

North Fork Currents

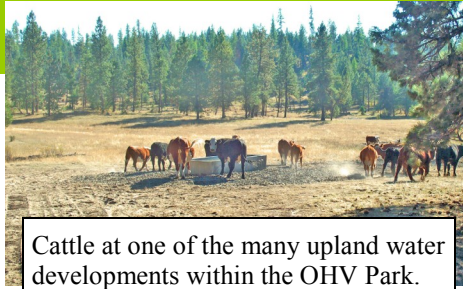
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April - June 2011

Cows, Fish and ATVs

Who says they can't all get along? A visit to the Morrow/Grant County Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) Park is proof of what thoughtful restoration and careful management can do.

The 9000-acre park in Grant and Morrow Counties opened in 2003 and has been working ever since to assure it's a friendly place for cows, fish and ATVs alike. The property is bordered by the Umatilla National Forest, and had been heavily logged before the County bought it. Morrow County Public Works turned the logging roads and skid trails into an OHV trail system, and developed a campground with RV sites, tent spaces, and cabins for rent. There are stocked fishing ponds, hiking trails, a golf driving range, viewpoints, and educational kiosks within the park. There's even an area for washing vehicles to help reduce the spread of weeds.



Cattle at one of the many upland water developments within the OHV Park.



Wilson Creek to be fenced this year to protect fish.

Races, rock crawls and other events bring enthusiasts from all over the Northwest. The park has become a cornerstone of Morrow County's tourism efforts, and the economic benefits are spilling over into nearby communities, with merchants in Spray reporting a significant increase in business from park users. The park is also leased for grazing, under a management plan developed by the permittee, the County, and Oregon State University.

The Watershed Council, with funding from the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board, has been involved in the park's restoration activities from the beginning. Work is set to start soon on Phase III of an effort that has supported numerous projects within the park. In this phase we will fence a two-mile stretch of Wilson Creek and provide protection of 14 sensitive acres around spring sites. More spring developments, a pond reclamation and the reconnection of spring overflows to Wilson Creek are also scheduled.

For more about this unique park, visit: www.morrowcountyparks.org. Better yet, load up your ATV and go get a first-hand look. The season opening is May 13th.

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In the spring I have counted 136 different kinds of weather inside of 24 hours.

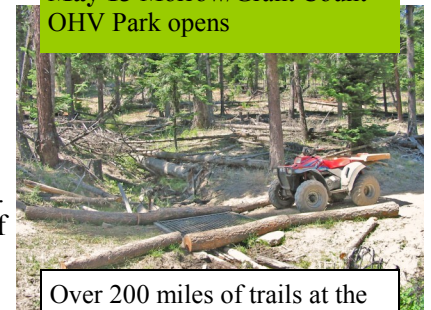
Mark Twain

Upcoming Events

April 19 NFJDWC meeting 6pm at Long Creek Office

May 4 Agricultural Water Quality Management Plan meeting. Contact Monument SWCD at 541 934-2141 for more information.

May 13 Morrow/Grant Count OHV Park opens



Over 200 miles of trails at the Morrow/Grant County OHV Park, located off Hwy 207, about 20 miles north of Spray.

Worrisome Grass Invader



Photo: Pamela Scheinost, USDA NRCS Pullman Plant Materials Center

Rangeland managers have become increasingly concerned about the spread of medusahead, an invasive annual grass. But there is another annual grass invader that has gone relatively unnoticed and seems to be gaining momentum in an alarming way.

Ventenata, also known as wiregrass or North Africa grass, is showing up in more locations across the North Fork John Day Watershed. Like medusahead, Ventenata produces very little leafy material and has a high silica content, making it unpalatable to livestock. Native to the Mediterranean region, it was first documented within the U.S. in Washington State in 1952 and began spreading rapidly in the early 2000s.

It is now a significant problem in hay and Kentucky bluegrass crops. Ventenata has also spread into range and pasture areas, displacing desirable vegetation. It even has the ability to replace fellow invaders like medusahead and cheatgrass.

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Executive Director Says Farewell

In July of 2008, I accepted the position of Coordinator for the North Fork John Day Watershed Council. My husband Steph and I had been looking for a place to settle down and found this area absolutely beautiful, with all the qualities we were hoping to find. I stepped into my new job excited, ready to work on projects, and looking forward to exploring the watershed.

The Board and existing staff had done a great job of getting several projects funded and I had a good foundation to build on. Over the past several years I've gotten to know the people and the landscape of this place I now call home.

I feel extremely proud to have developed multiple projects, programs and partnerships for the Council. We have grown considerably, tripling our budget and project load from when I started. Last year we were able to expand our operations further and hire two more employees, bringing us to a staff of five and making us the largest private employer in Long Creek.

Learning and working in this unique place, dealing with the issues that impact not only the resources, but the people that rely on those resources has been the most significant part of my time with the Council.

So it was a very difficult decision for me to accept another position and even more difficult now to announce that my last day at the Council will be April 22nd. Happily, I won't be going far. I will be in John Day with the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, where I plan to continue working with the Council and all the important partnerships we have built together.

I want to thank the Board and staff for being so wonderful to work with and for making the North Fork John Day Watershed Council such a great organization. I am leaving it in capable hands.

Sincerely,

Amy Charette

Poster Contest Results

Eight students from Monument and Long Creek will be advancing to the state level in a National Association of Conservation Districts poster contest. Dozens of posters were on display at the 10th annual Resource Fair held this past January, sponsored by the Watershed Council and Monument SWCD. The theme was "Forests for People: More Than You Can Imagine!" Winners received Subway gift certificates and the chance for prize money at the national level.

Monument Winners:

Toby Nation – 1st Grade
Samantha Choate – 2nd Grade
G.W. Clark – 6th Grade

Long Creek Winners:

Lilly Cave – 1st Grade
Drew Wilburn – 3rd Grade
Delaney Swanton – 5th Grade
Lucas Swanton – 8th Grade
Manuel Cabral – 11th Grade



Forester Mitch Mund with the Oregon Department of Forestry shows Long Creek Elementary students how to tell the age of a tree. The students used what they learned to create posters for the contest.

Employment Opportunity

The NFJDWC is looking for an Executive Director to take us to the next level of success. The ideal candidate is a seasoned leader with experience in the administration and development of a non-profit organization.

This person should also have proven success at grant writing and fundraising, and have an understanding of natural resource conservation and the role of watershed councils in Oregon.

For application information and a full position description, visit: www.nfjdwc.org

Applications are due to the Council office by April 13th at 5pm.

Attention Contractors

The NFJDWC is seeking qualified contractors for a variety of upcoming projects, including culvert replacements; spring developments; weed control; juniper removal; stream channel restoration; excavation work and riparian plantings.

To be notified of these bid opportunities, contractors must be on our contractors list. Deadline for submissions is April 15, 2011.

For more information on projects and contractor requirements contact our office: (541) 421-3018 or info@nfjdwc.org

Grass Invader

(continued from page 1)

This winter annual germinates in the fall and produces seed heads in the spring before browning and dying off in early- to mid-summer. In May – June it is easily recognizable by its distinct reddish nodes on the stem and long ligule at the leaf collar, where the leaf blade meets the stem (see picture below). Once the seeds mature, the awns become twisted and bent. Each plant may produce between 15-35 seeds.

Mowing is not an effective means of control. Prior to seed set, mowed stems will regrow and produce viable seed heads. Following seed set and drying, the tough stems will either bend over or become tangled in the swather. Grazing and prescribed burning are also ineffective control mechanisms, and presently there are no biological control agents available for *Ventenata*.

Registered herbicides for *Ventenata* control in hay, pasture, and range fields are limited. Perhaps the best control method for this grass invader, as with most weeds, is active prevention and treatment of infestations while they are still small and manageable.

Due to the short viability of its seeds (1-2 years), locating and exterminating small patches of *Ventenata* may be more economically feasible than other species with longer seed viability.

For more information, please contact NFJDWC Project Manager, Bryan Vogt, at (541) 421-3018 or bryan@nfjdw.org.



Donations Gladly Accepted
Your tax-deductible contribution will help us continue to protect water, wildlife and working farms & ranches in the North and Middle Fork John Day Watershed.

— CUT HERE —

North Fork John Day Watershed Council — Donation Form

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Please detach and send this form with your check or MO to:

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PO Box 444
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We are a nonprofit 501 (c)3 corporation and will send you a receipt documenting your tax-deductible contribution. Electronic donations can be made online through the link at our website - www.nfjdw.org



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North Fork Currents

About the North Fork John Day Watershed Council

The North Fork John Day Watershed Council was formed by local citizens in 1995 and incorporated as a non-profit 501(c)3 organization in 2006. Our mission is to plan, fund and implement programs that protect the health of our watershed, honor tribal treaty rights and provide long-term stability for the individuals and communities that rely on the watershed's natural resources. Through restoration, monitoring and outreach, we seek to foster an understanding that upland and riparian habitat improvement, weed management and other conservation efforts are vital to the social and economic fabric of the area.

Projects sponsored by the Council include, but are not limited to, upland watering system developments; irrigation diversion and efficiency projects; riparian improvements; removal of fish passage barriers; water quality monitoring; noxious weed control; educational outreach and technical assistance.

STAFF

Amy Charette, Executive Director

Bryan Vogt, Project Manager

Erik Rook, Monitoring & Data/GIS Specialist

Valeen Madden, Program Assistant

Patti Hudson, Outreach Coordinator

MEETINGS

NFJDWC meetings are open to the public and held the third Tuesday of every month at 6pm.

Contact us for agendas and locations.

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BOARD

Rick Henslee, President, Long Creek

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John Zakrajsek Secretary/Treasurer, CTUIR

Reiba Smith, Long Creek

Mark Rietmann, Morrow County

Steph Charette, Confederated Tribes of the
Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon

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