



Tapteal Talk

A Picture is Worth ... Discovering and Learning Something New!

Karen Sowers

As I walked in Amon one sunny day in December I stopped to take a photo of a white crowned sparrow in a cottonwood tree, then continued on my way down the trail not thinking anything more of it.

However, when I uploaded the photos to my computer I discovered that the sparrow actually had bands on its legs!



(cont...)

President's Message

A New Year – Mission Possible!

Karen Sowers, President

As I begin my first year leading Tapteal Greenway, I am humbled thinking about just how many people have had a role in building our organization from the ground up during the past 20 years.

We moved to the Tri-Cities eight years ago, and I recall my first 'sighting' of Tapteal Greenway not long after we arrived. I was in Columbia Park as a volunteer with my son's fifth grade class for Salmon Summit and one of the stops was at a station where a couple of people were making beaded bracelets with the students to represent the salmon life cycle. Although I did not know them at the time, I later learned that the two volunteer leaders of that station were Pam and Scott Woodward. Now, we are honored to establish a scholarship in their name to carry on the legacy of conservation and education to deserving college-bound students.

A few years later as I was walking in 'the desert' with our kids one warm summer day, a friendly woman asked if we would be willing to help water some native plants a couple mornings a week to aid in their survival. Many of you know who I'm talking about – Kathy Dechter. Little did I know that simple request from Kathy to help in Amon would lead to the opportunity not only to be a board member, but now to begin 2016 as your new president.

A Picture is Worth (cont.)

The sparrow was very near where Ed Rykiel, Tapteal member and volunteer, had a bird banding station at the Wildlands Walk last May.

I emailed the photo to Ed, and he confirmed that the sparrow was part of a project he's worked on for a number of years. Here's what Ed shared: "With support of the Lower Columbia Basin Audubon Society, I have been conducting occasional bird banding in several Richland parks and preserves. All species captured are banded on their legs with numbered metal bands issued by the Bird Banding Laboratory of the US Geological Survey.

Two species of winter residents, White-crowned Sparrow (WCSP) and Dark-eyed Junco, and two year-round species, Song Sparrow and House Finch, are also color-banded. The colors are specific to the park where they were banded. The immature WCSP in this picture is wearing a pink band on its right leg and a metal band on its left leg. The pink band shows that the bird was captured and banded in the Amon Creek Preserve, most likely on September 19, 2015. A total of 146 birds of 14 songbird species have been banded in the Preserve since 2012. The project will be continuing in 2016." Thanks, Ed!

While this is certain to be a year of transition, I am confident our Board of Directors will continue the mission of Tapteal Greenway with the strong foundation built by past and present board members.

2016 Board of Directors

Dave Berkowitz

Jenna Bracken - *secretary*

Adam Fyall

Dave Harvey

Stan Kuick - *treasurer*

Alicia Lawing - *CBC liaison*

Mike Lilga

Dirk Peterson - *vice president*

Karen Sowers - *president*

WSU-TC Environmental Club officers - *WSU liaisons*

I would also like to acknowledge Theresa Puccio, who started last year as our newsletter editor and is doing a fabulous job!

At a 2016 planning meeting a couple weeks ago, we made a unanimous decision that our primary goal for the year is '**Trail Excellence.**' What does that mean? We believe the Tapteal Trail, the original cornerstone of Tapteal Greenway, should be a high quality, user-friendly destination from start to finish. This will mean a focus on trail improvements, trail maintenance, increased signage, and education about and along the trail. We have already started the process of identifying sections of the trail that need attention, and *we will need you*, our members and volunteers, to help us achieve our goal. Please watch for emails and Facebook updates for volunteer opportunities beginning very soon.

Finally, I would like to thank Scott Woodward for his steadfast leadership of Tapteal Greenway for 12 years. I think it's safe to say that all of us have been touched in some way by his knowledge, energy and passion for Tapteal Greenway. Scott, thank you, and rest assured we will all do our best to carry the torch of conservation, education and recreation on down the trail!

Woodward Conservation Scholarship

Adam Fyall

At the Annual Celebration in October, the Board announced the creation of the "Pamela & Scott Woodward Conservation Scholarship", a new program years in the making that will help us to further our education mission.

This will be an annual scholarship – perhaps several scholarships in the near future – designed to assist college students in pursuit of degrees or careers in conservation, recreation, or environmental fields. At this time we are still putting meat on the bones, but there are some major points

Scouts Join Forces to Rediscover Trails in Amon

Boy Scout Troop 126 and Cub Scout Pack 126 arrived in Amon Creek Natural Preserve on October 10 ready to work on clearing trails that were choked with weeds and impassable in places.

Before trail work began, Karen Sowers spent some time teaching the scouts and their parents about several of the wildlife species common to Amon and the Lower Yakima River.

The Boy Scouts pulled weeds from the parking area to the kiosk on the south end of the Preserve, while the Cub Scouts and their parents filled bag after bag of weeds on another trail along the large south pond.

Thanks to all the scouts, families, and board members Adam Fyall, Dave Harvey and Dirk Petersen for a great morning of education and conservation!



that we can highlight:

- We will begin with the award of a single \$1,000 scholarship for the 2016/17 academic year. In the future, if the program grows, we may be able to increase the amount of the award and/or increase the number of awards.
- We will develop the program as an endowed fund, whereby the minimum scholarship awards can be wholly funded by the investment interest without eating into the principle. The general rule, under averaged economic conditions, is that you need a minimum principle of \$25,000 in order to spin-off \$1,000 annually. Our long-term goals are much higher than that.
- We will likely contract with a third-party to manage the fund and administer the program, but the Greenway will retain control over the vision and direction of the program, and play the primary role in determining award recipients.
- Eligible recipients must come from Benton or Franklin counties, and must attend an institution of higher learning in the state of Washington. This can include community colleges, vocational schools, and both undergraduate and graduate students at colleges and universities.

Pam and Scott have been instrumental in helping to set the direction for the scholarship program, and they will reside on the selection committee which will be assembled in-full in the coming weeks. We look forward to announcing our first Woodward Scholar later this spring. If you would like to make a donation to the fund, have questions, or would like to assist with the development of the scholarship program in any other way, please contact Dirk or Adam. More information to follow in future newsletters and on the website.

Tapteal Water Trail

Adam Fyall

This past fall, I was asked by a colleague from graduate school who happens now to be the executive director of the Washington Water Trails Association if I would be interested and willing to serve on that organization's board of directors. After spending most of the last decade in recession and a bit rudderless, WWTA has been re-energized and is in rebuilding mode.

I said yes because I am interested in the organization and the advocacy of paddle sports, but it was also self-serving. I am hoping that we can use WWTA to promote the Tapteal Water Trail, and there are at least two immediate opportunities to do so.

The first is to get recognition in the WWTA network, meaning appearing on their website and in their other promotional materials. Recently, WWTA only had five water trails in the state on their roster, yet there are about double that number formally in existence, including our own. I see a genuine interest from the board in reaching beyond the immediate Puget Sound area into other parts of the state, and we may have as many as four water trails east of the Cascades recognized and promoted this year.

The second area of interest is in getting WWTA involved in a specific event here on the Tapteal Water Trail. WWTA organizes 3-5 events per year that they call "rendezvous" where they co-organize

and promote a one- or two-day paddle event with ancillary activities along one of the water trails. We have tried in the past two years to do something like this on our own, but have not been able to generate a critical mass of interest. I think we have a good itinerary for a two-day float, beginning at Benton City, overnighing at Horn Rapids Park, then finishing the next day at Tapteal Bend, Chamna, or Bateman Island.

I am currently working with the director and the chairman on the possibility of either a June or September rendezvous here on the Tapteal. Details to come, contact Adam if you are interested or have questions.

Black Friday Hikes

Dirk Peterson

In support of REI's first-ever #OptOutside campaign we lead two hikes in Chamna Natural Preserve on Black Friday. Two dozen hikers, ranging in age from nine to seventy-nine, enjoyed a beautiful sunny day along the lower Yakima River. One group did a three mile loop through the Preserve and the other group hiked six miles along the Tapteal Trail from Chamna through W.E. Johnson Park and back.



The sunshine and lack of wind made for great hiking conditions.



The second group on their way back from WE Johnson Park.

City of Richland Park Partnership Program

Dirk Peterson

The City of Richland annually designates up to \$20,000 from the Park Reserve Fund to provide matching fund grants to community groups toward making capital improvements to City parks, trails, open space and recreational facilities. Applicants are required to cover at least half of the cost of the project. The applicant match may consist of cash and/or donated labor or materials.



The Problem



We applied for and received a grant to install vehicle barriers to prevent unauthorized vehicle access onto the trail system in W.E. Johnson Park. Our application was prompted by the illegal dumping of yard waste that has occurred in the park the past two years. Monarch Machine fabricated and installed two gates to block access to two dirt roads, one of which is a section of the Tapteal Trail. To complete the project the City will add boulders to prevent vehicles from skirting around the gates.

The Solution

What Is Trail North?

Dirk Peterson

Trail North is an eight mile long section of the Tapteal Trail that starts at the end of Kingston Road and ends at Wanawish Dam. We first started working on Trail North two and a half years ago. From the end of Kingston Road there is a short section of new trail following an easement which connects to an existing trail along the old Richland Irrigation District canal behind the Horn Rapids housing development. We held two work parties this fall to remove tumbleweeds and tackweed from the new trail section. One set of volunteers included residents from the Horn Rapids development while REI

employees and members of the Southridge High School Honors Society Club volunteered for the second work day. Over thirty pounds of tackweed were removed from the trail. Weed control and trail maintenance is an ongoing need on Trail North and other Tapteal Greenway trails – watch for more volunteer opportunities starting in the spring!



The September work crew.



Yes, there is a trail under there.



The October work crew.

Celebrating 20 Years



The 20th anniversary of Taptal Greenway was celebrated in style October 10 at Kiona Winery with special displays, a silent auction, awards and announcements. A highlight of the displays was a 12-foot long 'Banner of Memories' filled with photos and all kinds of stories from past and present board members, members and volunteers. An original concept map from 1995 was on display, as well as most of the new educational collection of skins, pelts and skulls. Kami Lowry and Deb Loehding once again did a fantastic job with their silent auction team, and a number of volunteers stepped up to help with set up, greeting, kitchen staffing, and more. Scott Woodward was honored as the 2015 Tri-Cities Conservationist of the Year, and the board of directors also announced the creation of an endowed scholarship in the name of Scott & Pamela Woodward for a high school senior planning to major in a conservation related field of study (see related article). Many thanks to all the volunteers who helped in so many ways to plan and carry out the event!





taptealgreenway@gmail.com
509-396-5936
www.tapteal.org