



OPAL CREEK

ANCIENT FOREST CENTER

Flowing Through Generations



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Naturalist Spotlight - Trillium (*Trillium ovatum*)

By Katie Ryan



These early blooming spring flowers are a beautiful sight in Pacific Northwest forests, sprucing up the drabness the winter rains can bring. There are 40-50 species of trilliums, and here in Oregon we have the Western Wake Robin, which carries this name because it appears about the same time as robins return from winter migration. Opal Creek's deep, rich forests provide the perfect habitat for these flowers. They are well-adapted to live in the damp, shady

understory of the Douglas Fir - Western Hemlock - Western Red Cedar forest. Trilliums, like all plants, make their food through photosynthesis, and therefore the green leaves are where the food is produced for the plant. Once the trillium is picked, it is not able to grow new leaves until it has gone through a period of cold dormancy, or until next year. So, as you hike through our damp forests this spring, please be on the look out for trilliums. Take all the pictures you would like, but please do not pick these magnificent flowers.

THEIR OWN WORDS

"I have always loved nature, but seeing Opal Creek made me want to learn more about what could be done to save other areas too."

— Sam, *Native Youth Careers Project* participant

"I would certainly recommend an Opal Creek day workshop to anyone with an adventurous spirit."

— Christina Draney, workshop participant

"Opal Creek is the perfect educational site, combining the best of history, culture, biology, and science along with a highly trained and welcoming staff. It is the perfect place for students..."

Our students all feel that Opal Creek is the perfect place to visit – the perfect classroom."

— Mike Weddle, Teacher, Jane Goodall Environmental School

Opal Creek's Forest Provides Prime Amphibian Habitat

By Katie Ryan

Scientists have been warning us for years that our amphibian species are declining worldwide. Many reasons are cited for this decline, including increased pesticide use, an upsurge in pollutants, rising levels of UV radiation, invasive species, and loss of habitat due to agriculture and urbanization. The forests of the Pacific Northwest are in no way immune to this trend, and we too are seeing declining amphibian diversity.

Amphibians have been around for 300 million years. They were thriving before the dinosaurs and continued living long after many other species had disappeared.¹ The fact that they are declining has been referred to by many as the "canary in the coal mine" scenario, their decline being indicative of overall forest health.

Amphibians are vulnerable and have sensitive skin, placing them among the first vertebrates to show the effects of increased pollutants or climate change. The name "amphibian" means "double life" and is derived from the habits of many amphibians that spend part of the year on land but return to ponds and lakes each year to breed. They are dependent upon the health of both their terrestrial and aquatic habitats.

Opal Creek's dark, moist, intact, ancient forest is pristine habitat for Northwest amphibian species. Our undisturbed stream beds provide sediment-free gravel and large woody debris, a vital cover and breeding substrate of aquatic amphibians. The cool, crystal, clear waters support a large diversity of macroinvertebrates, a

major food source for frogs, toads, and salamanders. Amphibians breathe through their skin, and therefore it must always be moist. The ancient forest stores that moisture and amphibians can still find a damp place to be during the height of summer, when we haven't seen rains in weeks.

Opal Creek boasts 15 species of amphibians, 8 of which are endemic to old growth forests. "The number of species, the density, and the biomass of amphibians range from two to seven times higher in streams flowing through natural forests than in streams flowing through logged areas in the Coast and Cascade ranges of Oregon."² Of the 15 species we see at Opal Creek, half are listed as either

From the Interim Executive Director



Exciting times lie ahead as we begin 2007. Who would have thought that one of Opal Creek's newts would be on the cover of a well-respected national magazine with a circulation of 450,000? While the March/April issue of Audubon Magazine hits newsstands, the phone is ringing off the hook at the Portland office as we receive requests for Amphibian Field Guides and take reservations for workshops.

Our thanks go to star board member David Seideman for sending out a crew from New York for this cover story.

I am excited to report that many of the facilities projects begun in the fall are coming to fruition. The Commissary conversion to a classroom is on time and on budget, which is no small task, considering the winter we have encountered. Happily, we were able to salvage most of the original lumber from the old Commissary and reuse it in the new construction. The new classroom is outfitted with a fully-equipped laboratory that will complement and enrich our field work curriculum. Students will be able to see firsthand where and how their electricity is generated, as the controls for the PGE-provided photovoltaic power panels will be mounted on an inside wall. The building will also provide a great venue and meeting facility for business and group retreats.

I would like to add special thanks to Larry and Blake Bilyeu, our contractors for this challenging project; John Kyle, our architect; and Bob Grummel, the project engineer. Our joint effort with PGE will make the Earth Day dedication a very memorial event.

For those of you who are concerned about the fate of our furry flying friends who once called the Commissary home, be assured that the Thompson Long-Eared bats have relocated. This colony that used to live in the attic now reside in several bat houses specially built and situated around Jawbone Flats for their resettlement.

The winter weather has brought familiar challenges to the Opal Creek staff living at Jawbone Flats, but the quiet of the season also allowed for some important facilities upgrades. Adam, Pete and Joe, our winter facilities staff, between fixing broken water pipes and keeping the road open, were very busy restoring Cabin 7. This provides overnight guests with a refurbished mining cabin as a larger alternative to Cabin 1.

In the past six months we added three members to the board: Rick Schaefer, Susan Hay and Thor Hinckley. Each brings dynamic leadership and experience to add to our success. As always, we have an active board that is fully committed to our mission and a viable future.

This past January we bid a fond adieu to Brian Windrope, our much beloved past Executive Director (please read his farewell on pg.6). Brian laid a firm foundation for the Opal Creek Ancient Forest Center, and we are ever grateful to him. We wish Brian and Amy much continued success, in particular with Amy's new salmon recovery project in the San Juan Islands.

Our great staff is making my job easier and they are all pulling their weight. As Interim Executive Director I am filling the gap with my past knowledge of our organization and facilities, and also bringing a business eye to the operation. Our Executive Director Search Committee is redoubling its efforts to locate the best qualified candidates in a national search. As members, your candidate suggestions are welcome. The committee should have this narrowed down by the end of April and a permanent Executive Director on the job in June.

Our 2007 workshop catalogue is now printed with twice the distribution as last year. Be sure to pick one up, and continue to check the website for special workshops that are not on the regular menu, such as our Yoga in the Ancient Forest workshop scheduled for August 4-5.

For serious hikers, we offer a new map that includes all of the Opal Creek watersheds and goes north into the Bull Of The Woods Wilderness. Leslie and I used the map last summer to hike to Silver King Lake, and this is the same trail that also extends to Bagby Hot Springs.

Having been through two self-generated financial audits and beginning a third, we feel confident in our ability to be a transparent non-profit organization and become more efficient with the funds with which we are entrusted. However, we still depend upon the generosity of our members and partner foundations to fill the gap between revenue generated by programs and cabin rentals. Now would be a great time to send us a contribution. As a reminder, members receive a 10% deduction on rentals and programs.

All of us involved on a daily basis with keeping Opal Creek alive really appreciate your commitment to our mission.

Tom

Tom Atiyeh
Interim Executive Director

STAFF

Tom Atiyeh <i>Interim Executive Director</i>	Joe O'Neill <i>Facilities Assistant</i>
Ali Jackiw <i>Development Assistant</i>	Kathy Rivera <i>Office Manager</i>
Claire Lukens <i>Lead Instructor</i>	Katie Ryan <i>Program Director</i>
Emily Wagner <i>Head Cook</i>	Nathaniel Talbot <i>Instructor</i>
Michele McKinzie <i>Assistant Program Director</i>	
Adam Mims <i>Facilities Director</i>	

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MISSION

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

Opal Creek Workshops 2007

We are very excited about our dynamic 2007 workshop schedule, and by now you should have received our catalog displaying all the offerings for this season. We have worked hard to create a diverse schedule, with something for everyone.

You will see some old favorites, such as **Mosses and Lichens of the Ancient Forest**, as well as **Mushrooms of the Ancient Forest**, both of which will be taught by past Opal Creek Ancient Forest Center instructor John Villella. We have continued our partnership with the Wilderness Medicine Institute, and will be offering the full 10-day **Wilderness First Responder** course again this fall. In addition, we will also be offering a **Wilderness First Responder Recertification** course in April, for folks who need to dust off their wilderness medicine skills.

Both our spring and fall amphibian workshops will be offered again this year, and led by our very own Adam Mims, co-author of Opal Creek Ancient Forest Center's recently published "Amphibians of Opal Creek" guide book. We also welcome local avian ecologist, Steve Edwards, back for a second year to lead our **Birds of the**



Participant in 2006 Moss and Lichen Workshop examines lichen communities growing on the rocks.

Ancient Forest workshop in late June. For those of you interested in the rock formations of Opal Creek, and the geology of the western Oregon Cascades, join us in August for our **Geology of Opal Creek** workshop.

We have created many opportunities for families to come spend a weekend together learning about the depths of Opal Creek's forests. Bring your family for one of our family workshops: **Wildflowers and Butterflies**, **Insects**, or **Ancient Forest Ecology**. They are all scheduled at the height of the summer, and with the long days there is plenty of time for swimming,

star gazing, and exploring. Our **Medicinal Plants of the Ancient Forest** workshop falls over Mother's Day weekend this year. What better way to celebrate Mom than with a trip to Opal Creek!

We are excited to welcome Portland State professor, Natalie Vasey, PhD, to teach our first ever **Mammals of the Santiam Canyon** workshop in September. A beautiful month in the Cascades, September brings more mammal activity as they prepare for the onset of winter. Natalie has been studying mammals for the past 15 years, including travel to Madagascar and the rainforests of Costa Rica.

In an effort to reach out a bit from our customary science workshops, we are excited to announce our first-ever **Nature Digital Photography** workshop, led by award-winning nature photographer Jeff Jessing (www.naturerevealed.com). Spend a weekend at Opal Creek learning how to best capture the spectacular sights around you. We are also excited to announce our first wellness-focused workshop, **Yoga in the Ancient Forest**. Join some of the Northwest's premier yoga instructors for a weekend exploring the joys of yoga, amidst the beauty and quiet of Opal Creek's old growth forest.

COMINGS & GOINGS

You will notice some changes in the Opal Creek Ancient Forest Center staff for 2007. Executive Director Brian Windrope has moved on from Opal Creek and settled with his family in the San Juan Islands, and past Development Director Steve Wise has moved with his family to Chicago. We welcome Ali Jackiw as our new Development Assistant. Ali comes to us from the campaign world, having dedicated herself to children's issues and environmental candidates for the past couple years. She can be found in the Portland office. In addition, you will notice that Program Director, Katie Ryan, is now based out of Jawbone Flats. Michele McKinzie joined our staff

in November as Assistant Program Director bringing her environmental, ecology-based background and outreach skills with her. Michele will serve as the initial contact for school groups, cabin rentals, and workshops. Facilities Director Adam Mims has returned from his sabbatical to Madagascar for another season at Jawbone. He will be joined by Joe O'Neill, Facilities Assistant, as we say goodbye and thank you to Facilities Assistant Peter Frost, who departs Jawbone in April. We welcome back Lead Instructor, Claire Lukens, for her third season in Jawbone.

Opal Creek Summer Camps 2007

By Katie Ryan



Summer camp participant looks for local amphibian species at Opal Creek.

Opal Creek Ancient Forest Center ran our first-ever summer camps last year, and had three fantastic weeks of kids exploring, learning, and having fun at Opal Creek. We are very excited to announce an even more expanded summer camp program for 2007. We will offer two weeks of **Opal Creek Summer Camp**, one for ages 10-12, and one for ages 12-14. Students will spend 5 days among the spectacular old growth trees, waterfalls, and rushing rivers of Opal Creek. We will explore the forest around us and the amazing diversity of wildlife, and even get the chance to snorkel in the crystal clear waters and see the underwater world happen.

We also have some weeklong programs focused on more specific topics. We are excited to offer the full weeklong camp **Wilderness Survival at Opal Creek**. Students will learn and practice the skills and knowledge necessary to take care of themselves and others in remote areas.

For those students interested in the fascinating rock formations of the area,



we will offer another full weeklong camp, **Geology and Mining History of Opal Creek**.

This summer students will be able to join Opal Creek instructors in their backyard for weeklong backpacking adventures. We are excited to announce two sessions of the **Opal Creek Wilderness Backpack for 2007**. Students will learn backpacking and outdoor skills as they investigate the remote reaches of Opal Creek. Opal Creek Ancient Forest Center's instructors are Wilderness First Responder certified, and have spent extensive time in the backcountry.

JAWBONE JOURNAL

Winter in Jawbone is a little quieter, with not as many visitors coming through town, and at times we are the only 4 humans within 15 square miles. Here are a few tales of our winter adventures.

November 7th - Rivers here become a raging torrent of foam during the floods that hit the entire Pacific Northwest. Logs almost take out the Opal Creek bridge and other decades-old log jams dissolve under the rushing waters.

November 26th - Katie Ryan and husband, Joe O'Neill, move into Cabin 6. Katie will continue her role as Program Director for the organization, and Joe joins Adam and Peter as a Facilities Assistant.

December 14th - Heavy winds blow through and knock down many massive trees between Jawbone and the gate. Our hydro line is spared, but it does take three days to chainsaw out. Always curious about the ancient forest, we count the rings on the downed trees and discover that we lost a Western Hemlock that was 257 years old and a Douglas Fir that was 301 years old.

December 18th - Adam and Joe see cougar scat and eye shine as they make a midnight run up the flume line to fix the electricity.

December 20th - Joe sees a grey fox cross the road near the Hewitt Grove, and days later Peter finds the tail, reminding us all of the cycles of the forest.

January 13th - Temperatures reach single digits, and staying warm and keeping pipes from freezing becomes a priority for all.

January 20th - The contractors raise the new trusses for the commissary. We are all getting excited for the completion of this project.

February 14th - Valentine's Day at Jawbone Flats - Peter finds a "newt ball" - a mass of mating newts - in the pond. Love is in the air!

February 19th - Varied Thrushes are seen in the forest around Jawbone Flats. Normally one of the first signs of spring, we wonder if their arrival means an early spring for Opal Creek.



Torrential winter downpours cause Opal Creek to rise almost to the level of the bridge!

The days are getting longer, and the weather a little warmer, both signs of the forest getting ready for spring. We too are getting ready for our spring season, by preparing buildings, hiring staff, and thinking about the days when the sun is high in the sky. We hope to see you all here sometime this season.

Best wishes,
The Residents of Jawbone Flats

Amphibian habitat continued from cover

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

species of concern, sensitive species, or monitor species.

The decline of amphibians has gotten the attention of scientists across the globe. The March issue of *Audubon Magazine* features a cover story about amphibians, Opal Creek, and the role it plays in preserving amphibian habitat. The Opal Creek Wilderness and Scenic Recreation area is a remnant of the forests that once blanketed the western Cascades, making the area especially vital for amphibian survival in Oregon.

Opal Creek Ancient Forest Center has been leading Amphibian Workshops since 2001, and surely many of you have dipped your hands in the cool waters of Opal Creek or peered under logs in search of these elusive animals. We are excited to continue the tradition this year, and will be offering both a spring and a fall Amphibian Workshop.

Our very own Adam Mims, Facility Director and co-author of Opal Creek's recently published Field Guide to the Amphibians of Opal Creek, will be leading these workshops. Adam has spent 5 years combing the forest surrounding Jawbone Flats in search of the local amphibian species. In addition we welcome back University of Oregon Research Associate and Instructor, Tom Titus, who will join us for our Spring Amphibian Workshop, scheduled for May 5-6, 2007. Join us for one of these weekends, and explore the forests of Opal Creek while learning about these very important indicator species.

We do have our recently published Field Guide to the Amphibians of Opal Creek available for sale through our website and Portland office, as well as in the company store at Jawbone Flats. They are \$10 each and although it specifically covers the

species found at Opal Creek, the guide can be used throughout the northern Oregon Cascades.

Amphibians are a critical part of an intact ecosystem, and often overlooked while exploring the forest. Next time you are out hiking, keep your eyes open for these elusive animals. Remember you should generally avoid handling them, and if you are patient and move slowly you can usually get a good look at them. Since they breathe through their skin, they are sensitive to natural oils and cosmetics found on our hands. The best time to observe these animals is in the spring and fall on wet, cool, days when they can be found foraging or migrating above ground.

¹ <http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2006/07/060707094220.html>

² <http://biology.usgs.gov/s+/SNT/noframe/pn169.html>

Helping to Balance the Carbon Cycle One Native Tree at a Time

Michele McKinzie

All known life on our planet is based on the element carbon; from the complex DNA molecules in your body to the tree in your backyard. All carbon atoms in existence essentially rotate through a process known as the carbon cycle. When the cycle is in balance, the Earth's systems and inhabitants are happy campers, but without its proper functioning, every aspect of life could change dramatically.

Humans have been altering the natural ebb and flow of the carbon cycle since the beginning of the Industrial Revolution, mainly through the combustion of fossil fuels and by converting forests into farmland or urban landscapes. Our actions and lack of foresight have led us straight into what scientists refer to as Global Climate Change.

Offsetting carbon dioxide emissions allows people and organizations to become part of the solution to Global Climate Change by investing in a project or action that reduces carbon dioxide emissions equal to that which they emit. Opal Creek Ancient Forest Center has decided to take on the responsibility of offsetting the tons of carbon dioxide emitted each year by transport to our education center. Each fall, we will organize native tree plantings at our Horn Ranch property to lessen the impact our participants have on an already unbalanced carbon cycle.



With our new carbon offset program, the Horn Ranch field will begin to resemble the forested area that borders it.

Volunteers will help plant the trees and students of all ages will have opportunities to learn about carbon sequestration and the importance of a balanced carbon cycle through our forest ecology education programs. It is our hope that we will help perpetuate a legacy of informed individuals capable of creating the change we want to see in the world.

Opal Creek Celebrates Earth Day and the Dedication of our new Paul G. Allen – Opal Creek Environmental Education Center



The Commissary on 2/20/07 – it's nearing completion and is now visibly changing everyday.



Adam and Pete stand in front of the freshly-poured Commissary foundation back in December.

Anyone who's visited Jawbone Flats within the last six months has probably noticed the ongoing construction project where the old Commissary once stood. You may have been there in November, when the old building was just a pile of lumber next to a big hole in the ground. Perhaps you saw it in December, once the new foundation had been poured, or in January when the walls had been erected. Today the rebuilt Commissary stands perched on the edge of completion, ready to be unveiled on Friday, April 20, 2007, as the new green, solar-powered Paul G. Allen - Opal Creek Environmental Education Center.

We have made every effort to insure that the construction

of the new Commissary has been as low-impact as possible, and that the finished project is sustainable and eco-friendly. Our finished Commissary will house a fully equipped laboratory and classroom that will serve the educational needs of 2,000 people a year. It will also be a concrete reminder of the principles of sustainability that guide our mission, principles that are beginning to assume a local and national focus: respect for the ecosystem, conservation of natural resources, and living lightly on the land. Appropriately, one of our partners in this project is Portland General Electric, a regional leader in renewable energy. They have donated a 4 kilowatt solar voltaic system that is the crowning symbol of the project.

Please join Opal Creek Ancient Forest Center and PGE at Jawbone Flats on Friday, April 20, 2007, for the ground-breaking of our new solar-powered Commissary and Earth Day festivities. We

would love nothing more than to celebrate this dream come true with our members and many generous contributors who helped make it possible- in short, you!

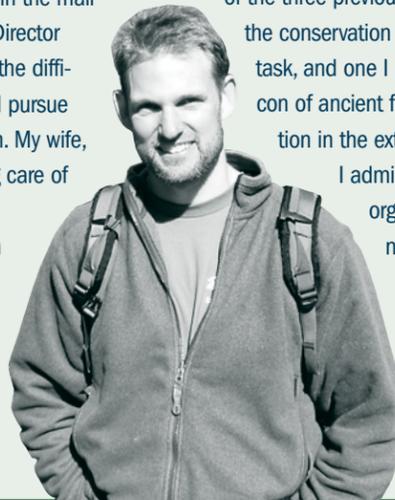
EVENT DETAILS

- WHAT:** Earth Day celebration and dedication of our new Paul G. Allen - Opal Creek Environmental Education Center
- WHEN:** Friday, April 20, 2007, 11AM-2PM
- WHERE:** Jawbone Flats (for directions go to www.opalcreek.org or call 503-892-2782)

Windrope's Farewell

This newsletter marks the first edition I will receive in the mail and not from the printer. My tenure as Executive Director came to a close this January as my family made the difficult decision to pull up our roots in Oregon (ouch!) and pursue an opportunity to live on San Juan Island in Washington. My wife, Amy, is directing the San Juan Initiative and I am taking care of our two small boys and pursuing interests on the home front. Besides relishing the chance to fully participate in the lives of our two boys, I am also happy reciprocating the support that Amy provided for me during my employment over the last six years.

Leading Opal Creek Ancient Forest Center was the most satisfying work of my professional life. When I began in 2004, I was able to stand on the shoulders



of the three previous directors who had guided the organization through the conservation and legal victories of the previous fifteen years. My task, and one I relished, was to help the organization become a beacon of ancient forest education and stewardship. I leave the organization in the extremely capable hands of the board of directors, whom

I admire and will miss, and the most incredible staff any organization could claim. The mission of the organization now shines brightly, and the mission will always thrive with the generous support from all of us who are dedicated to the majesty of Opal Creek. It is in my blood forever, and we will return again and again to delight in discoveries.

Thank You! (donors since 9/1/06)

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