

Taking Wing



Klamath Wingwatchers, Inc
Klamath Falls, OR

Give Back to Your Trail this Spring!

Dave Potter, Board Member & Volunteer Coordinator

Since our Klamath Wingwatchers Trail is the sole responsibility of volunteers to stay good looking and fully enjoyable, we are always looking for people who enjoy it to chip in and help. Can you spare a few hours to help keep up the trail?

- **Have a green thumb?** We need folks to care for the 118 new trees and shrubs that have been planted along the trail.
- **Are you a weed killer?** Keeping encroaching weeds at bay and adjusting the irrigation drip heads is critical, along with cutting back vines, mowing, weed whacking.
- **Chipping in?** We need a group to help with spreading additional wood chips and re-graveling spots along the trail.
- **Take out the trash!** Picking up litter can be done whenever you walk the trail, or on designated days with a group.

...and there are always special projects like placing rocks in eroded or bank burrow areas, and sign or building upkeep.

So if you're willing to join the handful of hard working volunteers already contributing, contact Dave Potter to receive more info. Email kpottermom@yahoo.com.



New Board Member Makes Time for Trail

Focused on Trail Signage, Restoration

Dave Hays, Board Member

There are many ways to mark the passage of time. The school year, Facebook posts, car payments... but I prefer [Say's phoebes](#).

When winter is at its longest and dreariest, these little tropical flycatchers appear to herald the leading edge of spring's return, and promise us that warmer times are soon to come. After the phoebes, I also note the return of the tree swallows, then the turkey vultures.

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Link River Entrance Closed

Due to highway construction, the Link River entrance to the Wingwatchers Trail is closed for the year. Use the entrance around the corner on Riverside Drive, starting from the Discover Klamath parking area.

Restoration News

Leslie Lowe, Board President

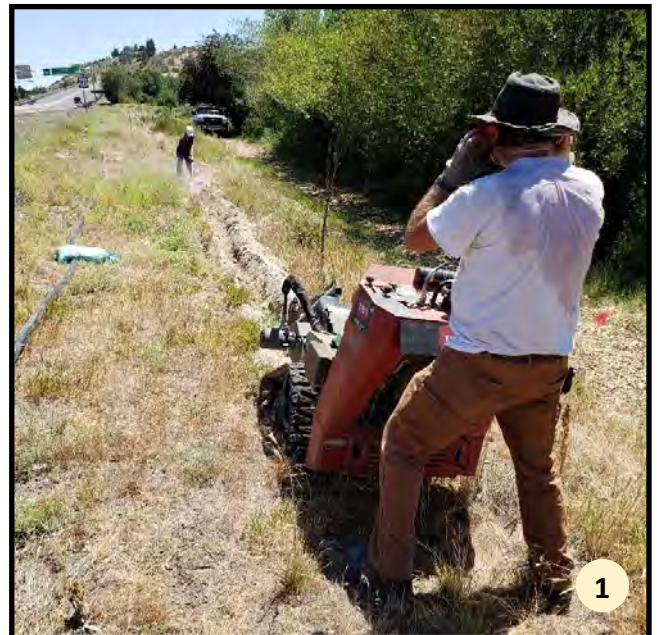
In 2023, our Wingwatcher Board and volunteers planted the area between the Ken Hay trail and Highway 97 for 1500' and installed a drip irrigation system to each of 118 new plants, plus 10 that were already there.

New plantings:	Previously planted but now getting drip feeders:
Currant 27	Rose 6
Elderberry..... 3	Chokecherry 1
Golden Rod..... 8	Potentilla 1
Klamath Plum 20	Privet 1
Milkweed 10	Chokecherry 1
Mock Orange..... 14	
Oregon Grape..... 7	
Oregon white oak... 7	
Ponderosa Pine..... 3	
Rose.....7	
Sumac..... 12	

We hope this spring you will see the fruits of our labors as these plants take hold and put forth leaves. This planting will improve the trail experience, increase wildlife habitat and food sources, and filter highway runoff that contaminates this area along Highway 97.

Thanks to **Mark Casebier, Allan Lowe, Dave Potter, Bill Wood, Leslie Lowe, Mike Griffith, Russ Hatch, Greg Christensen**, and others. This work would not have been possible without **John Bellon**, City Parks. It turned out to be quite the challenge to reduce the pressure and connect to all 4 controllers along 1500 feet of pipe. And then we had to bury all of it.

Funding:	
Mennen Foundation	\$4,000
Ford Family Fund	\$1,800
USF&W Klamath Refuges.....	\$750
Kerns Family for Ben Kerns Memorial.....	\$500
Wingwatchers.....	\$1,434



Images: 1.) **Mark Casebier** using the trenching machine for 1500 feet!!! 2.) It took A LOT of volunteers A LOT of time to cover the pipe for 1500' in ditches. 3.) **Greg Christensen**, amazing volunteer, readying the ditch to carry the 2" polypipe. 4.) Integral Youth Services (IYS) crew covering the polypipe that will bring water to 128 plants along Ken Hay trail and Highway 97. 5.) An oak tree planted in **Memory of Ben Kerns** near the junction of the Ken Hay Trail and the railroad bed.

“New Board Member ” Continued...

Observing these seasonal arrivals keeps me grounded in reality, as we all need to live by a different clock from time to time. Observing the pace of the natural world puts the constant thrum of bad news, deadlines, and responsibilities into sharp and appropriate context.

That’s why even the smallest patches of nature, even ones that bracket a busy highway, are critical to us. The Wingwatchers Trail, right on the edge of downtown Klamath Falls, provides a little bit of natural heaven for birdwatchers, families, and dog walkers (on-leash, of course!).

I feel gratitude towards any and all who share their time to maintain and improve this place, and I’m honored to join the Wingwatchers board to do my part.

I come to Wingwatchers as an ecologist and graphic designer, with a career spent in land management with the federal government. Through my career I’ve come to learn that every acre of natural land matters, especially if they are easily accessible to the public.

Working with Wingwatchers, my goals are to help with signage, including botanical signs to help the plant-curious, and to assist in efforts to restore areas that need native plants. That’s not to say I wouldn’t spend my fair share of time on the trail just watching the birds.

So when you next find yourself out there watching a red-winged blackbird defend his nesting site, or a muskrat swim lazily by, remind yourself that their time can be your time; that in that moment, you are part of a wider natural world. And also consider being part of our effort to provide access to it, and to preserve it.



The Wingwatchers Trail: An Environmental Gem

Unknown by Many, Right Here In the City of Klamath Falls!

Glenn Gailis MD. Membership Chairman

Today there is much discussion about all that our human species is doing to harm our natural environment, but I wish to tell you about a wonderful on-going project and nature conserving gem right here in downtown Klamath Falls. This is the Wingwatchers 2.5 mile wetlands trail with an entryway to the trail at the South Portal Building / Discover Klamath visitors center / Chamber of Commerce at 205 Riverside Drive (There is another trail entrance across from the Favell Museum and Art Museum, but it will be closed for a total of two years while there is earthquake retrofitting of the highway 97 bridges).

The Wingwatchers Trail is an incredible conservation and environmental improvement project. More than just another trail, we are conserving wetlands, cleaning water, providing habitat for birds and other animals, and promoting birdwatching and wildlife education. Wingwatchers trail also provides you with a place to walk to benefit your health. Walking and being outdoors helps with a sense of well being, and helps reduce anxiety and depression. Walking improves muscle strength, balance, reduces falls, and can even help with sleep and prevent memory loss and dementia.

This project is a 501(c) 3 non-profit organization started and run by a totally volunteer board and volunteer citizens. We receive funding through grants, memberships, and donations so we need all your financial support. Before this project got started some of the low-lying wetland and marsh were used as a construction landfill or dumping ground for old bricks and mortar. In the late 1980's, Wingwatchers trail was started by retired wildlife biologist Ralph Opp along with Terry Boyer, BJ Matzen, and others. Part of the Wingwatchers mission is to provide educational material for our youth and adults, and there is trail information provided at the trail head to help educate the public on native plants and the importance of wetlands to cleanse our environment. The land also has a tall tree snag that was helicoptered in by Weyerhaeuser Company in 1994 and provides a perch for eagles and other raptors.

In addition to the environmental benefits of this wetland, the board is continually trying to improve the land with the planting of native plants that are identified in a pamphlet at the trailhead. Many years ago, volunteers from the community and Klamath Union High School planted over a thousand new native plants. This effort continues today. In 2023 the board and generous volunteers, including Integral Youth Services and the City of Klamath Falls, put in an extensive drip irrigation system and planted 118 additional native plants, such as milkweed to provide food for monarch butterflies. Many of

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“Gem” Continued...

the new plants are between the trail and the highway to eventually provide a natural barrier from the highway.

Also, board members Phil Dussel, Bill Wood and Mark Casebeer installed a solar water pump to regulate water levels. Dave Potter, retired wildlife biologist, Bill Wood, and other volunteers re-anchored existing floating logs along the shoreline to help prevent bank erosion. With the help of Kelsey Mueller-Wendt and Merritt Driscoll at Healthy Klamath there is new colorful signage for educational purposes as well. Greg Christenson, another regular volunteer, cleans up homeless camp litter, trims trees, and helps with almost every work day activity. Board member Mark Casebeer and others helped build a new storage shed to house garden tools we use. There are also board members Leslie and Allan Lowe who are “volunteers for life” and do EVERYTHING to make sure this project never dies.

I am a relatively new member of the Wingwatchers board, but the longtime members are incredibly hard workers and put have put in hours of volunteer time to make the Wingwatchers trail a better place for the citizens of Klamath falls.

HOWEVER, WE NEED YOUR VOLUNTEER HELP TOO. As you can see, a lot is going on continually with maintenance of the Wingwatchers trail. The work never ends and we can't depend on only a few people to consistently do all the work. We need both young and old bodies to do things like hand weeding around new plants, weed whacking the trails, spreading wood chips on the trail, picking up litter (it's always there), repairing signage, and help with moving gravel and rock. Seven members of our eight person board are over the age of sixty-five - We could use some YOUNGER help!

Please consider becoming a Wingwatchers member, help us fund our improvements, and volunteer at our work party on the last Saturday of the month. The membership pledges are as follows: Student / Senior \$10, Individual \$15, Family \$25 and Business \$35.

If you are interested in helping with any our projects, call Glenn Gailis MD at 541 891-2715 (cell) or 541 884-5356 (home) at any time. My email is gggailis@msn.com. Or try Dave Potter, our volunteer coordinator, at kpottermom@yahoo.com or call Leslie Lowe at 541 882-6509.

I wish to also give a BIG THANK YOU TO ALL OF YOU WHO HAVE VOLUNTEERED OVER THE YEARS to improve the natural habitat and wetlands in downtown Klamath Falls.



Getting Pumped Up!

Phil Dussel, Board Member

If you think the Solar Pump (AKA Phil's Folly) will make it to April Fool's Day - Join the office pool and may the best guess win!

But seriously, the latest update is that the pump is protected from wind & wave action (sometimes there's rough water) but it still has to make it through winter.

The purpose of the pump is to lower the water depth in the South Pond, providing warmer, shallower waters for macroinvertebrates and the animals that feed on them, thus increasing biodiversity in the area.

When spring weather makes adjustments feasible, the solar arrays need to be repositioned inside the log booms, and pump power settings need to be tweaked. All in due time.



Turn Fred Meyer Groceries into Support \$\$\$

Help Klamath Wingwatchers painlessly by allowing a portion of your grocery bill to go to us! Sign up online at:

<https://www.fredmeyer.com/i/community/community-rewards>

Thank you!

SUPPORT THE TRAIL YOU CARE ABOUT

SEND YOUR MEMBERSHIP DUES TO:
8880 Tingley Lane, Klamath Falls, OR 97603

Membership dues and donations are usually tax deductible.

My membership pledge:

Student/Senior \$10 Individual \$15 Family \$25 Business \$35

Extra Donation _____

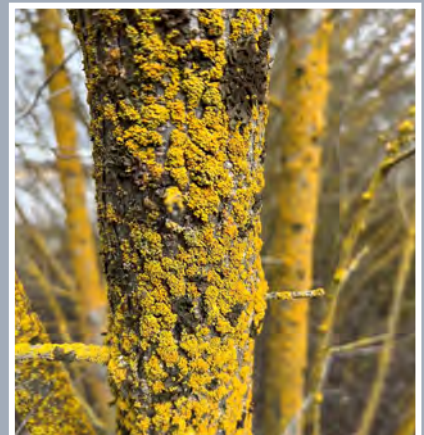
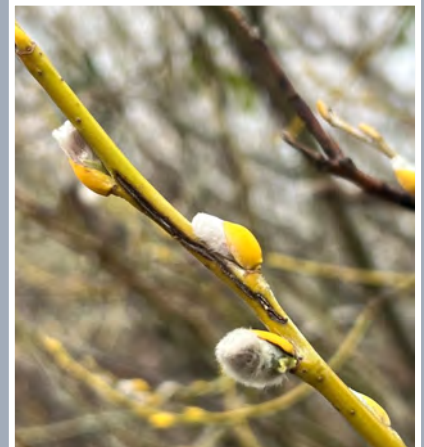
Name _____ Phone _____

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Our TAKING WING newsletter will be sent to your email address, unless you don't have one. If you want our newsletter snail mailed to your home address, please include an extra \$8 to cover postage and handling for 3-4 issues each year.



TRAIL MAINTENANCE NEEDS YOU!

Klamath Wingwatchers Board meetings are held at the Healthy Klamath Office in the Herald and News building at 2701 Foothills Blvd at 4:30 pm on the 4th Thursday of each month. They are OPEN to everyone! Come and join us. Call 541-882-6509 for more info.

PLEASE GET INVOLVED AND SUPPORT THE TRAIL YOU ENJOY

Set up your 2024 calendar

Trail Maintenance days are the last Saturday of the month for March through October. Volunteers assemble at the Discover Klamath building [205 Riverside Drive] parking lot at 9 a.m. Work winds up about 11:30 a.m. or whenever people need to take off. Bring gloves and water. Wear long pants and close-toed shoes.

If you are willing to help on other days, please let us know, as we are involved in some very big jobs to improve the trails. Help is always needed. Litter pickup [never ending], painting, weeding new shrub plantings, and spreading wood chips are some of the jobs requiring volunteer efforts.

For more info email Dave Potter at kpottermom@yahoo.com