



# THE BALTIMORE WOODS-WORKER

Welcome to the Fall 2017 edition of the Friends of Baltimore Woods e-newsletter. It's time again to share news of our ongoing work to bring a native oak woodland to the riverbank in St. Johns. We invite your feedback and participation.

**FREE**

## URBAN WEEDS WORKSHOP

Weeds – we all have them. Learn how to identify common garden and landscape weeds along with other more notorious plant invaders of the region. Find out how these aggressive plants take over in your yard and get simple yet effective tips that will help you gain the upper hand without turning to synthetic herbicides.

**Saturday, September 16**  
**9:30am - 12pm**  
**BES Water Pollution Control Lab**  
 6543 N Burlington

Register online at: [www.emswcd.org/workshops](http://www.emswcd.org/workshops)  
 Information: 503-222-7645

Brought to you by:  
 East Multnomah Soil and Water Conservation District

Hosted by:  
 FRIENDS OF BALTIMORE WOODS

### Upcoming Events:

**Friends of Baltimore Woods General Meeting**

**Tuesday September 19 6:30 – 8 pm**

BES water lab  
6543 N Burlington Ave,  
Portland 97203.

## Urban Weeds Class comes to BES Lab

By Katie Meckes, EMSWCD

Weeds – we all have them. The East Multnomah Soil and Water Conservation District and Friends of Baltimore Woods will present a free urban weeds class on Saturday, September 16. The class is open to the public, and everyone is welcome, but pre-registration is required. See the events calendar on page 8 for more information.

learn how to identify the most common garden and landscape weeds along with some of the other more notorious plant invaders of the region. We will walk you through how these aggressive plants take over in your yard, and you'll leave with some simple yet effective tips that will help you get the upper hand without turning to synthetic herbicides.

## FoBW Annual Meeting Report

By Caroline Skinner

FoBW held its annual meeting on Tuesday, July 18th. We had a small group in attendance to plan the upcoming year, but we could look back on many successes in the last year, and we made some solid plans for the coming year as well.

We have good news: We'll hold the FoBW

plant sale on March 31, 2018. Co-chairs are Kelly Derr and Susan Gere. Assistants are Caroline S. and Mark H., two of the event chairs from last year. Everyone is welcome to join the fun and help.

We moved the fourth program in the Exploring Our Backyard series from April to November 2018. April is a very busy month for us, with multiple large work parties, and November may be more of an indoor time of year anyway. Work parties will continue throughout the year, except in March (plant sale month) and December. We decided to take the month of December off and plan no events then.



# THE BALTIMORE WOODS-WORKER

## New Signage at Four Entrances to Baltimore Woods

By Caroline Skinner

FoBW is very happy to have four beautiful new welcome signs coming soon to Baltimore Woods. We ordered them from Bridge City Inkworks using funds from our capacity



grant. The locations for the new signs are at N Baltimore and Decatur, N St. Johns and Edison, N Reno and Decatur, and Baltimore Woods Meadow at the bottom of N Catlin. We hope they will help visitors learn a little more about where they are and what we are doing there.

## St. Johns Bizarre Features FoBW

Thanks to the St. Johns Bizarre organizers, including co-chair Emily Sterling, for highlighting Friends of Baltimore Woods, along with three other great local groups, at the 2017 Bizarre. Beer garden tips were split four ways, bringing us around \$500. We also had a great

opportunity to speak on stage, to have an info booth near the beer garden during the day's festivities, and to be included in publicity on the social media channels leading up to the event.

We are very grateful to the Bizarre for partnering with FoBW to highlight our work before a good-sized post-parade crowd. Volunteer Kelly Derr addressed the assembled masses in a five-minute slot to tell about our program on the Bizarre's main stage before the start of the musical acts. We literally had a platform to explain our mission and to share news about our work with the community.

Along with FoBW, the other three featured groups included Village Gardens, Community Alliance of Tenants, and Marrow. Thank you, St. Johns Bizarre!

## De La Salle HS Students Step Up to Help

By Caroline Skinner

We are grateful to the wonderful students from De La Salle High School who came out to help at our Old Oak site on May 12. Although rain was in the forecast and skies were cloudy, the weather did not deter them. We've been working on the Old Oak site for more than a year, first removing blackberry and other large invasive plants, and later planting native ones.

Somehow a major infestation of herb Robert (also known as "stinky Bob") filled much of the site around our plantings. Green is not always good. Plants that look pretty in the garden, like dames



*DeLaSalle students at Old Oak site in Baltimore Woods*



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# THE BALTIMORE WOODS-WORKER

rocket, lemon balm, herb Robert, and comfrey, are not native to this area, and they do not belong in our natural areas. And that is where De La Salle came to the rescue. This was a classic case of needing many hands to take care of a really big problem. The aroma of herb Robert was in the air, and the students bagged so much of it that we ran out of bags.



Restoring a natural area can be harder than protecting and preserving an intact ecosystem, but areas already full of native plants are becoming harder to find. We are very fortunate to be working with a natural area in St. Johns, including the Old Oak site under the SJ



Bridge. However, restoration work is never fully done. While our native shrubs and trees are doing well, the invasive ones continue to make themselves at home, resulting in a continuing need for work parties.

Not all the young adults from today's work party will settle down to live in St. Johns or even North Portland. But wherever they end up living their lives, it is our hope that they'll learn from their experience in Baltimore Woods and bring a conservation ethic with them. Any improvement to the natural environment anywhere can be an improvement to the natural world everywhere. Seeing young adults who care enough to help is a beautiful thing, and we thank the students of De La Salle for helping to restore Baltimore Woods.

## Service, Sports, and Suds Comes to Baltimore Woods

By Mark Hill

SOLVE, in cooperation with the Portland Trailblazers, the Timbers, and Widmer Brewing, unleashed an army of volunteers on June 29



*Service, Sports, and Suds volunteers in Baltimore Woods*

*Our restoration tools get lots of use and sometimes need a tune-up. Thanks to volunteer Howard Harrington for tool maintenance this summer!*



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## THE BALTIMORE WOODS-WORKER

to help clean up two sites in our community: Cathedral Park and Baltimore Woods. About 60 volunteers converged on the boat launch adjacent to Cathedral Park for SOLVE's annual Service, Sports, and Suds event. After a brief rally, roughly 10 of those volunteers set out to clean up Cathedral Park, while 50 volunteers trekked up N Baltimore Avenue to Decatur Street and commenced clearing weeds and mulching around native plants in our Baltimore Woods.

FoBW Restore work group members Leslie, Mark, and Bon helped lead the work party. In advance of the event, we set up canopies on Decatur to serve as assembly and rest stations for the volunteers. We met with Portland Parks & Recreation (PP&R) and SOLVE leaders to coordinate the management of volunteers for the event. Isabel LaCourse of PP&R made



a detailed work plan. We then split up to assist small groups of volunteers as they worked in the Woods. We had pleasant weather, and volunteers eagerly consumed the water we provided. They worked under the guidance of SOLVE, PP&R, and FoBW team leaders until roughly 3:30 pm. An after-party followed, with Widmer Brewing generously providing free libations.

This was another great opportunity to be a part of one of the bigger work parties ever in Baltimore Woods. We are grateful to all who participated.

### Service, Sports, and Suds Details In a Nutshell

By Melissa Peterson,  
Corporate Relations Manager, SOLVE

Hi, team. Wasn't the work party amazing? Thank you for all that you did to make the fourth annual Service, Sports, and Suds event another awesome success at Cathedral Park and Baltimore Woods.

Below is a quick overview with some fun facts for you.

#### **Overall Impact:**

65 volunteers attended

Removed invasive plants from  
7,500 sq feet

Removed over 200 pounds of litter from  
Cathedral Park with a special effort on  
collecting cigarette butts

Volunteers cleaned over 7,500 square feet of invasive, non-native plants including blackberry, clematis, sweet pea, and tall grasses in an effort



# THE BALTIMORE WOODS-WORKER

to restore the Baltimore Woods natural area in North Portland. The efforts of the Service, Sports, and Suds volunteers is greatly celebrated by the Friends of Baltimore Woods community group. Mark Hill of FoBW mentioned that the impact that these volunteers made in one afternoon otherwise would have taken up to 30 work parties to complete. Thanks again to all who helped.

## Summer's End is a New Beginning for FoBW

By Caroline Skinner

We've had a full summer of Thursday evening work parties at Baltimore Woods. From fall through spring, we hold our work parties on selected Saturday mornings. In summer, we shift to easy, one-hour weekly events on those lovely, warm, and breezy evenings. We'd like to thank the volunteers who joined us in the woods and meadows this summer to cut, pull, wrench, and



*Sidalcea in Baltimore Woods Meadow*

remove the weeds that are part of the great abundance of nature.

We are fortunate to have a large tool box fully stocked with gloves, cutters, loppers, and plenty of buckets for weeds, mulch, and trash. We are thankful for the support from our partner groups SOLVE and PP&R, and from the community, as we transform old, seemingly abandoned quasi-industrial sites into rich natural ecosystems that are suitable for wildlife of all kinds. The native shrubs and trees we've planted, in particular, seem to be thriving. If we just keep the weeds at bay a little bit, Mother Nature sees to the rest of the work. Preserving the land from development has been, and is, the most important job. Restoration is a never-ending part of our commitment. Help is always welcome.

If you haven't served on an FoBW work group and would be open to a deeper level of involvement, we hope you'll come to our monthly meetings. We meet on the third Tuesday of the month at the BES water lab, as noted in the events calendar on page 8. Baltimore Woods is large, and there is plenty of room for involvement by all interested parties. We are always happy to see new faces, and we hope to see you soon.

## More than Fair

By Steven McClure

The Seventh Annual Barbara Walker Regional Trails Fair on June 21 was excellent! Everybody rocked the canopies on the Oregon Convention Center Plaza for three hours. There were dozens of organizations at table displays that engaged everyone individually, with random acts of fun scattered about — I especially liked the disc golf basket, free snacks, and tall bike! — all anchored by nine speaker presentations under the big tent.

Among the presentations, I was particularly interested in the update presented about the Willamette Falls Legacy Project. The falls are second only to Niagara, after all. I'm also glad I caught Jerry Herrmann's talk about the multifaceted Trails of Discovery and Jim Thayer's project for trails from Portland to the Coast.

Also shared were discussions about the history of the Greenspaces and Trails Program, the



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# THE BALTIMORE WOODS-WORKER

trails corridor connecting the city to Mt. Hood, and organized counts of regional trail users. Gateway Green's recent opening was lauded as especially exciting for bike athletes of all abilities.

I missed Ranger Dan Miller's presentation about plans for a Discovery Trail in Clark County, in part running along the Columbia River, connecting the big wildlife refuges. But don't think I'm not aware of this venture to honor Lewis and Clark!

The Trails Fairs are free to all and you'll find some nifty goodies among all the stops. We'll let you know when next year's is approaching, because the more you learn about the natural byways and connections all around, the more you'll appreciate our special jewel here in St. Johns.

## Book Review: *A Weed by Any Other Name*

By Caroline Skinner

At the library I came across a book called *A Weed by Any Other Name*, by Nancy Gift, from Beacon Press, 2009. The subtitle is *The virtues of a messy lawn, or learning to love the plants we don't plant*. It's easy to read and written in a pleasant, conversational style. I agree with her central premise that we don't need to be perfectionists about our lawns. I think she makes her point, but has some mixed messages and does not go far enough to point out the value of native plants and the relatively lower value of non-native ones.

She seems to brush off the importance of native plants entirely, but then tells about Chinese lespedzia used in the restoration of West Virginia's coal mines. She explains that it's so hardy that it's nearly indestructible, and looks good, but provides absolutely no value for wildlife, so it's an unfortunate choice.

She has extensive training in the use of pesticides and herbicides. To her credit, she advises using them sparingly, if at all. However, not once does she mention

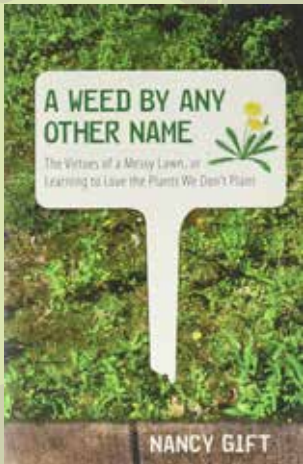


*Pea vine – pretty, but pretty invasive*

the concept of Integrated Pest Management, or IPM, which lists pesticides on the list of acceptable management tools but very low on the priority list.

Nancy Gift and her family live in Pittsburgh, PA, which may have a climate somewhat like Portland, OR. Their house is located near a community center. Some of the land between their home and the center is wooded, so she's been proactive in pulling an invasive plant, multi-flora rose. She also acknowledges how hard it is to hand-pull weeds in any large area. She used an herbicide against the poison ivy that grew where her two daughters played, but she did so reluctantly, and then changed over to cutting after the initial phase of removal. I think she displays a healthy concern about potential harmful effects of pesticides on the environment, so she's in a quandary, because her formal college training taught her to use and depend on them, while she knows better, based on a larger view for the environment and plain common sense.

For a book about plants, it's a shame that it has no photographs of the subjects covered. It has precious few illustrations at all. There is a lovely drawing of a thistle in bloom, but it's in the





# THE BALTIMORE WOODS-WORKER

chapter titled Winter, not the chapter about thistles. There are many other weeds she mentions that I'd like to see illustrated, including scarlet pimpernel, chickweed, and prostrate spurge.

Some of the weeds covered are so common that most people might already know them, including dandelions, violets, and plantain. But a few more of those lovely illustrations could have really brought the subject matter to life.

I give this book a B grade. It's engaging and, for the most part, compelling. I would have been harder on hawkweed, however, as it seems to be a very common unwanted plant in my lawn, as well as in all sorts of other places. She did not say enough about how hardy and prolific it is. Overall, though, I enjoyed the book very much, so can give it my recommendation.

## Least Wanted: Herb Robert Information from the West Multnomah Soil & Water Conservation District website

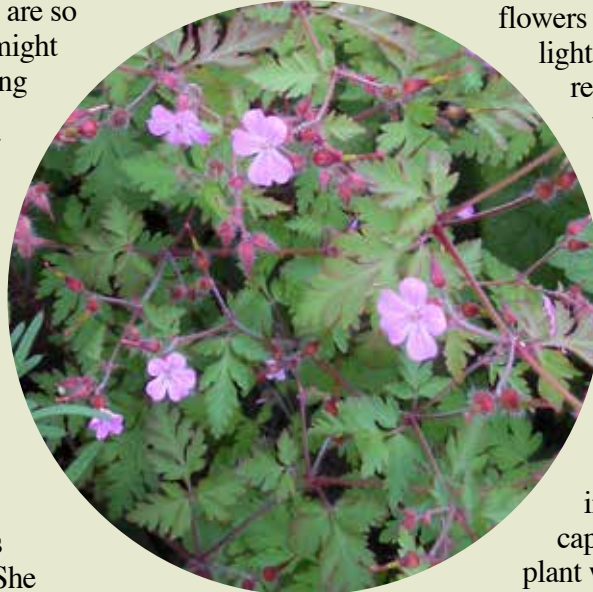
Least Wanted is an ongoing series sharing information about invasive plants of concern



*Reddish stems help identify Herb Robert*

in our community. You can help by removing them from your property.

Herb Robert (*Geranium robertianum*) is a branching, low-growing winter and spring annual. It has five-petaled pink flowers and deeply dissected light green leaves that release a pungent odor when crushed. Leaves turn red as the plant matures and the stalks get brittle. The roots are shallow, so it's easy to pull by hand, but be sure to pull early as the plant spreads by seed. The seeds are inside long pointed capsules that fly off the plant when it's touched. It is very difficult to make much headway if the seeds are being thrown into the soil all around you, waiting to



*Herb Robert before removal from the Old Oak site*

sprout! Also, the seeds can stay viable for up to five years.

Herb Robert is one of the worst woodland invaders, because of how the seeds are thrown out when it's disturbed by wildlife, pets, gardeners, walkers, and hikers. This is why we ask folks to brush off their boots, clothes, tools, bicycles, and pets after visiting infested areas. In addition, the plant can tolerate a lot of different growing conditions, spreading into dense patches that can contain up to 250 plants per square meter.

For your garden, some native plant alternatives to Herb Robert are stream violet, beach strawberry, wood strawberry, wild bleeding heart, and sea pink.

## SOLVE Beach and Riverside Cleanup

For more than a decade now, the City of Portland has been acquiring land along the rugged Willamette Bluff in St. Johns, including sites in Baltimore Woods. The goal is to recreate a native woodland on the bluff. The plan is to mobilize



# THE BALTIMORE WOODS-WORKER

community volunteers to restore it. The SOLVE Beach and Riverside Cleanup on September 23 is part of that ongoing effort. The Decatur stretch of our own Baltimore Woods is one of many sites for this event in the Portland Area. See the events calendar on page 8 for more information.

## What's Your Best Thing?

By Sylvia Allen

As I mentioned in the summer issue, we're a happy group, here at FoBW. We get a lot done and we have a lot of fun, but many of us have had life changes in the last few years and have had to cut back on our efforts. We need you to join us and get the work done!

Whatever you're good at, however much or little time you have to give, we can put your particular interests and skills to work in Baltimore Woods. In the last issue I listed a few people we're especially looking for right now. We're still looking to fill two of those spots:

- A volunteer follow-up coordinator. At each of our events, a few people sign up to volunteer with FoBW. We need someone who will get back with each of these people and chat them up. We have boilerplate emails to use for the purpose, and you can use an established script for a phone call. However you do it—get that person to a meeting, or get them to work on some project!
- A volunteer scheduler for events. We have about six events per year (other than work parties) that require volunteer participation, such as the FoBW plant sale or a farmers market table. This person will email or phone people who have already said they want to be called for this purpose, and schedule them for shifts at whichever event is coming up.

If you are one of these people, please talk to us! We also have a ton of other jobs that need doing. What's your best thing? FoBW needs you! Call or email us or come to a general meeting (see below).

## Spring 2017 Event Information

### September 16, Saturday, 9:30am – noon

Urban Weeds Workshop at the BES water lab at 6543 N Burlington Ave, Portland 97203. Brought to you by the East Multnomah Soil and Water Conservation District and hosted by Friends of Baltimore Woods, this free class is open to the public, and everyone is welcome. Pre-registration is required, at <https://emswcd.org/workshops-and-events>.

### September 19, Tuesday, 6:30-8pm

Friends of Baltimore Woods general meetings are on the third Tuesday of each month at the BES water lab at 6543 N Burlington Ave, Portland 97203. All are welcome!

### September 20, Wednesday, 1-3:15pm

Quarterly Trails Forum at Metro Regional Center, 600 NE Grand Ave., Portland. The agenda will be sent out closer to the date.

### September 23, Saturday, 9am – noon

SOLVE Beach and Riverside Cleanup in Baltimore Woods. Meet at N Baltimore and Decatur in St. Johns.

### September 23-24, Saturday and Sunday

Used book sale at the Audubon Society of Portland, NW Cornell Rd, in Heron Hall. This is a fundraiser to support Audubon programs. Look for used nature, travel, or gardening books, videos, and audio recordings.

### October 17, Tuesday, 6:30-8pm

FoBW general meeting. See September 19.

### October 28, Saturday, 9am – noon

No Ivy Day, co-hosted by PP&R and FoBW. Meet at the tool box in Baltimore Woods Meadow. Go to the bottom (river) end of N Catlin Ave and through the gate, and turn right. See the Portland Parks & Recreation website for details and to pre-register online.

### November 21, Tuesday, 6:30-8pm

FoBW general meeting. See September 19.

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