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Institute for Natural Resources

December 2014 E-Newsletter

Informing natural resource decision making through integrated knowledge and information.

SAGECON: Coordinating Conservation

In 2012, the Sage-grouse Conservation Partnership (SageCon) was convened at the request of the Oregon Governor's office to formulate an "all lands, all threats" approach to sage-grouse conservation to both address USFWS' sage-grouse listing decision in 2015 and support community sustainability in central and eastern Oregon into the future.

The SageCon Partnerhip's overarching goal is demonstrate how Oregon is implementing the policies and conservation actions needed to adequately reduce threats to sage-grouse and Oregon's sagebrush ecosystem. The primary product of the SageCon Partnership will be an amendment to the Oregon Sage-grouse Plan for Oregon to: (i) update the status of the species and its habitat conditions, (ii) identify existing conservation measures that have been implemented in Oregon since 2010 to reduce threats to the species , and (iii) formulate new regulatory and voluntary programs the state of Oregon, local governments, and public and private land managers to create more predictability and certainty in the permitting process and to ensure that mitigation dollars are invested in the highest value sage grouse habitat for the

species. Read More

For additional information, contact Theresa Burcsu at Theresa.Burcsu@pdx.edu

Introducing the Oregon Hydrologic Information Server

The Institute for Natural Resources, the Oregon State University Library, and the Willamette Water 2100 project partnered to purchase and maintain a server which will be connected to the CUAHSI network. The Consortium of Universities for the Advancement of Hydrologic Science, Inc. (CUAHSI) is an NSF sponsored research organization supporting discovery and use of water data through the development of a data model, infrastructure, and web services, as well as documentation and software enabling groups to implement a HydroServer that functions within the CUAHSI network. The Oregon Hydrologic Information Server (OHIS) will initially serve data produced by the Willamette Water 2100 project, but others in the research and agency community will be able to submit data to the OHIS using CUAHSI developed tools that allow interaction with the underlying databases.

Participating in CUAHSI through the OHIS makes data discoverable and accessible. The international community of CUAHSI users will be able to browse, view, query, and download OHIS data. Digital Object Identifiers will be assigned to data added to the server, thus creating a permanent record for each dataset. Connecting the OHIS to the CUAHSI network increases the availability and visibility of water data managed by INR.

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OSU: Largest Recipient of Funds from PNW CESU

The Institute for Natural Resources represents Oregon State University as part

of the Pacific Northwest Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit (PNW CESU). The PNW CESU is a cooperative venture between 11 federal agencies dedicated to natural and cultural resource management and 17 leading academic institutions and one state agency in the Pacific Northwest region. The PNW CESU, hosted by the University of Washington, was founded in 2000 and is preparing for its third five-year renewal.

OSU, a PNW CESU partner since 2000, has received over $25 million in funding, nearly a third of the total PNW CESU funding, followed by the University of Washington ($16 million) and the University of Idaho ($13 million). OSU's faculty and students have partnered with seven federal agencies: Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, Natural Resources Conservation Service, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and U.S. Geological Survey. OSU's projects range across interdisciplinary, cultural, social, physical, and biological disciplines. Biological disciplines have been the highest funded, 126 projects receiving over $19 million. Almost $1 million has supported three interdisciplinary projects. OSU's activity, 177 projects, makes up a quarter of all PNW CESU projects. Read more.

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WW2100 Technical Advisory Group Updates

This fall, the Willamette Water 2100 project formed a Technical Advisory Group comprised of thirty water resources operations, use, and planning specialists. Over the next four months, the group will meet to select assumptions for one or two "what if" scenarios that explore how climate change and population growth will alter the availability and use of water in the Willamette Basin. These "stakeholder scenarios" will be part of the suite of scenarios that will be run and analyzed with a computer model of the Willamette Water system developed by project scientists over the last four years. The computer model integrates aspects of hydrology, ecology, and human systems, and allows scientists and stakeholders to explore the interaction between land and water management policies, economics, climate, and ecology. The project involves 21 scientists from OSU, UO, PSU, and UC-Santa Barbara and is supported by grants from the National Science

Foundation.

For additional information, contact Maria Wright at maria.wright@oregonstate.edu or navigate to the WW2100 main webpage at http://water.oregonstate.edu/ww2100

How Do You Restore A Forest?

Using Models to Inform Work in the Blue Mountains

A common problem for restoration projects lies in building a set of projects that go beyond the general principle that "restoration is good." Details become critical. What exactly does restoration look like in different forest types? What is the desired condition in terms of tree species, tree sizes, and patch configuration? What would "restored" forests in those two environments look like and how resilient might they be in the face of climate change?

In order to answer these questions and others, analysts at the Institute for Natural Resources, working with the USDA Forest Service Pacific Northwest Region and Pacific Northwest Research Station, have run several landscape scenarios for the Blue Mountains with an emphasis on the high priority Lower Joseph Canyon area in the northern Wallowa-Whitman National Forest.

In addition to the reference condition models, other landscape scenarios can be run to forecast potential future forest conditions under a variety of management approaches. These will help the restoration team describe the effects of alternative restoration treatments in terms of forest conditions, wildlife habitats, fuel hazards, and other important natural resource considerations. All of these landscape models help the team include the best available science in management decisions. Read more

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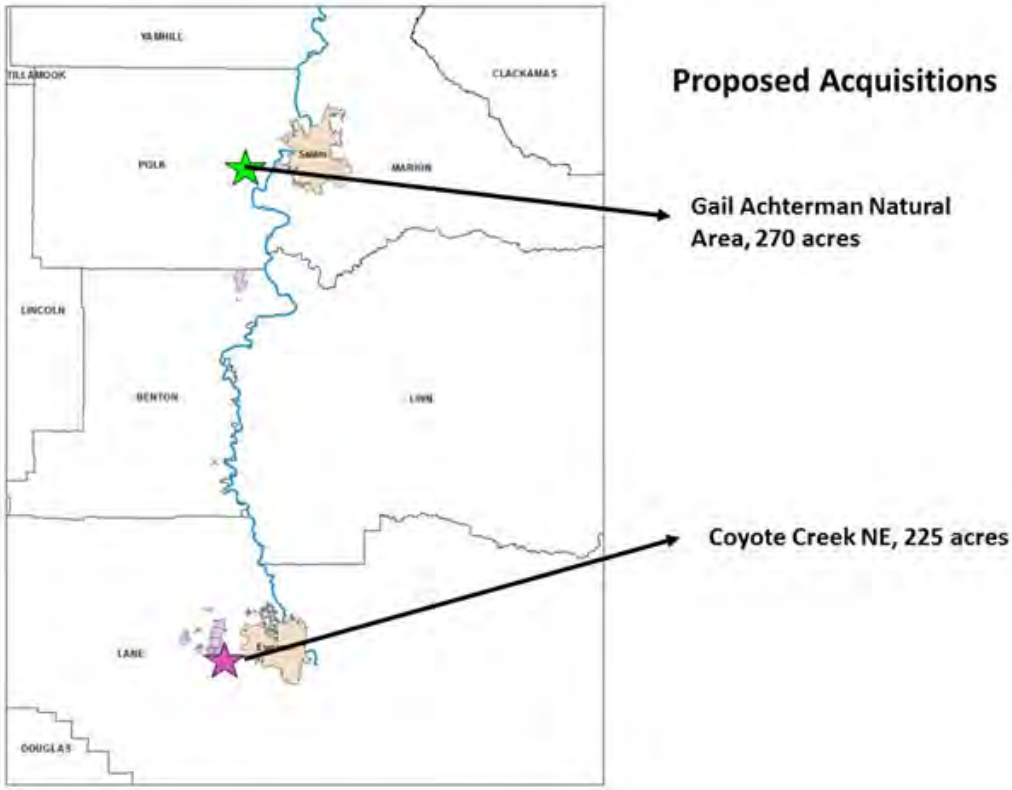
Commission Votes to Take Ownership of Hayden Island for "Gail Achterman Natural Area"



The Gail Achterman Legacy Group, the Trust for Public Lands, and many others have been working tirelessly to purchase Hayden Island, 270 acres of floodplain forest along the Willamette River in Polk County just across the river from Gail's hometown of Salem, and create a natural area in Gail's name. Last week, the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission unanimously voted for the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) to take ownership of Hayden Island in Polk County. The Trust for Public Lands is currently working on the last tasks as this effort moves toward the final transfer of the land to ODFW. Chris Achterman (Gail's brother), Stephanie Hallock (a dear friend of Gail's who lead the "Gail Achterman Legacy Group") and Owen Wozniak (the Trust for Public Lands) attended the Commission meeting. "It was the best Christmas present ever to see a map on the screen that said 'Gail Achterman Natural Area'", Stephanie said, "Thank you all for being a part of this effort. A formal update letter will be sent to all the donors in the coming weeks."

Editorial Staff: Andrew Wentworth and Julie Bain

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