



100 Valleys

A Quarterly Publication for the Supporters of Umpqua Watersheds, Inc

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Local Solutions, Not Government Bailouts

In recent months, Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar, Oregon's congressional delegation, local politicians and mill owners have been calling for more logging on federal lands to "break the log jam" and create more jobs in timber dependent communities. On a recent trip to Coos Bay, a local citizen photographed that log jam: stacks upon stacks of raw logs headed for Asia (see photo at www.umpqua-watersheds.org).

Government data tell a different story than our politicians and mill owners. In 2009 (the most recent year available) nearly 5 billion board feet of timber were cut in Oregon and Washington on public and private lands. Fourteen percent of those trees (697.3 million board feet) were directly exported without a saw ever touching them again here at home. Log exports to China alone have since increased almost 5-fold in 2010 and are continuing to increase in 2011.

The timber industry's representatives claim that our public forests are not supplying enough logs to their mills. Yet in 2010, more than 2 billion board feet of timber on public lands in the Northwest were bought but remain standing. Many other public timber sales were scrapped because no one bid on them.

How can there be a log shortage when such a high percentage of our raw logs go straight onto freighters, and so many timber sales on public lands remain uncut?

Supply and Demand

While announcing a recent Oregon mill shutdown, a company spokesman blamed "severe buying pressure from log exporters". During recent testimony in Salem, another corporate executive complained that high log prices due to Asian exports and low lumber demand were "killing him". A Roseburg CEO recently summed it up well when he blamed the industry's slump on "a poor housing market, cautious banks and Chinese competition for logs".

The picture that emerges from these complaints is that there is not a log supply problem -- there's a finished product demand problem. There are plenty of logs -- log sellers can simply get more for their loads at the docks in Coos Bay than at the mills in Riddle or Dillard, sending good jobs overseas in the bargain. But with a

weak domestic market depressing prices for finished lumber, local mills need cheap logs to undercut their global competition for very limited lumber sales.

But bailing out timber corporations by flooding the market with cheap public logs won't solve the problem. It will simply speed the liquidation of our natural heritage and force mills without access to those public logs to shut down.

Give and Take?

It is clear that economic forces originating in Asia, the Middle East and Wall Street are causing our mills to struggle -- not public land management policies. With house construction not expected to pick up anytime soon, and the unlikelihood of another government "safety net" bailout, it's clear that we're going to have to figure this problem out right here at home.

For many months, earnest citizens all over Douglas County have been meeting in official and unofficial "forestry collaboration groups" to try to come up with solutions to our forest management controversies. Unfortunately, the talk most often centers on supplying mills with more, cheap, high quality logs from public lands.

Mill owners often complain that the public forests aren't doing enough for them, but what is the timber industry doing for the forests?

At the same time that they are asking for more timber, most industrial timber land owners won't even share ecological data from their own lands in return. The vast majority of these corporations have little financial interest in protecting wildlife habitat or restoring other ecosystem functions. They focus solely on the so-called "bottom line" while leaving our public lands to carry the conservation load for providing habitat to our dwindling populations of fish and wildlife.

As a result, most corporate timber lands are heavily cut-over and have very little native forest left on them. They are most often intensively managed as 40-80 year old "tree farms" for maximum fiber production. These are the plantations that are filling the freighters in Coos Bay while nearby mills lobby for more of the public's trees.

We can do better than this.

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Our Mission

Dedicated to the protection and restoration of the ecosystems of the Umpqua Watershed and beyond.

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From the Executive Director.

Randy Rasmussen began in July as UW's executive director (ED). He was hand-picked by outgoing ED Cindy Haws, who in announcing the transition, said "In the past year I have had the pleasure to work with Randy in relation to Umpqua National Forest travel management planning process...He has demonstrated success in many facets of conservation leadership including coalition building, media outreach and communications, working with interdisciplinary science teams, grant writing and donor cultivation."



For the past four years, Randy served as the Pacific Northwest representative of American Hiking Society. He coordinated and unified the conservation community's response to off-road vehicle and "Travel Management" plans undertaken by each of Oregon's 11 national forests. In this role, Randy applied policy, grassroots organizing, science and economics in the protection of traditional "quiet" recreational uses and the enhancement of wildlands and important wildlife habitat.

Randy has been a field representative for two other national non-profits—The Wilderness Society and National Parks Conservation Association. Among his most exciting achievements, he lists his multi-year partnership with ranchers, scientists and local governments to secure congressional approval for the expansion of Petrified Forest National Park. The park expansion bill was signed by President Bush and was needed to protect the world's richest repository for Triassic Period fossils (including giant crocodile-like reptiles called phytosaurs) and important archaeological sites, including pueblo ruins and amazing galleries of rock art.

Randy has three children and enjoys hiking, floating and mountain biking throughout Oregon's diverse public lands. His wife is into horses and is growing a barefoot farrier (hoof-trimming) business.

Get Involved! Join a Committee

Wild On Wilderness Committee Meetings

When: Last Wednesday of Every Month, 7pm
Where: McMenamins Roseburg Station Pub

Restoration Committee Meetings

When: 3rd Tuesday of Every Month, 5:30pm
Where: McMenamins Roseburg Station Pub

Education Committee Meetings

When: 3rd Thursday of Every Month, 5:30pm
Where: Chi's Garden Restaurant, Roseburg

Conservation

Local Solutions Continued from page 1.

Local Solutions

It's time to rethink the industry-dominated economic model of the past and move toward community-centered solutions that can sustain healthy forests AND the economy that depends on them. These local solutions may include some of the following:

First, instead of asking for bailouts from the Government, we need to convince Americans of the need to invest in our nation's natural heritage.

Bringing some of our federal tax dollars back to the Umpqua to restore public lands would provide family-wage jobs to the highly skilled work force that we already have. Federally funded training programs that merge innovative forestry methods with local backwoods ingenuity would bring more education dollars to the area as we produce the skilled workforce of the future.

And given that public lands contain the vast majority of carbon-rich native forests in the Umpqua, federal legislation to enable local governments to trade carbon credits in an open marketplace could create strong economic incentives to conserve forests rather than to log them.

Second, we need to restructure our local economy so that we can add more value to our raw materials by making more finished goods here in Douglas County, thereby keeping more wages in our local community.

For example, establishing community log sorting yards would allow small specialty manufacturers to bid on only the types and species of logs they use, while the public gets more revenue for their logs. Providing tax advantages for milling logs within the county boundaries would give local small businesses the edge they need to compete in the world market. A business incubator for exploiting niche markets and developing innovative finished products would help to add local value to underutilized forest materials.

Only about 20% of the wood we ship to China from Oregon and Washington is in the form of finished lumber – the rest arrives as raw logs. We need to upgrade our mills to easily switch between Chinese, Japanese, Korean and other international specifications so that we can increase our exports of finished lumber.

Third, we need a consensus-driven Forest Partnership modeled after our highly successful watershed council, the Partnership for Umpqua Rivers, so that all stakeholders can have a voice in managing our local forests.

We have the unique luxury of living in a river basin that falls almost completely within the county boundaries. Having one diverse basin-level governing body coordinating groups of stakeholders from all of the major watersheds of the Umpqua would ensure that restoration and management dollars are spent fairly and wisely. This would also create incentives for our timber industry to bring some of their resources to the table where mutually beneficial agreements can be made to best manage complete landscapes. Such a partnership can also help us develop a sane and workable fire policy for both public and private lands.

Local problems need local solutions – it's time to roll up our sleeves, join our neighbors and work them out.

Ken Carloni, *President of the UW Board of Directors*

LNG

The LNG terminal and Western Connector Pipeline applications currently before the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) are big and complicated. There are many important issues, each complex in its own right; too many to write out for an article of reasonable length for this Newsletter. I have indentified 8 issues and will break them out in this and the next two issues of the Umpqua Watersheds newsletter. This issue will discuss Jobs vs. Jobs, the disaster an earthquake and tsunami will create and interesting secrets the Port of Coos Bay wants to keep and we want to expose. Future issues will cover the effects on Natural Gas prices in the USA, Royalties vs. eminent domain, Mitigation if any and other topics you can use to create havoc at candidate forums.

The several groups opposing these projects each have a point of attack, all of which have validity. With President Obama's focus on jobs in the near future, we'll likely be hearing the virtues of this project based on all of the people who could be put to work. It is important to communicate several key points about these "jobs" and development to elected officials and candidates for elected office. Congressman DeFazio in particular has growing interest in some of these questions and needs to be respectfully but frequently lobbied to adopt positions that allow him to keep talking to proponents yet moving closer to our views on these key points.

1. We need jobs, true but the LNG terminal and gas pipeline are short term jobs for people from out of the area. The creation of a handful of high tech jobs will at the expense of the local jobs there now in the fishing and tourism industry. The increased dredging and the creation of a turning basin for the tankers will have long term and lasting effects on the salinity of the bay and the estuary as a whole. Jobs people have enjoyed at the coast, fishing, crabbing and recreation will go away for the sake of people who live out of the area. These concerns are all brushed aside by the applicant as the fish and wildlife agencies continue to ask for better explanations. Far more local and stable jobs are to be found with energy retrofits and preparing for the mega-earthquake anticipated off the Oregon Coast. Any time you hear someone claiming this will bring xxx many jobs, challenge them to explain how they got to those numbers. Several years ago, the South Coast Development Corp (SCDC), and Coos Curry Douglas Economic Development Agency (CCD) claimed there were 2900 jobs to be created with the 12" gas pipeline put in to Coos Bay. There were a number of jobs as they moved through the area but otherwise few if any new jobs created in Coos County. Few of these whizz-bang job creator results in any actual employment, except for the people in the economic development field.

2. Oregonians are complacent about big earthquakes because the last quake and tsunami was several centuries ago in 1700. When earthquakes occur on a subduction zone they are big ones that will create a tsunami wave on the beach within an hour. There is no doubt that such a quake and tsunami will occur but many guesses as to when. It could be next month or 100 years from now. When the earth starts shaking we will know precisely when but we can begin planning for this event right now. Jobs in Oregon will be

Continued on page 7.

Restoration

Ever since we finished the aquatic habitat restoration project on our ranch in the Tiller area of the Umpqua National Forest, we have been amazed at the incredible changes we have seen. The streams' health seems to improve right before our eyes daily. It is inspiring and the healing seems to come into our every day lives as well.

Umpqua Watersheds wants to see that happen on a basin-wide scale. Healing the Umpqua valleys has long been our vision. Yet the work of restoring the land here in the Umpqua Basin seems daunting. All around us we see alarm signals telling us to act now. Are we ready for this?

The Northern Spotted Owl population decreases are well known as a symptom of the degradation of late seral habitat in the forest. The fact that the old forests are relatively distant from more populated areas makes the plight of those lands seem less critical. "Out of sight-out of mind" is an old adage that describes the situation. The occasional newspaper article decrying the environmentalists' use of the bird to halt logging and the ensuing rebuttal makes the plight of the creature more *virtual* than real.

Last summer, symptoms a little closer to home, did get the attention of many locals and agency people alike. On a stretch of the South Umpqua River between Canyonville and Myrtle Creek the highest concentration of blue-green algae bloom toxins ever recorded in the United States was posted. Many environmental factors contributed to the deadly river condition. The event shouted out loud and clear that **restoration needs to happen now.**

Clearing the Cultural Hurdles

The conflict with short-term human interests and the long-term undermining of our environmental health has created barriers for getting restoration done in Douglas County, Oregon. Long standing stereotypes in the community often block our efforts to find common ground. Even if pigeonholing is warranted, Umpqua Watersheds as an organization is convinced that there is work that can be mutually beneficial for the entire basin – work that can help heal the community and the land without threatening what remains of our critical life sustaining treasures. There are precedents in several areas of our basin that prove it can be done.

The Partnership for the Umpqua Rivers watershed council is a classic example of an organization that has brought a great deal of 'healing' to the riparian areas of Douglas County. Also, for a stretch of several years, the Umpqua Watersheds staff and Board members have been actively engaged in dialog with agencies and the private sector to address the dire biological conditions affecting our waters. The process has been slow and any gains are hard won, but again, 'healing' of the land and watersheds is our ultimate goal.

A Plantation Stand, a Forest Does Not Make

Sounding a bit like Yoda the Jedi, I introduce this paragraph with a principle of forest management that I'd like to talk about. Part of the problem continues to be our understanding of what constitutes a healthy forest landscape. For example, planting mono-culture conifer species after clear cutting is a very poor way to sustain a forest. It can be said that plantation stands on short harvest rotations are an ecological disaster. Green hill sides heavily populated with young

trees may have the appearance of health but in fact disrupt the flow of much-needed water during the hot summer months. Not only that, but these plantations, along with their road systems, exclude much of the biological diversity needed for a healthy natural system to function. For the most part they are as sterile as an overused polluted Iowa corn field. Excluded are the mushrooms, grasses, shrubs and deciduous trees that feed the soil and build up the food base for wildlife and plants alike. Those important additives are generally eliminated by herbicide sprays that only further degrade the system.

Nevertheless, the large tracts of plantation stands on timber land could help revitalization take place. The judicious removal of excessive wood based on the scientific principles of restoration ecology would go a long way to bring back the vitality of our forest. Tree stands that mimic the natural order of the forest will do a lot to beneficially influence the hydrology and biology around us. They would help to restore balance in the various life kingdoms of the forest. The rivers would flow clean and cool again once biological diversity was restored and an understanding of the mystery of intact hydrological processes were regained.

We Must Collectively Be a Part of the Healing

The job cannot be done by any single group of people. We believe that science is a solid base upon which to form a plan. For this reason Umpqua Watersheds has been in diligent pursuit of a scientific forum to craft a strategy with which to move forward. Having a well-trained well-paid work force from within the community is absolutely essential also. But we cannot do it alone. Because trust is woefully lacking within key organizations and their people, it is very difficult for everyone to agree on a common goal. In the mean time, the task at hand grows only larger.

The Common Good

Can the landscape be brought back to its former state of vibrancy and beauty? I do not believe so. We have intruded willy nilly, speedily and aggressively into the ancient natural order of the deep woods. We do have the capacity, however, to dream – our dreams grounded in the truth of *what could be*. You are invited to join us, in whatever way you can, to put your heart and shoulder into this work. It is for the good of all the things we love and care for, and ultimately for our mutual good as people of the beautiful Umpqua valleys.

Stanley Petrowski, *UW Vice President of the Board of Directors and Chair of the Restoration Committee*

Restoration Committee Meetings

When: 3rd Tuesday of Every Month, 5:30pm

Where: McMenamins Roseburg Station Pub

Education

Youth Campout 2011



Over a dozen youth attended this year's campout at beautiful Twin Lakes. Goopy smores, bright stars, and tall tales made their usual appearances around the camp fire as well. Dr Ken Carloni hosted a hike and shared his botanical expertise with all on Saturday morning.

I would like to personally thank long-time campout coordinators Ed and Mary Cooley for their years of service putting this quality experience together for local youth. Next year, the Education Committee will be taking over the reins. We hope to begin planning activities for Summer 2012 this winter. Please come to our meetings on will be held the third Thursday of every month at Chi's Garden Restaurant in Roseburg at 5:30 pm. E-mail me at tmcgregor.uw@gmail.com to learn more on how you could be involved in this and more.

Thomas McGregor, *UW Education Committee Chair*

Challenge Cost Share

A Challenge Cost Share Agreement between Umpqua Watersheds and the USDA Forest Service at Tiller Ranger District was negotiated this summer.

Aquatic invasive species are increasingly becoming of concern to the Forest Service. Once established, aquatic invasive species can have devastating ecological consequences and are expensive or impossible to remove from aquatic systems. The first step in managing for aquatic invasive species is identifying the species present, where they occur and how many are present.

To this end the Forest Service and Umpqua Watersheds are partnering to inventory ponds for non-native species on the Tiller Ranger District.

Cindy Haws seized upon this opportunity as an educational experience for students in Douglas County. She gathered students from Douglas High School and Umpqua Community College and embarked on a summer of conducting surveys for native and non-native mollusks, fish, crawfish, amphibians, plants and macroinvertebrates on six ponds located on the Tiller Ranger District.

Cindy is an incredible educator and we appreciate her dedication and commitment to this on-going effort.

Chris Rusch, *Secretary & Treasurer of the UW Board of Directors*

Umpqua Update

River Appreciation Day

River Appreciation Day, Umpqua Watersheds' and the State of Oregon's legal annual celebration of rivers and their values to all of life, was held again at our river's edge in Whistler's Bend Park in Glide on July 16th. The media gave us excellent support, including the "Cover of The Rolling Stone", (the News-Review's Currents Magazine).

The third Saturday in July is predictably dry and sunny in our clime but this year we saw clouds on the horizon and prepared for the worst. Sure enough, it rained Friday night into the morning. The 'monster' tarp crew got busy, suspending it across the sound stage. When it was high and taut, the rain stopped, gratefully staying away for the rest of the day and evening. While the weather certainly reduced the crowds, those who came enjoyed excellent music, testimonies of dedication to river protection, terrific food, compliments of Kathy Shayler and her volunteers and a variety of informative and activity-oriented booths.

The day was also a fund-raising success and many thanks to all the volunteers who helped, and the community members who supported the effort. See you next year!

Bob Allen, *UW Board Member*

Global Warming Event

The Douglas County Global Warming Coalition is pleased to announce that its fall forum will feature Dr. Richard Waring, emeritus professor of tree physiology at Oregon State University and co-author of a study of the impact of global warming on the lodgepole pine. Dr. Waring's topic will be "The Effect of Global Warming on the Forests of the Pacific Northwest." Dr. Waring is a member of the science advisory committee of Umpqua Watersheds and holds a B.S. and M.S. in Forestry from the University of Minnesota and has a PhD. in Botany from the University of California, Berkeley. The forum will be held on Monday, October 24th at 7:00 PM at the Douglas County Library. Admission is free.

Following Dr. Waring's presentation, Stacy Vynne of the Climate Leadership Initiative will talk about how communities can adapt to projected climate impacts with a special emphasis on forestry and agriculture. Ms. Vynne holds a B.A. in both Biology and Environmental Studies from Bowdoin College.

For more information, call 541 672-9819.

Outreach Update

What's it all about...Outreach?

The very definition of the word Outreach is kind of interesting (as I check the old Funk and Wagnalls). As a noun it is considered to be the provision of information or services to groups in society who might otherwise be neglected; as a verb it is to reach or extend farther than somebody or something else. Without setting the bar too high, UW's Outreach Committee plans to do both! In the short-term (2012), our goals are to:

1. Have 500 paid UW memberships.
2. Increase the business membership base by 100%.
3. Setting up a youth/student mentoring/scholarship program.

Working with the UW staff, board, and other committees, and also connecting with our membership as a resource to help reach these goals, we feel they are worth the effort! If you have family, friends, neighbors, or a business that you feel would benefit by being associated and involved in our organization, by all means please ask them to become members! If that might be a tad bit uncomfortable for you, ask them if it's okay that you pass on their information to us, and we'll be happy to approach them. Outreach is all about growing the many aspects of UW and being both an informative and positive influence in the community. Help us get there!

Reaching Out with Outreach

As the newly named chair of the Outreach Committee – Paddy Quinn slid over to take the helm of the Conservation Committee, I want to let all UW members know that they are in a unique position: Not only will they have the inside scoop to the environmental goings-on in our watershed, but they also have the inside track to be a volunteer at any of our fund raising events and to help with things the office! Talk about hitting the daily-double!

Seriously folks...we are always in a state of needing help. For example, this newsletter didn't write these stories all by its lonesome, and it wasn't folded, labeled, or stamped by itself either. For what it's worth, if you have a few hours to spend, and want to be with other conservationists, my opinion is that on any given day, this is the place to be! And even if you do come by the office and there is nothing for you to physically help do...well hang around and have a cup of tea at least!! We do have a growing library of books for folks to check out and read, along with maps to ponder and view. As previously stated, the UW offices may not be Cheers – the décor alone says that, but we do want to be a place where everyone is welcome and everyone knows your name. Come on down to Main Street!

Membership Drive Results

The results are in for the spring/summer membership renewal drive. You, our generous members, have made this one of our most successful fund drives ever. While memberships and renewals are always welcome at any time of the year, a heartening aspect to this effort was we did manage to re-connect with many folks that have

not been dues-paying members for a while. The board members that were able to do the follow-up calls all had some great stories to relate about talking with members that they had not heard from or seen in a while. The final numbers didn't quite add up to our ambitious goal of \$10,000, but the opportunity to talk to lost friends was priceless.

With the help of old and new members though, UW continues to move forward. With Randy Rasmussen as our new Executive Director, the streamlined organization of our Conservation, Education, Outreach, and Restoration Committees, and noted scientists lining up to be part of the Science Advisory Council, the future looks bright. We are entering a growth phase and it's going to be a very positive thing for all of us. There are many local organizations that have watched UW from the sidelines the past few years. Now they are approaching us to ask for our advice and to possibly work with them, as a collaborator with valuable insight. We, and by that I mean the board and all our members, have to stay positive about this and need to stay focused. Our watershed depends on it!

What Else Can You Do?

Have you considered or thought about what it takes to keep a grass-roots organization like UW in operation? As all of you should know by now, telephones, internet access, computers, the rent, electricity, even toilet paper, are not free. I remember how much of a shock that was to me when I moved out of my parental units' house! It hasn't changed since then! Go figure?! Anyway, when my wife and I were looking at contractors to do some work around our house, I specifically asked that all of them include \$125 in their quote, to join Umpqua Watersheds as a business member. Only 1 did so – our newest UW business member, Straight Line Fencing, in Oakland (SUPPORT THEM!!). The work they did, building our stairway to our lower yard, is a work of art!! But asking was just that simple, and something we all can do it.

The fact is that for people to donate their hard earned money, we have to make it affordable and tangible. Let me share this simple example; if 11 members can donate an extra \$10/month to UW, that \$110 covers the monthly internet and phone service bill. Doing a monthly donation like this is what the local PBS stations call "Sustainable Giving". Umpqua Watersheds is all about sustainability!

So my message to all of you is to be a good steward of your/my/our organization and consider making an affordable monthly donation to Umpqua Watersheds. If you can't, we understand, but at the very minimum, we do want you involved. You can call me on my cell 541/733-5191, leave a message for me at the UW office, 541/672-7065, or email me, buzzbike@msn.com, if you want to join the Outreach Committee, or if you have any ideas or suggestions as to how we can go about making UW yours! Thank you!!

Buzz Long, *UW Outreach Committee Chair*

LNG Continued from page 3.

found as research grants to model what could happen and designs for structural improvements to survive an earthquake and tsunami. We need to start building this infrastructure west of the cascades soon. The city of Eugene is rebuilding its city hall to withstand this coming earthquake right now. This sort of enlightened development will lead to real jobs designing projects along the coast for businesses as well as government, quakeproof school buildings, public buildings, refuge towers, utilities, reinforcing bridges and placing air services out of tsunami range. The tsunami that did so much damage in Japan recently was 30+ feet. The state predicts the tsunami to hit the Oregon coast minutes after a mega-quake could be as high as 100 feet although I have heard estimates on down. The truth is we don't know until it happens but the devastation could be very extensive even without an LNG terminal. Tsunami modeling is being done at the OSU Wave Lab, (one of the newest and finest wave simulation labs currently on planet earth) for cities up and down the coast but to my knowledge the only recent scientific examination for Coos Bay has been by the Jordan Cove Energy project, the applicant to FERC. Jordan Cove says their LNG terminal can withstand a tsunami of 35 feet and they wrangle with FERC, who postpones decisions. This is clearly inadequate for a public safety question of life and death to thousands of families, friends and neighbors. After the debacle of the Formosa Mine we simply cannot depend on agencies to do an adequate job. When you talk to people in office or who are running for office this blind spot for the mega-quake and tsunami needs emphasis. We need to have honest research into what could happen and the applicant must be obligated to build to standards that protect the lives of Oregonians and not the profits of a natural gas company.

Richard Chasm, *UW Board Member*

Black Wings

Visitors to the Umpqua Valleys are always a little disappointed when they find out that the big soaring birds they've been admiring aren't eagles after all but turkey vultures-- what we call buzzards here.

"Oh..." they say, "Buzzards huh?" and then they change the subject, embarrassed at having mistaken a common carrion eater for the Lord of the Skies.

You can't blame them really, it's got to be a let down when you find that the bold, sharp-eyed hunter you thought you saw turns out to be someone who dines on road kill possum. They suspect that somehow they've been taken in by a shabby impostor and even if you don't laugh outright they know they've made the kind of mistake that country people enjoy seeing their city friends blunder into.

Of course, we never tell them how right their first instincts were, that we often pause to watch them ourselves, because their spiral soaring fills us with delight. It's a local secret, something we don't often mention to each other-- let alone admit to outsiders-- but buzzards are beautiful.

Spring time comes to the valleys on black wings when the first buzzards return from their winter vacations in the deserts of Arizona and California. They come in from on high, tiny specks riding the wind, dropping lower and lower to sail along the rock faces and cliffs, wobbling like kites as they spread out over the valleys.

On sunny mornings after a rainy night they sit in snags and spread their wings, drying their feathers. They're sociable birds, patrolling with their friends and relatives or just roosting together five or six to a tree. They don't seem to mind sharing a meal. There's plenty to go around and besides, in their line of work I'd imagine one can't be too proud or fussy.

Though the buzzards migrate, they spend the better part of the year, nine months, right here, breeding and nesting and raising their young and just like we do. Like good country folk everywhere they don't ask for much, just a chance to live quietly and peaceably among their friends and neighbors, getting by on what the land has to offer.

In late fall, when the cold comes and the valleys cool, no longer sending up thermal drafts for them to ride, they gather together, fifty or sixty in a flock, waiting for the right wind to take them south. One morning you wake up and they're gone and the skies are suddenly emptier and more lonely.

Bob Heilman

Umpqua Watersheds Business Partners

Umpqua Watersheds sends a Big THANK YOU to all our Business Endorsers

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