

# MIDCOAST WATERSHEDS COUNCIL

2023 ANNUAL REPORT



# Letter from the Chair

Congratulations to the staff and board of MCWC for another successful year! I'm pleased to have served as chair with the success, significant growth and positive changes that the organization has experienced over the last year. The smooth transition from Paul Engelmeyer, who served diligently for over 25 years, reflects the strong teamwork between the staff and MCWC board.

This wasn't the only transition of 2023, MCWC is growing! MCWC created a new Estuary Program manager in March 2023, hiring Cheryl Horton, who brings extensive experience and an inspiring positivity to the staff. Within the same week, we filled our Habitat Restoration Specialist role with Carrie Wyler, who brings years of plant propagation and restoration credentials from work at Crater Lake and Zion National Park. At the very end of 2023 we brought on Natalie Dulansky, taking over for Tom McCambridge, as our new Communications and Outreach Specialist. Evan Hayduk's transition to the Executive Director role adds further depth to the leadership team, overseeing the growing staff and ensuring the organization's continued success.

But wait, there's more! We also had three interns for the summer of 2023. Adam, Logan and Una quickly and seamlessly incorporated themselves into helping the team. They made incredible contributions to our work during their internships. It was an inspiration to work with these interns, and the jolt of energy and enthusiasm they had for this work provides me with great hope in our uncertain future.

As our board transitions and our staff grows, it's important to remember and highlight all the great partnerships that MCWC has with our local, state, tribal and federal partners. We are never alone out there, and it takes commitment and dedication from so many people to accomplish our shared goals for watershed health and fish conservation. That includes you! Thanks to all of you for your volunteer time, your donations, and your personal commitment to the watersheds of the Central Coast. We look forward to another successful year in 2024!

- Mike Broili



Drift Creek Estuary | Cheryl Horton



Drift Creek Estuary | Cheryl Horton

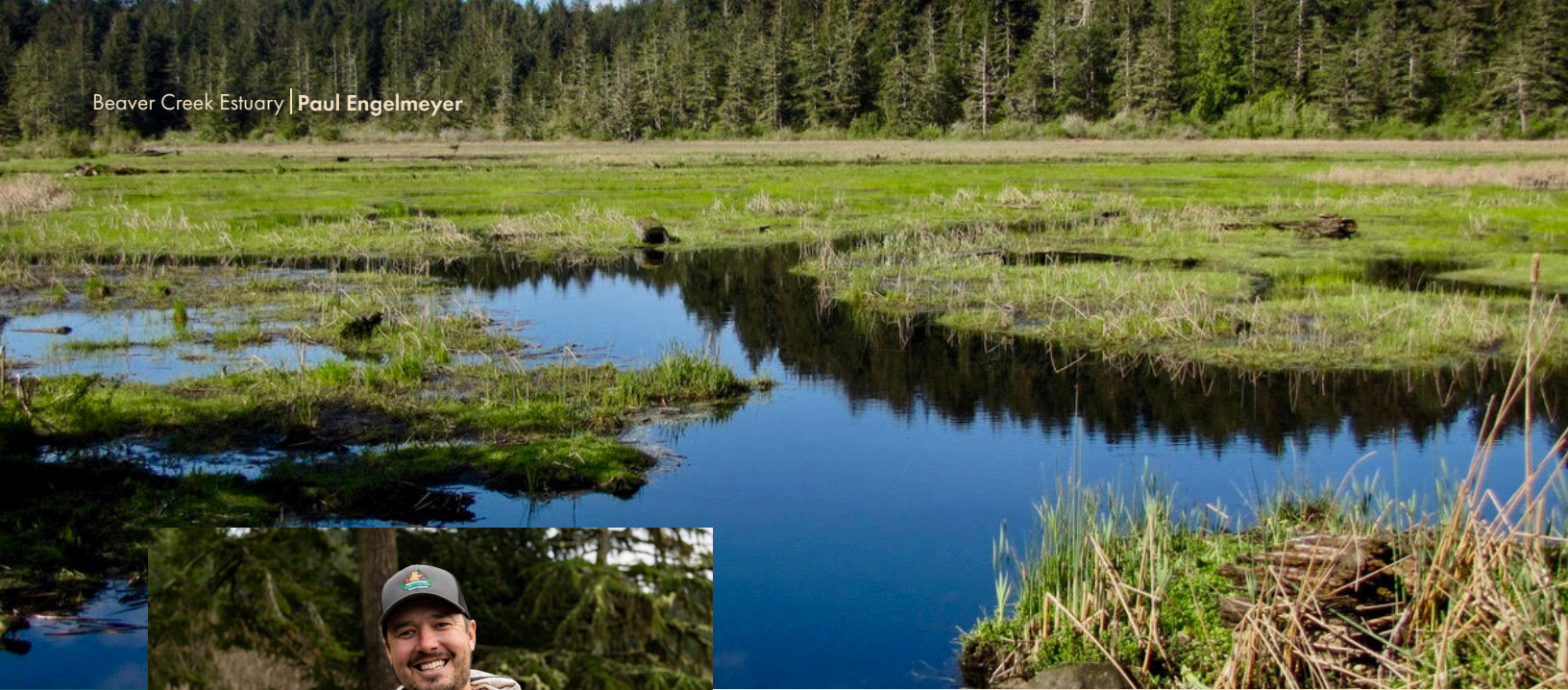


Willow preparation at Beaver Creek Nursery | Natalie Dulansky



## Quiet Water Neighborhood- Yachats Basin

MCWC worked with the Quiet Water Neighborhood to plant over 130 shrubs and trees, as well as remove weeds in riparian areas along the Yachats River.



# Letter from the Executive Director

Oh how time flies, another year gone by! Mike, our new Chair, highlighted the transitions at MCWC from the past year. Even with the on-boarding of new staff, MCWC was still able to plant and maintain many thousands of trees and shrubs up and down the coast. We worked in strategic locations to restore streamside and upland habitat for shade, fish and wildlife habitat, and to encourage beaver to help store more water for our now longer drier summers and fall.

After 4 years of planning and design, the MCWC and our partners at the Siletz Bay National Wildlife Refuge completed Phase I of the Lower Drift Creek Tidal Restoration project. This project on two tracts of the Refuge south of Lincoln City, removed dikes, dug new tidal channels, and restored full tidal connectivity to over 40 acres. This allows the marshes to recover their natural patterns, building in elevation to better withstand higher storm surges and sea level rise. Threatened coho salmon, and many other fish species rely on these habitats for their survival during portions of their life.

MCWC also worked with partners to restore

fish passage to watersheds in the upper Alsea. We helped complete the Cougar Creek Aquatic Organism Passage project (led by Lincoln County Public Works) and the Beaty Creek (Alsea) Fish Passage project, led by Weyerhaeuser and ODFW.

Two projects involved the placement of logs in streams to create vital salmon habitat by slowing water, collecting spawning gravel, creating pools and riffles, and providing food and cover. One of the projects in partnership with ODFW, involved placing over 200 logs in 4.5 miles of Sam's Creek, a tributary to the Siletz River. We also assisted in a log placement project led by the Confederated Tribes of the Siletz Indians on Little Rock Creek, near Logsdan. In 2023, we also received funding for 4 Technical Assistance projects, one restoration project, one monitoring project, and one stakeholder engagement project. These projects are the first funded by the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board under The Focused Investment Partnership (FIP) that concentrates on restoration and conservation of marshes and swamps in the Yaquina and Alsea estuaries. The FIP work is in great hands, led by our new Estuary Program Manager Cheryl Horton.

We are looking forward to another successful year in 2024, the team we have on board has me dreaming bigger than ever about what we can accomplish with our partners!

- Evan Hayduk



NF Alsea River at the Honeygrove Oxbow | Nathan Sschutte, NS Consulting



Tidal Wetland Yaquina Estuary | Cheryl Horton

## Drift Creek Estuary-Siletz Basin

In 2023, 40 acres of tidal wetlands were restored through the removal of dikes, restructuring and connecting of tidal channels, creating small mounds and planting native species, placement of large woody debris (LWD), and controlling invasive species. An additional 40 acres will be restored in 2024.

# Thank you Volunteers!

We want to express our deepest appreciation to our volunteers for the incredible dedication over the last year, contributing over 600 volunteer hours to native plant restoration. Their remarkable contributions, spanning a diverse range of activities, exemplify the positive impact that can be achieved through collaborative community action. Thank you for investing your time and energy in the vital cause of preserving our ecosystems and ensuring a sustainable future for salmon populations. We also honor the equivalent number of volunteer hours our Board members contribute each year by serving on the Admin committee and our Council.



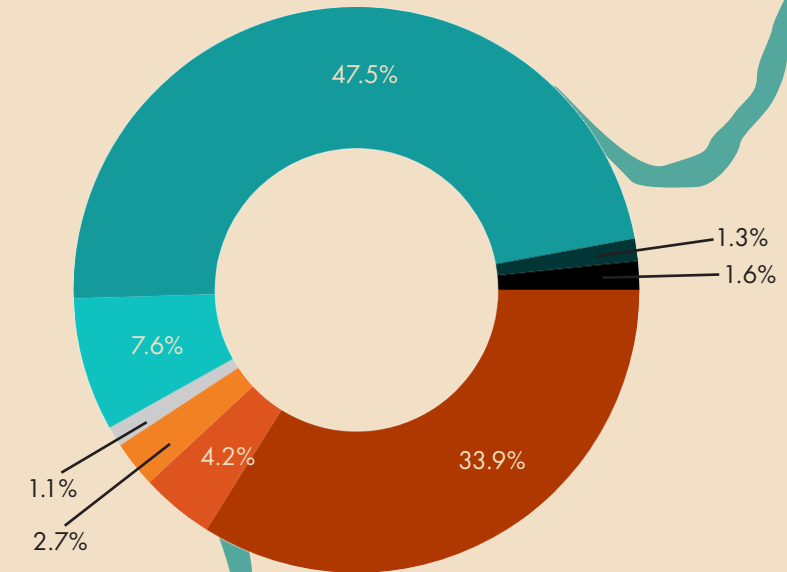
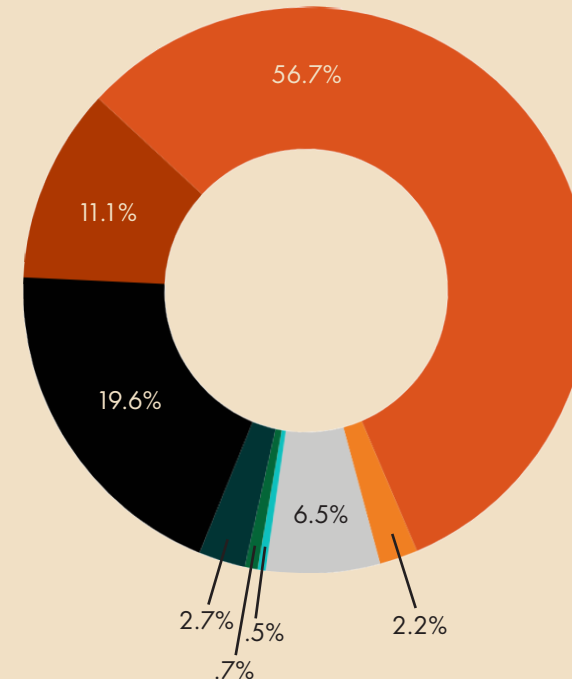
## Volunteer of the Year: Kate

Kate is not only an exceptional volunteer but an incredible individual. She dedicates herself to every volunteer day, demonstrating remarkable commitment while spending extra time working at the native plant nursery. Kate willingly takes on any task with a smile and digs right in. Everyone loves her because she genuinely cares about her community and Beaver Creek. In addition to her invaluable contributions, Kate has a talent for baking a batch of brownies that is truly incredible. Thank you Kate!

# By the Numbers

Total Revenues: \$1,350,373

Total Expenditures: \$1,151,980



- Federal Grant Receipts
- State Grant Receipts
- Other Grant Receipts
- Administrative Receipts
- Donations Receipts
- Interest Income
- Other Receipts
- Paid Time Off Reserves
- Mergers

- Personal Services
- Material and Supplies
- Equipment
- Office/Storage Rent
- Administration Expenses
- Contract Services
- Internet, Telephone, Utilities
- Travel and Conferences
- Operating Expenses

Balance as of Jan 1st 2023  
\$100,981

Balance as of Dec 31st 2023  
\$299,374

**Cougar Creek- Alsea Basin**  
During the summer of 2023 a culvert was removed to improve aquatic organism passage. A replacement concrete box culvert was installed by contractors working for Lincoln County in the summer of 2023.

**1200**  
VOLUNTEER  
HOURS

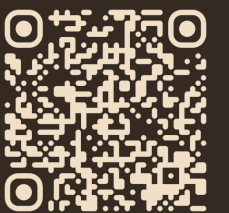
**6**  
UNDERSIZED, BARRIER  
CULVERTS REMOVED

**7.2**  
STREAM MI  
OF IMPROVED ACCESS  
TO COHO HABITAT

**5** NEW  
LANDOWNERS  
ENGAGED

**42** ACRES OF HISTORIC ESTUARY  
RECONNECTED TO  
FULL TIDAL INFLUENCE

## 2023 Community Meetings

|                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                                        |                                                                               |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>JAN</b><br><br>Who are the Whales?<br>w/ Lisa Hildebrand                                     | <b>FEB</b><br><br>Climate Change and Oregon's Rocky Shores<br>w/ Bruce Menge                                                                                                                                   | <b>MARCH</b><br><br>Restoration of Salmon River Estuary<br>w/ Kami Ellingston          | <b>APRIL</b><br><br>Big Trees & Endangered Species<br>w/ Paul Engelmeyer      |
| <b>MAY</b><br><br>Native Oysters of Yaquina Bay<br>w/ George Waldbusser                         | <b>JUNE</b><br><br>Siletz Bay NWR<br>w/ Kate laquinto                                                                                                                                                          | <b>AUG</b><br><br>Intern Summer Celebration<br>w/ Logan Kary, Una Burke & Adam Wampler | <b>NOV</b><br><br>Pollinators<br>w/ Tyler Clouse, Stormi Dykes & Celeste Lebo |
| <b>SEPT</b><br><br>Conservation in Yaquina Bay<br>w/ Cheryl Horton, Meghan Hoff & Michael Moses | <br><br><a href="https://www.youtube.com/@midcoastwatershedscouncil">https://www.youtube.com/@midcoastwatershedscouncil</a> | <b>DEC</b><br><br>Blue Carbon<br>w/ Liz Ruther                                         |                                                                               |

# Honoring the Salmon Drift Creek Watershed Council

Last year the MidCoast Watersheds Council (MCWC) and the Salmon Drift Creek Watersheds Council (SDCWC) announced that we would be merging operations, with MCWC assuming responsibility for work in those watersheds. That merger was completed in 2023, with SDCWC transferring their remaining assets to MCWC.

With most of SDCWC's prioritized work completed, the time was right to merge. Since 2016, SDCWC had been operating without a paid staff, and relying on the work of Board President Paul Katen for most of the group's work on outreach, project design, development and implementation. Meanwhile other Board members helped with fundraising, communications, events and other work and Tanya Graham provided contracted fiscal services. SDCWC Board members have included Paul Katen, Debbie Pickering, Dave Martin, Laura Doyle, Joanne Daschell, Peter McSwain, Jim Nicholas, Jim Stafford, Sheryl Smith, Fran Recht, David Hawker, and Stan van de Wetering.

MCWC has now taken over the on-going work for sediment reduction in Schooner Creek, the Fraser Creek estuary monitoring work, and the annual Salmon River clean-up. The MCWC also is working on a large tidal wetland restoration project on Lower Drift Creek in collaboration with the USFWS refuge program, scoping fish passage projects in drainages of the Salmon River

that had been identified by SDCWC, and working on tree planting and erosion control in the Otis fire area. It's hard to properly acknowledge the work accomplished by the SDCWC over their 17 years of work. Under the mentorship of Paul Katen, staff Katie McKenzie, Corrina Chase, Catherine Pruett, and Josh Murphy, were able to build the organization, analyze and prioritize work, form partnerships with federal, state and local agencies and receive grant funding to implement restoration projects. Projects accomplished included the removal of a dam blocking coho passage on Rock Creek, Devil's Lake; a culvert survey on the Salmon River to identify and then remedy fish passage barriers; restoration planting/fencing along Crowley Creek; large wood placement for fish habitat on Bear Creek; replacing culverts to allow tidal flow and a walking path at Alder Island on the USFWS refuge; helping USFS re-establish the Cascade Head Biosphere reserve, and working with the City of Lincoln City to identify and fund sediment reduction problems in Schooner Creek, the City's water source. One of their largest projects was the planning and restoration of the former Pixieland amusement park site and the Tamara Quays sites within the Salmon River estuary, near Highway 101, working in coordination with the USFS. Another part time staff member, Paul Robertson, worked with Katen to set up a water quality monitoring program and lab that for the first time collected water quality, bacteria, flow, and temperature data on Drift Creek, Siletz, Rock Creek, and on the Salmon River that was submitted to the Oregon DEQ. This information allowed the SDCWC to identify and remedy problems for fish. Graham Klagg, another employee of the group, brought in funding from the state to set up an education program called REEF (Restoring Ecosystems, Educating Future Conservation Leaders) that, among other things, worked with Taft High School students to design educational charrettes and restoration plans for the silver spot butterfly on Cascade Head. The MidCoast Watersheds Council is proud to continue on with this outstanding work and thanks the SDCWC staff and Board members for all their successful efforts over the years.

- Fran Recht



Locate the © on each page to learn more about a featured project in the five main basins along the MidCoast.



**Echo Mountain Fire-Salmon Basin**  
 Work was done in 2023 to continue riparian and upland plantings to stabilize soils, manage invasive vegetation, and provide long-term protection for water systems.

# Our 2023 Interns



MCWC staff & interns at restoration site | Adam Wampler

I spent this past summer interning with the wonderful folks at the MidCoast Watersheds Council. Under their guidance, I learned how to use ArcGIS, Field Maps, GPS software, temperature monitors, and so much more in the office. I also got a wealth of field experiences with invasive species management, fish salvage, Environmental DNA (eDNA) collection, and interacting with the resilient and dedicated community up and down Oregon's coast.

I am especially proud of the work we did on the council wide eDNA survey and the Alsea temperature monitoring project. The eDNA survey gave a wealth of information on current species locations that can be used to inform future restoration efforts. Thanks to the support of the council I was able to create visualizations of the data that will soon be available to the public. Through the Alsea temperature monitoring project I contributed to an ongoing data collection effort and created new systems to track the change over time. I presented the 2021 and 2022 season data at the MCWC August community meeting and at the American Water Resources Associations annual conference.

Thank you to the MidCoast Watersheds Council and the Kenan Institute of Engineering, Technology, and Science for supporting my education and providing me with an unmatched environment for learning and growth.

- Adam Wampler

Each year we host undergraduate and high school interns who have specific interests in watershed restoration. Last summer we had the pleasure of bringing Adam Wampler, Logan Kary, and Una Burke onto our team to assist with water temperature sampling, GIS mapping, and communications efforts. With the guidance of Tom McCambridge, this group exceeded expectations and learned many on the ground skills.



Logan Kary, Adam Wampler, and Una Burke | Adam Wampler

When I first applied for the Marine Studies Initiative internship with MidCoast Watersheds Council I had an idea of what restoration was. I was familiar with regenerative practices such as planting native species and invasive species control but through my internship I learned that it was so much more. One experience that made this apparent was my first fish salvage on the Cougar Creek east of Yachats and witnessing the degraded culvert being lifted out of the stream. As we pulled up to the site, I realized how many different groups had coalesced to make this project happen: people operating the heavy equipment, ODFW personnel conducting fish counts, MidCoast staff, and more.

I was also able to participate in other projects including fish salvage in the Lower Drift Estuary, eDNA collection and temperature logger deployment throughout the Alsea Basin. I additionally ran my own project involving restoration site photography and landowner interviews throughout the Beaver Creek watershed.

At the start of the summer, I was unsure of where this experience was going to take me. I am now lucky enough to consider the Oregon Central Coast a second home after developing a close relationship with the people, species, and environment that comprise it.

- Logan Kary

## Staff



**Evan Hayduk**  
Executive Director



**Carrie Wylar**  
Habitat Restoration Specialist



**Cheryl Horton**  
Estuary Program Manager



**Natalie Dulansky**  
Communications & Outreach Specialist

## Board

**Chair**  
Mike Broili

**Vice Chair**  
Paul Engelmeyer

**Recorder**  
Fran Recht

**Treasurer**  
Michael Meagher

**Public at Large**  
Fred Holzmer

**Public at Large**  
Bill Montgomery

**Industrial Forest Representative**  
Jennifer Beathe

**Commercial Fishing Representative**  
Jeff Feldner

**Recreational Fishing Representative**  
Joe Rohleder

**Siletz Watershed Council Representative**  
Don Larsen

**Tribal Representative**  
Brandon Larabee

**Local Government**  
Paul Seitz

**Small Woodlot Owners Representative**  
Joe Steere

### ● Poole Slough-Yaquina Basin

MCWC worked with partners to remove the obsolete road to allow full tidal exchange through the Slough, this was paired with several large wood placements to increase channel complexity and encourage formation of side channels. Planting was finished in early 2023.

# Thank You for Making Our Work Possible!

This past year has been worth celebrating, and it's all thanks to the unwavering support and dedication of our incredible community of partners, landowners, volunteers, donors and funders who have helped us improve the health of streams and watersheds of Oregon's central coast this year. Looking ahead to 2024, we envision even greater opportunities for collaboration, growth, and positive change.

## How To Get Involved:

- Attend presentations and meetings to get to know your local groups' work and learn more about conservation topics
- Sign up for volunteer events
- Explore and enjoy your local estuaries, streams, parks, and national forest lands
- Donate!

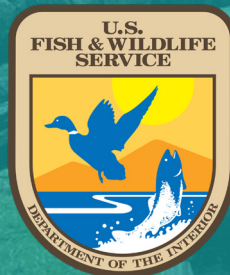
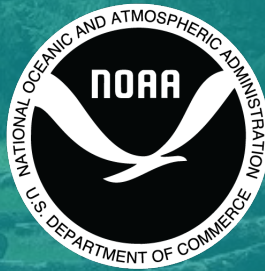


Scan to donate to MCWC



Join our volunteer mailing list!

## 2023 Funders



Siuslaw Stewardship Watershed Restoration Program

