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## Natural History Spotlight Bigleaf Maple (*Acer macrophyllum*)

by Katie Ryan



**A**s the season turns to fall, the deciduous trees begin to steal the show from the giant trees at Opal Creek with the brilliant colors of their changing leaves. The Bigleaf Maple, the largest of all maples, has pushed the furthest into the conifer dominated landscape of Pacific Northwest forests. It flourishes in

the sunnier spots of the forest, where the conifers have failed to create a deep shading canopy. This tree is host to a greater load of mosses, lichens, club-mosses, and ferns than any other tree species in our region. At times, the bark is not visible anywhere on the tree or main branches. The moss layers can get so thick that they form a “soil” in which tree roots can sprout and grow. These “canopy roots” were also discovered in the canopies of vine maples and red alder. Deer and elk browse the maple leaves when they can reach them. The Northwest Indians carved the Maple wood into utensils, tools, and ornaments and the inner bark was woven into baskets. As the giant yellow leaves blanket the ground this time of year, we are reminded where this tree got its name.

## THEIR OWN WORDS

*“Every time I go to the woods, I will remember the sweet smells and sounds of Opal Creek.”*

– Parent Chaperone

*“This has been the highlight of the year! The boys are unable to believe they we’re learning today!”*

– Buckman Elementary Teacher

*“What an amazing gift of the passion of staff members.”*

– Parent Chaperone

*“Great alignment of curriculum/ vocabulary to our requests and state standards.”*

– Vose Elementary School teacher

*“This is the way that students really learn. I am leaving today confident that my students have incredible memories and new information about wildlife that they will remember through their lives.”*

– Vose Elementary School teacher



FALL 2008

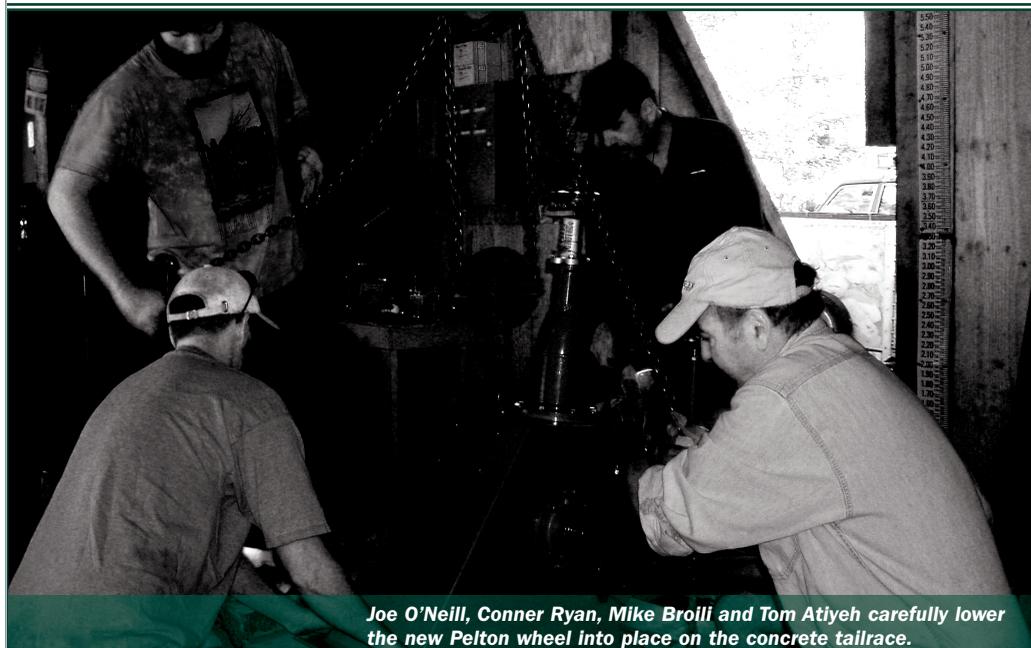
# OPAL CREEK

## ANCIENT FOREST CENTER

*Flowing Through Generations*

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Joe O'Neill, Conner Ryan, Mike Broilli and Tom Atiyeh carefully lower the new Pelton wheel into place on the concrete tailrace.

## Jawbone Flats Gets New Hydroelectric System

By Adam Mims

Jawbone Flats has updated and upgraded the hydroelectric system that powers most of our little town. Many of you know the familiar whirl of the water wheel and have enjoyed watching water spilling from the Pelton shed. Thousands of people have taken a tour of the hydroelectric system at Jawbone Flats since it was installed in 1973. Now, 35 years later, we have installed a new water wheel that is more efficient, produces more power and is quieter. This new system will give camp a much needed boost in power during the summer months when less water is flowing in the creek. During times of high water, usually during the colder months, we will enjoy up to 18kW of power, which may be enough for some free and clean electric heat, so that less firewood needs to be burned.

This project was a long time in the making, having been discussed for years. We needed to secure funding and have a new wheel engineered and manufactured to our specific needs. The funding was provided by a challenge grant from Thurston Twigg-Smith, who had funded the previous system installed in 1973. **We would all like to thank Twigg and Sharon for their generosity and long standing support of Opal Creek.** Our thanks extend to all of our supporters who helped us meet this challenge grant. Minor improvements had been made to that system over the years including a new generator and an electronic load controller; the last thing to be improved was replacing the wheel itself. The old wheel had been designed to turn a World War II era generator which spins slower than is

optimal for a modern generator. Canyon Hydro, located in northern Washington, designed the new wheel to our site's requirements. They also sponsored our recent sustainable energy workshop and have been helpful throughout the process; we extend our thanks to them.

The installation of the new wheel required shutting down the whole system for a week. We dismantled the old wheel, poured concrete, installed new penstock plumbing and expanded the load controller. Mike Broilli, Tom Atiyeh and George Atiyeh, three people who were on hand during the installation of the previous system in 1973, provided assistance to Adam, Joe and Connor with the installation of the new system. It was a fun cross-Jawbone-generational project. The

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

# From the Executive Director A Progressive 2009



Executive Director Tom Atiyeh at New Welcome Sign.

Greetings my fellow Opal Creek supporters,

**What a wonderful season we are having at Opal Creek.** Katie assembled a great team of instructors and cooks and we are on track for **record setting participation this year.** Factoring in the late start this spring **we are very pleased with this robust growth.**

Adam will tell you more about the **new Pelton wheel**, but for me, my cousin George and Mike Broilli it was like getting the band back together for one more gig. You see, we were the crew that installed the old Pelton 35 years ago and never thought we would have to replace it. Naturally we took some good natured ribbing from the current staff when they found lost tools under the building and discovered the main valve so buried in concrete that we used it as a thrust anchor this time around.

Some things don't change, but *we only blew the water line once during this installation, not twice like years ago.* Back then we blew the building off the foundation when we started the water flowing.

Summer brought successful backpacking trips with kids and families. Summer camps brought scores of eager participants and several

groups rented the entire camp. This time of year we switch from wilderness exploration programming to experiential environmental education as school groups return to Opal Creek for outdoor programs.

We now have a new database to keep better track of our members. Which leads me to remind you: **one benefit of membership is getting first crack at 2009 cabin rentals and workshops ahead of non-members beginning on November 17th.** We are solidly booked this season, so we want to give our members the advantage of advance reservations.

*Individual financial donations are up 100% over last year, indicating you must approve of our mission and growth.* **Thank you for your support.** Have you renewed your membership in the last 12 months?

I would like to introduce Heidi Hu, who joined our board at the annual July meeting. Heidi's Northwest roots began at Lewis and Clark College. She recently retired as the Principal, Managing Director and Portfolio Manager of Transamerica and is based in Los Angeles. This past winter Heidi and her husband Dan joined Leslie and me on a snowshoe trek to Stack Creek to get a taste of winter at Opal Creek.

I would also like to introduce our newest board member, Portland native Nancy Burke. She is an advertising and marketing specialist with a travel niche representing various publications in the Pacific Northwest including *Audubon Magazine*. Nancy, her husband Michael and their two sons enjoy racing their J24 sailboat.

Three of our long-time Board members have transitioned to the Advisory Board. Doug Macy, David Seideman and Peter Schoonmaker will remain active providing advice and assistance as part of our brain trust.

**Thanks to a sizable grant from the Bill Healy Foundation we are beginning a new capital project of replacing "Nellie's" with a new utility and food storage building.** Upstairs will provide two rooms for staff housing. Much of the siding will be reclaimed when we dismantle the original structure during our November 8-9 volunteer weekend launching the project. Work will continue though the fall and winter, with its completion at the start of the 2009 season.

There is still enough time for that last hike or jump in the river before the snow flies. Maybe I'll see you in the woods.

*Tom*

Tom Atiyeh  
Executive Director

STAFF			BOARD OF DIRECTORS		MISSION
Tom Atiyeh <i>Executive Director</i>	Suntara Loba <i>Registrar</i>	Katie Ryan <i>Program Director</i>	Thor Hinckley <i>Board Chair</i>	Nancy Burke	<i>Promoting ancient forest stewardship through educational experiences inspired by Opal Creek's natural and cultural history.</i>
Scott Beutel <i>Development Assistant</i>	Adam Mims <i>Facilities Director</i>	Olie Smith <i>Instructor</i>	Ted Helprin <i>Vice Chair</i>	Heidi Hu	
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Sarah Killion <i>Assistant Cook</i>	Connor Ryan <i>Facilities Assistant</i>	Meghan Young <i>Instructor</i>		Sean Sullivan	
				Dave Taylor	



*Instructors Meghan Young and Kaola Swanson and the rest of the Intermediate Backpack crew gets ready to hit the trail.*

## Another Outstanding Season at Jawbone Flats

by Katie Ryan

Thus far, 2008 has brought yet another fantastic programming season to Jawbone Flats. Due to the heavy snow pack, we opened 6 weeks later than normal this year. We hit the ground running, our new instructors quickly learning the ins and outs of field teaching. Kaola Swanson returned as our Lead Instructor this year, and was very helpful in pointing the new additions in the right direction. Our kitchen staff, also new this year, quickly organized the lodge and figured out systems to efficiently feed the many guests. The last of the snow banks melted in mid-June. Hundreds of students visited with their schools, all relishing in the chance to get their hands dirty and learn about the ancient forest up close and personally.

Summer brought the return of backpacking trips, and our instructors and students were hiking the high country ridges, although walking alternate routes in some places due to snow still left at higher elevations. For the first time, we extended our backpacking offerings to include programs for families. Five brave families took on the elements over Labor Day weekend and explored deep into the Opal Creek watershed. They returned tired, but proud of their accomplishments, and ready for a shower.

Portland State University professors Dr. Trygve Steen and Patrick Edwards each brought their students to Jawbone Flats for a week of in depth forest investigations. Dr. Steen's class focuses on ancient forest ecology and Patrick's class

is centered on watershed ecology and macroinvertebrate sampling.

Younger students were able to take part in our residential Summer Camp programs. This year our Wilderness Survival program and Watershed Exploration were among the most popular. These week long programs are a great value, and provide a unique summer camp experience. Our 2009 Summer program calendar will be

available in February.

We added a July Wilderness First Responder course to our programming season this year. This course brought 22 folks from throughout the United States to Jawbone Flats for 10 days to learn what to do when you have a medical emergency in the backcountry. Required for our programming staff, this certification is quickly becoming industry standard and Jawbone Flats is the perfect place to practice wilderness medicine skills.

Our Summer Family Workshops sold out quickly, and families had the chance to enjoy Opal Creek together while they studied wildflowers, butterflies, and insects. Bruce Barney, an engineer for PGE's renewable energy program taught our first annual Sustainable Energy Workshop at Jawbone this summer. Our hydro-electric and solar systems proved perfect examples for the participants to learn the ins and outs of sustainable energy production.

Fall programs will be filled with our many school groups from throughout Oregon. We are also getting ready for our annual Family Amphibian Workshop in September and our annual Mushroom workshops in October. We have a wonderful staff this year, and our programs just keep getting better. Please contact us if you are interested in learning more about the educational programming we offer at Jawbone Flats. We can be reached via phone at 503-892-2782 or via email at [opalcreek@opalcreek.org](mailto:opalcreek@opalcreek.org).

### Fall Volunteer Weekend: November 8–9th

Opal Creek needs your help! Join us for a weekend of camaraderie, work and fun this November 8–9th. We will be demolishing our Nellie's building and preparing the site to rebuild the structure. As part of the tear down we will salvage materials to use in the new building. There will be plenty of lifting and prying nails; the benefits to Opal Creek are huge, we won't be able to complete this project without the help of volunteers!

We will also be doing some trail maintenance in the area around Jawbone Flats to clear downed trees and keep the trails passable. No construction or trail work experience necessary, just bring your love of Jawbone Flats and a willingness to work hard. Call our office at 503-892-2782 for more details or to sign up. We ask for a \$25 donation to cover lodging and food for the weekend.

# Fall Workshop Season at Opal Creek

If you haven't gotten out to a workshop yet, there are still plenty of chances to participate in an Opal Creek program this year. Below are the remaining workshops for 2008. Please contact our Portland office at 503-892-2782 or opalcreek@opalcreek.org to further inquire about our workshop opportunities. The 2009 workshop schedule will be posted on line and in our catalog in February.

## Ancient Forest Mushroom Workshops: 10/11–10/12 and 10/18–10/19

The forest surrounding Opal Creek produces a large diversity of mushrooms every fall. Join past Opal Creek Ancient Forest Center instructor, John Vilella, for a weekend as we hike through the tall trees, learning about the amazing world of mycology that holds it all together. Look high and low in the ancient forest of Opal Creek for the curious organisms that come in so many shapes and sizes... that help the forest grow and decompose... that we can eat

and use to dye our clothes. You will enjoy exploring for mushrooms, learn to identify common species, discover their role in the forest, and try some tasty treats.

## Wilderness First Responder: 10/26–11/4

Essential for anyone who spends significant time in remote places or who has a professional career in the outdoors, the Wilderness First Responder (WFR) course will prepare you to make difficult medical decisions in remote settings. Taught by the Wilderness Medicine Institute, this course is fast-paced and engaging. You'll spend half your time outside of the classroom practicing hands-on skills and doing realistic scenarios. In addition to scenarios, you'll participate in a full-scale night mock rescue. WMI's curriculum encompasses a wide range of topics including long-term patient care, wound management, straightening angulated fractures, reducing dislocations, litter packaging



and administering medications. You'll complete this course with the tools and confidence to manage patients in the backcountry for multiple days. The intensive 80-hour curriculum is nationally recognized and supported by the Wilderness Medicine Institute's Medical Advisory Panel, and is quickly becoming an industry standard for all outdoor professionals.

## Jawbone Flats Gets New Hydroelectric System continued from cover

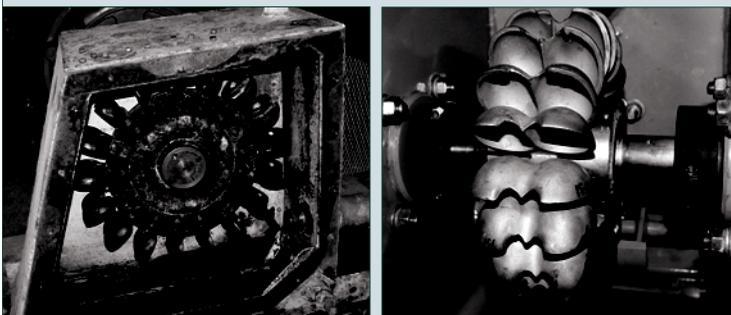
current staff delighted in the history, aptitude and "wisdom" of these former Jawbone residents; and the old-timers delighted in the current staff doing the heavy lifting. A lot of stories were told, and we met similar problems of dealing with water under pressure as were faced decades earlier. Our first attempt to pressurize the system produced a geyser

Jawbone residents were thrilled to see the return of running water and electricity in camp and Jawbone was reopened to visitors.

Jawbone is not connected to the power grid so we make all of our own low impact electricity. Water is drawn from a tributary stream to Opal Creek roughly a mile from Jawbone Flats. The water is delivered via an 8" pipe that narrows to 6" about half way down. Over the pipe's length it has a vertical drop of about 300 feet. The drop produces a high pressure jet of water at the bottom in Jawbone Flats.

allows more water through generating more power. When the stream's flow decreases we reduce the size of the nozzle to maintain water pressure. The object of changing the nozzle size is to always have the pipe full to the top so that the pressure is consistently high and the wheel can spin quickly enough. The wheel is directly attached to a generator that produces electricity. Power goes through underground transmission lines throughout the camp and everything that is plugged in or turned on gets the power it needs. If there is extra power the electronic load controller, what we call the "dump system," diverts the excess power into resistance heaters. All of the power that is produced must be used or dumped by the load controller so that the frequency remains stable and clean.

Confused yet? It is actually pretty simple, but easier to understand when you see the system. Come visit us at Jawbone Flats and see the new wheel for yourself. Participate in a program or rent a cabin to enjoy clean and sustainable off-grid power at the flip of a switch.



*The old Pelton wheel that we removed. Our new Pelton wheel.*

40 feet high, but we quickly had a piece of steel pipe fabricated in Stayton fixing the problem. Compared to blowing the entire wheel off the foundation in 1973 this was a minor setback! The installation was a great success and we are once again running at full power.

The 135 PSI water sprays out of two jets spinning the 7.5" diameter wheel at 1,800 revolutions per minute. One of the nozzles has a fixed size of .8" and the other nozzle is adjustable anywhere between zero and 1". As flow in the stream rises, increasing the nozzle size

# The View from Nellie's

by Sarah Killion

It all began on Craigslist in January. A job posting for an assistant cook with the location of “wilderness” and the conclusion “COME LIVE AND WORK IN PARADISE.” Though such a description could be viewed as propaganda, it was appealing to me and with a wild sense of hope I followed the link to opalcreek.org. I then discovered “paradise” wasn't an exaggeration; if a watershed in the heart of 35,000-acres of Cascadian ancient forest isn't paradise, what is? After learning more about the community at Jawbone Flats and the mission of OCAFC, I knew I would regret it for the rest of my life if I didn't apply for the job.

So began my five-day writing and rewriting of an e-mail to the program director at Opal Creek, a woman named Katie Ryan who held my future in her hands. I knew whether I was hired or not didn't really matter in the grand scheme of things; I would continue living happily as I have learned to do either way. But from my cramped studio in downtown Portland, bleary-eyed from another shift at a dead-end job, this e-mail, this opportunity, felt extremely important.

Thankfully I was accepted for the position and ascended to Jawbone Flats in mid-April, after the snow had been cleared enough to allow for vehicles on the road. I remember it took Joe O'Neill and myself a good hour or two to shovel a tunnel to the stairwell of my cabin, Nellie's. Tucked behind the southwest corner of the lodge, this place in late spring was shrouded in a snowdrift. Moving in felt so gratifying after all the work it took to get inside. It's September now and this place definitely feels like home, so much so that it's hard to imagine leaving in November.

More than home, this place really is like paradise. Aside from the astounding natural surroundings of the Opal Creek

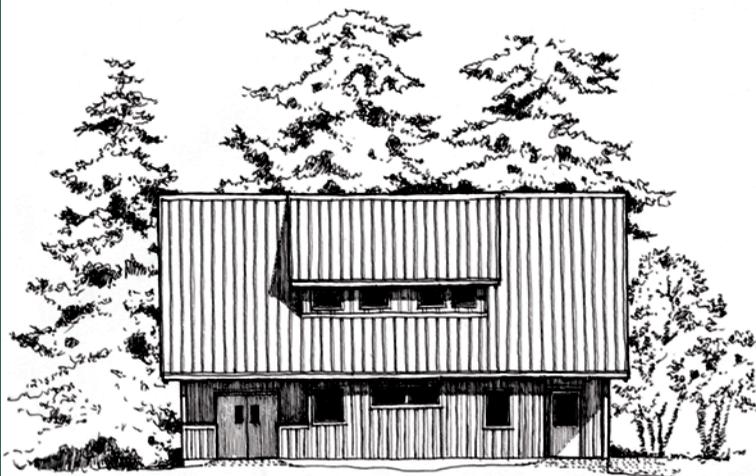


*The Nellie's building, originally a woodshed.*

Wilderness, the community and lifestyle here are conducive to supreme happiness and personal growth. Not only do I enjoy my work here, I learn while doing it and share the kitchen with two sparkling gems of humanity. Plus, it's the shortest commute I've ever had! The pace is productive but laid-back and I never have to deal with money or phone calls, just good food and hand-held radios. I love the notion that I'm nourishing the people who come here as the mountain air is nourishing them, as the trees and the sounds of the river and the birdsongs nourish them. Sometimes when there is little to do in the kitchen or lots to be done in camp, I'll join the ranks and lend my hands to manual labor. I never knew the sheer joy of swinging a maul or the sense of accomplishment in a woodpile until I came up here. All this work in camp builds a strong feeling of community amongst the 11 Jawboners and at the end of the day, there's no better place to be than here with all of them. My job no longer feels meaningless, my life is full and I am content.

Like most good things, however, life in the Bone is fleeting and to be enjoyed each second it exists until it inevitably changes. Nobody stays here forever, not even the buildings do. For instance, Nellie's is going to be torn down in November. While I've grown very attached to this building and will be sad to see it go, I must accept that it's a change for the better. And it won't be gone forever. In fact, it's coming back even bigger with 10 feet of additional space in each direction. I trust that any sadness or longing for the original Nellie's will dissolve when she can finally house both of the cooks harmoniously and provide better, more spacious storage and facilitation for program needs. While change can be painful, it is necessary for progression. So I'll help tear her down in November, help end an era and begin anew, afresh.

Meanwhile, I'll bide my time at Nellie's, gazing into the grove of trees as I stand at the kitchen sink, sipping a cup of coffee, experiencing gratitude about being alive. It's the same feeling I get listening to the river from my porch or when I'm crouching to stoke the woodstove with guests over, sharing stories, food and drink. It's that quiet moment when I notice the poetic way the light comes in the window, beaming across the floorboards. I realize I'll miss the incredible creaking the door makes when it opens or closes and I relish while I can the scent of history and wilderness and propane. These are precious moments, golden times. As I'm remembering to remember all of these things, I realize I really do live and work in paradise.



**NORTH (FRONT) ELEVATION**  
*Drawing of the replacement structure.*

## COMINGS and GOINGS

We've had a great season so far.

Around Jawbone and Portland you will see some new faces and miss a few old faces.

Ali Jackiw, our development assistant, has departed Opal Creek to travel the world. She has been a great asset and we will miss her focus and pose in soliciting funding. We welcome her replacement, Scott Beutel. Scott has a back-

ground in political activism working for the Bus Project and Novick for Senate. An avid hiker, climber and cyclist he's excited to join OCAFC's Portland staff.

Suntara Loba, our registrar, is leaving in early October to spend more time with her family in New Mexico. Her meticulous tracking of rentals and program participants improves all of our lives and she will be missed.

## JAWBONE JOURNAL

After an extended winter, spring and summer seemed to fly by at Jawbone Flats. We have enjoyed meeting and working with the many school groups, workshop participants, and cabin renters that have come through so far this year. Fall is here, the days getting shorter and the evenings cooler.

**April 1–12th** Jawbone caretakers Adam Mims, Peter Frost, and Joe O'Neill work with George and Aziz Atiyeh on the grueling task of opening the road. Adam, Peter, and Joe commute by foot every day to the snow line.

**April 13** Aziz Atiyeh reaches Jawbone Flats on a large cat. After a 10 day push, the road is now open for vehicle access.

**April 21st–26th** Seasonal staff move into Jawbone, three weeks later than planned, and amid 6 foot snow banks. The week is spent shoveling out paths to cabins, learning the systems at Jawbone, and wondering just when this snow was going to melt.

**May 1st** We welcome the first public group to Jawbone in 2008, with a Wilderness First Responder Recertification course. The snow was an added benefit, as folks from all over the Pacific Northwest brushed up on their skills.

**May 16th** The crew at Jawbone Flats hosts its first school groups of the year, six weeks later than originally scheduled. There are still large snow banks throughout town, and much of the forest floor is still covered by remaining snow and ice.

**May 18th** The power in Jawbone



*Our May WFR participants outside the lodge in the deep snow.*

goes down due to a blown circuit at the main distribution point in the Pelton Shed. Staff dug holes in snow banks to store food and Jawbone is without power for 2 days while the problem is fixed. This is opening weekend, and the new staff rolled with it like old pros.

**May 28th** Our office manager, Kathy Rivera, spies a bear on our Horn Ranch property.

**July 4th** A cloudy day for the 4th this year, but we celebrate our freedoms regardless, with the day ending in a parade through town to the Meadow. Our only spectator was past Executive Director Scott Fogarty, who was camped nearby with his family.

**July 6th** Connor Ryan and Shea Scribner, our summer interns, arrive excited for a summer exploring the forest with our many students.

**July 12th–14th** Jawbone bids farewell to Instructor Justin Gardiner, who is moving on to a sweet gig in Asheville, NC. We welcome Olie Smith, from Northern California to our instructor team.

**July 19th–20th** Our Board of Directors and their families visit Jawbone Flats for the annual on site

meeting. It was the last meeting for some, and the first for others. New ideas were launched and stories were shared. We have a great board working on behalf of the organization, and the staff always enjoys this weekend.

**August 11th–15th** The residents of Jawbone Flats from the 1960s and 70s return for a week for the third annual Atiyeh Camp. Some folks were missed this year, as many stories were told and Jawbone was only referred to as "the mine" for the week.

**August 15th** PGE engineer Bruce Barney teaches our first Sustainable Energy Workshop at Jawbone Flats. Bruce designed our current solar/micro-hydro system, and was able to share the details with our participants.

**August 16th** Temperatures reach 101 degrees in Jawbone. The butt slides have never felt better.

**August 18th–22nd** Cabin 8 gets a much needed facelift with a new front porch and bathroom remodel, and Cabin 6 gets a back porch.

**August 29–September 1** Five families brave a rainy Labor Day weekend and join us in backpacking

across the steep ridgelines that make up the Opal Creek watershed, guided by our all girl crew of Kaola, Shea, Meghan, and Sarah.

**August 25th** Brian Campbell joins Rebekah and Sarah in the kitchen as our new Assistant Cook.

**September 3rd** Connor Ryan returns from upstate NY. Connor will be joining Adam and Joe in the Facilities Department for the year.

**September 12th** The new Pelton wheel installation is completed. The water is turned back on, and electricity restored to Jawbone. The new wheel is an excellent addition to the facility here and will provide Jawbone with even more free, clean, micro-hydro electric power.

We in Jawbone are looking forward to our fall season and the return of school groups, bright red vine maples, and the delicious mushrooms we look forward to every year. Autumn in the Cascades is beautiful, and as we say "every day is a good day in Jawbone." There's still time for a visit before the snow flies. Hope to see you all in the forest sometime soon. Enjoy the fall sunshine.

—The Residents of Jawbone Flats

## Thanks to our Recent Donors

**T**hank you to all of our members, your willingness to step up and support our mission keeps OCAFC strong and furthers our objective of using this ancient forest to teach others. Your continued support is a tangible sign of the commitment people have to Opal Creek. As we continue our work your continued support is more important than ever, doing environmental education in a remote and unique location is expensive and your help makes it possible.

We want to remind you that all **current members are entitled to early cabin reservations for the 2009 season starting on November 17th.** In addition to getting 10% off rentals you get to beat the rush. As Opal Creek's popularity swells it has gotten harder to reserve space so please jump on this opportunity in advance! Contact Scott Beutel in our Portland office (503-892-2782) to become a member, increase your gift or buy a membership for a friend.

## Thank You! (donors between 3/29/08 and 9/18/08)

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