



OPAL CREEK

ANCIENT FOREST CENTER

Flowing Through Generations



Student from Springwater Environmental School searches his dip net for macro-invertebrates, key indicators of water quality.

NEWS & NOTES

Member's Only reservation period for **2011 cabin rental** dates begins November 15th.

Join us November 5th at Ecotrust for our Evening for **Opal Creek fundraiser**. See our website for more details.

Spaces still available in our **fall mushroom workshops**. Call our office (503-892-2782) to reserve your spot now.

Want to help maintain the trails around Jawbone Flats? Join us for our **fall Volunteer Weekend** November 6-7. Call the office to register.

Hello From Our New Program Director, Serena Becker

Opal Creek is a gem. I have lived in the Pacific Northwest my entire life, I have worked for a number of environmental education and outdoors organizations, including the Audubon Society of Portland and Santiam Crossing, a wilderness therapy program. In 2008 I undertook the challenge of thru-hiking the Pacific Crest Trail. These experiences have given me unique insights into natural environment and in particular, the Pacific Northwest. I believe there is a necessity and joy of providing youth with opportunities to learn from and interact with the natural world. I could not ask for a more compelling environment than that of Opal Creek to offer these experiences.

Throughout the spring we were successful in providing environmental education programs to more than 500 students. With each group that came through Jawbone I witnessed an excitement and curiosity. Students who had never been in an old growth forest before were awed by the giants

of the forest, fascinated by the up-close look at mosses and lichens under the microscope and, despite cold hands, intrigued by the many macro-invertebrates found in the clean clear waters of Opal and Battle Ax Creeks. Help us to support these young minds by using the enclosed envelope to send in your contribution. Your gift helps us educate the next generation on the importance of ecological stewardship.

In addition to our school programs we expanded our **Opal Creek Expedition** this year, offering new programs such as **Fly Fishing and Freshwater Ecology** in addition to the numerous weeklong backcountry programs that explore the ridgelines and mountaintops surrounding Jawbone Flats. We will continue to grow our summer expeditions next season, branching out into new environments and comparing the diverse ecosystems Oregon has to offer.

As fall approaches we look forward to continuing to provide high-quality

environmental education to the many school groups that visit Opal Creek. In addition, we have a host of workshops still to come. Our ever-popular **October Mushroom Workshops** are quickly filling, with the promise of finding many delectable edibles. In October we will also be hosting the top-notch WMI (Wilderness Medicine Institute) **Wilderness First Responder** course for those seeking to enhance their backcountry medicine skills. And our November **Writing Workshop** with author of *Siesta Lane*, Amy Minato, offers the perfect opportunity to slow down, be inspired and focus on the art of writing. Please see our 2010 catalog for more details or visit the workshops page on our website: www.opalcreek.org.

With the help of supporters like you, we have had many successes this season. Opal Creek Ancient Forest Center continues to be a place of solace, reflection, education and fun for the many people that visit. Without the support of those who have come to know

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Greetings members and friends of Opal Creek Ancient Forest Center, There is an autumn crispness in the morning air in Jawbone Flats, reminding us all that yet another summer has passed at Opal Creek.

Things have certainly been busy with our staff actively supporting hundreds of visitors and students. Programs are thriving and hundreds of students have taken part in our outdoor school opportunities and summer expeditions. Jawbone has been full of families enjoying our rental cabins and workshop opportunities for all ages.

2010 has been a year of transition for Opal Creek Ancient Forest Center and you will notice a few different faces in Jawbone Flats this season. In October, I transitioned in to the Executive Director position, and with this move my husband Joe

and I moved on from Jawbone Flats and now reside in Bend, OR. Brian Campbell, assistant cook for 2 seasons, moved to Jawbone Flats in December of 2009 to take on our Facilities Director position. Jawbone veteran Kaola Swanson stepped up to the plate as Interim Program Director, and she left us in early August to pursue graduate school at Duke's Nicholas School of the Environment in Durham, North Carolina. Serena Becker joined us in April and after 4 months of learning the ins and outs of our dynamic program, has taken on the role of onsite Program Director. And thankfully for all of our stomachs, Rebekah Yglesias has returned to Jawbone for her third season as our Food Service Director. Say hello next time you hike through town.

We also saw some changes to our board of directors this year, with longtime board members Craig Jacobsen and Josh Kling leaving after 10 plus years of volunteer efforts on behalf of Opal Creek. We welcomed two new board members as well this year, Lizanne Saunders and Nancy Bales both bring years of non-profit experience to the table.

2009 was a tough year for many families, non-profits and businesses alike. Opal Creek Ancient Forest Center was no different. Faced with significant sustainability issues, our organization was

forced to make some very tough decisions in an effort to preserve our core mission. We slimmed down our staff and operations, but were able to preserve all our programming. Thanks to you our members, our incredible board of directors, and our hardworking staff, our precious organization found itself open for business in 2010, ready to awe and inspire yet again under the tall trees.

This year has been one of rebuilding, taking a deep breath, looking around and determining where we are going and how we are going to get there, all within the realm of the financial realities. As our organization and community pulled together to ensure the opportunities provided by Opal Creek Ancient Forest Center continued to exist, I was shown just how much we do value

education and wild places like Opal Creek. It is because we have experienced them – hiked the ridge tops for views stretching hundreds of miles, shared the early morning quiet with none but the birds, and swam in the crystal clear waters – that we place such high value on them. It is our duty to ensure that these experiences remain available for youth and adults in an effort to protect this amazing watershed, and all remaining wild places for future generations.

Our mission of promoting ancient forest stewardship is essential and it is thriving. We need your support to continue to do this important work. Your investment is needed to ensure our continued success. Donate today, and enjoy member discounts on cabins, workshops and summer expeditions as well as a special "members only" reservation period for 2011 cabin rentals.

Hope to see you soon at Jawbone Flats,



Katie Ryan
Executive Director



2010 Opal Creek Staff (left to right) Back row: Richard Morse, Todd Phillips, Katie Ryan, Kristina Oldani, Rebekah Yglesias, Brian Campbell, Leonard Smiley. Front row: Kie Bastian-Berman, Kaola Swanson, Serena Becker.

STAFF

Kie Bastian-Berman <i>Science Instructor</i>	Richard Morse <i>Science Instructor</i>	Leonard Smiley <i>Assistant Cook</i>
Serena Becker <i>Program Director</i>	Kristina Oldani <i>Registrar</i>	Rebekah Yglesias <i>Food Service Director</i>
Brian Campbell <i>Facilities Director</i>	Todd Phillips <i>Assistant Cook</i>	
Erin Flynn <i>Science Instructor</i>	Katie Ryan <i>Executive Director</i>	

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Adam Lane <i>Board Chair</i>	Nancy Bales
Heidi Hu <i>Co-Vice Chair</i>	Thor Hinckley
Ted Helprin <i>Co-Vice Chair</i>	Greg Meenahan
Rick Schaefer <i>Treasurer</i>	Liam Sherlock
Keith Hatch <i>Secretary</i>	Sean Sullivan
	Lizanne Saunders
	Dave Taylor

MISSION

Promoting ancient forest stewardship through educational experiences inspired by Opal Creek's natural and cultural history.

“New Nellie’s” Update

by Brian Campbell, Facilities Director

Anyone visiting Opal Creek within the last two years who has wandered through our little town of Jawbone Flats has likely noticed an exciting change of scenery developing behind the Lodge. During our 2008 season we decided that the time had finally come to upgrade the building which had housed our laundry facilities, kitchen refrigeration, program equipment, staff shower (fearfully referred to as the *Devil’s Den*) and even one of our assistant cooks. This building, which the residents and friends of Opal Creek knew as *Nellie’s*, had been standing since the early mining days of Jawbone Flats. It had served us so well, and so long, but had, sadly, begun to blatantly show its age and the scars of too many hard winters.

We tore it down, with the help of about a dozen volunteers, during a cold late season rain. Swinging sledge hammers and wielding crow bars we managed, within only a handful of days, to reduce *Nellie’s* to not much more than a hard scraped piece of earth. It was sad to see this relic turn into a stack of lumber but, with the blueprints for our new food storage and utility building in our hands it was exciting to imagine what would soon be in its place.

The next season, framing for the *New Nellie’s* began. It would be ten feet bigger in each direction with a vaulted ceiling to cover the second floor living quarters, which would house our assistant cooks. I remember standing on the side stairs of the Lodge and watching as the massive ridge beam was carefully placed on its perch at the crown of the building. After that the interior framing and exterior walls were constructed in a flurry of hammer swinging. By the end of last season the green steel roof was screwed into place and the exterior walls were sheathed in black felt paper. And, during this last mild winter, Adam Mims, Ben Yates and myself were able to nail down most of the board and batten siding. Finally, the *New Nellie’s* had begun to look like a finished building and was blending in nicely with the existing cabins and sheds of Jawbone Flats.

The construction of the *New Nellie’s* has come a long way since that rainy volunteer weekend in 2008. Now, we find



New Nellie’s is ready for the next step – doors and windows.

ourselves ready to shift gears one more time and prepare for the final stretch. Within the next two weeks we will be ready to finish the installation of the gas, electric and water supplies. Then it will be time to insulate and sheetrock the walls and ceiling. When this is done all that remains is the final inspection, some finish carpentry, the furnishing of the living quarters and, finally, the relocation of our washers, dryers and kitchen refrigerators. Our new food storage and utility building will be online!

And it all comes not a moment too soon, our kitchen refrigeration and laundry facilities have been in a cramped building next to the Lodge since construction began. Our program equipment has been stored in the overcrowded programming office and one of our assistant cooks, Leonard, has been living in the third floor of the Lodge. But, it’s all worth the wait. This new building will give us the infrastructure we need to continue to develop our programs, comfortably house our staff and provide them a shower facility which will feel like a spa compared to the old *Devil’s Den* of *Nellie’s* past.

It has been a long time coming but, as we near the end, we are all excited to put our *New Nellie’s* to work. During the challenges of the past 18 months, Opal Creek Ancient Forest Center was forced to put this project on hold. We are again ready to pick up this project and are currently seeking the necessary funding to finish the building. A donation to Opal Creek Ancient Forest Center at this time supports this important capital project, vital to our continued success.

From Our New Program Director

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and love Opal Creek we would not be here today. We depend on our members and other generous individuals who believe in what we do. Visit our web site and become a member, “like” our facebook page, make a

contribution. Opal Creek enriches the lives of all who come. Help us to spread the word. Opal Creek should not be a secret.

I look forward to your visit to Opal Creek, whether it be to enjoy one of our rental

cabins, attend a workshop or simply stroll through the forest for the day.

**Serena resides at Jawbone Flats and provides daily oversight to our many programs.*

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Natural History Spotlight

Cyanide Millipede *Harpaphe haydeniana*

by Serena Becker, Program Director



If you have spent time at Opal Creek you have likely come across a Cyanide Millipede. This small black and yellow invertebrate is also known as the night train millipede – the yellow spots trailing along its sides conjure up images of light pouring through train windows as it travels in the night. This millipede is known for its ability to produce and release a small amount of cyanide when threatened. If you smell the scent of almonds while walking through the forest you can be fairly certain

that you are within close range of a Cyanide Millipede. Fortunately, the small amount of cyanide they produce is not harmful to humans. But these “macro-shredders” do more than just release cyanide. They play a crucial role in the soil food web. Cyanide Millipedes are considered a keystone species and between 30-50% of all the coniferous and deciduous leaves on the forest floor pass through their system, making them critical to the decomposition of fallen debris. Without their ability to breakdown the acidic Douglas Fir needles and other large leaf litter, fallen plant matter would not be accessible for smaller arthropods that continue to return the nutrients to the soil. Without the Cyanide Millipede we surely would not find the diversity that exists in the soil of the Pacific Northwest. Next time you wander through the ancient forests of Opal Creek tread lightly and remember the small yet crucial life forces below your feet.

THEIR OWN WORDS

“Science is a significant part of Opal Creek and they made learning it fun!”

– 5th grade outdoor school student

“I have a student who I constantly have to motivate in the classroom. He can barely keep his eyes open in class. At Opal Creek he was a totally different kid. He was front and center constantly, had his hand up for every question. When we hiked out of Opal Creek, he was pointing out different plants that he had learned about and kept commenting on how breathtaking the scenery was.”

– 5th grade teacher

“Opal Creek staff – instructors, interns, cooks, etc. – were fantastic. This has been a blue-ribbon week for the kids and me. Thank you.”

– Jeff Gottfried, Educational Recreational Adventures

“Your staff is great! The field classes were so interesting. The kids learned so much. Wonderful experience even with all the rain.”

– 5th grade parent