will find this recommendation in the Ridges to Rivers Open Space plan, <https://ridgestorivers.wordpress.com/> Recommendation OS1.2: Establish trail easements along irrigation canals.

Tapteal concerns about Phragmites have been moved to the operations section of KID. We hope we can be partners with KID and the City of Richland to keep this scourge out of the preserve.

We hope to meet again in the fall to discuss progress concerning Amon.

Do you love Horn Rapids Park? You will be interested in this exciting new "project".

FRIENDS OF HORN RAPIDS PARK

Spearheaded by Bonnie C. Cooley – reddogfam@yahoo.com

"We are a united coalition of animal enthusiasts, recreational groups, and community members dedicated to protecting and preserving Horn Rapids Park — safeguarding its wildlife, natural beauty, and recreational opportunities for generations to come."

This group is being organized now. If you are interested in saving HRP, join us.

Watch for more information coming soon...

Late Season Plantings

By Dirk Peterson

We normally like to get our native plants in the ground in late October or November, although we have occasionally planted as late as February using larger plants. This year we decided to do a number of winter plantings. In late January we planted four cottonwood trees at the north end of our property along the Yakima River. The trees were planted about two feet deep with watering tubes added. The trees were encircled with wire cages to protect them from beavers and deer (and also potential flood debris). In early February we did additional plantings at two of our Amon Creek Natural Preserve restoration sites. In early March we planted six smooth sumac trees along the West Fork of Amon Creek. Finally, we took cuttings from a cottonwood tree that beavers had cut down and tried planting them in two spots along the creek.



Dirk watering a newly planted cottonwood tree



These plants are in standard one gallon pots



In this area we used plants in one gallon tall containers



Two of the six smooth sumac plants added along the West Fork of Amon Creek.



Cuttings from a beaver downed cottonwood tree

Upcoming Events

This spring wildflower walk will be at Horn Rapids Park on Wednesday, May 6 at 5:00 - 7:00 pm



Columbia Basin Chapter of the WA Native Plant Society

Details + Directions

www.cbwnps.org/calendar

More Upcoming Events:

Tri-Cities Earth Day Festival, REACH Museum, Saturday, April 18, 12:00 – 4:00 pm

Salmon Summit – April 21-22, 8:30 am - 1:30 pm, Columbia Park

Badger Mtn Elementary Community Science Night – April 22, 5:00 – 7:00 pm

Tapteal Trail Clean-up, Saturday, May 9, meet at the end of Carrier Rd, 9:00 – 11:00 am

For further information, contact taptealgreenway@gmail.com

Annual Back Country Horsemen Cleanup@ Horn Rapids Park

Submitted by Carole Schuh



Gary Westergard (PSR/RRR) pruning shrubs



Carole Mylius (RRR President/PSR) pulling tumbleweeds



Carole Mylius (RRR/PSR), Katie and Nancy Cox (PSR)



Barb Ott (RRR/PSR) on a mission



Mikki Symonds (Native Plant Society) and Olive Schuh (BCHW youth) cleaned the native garden



A clean Backdoor Trailhead to the TG River Trail – no native plants were harmed in the process - a log was added to block access



Tumbleweeds pulled from the native garden and dispatched

As you can see, a huge amount of work was accomplished at Horn Rapids Horse Camp (Camp Smith), Meacham Hall and the Backdoor Trailhead. Sixteen people from three organizations (BCHW Purple Sage Riders, BCHW Rattlesnake Ridge Riders and Native Plant Society) worked together to get all of this done.

**THANK YOU TO EVERYONE WHO COLLABORATED BECAUSE YOU CARE ABOUT HRP!!
Well done, Everyone!!**