

The Freshwater Trust

● QUARTERLY

Impact

REPORT

Q1



2021





HELLO



Events don't look like they used to. We hope you'll join us for our first virtual benefit on May 13, 2021.

FRIEND,

Everyone remembers what their last gathering was before the world changed. A concert. A birthday party. A benefit.

Last year, Immerse fell on March 5 – about a week before most of us went into “lockdown.” We’ve heard from many of you how memorable it was for that reason. There was talk of COVID then, but few knew the year we were all about to face. More than a year later, there’s a little light at the end of a long tunnel. We hope this letter finds you seeing and feeling some of it.

Fortunately, and thanks to our supporter community, TFT weathered the storm that was 2020 well. Because we were able to continue to safely work outside last spring and summer, restoration projects carried on. And thanks to the fact that much of our work involves building analytical tools behind the scenes, many of our staff transitioned to remote work seamlessly. We’re gearing up for another big (and safe) restoration season this summer. 2020 was also a foundational year for innovation. Doors have opened with massive new partners, such as Microsoft, and our tools are being used in new geographies, including Washington and Colorado.

This year, at the virtual version of Immerse, we want to give you a look into some of this new and groundbreaking work and how we are disrupting the status quo of freshwater conservation and restoration. Immerse got its name because we wanted to give our supporters an insider’s look into The Freshwater Trust’s approach. Even with the virtual format, you can be guaranteed that the intention of the event holds true.

See you then!

Haley Walker
Communications Director



Love from one clear liquid to another

TFT partners with Hood River Distillers

The Freshwater Trust (TFT) is proud to have joined forces with Hood River Distillers (HRD) as a beneficiary of their new spirit Timberline Vodka, released this past March. HRD recognizes that the quality of their products rely upon the quality of the water used to produce them, and TFT is grateful for their financial support to continue to fix rivers throughout Oregon. TFT sat down with Joe O’Sullivan, master distiller, and David Ballew, president, to learn more about the company ethos and what inspired them to embark on this collaboration.



Meet Joe

1. How did you come to be a Master Distiller at Hood River Distillers and was this always something you imagined yourself doing?

Funny enough I started my career in science and wetland ecology, certifying vernal and autumnal pools in Eastern Massachusetts through the identification of fairy shrimp, wood frogs and the spotted salamanders. I also worked for Natural Resources on Cape Cod for a few years too.



My work there was in sustainable aquaculture research and monitoring toxic phytoplankton blooms. Most of the time I grew a lot of quahogs and scallops. Baby scallops are cute. Till the day I die I'll always be captivated the natural world and our place in it. I'm very grateful for it. I never expected to become a distiller, it was a lucky break that Steve McCarthy needed help when he did. I had no idea what a distiller's life was like before that. I love what I do, but I don't think I would have remained in it if it wasn't for what I learned in those early days at Clear Creek. The principals of sourcing locally, of using real whole ingredients, and absolutely nerding out on fruit continue to give this job soul and purpose.

2. Describe the Timberline Vodka to someone who has never tasted it before.

Timberline's flavor is very clean. Different ingredients distill to different tastes. What you find in a bottle of Timberline is all the brisk crystalline flavor of well-made grain spirits supported by the soft silky sweetness of an apple vodka. Working out the ratio of the two ingredients was more educational to our distilling crew than you may expect. What we settled on was a balance that would be best shared on a cold night camping. It might sound silly, but good design should always have an emotion or tone to convey.

5. What stands out to you about The Freshwater Trust?

There is another world out there where I pursued a career maintaining our most important resource just as The Freshwater Trust does. This invaluable work benefits everyone and everything. I am incredibly thankful for what they do, for the volunteers they depend on, and for the education they provide to the public. Organizations like theirs guide my own decisions both privately and professionally. I can't thank them and everyone who takes a guardianship role towards our world enough.



Meet David

1. What sets Hood River Distillers apart from others?

Hood River Distillers has a rich heritage and history, with deep roots in the Pacific Northwest. Hood River Distillers was the first licensed distillery in OR, and the largest distillery in the Pacific Northwest. From our beginnings in 1934 to current times, one of our strongest traits has been, and will continue to be innovation – innovation is in our DNA. Ultimately, though, it is our people and culture that sets us apart. Hood River Distillers is a family, and that is our bond. We care about each other, we help each other, we respect each other, we work hard for each other, and we depend on each other. Oh, and by the way, we happen to have a great portfolio of spirit brands!

2. Why is it important for Hood River Distillers to be engaged in philanthropic efforts?

At the core of it, giving back, helping out, and trying to do good is just the right thing to do. Engaging in philanthropy is the right thing for our people to do, and it is the right thing for Hood River Distillers to do. For decades, Hood River Distillers has supported philanthropic efforts, including a very generous company match of employee charitable contributions. Being authentic in what we engage in, and how we engage in it is always important. As our future philanthropic efforts will continue to be done authentically and for the right reasons, it gives a sense of purpose, it makes a positive impact on ourselves, and it connects us to people in our community (local and greater) for causes that truly can make a difference.

3. What really stands out to you about The Freshwater Trust?

I really appreciate how The Freshwater Trust has evolved over time and is really similar to Hood River Distillers in that regard. TFT has evolved their direction from working on important water conservation policies to more of a restoration platform, and that really stands out to me. The Freshwater Trust strives to restore degraded water quality and quantity, fish habitat, and freshwater ecosystems. Their impressive and innovative use of technology adds more precision to their efforts, setting them apart from other restoration efforts. At Hood River Distillers, great water is a critical component of what makes our products so special, so partnering with The Freshwater Trust is such an obvious and natural fit. It feels right!



TFT hits major milestone years early



Eugene Wier was skeptical, yet optimistic, when he began overseeing The Freshwater Trust's (TFT) water quality trading program with the City of Medford.

In 2011, the major Southern Oregon municipality agreed to do something unprecedented – allow TFT to use nature to offset the impacts of its wastewater treatment facility. Rather than invest in a cooling tower or a chiller, engineered solutions with price tags upwards of \$20 million, the city partnered with TFT to the tune of \$6.5 million. The solution proposed was to plant trees and shrubs in strategic places along the Rogue River and its tributaries.

The acres of planted native vegetation would block solar load and keep the water cool by mitigating the warm water discharged. Importantly, it would keep the city in compliance with the Clean Water Act. Increased water temperatures impact water quality and the health of native fish species.

“This was the first time anything like this had really been done – in the West,” said Wier. “The stakes were really high, and our solution had to be highly durable and have appeal to landowners who would host the projects for 20 years.”

TFT was charged with ensuring the planting projects throughout the Rogue basin would generate credits representing the offset of 600 million kilocalories of solar load. A kilocalorie represents the amount of energy required to raise the temperature of a liter of water by 1.0 degree Celsius. One credit equals one kilocalorie per day.

Regulator-accepted models and analytical tools helped TFT determine where to work, and the size of the projects necessary, to achieve that target.

“The 600 million was double what we needed to be in compliance with our permit,” said Dustin Hagemann, Water Reclamation Division Manager with the City of Medford. “That really helped soften some initial concerns for us – just knowing that we were generating twice what we actually needed to.”

Nine years after the program began, and two years ahead of schedule, TFT has officially implemented enough projects to reach that threshold needed to satisfy the permit requirements.

“On its face, this program was built to mitigate a very specific impact through a natural approach,” said Wier. **“The truth is, there’s been a whole myriad of ancillary benefits.”**



TFT HITS MAJOR MILESTONE YEARS EARLY

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The thousands of plants tucked into the ground over the years to increase stream shade have also helped prevent erosion, filter nutrients, suppress invasive species growth, provide future woody debris for fish habitat, and beautify the river corridor for recreation. And the contract has supported local jobs by directing millions to local businesses, such as plant nurseries and landscape professionals.

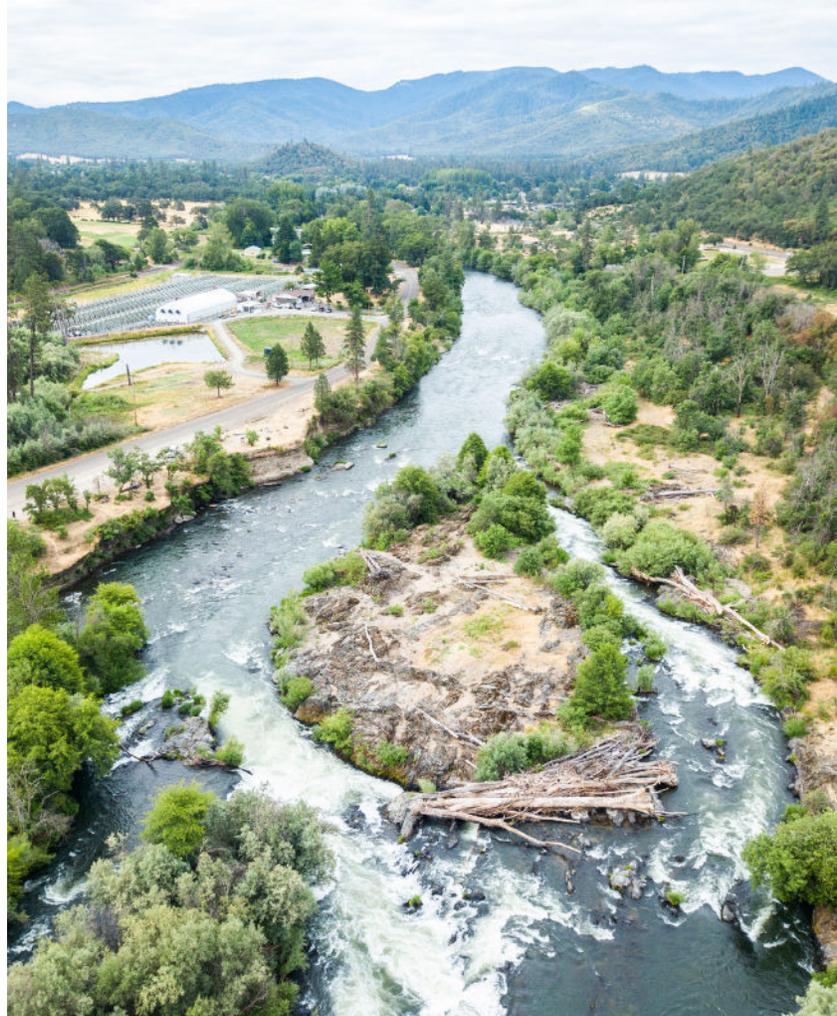
“The additional benefits and the cost really showed how this was the right thing to do,” said Hagemann. “If we had built a giant chiller, it could have complied with our limits but it would have been expensive and there wouldn’t have been many environmental or economic benefits. It’s also been impressive to see how resilient these projects are, when it was so hard to believe that natural sites could uphold in the same way as the constructed option.”

In September of last year, a handful of the projects were tested by Mother Nature when unprecedented wildfire tore through the area. Areas of the creeks and rivers plagued with invasive plants and shrubs burned hotter, while the restored sites endured the fire.

“We saw exactly how having a healthy riparian area makes a difference for fire events like that,” said Wier. “It’s another example of how we design and build these projects in order to weather all kinds of natural disturbance, whether that’s pest, flood, or fire.”

The projects implemented are woven throughout the basin – on both public and private land. Two are in parks to be enjoyed by the public. Two are on local wineries.

Eleven private landowners and three municipal owners have been recruited as part of this program to lease their land to TFT for two decades, ensuring the projects can continue to be monitored and maintained.



“I was so unsure of whether or not people were going to be willing to lease their land for projects like this – especially for that long,” said Wier. “As it turned out, they were really receptive to hosting this work, and they’ve been pleased with the improvements as well.”

Witnessing the program’s success hasn’t only made believers out of skeptics like Wier and Hagemann. The nearby City of Ashland approached TFT to implement a smaller-scale program in 2018 that would help mitigate their facility’s impacts on Bear Creek. It is anticipated to run through 2043 and will restore more than 20 acres of vegetation in the Bear Creek watershed.

IMMERSE

2021

A VIRTUAL BENEFIT FOR
THE FRESHWATER TRUST

MAY 13 7 P.M. PT

At Immerse 2021, a virtual benefit for TFT, you'll have the behind-the-scenes opportunity to immerse yourself in TFT's analytical approach and data-driven work to fundamentally change how all rivers are fixed. You'll hear about the current state of the organization and meet some of TFT's brilliant staff working on this big, hairy problem. Most importantly, you'll play a fundamental role in helping us solve it.

SPEAKERS

Joe Whitworth

President of The Freshwater Trust

Kim Malek

CEO and Cofounder of Salt & Straw Ice Cream

Kevin Surace

Entrepreneur of the Decade by CNBC, a "Tech Pioneer" by the World Economic Forum, Entrepreneur of the Year by Inc. Magazine

Special appearances by TFT staff discussing latest projects

TICKET LEVELS

General Admission: \$20

VIP Admission: \$100

*VIP admission includes special swag bag full of local goodies delivered to your door. Available to Portland metro area.

ATTEND | our 2021 virtual Immerse benefit

READ | the latest about our work on our blog

DONATE | to help us continue to achieve quantifiable results for rivers

THEFRESHWATERTRUST.ORG

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