



# WATERSHED EVENTS

Glenn and Gibson Creeks Watershed Council Newsletter

Summer 2020

## Working on the Watershed at home

In the spirit of the changes designed to keep us and our community safe, here are some activities allowed during these times. This issue will feature two home watershed restoration projects that can be done in your own backyard and an illustrated walking tour through the Wallace Marine Park Natural Area. Please stay safe and keep working toward healthier watersheds!

### Wallace Marine Nature Park Walk

Getting out of doors is good therapy and we can still go for walks, observing social distance. Wallace Marine Park Natural Area is one of the best Salem walks for birding, watchable wildlife and river views. This regional park offers recreational softball and soccer fields, Willamette River boat access, bike and pedestrian trails, playground equipment and picnic facilities. The park is also a winter time flood mitigation site, protects the riparian natural forest area along the river and provides wildlife sanctuary within the City limits.



A snag tree nest  
feet from the  
pedestrian  
bridge

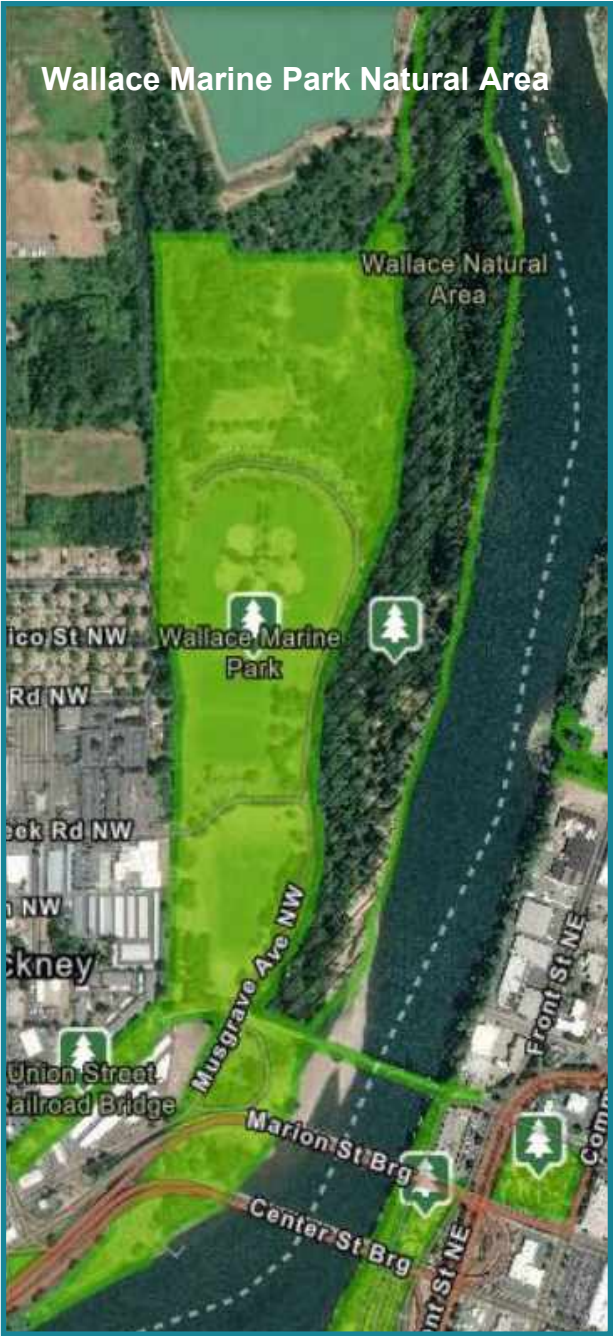
The City's efforts to protect this urban jewel are two fold. For more than 4 decades, most of the park has been included in the Willamette River Greenway which limits development along the river riparian shore and the slough. More recently, the City designated most of the passive recreational portion of the park as a "nature park" to insure that the forest, flora and fauna are preserved as a natural habitat for future generations. The area designated as the Wallace Marine Park Natural Area does not include the west side slough or the pond north of the softball fields.

[Nature Walk continues on p.2](#)

*Author and photographer E.M. Easterly is a founding member of the Glenn and Gibson Creeks Watershed Council and represents the West Salem Neighborhood Association on the watershed council. He is currently challenging the City's implementation and application of the Salem Area Comprehensive Plan Policies in Wallace Marine Park.*



The pond North of the softball fields



Wallace Marine Park Natural Area



A Feathered Fisherman



Bald eagle in tree top



Homeless camps impact the park. Untreated sewage, the detritus that accumulates around the camps, and the human disturbance that goes along with life in these camps all have adverse affects on water quality, plant and animal life.



The pond visitor

## My Accidental Pollinator Garden



For a number of years I tried to grow vegetables in three raised beds in the only reliably sunny part of my yard, a strip along the drive in the front. I failed year after year. So three or four years ago I gave up and just spread cosmos seeds in the beds, and that is when the beauty began.

I already had a border of perennials along side the raised beds planted with trustworthy plants like lamb's ears, liatris (gay feather), echinacea (cone flower), lavender, yarrow, etc. Once the cosmos grew up and I realized the possibilities (Click! I can have a pollinator garden), I kept planting, tucking in some milkweed and adding more echinacea and other colorful plants. The result is a pretty border with lots of color. But the excitement is when you get closer and see all the bees and butterflies and other pollinators buzzing around.

Last year I "fostered" two Monarch butterflies for a couple days. They roosted on the cosmos, and finally, on day three, flew away. I felt proud to be part of this statewide effort to establish local Monarch habitat and hope that they or their offspring will return. In the meantime, however, the little garden is providing grazing for lots of little bugs.

An upside of all this is not only a habitat for pollinators and a pretty flower garden, but also a low maintenance growing space. Other than pulling weeds as needed and cutting back the plants in the fall, it pretty much takes care of itself. I have a drip/soaker hose system for watering and the flowers flourish without fertilizer or, of course, pesticides. So far the cosmos has reseeded each spring so I have not had to replant.

There are a number of free resources for planning and maintaining a pollinator garden.

Xerces Society publishes an excellent list of pollinator friendly plants at <https://xerces.org/pollinator-conservation/pollinator-friendly-plant-lists>

Natural Resource Conservation Service of the USDA has several publications dealing with pollinators at (search for pollinator gardens) [www.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov)

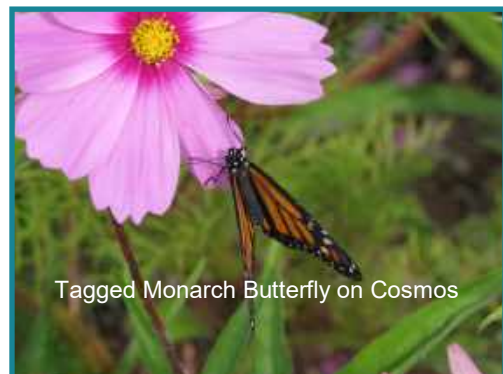
U.S Forest Service offers a publication on Gardening for Pollinators at <http://fs.fed.us/wildflowers/pollinators/gardening.shtml>

The National Wildlife Federation's publication on pollinator gardens can be found at <https://www.nwf.org/garden-for-wildlife/about/national-initiatives/plant-for-pollinators>

Oregon State University's Extension Service offers an on-line publication:

Living on the Land: Providing Habitat for Native Pollinators, that lists a number of resources. Get it at <https://catalog.extension.oregonstate.edu/ec1649>.

*Author and photographer Dorald Stoltz is a founding member of the Glenn and Gibson Creeks Watershed Council, and served as Chair in the past. She has used her back yard, home to a reach of Glenn Creek, as a conservation project planting native plants and conserving a healthy riparian corridor. She is a Master Watershed Steward through the OSU extension program. Other community service includes member of the board of the Willamette Heritage Center and immediate past president of the Salem Fiber Arts Guild. Dorald has many roles in GGWC among them using her journalism skills as our editor-in-chief.*



## Reasons for Rain Gardens

Recently I heard someone say, "If water is the key to life, then protecting it should be the way of life," and I agree. That is why we built a rain garden at our West Salem home.

Development in urban areas impacts our local streams and the Willamette River. Hard surfaces, such as roofs, roads, and driveways alter the natural water cycle because rain cannot soak into the ground as it did during pre-development. Rain flows from hard surfaces (as stormwater runoff) to the nearest storm drain. This movement of the stormwater helps prevent the flooding of our homes and streets. While storm drains help prevent flooding, stormwater runoff picks up pollutants, such as oils, pesticides, dirt, and pet waste and discharges them into sensitive streams where the pollution can cause harm to aquatic life, such as fish, frogs, and salamanders.



Rain Garden beginning



Rain Garden Underway

Rain gardens help protect stream water quality by reducing and filtering the stormwater that flows off your yard and into the nearby stream. A rain garden is a shallow depression that collects water from downspouts and allows it to soak into the ground, helping to mimic pre-development conditions.

Rain gardens are usually designed with native plants, they are cost effective, low maintenance, beautiful, and habitat

havens! For example, hummingbirds are often seen sampling the red flowering currant and Western columbine planted in our rain garden.

Rain gardens can vary in size depending on the amount of water being channeled to it and are generally 10-15 percent of the roof drainage area. A rain garden is a great option to consider as an addition to your landscape. A quick Google search results in a wide arrangement of designs. [Oregon State University](#) and the [City of Salem](#) have helpful guides.



Rain Garden today

### 10 Reasons for Rain Gardens

- Filter runoff pollution and protect streams from pollutants
- Recharge local groundwater
- Protect community from flooding and drainage issues
- Create habitat for birds, butterflies, bees, and beneficial insects
- Create drought tolerant green areas
- \* Reduce yard maintenance
- \* Reduce use of pesticides and herbicides
- \* Beautify yards, neighborhoods, and parks
- \* Increase biodiversity
- \* Conserve water

## Contact Us

Give us a call for more information

**Glenn and Gibson  
Creeks Watershed  
Council**

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(503) 362-6860

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Visit us on the web at  
[https://  
glenngibsonwc.org/](https://glenngibsonwc.org/)

## Join us

We are always interested in new members or issues of interest to watershed health.

We meet at 5:30 pm on the 2nd Tuesday of every month in the Breezeway Room at Salemtowne  
1800 Oakcrest Dr. NW,  
Salem, OR 97304

### **Author and photographer**

**Deborah Topp** staffed the Glenn and Gibson Creeks Watershed Council in the early days of the Council, then was the City of Salem representative for some time. She has recently returned to that position. Deborah directs the City of Salem Department of Public works' Environmental Education and Outreach Program. Deborah has directed, helped and orchestrated the public education programs of the GGWC including presentations on Rain Gardens and Native plants. She serves the GGWC as the City of Salem representative and our environmental educator and has been a resident of West Salem for 15 years.