

Nature Trails

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Gullfoss, on Thorsa'

**Dr. David Noakes, Professor, Department of Fisheries and
Wildlife, and Director, Oregon Hatchery Research Center,
Oregon State University, Corvallis, Oregon**

"Iceland Rocks"

**Friday, 16 October 2009, 7:30PM, Room 100,
Willamette Hall, UO Campus**

We are honored to have for our October speaker Dr. David Noakes, Professor of Fisheries and Wildlife at Oregon State University, and Director of the Oregon Hatchery Research Center, a unique, new facility jointly sponsored by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife and Oregon State University. Joining the OSU faculty after 33 years at the University of Guelph, in Ontario, Canada, where he developed into one of the world's foremost researchers of fish biology and behavior, Noakes brings to our state a wealth of experience in salmonid research, at a time when the future of wild salmon and steelhead in the Pacific Northwest is tenuous and controversial. (Given this background, perhaps I can be forgiven when I admit that my first two questions when we met in his office recently were only tangentially related to the matter at hand. They were: "Do you fish?" and "Can you cast a Spey rod?")

"Hold on", you say, "I thought this talk was going to be about Iceland." Yes, you're right, Noakes will be telling us about Iceland and showing us some wonderful photos, but to get properly introduced to him you need to know these other things, too. I'll get to Iceland in a bit.

Born and raised in Southern Ontario, Noakes was interested in the scientific process – the analytical way of posing and addressing questions – since he was a child. His interest in fish began in his days as a student at the University of Western Ontario, where he obtained both his bachelor's and master's degrees. He was primarily interested in animal behavior, and Miles

Keenleyside, the person he worked with at UWO, worked on behavior – of sunfish. His PhD came from the University of California, Berkeley, where he studied the development of behavior in cichlid fishes under George Barlow. His first academic position was at the University of Edinburgh, Scotland, and from there he returned to Ontario to the Department of Zoology (now Integrative Biology) at the University of Guelph. During his tenure Noakes served in several capacities, such as Acting Chair of his department. He was the founding Director of the Axelrod Institute of Ichthyology. He taught throughout his tenure there, and as an indication of his ability – and a suggestion of the quality of his upcoming talk to ENHS – he and a colleague were



co-winners of the University of Guelph College of Biological Science teaching award in 2005. His recent research publications include studies on conservation and restoration, environmental impact, fisheries management and systematics, and ecology, evolution, and behavior.

Illustrative of the esteem in which his professional associates hold him is a list of the schools where Noakes has been a visiting professor: Oxford University, Kyoto University, the University of Iceland, the University of California at Davis, the University of California at Berkeley, Huazhong Agricultural University in Wuhan, China, and Holar University College in Iceland (See? We are getting to Iceland).

Another Icelandic connection: recently Noakes gave the Keynote Address at the Fifth International Charr Symposium, in Reykjavik (he occasionally signs his correspondence "Charrs, David").

Noakes was responsible for the formation of academic exchange agreements between the University of Guelph and four Icelandic Universities, and now that he is here in Oregon he has been

instrumental in establishing similar agreements between OSU and three counterpart institutions in Iceland.

As a co-advisor of graduate students in the Department of Aquaculture and Fisheries Biology at Holar University College, Iceland, Noakes maintains close Icelandic ties. He began visiting Iceland in 1982, as a result of having become the advisor of an Icelandic graduate student,

whose theses projects – both MS and PhD – involved study in Iceland. Since that beginning Noakes has advised a series of students from Iceland, the last of whom finished his degree a year ago. He has also established collaborations with fisheries scientists in several parts of that country (he corrected my assumption that fishing for wild Atlantic salmon had something to do with his zeal for the country. Icelanders long ago realized if they caught these fish and sold them for food they could maybe get several dollars a pound, but if they left them in the rivers persons like Eric Clapton would fly there in private jets just to catch one, at a cost of several thousand dollars a day).

Through his extensive experience in Iceland Professor Noakes has come to treasure its many

charms: its people, its geology, and its history, as well as its fisheries. On Friday, 16 October 2009, at 7:30pm in Room 100 Willamette Hall on the University of Oregon Campus he will share with us his love of the country in a talk entitled "Iceland Rocks". The presentation will include information about geology, biology and human history in Iceland. Noakes will highlight some of the major tourist attractions and museums, as well as some places not so likely to be visited by "ordinary" tourists (Attendees who study fish, eat fish, or try to catch fish may be able to bait him into some fish tales during the question period). Please come, and bring friends and family. Those in the know arrive early for the cookies and such that are usually on offer.

Hoarding by Reida Kimmel

It's the last Monday in September and the clouds are gathering. If these clouds really mean rain, I am very, very, ready for it. For weeks the longer, cooler nights have signaled the coming of fall. A few vine maples are turning scarlet and peachy gold. The ubiquitous poison oak is lovely in fall shades of pink and burgundy. Too bad it is so unsuitable for bouquets. Big flocks of geese have been flying overhead for days. The swallows, finches and hummingbirds deserted the valley weeks ago, and though we have a few winter friends, chickadees and nuthatches, coming to our feeder, the local birds are mostly busy enjoying the rich bounty of seeds and insects in the woods and fields nearby. A few weeks ago I saw an unusual sight, Steller's jays flying in total silence [!] across the property and into the hills to the south. A closer look revealed the reason for the quiet. Each jay had a shiny nut in its bill, almost certainly an acorn. This dignified process went on for about an hour. I have no idea where the birds stored all these acorns, but I hope the nuts they forget to eat sprout. An oak savannah would be very welcome on the scorched hillside overlooking the valley.

Last year the big incense cedar trees in my favorite nearby patch of woods covered the forest floor with beautiful golden spore capsules. Now the cedars are shedding their cones. The small tripartite seed-bearing cones each contain two seeds. 'Someone' is tearing open pods and eating the seeds before they fall. I opened an intact cone and tasted the seed. It was terrible: resinous and potently bitter. The Douglas firs on either side of the valley are so lavish with bright tan cones this year that they seem prematurely decorated for Christmas. Not that the cones will last that long. Many have fallen already.

On the ground little piles of the cones' scales tell me that a Western grey squirrel [*Sciurus griseus*] or a chicaree [*Tamiasciurus douglasii*] has been feasting. I hear both species chattering in the trees from time to time, but I don't see them close to the house. Jays also enjoy conifer seeds. I hear groups of jays screaming in the fir and cedar trees when I am in the woods. People on horses do not disturb the birds. We can get quite close. It is very noisy.

Not to be outdone, the drought-stressed Bigleaf maple trees are brown with winged seeds and the dogwoods are cheery with their complex reddish fruits. Who will eat those, I wonder. All the early-fruited plants have been stripped: the poison oak, the twinberries and black-capped raspberries, even the red and purple elderberries.

Those of us who have gardens or who haunt the farmers' markets can feel a close kinship to the wild critters packing it in for the leaner seasons ahead. I've been canning and freezing non-stop for the past month and there's still lots more to deal with in the weeks ahead. Nature has been lavish in the orchard and the garden too this year; from cherries to peppers, we have had unexpectedly huge crops of wonderful fruits and vegetables. I doubt we can consume or give away all that I am stashing, as compulsive as a squirrel, as energetic as a jay, even if my life does not depend on the fruits of my industry. It's a lot of work, hoarding, but it is also a huge pleasure, a special tie to the natural world. Outside, right now as I write, the wild creatures of Fox Hollow are as busy with their stashes of seeds as I am with my tomato sauce on the stove. And the wonderful thing is that there is another hoarder, let's call her Mother Nature, who has her own uses for all that excessive bounty. This year's crop of seeds and nuts in my wild neighborhood is so huge that not even all the birds and squirrels in Lane County could dispose of it. If only we have a reasonably wet winter and spring that 'excess' will sprout, grow and survive, repairing land wounded by logging, grazing and development. Now that's really grand scale hoarding!

The Memory Tree by Tom Titus

Change is wonderful, but on occasion I have an irrational urge to freeze time. It happened last week on one of those perfect early fall days when the sun was warm and the pickup windows were down and I was winding along the back way to Smith River. The ash trees along Fox Hollow Creek were finally overflowing with warm sunshine, the surplus yellow oozing ever so lightly from green leaves.

My mind meandered with the road, returning me to a September Saturday ten years ago, the weekend after my grandmother's funeral. Then I had experienced a deep down longing for a trip to the old family place at Gunter, as though I needed to re-grow some roots that had been severed from the earth.

That morning had been unusually gray for early autumn. Kim and I packed raincoats and lunch and piled Alex and Laurel into the car. A serpentine road follows Upper Smith River roughly westward, pavement and creek twisting together like mating snakes through Douglas fir forests and golden September grass. Gunter is still on the Oregon highway map and even has a Google Maps zip code: 97435. But you'd better not plan on buying gas there. It's been sixty years since the general store and gas pumps closed, over forty years since anyone even lived there.

Grammy's time on Smith River had ended shortly after Grandpa Roy's passing in 1962. She was born and raised at Gunter, but her era ended with the same story now retold a million times across rural America: the kids grew up, parents grew old, the place grew too big to keep up, medical care was too far away. So Grammy came to Eugene. The family place became the property of a logging company, and eighty years of continuity that had begun with the purchase of a piece of O and C Railroad land by my great-grandfather James Gunter were broken. Thirty years later, her memory increasingly honeycombed by dementia, Grammy moved in with Mom and Dad. We visited regularly after our return to Oregon, and her parting words often were "Come visit me anytime. I live in the house on the hill between two creeks."

Haney Creek and Panther Creek flow southward out of parallel canyons, entering Smith River about a quarter mile apart. Together these three streams bracket a large flat with deep, loamy, floodplain soil. Overlooking Smith River is a small knoll. The two-story gray house was still standing on that hill when Kim and I visited 20 years ago. By then it was nothing but a hollowed-out shell, the first floor used by a herd of feral cattle then roaming the valley. The house was bulldozed and burned soon after. I suppose a sort of euthanasia was in order; better the fuzzy memories of childhood than a house full of cow manure.

We parked at the base of the knoll, found the driveway now overgrown with Scotch Broom, and walked up to the burned-out foundation. Cracked and crumbling concrete was surrounded by a mongrel plant community composed of unkempt ornamentals

and native shrubs. I felt the disequilibrium of a landscape in flux. The inanimate vestiges of human influence are usually first to go: the house, fences, and goldfish pond. They have no energy of their own beyond human creation and maintenance. Introduced plants persist longer, maintained by their own photosynthetic energy and nutrients from the soil. Yet in the absence of human sweat, all of these interlopers will eventually yield to relentless reclamation by wild nature, to the plants that always grew there: hazelnut, hawthorn, dogwood, and Douglas fir. These are the things that know their place.

Looking downhill to the west, onto the flat toward Haney Creek, fragments of memory floated by like leaves in a lazy summer stream; little kid anxiety after being dropped off for a long visit; milking, feeding pigs, haying, digging fishing worms out of the manure pile with cousin Frank. To my family I pointed out the barn and garden at the base of the hill, long since gone and visible only to me, only in my mind. Alex and Laurel were half listening. Kim cared only because I did.

The old orchard rose above the Scotch Broom and blackberries, something tangible, a fixed line anchoring the hazy memories of early childhood to the immediacy of this September morning; a sharp cry of Steller's Jays, pungent aroma of overripe blackberries, drought-scorched grass still wet from last night's mist. We followed a track off the hill and wandered through one-hundred-year-old apple trees still standing watch over the meadow, ancient trunks covered with concentric rings of red-breasted sapsucker drills. Some trees were three stories tall, their limbs festooned with unripe apples, green leaves of late summer, and gray wagging Beard Lichen.

In the space near where the barn once stood rose a large tree. Unlike the apple trees it grew straight up for perhaps sixty feet. When we approached, a more striking difference emerged; it was covered with beautiful pears. Giving myself over to foraging mode, I jumped and grabbed the lowest limb, hoisting myself into an upright sit. The bear had been there before me, her claw marks clearly visible in the bark between sapsucker holes.

Climbing upward, I felt the exhilaration of a five-year-old just liberated from the earth. Pears sagged from the branches like jade-colored tears, beyond which rose fir-clad ridges. Hanging by one arm, I stretched out with the other to pick one of the pendulous fruits. They were D'Anjous, a winter storage variety, more squat than Bartletts, with a short, thick neck tipped quizzically to one side. Their

light green skin was the texture of emery paper, flawless, without worms or scab despite decades of complete neglect—no spraying or fertilizing or pruning of any kind. For a moment I enjoyed the weight in my hand, took in the sensuous shape, then tucked my zipper-fronted shirt tightly into my belt and placed the fruit gently inside this makeshift marsupial pouch.

Swinging from limbs forty feet up, filling my shirt with pears, my risk-averse wife stared upward, simultaneously terrified and horrified, wondering whether she should shield her children's eyes from this spectacle of reckless behavior. My shirt was soon full and the ground forces were enlisted. Kim positioned herself below an opening in the branches and I lobbed pears for her to catch. But the freefalling pears gained enough velocity to sting her hands like a hard-thrown baseball and she dropped more of these gravity assist pitches than she handled. With pioneer ingenuity that would have made my ancestors smile she pulled the jacket from her waist and held it between outstretched arms, a contraption that brought the accelerating pears gently to earth. The kids were quickly in on the act, green missiles landing with a muffled "whump" into their outstretched jackets.

Pears were soon stacked like mounds of green cannonballs beneath the tree. We had no buckets or baskets or boxes for moving fifty pounds of pears from point of picking to place of consumption. More innovation. Knotting the arms of our pear decelerators, we carefully packed each one with fruit,

pulled the zippers closed, and toted the now manageable cargo on the short hike to the car.

That day soon became like a September leaf drifting out of an azure sky and falling into a stream of memory, becoming as seamless with the present as unblemished pear skin. Old orchards are fully integrated into the local ecology; their sap feeds sapsuckers and the blossoms feed pollinators and become the pears that feed people and bears and elk, which are also eaten by humans. But old orchards are more than this strictly biological network of relationships. They are sapwood, a conduit for memory that flows through people in an unbroken stream from roots to leaves. Those memories connect us to others who owed their existence to the land, those to whom we also owe our existence. This is the *ecology of heritage*, a network of biological, cultural, and spiritual relationships that make us cohesive human beings fully integrated with Nature.

Ten years later. Parking at Gunter, I grab a bucket from the back of the pickup and follow an elk trail through ten-foot-high Douglas fir trees. The pear tree still rises above the fir plantation. Her leaves are an apron, and the limbs are open arms, strong, still productive, but drooping under the load of many years. She is loyal to those who love her, ready to give what she has, but in due time and only with some effort on your part. With some luck she will outlast me, and I can return always in the dry days of early fall, clambering up like a little kid into his grandmother's lap.

Open letter to Natural History Society members:

To my great surprise the board of the Society presented me with a generous check at the September meeting as a result of my retirement from the treasurer's position. I felt like a CEO receiving a bonus. I should add that the award did not come out of membership dues, however, so your investments are still safe. It was earmarked for one of Larry McQueen's paintings. I selected one of a White-headed Woodpecker to grace an already-selected place on our wall. In case there are some of you who don't know Larry he is a premier bird artist known far and wide and a resident of Eugene. I am most grateful to the Board for this action and to the Society for continuing to let me linger in this position for so long – 35 years I'm told. It doesn't seem possible but somebody looked it up. Herb Wisner

Events of Interest in the Community

Audubon Society

Tuesday, 27 October, 7:30pm. A program based on the book "The Willamette River Field Guide: 200 Miles of Adventure From the Cascades to the Columbia," by its author Travis Williams, executive director of Willamette Riverkeeper. Williams will provide practical information on the natural and environmental history of the river, accompanied by beautiful photography. Learn about the sources of our river, and the problems it encounters as it flows to its junction with the Columbia. Eugene Garden Club, 1645 High St., Eugene.

Mount Pisgah Arboretum

34901 Frank Parrish Rd., Eugene, 97405. Located off I-5 Exit 189, 15 minutes southeast of Eugene. Call Peg Douthit-Jackson at 747-1504 or email mtpisgjp@efn.org for more information or to sign up for any of the following Arboretum activities.

Sunday, 11 October, 10am-noon. Animals and Plants are Preparing for Winter, Family Walk. Join nature guide Tom Bettman on this family-friendly walk. Rain or Shine. Meet at the MPA Visitors Center. Fee: \$5 (MPA members/donation).

Saturday, 17 October, 10am-4pm. Finding and Harvesting Edible Mushrooms Workshop.

Join Josiah Legler and learn where and when to look for edible mushrooms, how to get a collecting permit and where you need it, how to use a field guide to identify edibles, and how to harvest mushrooms using low-impact, sustainable methods. Meet at the Arboretum, then carpool to a mushrooming location about 45 minutes away. Dress for a walk in the woods, and bring a mushroom guidebook (some will be available for sale) and a lunch. We will respect the forest on the day of the workshop by not collecting mushrooms with a large group. Fee: \$25 (MPA members/\$20). Reservations required.

Sunday, 18 October, 1-3pm. Scarecrow Building and Pumpkin Carving. Get ready for the Mushroom Festival's Scarecrow Contest. The Arboretum staff provides inspiration and know-how for creative pumpkin carving, and you can design your own unique scarecrow to enter in the Scarecrow contest or display on your lawn. Scarecrows made at the workshop can be entered in the Mushroom Festival contest for FREE! Bring decorations for scarecrows, and knives and spoons for pumpkins. Pants, shirts, straw, and pumpkins provided. Fee: \$5 per pumpkin or scarecrow. (Registration appreciated but not required).

Sunday, 25 October, 10am-5pm. Mushroom Festival. Don't miss our annual fall celebration of mushrooms and the harvest season, co-presented by Mount Pisgah Arboretum, the Cascade Mycological Society and Lane Community College. This event is one of the largest mushroom displays on the West Coast. There will also be a huge plant sale, a scarecrow contest, children's activities, hayrides, craft vendors, live music, incredible mushroom-inspired food, fresh cider, wine and much more. Suggested donation: \$5/person/ Kids under 12 free. Call (541) 747-3817 for more information and how to volunteer.

Sunday, 25 October, 10am-5pm. Mushroom Festival Plant Sale.

Sunday, 25 October, Judging at 3pm. Scarecrow Contest at the Mushroom Festival. Families, individuals, businesses, or clubs: get creative, have some fun, and enter the Scarecrow Contest. Build your scarecrow from any materials (except invasive species) and set it up in the Arboretum's Scarecrow Alley on Saturday, 24 October. Festival visitors vote for the Funniest, Most Original, Most likely to Scare a Crow, Most Beautiful, Best Youth Entry and Best Overall. Contest entry fee/\$10.

Sunday, 25 October. Nature Walks at the Mushroom Festival. Check out our Nature Walks being held all day during the Mushroom Festival. Walk list will be posted on site and on our website. Free.

Saturday, 31 October-Sunday, 1 November, 10am-4pm each day. Mushrooming on the Mountain. Marcia Peeters, co-founder of Cascade Mycological Society, will lead this two-day workshop for beginning 'shroomers. Rain or shine. Fee: \$60.00 (MPA members/\$50). Reservations required.

Saturday, 7 November, 1-3pm. Late Fall Bird Walk. Join birder Davey Wendt to seek out and identify late Fall avian residents of the Arboretum. Rain or Shine. Fee: \$5 (MPA members/donation).

Saturday, 7 November, Play in the Rain. More TBA

Sunday, 8 November, 10am-4pm. Finding and Harvesting Edible Mushrooms Workshop.

The information provided for the 17 October Workshop applies to this one, as well.

Sunday, 8 November, 10am-noon. Slowpoke Sketch Walk. Science Illustrator Katura Reynolds will teach sketching on brown paper, perfect for catching the details of autumn leaves. Bring white and black colored pencils and a pencil sharpener, as well as any other portable drawing supplies you like to use. Rain or shine, so be ready to get muddy. Meet at the MPA Visitor Center. Fee: \$5.00 (MPA members/donation).

WREN For more information on the following activities call 683-6494.

Wednesday, 21 October, 7-8pm. Spider Talk. How well do you know your eight-legged neighbors? Join John Parrott, OSU/Master Gardener and spider expert, to find out how spiders live and what the major types are that live locally. Meet at the West Eugene Wetlands yurt, 751 S. Danebo Ave. Cost: \$5/WREN members, \$7/non-members.

Tuesday, 10 November, 9-10am. Wetland Wander at Meadowlark Prairie. Meet at the Green Hill Road center. Wetland Wanders are casual walks through various West Eugene Wetlands sites on the second Tuesday of every month. WREN will provide binoculars.

Nearby Nature

Saturday, 24 October, 5:30-9pm. Nearby Nature's 13th Annual Haunted Hike! Alton Baker Park. Celebrate night creatures! Enjoy a pumpkin-lit hike in Alton Baker Park and meet an entertaining costumed owl, bat, frog, spider, and more. Check out live owls and vultures from the Cascades Raptor Center. Crafts, snacks, and a raffle as well! Rain or moonshine. Members free, non-members \$5/person. Registration required: 687-9699. **Pre-hike pumpkin carving. (Thursday, October 22, 3-5 pm).** Help us carve 80 pumpkins to line the trails at the Haunted Hike. Bring carving tools. Snacks provided. Meet at the Park Host Residence in Alton Baker Park.

Wednesday, 28 October, All day long. Track Town Pizza Pie Day. Support Nearby Nature's Youth Scholarship Fund. Join us at Track Town Pizza at 1809 Franklin Blvd. Track Town will donate 50% of the cost of your pizza, salad, or soup order (not for delivery items) to the Fund if you bring in our special coupon. Coupons are available at <http://www.nearbynature.org/membership/benefit-days>. Scholarships help families pay for daycamps, school programs, No School Days, and other youth programs. Coupons will not be available at Track Town—bring your coupon with you! Help us make exploring nature accessible to every child in our community!

Wednesday, 11 November, 8:30am-3 pm Rhythms of the Forest. Learn about forest cycles and make music from recyclable materials. Visit the UO Natural & Cultural History Museum's World of Harmony exhibit.

Saturday, 21 November, 10am-noon: Tails of the Night. Learn about raccoons and other creatures of the night and find out how they stay warm in winter. Meet outside the Alton Baker Park Host Residence, rain or shine. Cost: \$2/person, \$5/family. Pre-registration is suggested: 541-687-9699.

We welcome new members! To join ENHS, fill out the form below. You will receive *Nature Trails* through December of next year. Membership payments allow us to give modest honoraria to our speakers, as well as to pay for the publication and mailing of *Nature Trails*.

MEMBERSHIP FORM

Mail checks to **Eugene Natural History Society**
P.O. Box 3082, Eugene, OR 97403

Name _____

Phone _____

Address _____

E-mail (optional) _____

City _____ State & Zip _____

ANNUAL DUES: Contributing 20.00
 Family 15.00
 Individual 10.00
 Life Membership 300.00

Generosity is Appreciated

Do you have any special experience in natural history? _____

Would you like to organize/lead field trips? _____

Teach informal classes? _____

Work on committees? _____

What natural history topics interest you for future talks? _____

Errata: Confused about the numbering of the volumes and issues of *Nature Trails*? I just learned our year begins with the January issue, not the September issue. The September 2009 issue and all last year's issues are incorrectly numbered. Sorry. Ed.

ENHS Schedule of Speakers and Topics 2009-2010

16 October - David Noakes – Fisheries Biologist: "Iceland Rocks"

20 November - Nora Terwilliger – Marine Biologist: "Invertebrate Natural History"

11 December - John M. Marzluff – Ornithologist: "Crows and Ravens"

15 January - Rick Boatner – Wildlife Biologist: "Exotic Species, like Bullfrogs"

19 February - Greg Retallack – Geologist: "Past Climate Crises"

19 March - Sue Beilke – Herpetologist: "Turtles"

16 April - Dean Walton -- Ecologist, Science Librarian: "Freshwater Tidal Swamps of the Atlantic Coast"

21 May - Pat Kennedy – Ecologist: "Habitat Conservation in NE Oregon"

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