NatureTrails

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Joe Moll, Director, McKenzie River Trust

"Why is there a River in my Forest?"

Friday, 16 January, 7:30PM Room 100, Willamette Hall, UO Campus

Joe Moll has been the Director of the McKenzie River Trust (MRT) for exactly four years; he started in January, 2005. During his tenure MRT has been involved in a number of projects – all having to do with rivers and natural areas in Lane and Douglas Counties. The big one, the one most of us have heard about (and some may have been involved with) is Green Island. It started with a million-dollar grant from the Eugene Water & Electric Board, which is always concerned with the McKenzie River since that's where the city gets its water. MRT has used that initial grant as leverage to obtain further funding from a variety of sources: Bonneville Power Administration, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, as well as several private foundations and many individuals. Together these funding sources gave $1.7 million – enabling MRT to buy the land in 2003. Joe estimates that a like amount will be needed to restore Green Island to its wilder state (the river has been doing its part: now that dikes and revetments are being removed, the recent high water has had a surprisingly large impact.).

At nearly 1,000 acres, Green Island - named for the previous owners who in their generosity sold it to the MRT for $500,000 less than the appraised value - dwarfs all the other properties owned by the Trust. Its purchase and the ongoing restoration efforts MRT leads have taken the Trust to a higher level.

When Joe Moll talks to us we can expect to learn more about Green Island. Here, we want to learn a bit about this talented young man's background. How did he get here?

Joe was born and raised in Kentucky, the youngest of five siblings. His mom and dad both loved the outdoors. They took their children on hikes, and camped and fished with them. When Joe was seven years old they moved to a house next to a protected woods filled with huge trees, both upright and fallen. The way Joe looked and sounded as he talked about his adventures there left no doubt how important that natural playground had been in nurturing his love of the natural world.

Joe's undergraduate degree is from Transylvania University, a small, excellent liberal-arts school in Lexington, Kentucky. He started out in biology but changed majors and ended with a degree in economics. Toyota, which has a plant not far from Lexington, awarded Joe a scholarship that enabled him to spend a year in Japan between his junior and senior years at Transylvania. As soon as he finished his degree he went back to Japan for two more years, teaching English in junior-high schools. He got involved in a musical group while there: a bluegrass band. Given his Kentucky roots it is perhaps not surprising that Joe's musical genre is bluegrass, but it was surprising to me to learn that bluegrass has a sizeable Japanese following. Baseball, yes. But bluegrass? Who would have guessed? That bluegrass band became a rallying point for a 1990 Earth Day Celebration that continues annually to this day in Kochi, Japan.

After that stint in Japan, Joe discovered the wilderness and high mountains of the American West, working a fall season for Canyonlands Natural History Association in Arches National Park. That experience made it even more difficult for the Kentucky boy to stay home, so the following year he entered graduate school at University of Montana-Missoula's School of Forestry. He began working for the Nature Conservancy in environmental education and did research on grizzly bears, focusing on minimizing harmful interactions between bears and humans. His interests were split between animal behavior and policy. For part of his graduate work he went back to Japan for three more years, this time to the large northern island, Hokkaido, which has a natural population of brown bears, kissing cousins to the grizzly bears of North America. The bears, domestic animals, and humans are uncomfortably close together there, with the inevitable troublesome interactions one might predict. His time there gave Joe some insight into how another culture deals with the interface between human civilization and natural ecosystems. On the personal side, one of the persons he met while in Hokkaido is now his wife, Kana, with whom he has

three young boys, affectionately known as the Moll Monkeys. His animal behavior studies are now more relevant than he'd ever expected.

When Joe came to Oregon in 2005 he had spent a total of six years in Japan and ten in Montana. He left Montana with a Master's degree from UM and an uncommonly deep understanding of how to deal with the complexities of human impacts on natural environments. The McKenzie River Trust is fortunate to have Joe Moll as its Director; the Eugene Natural History Society is fortunate to have him as our January speaker. The title of his talk is "Why is there a river in my back yard?" We will be doing a service to our community by encouraging our friends, neighbors, and co-workers to come hear him. When he is finished with us we will all have a better idea of what we can do to help keep our wonderful river systems healthy and beautiful. I'll see you and your guests on the 16th at 7:30pm in room 100, Willamette Hall, on the U of O campus.
John Carter

SURVIVORS, by Reida Kimmel

The four of us were busy in the misty but determined rain this morning. Three of us cleaned up in front of the chicken house where I had dropped a few wee grains of corn, while I shoveled out the horse stalls. Then, as I pushed the very heavy manure carts across the sodden riding arena my companions, a dog, a puppy, and a duck splashed along beside me. A duck? Our holiday surprise this year was a female Muscovy duck, obviously tame, that appeared one day on the greenhouse roof. At first she was terrified by the dogs, which relentlessly herded her back to the pond. In a very few days, however, she was bullying the sheep, stealing their grain, and fluffing her feathers and hissing at the puppy before waddling regally off to a fence post if the play got too rough.

This is not the sort of duck I want. Twenty years ago we raised Muscovy ducks for meat, and stopped doing so because we wanted our pond to be more attractive to wild birds. Musovys are native to Mexico and Central America and have become feral all over the United States and parts of Europe. They are very cold-tolerant, big, tasty, and domineering, a sort of wetland variation on the turkey.

When we first lived in Fox Hollow, there were far fewer houses and no turkeys or Muscovy ducks.

Uninhabited forestland, albeit almost entirely second growth and much of that only a few decades old, stretched from Fox Hollow Road to Hamm Road outside of Creswell. Quail and rabbits were all over in the brush behind our house. We often saw ruffed grouse in the trees as we rode over the hill towards Creswell. Skunks and porcupines abounded, much to our dogs' and our dismay. One morning in our first spring here, I saw a strange rodent ambling down our driveway. It turned out to be an animal I had never even heard of, an Aplodontia or mountain beaver, the 'boomer', nemesis of loggers. I have never seen one since. The only fox I have seen in decades was dead in the middle of a logging road, most likely killed by coyotes. In the Seventies we rarely saw or heard coyotes, but foxes were not uncommon. Another animal that has quite disappeared in our area, not that I miss it, is the rattlesnake. There was at least one wintering den close by and I have seen some very big rattlesnakes on the road and in meadows along the creek. There have been rattlesnakes in our yard. I killed them.

Some species are still as common as ever: deer, owls, juncos, chickadees. We encounter bears and know that bobcats and cougars hunt in the neighborhood. We had seven families of barn swallows raise young this year, the most ever. Both evening and black-headed grosbeaks had successful nests. The quail and grouse are not gone completely, but there are now so few. I believe that is because they cannot compete with the exploding populations of introduced turkeys. Varied thrushes have almost disappeared, as have meadowlarks. Cedar waxwings no longer visit us even though we have a wealth of berries compared to the past.

We assume that the tremendous population increase in the hills surrounding Eugene in the past four decades, as well as logging in the Cascade and Coast Range foothills, has had a major deleterious effect on species diversity. But what causes some species to thrive in spite of human impact, while others decline? Why are there fewer meadowlarks, varied thrushes and robins? These are complex questions. The rabbits and quail probably moved away from my 'back yard' because the open brush became closed canopy woods, but why aren't there rabbits in the clearcuts a bit farther up the hill? Perhaps those higher elevation sites are not suitable for rabbits, but then why are there no hares up

there? There were hares aplenty on Le Bleu Road decades ago, but that road is all developed now. Perhaps the bobcats have wiped out the hares, but if the hare population were healthy and viable, that would not happen. Did my killing those snakes tip the species balance between survival and extinction for rattlesnakes in our area, or was it the clearcutting and house building in the hills that made it impossible for these important creatures to thrive and reproduce? We all bear a huge responsibility for reducing the diversity of species in our environment, and we who live in the 'ex-urbs' and countryside bear the most responsibility. One by one our wild neighbors disappear and we don't really notice until one day we are struck by all that we have lost. I've lived in the same place for forty years and in so many ways it is a much poorer place than it was then. I can't blame it all on the new neighbors or the loggers or the vague but very real evil of global warming. I have contributed. Now I hope that I can make at least a small contribution toward healing all the wounds that we have inflicted on our world by supporting environmental causes and trying to make our own six acres as rich and varied in habitat as it can be. Many of our neighbors are trying to do the same on their land. We have woods and wetlands and meadows richer and healthier than in the past, and I do believe that if you create great habitat, declining species will rebound. In the meantime, what am I going to do with that duck?

KNOWING OUR PLACE, by Tom Titus

Darkness does not fall gently during a Coast Range winter. Lengthening shadows niggle at my insides, the soft voice of oncoming nightfall. I put up my tools and retreat to my customary spot on the front porch to watch. And listen. As the sun drops precipitously behind a ridge to the west, day's end rumbles in the east, quickly becoming a roaring, crashing wave, a tsunami of shadow that inundates the landscape, drowning the last colors of daylight, swirling around my precarious perch. The green line of conifers at the edge of the meadow is transformed into an imposing black wall that steps boldly outward onto the wet grass. Then silence. Closing my eyes, I listen to the quiet of no thing—no spring thrush music, no chatter of summer swallows settling in to roost, no autumn cricket chorus—only the rhythm of my own breathing and quiet cold seeping into my back from a rusty folding chair. Paradoxically, I am alone to contemplate belonging. Humans are fundamentally tribal beings. Zoom out from your individual existence here and now and imagine a branching tree representing the vast history of primate evolution. On this tree there are no solitary human relatives, no species composed of "rugged individualists" in the world of great apes and monkeys. Phylogenetics, a branch of biology in which evolutionary trees are reconstructed and then used to infer ancestral attributes, tells us that our human ancestral species lived in small, communal bands.

This broad evolutionary inference is supported by zooming in, focusing on the human branch of the primate tree. The picture painted by archeologists and anthropologists is one in which the majority of human history also was spent in small tribal units. Modern hunter-gatherers also are tribal. Tribalism was not an accident but a viable evolutionary strategy inherited from our ancestral species, a strategy of cooperation among individuals that was a means for exploitation of resources sufficient to ensure generational survival. This resulted in continuity of both the genetics and culture of group cohesiveness.

Our survival also depended on an intimate knowledge and profound connection to the natural world. The earth was the source of everything necessary for existence, primarily food, medicine, and shelter. This knowledge is reflected in the various compendia that catalog indigenous names for local plants and animals. Although the biological breadth of these lists has long been appreciated, in some cases for over a century, only recently have non-native peoples begun to appreciate the deep cultural imbeddedness of aboriginal botany and zoology. In other words, this knowledge was not simply a "Checklist of the Birds of Mt. Pisgah" but rather a spiritual connection to the land, the means to and reason for existence.

This multimillion-year history of ecological and social connectedness must certainly be etched in our genes. Our genetically endowed connections to the land and fellow humans are two driving forces behind what is often referred to as our *sense of place*, a need to belong to a group of people coupled with a fundamental desire to remain attached to the natural world. A growing body of evidence indicates that people are happier when

they are associated in some way with other groups of people and happier when there is some connection to nature. Even something as simple as a houseplant or a fish in a tank can reduce stress at the office. Kathleen Dean Moore points out that our sense of place is more than simple metaphor. We literally *become* our place. When I drink the spring water that has flowed through layers of Coast Range sandstone, the calcium leeched out of the rock becomes part of my very bones. Thus, the physicality and spirituality of connectedness merge into one.

As a species we have much to celebrate in the way of cultural and technological advances. But rarely do we consider the cost. My woodstove and chainsaw (primitive compared to a natural gas pipeline and a furnace but nonetheless technological) will, in a few minutes, allow me the luxury of wandering inside and pulling up a chair to radiant warmth. I'll flip a switch and convert modern electrical generation and transmission lines into light from an incandescent bulb and then sit comfortably on a winter night and scratch out a few meditative lines. But that same technology also shields me from Nature. My bubble of heat and light pushes away the black, cold silence of a winter night, and although I have little to fear when nightfall rushes in, there is also less to celebrate at dawn.

Modern society, a mere blink of an eye in terms of human evolution, seems in many ways to have pulled our cultural and ecological roots from the ground, laying them bare to the withering sun of civilization. We celebrate the primacy of the individual but have become stratified, specialized, transient, and isolated beyond the wildest imaginations of even our very recent ancestors. All of this seems to have left our sense of belonging, our sense of place, in tatters. The Solstice has become subverted from a time to celebrate the rebirth of light and our connection to others into a materialistic shopping frenzy. No wonder many people become depressed during the holidays. Shopping is not a reasonable remedy for isolation from nature and other humans, does not make up for the separation from our evolutionary heritage.

Human evolution is a vantage point from which we can explore our fascination with natural history. We name the fungi, plants, insects, amphibians, birds, and fellow mammals and revel in their ecological connectedness. But why do we care? We struggle to describe our attraction—because it's "interesting," because it's "important," because, well, we just "like it." Despite our best intentions, the words take on the hollow ring of euphemism. This is because there are no words to describe our pursuit of *place*, a spirituality borne on our primal urge to remain connected to the earth and to one another, a fundamental attraction with roots reaching deeply into our long evolutionary past.

I'm beginning to believe that this deep cohesiveness is a necessary anchor for meaningful environmental and social change. We will effectively protect and nurture our *place*, not because it is something we admire that is outside us but because it *is* us. My hope for the coming year is that we continue to grow our roots. This is not a New Year's Resolution, not a pass/fail exercise. Living a cohesive life is an incremental process. Let's learn a few new rocks, plants, salamanders, and birds. Find out how they were used by our ancestors. Decide to eat food that was grown in our soil, either by us or by someone we know. Spend our money in ways that benefit not only us but the people in our community. This is our genetic and cultural heritage. This is a celebration of our Natural History.

ROOM ALERT! Our Feb. meeting will <u>not</u> be in 100 Willamette Hall. The location will be announced in next month's Nature Trails, and, if we get it nailed down, at the 16 Jan. meeting.

Events of Interest in the Community

Tuesday, 13 January, 7:30pm. "Darwin's Puzzles: The Evolution of Sex and Death", a lecture by Professor Patrick Phillips, from the Center for Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, University of Oregon. Room 182, Lillis Hall, University of Oregon. This is the first in a monthly series of lectures celebrating the 150th anniversary of the publication of Darwin's Origin of Species. It will be geared to an informed, lay

audience. Come early to be assured a seat: this should be an excellent presentation and may be very well attended.

Audubon Society

Tuesday, 27 January, 7:30pm. The Owl and The Woodpecker: Encounters with North America's Most Iconic Birds, by Paul Bannick. Eugene Garden Club, 1645 High St., Eugene. Mr. Bannick will have available copies of his recent book. "The Owl and the Woodpecker is a monumental work of photojournalism by one of North America's top wildlife photographers. The images you'll encounter in this book are the result of an encyclopedic knowledge of birds and their habitats, an intense love of nature, and endless patience. For anyone who appreciates wild things and wild places, each of Bannick's stunning photographs is worth ten thousand words." —Ted Williams, Editor□at□Large, Audubon magazine

Mount Pisgah Arboretum
34901 Frank Parrish Rd., Eugene, 97405. Located off I-5 Exit 189, 15 minutes southeast of Eugene.
Call Clare at 747-1504 or email mtpisgjp@efn.org for more information or to sign up for any of the following Arboretum activities.

Sunday, 11 January, 10am-4pm. Finding and Harvesting Edible Mushrooms Workshop. Join mushroom enthusiast Josiah Legler and learn where and when to look for edible mushrooms, sustainable harvesting methods, field guide use, permitting and more. We'll meet at MPA, then carpool to a mushrooming location 45 minutes away. This class will prepare you to find and harvest mushrooms on your own, but we won't harvest what we find on class day. $20/$18 MPA members
Saturday, 17January, noon-4pm. Lichen Dyeing Workshop. Create color with lichen, with botanist Cheshire Mayrsohn. Seek out and identify lichens, learn about the mordants that make dye "stick" to yarn and cloth, then create rich, colorful dyes and dyed samples. $40/$35 MPA members.

Saturday, January 24, 10am-1pm. Silk Painting Workshop. Silk painting artist Meredith Ferrell will instruct students on how to create their own designs using silk dyes with a paintbrush and resist. $30/$25 MPA members.
Sunday, January 25, 10am-noon. Lichen Walk. With lichen expert Daphne Stone, explore the symbiotic relationship between algae and fungi that create lichens, and learn about their ecological importance in Oregon forests. All levels of expertise welcome. Meet at the MPA Visitor Center, rain or shine. $5/MPA members free.
Sunday, 1February, 1-4pm, follow-up Sunday, 8 February, 1-3pm. Nature Photography in a Digital World. Professional photographer David Stone will take the mystery out of your new camera and show you how to take amazing outdoor photos. See some of David's work at www.WildlandPhoto.net. $25/$20 members.
Saturday, 7 February, 10am -12 noon. Slowpoke Sketch Walk. Science illustrator Katura Reynolds will introduce basic skills for field sketching, then lead you on a walk that is short in distance but fascinating in detail. Bring portable drawing supplies and dress for the weather—anticipate muddy knees as we peek at tiny treasures along the trail! Meet at the MPA Visitor Center, rain or shine. Fee: $5/MPA members free.
Sunday, 8 February, noon-2pm. Winter Wonders Family Walk. What are plants, animals, and fungi up to this winter? Led by Tom Bettman. $5/MPA members free. Meet at the MPAVisitor Center, rain or shine.
Wild Child Survival Skills.
Sunday, 8 February, 3-5pm: Wild Child 1: Navigation & Lost-Proofing
Sunday, 15 February, noon-2pm: Wild Child 2: Shelter & Fire
Sunday, 22 February, 10:30-12:30: Wild Child 3: Water & Food
Matt and Anna Bradley, founders of Rewild Eugene, teach this three-class series geared toward children 5-11 years of age and their grownups. Sign up for just one class, or all three. Classes meet at the Visitor Center, then take place mostly outdoors and in the Pavilion, so dress for the weather. Each session is $8 per child or $5 per child with a family membership, and adults are free with child. Limit 12 children per session.

Saturday, 14 February, 8-10am. Bird Lovers' Valentine Walk. Bring your binoculars for this fun walk for birders of all levels, led by entertaining, long-time bird guide Davey Wendt. $5/members free. Meet at the MPAVisitor Center, rain or shine. Limit 20; RSVP #747-1504.
Saturday, 21 February, 10am-noon. Wild Edibles and Herbs Walk. Take a walk with herbalist Sue Sierralupé, and find out which local plants are good to eat, which are not, and how to cook the good ones. $5/members free. Meet at the MPA Visitor Center, rain or shine.
Sunday, 22 February, 1-3pm. One Small Square. Stretch your sketchbook and open your eyes to the details of our ecosystems! Natural science illustrator Kris Kirkeby teaches this mind-expanding drawing class for nature observers and sketchers. We will choose one square foot of nature, draw elements that identify aspects of the ecosystem and habitat, and create an artistic record of the location, time, weather, species present, living and non-living elements, and seasonal observations. We will finish drawing indoors, then share our squares and discuss the relationships within them. No drawing experience required; beginning and experienced artists will enhance their skills. $20/$15 members.

WREN Wetland Wanders

Wetland Wanders are casual walks through various West Eugene Wetlands sites. They are on the second Tuesday of every month.
Tuesday, 13 January, Meadowlark Prairie.
Tuesday 10 February, Stewart Pond.
For more information contact Holly McRae at 683-6494 or hmcrae@wewetlands.org.

We welcome new members! To join ENHS, fill out the form below. You will receive *Nature Trails* through December of next year. Membership payments allow us to give modest honoraria to our speakers, as well as to pay for the publication and mailing of *Nature Trails*. Please mail your check to Eugene Natural History Society, at the address below.

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Do you have any special experience in natural history?_____________________________________
Would you like to organize/lead field trips?______
Teach informal classes?______
Work on committees?______
What natural history topics interest you for future talks?____

ENHS Schedule of Speakers and Topics, Remainder of 2008-2009

16 January 2009 - Joe Moll, Executive Director, McKenzie River Trust
"Why is there a river in my forest?"
20 February 2009 - Bitty Roy, Professor of Biology, University of Oregon
"Biodiversity Hotspots Around the World"
20 March 2009 - Emily Steel, Restoration Ecologist, City of Eugene
"Green Gold: West Eugene's grassland communities"
17 April 2009 - Steve Sillett, Associate Professor, Humboldt State University
"Ecology and Physiology of the World's Tallest Trees"
15 May 2009 - Bruce Mate, Director, Marine Mammal Institute, Newport, Oregon
"The Biggest and the Deepest: Tracking Whales"

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Eugene Natural History Society

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ATTN: Interesting lecture next Tuesday, the 13th! See Events on p. 5.