

GROUSE HOLLOW NOTES

Fall 2023

OUT IN THE FOREST



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Halfway through the fall with the leaves changing, the end of the year is just around the corner. When December 31st arrives, FFI will be concluding fundraising efforts for the Belton Outreach Center (Belton-ORC), so the final push to complete the \$500,000 goal has begun. To date, only \$20,000 more is needed to fully fund this project as the finishing touches are being put on the detached carport.

Speaking about finishing touches, several other projects have been wrapped up or are nearing completion. The first project that is most noticeable is the new entrance from the Bus Parking Lot. With the parking area reshaped, the water is now directed towards a 'dry creek bed' ditch (that flows runoff from heavy rains). A wooden arched bridge was installed to provide school groups or other large private groups access down to the Poppino Pavilion (with new rock retaining wall) and general forest access for the public, too. With a cedar log gate-way and welcome sign left to install, this addition helps connect the groups that use the Bus Parking near the Belton-ORC & Restrooms to the forest. This also has the added benefit of being a more gently sloped parking area for unloading compared to the Main Parking Lot too. Next on the list is the Molalla Log House. The restoration of the original (circ. 1795) structure needs a few small details, as the area around the structure just received a cover of wood chips to help reduce soil exposure and mitigate impacts to the forest floor from the construction activities. Down by the Wetland Ponds, this project has been a labor of love over many years and we are looking forward to an opening ceremony soon. Rounding out the new projects are the addition of a cover over the Reforestation Area's interpretive signage (and seating), a new kiosk in the Native Plant Garden (which is soon to be stocked with information), and landscape/access improvements around the Restroom and Forest Yurt.



While I am sure I missed something as I type this... it's time to get onto forest management. Over the summer we completed the mastication of the ice damage rehabilitation work using a different technique. Rather than grinding all material like we did on a portion of the Red Alder Stand, we did a lop and scatter of the larger material and only ground the smaller diameter material and shrubs. This work can be seen in the Red Alder Stand, along the Post Road, and a couple of valley pine stands by the Ponds. In addition, we have been watching the top die off and in some cases, mortality of many western red cedar on the property. As a result, a team of volunteers are assessing the health of the cedar and marking trees for removal. By the end of this year, many of the dead and dying trees along the lower portion of the properties' trail system (adjacent to the riparian buffers) will become lumber rather than standing hazards. While there are several theories about the cedars' decline, more information is needed. So keep an eye out for declining cedars, take some notes on the diebacks progression, and become a volunteer citizen scientist.

On the topic of volunteers, every Monday has become a day for folks to gather at Hopkins to help with various projects. Our "Mondays with the Mikes" Day have been joined by our Facilities Team to create a larger buzz around the forest every week. EVERYONE IS INVITED TO JOIN! The Mikes often work in the woods; the Facilities Team focuses on construction and building projects, maintenance, and repairs. Come join the fun—and learn by doing.



Peter Matzka
Peter Matzka
OSU Extension Forestry Educator/Hopkins Demonstration Forest



Upcoming Events

(Fall & Winter 2023)

Mondays with the Mike's & Facilities & Maintenance Crew Weekly - call to confirm

~9:00am-3:00pm

Forest Management Focused

~9:00am-1:00pm

Facilities @ Maintenance Crew

Great Exercise, @ Camaraderie

All are welcome for all or part of the day— Even Non-Mikes!

Every 1st and 2nd Saturday of the month, Lookout Tower Open*

9:00am-1:00pm

*Depending on volunteer availability

December 9th Community Forest Day (CFD)

8:30am-2:30pm

Bough Orchard Maintenance @ Wreath Making w/ Holiday Brunch

January 13th

Community Engagement & Education Day (CEED)

8:30am-2:30pm

Theme: Reforestation

February 10th CEED

8:30am-2:30pm

Theme: Lumber Milling

March 9th CEED

8:30am-2:30pm

Theme: Invasive Species

For More information:

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EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

As usual, youth education programs slowed down in the summer and the focus shifted to public, teacher, and landowner education. The Lookout Tower was open nearly every Saturday from 9am-1pm to the public. Tracking the number of visitors climbing the tower or hiking in the forest on those Saturdays was always impressive. The popularity of Hopkins continues to grow and our visitors (even as numbers increase) continue to be respectful and appreciate everything Hopkins and OSU Extension are doing with outreach and education. We have heard many positive comments about the increase in interpretive signage and the quality of access and facilities. Teacher in the Woods met at Hopkins for a week, and we are looking to have another week over the winter to focus on bigleaf maple sugaring. Finally, but really in the fall, OSU hosted its 2nd Annual Tree School Field Day which was another successful event that offered 14 learning and demonstration stations attracting 130 participants.



Looking at the fall youth and adult education activities scheduled through the end of the year, school group numbers were up and on track to set a record for the fall season. This increase is due to returning schools getting back to scheduling off-site field trips, new groups discovering the benefits of outdoor learning through Covid, an increase in the high school natural resource programs, and preschool/home-schooled groups (which saw the largest increase). Currently, there are several large, home-schooled networks and preschools that visit Hopkins at least once a month and a couple that visit multiple times a month. After identifying these groups (coming on their own), we begin to coordinate facility use and ways OSU and Hopkins can engage and work with them to assist with their objectives and educational activities.

Lastly, BSA Scouting Troop 425 (a boys' troop that FFI Charters) is excited to be completing its first year at Hopkins and looks forward to the addition of an officially Chartered girls' Troop. These two Troops will continue to meet weekly at Hopkins, have goals to increase their volunteer time at Hopkins, and have planned overnight weekends down at the Cedar Shelter, Schink Demonstration Forest, and the Peede Woodlands. Their Troop logo is pretty cool too!



COMMUNITY FOREST DAY TO MODIFY FOCUS IN 2024

Community Forest Day has been a staple every second Saturday of the month, and we are looking to modify the format as a pilot in 2024. Currently, volunteers come from 8:30am-2:30pm to learn by doing as they give back to the forest they enjoy and gain skills to take back to their property or gain an appreciation about the work of a forester. Projects focus on forest management, educational enhancements, access improvements, and facilities construction and maintenance. Going forward into 2024 we will still be doing OSU Extension workshops for woodland owners and tackling some large forest management projects but, the focus will shift to community engagement and education that is targeted at public outreach, service-based education, and youth/family appropriate activities and tours provided by OSU Extension and FFI Board Members and volunteers. The smaller and more technical/skilled projects will be deferred to the Monday work party with the (Forest Managing) Mondays with the Mikes and Facilities Crew. While we will not be offering lunch to all attendees, those doing service-based work will still be provided with lite snacks and beverages to keep them fueled and going for the day.



LEARN BY DOING—IT'S THE HOPKINS WAY WE MANAGE OUR FOREST!

www.demonstrationforest.org