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Party Time!

Be sure not to miss our 10th MRA Anniversary dinner and get-together on **Friday, May 4**, at 5:30 p.m. at a new location: Everett Hall on the grounds of Hopkins Demonstration Forest. Details inside.

Molalla River Alliance

Newsletter 12

Volunteers step up to patrol river corridor

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A new app through Molalla River Alliance allows visitors to the Molalla River Corridor to help keep things clean, safe and intact

By John Baker, Pioneer Editor

Having more eyes on the prize—that is the Molalla River Corridor—is going to help keep things cleaner and safer moving forward.

That's the hope of John Atkins, president of the Molalla River Alliance, as a growing group of volunteers are helping the Bureau of Land Management look after the assets the corridor offers people who love the outdoors. And they are using technology to do it.

Atkins said that with the BLM short-handed due to a hiring freeze, the normal monitoring of the corridor's camping and recreation areas isn't available this year. So, with the help of a newly developed mobile phone app, he's hoping he and fellow volunteers can fill in the gap.

"We just wanted to put some more eyes out there to help the BLM out," Atkins said.

The new app, created by First Incident Response of Quebec, Canada, lets observers pinpoint and report on activity such as vandalism, illegal acts or other things that can damage the corridor. Circumstances dictated that something needed to be done, and the new Molalla River Incident Report App could make a big difference.

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And now we are 10

By John Atkins
MRA President



It doesn't seem that long ago when Fran Taylor dropped by my office in Molalla to introduce herself and to ask if I might be interested in helping start a new organization. As she envisioned it, its focus

would be on the Molalla River, with the aim of protecting water quality, supporting recovery of native fish runs, restoring habitat, and promoting family-friendly recreation opportunities. In my pre-retirement job as city manager, Fran's idea sounded like something worth trying. That was 10 years ago.

Over the decade that has since elapsed, the Molalla River Alliance has stayed faithful to its founding values and has proved itself many times over to be something worth trying.

Our very first challenge was to recruit like-minded supporters—individuals as organizations—to the cause. That turned out to be pretty easy. Among local property owners, recreation enthusiasts and conservationists there is a strong connection with the Molalla River—often going back generations. That an organization of local volunteers interested in protecting this remarkable natural resource had a lot of appeal.

From the start, there was a strong consensus that something needed to be done to reverse the unsavory reputation that the upper Molalla River had earned as a dumping ground, a place unsafe and unfit for family outings, a place where pretty much anything went, and often did.

Now that has all changed. Regular patrols in the river corridor by Molalla police officers, their overtime hours paid with a grant from the federal Justice Department, had an almost miraculous effect. It was not long before word began to get around that you could take your kids swimming or camping in the scenic Molalla River corridor without getting nervous about who you might run into.

With guidance from a strong board of volunteers led by Mike Moody, our dynamic first president, the MRA sought to build supportive relationships with numerous organizations and with local, state and federal agencies.

An early (and ongoing) goal was to obtain federal Wild and Scenic River status for the upper Molalla River. We have come close a couple of times in Congress, with help from Rep. Curt Schrader and Sens. Jeff Merkley and Ron Wyden. I am confident that we will get there eventually.

Meanwhile, the MRA's advocacy on behalf of the Molalla River has chalked up some notable successes, including:

- Adoption by the BLM of a recreation management plan for the Table Rock Wilderness and Molalla River Recreation Corridor.
- Development of new congregate campsites with attractive amenities along the river—allowing older, unimproved camping spots to be cleaned up and restored with native plantings.
- Designation by Gov. Kate Brown of the upper Molalla as an official Oregon Scenic Waterway—the first in 25 years.
- And, as you will read elsewhere in this newsletter, an innovative river patrol effort by local volunteers. Be sure to come by for dinner and a piece of cake at our 10th birthday party on May 4!

A Remembrance: Mark Schmidt

Mark Schmidt, a founder of the MRA, passed away of circulatory failure last spring.



The Molalla River had no better friend than Mark Schmidt, nor did those of us who were lucky enough to know him.

We could not help but admire Mark. He was

devoted to his family, loyal to his friends, and full of wonder and attachment to Nature in all its incarnations.

Mark was a lifelong resident of the Molalla River Basin and a longtime board member of Molalla River Watch Watershed Council.

He served for many years as the Molalla River Steward for the Native Fish Society, a volunteer position to which he devoted many hours of his life.

Year in and year out, Mark hiked miles of the upper Molalla River to conduct fish surveys and prepare reports.

He planted salmon carcasses in the river to provide nutrients for newly spawned fish. He worked to restore streamside habitat with native plantings.

His affection for the Molalla River came through with every story he would tell of plying a drift or pool for wild winter steelhead, which he regarded with awe and reverence.

He was a skilled fly-tyer and designer

who shared his creations generously with admirers.

He advocated tirelessly for restoration and recovery of wild steelhead and Chinook salmon runs. His knowledge of their habitat requirements, threats to their survival, and the keys to their recovery were embedded in his own experience as a close observer of their life cycles.

For these accomplishments, among many others, Mark was named winner of the MRA's Ryan Morgan Service Award—given to the individual who best exemplifies the values and goals of the Molalla River Alliance.

Mark was also a gifted writer. In relating an encounter with a wild steelhead hen at the confluence of the North Fork and main stem of the Molalla, Mark marveled at her natural beauty.

"The water was smooth and I could see her clearly," he wrote. "See the slim pink



line, and soft crimson of her cheek, the form and beauty of a classic wild fish.

There are really

no words to describe the amazing beauty of these creatures."

In the same story, Mark noted that in his earlier years it was not so unusual to hook and land a wild steelhead. "Now," he wrote, "hooking a steelhead is uncommon. The rule is catch-and-release only, and smoked steelhead comes from the market. I can live with that. Without recovery of the species, the adventure cannot persist."

--Volunteers patrol river

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“It came about because the BLM district office in Salem is short-handed; all of the federal agencies are short-handed right now. They are really lacking sufficient manpower to patrol their recreation assets, including Molalla River Recreation Corridor,” said Atkins.

“Because of that lack of supervision, last summer there was no one to host the campsites that have been developed in the corridor, no admission or fee for the campsites, and a lack of patrol supervision in the corridor as well. There has been vandalism, dumping, damage and so forth throughout the corridor, including camping in some of the spaces that were under restoration that were closed off for rehabilitation.”

This past spring, the BLM announced they would not open the campsites at all this summer. Fortunately, the Molalla River Alliance and Molalla River Watch, two local nonprofits, didn't sit idly by.

They offered to patrol the corridor with volunteers—people would simply observe and report, not take enforcement action.

“We requested that the campsites be reopened for the weekends. The theory was that the Molalla River Corridor is so popular that people were going to camp there anyway,” Atkins said.

“They'd find a place to throw up a tent and build a fire. Without any actual supervision going on, that's a fairly dangerous proposition. There was also a concern that there would be camping going on in areas that had been closed for rehabilitation efforts.”

Molalla River Alliance offered to do some volunteer patrolling and the BLM said they'd give it a try. In trying to get patrols organized, it occurred to Atkins that there needed to be some way of reporting on a consistent basis to the managers in

Salem. After using a homemade form that proved clunky and somewhat unreliable, Atkins went looking for something else. He found First Incident Response, which would develop a program that was smartphone-friendly and simple to use.

“We contacted them and they were very receptive. They helped me think through all the information and how to organize it,” Atkins said. “They offered to develop a mobile app for use on smartphones. I was pleased with the response, but also kind of wary—these apps can run into a lot of money. Cost was a consideration.”

And that's where the project takes a fun turn. The president of First Incident Response was so on board with the goal of the project, he didn't charge Molalla River Alliance a dime—they would donate the app to the effort.

“It knocked me over,” Atkins said of the generosity.

After some test trials, the app was deemed ready and given to volunteers on Aug. 19.

“We now have a way of filling out the form online and since there is no cell phone availability in the corridor, the information is retained until you get to a cell phone area and then relayed immediately to the BLM. You can attach a photo, too,” Atkins said.

Additionally, the program provides GPS coordinates to pinpoint where the incident happened. Atkins added that he's eager to add more eyes to the effort, noting that there are some equestrian groups that are helping out (the corridor has 35 miles of equestrian trails).

Anyone who'd like to volunteer to keep an eye on the Molalla River Recreation Corridor this summer can contact Atkins via email at j3atkins@frontier.com.

Ilene Waldorf honored for MRA service

Ryan Morgan Service Award, 2017

It is a tradition at our annual MRA meetings to focus our recognition and thanks to a person who has served the Molalla River Alliance with distinction.

We do this in honor of Ryan Morgan, one of our founding members, who died in a kayaking accident in 2009.

He was young, talented, energetic and full of promise. He loved the Molalla River. He embodied the goals and ideals of our alliance of organizations and individuals who are working successfully to protect and enhance our treasured river.



The 2017 recipient of the Ryan Morgan Service Award has likewise contributed to our success over many years of faithful and valuable service. The award recipient is our esteemed treasurer, Ilene Waldorf. As an accountant, Ilene has

volunteered her services to keep careful watch on the finances of our organization, to ensure the timely receipt and disbursement of funds, and to provide annual reports to our organization.

With her husband Monte, Ilene is a resident of the Molalla River corridor. She is also a private woodlot owner and manager who brings a valuable perspective to our MRA board when it comes to policy questions and our direction as an organization.

Ilene has helped ensure that the Molalla River Alliance stays faithful to its founding principles of openness and inclusion; that it serve as a forum for individuals and organizations that may disagree with each other on various issues but are united in advancing the MRA's goals of maintaining a clean and cold Molalla River, with a verdant habitat for plants and wildlife, and a haven for recreation.

It was Ilene who came up with the suggestion that the historic Molalla Log House, currently dismantled and in storage, be relocated and reassembled at the Hopkins Demonstration Forest. (See related story.)

Ryan Morgan

Service Award

Presented to

Ilene Waldorf

For her dedicated and selfless work in advancing the goals of the Molalla River Alliance to protect and enhance the Molalla River and its watershed.

Time to lift off

Elon Musk may be able to shoot a Tesla roadster into outer space, but here at the MRA we have more down-to-earth ambitions: Keeping our treasured Molalla River running clean and cold—a magnet for family-friendly recreation, a haven for wild winter steelhead and home to a great array of wildlife—some of it threatened.

That's one difference. Another is that Elon Musk doesn't need your donations and the MRA does. What an easy choice. Just launch your generous payload on a check to the Molalla River Alliance, PO Box 727, Molalla, OR 97038.

The Molalla Log House Finds A Home

By Pam Hayden

At the Molalla River Alliance Retreat last May, Jack Hammond asked me to make a presentation about the Molalla Log House. Those of you who attended will recall that it produced a lively discussion about the very old, highly crafted log building of unknown origins, located on a farm a few miles south of Molalla. With help from a grant, it was dismantled for preservation in 2008 and since that time, has been without a home.

The square-cut, precisely notched logs have been in storage ever since, while efforts were underway to find an appropriate home for the log building. It needed to be a place suitable for education and interpretation.

MRA Treasurer Ilene Waldorf suggested that the Hopkins Demonstration Forest, a few miles north of Mulino off Highway 213, might be a good spot. As a former board member of Forests Forever, Inc., Ilene helped inspire discussions that ultimately led the Board to a decision to take ownership of the Molalla Log House and re-locate it to the Hopkins Demonstration Forest.



The logs were hewn and notched so expertly that no chinking between them was needed to keep out the cold. No nails, either.



Variously used as a house, granary, animal shelter, machine shed and hay storage building over many decades, the Molalla Log House was saved from collapse in 2008, dismantled, and moved to a warehouse for rehabilitation.

“Our Board sees excellent possibilities for our forestry educational programs at Hopkins and the Log House, said Executive Director Ken Everett. “Showcasing one of the oldest original all-wood buildings in this part of the country will be a special connection when talking about how we manage our forests today and the history and importance of wood in our culture.”

The Molalla Log House is considered to be one of the oldest buildings in Oregon. It is thought to be an artifact of the Canadian fur-trading era when Iroquois, French Canadians and metis fur trappers and voyagers crossed the Rocky Mountains in the late 1790s in search of new fur resource areas in the hospitable

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This is what we're all working for . . .



Recreation: Rafting Baby Bear Rapids at Party Rock



Recovery: Shaded spawning water



Habitat: Foxglove



Protection: Wild steelhead come home



Preservation: The great basalt rosette



Service: Volunteers construct a new campsite

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Willamette Valley. The Molalla Log House never materialized as a company post, but was most likely inhabited by freemen hunters and trappers and their metis families during the early 1800s.

Although there is no historic documentation about the origins of the building, it is a primary resource of study in and of itself.

The craft and design of the Molalla Log House give clues about its age and the cultural tradition of the builders. The location of the original building site, between two ancient Indian trails in the Molalla area, also provides clues about the possibility of early fur trade origins.

Plans are underway to prepare to reassemble this unique log building at Hopkins by 2020, where it will be interpreted and appreciated for education and visitation.

Pam Hayden is an architectural historian who helped save the historic structure from collapse and has worked for many years to unravel its mysteries.



Molalla River Alliance

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Now on Facebook . . .

Molalla River Corridor Happenings

Useful information about the recreation opportunities and events going on in the corridor. Check it out! Post info!

Find us at:

www.molallariveralliance.org