

# Musings on the Molalla

Newsletter of the Molalla River Alliance

Summer/Fall 2009



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## Congress considers Wild and Scenic for the Molalla River

by **Mike Moody**  
MRA President

*Madam Speaker, I am pleased to introduce The Molalla River Wild and Scenic River Bill. This legislation would designate 21.3 miles of the Molalla River as "wild and scenic" and would provide federal designation in preserving the character of this section of the Molalla River.*

And with that succinct wording on June 9, 2009, Congressman Kurt Schrader introduced bill H.R. 2781, Wild and Scenic Rivers legislation, into the U.S. House of Representatives. This was followed fourteen days later by introduction of a companion bill into the U.S. Senate by Senator Ron Wyden and Senator Jeff Merkley.

In a press release Senator Wyden said the bills "...preserve another unique piece of Oregon's beauty and responds to local voices like the Molalla River Alliance."

The persistent work of the Alliance, including members Oregon Wild, American Rivers, Molalla RiverWatch, Native Fish Society, and the City of Molalla, initiated and led efforts to secure this legislation.

Passage of Wild and Scenic legislation will apply one of our nation's strongest conservation tools to protect the Molalla River.

Those listed under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act are afforded numerous federal protections. Among them, the Act assures the continued free-flowing character of the river, protects water quality and the river's "outstandingly remarkable values" (ORVs), and establishes a quarter-mile riparian buffer

on both sides of the river.

"Protecting this scenic area will provide clean water for our communities," said Sen. Merkley, and "improve recreational opportunities and ensure future generations can enjoy the river."

The Act also protects existing uses of the river. All legal recreational activities will continue to be allowed and designation does not affect privately-owned lands within the Molalla River Recreation Corridor.

"This represents a rare opportunity to safeguard and protect one of Oregon's storied rivers," said Erik Fernandez, Wilderness Coordinator for Oregon Wild.

Kavita Heyn, American Rivers Associate Director of Oregon Conservation Programs, points out that this "will protect the river and its values in the short and long terms, for the benefit of fish and people".

Now that legislation has been introduced, the Alliance and our partners continue to work to ensure this legislation receives a hearing in the House. We will be testifying before the House Natural Resources Committee on behalf of the legislation Oct. 2.

Passed in 1968, The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act protects more than 170 rivers in 38 states. Oregon now has more than 50 designated rivers, more than any other state. To be included, a river must be free-flowing and the adjacent lands must possess scenic, recreational, geologic, fish and wildlife, historic, cultural or other similar ORVs.

The Molalla is, of course, dam-free and its ORVs are scenic, recreation and geology.

## SAVE THE DATE

Members and Partners meeting  
9 a.m. Oct. 23 at Molalla Retreat, 36208 S Molalla Forest Rd.

# President's Message: Ryan Morgan may be gone but his example lives on

by **Mike Moody**  
MRA President



Twenty minutes after eagerly sitting down to write you about our recent achievements, an Alliance board member called to tell me that our friend and found-

ing member Ryan Morgan was killed in a kayaking accident on the Little White Salmon River in Washington.

I feel compelled to try to mold this dreadful moment into some meaningful metaphor or sage inspiration. As one who feels quick with a quip and semi-articulate, I find life's ultimate event does not encourage quips and I certainly don't feel articulate.

When I read various accounts of his life, I was struck by numerous parallels with our own efforts at the Molalla River Alliance. Unknowingly, unwittingly, or mere coincidence, the Alliance seems to possess characteristics and qualities exemplified by Ryan Morgan. If I am wrong about this, then it is certainly the bar we should be striving to hurdle.

- He was a quiet leader and consensus builder
- He selflessly worked for the benefit of others
- He was all about challenges, especially difficult ones
- He never drew attention to himself; his actions were his voice
- He worked effectively with all types of people and groups
- He was devoted to his hometown of Molalla

Compressed into a mere 31 years, we know Ryan lived fully and for the moment. He illustrated to the rest of us that life is precious, priceless and



never knowable. Always mysterious, hardships like this nonetheless serve to remind us to cherish the things important to us -- our family and friends, and to preserve the things we care about.

Finally, I would like to propose that when we achieve our goal of a centralized campground in the Molalla River Recreation Corridor, much consideration be given to naming it in honor of Ryan Morgan.

Personally, I want Ryan's legacy to move me/us to do better things for the Molalla, its watershed and our community.

We are not attempting to alter earth's rotation. The Alliance is, however, trying to effect positive changes to one small part of the planet, which is in our backyards.

All of the fabulous photographs you will see in this newsletter were taken by Ryan Morgan (unless otherwise noted). If you want to see more of his keen and artistic eye please see the Alliance website as well as Ryan's own internet site <http://molallakayaker.blogspot.com>.



# Ryan Morgan 1977-2009



Ryan Morgan, a widely admired founding member of the Molalla River Alliance, a member of the Molalla City Council and a lifelong Molalla resident, died in a kayaking accident Sunday Aug. 9 on the Little White Salmon River in Skamania County, Washington.

In his 31 years of life, Ryan touched and helped shape the lives of scores of young men as a coordinator of juvenile justice community service programs in the Molalla area. Ryan's work included numerous improvement projects in the Molalla River Recreation Corridor. He was an avid outdoorsman who loved to raft and kayak the Northwest's most challenging rivers.

He was appointed to the City Council last year to fill a vacant position. He was very well thought of as an energetic young leader who wanted to serve his community and make Molalla a better place.

People like Ryan Morgan don't come along all that often, and we were privileged to know him and work with him.



# 2009 steelhead spawning survey completed

*Despite second worst run on record, Molalla continues to see higher percentage of Upper Willamette winter steelhead*

by **Mark Schmidt and Russell Bassett**  
NFS Molalla River Stewards

The 2009 survey provided viable data in the form of redd counts in our traditional spawning reaches. We did again document higher concentrations of spawning in the newly protected area between Pine Creek Bridge and Horse Creek Bridge.

2009 was a year of low returns over Willamette Falls. 2,813 adult winter steelhead passed through the Willamette Falls fishway counting station. This was the second worst run year on record. Historical data indicates that 20%-30% of these fish are destined to the Molalla River drainage.

Our spawning survey covered 13 miles of spawning water/study area. We observed a total of 51 redds, 11 areas of excavation and counted 24 adult steelhead and one jack steelhead. Our calculations indicate approximately 10 spawning adults per mile in 65 miles of premium spawning areas; which include the entire North Fork drainage, the mainstream and tributaries upstream of Pine Creek Bridge and the upper reaches of Abiqua, Butte and Milk Creeks.

The survey figures indicate that 650-1,000 steelhead, comprising 23-36% of the Upper Willamette winter steelhead run, returned to the Molalla system in 2009. Based on Santiam River dam counts and Santiam and Calapooia River spawning surveys, we believe that during this decade, the Molalla has seen a significant increase in the percentage of fish that pass over Willamette Falls.

Though our primary objective is to create an accurate estimate of wild fish populations in the Molalla River drainage, we have discovered that each successive year of observation provides us with further insights into this population. We are finding that large concentrations of Molalla River winter steelhead spawn in portions of the river system which are outside of our observation areas. In addition, we believe that a significant part of this population may be moving in and out of the river system, totally unobserved. The lower river, from Highway 211 to the mouth is accessible only by boat throughout most of the season. No spawning observations are being done in the lower river.

Informal creel surveys, and reports issued by local fisherman indicate that the lower river may provide spawning habitat for a significant part of this steelhead population.

In 2010 our plans include: Repeat the redd counts for the designated study reaches, perform multiple visits to the designated study reaches, expand our informal observations to include the lower river, and expand our formal surveys to include Trout Creek and Pine Creek.

We want to acknowledge and thank the significant contribution to this survey provided by volunteers Jim Byrne of Tigard and Bob Ruediger, fish biologist for the BLM Salem District.



Photo by Mark Schmidt

Above: Photo of steelhead spawning redd.

Below: Native Fish Society Molalla River Stewards conduct the 2009 wild winter steelhead spawning survey on Copper Creek in May.



Photo by Jim Byrne

# News and Notes

## Enforcement patrols expand over the summer

by Sgt. Gordon White  
Molalla Police Department

Thanks to funding again provided by the City of Molalla as well as its Weed and Seed Program, enforcement patrols have been expanded this summer in the river corridor.

Since Memorial Day weekend, the Molalla Police Department has been providing between 50 and 60 hours of corridor patrol between Fridays and Mondays. In addition, Clackamas County Sheriff's office also has a full deputy working Friday through Monday, giving a lot of law enforcement presence in the corridor.

With the exception of minor vandalism, we have been fortunate again this year to have had no fatal crashes or drowning.

The Molalla Police Department plans continuing full patrols through the end of September. Alliance member Sgt. Gordon would like to note that "We continue to get support and thanks from the public for our presence while patrolling the corridor, which we greatly appreciate."

## Dinner Postponed

Due to lower than hoped for attendance, the Alliance postponed until next year our first annual fundraising dinner. Your planning committee learned not to schedule an



event that competes with vacation and late summer travels.

A very special recognition to those who worked so diligently on this, including Ilene and Monte Waldorf, Russell Bassett, Tom and Connie Derry, Fran and Bill Taylor, Mark Schmidt and Wendy Chadsey, and Mike and Ronda Moody. We very much appreciate all your efforts.

## Congressman Schrader holds roundtable

On Sept. 2, Rep. Kurt Schrader held a roundtable discussion on the Molala River with key local stakeholders to highlight

the efforts being made on the Molalla River, including his introduction of Wild and Scenic Rivers legislation.

## Oregon Wild Update

by Erik Fernandez  
Oregon Wild

After several years of hard work, Oregon Wild recently helped win protections for over 200,000 acres of Wilderness in Oregon. President Obama signed legislation into law that protected Mount Hood, the Columbia Gorge, Copper Salmon, Soda Mountain and others as Wilderness areas for future generations to enjoy.





The legislation also protected 90 miles of Wild and Scenic Rivers. This was a great step toward doing our part to protect the forests that slow the effects of global warming. Oregon's forests absorb a tremendous amount of carbon that would otherwise be released into the atmosphere. Keeping forests standing is the best thing we can do to slow climate change.

Oregon Wild is now hard at work building on the momentum from the passage of the new Wilderness areas in Oregon. In June we were successful in working with the US Congress to introduce legislation that would not only protect the Wild and Scenic Molalla River but also the Devil's Staircase Wilderness and additional Wild

and Scenic Rivers that feed the Rogue River. In working to protect Oregon's natural treasures we're working hard to keep Oregon a great place to live, work, and raise a family.

## MRA Website

The MRA website continues to grow with many new features designed to inform visitors of the many wonderful environmental and recreational benefits of the Molalla River.

Some of those new features include a Flash photo slideshow on the homepage, location and contact information for services

near the Corridor, online membership form, map of Corridor points of interest, white paper on the ecological and recreational benefits of the Upper Molalla River, news releases, numerous photos (many of which were taken by Ryan Morgan), and details on how to be more involved with the Alliance.

If you have photos, videos or information you would like to see on the website, please send them to Russell at [nativefish1@molalla.net](mailto:nativefish1@molalla.net).

## MHS Green Team MRA Facebook

by **Ethan McClelland & Kyle Lindsey**  
MHS Students

The Molalla High School Green Team has a number of plans for the upcoming year to help build on our presence and positive impact on the Molalla community and beyond.

One of our main focuses of the year is to help make the second annual Greenstock Earthday Concert even more successful than last years.

An important goal of ours for the Molalla High School and eventually other surrounding communities is to join the Oregon Green Schools Initiative, through correspondence with the Gladstone High School Environmental Club.

Other side projects of the Green Team include community gardening, tree planting, park and river cleanups, and road cleanups.

In other news The Molalla River Alliance will soon have a Facebook page! We at the Green Team believe that the MRA can greatly benefit from a presence on the social networking site Facebook. Facebook can give us exposure to a larger crowd of people especially from demographics that may not normally hear of us.

This can serve to spread the message of the MRA and increase awareness about the Molalla River Corridor and its many attractions. In this way we can increase the amount of people who come to enjoy the natural beauty of the corridor responsibly, with the environment in mind.

Thank You to every one who reads this article, and everyone who has made it possible for us take part in this organization.

# Schrader speech to U.S. House

*(The following is a speech by Rep. Kurt Schrader introducing his Molalla River Wild and Scenic River Bill to the U.S. House of Representatives on June 9, 2009.)*

Madam Speaker, I am pleased to introduce The Molalla Wild and Scenic River Bill. This legislation would designate 21.3 miles of the Molalla River as “wild and scenic” and would provide federal designation in preserving the character of this section of the Molalla River.

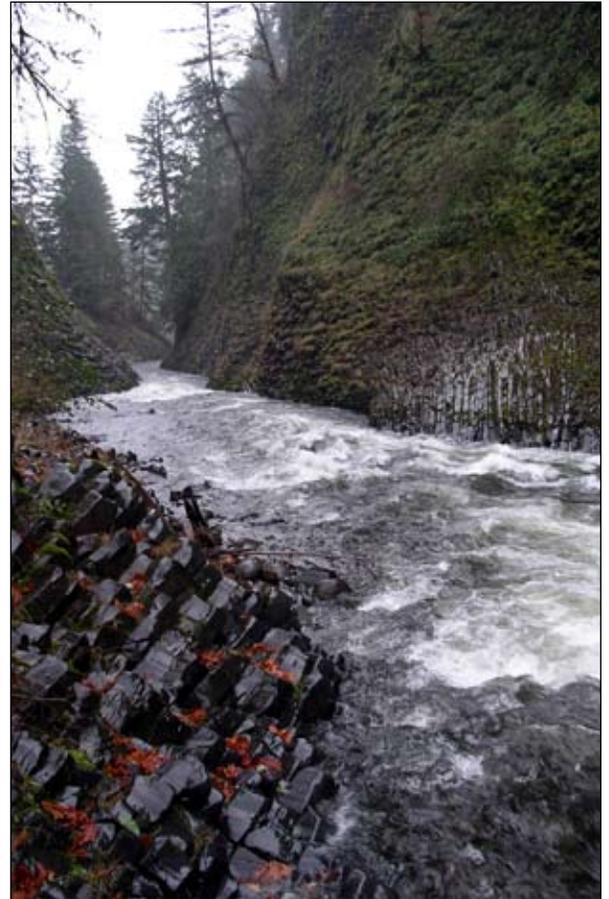
This legislation is supported by numerous elected officials, civic leaders, and recreational and environmental groups in Clackamas and Marion counties including American Rivers, the City of Molalla, the Oregon State Police, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, Wild Salmon Center, and the Willamette RiverKeepers. All of these groups recognize the social, cultural and economic benefits of this bill.

In Oregon, the Molalla River is known for its many recreational

purposes which include hiking, diving, fishing, kayaking, whitewater rafting, picnicking, mountain biking and horseback riding. It still serves as a water source for many citizens in Canby and Molalla, Oregon, and is nationally recognized for its beautiful and scenic wildlife.

It provides spawning beds for threatened steelhead trout and chinook salmon, and is also an essential wildlife area for the pileated woodpecker, red tree vole, red-legged frog, northern spotted owl, pacific giant salamander, and both gold and bald eagles.

Designating this section of the Molalla River as “wild and scenic” would permanently ensure its protection and preservation as one of Oregon’s many natural state treasures. It would guarantee that future generations can experience the river’s rich historical, cultural, and recreational purposes. I am excited to introduce this legislation and urge my colleagues to support it.



## MRA PARTNERS AND MEMBERS

American Rivers  
Back Country Horsemen  
Back Country Hunters and Anglers  
BARK  
Bee Ranch  
Bureau of Land Management  
City of Molalla  
Friends of the Molalla  
Kaitlin Lovell, Environmental Services, Portland  
Clackamas County Parks and Recreation  
Clackamas County Sheriff  
David Moskowitz, Confluence Consulting, LLC  
DEQ / Karen Williams  
Ecotrust  
Friends of the Molalla River  
Glen Avon Neighborhood Association  
Hamlet of Mulino  
Jo Anne Dolan, Lluvia Buena  
Mazamas  
Molalla Community Planning Organization  
Molalla Pioneer Newspaper

Molalla Police Department  
Molalla Retreat  
Molalla RiverWatch  
Molalla River Anglers  
Oregon Equestrian Trails  
Oregon Wild  
Native Fish Society  
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration  
North American Salmon Stronghold Program  
Northwest Steelheaders  
Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife  
Oregon Department of Forestry  
Oregon State Police  
Oregon Trout  
Peachuck Lookout Advocacy Group  
Sierra Club  
South Clackamas CPO  
Steven H. Smith Fisheries Consulting, Inc.  
Todos Juntos  
Trails End Campground  
Western Rivers  
Willamette Riverkeeper  
Individual Landowners and Neighbors



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