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Beyond Toxics Board of Directors is now seeking potential candidates to be part of the Board team. For more information please email Pradnya: pradnyagarud2@gmail.com, Kim: kim@oregoninsurancelady.com or Kathleen: sullivan8108@gmail.com with your interest.

Spring/Summer
2022



Photo Credit: Carla Hervet

Bear grass and lupine bloom along a mountain side in the Oregon Cascades

BEE JAZZY
A BENEFIT TO SAVE OREGON'S BEES
FEAT. HALIE LOREN
JAZZ QUARTET &
THE OLEM ALVES TRIO

SILVAN RIDGE WINERY
JUNE 23 5:30 PM - 9 PM
BUY TICKETS: BEEJAZZY.ORG

Photo Credit: Sally Sheldon



Beyond Toxics Newsletter

Our mission

We envision a society where everyone has equitable access to healthy food and clean air and water, and underserved communities are included in decision making processes that affect them. Together, we move beyond the damaging environmental practices of the past and collectively work to support and maintain ecological resilience and balance.

What's inside

- 2022 Program Updates
- New Staff
- Building Climate Resilience in Lane County
- Rethinking Land Use To Beat Climate Change
- Pollution Mapping in Lane County
- Willamette Wetlands of the Kalapuya Tribes

You're Our Biggest Partner!

By: Lisa Arkin
Executive Director

Beyond Toxics relies on our deep experience working with marginalized communities to envision - and win - new laws that were unimaginable just a few years ago.

I hope you feel encouraged that, in the face of extreme risk to all that we hold dear, the Beyond Toxics team takes action to create a world built on a foundation of environmental justice and ecosystem protections.

I'm so proud that we deliver on our promise to confront the root causes of today's complex issues.

The proof of our success is evident in our achievements. From protecting communities by shutting down dirty polluters, to protecting pollinators and watersheds by phasing out the worst classes of pesticides, we are consistently productive and hard-hitting.

“
Reflecting years of our dedicated environmental justice organizing, we brought public and regulatory pressure on JH Baxter to end their chronic toxic pollution. We use legal and community-based strategies to hold polluters morally and financially accountable for poisoning nearby neighborhoods.
”

We set a high bar to advance environmental stewardship merged with environmental justice. For example, our legislative proposal to build racial equity and climate resilience into Oregon's land use laws shined a light on the historical absence of any policy to include communities of color, Tribal representatives, and impacted rural communities in decisions about growth and land conservation. As a result of our advocacy at the state legislature, Oregon's land use agency, the Department of Land Conservation and Development, is now adopting new rules to guarantee more equitable outreach and diverse public participation and input into all land use decisions.

Our success depends on supporters like you who join us in this bold vision. Your financial support and encouragement gives Beyond Toxics the resources necessary to bring about the change Oregon needs and deserves. We have an unprecedented opportunity to create a sweeping transition from a pollution-based economy to a society centered on thriving communities and healthy ecosystems.

Please join with us! We need your support to tackle the urgency of climate change and toxic pollution. Help us build momentum to win lasting environmental and public health protections.



Above: Partnerships are an example of environmental justice. Here Paige and Lisa (right) stand together with UNITE OREGON at our office in Phoenix



Above: Lisa advocates for Clean Energy Jobs at the Oregon State Capitol.

Ways To Give

- ♥ DEPENDABLE DONATIONS
- ♥ IRA DISTRIBUTIONS
- ♥ MATCHING GIFT CAMPAIGNS
- ♥ DONATIONS OF STOCK



Lisa



Emissions from J.H. Baxter in West Eugene.

Chronic Creosote Polluter Ends Operations in Eugene

By: Peter Jensen
Environmental Justice Law & Policy Extern

For over 50 years, J.H. Baxter operated a wood treatment facility in West Eugene where wood products were infused with potent oil-based pesticides and chemical treatments. In recent months, J.H. Baxter, facing large civil penalties and an expensive environmental clean-up, announced that they would “mothball” their facility. The owners claimed “it simply doesn't make financial sense to continue current operations at [their] Eugene facility.” Apparently, J.H. Baxter's choice of operational methods, which never made moral or legal sense, is no longer financially sensible.

Celebrations from neighborhood residents are justified. Beyond Toxics and thousands of residents of West Eugene have raised the alarm on J.H. Baxter's pollution for decades, citing noxious smells, illness, discomfort, and respiratory issues among other adverse health effects, including incidence of rare childhood cancer.

J.H. Baxter has been cited with over twenty pollution violations in the last 30 years, including poisoning groundwater with PCPs and contaminating homes and public parks with dioxin.

Despite laws and environmental protections codified to protect ‘public health and welfare,’ poison on the playground and pollution off the porch have repeatedly threatened residents of West Eugene. Today, nearly 40 Bethel residents wait to find out if their property is marked unsafe for children or growing food or unfit for typical use.

Today's antiquated laws, as codified, allow our state and federal government to permit harm and, functionally, designate sacrifice zones. And unfortunately, these violations and cited penalties have little effect—to a company like J.H. Baxter, it's just a cost of doing business.

Since the inception of Beyond Toxics, we've been dedicated to addressing the root causes of toxic pollution. By working to dismantle entrenched and unfair legal loopholes that allow unabated contamination with no accountability, we will go a long way in the fight against these root causes. A vital part of that work includes updating land use laws and strengthening environmental regulations.

We are taking on the issue of chronic toxic polluters in the courts, at City Hall, at the Oregon Legislature, and in “sacrifice zone communities.” Accomplishing these goals will provide lasting protections for all communities, in perpetuity.

“
Despite laws and environmental protections codified to protect ‘public health and welfare,’ poison on the playground and pollution off the porch have repeatedly threatened residents of West Eugene
”



Peter

Visualizing Lane County Pollution

By: Mason Leavitt
GIS and Spatial Data Coordinator

Over the past few months, Beyond Toxics has worked with GIS specialists to map gas station locations, aerial pesticide applications, and much more! I recently joined the Beyond Toxics team to map out air pollution data in Lane County using two data sets from Lane Regional Air Protection Agency (LRAPA). LRAPA requires certain facilities to report their greenhouse gas (GHGs) emissions and hazardous pollutants. Combining the two data sets in one display helps us see where the most toxic polluters are regularly emitting the most GHGs that contribute to climate change.

On the map, you can differentiate the two data sets by size and color. First, the color of a symbol shows human health risks from cancer and other serious diseases (red and purple being the most toxic and yellow and orange being the least toxic).

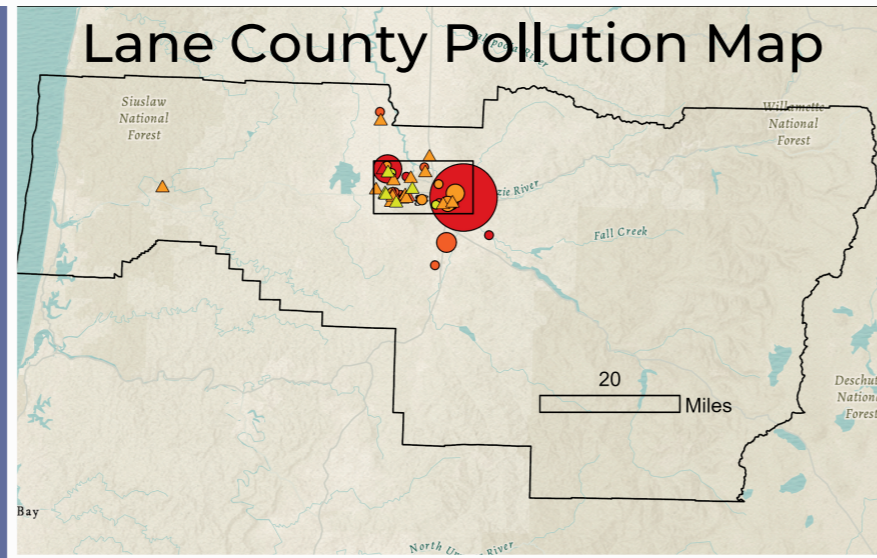
The **Total Risk** is the probability per million people a person will develop a chronic, such as asthma, or an acute health condition, such as a heart attack.

Second, the size of the circle shows how much GHGs a facility emits. Note the large number of triangle shapes, which show industrial polluters that are not required to report their GHG emissions. We see that the biggest emitters of air toxics are also some of the biggest contributors to GHGs. Visualizing the relationship of toxic polluters and GHG sources can provide a critical insight into the meaning of a "sacrifice zone."

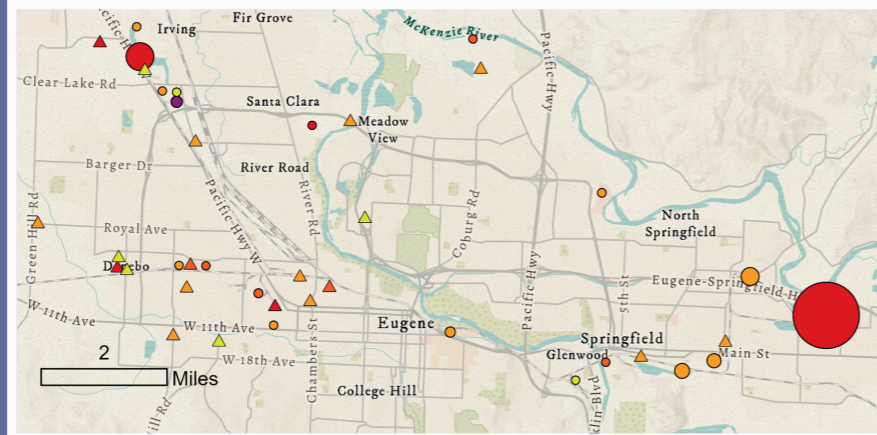
These maps illustrate a geographical relationship between the highest risk for diseases, air toxics polluters, and GHG emitters.

Oregon needs stronger policies that monitor air toxics and GHGs. In particular, we need to close the data gap by requiring all polluters to report GHG emissions. Many smaller sources can add up to significant climate impacts. The analogy is similar to cars and trucks. Taken individually, each emits a small amount, but in the aggregate, their climate impact is massive. Reducing both at the same time will not only protect our environment but will also prioritize public health in the process.

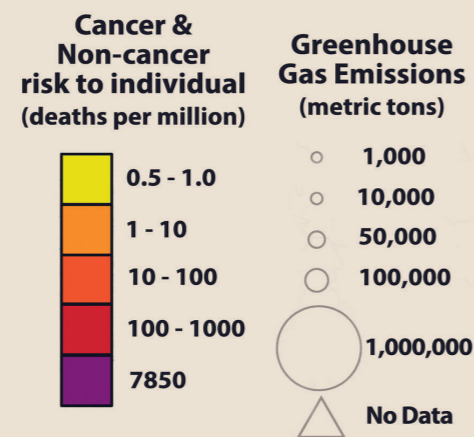
“Climate protections and public health are inextricably linked. Oregon needs stronger policies that monitor air toxics and GHGs. In particular, we need to close the data gap by requiring all polluters to report GHG emissions.”



Above: This map shows the main areas of pollution concentrations in Lane County. Notice how it concentrates around urban development and where people live.

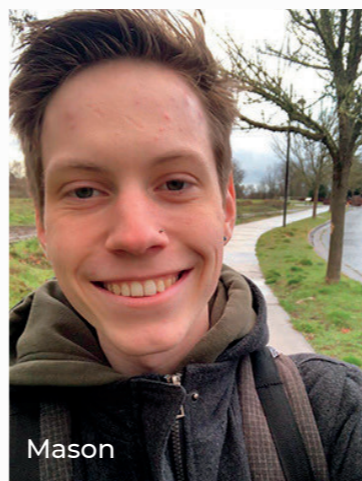


Above: A close-up of Eugene-Springfield. Below is the legend for both maps.



We are using spatial data science to advocate for fair and equitable policies based on data and community input.

The result will be cleaner and healthier neighborhoods that honor culture, assist with emergency preparedness and enhance carbon storage.



Mason



Meet Panchal

Statewide Environmental Justice Organizer

Meet Panchal holds a Graduate degree from Tata Institute of Social Sciences in Social Work with a specialization in Livelihoods and Social Entrepreneurship. Meet's academic fieldwork focused on livelihood assessments and economic and environmental justice with an emphasis on water equity projects.

Meet is excited to be on the forefront of connecting and communicating with community groups and other nonprofits that represent historically disadvantaged Oregonians.

Meet enjoys biking, hiking and relaxing at any available water bodies.



Mason

MEET THE NEW STAFF

Teryn Yazdani

Climate Policy Staff Attorney

Teryn Yazdani was born in Jackson, Mississippi and raised in a multi-generational Iranian-American household. In 2020, Teryn earned her J.D. from Lewis & Clark Law School with a certificate in Environmental and Natural Resource Law. After graduation, she joined the Crag Law Center as their 2020-2022 Legal Fellow, gaining experience in federal and state environmental legal issues.

Teryn is joining our team after recently winning an important legal argument alongside Crag Law Center. On May 9th, the Land Use Board of Appeals (LUBA) heard Teryn's arguments and overturned Columbia County's decision to rezone 837 acres of high-value farm land for industrial uses. This decision will protect salmon habitat along adjacent farmland and halt fossil fuel expansions along the Columbia River.

In her spare time, she enjoys taking in the beauty of the Pacific Northwest by hiking, camping, and foraging.



Teryn

Mason Leavitt

GIS and Spatial Data Coordinator

Mason is almost finished with his undergraduate degree at the University of Oregon in Geography as well as Spatial Data Science and Technology. He is fascinated by the science of geography and mapping, whether that be through the methodologies of the humanities, qualitative social sciences, or the statistical basis of programming and Geographic Information Systems (GIS).



Paige Hopkins

Lane County Climate Justice Organizer

Paige holds a Bachelors of Science in Environmental Studies at Portland State University. She interned with the Portland Fruit Tree Project to develop a mutual aid program for urban fruit tree produce within the Portland Community. This experience influenced her interest and passion for grassroots-led initiatives applied to environmental and climate justice issues.

Paige looks forward to building connections with local community members. Part of her work is to organize the Lane County Equity and Resilience Task Force so that the public has a voice in future climate decision making.

In her free time, she enjoys paddleboarding and spending time outdoors.

Our Pesticide Program Update

Great news on pesticide reform! We are working with the Oregon Dept. of Agriculture (ODA) to set restrictions for highly hazardous and volatile herbicides. In June 2021, Beyond Toxics and Crag Law Center filed a petition with the ODA to adopt new rules to restrict formulations containing 33% or more 2,4-D ester and Triclopyr ester. These are old warfare chemicals re-marketed to drive up chemical corporate profits.

Due to the concerning number of pesticide exposure complaints, we urgently need to get these highly toxic products off of consumer store shelves. These products should no longer be available for consumer use in residential neighborhoods and on school grounds. Our efforts will hopefully yield protective restrictions of these highly volatile products by the end of the year.



Paige Hopkins, conducting a canvass in Phoenix, Oregon.

Southern Oregon Update

The US EPA and the Oregon Community Foundation are funding a new and innovative partnership between Beyond Toxics and Unite Oregon Rogue Valley! We are sharing an Environmental Justice grant for outreach to Phoenix and Talent communities. Both cities were significantly damaged by the Almeda fire of September 2020. Many affordable manufactured home parks were decimated by the intense fire and smoke. Many Latinx and low income families barely escaped as the flames engulfed their homes. During our canvassing in fire-hit areas, we heard that even after 2 years a significant number of people continue to feel traumatized about their harrowing experience. We will also be distributing air quality monitors and emergency “go bags” for people to help them be better prepared for wildfire season.



Aftermath of wildfire in Southern Oregon

Building Climate Resilience in Lane County

By: Paige Hopkins
Lane County Climate Justice Organizer

Oregon is rapidly changing. In recent years, our beautiful state has endured increasingly severe wildfires, drought, and extreme heat. We simply cannot afford to delay meaningful climate action. Now is the time to draft actions and strategies to avoid statewide ecosystem collapses.

As our shifting climate continues to reshape communities and landscapes across Oregon, I'm working to prioritize the most impacted communities in lawmaking and decision-making spaces moving forward. The majority of us are already experiencing increased health risks and rising economic challenges as a result of climate change.

“ We simply cannot afford to delay meaningful climate action. ”



Paige

In my work as Beyond Toxics' Climate Justice Organizer for Lane County, my goal is to emphasize climate resilient strategies that offset historical barriers. I've made it a priority to speak with under-served county residents who have traditionally been left out of decision-making due to underlying systemic exclusion. I've learned that environmental changes are currently presenting unique challenges to these communities. For example, the urban “heat island” effect is more likely to impact low-income communities of color because of lack of access to shade from urban trees due to historical under-investment in those communities.

We see the evidence of this in West Eugene, where working class neighborhoods lack the tree canopy enjoyed by residents of south and east Eugene. A lack of access to shade then leads to an increased likelihood of heat-related sickness during the inevitable temperature spikes and wildfires. As the temperature continues to increase, I expect that these vulnerabilities will only increase.

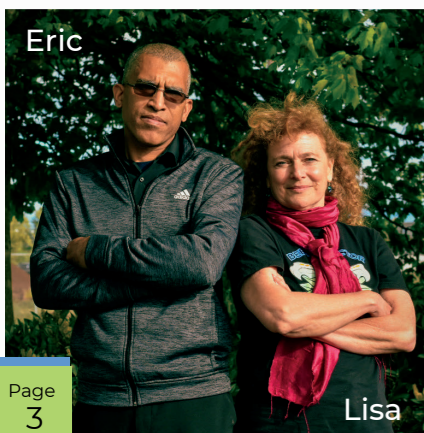
We need community-based solutions to ensure an equitable distribution of benefits that are formed in local community climate resilience plans. In an effort to help drive these solutions, Beyond Toxics has established a partnership with Lane County Public Works Department and the Geos Institute to develop a countywide Climate Action Plan, the last of three phases to be adopted by our county government.

Get involved in climate resilience planning for Lane County!

We are inviting Lane County residents to participate in resilience planning. Your input will be used to develop a strategic action plan that identifies positive steps for preparedness and resilience. This plan will be presented to the Lane County Board of Commissioners. A modest stipend will be available for eligible workshop attendees. Lunch will be provided. Please register in advance.



What: Resilience Strategy Development Workshop for Lane County
When: Saturday, June 25th, 9:30 am - 2 pm
Where: Hilyard Community Center, 2580 Hilyard St, Eugene, OR, 97405
Contact: Paige Hopkins at phopkins@beyondtoxics.org or (541) 543-2454
Register: Scan the QR code



Eric

Lisa

Our Executive Director Receives The Turtle Award

Lisa Arkin (right), Executive Director of Beyond Toxics, and Eric Richardson (left), former President of the Lane County NAACP, were jointly awarded the 2022 Turtle Award. The City Club of Eugene created the annual Turtle to honor exemplary civic-minded residents who stick their necks out for community benefit. The award recognizes those with diverse perspectives who can foster creative and constructive action.



Dexter Reservoir - Photo Credit: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Rethinking Land Use to Tackle Climate Change

By: Meet Panchal, Statewide Environmental Justice Manager

Beyond Toxics staff is back in action to demand strong climate goals that will help guide Oregon to prepare for an increasingly unpredictable energy future. In light of water shortages and increasingly intense natural disasters we need to integrate climate criteria into land and water use planning. An integrated approach would address the need to include climate change as a principle criterion in land/water use planning in order to prevent climate impacts. Through land-use planning our local governments can increase resiliency to major climate shifts and ensure that we have strategies to provide environmental, health, social and economic solutions, before a disaster strikes!

During my fellowship I came across a great example. I learned that water planning tends to be subordinated to land use planning. That is, water planners seek to obtain water to meet the demands of expected population growth while local land-use planners do not constrain development in response to limited water supplies. It's as if the left hand doesn't know what the right hand is doing.

We have a complicated water supply picture shaped by climate change. This creates new challenges to planners and local communities. For example, western states like Oregon will see a huge decrease in snowpack and spring runoff, which will make it difficult to meet our water demands in the drier summer and fall months.

Even as we build upon our strategy to embed climate criteria into all land use planning, we are faced with defending the newly adopted Oregon Climate Protection Program (CPP) in its infancy! The Environmental Quality Commission voted to approve the plan just a few months ago, however industrial polluters have filed a lawsuit against the State to block the roll-out. We must stop these attempts to unravel Oregon's hard-won effort to launch a robust climate action plan.

We expect to fight in both the courts and the state legislature for smart climate planning. Climate change is the issue of this and future generations. We must not step away from this urgent crisis!

LOCAL Update

Liberation of Communities and Land



Beyond Toxics offers an annual environmental justice BIPOC youth leadership training. This year's cohort of 12 got to experience topics ranging from Racism & Oregon Farmworkers to Land Use Planning. After graduating, youth are offered opportunities to go on a camping trip and apply for paid summer internships. Do you know a young person hoping to expand their environmental justice knowledge? Let us know! We are working to expand this program in 2022.

“*The impetus for an integrated approach would address the need to include climate change as a principle criterion in land/water use planning in order to prevent climate impacts.*”

”

Meet



We Are Dynamic and Intersectional

By: Lisa Arkin, Executive Director

The Beyond Toxics staff is thrilled to debut our Environmental Justice Theory of Change! This is a graphic representation of our guiding vision and our strategic plan. Our hope in sharing this is to communicate the intersectionality of our five core projects and the dynamic strategies we apply to accomplish our work. This flower model was inspired by the Climate Adaptation Model adopted by the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation Strategic Plan.

The center of the flower represents the creative energy of the people who make Beyond Toxics thrive, including our staff, Board of Directors, members and supporters.

The inner petals describe the five approaches we take to succeed in our goals, including grassroots organizing, coalition building, public education, community outreach and legal analysis/political action.

The outer petals represent our core projects, which are Environmental Justice, Climate Justice, Air Quality, Regenerative Ecosystems and Pesticide Reform.

This Theory of Change model represents our decision-making process to assess the complex work we are called to do as a statewide environmental justice organization. Our organizational purpose is to build an environmental justice advocacy and leadership movement. The outcomes of pursuing our vision are meaningful public engagement in decisions that affect our communities, equitable benefits of living in healthy communities and protections from environmental hazards for everyone.

Our work merges social, racial and environmental justice in policy, practice and education. This illustrated Theory of Change demonstrates the way Beyond Toxics provides leadership for a thriving and just Oregon. We build a community-driven environmental justice movement to support clean air and water, non-polluting energy and vibrant communities.



Resilient Forestry Tours

Get ready to join us for our 2022 Resilient Forestry Tours. These tours demonstrate how good forest management can protect drinking water, biodiversity and sequester carbon on the land, all of which are practices that benefit future generations.

Upcoming Dates

- 📅 Saturday, June 18
- 📅 Saturday, July 16
- 📅 Saturday, August 20

To Register

- 📞 541-465-8860
- 🌐 resilientforestrytours.org



Above: First look at the beginning of painting the Kalapuya Wetlands Mural at the Boys and Girls Club in Westmoreland Park.

“ We are proud to collaborate with Kalapuya descendants, Friendly Area Neighbors Equity Action Team, local businesses and the City of Eugene to sponsor the Willamette Wetlands of the Kalapuya mural project. ”



Jennifer

be located on the east wall of the Coleman Community Center that houses the Boys & Girls Club of Emerald Valley. The project includes an informational kiosk, a web page of environmental and cultural curriculum, and enhancement of the park wetlands to preserve significant native plants within these sites.

The mural will be completed in June and the entire project will be presented at a public honoring ceremony with singing and drumming and storytelling on **Saturday, July 9th at 11:00 am**. We invite the community to join us to listen to traditional Kalapuya storytelling, remarks by Dr. David Lewis and Mayor Lucy Vinis, take a guided tour of the wetland plant community at the site, and enjoy singing and drumming with the Splachta Alla Singers.

This project is an important part of our work in the community and I'm looking forward to utilizing these wetland remnants as an outdoor laboratory to educate local communities about the history and culture of the Kalapuya people. Through the support of the Gray Family Fund, we're able to host a summer youth camp at the mural-site and the wetlands with the Boys and Girls Club. This summer we will provide educational activities centered around native plants, pollinator protection and environmental justice with local youth.

Meet the Mural Team



Susan Applegate
Artist



Ester Stutzman
Consultant



Esteban Camacho Steffensen
Assistant Painter

Why are we working on this project?

Beyond Toxics' work is always intersectional! This mural project highlights respect for the Kalapuya land stewards and shares Traditional Ecological Knowledge of Oregon's First Foods and medicines.

This project is a collaborative opportunity to learn more about foods and medicines and understand the ways native plant habitat has changed and been re-shaped by European settlers over the past centuries. This is our chance to pass knowledge on to the youth and future generations.

Willamette Wetlands of the Kalapuya Tribes

By: Jennifer Eisele, Pesticide Projects Manager

The mural will reach back into history to commemorate Kalapuya presence on this land prior to European settlement. Imagery developed by the artists and consultants will highlight the Kalapuya people harvesting native plants, preparing plants for food, medicine and spiritual observance through the annual seasonal round in the traditional manner still practiced today.

The mural is part of a larger project called the "Kalapuya Cultural Project and Wetlands Preservation." Once finished the mural will

Tarweed
Kalapuya Name
TUKWA



Women harvested the seeds after a burn by knocking them into gathering baskets. The seeds were used to make meal or flour, like hazelnuts or sunflower seeds. These rich and fragrant seeds were a staple food source and often traded across Oregon.

Microseris
Kalapuya Name
CURRENTLY UNKNOWN



If left in sunlight for long enough, the milky juice in the plant's hollow stems will thicken and firm. Despite the well-known bitter taste of the milky, sun-baked juice, some children would use it as chewing gum! The roots may have also been used as a food source on occasion.

Camas
Kalapuya Name
ANDIP



Many tribes across the Pacific Northwest traditionally harvest the Camas bulb when the flowers have died back in the summer. This patience allows the harvesters to support future Camas plants and prolong the prairie's health.

Mules ears
Kalapuya Name
UAMELK TEPOK



Tribes across the Pacific Northwest harvested this plant's nutritious seeds. The seeds can be roasted and baked into bread or boiled for mush or soup. They also provide nutrition through long, cold winters when pressed into a flour with other herbs and grasses.

Biscuitroot
Kalapuya Name
ALU'T



While its roots are valuable for medicinal properties (to treat colds and sore throats), the seeds hold immense value to many local indigenous cultures. When burned, the seeds have a strong aromatic fragrance that is a central aspect of sacred ceremonies.

