

CONSERVATION CONNECTION

Lower John Day Working Group honored with statewide award

The Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board recently selected the Lower John Day Working Group to receive their annual Partnership Award, highlighting a group of individuals and organizations working collaboratively to solve natural resource problems. The Lower John Day Working Group is focused on water resources in the basin.

“We are honored and surprised to be selected,” said Christina Kirwan of the Gilliam Soil and Water Conservation District. “It’s true, though, that we have a great group of people dedicated to and working toward smart water management in the Lower John Day.”

The Lower John Day Working Group is one of four places selected by the Oregon Water Resources Department (OWRD) for a new water management planning process. Whereas in the past, OWRD staff have created a water management plan for each basin in the state, this time OWRD is trying it a new way. OWRD has granted funds to local organizations to work collaboratively and collect information, data, and opinions from local water users and other stakeholders and then develop a water management plan themselves for their location.

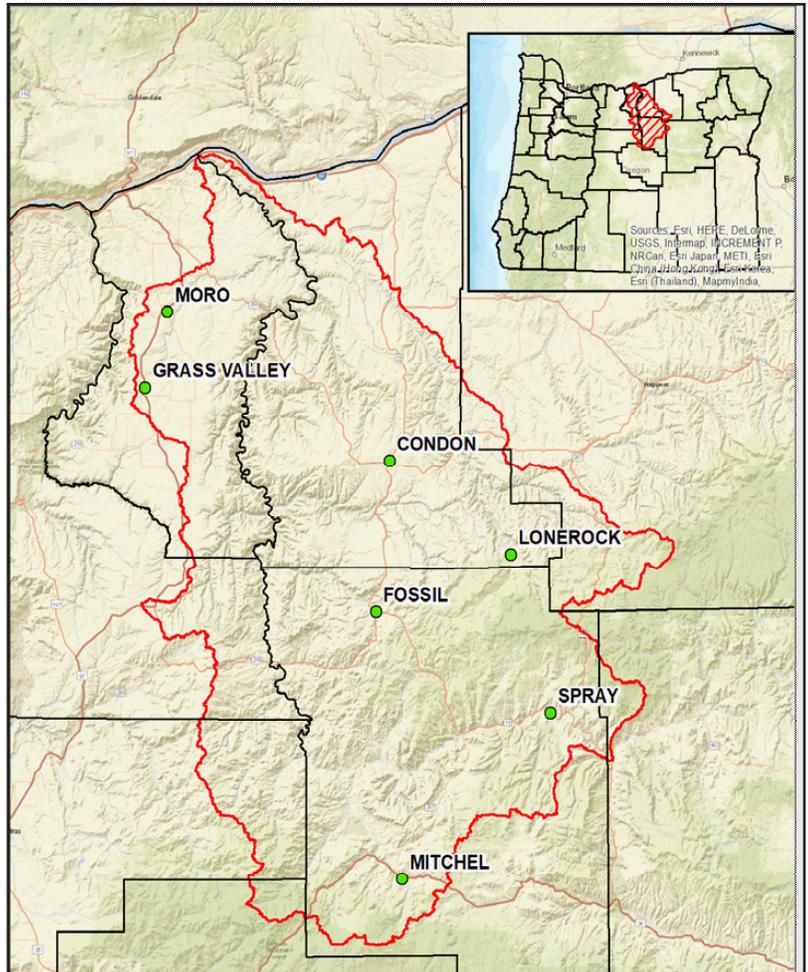
“This is a bottom-up solution. It’s a grassroots, locally led process, versus a top-down approach from Salem,” Kirwan said.

The other three sites include the Upper Grand Ronde, Mid Coast, and Malheur Lake Basin Planning Area.

Sustainable Northwest has been helping to facilitate the meetings. “We are truly impressed by the amount of time, effort, and dedication we’ve seen from the group in the Lower John Day. This is a place where people are planning ahead to avoid a possible water crisis. And that’s good news for anyone who cares about local economies, recreation, fish, and wildlife,” said Sustainable Northwest Program Director Lee Rahr.

“We’ve been meeting for a little over two years now, trying to bring in all of the different users in the Lower John Day subbasin to talk about water use -- what water is available, where the water is being used -- and try to work out some solutions for meeting the water needs in the future,” said Debra Bunch of the Mid John Day-Bridge Creek Watershed Council.

Public comments on the Draft Lower John Day Basin State of the Basin Report are invited through the month of June 2018. Comments should be submitted by June 30, 2018. The first step is to request a copy of the report, which is available by emailing christina.gilliamswcd@gmail.com.



Top: Juniper Removal
 Above and left: Spring development trough
 and spring box

What's Inside?	
Garden Yellow Loosestrife	2
Private Forests	3
Event Calendar	4



Please call 1-866-invader if you suspect you have found this species

Garden loostrife
Lysimachia vulgaris

Other common names: garden yellow
loosestrife

USDA symbol: LYVU
ODA rating: A



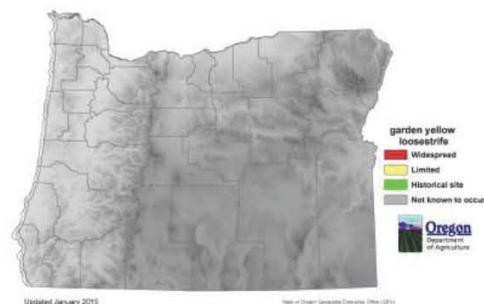
Introduction: Garden loosestrife is native to much of Asia, including northwestern China, much of Siberia, the Caucasus, middle Asia, and all of Europe. In North America, naturalized populations have been found in multiple states in New England and the northern mid-west, Montana, Colorado, Washington, Oregon, and in Canada (British Columbia and most eastern provinces). Garden loostrife can be highly invasive in wet habitats like shorelines of lakes and rivers, as well as freshwater marshes, fens and wet woodlands. Its stoloniferous growth enables it to form dense stands; excluding most other vegetation.

Distribution: Awareness of the plant is new in Oregon. No surveys have been conducted to determine plant locations.

Description: Garden loosestrife is an erect rhizomatous perennial growing to 1.2 m tall, with terminal panicles of showy yellow flowers. Lanceolate to ovate leaves (7-12 cm long, 1.5-4 cm wide) are opposite to whorled, sessile (or nearly so) and dotted with very small black to orange glands (DiTomaso and Healy 2003). The stems and abaxial leaf surfaces are hairy; stems are sometimes slightly flattened. Flowers have five ovate sepals with maroon margins (figure 2); the corolla is approximately 2.5 cm in diameter with five yellow petals (8-12 mm long) and sometimes with red or orange bases.

Impacts: Garden loosestrife is an escaped ornamental plant that inhabits riparian habitats similar to purple loosestrife. When in the vegetative state, it looks similar in appearance, but lacks the square stems of purple loosestrife. Garden loosestrife can crowd out native flora. Because it is a rhizomatous plant, manual control can be difficult if root fragments are left behind. Infestations can clog waterways and increase sedimentation. Garden loosestrife spreads by rhizomes and production of seed.

Biological controls: No biocontrol agents are available. Weed populations would be targeted for eradication.



Oregon Department of Agriculture • Noxious Weed Control Program
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www.oregon.gov/ODA/programs/Weeds/Pages/Default.aspx

Photos (left) King Co.
Washington. (right) Ben Legler

Private Forest Management News

Private family forestland managers are challenged by demographic trends that include the advanced age of owners and development pressures. The average age of a family forestland owner is approaching 60 and over a million acres of natural land has been lost in Oregon Washington and California in the last 10 years.

Over 60 percent of the forests in the US are in private ownership.

Many forestland owners want their forests to stay productive past their management. One option is to place easements and deed restrictions permanently on the land. Placing use restrictions on property can result in significant benefits in taxes and estate planning.

Specific measurable performance goals are the foundation of long term protection for working forest lands. Restrictions that are measureable and appraisable are required for valuations and assessments.

Pacific Forest Trust shared their experience creating permanent conservation easements on forest land in Northern California. The project is designed to keep the forest economically productive while conserving significant ecological values on the land. The trust has helped landowners secure long term protection on over 98,000 acres in the northwest. Working forest conservation easements often include public access, endangered species protections and continued commercial timber production. www.pacificforest.org

Removing potential development opportunities from a parcel can provide significant private and public benefits. Maximum long term benefits for forests are dependent on regularly securing sound data. A detailed inventory allows for more effective, productive management and the potential to secure financial benefits in the future, such as Carbon sequestering markets.

California Greenhouse Gas rules are driving the carbon sequestering market in the West. California has policy in place to offset the states impacts from carbon dioxide releases. A project to sink carbon in forest management can be located out of state. California was the first organization to develop compliance grade forest carbon offsets that are recognized internationally.

Securing long term conservation easements for large tracts often require multiple partners. The Western Rivers Conservancy, based in Portland, has been working with the US Forest Service, the State, Hood River County and Weyerhaeuser Corporation to begin putting an 18,000 acre parcel into permanent long term protection. The benefits of this working forest lands conservation easement will protect commercial timber protection, remove residential development threats and protect the most diverse assemblage of salmonids in the Columbia Basin.

Weyerhaeuser is a Real Estate Investment Trust, which requires it to evaluate a variety of profit streams including returns from residential development. The company owns 6.6 million acres in the US. Weyerhaeuser inherited a significant land conservation program through its recent acquisition of Plum Creek Timber, which has a strong history of engaging local communities for public benefit.

If a landowner is considering transferring ownership to a public entity such as the US Forest Service, the State or even to some non-profit entities such as land trusts, they should consult with their local county tax assessor. A new Oregon Law House Bill 2127, passed in 2015 and may require the payment of additional back taxes when land is transferred between some entities. This law requires the local assessor to certify that all the taxes have been paid, and if a tax deferral rate is changing it could result in a significant penalty of paying back taxes.

Information from the "Protecting Forests Through Conservation Easements" law forum offered by the Coalition of Oregon Land Trusts in Portland April 19, 2017,



Pacific Forest Trust Annual Report 2016 and the National Ag Statistics Census 2012. Forest Ownership Changing

A study published in the Journal of Forestry in Nov 2016 noted that there are 816 million acres of forestland in the US. There are 10.7 million acres under family ownership. Eighteen percent of these family owners indicate they are planning on selling or passing along their forestlands in the next 5 years.

Forest Management Tools

American Forest Foundation "My Land Plan" program offers introductory on-line management tools. www.mylandplan.org

Oregon State University offers a family forest planning guide www.tiestotheland.org

Another interesting fact identified by OSU and WSU during a farmland succession planning project in 2016. Sixty percent of farm land owners will die without a will.

Jeffrey Kee, CWRE, PLS, CECSL



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UPCOMING EVENTS & MEETINGS

5/30	6 pm	Wheeler SWCD Meeting, Big Sarvice Corral
6/27	6 pm	Wheeler SWCD Meeting, Big Sarvice Corral

Everyone is welcome to attend these events. For more information please contact Debra Bunch, Watershed Technician at 541/468-2990 or debrabunch@gmail.com.