*2017 Q2*

# Quarterly Impact Report

The Freshwater Trust®

**FRIENDS,**

It's a pleasure to have this venue to introduce myself to you all. Unless you are one of The Freshwater Trust's landowners, we likely haven't met in person. Nevertheless, it's an honor to be the one presenting our latest impacts in this report.

My official title is Southern Oregon Programs Director. Put simply, I'm a connector, charged with developing relationships with conservation partners and landowners in the Rogue, one of TFT's restoration strongholds. We collaborate with farmers, ranchers and other individuals who own property along this wild and scenic river and its key tributaries. With this, we gain access to parts of land where restoration actions will make a quantifiable difference for water quality and habitat. Bigger than that? We are breaking down barriers between sectors and proving healthy rivers and working lands can coexist.

It's easier written about than done. Sometimes we get great skepticism. Sometime we get sheer resistance. After all, the rifts between producers and environmental groups run deep, and for every handshake we have, there are several "nos." It takes persistence and patience. And our supporters keep us doing what we know is difficult but critical.

In the following pages, you'll be introduced to one of the landowners we work with on Little Butte Creek. You'll hear from my colleagues based in our Ashland office. And we'll show you the big picture of our efforts in the basin.

What's happening in the Rogue is a microcosm of what's possible and necessary elsewhere. Thank you for helping us lead the way.

**DENIS REICH**
*Southern Oregon Programs Director*

*Front cover: Lone Pine Creek, Oregon*
*This page: Little Butte Creek, Oregon*
*Last page: South Fork Little Butte Creek, Oregon*

# I'll walk the creek with you

Once a day, Diane Seitz walks to Little Butte Creek with her dog Maggie. It's not far. Maggie usually leads the way – out a garage door and through a garden gate. Follow the fence to the water. Seitz started making the routine daily after her husband died.

"It was my therapy," said Seitz. "Just to come out here and walk."

They purchased the land along the creek and moved south from Anchorage to the little town of Lake Creek, Oregon. It was the final stop on a grand tour of the West. Gary spent his career in forestry. There were stints in Montana, Wyoming and California.

And they'd always wanted land along water.

"Having property along a creek like this is a treasure, and you should take care of it," said Seitz. "But when we bought this place, I called it used and abused. There were no young trees, and it had all been overgrazed."

Over the years, Gary replanted thousands of trees. And after he died, The Freshwater Trust (TFT) would come to plant 1,400 more.

The creek had been identified by the Bureau of Reclamation as prime habitat for juvenile coho, and had allotted money for restoration. A side channel off Seitz's property was critical for the fish during the winter. Starting in 2015, TFT built nine large wood structures and planted more than 1,000 native trees and shrubs on one acre of Seitz's property.

**HIGHLIGHTS**

- 1,400 native trees planted
- 9 large wood structures installed
- Little Butte Creek is a 17-mile tributary of the Rogue River.

"This is a remarkable spot," said Lance Wyss, restoration project manager with TFT. "When you realize there are more fish because you are present, that's a powerful example of impact."

Seitz has watched the plants grow, as she and Maggie wind through them daily.

"All of this just used to be thick, invasive blackberry," said Seitz. "It's good to see it gone."

Her neighbors have noticed the changes as well. It would be hard not to. Dead and dying logs from another nearby neighbor's property were trucked in to create the large wood structures to improve habitat complexity.

But placing large wood in streams can be contentious. In the 1960s, the Army Corps of Engineers led a national movement to remove "woody debris" and meanders from streams

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## LANCE WYSS

*Restoration Project Manager*

Lance has spent more than a decade completing fisheries and wildlife research and the last three years managing ecological restoration projects. He has extensive experience overseeing large wood placement and riparian revegetation, monitoring Pacific lamprey, sampling fish populations and aquatic invertebrate communities, and surveying streams. Lance has worked for Oregon State University, Oregon Dept. of Fish and Wildlife, U.S. Forest Service, Calapooia Watershed Council, Oregon Dept. of Environmental Quality, and ABR, Inc. As a Restoration Project Manager for The Freshwater Trust's Ashland office, Lance interacts with landowners and partners to support the implementation and stewardship of restoration projects throughout southern Oregon. In his spare time, he enjoys running, hiking, bird watching, and backpacking.

## I'LL WALK THE CREEK

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and rivers. They thought it would prevent flooding. In actuality, water was carried through the river system faster, exacerbating the problem. Removing the wood also decreased habitat for native fish.

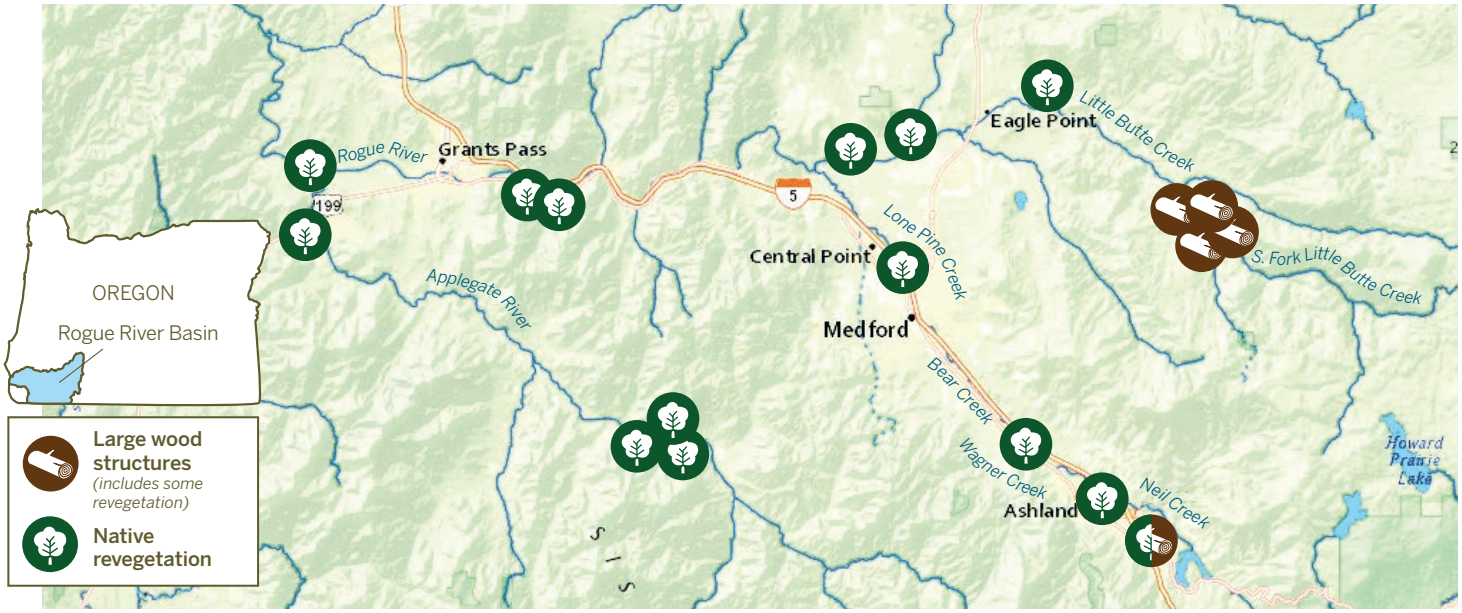
"We're working to modify historic impacts," said Wyss. "The accumulation of large wood is a completely natural process. We're trying to bring these waterways back to a higher functioning state."

Seitz believes that with seeing comes believing. The side channel that was once almost gone now has water and juvenile coho in it. Now entering their second growing season, the native plants that took the place of the invasive blackberry are thriving. She invites the skeptics to come take a look.

"I'd like to tell them to come down here," said Seitz. "Come down here, and I'll walk the creek with you."

## TFT IN THE ROGUE

Since 2012, our efforts to reduce water temperature with streamside plants and restore native fish habitat with large wood structures have grown to 18 project sites.




TREES PLANTED

**50,000**

LARGE WOOD STRUCTURES INSTALLED

**130**

## LOOKING FORWARD

### SNAKE RIVER BASIN, IDAHO

Last year, we doubled the size of an island on the Snake River to improve instream habitat and reduce thermal loading. With the winter flows beginning to recede, our team is gearing up for an active season of maintenance and monitoring. To kick off the season, our crews will be conducting quantitative vegetation monitoring on Bayha Island by surveying more than 25 transects across the island to assess the health of the vegetation planted last fall. We will also be maintaining the plants throughout the summer, which will include irrigation and weed management.

### SACRAMENTO RIVER BASIN, CALIFORNIA

In the North Sacramento Delta, we are working with 18 local groups to form Groundwater Sustainability Agencies under California's new groundwater management regulation. TFT is assisting these entities with formulating a cooperative groundwater sustainability plan that balances the needs of the entire groundwater basin. Also, work with landowners in this region on an Alternative Compliance Plan for surface water discharge measurement has gained traction and will ramp up over the summer.

### ROGUE RIVER BASIN, OREGON

This quarter, we'll be working with our partners to conduct a comprehensive geospatial assessment within the Little Butte Creek watershed. The goal is to identify areas along the creek and its tributaries that are experiencing streambank erosion that is resulting in excess sediment to the stream. Using spatial datasets such as LiDAR, soil erodibility, land uses, and aerial imagery, the assessment will look at land management practices near the stream to determine the most cost-effective areas to target outreach and funding for agricultural best management practices that directly benefit water quality in Little Butte Creek.

### LOSTINE & JOHN DAY BASINS, OREGON

For the Flow Team, the arrival of summer means seeing the results of the past nine months of work. As the irrigation season begins and temperatures creep upwards, nearly 150 instream leases across Oregon will kick into action, leaving nearly 160 cfs instream (more than 100 million gallons per day). Over the next several months, staff will head into the field to collect data on our leases, providing critical feedback for next year's work.