

Nature Trails

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Nanny and kids. Photo by N. Reynolds

Mountain Goats Return to *Lawetlat'la* (Mt. St. Helens)!

Nathan Reynolds

Ethno-ecologist, Cowlitz Tribe
Longview, Washington

**Friday, 19 January 2018, 7:30pm,
Room 100 Willamette Hall, UO Campus**

Our January speaker, Nathan Reynolds, his wife, and their two daughters reside in southwestern Washington, where he spends some of his spare time wrenching on his 1971 VW bus. He said Eugene is on his list of okay places if for no other reason than that we are known to harbor an inordinate number of these iconic machines. Reynolds was born in Medford, Oregon but while still a toddler found himself in Camas, Washington, where his father had taken a job. Growing up along the banks of the Columbia River the young Reynolds spent plenty of time with his family in the outdoors, hiking, camping, canoeing, and fishing, and this early imprinting was fundamentally important in the path to his present position with the Cowlitz Tribe. His love of the natural world led him to abandon two career paths because they didn't afford him sufficient opportunity for outdoor activity. The first of these was rock musician: he toured for several years in rock bands in the Pacific Northwest. The second was developing computer programs for prison control systems. He kept asking himself this question: "what can I do that would involve a lot of hiking and camping and still pay the bills?" Deciding at the fairly advanced age of 26 that he needed credentials, he became a student at Washington State University Vancouver and obtained a B.S. in natural resource sciences. Credential in hand, he found the answer to his question. Shortly after finishing his B.S. he began working for the Cowlitz Tribe, where he has been involved in fascinating outdoor work ever since. He also has a M.S. in environmental science from WSUV, which he completed while employed by the Tribe.

A word about the Cowlitz Tribe that employs Reynolds is in order. Reading a brief account of the history of the Cowlitz people produces the all-too-familiar set of feelings: admiration for their ability to thrive for untold centuries before Europeans arrived, and sorrow, disgust and shame at the post-European record, filled as it is with pestilence, belittlement and betrayal. Through patient persistence members of this indigenous group have asserted their rights to territory and recognition. The Cowlitz Indian Tribe website contains the following statement: "When the Federal Government recognized the tribe officially in 2000, the Tribe thought of it as belated acknowledgement of a cohesive culture spanning centuries. Without cover of Federal status, tribal members overcame tremendous obstacles during millennium changes, holding firm to their remembered past as one of the largest and richest tribes in what is now Washington State." The Tribe's administrative office is in Longview and their reservation is near La Center, Washington. The territory they occupied historically, however, was all

along the Cowlitz and Lewis Rivers, which meet the Columbia River near the town of Longview.

Reynolds is an ethno-ecologist who has served as Manager of the Tribe's Habitat Program. In the late fall of 2017 he became the Interim Cultural Program Manager, in which position he is involved in educational curriculum and archaeological projects focused on recovery of tribal artifacts. He also participates in a variety of scientific projects, which vary throughout the seasons in a way that mimics how tribal members moved through their environment each year during their long occupation of this fertile land. This work takes place all over the region historically used by the Tribe. In early spring his main concern is rivers and their fisheries. Salmon is an obvious focus, but Reynolds is also interested in restoring the smelt run, which used to be almost as important a food source as salmon to the Tribe. "Smelt used to be so abundant that they were simply raked from the rivers." Later in the spring his attention shifts to camas prairies and oak woodlands.



In summer he works in the surrounding mountainous terrain, where mountain goats and huckleberries have been prime sources of the Tribe's food, fabric, and lore. He is involved in a project in the Gifford Pinchot National Forest trying to restore and increase wild huckleberry habitat. Fall finds him concentrating on wapato, and revisiting the oak woodlands to chart and document the acorn harvest.

Lawetlat'la, the Cowlitz name for the volcano most people know as Mt. St. Helens, translates to "the smoker," which is much more descriptive than our name, for which we have the British explorer George Vancouver to thank. He honored his friend Lord St. Helens by naming the mountain for him. It could have been worse. Baron St. Helens, at one time the British ambassador to Spain, had the given name Alleyne Fitzherbert. Even though it isn't descriptive and doesn't honor the people who have surrounded it for millennia, the name Mt. St. Helens sounds better than Mt. Fitzherbert. Name changes are slow to occur and can be fraught with controversy, but they do happen. President Obama changed McKinley to Denali, in recognition of the prior history of the indigenous peoples of the area, who have always

called our tallest mountain Denali. But the present administration says that Obama's action was an insult to Ohio (go figure) and has vowed to change it back, so it's not a done deal. It's doubtful that St. Helens will ever be replaced by Lawetlat'la—it's hard to pronounce—but what about Loowit, a shortened version of Lawetlat'la that is commonly used by indigenous people as the mountain's name? The trail that encompasses the mountain, which some of our members have traversed, is called the Loowit trail, so why not the mountain? It has a nice ring to it, don't you think?

Mt. St. Helens was recently listed on the National Register of Historic Places as a Traditional Cultural Property of the Cowlitz Tribe. The eruption in May 1980 killed many wild animals that were native to the area. The dwindling herd of mountain goats (*Oreamnos americanus*) was apparently wiped out. Nature abhors a vacuum, though, and in the intervening decades a surprising thing has happened, and is continuing: mountain goats are repopulating their ancestral range, with no human intervention. Reynolds will be telling us about this remarkable occurrence. He'll talk about their population trends, how the eruption actually improved the ecosystem from the goats' perspective, and how their return is bringing about the rebirth of an ancient endeavor. For centuries before European encroachment—the major

reason for the diminution of the mountain goat population—members of the Tribe would search out and collect the bits of wool these animals left behind on branches and whatever else they might brush up



against. This lanolin-rich and wonderfully insulating material would be spun into yarn and woven into fine, warm blankets and robes, highly valued all up and down the Pacific coast. Reynolds will weave science, culture and history together in his fascinating presentation, so make sure you're in the audience at 7:30pm on Friday, 19 January 2018, in room 100 Willamette Hall on the UO campus to hear his presentation "Mountain Goats Return to *Lawetlat'la* (Mt. St. Helens)!" And leave room for cookies.

John Carter

Returning by Tom A. Titus

On the trailing edge of a late November storm, the mouth of the canyon gaped before me. I wallowed into bib rain pants, jacket, and rubber boots. For reasons I can't fully explain, I'm compelled to tell the ongoing story of this watery green crease in the Coast Range. On this showery morning my compulsion was fueled by the possibility that the coho had returned. Yet my compulsion is small and vague compared with coho compulsion, their thrashing impulse to spawn in this thin thread of water sixty river miles from the Pacific.

The route into the canyon was familiar. The remains of a logging road made the first half-mile easy walking. The track gave way to a deer trail winding across the foot of a clearcut now sporting fifteen-year-old Douglas-fir. From the edge of the clearcut, I stepped into the shelter of an old forest and plunged downhill to the creek. Beauty in the canyon bottom is exhausting. Jade trunks of vine maple are contorted into forbidding tangles. Large logs are strewn haphazardly on the ancient forest floor. I teetered across log bridges spanning impenetrable thickets of russet-stemmed Devil's club and salmonberry. The storm sang in the high boughs, its

tone slightly lower and smoother than creek music breaking over sandstone rills. I negotiated the heavy undergrowth and fallen logs to stay near the creek and watch for salmon. But there were none.

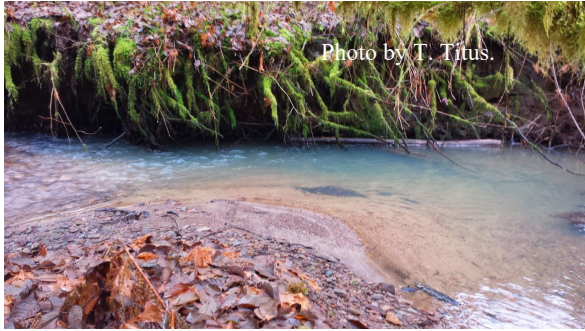
The storm thrashed her way east. The rain tapered. I found the other old road along the canyon floor and continued in. The old growth ended in a stand of mature second growth marked for cutting with flagging and red spray paint. Despite the rain, the creek remained relatively clear. From the road I could see the blonde gravel riffles and the bottoms of all but the deepest pools. Still there were no coho.

The absence of fish drove me further into the canyon than ever before. The road ended. A phalanx of huge dark trees rose before me, two-hundred-year-old soldiers spared by gaily-colored ribbons labeled "TIMBER CUT BOUNDARY." Squinting into this old forest that was new to me, I felt a swirling mix of excitement and trepidation. My scratched hands were lifted in a silent request to enter. People sometimes ask, "How can you know the answer?" The answer is that you don't know. But knowing is far less important than a willingness to ask.

Squinting harder, I lowered my arms and followed a game trail inside. From my left a tiny arteriole of water gurgled downhill. I followed it toward the main

channel, struggling over more logs, tree bones slowly returning to the larger life of the canyon. Dimness seeped into my own bones. For a few moments I felt small and alone, as though I was the only human ever to have entered this sanctuary, as though I was the only human left in the world.

This far up, the creek was perhaps only four feet across. A gravelly riffle surged from under a large



log. When I stepped in, a splash erupted from beneath the log, practically at my feet. Any splash, regardless of size, is a disruption in the continuity of water. A signal. I was not alone. Stepping to the other side of the channel, I sat motionless in a bed of soft moss and three-petaled oxalis. A turbid pool gathered just upstream from the log and telltale splash. I stared. Listened. Creek song. Wind song. Rise and fall of my breath, my own stream, lifeline of oxygen, gift from the trees. Stared some more. Yes. Just there. A ghostly undulating tail steadying the yard-long body of a coho, beat up, barely visible in the gentle cloudy current. Stared. There. Another battered tail, this one smaller, waving slightly faster, holding a second fish next to the first. There then. A mated pair of coho, ready for spawning. I felt a shudder of relief and gratitude and creeping exhaustion in my shoulders. Then I slipped away, back into giant conifers and mossy logs, the living and the life-giving dead.

Incessant splashing reached me from just upstream. Another fish. I circled above the sound, well away from the creek, stepped back across the stream, and approached from the other side. A single hen with bony battered fins rested in the small easy water of a

pool. She turned on her side and surged into a riffle. Her body became a flesh-and-skin rug beater, pounding silt from the gravel, readying the redd for glistening orange eggs. For many quiet minutes I watched as she repeatedly surged, thrashed, and rested. No buck was evident. The lone hen left me haunted with ambivalence. Was hers the face of optimism, to throw one's body sidelong into what is absolutely necessary, even if the outcome is uncertain? Or is optimism only driving, thrashing, intergenerational survival, the rawest form of compulsion? The hen returned to her pool and held tightly against the opposite bank. She knew I was there. Even in her urgency, she was moderated by caution.

Just downstream a large Douglas-fir log spanned the narrow flow. From its splintered underside hung a foot-long piece of pink flagging tape. I knew the tape marked a spawning redd, knew the stream was monitored by snorkel surveys for smolt, knew the data were online. I knew how critical those data are in this wounded and bleeding world where coho numbers are 10% of their population only half a century ago, in this new time when smolts are stranded in small streams by historic heat and drought, when ridges and canyons are scorched by vast clearcuts, then scorched again by herbicides. But I resented that scrap of dayglow pink hanging just above the surface of *my* creek, marking *my* coho, disrupting *my* illusion that the world still holds secret places for salmon and people willing and able to throw their bodies against wet brush and fallen logs on a stormy morning. I resented my return from mystical witness to rational observer.

The shortened leash of daylight tugged at me. I hoped for continuity for this handful of coho; hoped their shiny eggs would stick tightly in the gravel and swell with the embryonic wriggling, hoped the new generation would dart downstream through ample pools of cool clean water, hoped they would grow fat and nickel bright in a healing ocean, hoped for their return. I hoped for my own return. Then I plunged into the brush toward home.

Midwestern Take on Western Rains

by Kris Kirkeby

My traditional ecology knowledge comes from Minnesota and is firmly anchored in ice and snow. Does having TEK mean one should never talk about things outside that boundary? Perhaps a person who isn't imprinted on rain like the Pacific Northwest people shouldn't even be talking about rain. Winters everywhere seem to have the 'onandonandon' factor. I know talking

about snow got way too boring for me in Minnesota — I don't even talk about that any longer. But perhaps unaccustomed eyes have a different take on western Oregon's winter season so here goes...

- Soft single sounds of the first wetting rain spots falling on your dinner plate on the deck, causing radiating pools in your wine glass. Rain crescendos, building to their full strength. Then

dripping, wet-dog flings that hit the tin roof vents. Wild, unashamed, raging rains sounding like Japanese Taiko drums.

- Rain filling a lid on the deck railing, slowly building to reverse meniscus until surface physics shift and it breaks into an overflow.
- Leaves bending slowly under the accumulating weight of the rain, dipping, then springing back in relief.
- Rivulets gathering force on a steep hill: tiny rivers flowing down the rib of a fern.
- Have you noticed, like I have, that we don't spend a lot of time gazing skyward in late October days when the rains rains rains seem to be so unimaginable? But let's not even talk about that any longer.
- Gentle droplets tattooing our large, flat, silver lakes: small radiating circles at first.
- Rain in the drain pipe getting its chance to practice being the river it will probably soon join.
- Streams greedily sucking in each raindrop like a dog with a treat — it can't tell you its taste.
- Rain imitating an infant waterfall on the windowpanes.
- Horizontal rain that has taken to consorting with wind which it has no business doing in the first place and we won't even talk about that any longer.
- Looking closely at colors reflected in droplets—spring colors, yellows of fall, blues of sky or grays of winter clouds. What color is reflected at night?
- Studying double rainbows — what kind of mindset does the storm have to arrange that? They could be a strange sort of oval ice rink with speed skating rain droplets laying down colors in their respective lanes.
- And rain that is messing around so much it becomes hail. Now that is just plain twisted.
- Mist building into glistening tears clinging so carefully to bare winter branches, once again waging their war with gravity. Soon the weight of their glory sends them falling to nourish the earth below.
- Rain shining like fine crystal droplets hanging off branch tips that streetlights make into LED lights.
- Hard-soaking-straight-down rain causing head duckings and shoulder tuckings, which of course

do no good so we won't even talk about these any longer.

- Fog may be rain that got inhaled and is slowly being released as a minutely fine rendition of what it was before.
- Freezing fog — what we get when that breath is held too long.
- Heavy rains joining together to knit a gray gauze coverlet for everything below the south hills.
- Rain on its way to becoming snow looking like huge white paint splotches. And when I see that my reaction is the same — watching those splotching globs is quite like watching gull poop land on a post at the ocean. Not a fan of snow.
- Decrescendoing rain looking like a video of an artist doing a painting. Played in reverse, spattered dots on the earth's canvas are erased and colors gradually disappear.
- Rain playing the artist, creating patterns formed because branches block its fall or droplet-etchings on ocean beach sands.
- After the rain the now quieted puddles are looking like pools of azure-tinged mercury matching the color of most of our planet. After a long winter we do talk about such things in the PNW!
- Late winter rain taking pity on us — sparkling flowers are peeking through, breathing hope.
- The rain is slowly sweeping away, along its path applying a lime-green patina to the valley fields.
- Sometimes our revenge is watching the shrinking puddles: drying rings record each dying stage of the decreasing rains. But wait! Not gone. What we're seeing is earth's greatest recycling program.
- Drizzle — I can't say that word without hearing my grandfather with his heavy Scandinavian accent talking on the tapes we exchanged about how "yesterday sure was a gray day, it was drizzle" all day long."
- And those can't-make-up-its-mind days of dribbling, staccato, undecided rain showers that usually happen on the days you have to get some early spring garden work done.
- And clouds — the precursors to rain...oh, now don't even get me going on clouds.
Sometimes I think that silence has found its voice in rain.

Events of Interest in the Community

Lane County Audubon Society

Tuesday, 23 January, 7:30pm. Fernhill Wetlands Restoration Project. In 2014-15 Clean Water Services (CWS) implemented a massive habitat restoration project within the Fernhill Wetlands in the Portland Metro region. Joe Liebezeit, Avian Conservation Program Manager for Portland Audubon, will detail the restoration that transformed 90 acres of unused sewage ponds into a complex native wetlands habitat designed to treat wastewater. 1645 High St., Eugene.

Mt. Pisgah Arboretum

Sunday, 14 January, 8-11am. Bird Walk. Join Julia Siporin and Joni Dawning for another monthly bird walk intended for people with all levels of birding experience. We'll use vocalizations, habitat, and behavior clues for identification of our fall migrants and year-round residents. Come discover the Arboretum's avian diversity. Please bring binoculars. Option to continue the walk until noon for those who are interested. Rain or shine. Meet at the Arboretum Visitor Center. \$5, members free.

Saturday, 20 January, 11am-3:30pm. Plant Fiber Cordage Making and Basket Weaving Workshop. In this weaving workshop for beginners and beyond, local artist Donna Crispin will introduce you to a variety of leaves, grasses, and fibers, creating a small collection of natural cordage. We will use some of your cords, in addition to commercially prepared seagrass, to weave over a 16-ounce Mason jar. This will be a 5-hour workshop with a break for lunch. Workshop meets at the EPUD community room (33733 Seavey Loop Rd, Eugene, OR 97405). \$40 members, \$45 non-members, PLUS \$12 materials fee paid to instructor. All basketry materials included. Bring a lunch, kitchen shears or lightweight garden shears, old hand towel, and a spray bottle (optional). Pre-registration required. To register call 541-747-3817 or visit

<http://www.mountpisgaharboretum.com/learn/workshop-registration>

Sunday, 21 January, 10am-1pm. Life Among the Mosses Walk. This is our annual celebration of the little folks of the plant world. Botanist David Wagner will tell moss stories and weave lichen yarns to help us understand the elfin world of mosses, liverworts, and lichens. Rain or shine. Meet at the Arboretum's Visitor Center. Don't forget your parking pass. Fee: \$5, members free.

Saturday, 27 January, 10am-2pm. Workshop: Herbal Medicine for Colds and Flu. Want to have a healthy cold and flu season this year? Join Anna Bradley for a workshop on how to utilize herbal medicine for prevention, symptom relief, and overcoming your illness more effectively. Some of the herbs we will be working with include: Oregon grape root, Echinacea, Mullein, and more! Take home recipes, formulas, and new methods for you and your family. Meet at the Visitor Center. Members \$25, non-members \$30. Pre-registration required. To register call 541-747-3817 or go to:

<http://www.mountpisgaharboretum.com/workshop-registration>

Friends of Buford Park and Mt. Pisgah

Monday Morning Regulars. 9am-noon. Contact volunteer@bufordpark.org for more information.

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9am-noon. Nursery Work. Meet and work at the Native Plant Nursery at Buford Park. Enter Buford Park from Seavey Loop Road. Turn LEFT after crossing the bridge and drive 1/4 mile to the nursery.

Saturday, 27 January 10am-noon. Turtle Flats Tour. Join Friends of Buford Park & Mt. Pisgah for a tour of our 62-acre Property, Turtle Flats, near the Willamette Confluence. See the restored gravel ponds, which now are home to river otter, western pond turtles, and waterfowl, and the willow wetlands where migratory songbirds flock. Turtle Flats is extremely important because it connects two key parcels— Glassbar Island, owned by Oregon State Parks, and Willamette Confluence Preserve, owned by The Nature Conservancy. The pace of this tour will be a leisurely walk over old gravel roads for approximately 2 miles. Please, no pets. Preregistration required: <https://www.bufordpark.org/tours/>. For more info: outreach@bufordpark.org, 541-344-8350. Directions provided upon registration.

WREN (Willamette Resources and Educational Network)

Go to <http://www.wewild.blogspot.com/> for information on WREN upcoming events.

The University of Oregon's Museum of Natural and Cultural History

[Wolves and Wild Lands in the 21st Century.](#) How can wolves and people coexist in our modern world? From Alaska to Oregon to North Carolina, explore the epic story of North America's wolves—and the vital role humans play in shaping their future. On exhibit through 11 February 2018. Exhibit Hours: Tuesday through Sunday, 11am-5pm.

Native Plant Society of Oregon, Emerald Chapter

Saturday, 20 January, 6:30 pm. The Weird Beauty of Liverworts. Botanist Dr. David Wagner gives a talk and slideshow, with a focus on photomicrographs that get up close and personal with the graceful forms of liverworts. Hiding among the mosses in our forests are plants with a mossy aspect but in a completely different division: liverworts. Those with a ribbon-like thallus are easy to notice. Thalloid liverworts have an amazing diversity of structures from simple to complex. Leafy liverworts are more easily overlooked because they share the same life form and life cycle as mosses. Location: the Amazon Community Center at 2700 Hilyard St in Eugene. For more information call 541-344-3327.

Sunday, 21 January, 10am–1pm. Field Trip: Life among the Mosses Walk. A follow-up to Dr. Wagner's Saturday talk, this walk will focus on lichens, liverworts, mosses, and ferns. The Native Plant Society and the Mount Pisgah Arboretum co-sponsor both events. Rain or shine. Don't forget your parking pass. Fee: \$5. Location: meet at the visitor center, Mount Pisgah

Arboretum, 34901 Frank Parrish Rd, Eugene. For more information, visit mountpispaharboretum.com/learn/walks or call 541-747-3817.

Nearby Nature

Monday, 15 January, 8:30am-3pm. No School Day Adventure — Mammal Mania! Spend the day pretending to be a wild animal! Learn to build like a beaver, creep like a coyote, and run like a rabbit. Find tracks and traces of mammals in the park and check out real furs from naturalist Dave Walp’s amazing pelt collection. \$45 members/\$50 non-members. Scholarships available. Ages 6-9, max 12 kids. Outdoors in Alton Baker Park and at our Yurt. To register, call 541-687-9699, ext. 2.

Saturday, 20 January, 1-3pm. Nature Quest: Gnome Roam. Go on a Gnome Roam in the Wildflower Hollow! Learn something new about the winter forest with each Gnome you discover on this family-friendly wander through the woods. Meet outside the Nearby Nature Yurt in Alton Baker Park. FREE for members, \$5/family for non-members. Pre-register: 541-687-9699.

Friday, 2 February, 8:30am-3pm. No School Day Adventure — Time Travelers. Unravel the mysteries of Alton Baker Park! Discover 20 million-year-old fossils, explode a volcano, and create your own fossil imprint. Trek to the Talking Stones and play Kalapuya games! \$45 members/\$50 non-members. Scholarships available. Ages 6-9, max 12 kids. Outdoors in Alton Baker Park and at our Yurt. To register, call 541-687-9699, ext. 2.

North American Butterfly Association, Oregon (Eugene/Springfield) Chapter

No meeting in January.

ENHS welcomes new members! To join, fill out the form below. Membership payments allow us to give modest honoraria to our speakers, as well as to pay for the publication and mailing of *Nature Trails*. Our web address: <http://biology.uoregon.edu/enhs>

MEMBERSHIP FORM

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State & Zip _____ Phone _____
E-mail (if you want to receive announcements) _____
I (we) prefer electronic copies of NT rather than paper copies. ___ Yes ___ No
If yes, email address (if different from the one above): _____
ANNUAL DUES: Family \$25.00
 Individual 15.00
 Life Membership 300.00
 Contribution _____

Annual dues for renewing members are payable in September. Memberships run from September to September. Generosity is encouraged and appreciated.

Make checks payable to:
Eugene Natural History Society
P.O. Box 5494, Eugene OR 97405

A good place to park for our meetings is the Physical Plant lot: turn north from Franklin onto Onyx, go about a block and you will be in the lot. After 6pm it’s open to the public.

Herb Wisner has made a generous donation to ENHS in memory of his late wife Ruth, who died in 2017. From all who knew and loved Ruth, thank you Herb.

ENHS Officers and Board Members 2017-2018

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Schedule of Speakers and Topics for 2017-2018

19 Jan. 2018	Nathan Reynolds	Mountain Goats Return to <i>Lawetlat'la</i> (Mt. St. Helens)!
16 Feb.	Gayle Hansen	Seaweeds on Japanese Tsunami Debris: Have They Invaded Our Shores?
16 March	Leigh Torres	Insights into Whale Ecology
20 April	Fred Swanson	Humanities, Arts, Science Collide at Andrews Forest, Mount St. Helens, and Beyond
18 May	Ron Larson	The Natural History of Lake Abert, Oregon's Salt Lake



Photo from the web:

https://www.google.com/search?q=mountain+goat+photos&client=firefox-b&tbm=isch&tbo=u&source=univ&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjgLablcXYAhWD34MKHcMHCqUQ7AkIQA&biw=1117&bih=620#imgrc=eZ_Lz1ft0t42YM:

YOU CAN HELP US.

ENHS has to find dry storage for our booth and its contents, which are in well-organized containers and occupy a space the size of the bed of a small pickup (87"x60"x20"). The booth is used two days a year, once in May and once in October. If you have a dry space and are willing, please contact Dean Walton.