



## Voices from the Nursery

Staff, volunteers and interns are key members of our native plant nursery community who propagate plants, harvest and clean seed, maintain the grounds, facilities and equipment, enter data, conduct experiments, and much more. Staff are essential for planning and managing operations as well as directing all of those volunteers to keep it running smoothly. Here are the stories of a few of our nursery friends.

### Annaquot Hayes, Nursery Intern Summer 2023



I would like to tell you that I applied for an internship with the Friends of Buford Park & Mt. Pisgah because I was aware of all the good they do, and that I was already a supporter of their mission, but that's not true. I was only minimally aware of the Friends. At points I had read Park signage, but never asked questions. I certainly could not have told

you that Friends of Buford Park is separate from another organization that is located in the same area.

I came to a Summer Internship with the Friends by chance: while attending a meeting of community members and business leaders, I had the good fortune to hear Jared Tarr, Volunteer & Intern Coordinator, speak. That led to an evening of research and an application. There were multiple positions within several departments that would have allowed me to meet the academic requirements I needed to fulfill, and I would have enjoyed and benefited from any of them, but I was lucky enough to be placed in the Native Plant Nursery. Over the following months I was able to spend early (but not as early as the Trail and Steward Crews!) mornings at Mt. Pisgah with the Nursery as my classroom, fellow interns as my classmates, and a truly inspiring cohort of staff and volunteers as my teachers. As cliché as it likely sounds, these days truly inspired and nurtured me.

My experiences during this internship fall into two distinct categories: academic / professional, and personal. On an academic / professional level, I learned about the organizational and managerial operations of Friends, which in turn helped me to understand how the Nursery operates on a functional level. Specific to the Nursery itself, I learned a lot about botany, and how the staff seek to understand the plants in their attempts to monitor and fortify the ecology so unique to the lands of Mt. Pisgah and the surrounding area. While much of this

learning was structured around the growing and harvesting of plants and seed, including various seed sorting techniques (operating the Office Tester – so much fun!) I also benefitted from hands-on work related to the basic upkeep of tools and garden structures.

Technically, my Internship was a success because I fulfilled all the academic requirements which it was built on, but that is not what has made me continue my relationship with Friends or recommend the internship program to others: that is purely personal. From the very beginning, before I had even submitted my application, my interactions with staff and volunteers were nothing but positive. The more time I spent at the Nursery, the more positive they became. The ability of staff to work with me and my program was exceptional (seriously, I have used portions of the model in write-ups for other organizations) and provided solid continuity from start to finish. The wealth of knowledge collectively held by volunteers and staff, and their willingness to share it, absolutely blew me away. I genuinely missed the Nursery on days I was not there, and I looked forward to visiting with new acquaintances and hearing updates from fellow interns on days that I was. The welcoming atmosphere and inclusivity expressed by everyone I encountered created such a feeling of community that I introduced my middle-school-aged nephews to the Nursery. To see them welcomed with the same level of respect and generosity that I was given, to hear them express interest in something and have a volunteer take the lead to communicate, instruct, and give them hours of time and patience made me grateful. That all three of us would look forward to spending time there made my heart happy.

The friendships and connections I now have are what made my Internship a success, and that simply cannot be structured in a program checklist.

*Annaquot is studying at Eastern Oregon University: Health and Human Performance Major, dual concentrations in Nature & Outdoor Recreation Programming and Community Health, Minor in Public Administration*

## Caroline Baucom, Nursery Assistant

I am delighted to introduce myself as the new Nursery Assistant with the Friends, as of May 2023. Here is a little more background about my experience: I completed my Bachelor's of Science in Environmental Studies at Virginia Commonwealth University in 2019. While in school, I worked as a research assistant in the Coastal Plant Ecology Lab. There I worked on projects studying the unique plant communities of Atlantic barrier islands and maritime forests, particularly relating to questions of increasing salt water intrusion and resilience to increasing storm intensity and rising temperatures. Additionally while in school, I held a summer position with the James River Park System leading volunteer groups in "free-the-tree" (invasive vine removal) work parties to engage community members in caring for their wild spaces.

Wanting to experience more of the country, I eventually made my way out west via seasonal work with the USFS. I spent one season at Mount St. Helens National Volcanic Monument, and one in the Rogue River Siskiyou-National Forest. In those places I got an intensive introduction to plant species unique to the Pacific Northwest.

After moving to Eugene, I worked part-time as the Alton Baker Native Plant Nursery Assistant for the Eugene Parks and Open Spaces, which introduced me to all things native seed processing. In between seasonal and career focused jobs, I have worked commercial nurseries and volunteered for various environmental organizations.

If you are reading this, it is likely that we have at least one thing in common: a deep appreciation for our beautiful habitat. Native plants are my main passion. So, when the opportunity arose with the Friends' Native Plant Nursery, I jumped at the chance to join full-time with such a wonderful organization of folks who dedicate themselves to caring for this local oasis. It brings me so much joy to see all the life that grows here, and in the hearts of those who care for the land. I am so grateful to be here.

Now is more important than ever to protect and nurture the unique genetic diversity of plants and wildlife in Buford Park, Mt. Pisgah, and everywhere. I hope to see you all during one of the nursery's recurring work parties (Tuesdays, Thursdays, and some Saturdays!) Come and get your hands dirty and your minds cleared through the power of connection with nature.



*Rufous Hummingbird (Selasphorus rufus) visiting red columbine (Aquilegia formosa).*

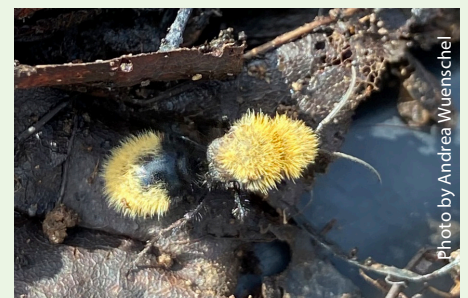
I especially enjoy photographing pollinators, such as native solitary bees, wasps, and flies, as well as the more popular butterflies and bumblebees. I enjoy getting up close and personal with wee critters, which often have amazing patterns and vibrant colors when viewed up close! I am often surprised which insects are associating with which native plants--there is always something new to discover!

*Andrea started uploading her nature photos to iNaturalist in 2018 while living in California, and has taken and uploaded photos of nature almost every day since. You can check out these photos and more in full resolution on iNaturalist at <https://www.inaturalist.org/projects/fbp-native-plant-nursery-wildlife>*

## Andrea Wuenschel, Nursery Volunteer

When I moved to Eugene at the end of last year, I was looking for a way to structure my days and get my hands back into dirt and native plants. Previously I had lived in Seattle and enjoyed working part-time at a small native-plant nursery called GoNatives!, and I was looking for a similar experience. When I found the Friends nursery online this May I was thrilled that their focus was Oregon native plants for restoration projects and eagerly started to volunteer. It has been great going there weekly to hang out with the staff, volunteers, and interns while learning plant names, thinning and weeding plots, and (most fun) learning seed collecting and processing! One of the things I enjoy most there is experiencing plant phenology: watching plants across the seasons go from a seed to a sprout to flowering, fruiting, and then senescence.

A side project while I'm volunteering at the nursery is photographing the wildlife I find there--from tiny moth eggs (1mm!) to speedy rufous hummingbirds and bright blue singing male lazuli buntings. Staff and volunteers at the nursery often see me crouched low on the ground trying to capture a clear image of a speeding fuzzy velvet ant or intently watching a dragonfly land on a leaf through my telephoto lens.



*Pacific Velvet Ant (Dasymutilla aureola) in the Friends nursery.*

# Emerald Ash Borer in Buford Park?

By Jason Blazar

A frequent park visitor reached out in June with concern that an Oregon ash tree growing in the North Bottomlands was infected with Emerald Ash Borer (*Agrilus planipennis*) (EAB). While I was unaware of any documented populations south of Forest Grove, I took a walk that afternoon to visit the tree of concern. Along the way I observed declines in additional ash trees, which I thought were due to heat stress and storm damage.



*Oregon ash tree in North Bottomlands climbed and checked by Scott Hyde*

With an air of reservation but a spirit of caution, I contacted Forestry officials and inquired if additional populations of Emerald Ash Borer had been documented in the Willamette Valley since the initial discovery in June 2022. I met on site with Lauren Grand, OSU Forestry and Natural Resources Extension

Agent, to inspect the trees. Lauren concurred with my assessment. However, she

asked if we have a tree climber on staff or a qualified volunteer who could climb into the canopy for a closer look.

Scott Hyde, our go-to tree climber/master feller/forester contractor offered to take a look at the trees of concern in the North Bottomlands. He climbed the tree due north of the nursery and I am happy to report that he did not find evidence of the pest. He agreed with Lauren and

me that this tree—similar to other trees in the North Bottomlands—is showing impacts from extreme weather events including recent ice storms and the 2021 Heat Dome.

I was grateful to have confirmation of our assessment and to know, at least for now, Emerald Ash Borer is not present within the park or Greater Mount Pisgah Area.



Art by Iris Garber

Since EAB was found in the Great Lakes region in 2002, hundreds of millions of ash trees have been killed in the US and Canada. It was first found in Oregon in Forest Grove in 2022.

**Life Cycle:** Adults lay eggs on ash tree bark May-July. The larvae hatch, feed and tunnel under the bark, then pupate and overwinter. In spring the adults emerge and disperse.

**Signs of infestation include:**

- Serpentine galleries from larvae feeding under bark.
- D-shaped exit hole created by emerging adult.
- Woodpecker activity and loose bark.
- Canopy die-back and resprouts on trunk.

Note that by the time these signs are apparent, the adults have already emerged and moved on. Early detection is very difficult. More information about the Emerald Ash Borer can be found in the Oregon Department of Forestry Fact Sheet:

<https://www.oregon.gov/odf/Documents/forestbenefits/fact-sheet-emerald-ash-borer.pdf>

Suspected ash trees can be reported at this online site: <https://oregoninvasiveshotline.org/>



# The Year of Good Fire, Realized

By Jared Tarr

2023 was indeed the “Year of Good Fire”, representing more than 200 acres burned, collaboration with partner agencies across the valley and community members engaged in everything from trail closures and education to burn unit prep and ignition.

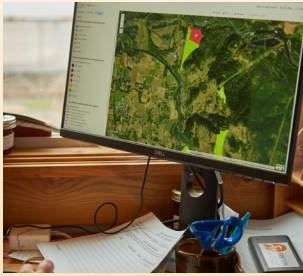
Bringing fire back to the landscapes of the greater Mount Pisgah area, some of which receive over a half-million visits per year, is no simple matter. Each acre burned represents a symphony of brainstorming, planning, preparation, collaboration and coordination that demands the attentive dedication of land stewards and fire practitioners over the course of many months, if not years. This symphony crescendos when fire touches the land and, often within an hour or less, has completed its work, burning away the old and making space for renewal.

The following photo essay catalogs the ins and outs of Friends’ first day of burning in 2023. Thanks and appreciation to photographer Jordan Hundelt for donating her services and providing an intimate look at Good Fire.

# A Day in the Life of Live Fire

## What does it take to pull off a successful ecological burn?

By Jared Tarr



### 1. Pre-Season Planning

Before the first flame touches the landscape, Friends stewardship director and others put in hundreds of hours forging inter-agency agreements, planning for burn season collaboration, and drafting prescriptions and burn plans.



### 6. Briefing

With a plan in place, fire practitioners gather for a morning briefing hosted by the burn boss. Teams are formed, leaders assigned and logistics explained before all resources mobilize to their assigned positions.



### 2. Burn Unit Prep

As the most dependable window for ecological burning approaches (mid-September to mid-October) land stewards and contractors mow burn-unit perimeters, protect installations like power lines & ready the landscape for beneficial fire.



### 7. Equipment Prep

Firing teams (those responsible for strategically setting the fire) prepare drip torches—a controlled burn tool that uses a wick to ignite liquid fuel that can be accurately dispersed into the burn area.



### 3. Coordinating Resources

Once days within prescription are identified and burn plans are set in motion, an intensive effort to coordinate resources, both equipment and people, from partner agencies, contractors and volunteers begins.



### 8. Fire Practitioner's Toolkit

A basic kit consists of head-to-toe fire-resistant clothing like Nomex; sturdy leather boots and gloves; a hard hat, ear and eye protection; a field pack with water, and a fire shelter; a two-way radio and a hand tool specialized for fire.



### 4. Day-Of Collaboration

On the morning of a planned burn land stewards, the burn boss and lead partner staff confer to refresh themselves on the plans for the day and consider conditions, contingencies and other needs.



### 9. Team Building

Members of a hand crew or fire team rely on cohesion and teamwork in high-stress and high-intensity environments like ecological burning. Everyone must be performing at their highest level to ensure safety and efficacy.



### 5. Action Planning

The burn boss uses the burn plan and the roster of resources to create a cohesive plan for the day. This plan includes assignments for each resource and provisions for unforeseen outcomes.



### 10. Unit Walk-Through

Crew bosses and team leaders do a final walk-through of the burn unit to confirm their understanding of the day's plan and consider any challenges or hazards they might face.



### 11. Team Briefing

Crew bosses gather their personnel and give a team briefing. They go over the team assignments, hazards, and contingencies before deploying team members to starting positions.



### 16. Smoke Dispersal

Unlike uncontrollable wildfire smoke, the planning and execution of ecological burns means that convection (upward air currents) carries smoke up and away from fire practitioners, adjacent roadways and neighbors' lungs.



Photo by Jared Tarr

### 12. Test Fire

Once resources are in place, a test fire is lit. This affords the burn boss and team leaders the opportunity to observe fire behavior and make any last-minute adjustments to their plan.



### 17. Fuel Consumption

Fuels in prairie and savanna habitats primarily consist of grass. This grass burns quickly and nearly to completion, leaving very little smoking material behind.



### 13. Ignition

With a successful test fire, the methodically laid-out plan is set in motion. All resources jump into action and firing teams begin using drip-torches to set fire to the landscape.



### 18. Unit Completion

Often mere minutes after the final flame has died down in a burn, the air clears and the only thing left smoking are larger branches and logs.



Photo by Jared Tarr

### 14. Communication

Using two-way radios, every team member is in constant contact. A designated fire practitioner takes weather measurements and radios the results in to everyone on scene, informing decisions as weather conditions change.



### 19. Mop Up

Fire practitioners address any fuels still burning using hand tools and water once firing operations are complete. This step can be time consuming, but ensures that no embers from a controlled burn ignite an unintended wildfire.



### 15. Utilizing Fire Behavior

The pattern of ignition (where fire is applied) planned by managers and executed by fire practitioners is tailored to each specific unit. When successful, this pattern results in controlled and predictable fire behavior and optimal ecological outcomes.



### 20. After Action Review

Once all operations and mop up have concluded, dirty and tired fire practitioners gather for an After Action Review. This facilitated conversation encourages reflection on the events of the day. Lessons identified here are folded into a toolkit that the burn boss and crew leaders can use to ensure safer, and more effective burns throughout a season.

# The Power of Open Air

## Exploring the Importance of Outdoor Recreational Spaces

By Abbey Taylor, *Friends Outreach and Communications Intern Fall 2023*

Outdoor spaces hold great ecological significance for regulating the climate, filtering pollutants, and preserving biodiversity, among many other services. However, these spaces also promote physical and mental well-being, while fostering economic prosperity within larger communities. The substantial public and economic impact of outdoor recreational spaces deems their preservation a crucial component of sustainable economic growth.

Friends has worked for over 30 years to preserve ecological diversity and build opportunities for compatible recreation in the greater Mount Pisgah area. At the heart of Eugene and Springfield, the stewardship of over 2,000 acres of critical habitat and well over 20 miles of trails has helped HBRA become a refuge, for people and wildlife alike. In recent years, volunteer hours and funding towards recreational spaces have decreased, restricting the resources available for stewardship agencies to reach their potential and give back to the community.

Investments in local recreational spaces are shown to stimulate financial prosperity within our neighborhoods – becoming economic catalysts in our own backyard. Studies show that residential property values can increase by 5-20% if in close proximity to exceptional parks. Additionally, natural areas not only attract visitors and increase local spending, but also support local communities by creating jobs, building workforce retention, and reducing transportation.

Beyond economic growth, the necessity of natural areas lies in the physical and mental well-being these areas promote. Individuals living within a quarter mile of parks or trail systems have reported leading healthier, lower stress lifestyles. Recreational areas sustain educational platforms for all ages by providing dynamic classrooms, ruled by hands-on exploration and direct engagement with the natural world.

Preserving outdoor recreational spaces is an investment in the health, happiness, and economic prosperity of current and future generations. However, these measurable benefits are only possible due to the thousands of volunteer hours donated, as well as financial resources from public and private sectors. It is the support by our community that makes public natural areas so valuable, and we have the power to put our voices and financial support behind the future we want.

\*Sourced from a City Club of Eugene Panel hosted on October 13, 2023. For more information visit [cityclubofeugene.org](http://cityclubofeugene.org).

Visitors to HBRA and the greater Mount Pisgah area know that the lands Friends stewards are beyond exceptional – they are priceless. The rare habitats, miles of trail, and breathtaking vistas are enduring resources and gifts that nourish our community year-round, and which are too often taken for granted. In some way, we are all a part of the landscape; the soil, waters, plants, animals, and people sustain it and we sustain each other.

Here, at the end of 2023, please share with us your answer to a simple question:

### What gifts has the mountain given you?

Responses can be sent to [volunteer@bufordpark.org](mailto:volunteer@bufordpark.org), mailed to Friends' P.O. Box or submitted via the form linked at the QR code at right..



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