

Introducing the Klamath Watershed Partnership

Many people throughout the Upper Klamath Basin have become familiar with the restoration work of the Klamath Watershed Council and the Klamath Basin Ecosystem Foundation (or KBEF), both community-based organizations that have been working in collaboration with Upper Basin landowners and local agencies to implement restoration projects.

In July 2007, these two organizations joined forces to form the **Klamath Watershed Partnership**.

The primary goal of combining the KBEF and the Watershed Council was to facilitate “one-stop shopping” for people interested in restoration in the Upper Basin, particularly landowners interested in doing work on their property. The merger also allows for cost savings and combines the experiences and expertise of both organizations.

The Watershed Council and KBEF each had their own boards of directors, which were brought together to form the Partnership’s new board. The chairs of all eight Working Groups sit on the Board, each from a different subbasin within the Upper Basin, from the Upper Williamson to the Klamath River. Also sitting on the board are community leaders and representatives from the wide range of stakeholder groups in the Basin. Together, these 19 board members help to set priorities and ensure that the mission is met: **To conserve, enhance and restore the natural resources of the**

Klamath Basin, while ensuring the long-term sustainability of the regional economy and local communities.

Just like the Watershed Council and KBEF, the Partnership is involved from start to finish in a wide range of large and small voluntary restoration projects throughout the Basin. A project begins when a landowner contacts the Partnership with an interest in restoration work, such as riparian fencing to help reduce stream bank erosion, screening diversions, or a new irrigation system that uses water and power more efficiently. The Partnership then works closely with them to design a project that fits with their values and also pencils out economically for them. Next, the Partnership applies for grants to help underwrite the project, in order to minimize the cost to landowners, who often end up contributing only a small portion of the labor or the use of their equipment. The Partnership will then manage the on-the-ground work, whether that be their own employees or private contractors. Monitoring is completed on all projects to document effectiveness and allow us to continually improve our strategies and methods.

In addition to these on-the-ground projects, the Partnership also coordinates the Watershed Assessments, which are in-depth reports that bring community members and scientists together to identify natural resource concerns and set restoration priorities. You can find out more about the ongoing Lower Williamson and Lower Sprague River Assessment on **page 2**.

The board recently selected Terry Morton, a long-time Basin resident, to be the organization’s Executive Director

Terry, who has worked with KBEF, the Watershed Council, agencies and landowners on natural resource issues in the Basin, brings a considerable amount of experience to the table. She heads a growing staff of both new and familiar faces. (Each newsletter will feature a profile of a Partnership staff member, starting with Joe Watkins, a former Watershed Council board member and now lead Project Manager for the Partnership.)

If you are interested in finding out more about the Partnership, or if you’d like to get involved, there are several ways to get more information. You can check out the Partnership’s website at www.klamathpartnership.org or call the Partnership at 541-850-1717. The group also holds quarterly board meetings that are open to the public, the third Thursday of January, April, July and October from 6:30 - 8:30 in the evening. We rotate throughout the Basin in order to make our meetings more accessible to local landowners, and to allow board members to get to know the local communities. You can find out where we’ll be by getting in touch with anyone at the Partnership office.

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At Work: Joe Watkins

“I just love it out here,” Joe Watkins said as he drove along the Sprague River Valley in his maroon Dodge Ram. The truck’s bed was loaded with a cutting torch, tool boxes, and



piles of fencing supplies. That day, Joe planned to finish several off-stream watering troughs that will help keep livestock off river banks on a Sprague River ranch. Later that week, he hoped to begin a riparian fencing project for another landowner. Both of these projects were supported by grants through the Klamath Watershed Partnership.

Joe is the Project Manager for the organization, and he oversees the restoration and enhancement projects that it helps to fund. His job, in his own words, is to “get the money on the ground,” to coordinate contractors and employees, and to make sure that projects are completed correctly and according to the needs of the landowner.

A life-long resident of the Merrill-Malin area, Joe knows the Basin well. He also knows

agriculture and the importance of watershed enhancement. For 30 years he worked at the UC Davis Intermountain Research and Extension Center in Tulelake, CA,. He is a long-time member of the Soil and Water Conservation District, and is currently the chairman of the board. Before taking on the job of Project Manager, he was the head of the Watershed Council’s Klamath Project Working Group, which represents irrigators in the Klamath Reclamation Project.

Joe is excited about the Basin’s future and about working with landowners. “Everyone is willing to pitch in to make this happen,” Joe said. “I’ve never seen such a sense of community in this country before.”

Watershed Assessment Continues

Now that the Upper Sprague and Sycan Watershed Assessment is complete — you can download the report at www.klamathpartnership.org or call the Klamath Watershed Partnership office for a copy — it’s time to turn our attention to other parts of the Upper Klamath Basin.

Watershed Assessments are reports supported by the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (also known as OWEB) and are meant to be documents that summarize ecological conditions and identify priorities within a watershed. They are also opportunities for people in the community to have their concerns about the watershed heard and documented. Assessments help local communities to then develop Action Plans, to focus and guide future restoration efforts.

So far, two assessments have been completed: one for the Upped Williamson, and the other for the Upper Sprague and Sycan. We are currently working on the Lower Sprague and Lower Williamson River watershed assessments. Last September, community members and representatives from a variety of agencies identified issues and concerns about the watershed.

Scientists and members of the local community sit on the Assessment Team. Rabe Consulting, a Klamath Falls-based environmental consulting firm, is compiling

community input and scientific reports and writing the actual document. The assessment will be completed this summer and presented at another community meeting for discussion.

If you would like to find out more please contact the Partnership office (541-850-1717).

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What is the Water Cycle?

Even though the Earth might be the “blue planet,” we all know that fresh water is a scarce resource. But it might surprise you just how scarce it is.

While there are 332,500,000 cubic *miles* of water on earth — that’s enough to cover the United States to a depth of eighty-eight miles — all but a small fraction is salty. In fact, only 3% is fresh. And the vast majority of fresh water is stored either in icecaps and glaciers or underground. Rivers, lakes and wetlands hold only *one-hundredth of one percent* of all the Earth’s water!

Surface waterways such as wetlands, lakes and rivers represent a very small part of a global cycle in which water moves between the continents, the oceans and the atmosphere. The hydrologic cycle, or water cycle, describes the way that water moves between these different “reservoirs.” Water is always on the move below, on, and above Earth’s surface, and as a result, the flow of water connects the entire planet. The water we use to wash our dishes, for instance, might long ago have been deep in the Pacific Ocean, then evaporated into the air, rained onto the land, and finally drawn from an aquifer. These connections mean that even seemingly far-

removed events can have important impacts on the local availability and quality of fresh water.

The hydrologic cycle has no real beginning or end, but a good place to start talking about it is the oceans, the largest reservoir of water on the planet. Oceans hold 97% of all the Earth’s water, and they are the ultimate destination for most of the world’s rivers and rainfall. But even in the ocean, water is always moving. Huge currents circulate water from the depths to the surface, as well as around the world. In addition, a tremendous amount of ocean water evaporates into the air.

Rising air lifts the vapor high into the atmosphere, where winds blow it around the globe. When conditions are right, the vapor condenses, and we get precipitation in the form of rain or snow. Most falls back into the ocean, but some falls onto land.

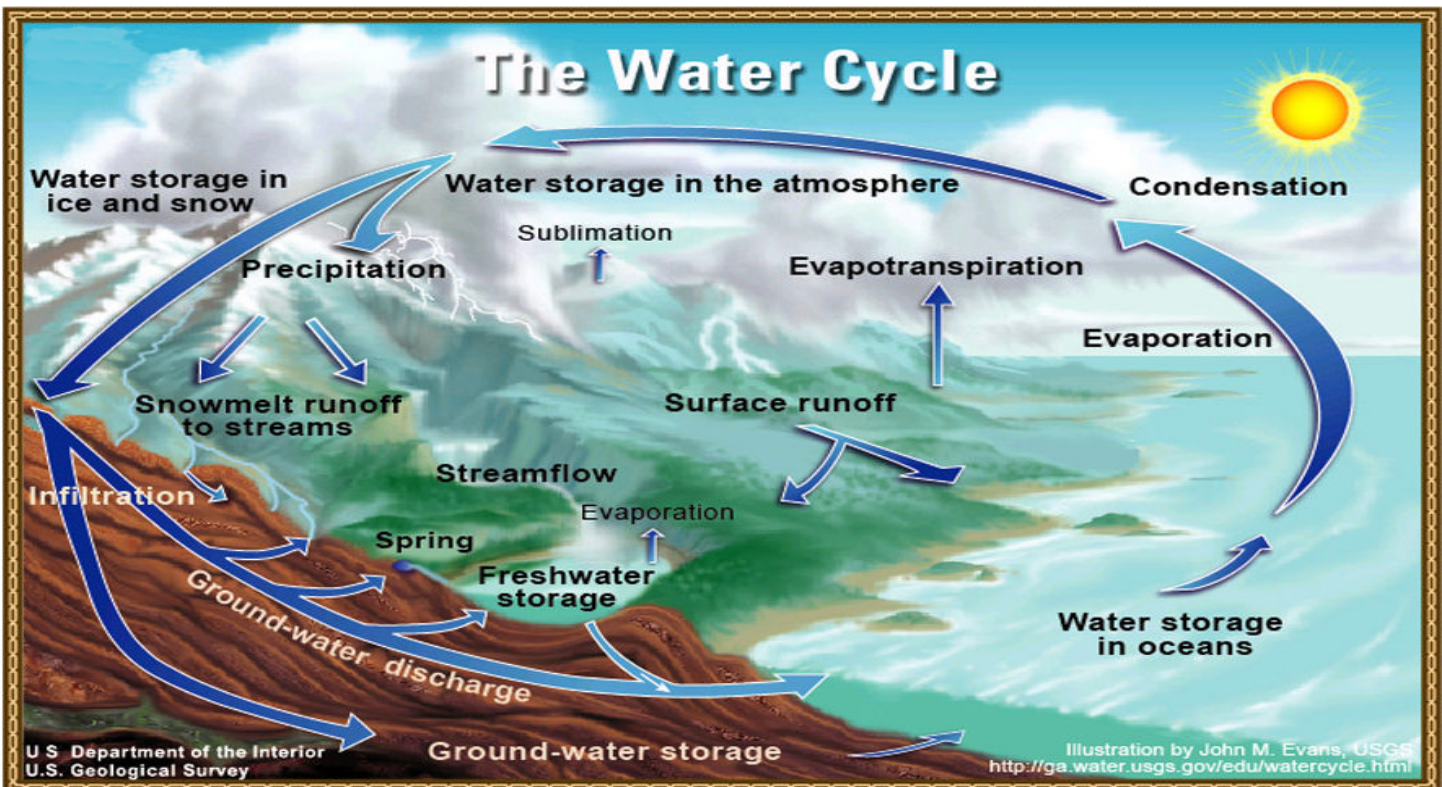
Water that ends up on land follows a number of paths. Some is stored temporarily as snow or more permanently in icecaps like those in Antarctica. Some of it soaks directly into the ground, adding to the groundwater reserves that hold almost a third of the fresh water on the planet, mostly in deep and relatively

inaccessible aquifers. The rest ends up in surface waterways.

In lakes, wetlands and rivers, runoff from precipitation joins groundwater from springs and seeps. Rivers hold the smallest amount of fresh surface water, only about 2%. Lakes and wetlands hold the other 98%. The relative size of lakes and wetlands as reservoirs for fresh water underscores the vital role they play in the hydrologic cycle — conserving and enhancing them could have a significant benefits for our supplies of fresh water.

From the continents, some water flows back to the oceans. The rest reenters the atmosphere in two main ways. One way is via evaporation. Plants take care of the rest by pulling water from the ground and releasing it through their leaves. This process is called transpiration, and it can pump a significant amount of water into the air: a mature juniper, for instance, can transpire 35 gallons of water in a single day if conditions are right.

The cycle repeats endlessly as water moves from one reservoir to another, changing from fresh to salty, and from liquid to solid or gas. Your dishwasher is on a round-the-world journey.



Klamath Watershed Partnership

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Where people, land and water come together.

Stay tuned for new and exciting announcements, events and information from the Partnership. If you have any suggestions on what you would like to see in future newsletters or monthly informational sheets, please contact Ginny Monroe, Outreach Coordinator at the Partnership at 541-850-1717 or gmonroe@klamathpartnership.org.

Further Reading: Common Plants of the Klamath Basin

Plants can provide fodder, their roots can reduce erosion by anchoring the soil, and their branches and leaves can create shady habitat for animals. But some plants, especially noxious weeds such as musk thistle, can pose big problems.

Given the significance of plants — both good and bad — plant identification is a valuable skill to have. With it, you can catch weeds before they have a chance to take hold. You can also see (and tell your neighbors) about desirable plants as they gain ground.

But identification can be hard to learn, and until now there hasn't been a convenient field guide dedicated to the Upper Klamath Basin to make it any easier. The Klamath Basin Chapter of the Native Plant Society of Oregon has stepped up with their new book *Common Plants of the Upper Klamath Basin*, a readable, easy to use, and colorfully illustrated field guide. Best of all, it's free.

The book's highlight is its 231 pages of color photographs, covering a wide range of plants from the Mare's Eggs found in some Basin springs to the Ponderosa Pines of the upland forests and everything in between. The pictures are bright and clear, and its easy to match them up with vegetation you might come across in the field. Next to each photo is a brief description of the plant, where it can be found, and a note on some of the plant's history, uses, and features. The book includes both common and scientific names, making the guide especially friendly.

The details: *Common Plants of the Upper Klamath Basin* was published in Klamath Falls by the Native Plant Society of Oregon, Klamath Basin Chapter, and Rabe Consulting in 2007. The guidebook is free, thanks to a grant from the Secure Rural Schools Act through the County Commissioners.

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